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**Special Report: The Music Biz vs. Drugs**

# MUSICIAN

THE ART, BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY OF MAKING MUSIC

**On The Road With The**

## Wallflowers

**Find The Right Price  
For Your Band**

**Songwriting:**

**Bernie Taupin On The Lyrical Art**

**Private Lesson:**

**p-Ziq's Lessons In  
Electronic Arrangement**

**Technology:**

**Gear News From AES**

**Studio Techniques:**

**Audio Streaming**

**Editor's Pick:**

**Alesis "Nano" Series**

**Working Musician:**

**Get Your Career In Gear!**

**Plus:**

**Sinéad O' Connor**

MARIO CALIRE  
THE WALLFLOWERS

NO  
TIP



# M•1400 AMP

## When you buy an FR Series M•1400, you get a ballsy, ultra-reliable, high-current power amp. Plus a few hundred bucks worth of important extras.

**FR means Fast Recovery.** Fast Recovery means that the M•1400 can be driven right out past the edge of clipping... into nastily low impedances... and still sound good. Minimal negative feedback and special circuitry we shamelessly borrowed from digital switching technology are used to accelerate transient recovery when the M•1400 is running "at red line." It makes a difference that you can hear.

M•1400	4Ω2 bridge	8Ω2 bridge	2Ω2 load	4Ω2 load	8Ω2 load
at 1% THD	1400 W	960 W	700•700 W	480•480 W	280•280 W
at rated power*	1260 W	850 W	630•630 W	425•425 W	250•250 W
THD at rated power*	0.05%	0.025%	0.05%	0.025%	0.012%

**Detented gain controls** calibrated in volts AND dBu.

**Full five-LED stereo level display** PLUS signal present indicator instead of just two chintzy LEDs.

**Top LEDs** light when protection circuits are engaged.

**Short Circuit LEDs** (a Mackie exclusive) warn you of wiring or voice coil short circuits BEFORE you crank up your system.

**Temperature status LEDs** (previously only found on far more expensive amp models).

**Fixed line cord** won't vibrate out when the amp is placed close to a PA cabinet.

**Neutrik® Speakon® connectors** plus multi-way binding posts.

**T-Design cooling** for enhanced reliability. Unlike amps that just waft air through their entire chassis, the M•1400 delivers massive air flow only where it's needed — on the output devices — keeping dust, smoke, and other contamination out of the amp's main electronics. Via a huge front manifold 1, the M•1400's demand-sensitive fan 2 concentrates cool air into two highly efficient heat sink tunnels 3 and out the SIDES of the amp. The short air path maintains constant gradient cooling.

**Male AND female XLR inputs** let you use either gender of plug on the cable from the mixer — and they allow one input to power multiple amps so you don't have to wire up special "splitter" cables.

**Built-in low-cut filters for tighter bass and more system output.** PA cabinets can only reproduce bass down to what's called their **tuned frequency**. Below that, you just get distortion and potential woofer damage. The solution is to chop off everything below the tuned frequency with a low-cut filter (equalizers — even 1/3-octave equalizers — can't do the job).

We're not the only amp maker to advocate low-cut filters. But we ARE the only ones who don't charge extra or force you into a couple of pre-set cut-off frequencies. Our low cut filter's variable from 5Hz to 170Hz to fit your system's size.

**Built-in subwoofer filter.** Power your subwoofer with an M•1400 and you've saved the \$250 to \$400 cost of an outboard electronic crossover (or the expense and hassle of "optional" plug-in cards). You get an 18dB per octave, linear-phase, uniform-time-delay design that's switchable between 63Hz and 125Hz. Since clipping elimination is undesirable when driving a subwoofer, that M•1400 feature is automatically disengaged when you switch to subwoofer mode (a critical detail not found on many comparably-priced amps with inconvenient plug-in subwoofer cards).

**Both 1/4" TRS & XLR inputs.**

**Constant directivity HF horn compensation.**

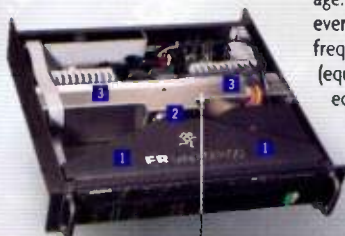
"CD" horns dramatically improve high-end dispersion. But to make them work right, you have to add special equalization. Until now, that's meant hard-to-find, harder-to-adjust speaker modules (or using a graphic equalizer...which simply doesn't work). The M•1400's separate left & right CD horn adjustments are continuously adjustable from 2kHz to 6kHz.

**Inside: expensive, state-of-the-art T0-3PBL-case power transistors** with perforated emitters for maximum gain linearity. (Some amps use cheap, 20-year-old-technology metal T0-2 transistors... possibly due to lack of robust cooling resources.)

\*20Hz to 20kHz



**Right out of the box,** the M•1400 is ready to improve your sound reinforcement system with tighter bass and better constant directivity horn performance. Because we've built in THREE critical electronic system enhancements that others leave out or charge extra for. And, signal processing aside, the M•1400 is also the gutsiest, no-compromise power amp in its price range. Call today for full information.



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Below a few of the 400+ folks who work at Mackie Designs in Woodinville, WA, 20 miles north of Seattle.



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World Radio History



This is Johnny Strator's  
178 BOSS DS-1  
Distortion pedal.  
It's been around the World  
2.7 times. It's been used as  
a bottle opener, a hammer  
and as currency.  
It subbed as a fire stop  
while changing a  
blow out on the  
tour van in Japan.

It was booted off the 7th floor of the international  
hotel in Prague after a late night jam  
with some locals got a little out of hand.

It tripped Johnny on stage in New Orleans,  
resulting in 12 stitches over his left eye that he tells the girls  
is from a surfing wipeout in Costa Rica... and it has never once  
failed to provide that kick-ass tone like it did the day he got it.

Ask Johnny why he doesn't replace his BOSS with a new  
"retro" pedal and he'll flash a smile and say  
"Nothin's sweeter than the original, man."

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BOX.

Twentieth  
**NICE  
BOSS  
BOX**  
ANNIVERSARY  
1977-1997

All characters in this ad are fictitious  
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# ALESIS

## classic acts

Your Keith Richards interview (Nov. '97) reflects the current trend of older bands dusting off their guitars and coming out for "reunion" tours. It isn't hard to hear with your own ears that the reason behind it all is that they know that the current state of popular music is at a low point; it's only natural that the masters will come out of the shadows and teach the world what truly good music is all about. I'm certainly not saying that all new music is worthless, but there are few new groups who are making timeless music. More than ever, the old saying is true: They just don't make 'em like they used to. (P.S.: Is it me, or do you see a striking similarity between the Spice Girls and the Village People?)

**matt austermann**  
mt. pleasant, MI

The coolest thing in your Keith Richards story came at the end, when you got him to speak straight to people like me: guys in bands who are trying to get out of the garage and into a career. No other magazine uses the kind of access you have to make the stars address real-world issues. Thanks, *Musician*!

**alex hancock**  
seattle, WA

Congratulations on your insightful interview with Keith Richards. I'd like to offer one clarification about the "Orange County Rocket 88" amp mentioned in the gear box. It was in fact an Electrolux Rocket 50 4x10 combo with a Rocket 90 logo on the front. Yes, it was built in Orange County, but it bears only a mild resemblance to an Oldsmobile.

**don morris**  
electrolux@aol.com

## legal aid

I just got my Nov. '97 issue and read with great gusto the article "Need a Lawyer? Maybe Not." Great job, as always; you guys are miles ahead of the competition. But while a lot of the legal stuff the article offered was quite useful, I would have liked to have seen something about the value of hiring a lawyer to get your music into the hands of the labels. Can you maybe include some info on this topic in a future issue?

**tom cioppa**  
tcioppa@lamar.colostate.edu

[No problem. You'll be seeing a lot more coverage of the music business and how to survive it in the pages of *Musician* from now on. Keep

watching our Business feature and the Working Musician section for news that all musicians can use.]

## cover bands

Cheers to the Fleshtones, Dar Williams, and the many artists who have performed tasteful renditions and tributes to works of other artists throughout the years. Jeers to the wedding/local cover bands who play all (or almost all) cover songs purely for audience response. I've grown to hate the wooooos associated with the intros to "Brown-Eyed Girl," "Old-Time Rock & Roll," "Blister in the Sun," and the like. All these songs are great and influential, yet there are too many musicians who feel they need to play them for monetary gain. I realize that these musicians may be extremely talented, but they start acting like these songs are their own. Furthermore, they create an unlevel playing field for original artists. Many local establishments will go for acts that "play the hits" and "bring in people/make money." It's a shame bar patrons and entertainment seekers reinforce this "cover band ideology."

*I don't feel the need for cover bands.*

Jukeboxes and DJs can do as good a job of pleasing the crowd. Something needs to be done about this vicious cycle of mediocrity.

**dillip chandran**  
dilip@thunkit.com

## mindy jostyn

It was pure delight to see your article about Mindy Jostyn (Sideman, Nov. '97). She is such a dynamic personality and a real must to see live. *Musician* is to be commended for giving attention to up-and-coming musicians and bands, as well as established players.

**h. m. stern**  
hannibal@escape.com

## errata, contd.

Apologies to Christian Donlon for misspelling the name of his band, More Good Oil, in our Nov. '97 Letters page. (Although No Good Oil really isn't such a bad name either.)

Send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Email us at: editors@musicianmag.com

There wasn't a propeller on anybody's head at New York's Javits Center. Instead, there was a roomful of people who looked pretty much like people I know—musicians—listening intently as the future of recording filled the room.

This was the Grammy recording forum at this year's Audio Engineering Society convention. Five distinguished engineers sat onstage, each one taking a turn at playing an example of his or, in Sylvia Massy's case, her work and fielding comments from the crowd. At this point, we were taking in Elliot Scheiner's mix of a song recorded live at an Eagles concert, nothing but voices and one acoustic guitar, coming at us from five speakers. For many attendees, this was an introduction to surround sound, the latest attempt to break the stereo barrier and revolutionize the way we mix our music.

When the music stopped, the questions began. One listener caught my attention by asking, "What's my position in listening to this? Am I supposed to imagine myself surrounded by the Eagles, with all of them singing right at me?" Scheiner responded, "Why even ask? Why not

just enjoy the music on its own merits?"

None of these questions was ever really answered, but together they do suggest that as surround sound and other resources fall into the budgetary grasp of the real-world player, we're all going to be challenged to create in new ways. Each engineer on that panel admitted to not having a clue as to what the "rules" of surround sound are or will be. Which, of course, is cool: It's always fun to invent your own rules, or even decide to play without them altogether.

But as musicians, we'll soon be asking ourselves whether live performance is still the model for how we present our music. Part of enjoying a solo guitarist or pianist is the perspective between the artist and the listener. When we're able to move the listener inside the guitar or beneath the strings of a Steinway, this fundamental element will change. What we do with this opportunity is up to us, and how we respond to it can alter how we make, hear, and even dream about music from now on.

—Robert L. Doerschuk



**From the Editor**

DEAR SANTA,  
I'VE BEEN A VERY GOOD  
BOY THIS YEAR. I HELPED  
MOM AND DAD SHOVEL  
THE DRIVEWAY. I WANT:

G.I. JOE  
A PHONE FOR MY ROOM  
A STEREO  
A BIKE  
FACEPAINTS  
A BASEBALL MITT

LOVE,  
BOBBY

FROM THE NORTH POLE

Dear Bobby,

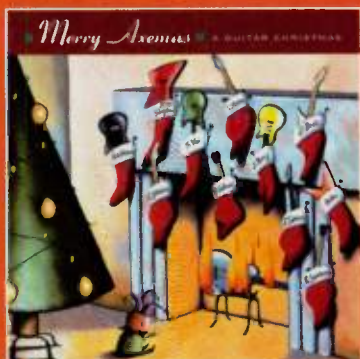
I found your list childish and stupid.

I'm giving you "Merry Axemas" because it's time you learned about the  
important things in life—talent, brilliance and ripper guitar leads. Your social  
and intellectual development depends upon it.

You can thank me later.

Love, *Santa*

P.S. And stop being such a goody-goody. Nobody likes a kiss-ass.



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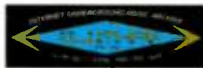
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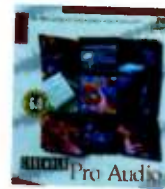


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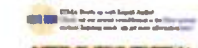
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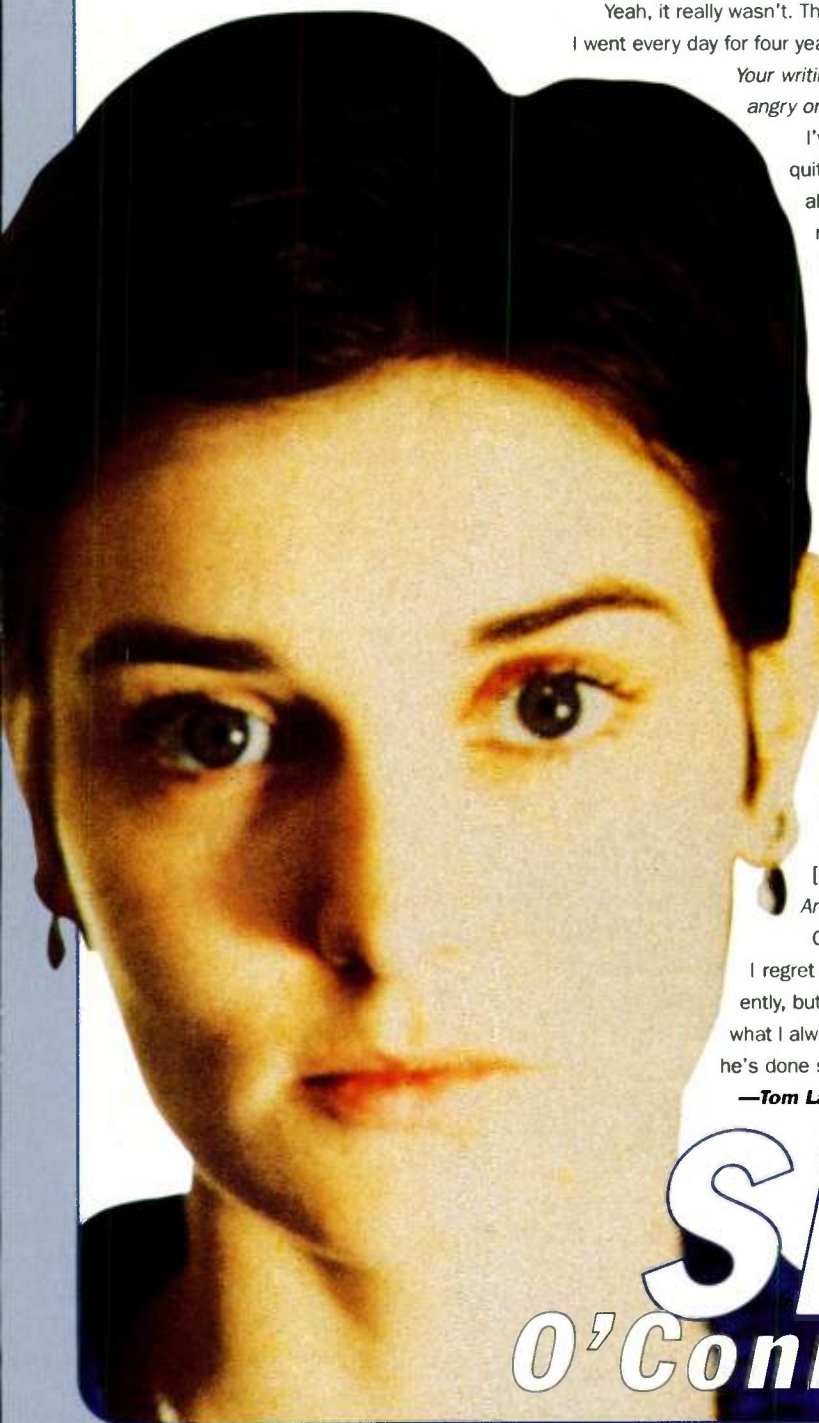
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World Radio History

**"I regret everything and I regret nothing."**



**Y**ou've got to look back and laugh at the strange ups and downs of your ten-year career.

I'm just beginning to be able to do that. In fact, over the last few days I've become able to do that. Not to look back in anger at oneself is the most difficult thing—not to beat yourself up about things that you've done. I guess you get to that point through time; you understand that you were understandable. For some things—like, for example, the Pope thing [i.e., tearing up a picture of the Pontiff on Saturday Night Live]—I think people understood. That and me not accepting awards were the only two things that meant something and were solid. The other things were just bad moods.

On your new EP *The Gospel Oak* (Columbia) also on the recent *Universal Mother* album, you've reclaimed the word "mother" after enduring years of abuse as a child. It's almost as if it hasn't been in your vocabulary for a while.

Yeah, it really wasn't. That's happened through therapy and working really hard to get over it. I went every day for four years, and I still go when I'm at home in London.

Your writing and singing seem to have changed as well. You don't sound as angry on the *Oak* ballads as on previous records.

I've always been pretty in touch with my emotions, although there are quite a lot, I'm sure, that I'm still not in touch with because there's always a lot buried in your subconscious. Actually, maybe I should correct that, because I think I was very angry, and that's a way of not being in touch with your emotions, because underneath that anger is always a lot of tears. But you express them all, and that's how you get to what's underneath. As long as you express whatever's in there, even if it's ugly, that's how you get it all out and get to what's underneath, which is always love. You wouldn't be so angry if you weren't so full of love, you know what I mean? Except your love has been brutalized, so when you get all that shit off of you, you find yourself.

As a mother of two yourself, you have the unconditional love of a family to keep you centered.

Absolutely. I've got a lot of love in my life now, which I didn't have when I started off. I have a lot of people around me who are good to me, and that really helps.

And a duet with Bono to boot: "I'm Not Your Baby," on *Wim Wenders'* *The End of Violence* soundtrack.

Oh, that's something we threw together very quickly. But it's actually quite good. It's a U2 song, but it's really for the movie, so it's not meant to be paid attention to separately.

Although it will be.

[Sighs.] Yeah, I know.

Any real regrets?

Oh, God! I've got hundreds, just like everybody. I regret everything and I regret nothing. Everyone has a million things they wish they'd done differently, but at the same time that's how you learn, by making mistakes. That's what I always say to my son when he comes home crying his eyes out because he's done something he ought not to have done—that's how he learns.

—Tom Lanham

**Sinéad**  
**O'Connor**



**sideman**

# Larry Ciampion

**"I won't be offended if they say, 'Your playing sucks.'"**

about.

*So if there was a tune where he did a certain kind of fill behind Fiona, you'd try to get close to it.*

You bet. Then if I want to turn it into my own fill later, at least I know what was there originally. It's funny how a lot of people don't do their homework and show up without knowing any of the artist's music. Even if they're the sweetest guys in the world, they're not gonna get the gig. As long as you make the artist happy, even if it means going that extra step, they're gonna use you again. —Robert L. Doerschuk

## résumé

Herbie Hancock  
Fiona Apple  
Barry Manilow

*You're relatively new on the L.A. session scene, but you've got your own publicist.*

I thought it was a smart business move to get my name out. Rather than spend money on stupid trips once I start making money, I tried to be wise about my future. This is a business: It's part of your heart to play music, but that's only one hour a day when your band is on the road, but the other 23 you're on the phone, doing whatever needs to be done to hook up other sessions.

*How far ahead are you booked?*

Sometimes it's a couple of months, but there have been months where nothing is going on. When you get that break, use it as a vacation.

*How do you get into fresh material when you're doing a session?*

Studio work is about being solid, getting great tones, and really listening to what the artist says they want. I think it was Steve Gadd who said that the first thing he does is read the lyrics and discuss them with the artist, and that's what I believe too. You get to know what the artist is about, and then you can go, "Okay, maybe a piccolo snare is not so good for this song."

*What do you say to an artist when you want to get into his or her material?*

The first thing I say is, "Don't worry about telling me if you want me to do something differently." I want them to know that I won't be offended if they say, "Your playing sucks on this song." To me, that's not a personal thing, because it's about getting the music right. You have to let them know right off the bat that you're open to anything they might say.

*You also had to cover drum parts that Matt Chamberlain had recorded with Fiona Apple when you began working with her on the road.*

That was tough, because I really had to learn how he played. I watched videos of him, and I bought the album he cut with Critters Buggin' to hear what his playing was

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World Radio History

## Workingman's Blues

**A**sk any group of struggling musicians for their biggest complaint and you're likely to get the same response—the dreaded day job. But deciding how to deal with the day job leaves most of us dumbfounded.

"I realized when I said I was gonna' quit and I said I didn't know what I'd do, people thought I had a lot of nerve," says solo artist/Pete Drogenband member **Elaine Summers**, "but you've got to close the door for another to open." Summers, who left her day job as a publicist for Chrysalis Records back in 1993, landed a publishing



deal soon afterwards, enabling her to spend a couple of years pursuing a record deal. "It takes so long [to make it], so you have to be prepared to do whatever it takes."

"You'd rather work your ass off for yourself rather than someone else," says Brent Best, the guitarist/vocalist for **Slobberbone**. With the release of *barrel chested*, the band's second album on Doolittle Records, the band is poised to hit the road in a hard way, leaving Best to decide his fate as a part-time employee at a truck parts warehouse. "Now's the time for someone like me to pursue this, because I don't think I'll be able to as easily in ten years," he says. "You're either going to sink or swim, so now's the time to jump in."—**Michael Gelfand**



## Selling Your Soul Et Al

**E**very band who's played outside the local bar circuit will tell you the same thing: You make your money on your merchandise. This adage has sent musicians back to the lab to improve on the traditional menu of t-shirts, stickers, and CDs.

Atlanta's space surfers **Man Or Astro-Man?** have built a "consumer-oriented production house" around a few bizarre ideas and some clever (if deceptive) packaging. Individual packets of "Space Dust" actually contain lint from the band members' clothes dryer. Astro Anti-Gravity Gyroscopic Spinning Thingys, or yo-yos, have proven a hot seller at shows thanks in part to guitarist Star Crunch's demonstration skills. Other items from the **Astro-Man?** catalog include custom light switch plates, snow squeegees, and cosmic "teeth" paste.

While most Astro-Man? products sell well (except for the drumstick shavings), the profit margin doesn't compare to that of recorded music. "Often it takes touring and royalty money to keep some of the wackier items stocked," explains drummer Birdstuff. "We do it because we like seeing our names on things and observing what absolutely stupid things people will buy."

Despite the initial expense, many bands have plunged into the manufacturing game and created clothing and merchandise lines worthy of the pages of glamour magazines. New York City's hardcore veterans **Sick Of It All** enjoy great success with die-cast metal keychains, necklaces, Zippo lighters, and pennants bearing their "Alleyway Dragon" logo. Other SOIA offerings include Champion-brand basketball jerseys, gas station-style work shirts, baby tees, rain slickers, and bomber jackets. Now a self-funded industry in itself, Sick Of It All's investment has paid off. "In Europe, our merchandise has become bigger than the band," says guitarist Pete Koller. "The Sick Of It All name and logo is as recognizable there as Stussy's or Thievz's."

You'd think a college degree would be required to pull off such an ambitious undertaking. Well,

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World Radio History

Pete and brother/singer Lou did study graphic arts at the Center For The Media Arts in Manhattan but they'll be the first to tell you it doesn't take a genius. "We just look at what's selling in the stores, check out what people are wearing," Pete says. "Slap a logo on it and there you go."

As avid audiophiles, Chapel Hill, North Carolina's hot jazz revivalists **Squirrel Nut Zippers** chose not to sink their savings into clothing, accessories, or novelty items. Instead, with their startling crossover popularity on the rise, they released *Sold Out*, a limited-edition EP of choice Zippers rarities. After 25,000 copies clear the shelves at independent record shops, the raw collection of live recordings, demos, and previously unreleased material will only be available at SNZ gigs and through mail order. With their sophomore effort, *Hot* (Mammoth), currently exceeding gold status, such a move seems unwise. But the Zippers' motivation isn't financial, explains guitarist Ken Mosher. "We've tried to make our live shows special for those fans that have supported us since 1993," he says. "We feel that this release is our historical gift to those folks." —**Sam Cannon**

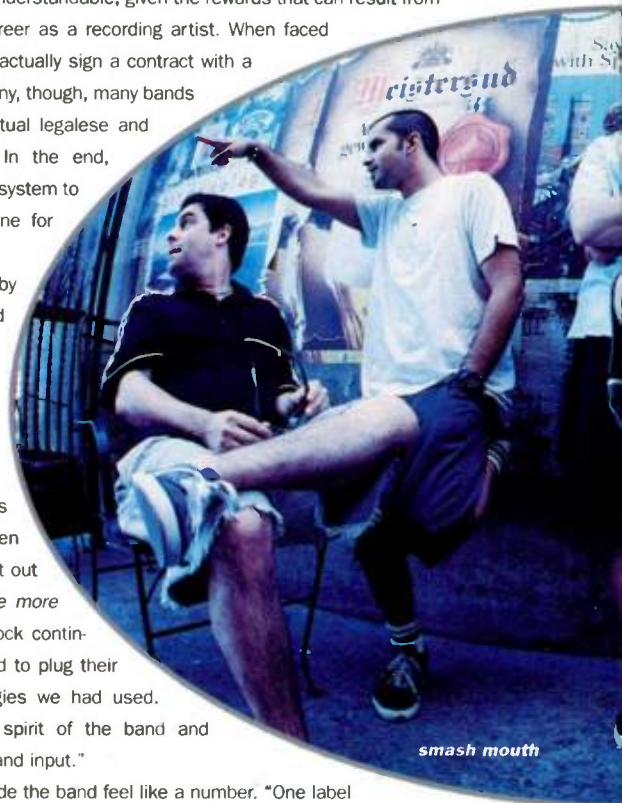
# Signing Language

**F**or many bands, the obsession with "getting signed" to a record deal often takes on the vibe of a quest. And that's understandable, given the rewards that can result from having a successful career as a recording artist. When faced with the opportunity to actually sign a contract with a particular record company, though, many bands become confused by all the contractual legalese and "we're-the-best-label-for-you" spiels. In the end, bands have to rely on their own value system to determine what label is the right one for them.

"The hardest thing to do as a baby band is to create momentum, and Universal wanted to capitalize on the following we had already cultivated," observes Ken Block, vocalist/guitarist with Gainesville, Florida's **Sister Hazel**, a band who'd already sold more than 10,000 copies of its self-titled, self-released debut when Universal Records came calling to put out their second effort, . . . *somewhere more familiar*. "What sealed it for us," Block continues, "was that they said they wanted to plug their machine into the strategies we had used.

They understood the spirit of the band and respected our ideas and input."

Other suitors made the band feel like a number. "One label made it appear as if we weren't going to be a priority for them," recalls vocal-



smash mouth



## The Road Kills

**I**f you're the health-conscious type and have ever had to go out on the road with a band, you've come to know that McDonalds doesn't sell vitamins and Denny's doesn't have drive-thru juice bars. But even so, it's possible to maintain a state of physical well-being while travelling around the country in a putrescent van.

Krist Novoselic of **Sweet 75** survived the whole excessive rock lifestyle with Nirvana and is now a vegetarian who avoids his vices.

"That's key, because I can really get strung out on coffee, pot and cigarettes—those three drugs are like total bliss for a day or two, and then I turn into a freak," says Novoselic. "The number one thing is not to get out of your mind all the time. Mental health is more important than physical health, but physical health facilitates mental health, so it's good to just walk or run. You're cooped up in a van and it seems like you've usually got 23 hours a day with not a lot to do, except travel and get between the sets, so it's good to keep your mind occupied and keep a healthy perspective."

ist/guitarist Andrew Copeland. "It seemed like they were already snowed under with too many other bands in our genre. We felt like we would be fifth in line if we ever needed anything, so we held out for a better offer."

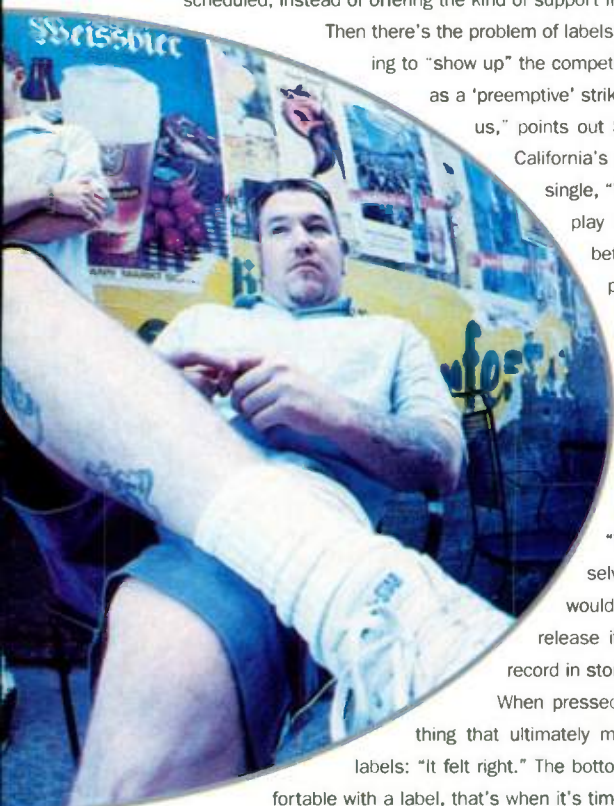
Individual attention was an important factor for Boston's *Big Wreck*, who was the subject of an intense bidding war that eventually saw Atlantic Records release the band's first effort, *In Loving Memory Of* . . . "We definitely don't feel like another piece of product," says bassist Dave Henning. According to Wreck vocalist/guitarist Ian Thornley, it was obvious that Atlantic's enthusiasm and commitment went beyond the usual 'brushing-of-the-ego' stuff. "Other labels wanted us to put on showcases beyond what we had scheduled, instead of offering the kind of support from the beginning that Atlantic did."

Then there's the problem of labels pursuing bands because they're looking to "show up" the competition. "Some labels wanted to sign us as a 'preemptive' strike just to keep Interscope from getting us," points out Steve Harwell, vocalist for San Jose, California's *Smash mouth*, whose infectious first

single, "Walkin' on the Sun," was receiving air-play on Los Angeles' influential KROQ before any deals had even made it to paper. "That's what really pissed me off—they were only interested in us because Interscope was interested." Harwell knew Interscope was the right call because the label was willing to let *Smash mouth* retain creative control as well as put out their album, *Fush Yu Mang*, immediately. "We were prepared to put it out ourselves when Interscope told us that they wouldn't touch the record and would just release it as is," he marvels. "They had the record in stores just three weeks after we signed."

When pressed, all three bands agreed on the one thing that ultimately made them sign with their respective labels: "it felt right." The bottom line, then: Once you feel that comfortable with a label, that's when it's time to sign on the dotted line. Just read

the fine print first.—Mike Mettler



Jeff Martin, guitarist/vocalist for the *Tea Party* refuses to sacrifice the nutrients his body needs while out on tour. "Performing, playing guitar, and singing [present] an extreme cardiovascular work-out, so I'm probably a hell of a lot healthier on the road than I am when I have down-time," Martin says. "I've just learned to drink a lot of water because you have an excessive lifestyle when you're on the road—drinking, drugs sometimes, hanging out—and you get caught up on the whole carousel of it, so you've got to keep hydrated and maintain a healthy diet. And I don't eat fried food or red meat. It's not for any moral reason—it just slows me down too much."

*Live's* success actually affords them the lux-

ury of bringing a nutritionist/trainer on the road with them to monitor their diet and progress in the gym. "It's mainly just to keep us from eating junk," says singer Ed Kowalczyk, who only earlier had been eating potato chips put out on a tray outside their hotel suite. Kowalczyk, who has allergies, tries not to eat dairy products and maintains a vegetarian, relatively alcohol-free diet. "None of us are alcoholics anyway, just festive drinkers," he says, "but even then, it's really hard to bounce back from stuff when you're on the road because you're traveling all the time. So even a few beers every once in a while really knocks your immune system down and makes it hard to tour."

—Karen Bliss



## Nothing to Fear

**E**very legitimate performer knows that stage fright kills; it can reduce a touted prodigy into a blubbing lump of angst. So how should you deal with it?

One of *Alana Davls'* very first gigs was at last summer's Lilith Tour, but her subsequent industry showcases were far more nerve-wracking. "I started sitting down and the label people wanted to see me standing, so when the show started my legs locked and I kept banging into the mic stand. I didn't mess up lyrics, but it was almost impossible not to bust out crying." She dealt with the awkwardness by thinking about her lyrics and pouring herself into them. "That way I didn't worry about doing anything but what was right for the song," she says.

"The thing about stage fright isn't about the act of performing," says *Matthew Ryan*. "Stage fright is the fear of making an ass of yourself." Ryan's method for ass-prevention? "I remind myself why I'm here, why I got here, and how I got here," he says. "I believe in myself, so I don't want to let myself down. And I'm wasting my time up there if I'm letting it get to me. You can't allow yourself to undermine yourself. I think that's what stage fright ultimately is: It's trying to find someone to blame for possible failure."

—Michael Gelfand

William Waitzman

# private lesson

**T**alking about "techno" in respectful terms can often prove problematic for "traditionalists," i.e., stodgy throwbacks who wouldn't so much as spit on a drum machine. But in much the same way, some traditionalists found it just as difficult back in 1965 when Bob Dylan strapped on an electric guitar at the Newport Folk Festival and shocked a generation of Luddite hipsters.

Dylan's performance set a precedent, letting generations from there on out know that you can run but you cannot hide from change. Still, many classic rock aficionados have ignored or tried to suppress techno's unorthodox bleeps, bombastic distorto-beats, and gurgling samples for years, but they've ultimately failed. The assault is just about over, the battle all but lost. Techno is here, and when it comes knocking on your door—you know, the one with a ratty poster of Steppenwolf on it—it's very likely that  $\mu$ Ziq, a.k.a. Mike Paradinas, will be one of those leading you out to your conversion.

Paradinas' latest record, *Lunatic Harness* (Astralwerks), is insidiously rock-friendly. His evolving penchant for melody ("Midwinter Log") rails against the stereotypical industrial monotone, and his indulgent use of reverberant synth pads ("Mushroom Compost") and tasty drum samples ("Lunatic Harness") is notably musical. But what makes Paradinas' music so initially repulsive—and subsequently attractive—to classic rockers is the subversiveness of his breakneck beats; what at first sounds like a mindless hail from a Gatling gun turns out to be a painstakingly crafted, hyperkinetic drum aesthetic. The beats may sound synthetic and physically improbable from a playing perspective, but once you've absorbed a song like "Approaching Menace," you come to understand the deeply internalized sense of condensed time that drives Paradinas to throw so much rhythmic information into a song whose tempo hovers in the 200 bpm zone. Think of an angry Mitch Mitchell munching on a mouthful of uppers and you'll be in the right neighborhood.

The frenzy started back when Paradinas was nine years old and got his skinny little fingers all over the buttons of the beat box that came in his inexpensive Italian-made Bon Tempi organ. "It had stuff like 'bossa nova' and 'slow rock' beats, but you could press them all at the same time and this weird beat would come out," he says. "So I used to do that. I knew what I wanted to do." When he was fourteen, Paradinas graduated to his first real rig, a Korg Poly 800 synth and a Boss DR-100 drum machine, and now, at age 25, his arsenal has grown larger and far more complicated as his sonic ambitions have expanded. (Although he longs to scale down his gear, Paradinas' current equipment list includes an Atari 1040STE, a Yamaha DX-11, a Clavia Nord Lead 2 keyboard, an E-mu ESI 32 sampler, a Casio FZ-1 sampler [a personal favorite], an Akai MPC3000 sampling drum machine, a Roland D-50 keyboard, a Yamaha RY30 drum machine, a Fostex 280 four-track home studio, a Soundcraft Spirit Folio 12-track mixer, an ART LTX reverb unit, a Boss SE-70 Super multieffects processor, and enough patch cords and MIDI cables to strangle a herd of wildebeests.)

Paradinas has a rather roundabout approach to songwriting. Instead of diving in with distinct ideas for a song's structure already formed, he seeks inspiration by experimenting with timbres and samples before he creates the melodies, and only upon completing the melody does he begin injecting his hallmark fusillade of beats and start the laborious process of making it all work together. "I like not to have a preconceived idea about what it's going to sound like," he explains. "I learned very

early on that if I had an idea for a track and I tried to do it, it never turned out as well as when I didn't have an idea. That's the way it works.

"If you write a melody and have to spend three hours writing a beat, it's a waste of time," he continues. "It's better if you've already gotten what you wanted ahead of time. That's why I like to load everything else in so that when I want to get a rhythm going there's something already there, because that's what takes the time—it can take three hours to load a break in and chop it up."

What gives the beats their realism is Paradinas' uncan-

## the Beat

by michael gelfand



ny ability to synthesize a drummer's sensibility with a utilitarian perspective on technological innovation. He starts by culling samples from various sources, using extreme prejudice during the selection process. "You want to sample a

drum kit from a break in a record, instead of sampling separate bass drum, snare, cymbals, and so on. If you do that, you don't get the sound of a kit—that's the sound of separate drums playing together, which isn't what a drum kit sounds like," he says. "You get resonances from a kit. You'll hear cymbals in a drum

sound, and all kinds of other ambient sounds. That's the reason for sampling breaks, and then you use them in whatever order you want."

Real drum kits being the basis of his rhythms, Paradinas looks to add to their acoustic dynamic by

introducing harsher sounds into the sampled mix. For instance, he'll grab a rap drum sound from an Alesis SR-16 drum machine, distort and re-EQ it, and mix it in with the sampled "breaks" that he'll sporadically pitch according to his creative whimsy. Or he'll incorporate a distorted, pitched-down tom sound for use as his kick drum. Instead of settling on an imitative sound, he takes what he needs from what he wants, transforms it into something he can use, and discards the rest.

Once he's decided on the sounds, it all comes down to arrangement—his beat methodology—which is a job in and of itself. Using Steinberg's Cubase software for step-editing, Paradinas tries to think as a drummer who's playing, but instead of an honest portrayal of real drums, he often opts for drum sounds that fade out unnaturally. "I want for there to be spaces in between each drum beat, so I program every single drum beat by putting little dots on the screen. And all of the little beats are of different lengths and pitches. I'll do lots of things with it," he explains, "like sample a break normally and chop it up, then sample a break while using effects, like a flange, and then sample a break and time-stretch it [by increasing the pitch]."

It's almost like programming via Morse code, he says, but far more melodic than based on graphics or mathematical equations for rhythm. Slowing the tempo of "Approaching Menace" down to 30 bpm, one gets the impression that there are impenetrable walls preventing the mish-mash of loops from ever coalescing, but as Paradinas slowly brings the tempo up to speed through standard tempos and back on up to his standard rapid-fire rate, you begin to hear how smoothly the snare rolls, bongo triplets, and assorted distorted toms mix in with the augmented shreds of James Brown's "Funky Drummer."

But is this what's conventionally referred to as music? Ultimately, it's for each of us to decide for ourselves if we can accept Paradinas' evolutionary hybridization of rhythm. To my ears, it works—musically and logically—but his passive-aggressive style of techno may leave you

wondering where the music starts and the science ends. "Through the Fifties, Sixties, and

### ***The rhythmic hijinks of a techno king***

Seventies, people tried to create what electronic instruments might sound like, and we seem to be going back to how they thought we would sound back then," he says. "It's almost nostalgic, which is kind of ironic because no one knows the difference between the past, present, or future anymore. Just listen—listen to what's going on." Indeed.

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# Bernie Taupin's Words of Wisdom

**Elton John's lyricist finds musical meaning in words.**

by paul zollo

**A**s Elton John's lyricist for three decades, Bernie Taupin is half of one of Britain's most successful songwriting teams. Yet his passion is rooted in all things American: He lives the life of a working cowboy on his ranch near Santa Barbara, and even when he comes to his Hollywood office to tend to business, he stays surrounded by immense posters of *The Wild Bunch* and other images of the Old West. With his partner's interest in the wild prairie waning since the golden days of *Tumbleweed Connection*, Taupin has created a new outlet for such songs: his own band Farm Dogs, with whom he recorded the gloriously acoustic *Last Stand in Open*

Country and who are at work on the follow-up.

Aside from the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his rewrite of "Candle in the Wind," Taupin now focuses only on neutral content when collaborating with Elton. "I write songs about desert nights and horses and guns because I'm around them," he says, laughing. "That's what I do. I spend most of my life on a horse. Elton doesn't. He spends most of his life in designer clothes."

*Could a Farm Dogs song ever work for Elton, or vice-versa?*

Oh, no. I had to put myself in a whole different frame of mind because when I work

with Elton—and I credit him for his honesty—he likes the material to be ambiguous. No "he" or "she." The references are important to him. He wants people to believe that what he is singing about is true, that it's honest. So the subject matter is different, and when I come back and write for Farm Dogs, I get gritty and write about things that I want to write about.

*So many of your classic songs with Elton told stories of a sort.*

Yeah, but times change. Elton could never make a *Tumbleweed Connection* now, because he wouldn't want to; he wouldn't feel honest doing it, because his personality has developed into something larger than life. In a way, Elton is a lot more advanced than I am; I'm a bit more retro. He's very into what's going on in England, and that doesn't interest me. I can't relate to bands singing about bus shelters in Newcastle.

*Was Elton more open to a variety of subjects in the past?*

Well, in the past we were finding our way. That's why people love all that old stuff—because it was evocative, and it covered every musical source. He's developed his style, he's developed his personality, he's developed his character. And his music reflects the character he is now.

*Do you write down all of your ideas as they occur?*

Oh, yeah. I have to. If I get too drunk, I'll forget them. I've been in horrible situations where I've not been in the vicinity of paper and pen as I've come up with several lines strung together. I'll have to drive along and repeat them until I can get somewhere



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where I can write it down.

*Any specific examples?*

I came up with the first verse of "Rocket Man" like that. It was in my head as I was driving to my parents' house in England many years ago. I drove like crazy down these backroads, trying to get there in time to remember it, and I rushed in the door to write it down. I had the whole opening bit: "She packed my bags last night, pre-flight. Zero hour, nine a.m. And I'm gonna be high as a kite by then." That all came to me at once.

*Are lyric and music equally important?*

They should be, although I don't necessarily think that's always true. The melody, more than the words, should sell the song. If you've got them both, of course, it's even better.

*Can a song be great even without a great title and lyric?*

I think so. The perfect example is that Eric Clapton song, "Change the World." What sold that song, I believe, is production. And it had a good melody. But don't listen to the lyric—it's *appalling* [laughs]. There are some rhymes in there that are really awful.

*When writing lyrics, do you work from titles?*

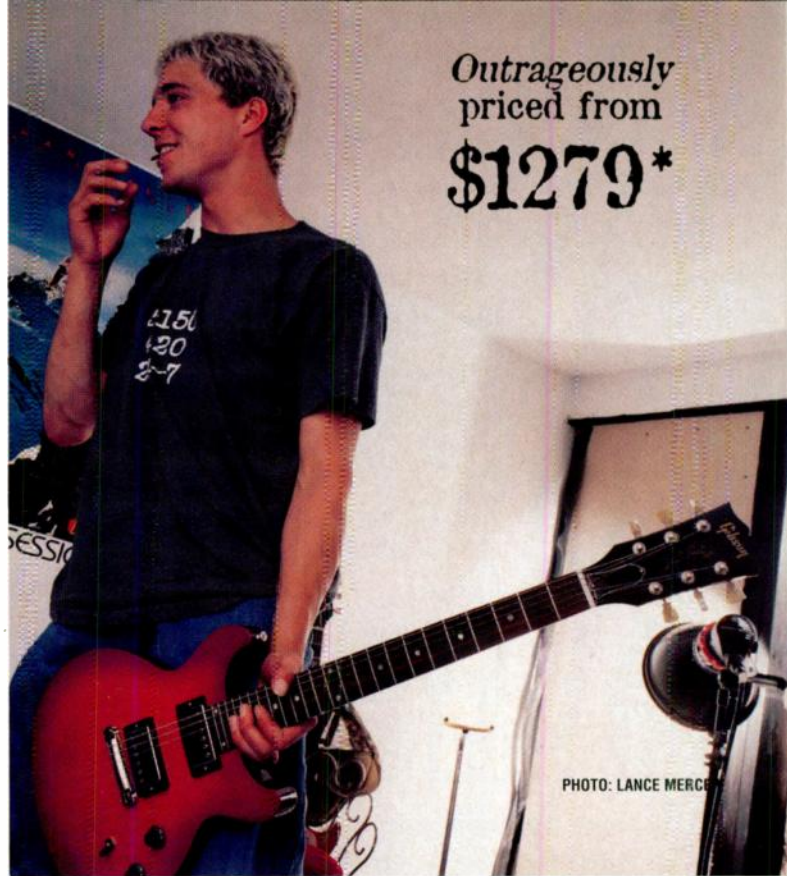
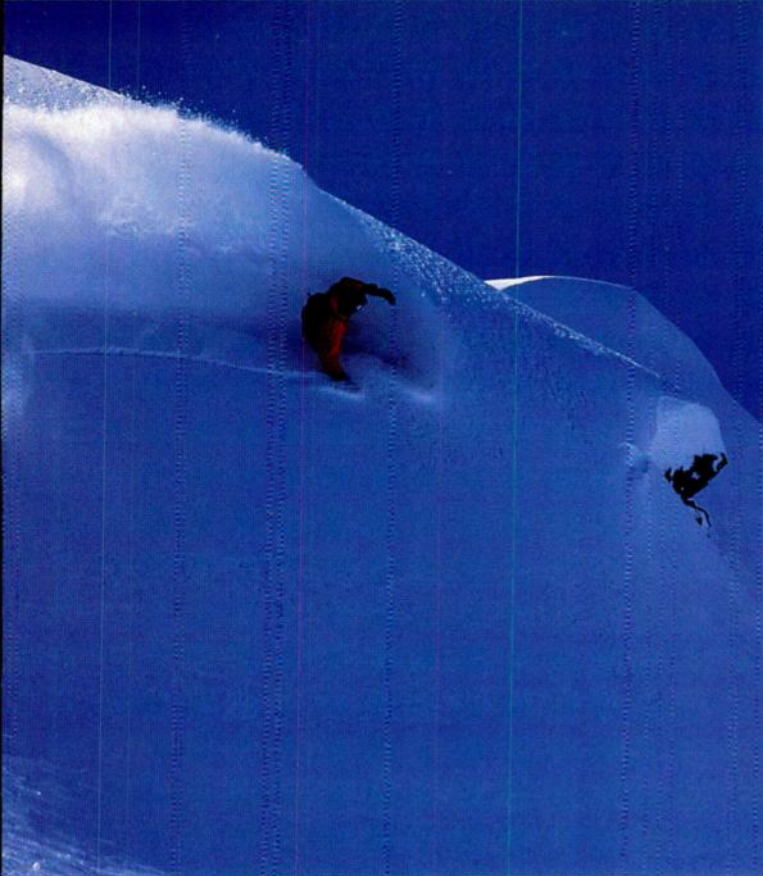
Yes, very often. I have my word processor, a writing pad, my guitar, and hopefully a title. I love titles, actually. They've always fascinated me. Whenever I'm in my car and an idea [for a title] occurs to me, I'll talk it into my tape recorder. Once I've got it, I'll put it on the top of a piece of paper, and I'll start at the beginning, working my way down. Sometimes I'll write the verses first and then come back to write the chorus. I never write the chorus first. It's almost like writing a story; the story comes alive as I write.

*Do you always grasp the full meaning of a song as you're doing the words?*

In the old days I didn't really think at all about what I was writing. It used to just fall into place. That's why some of that early stuff is so esoteric. Some of it, I haven't got a clue what it means, like "Take Me to the Pilot." I haven't the foggiest idea of what that song is about.

*How does it feel to have written so many standards with Elton?*

I'm very proud of my songs, *fiercely* proud of our catalog and what we've done. I think it's pretty remarkable that two people have been writing consistently well together for thirty years. That's over half my life. And we're still doing it prolifically, still writing great songs. ♪



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Mike Ranquet is a pro at having fun. For eight months of the year he can be found chasing winter storms across America, like a surfer chases waves. At times he'll follow the same storm for several days as it dumps snow and ice on the most challenging mountains in the country.

## Take a Free Ride

Mike and his friends call their unique sport "free riding." They belong to a small group of pro snowboarders that ride in front of cameras instead of crowds. Mike spends his days making snowboarding films and doing magazine photo shoots at the greatest ski areas in America.

## After Hours Jam

Over the past few years, Mike has developed a reputation as a "guitar fiend" among his fellow athletes. When he gets to a ski resort, his snowboarding friends will often have amps and P.A. gear set up, ready for an after hours jam. Whenever this happens, Mike reaches for his Gibson Les Paul DC Studio.

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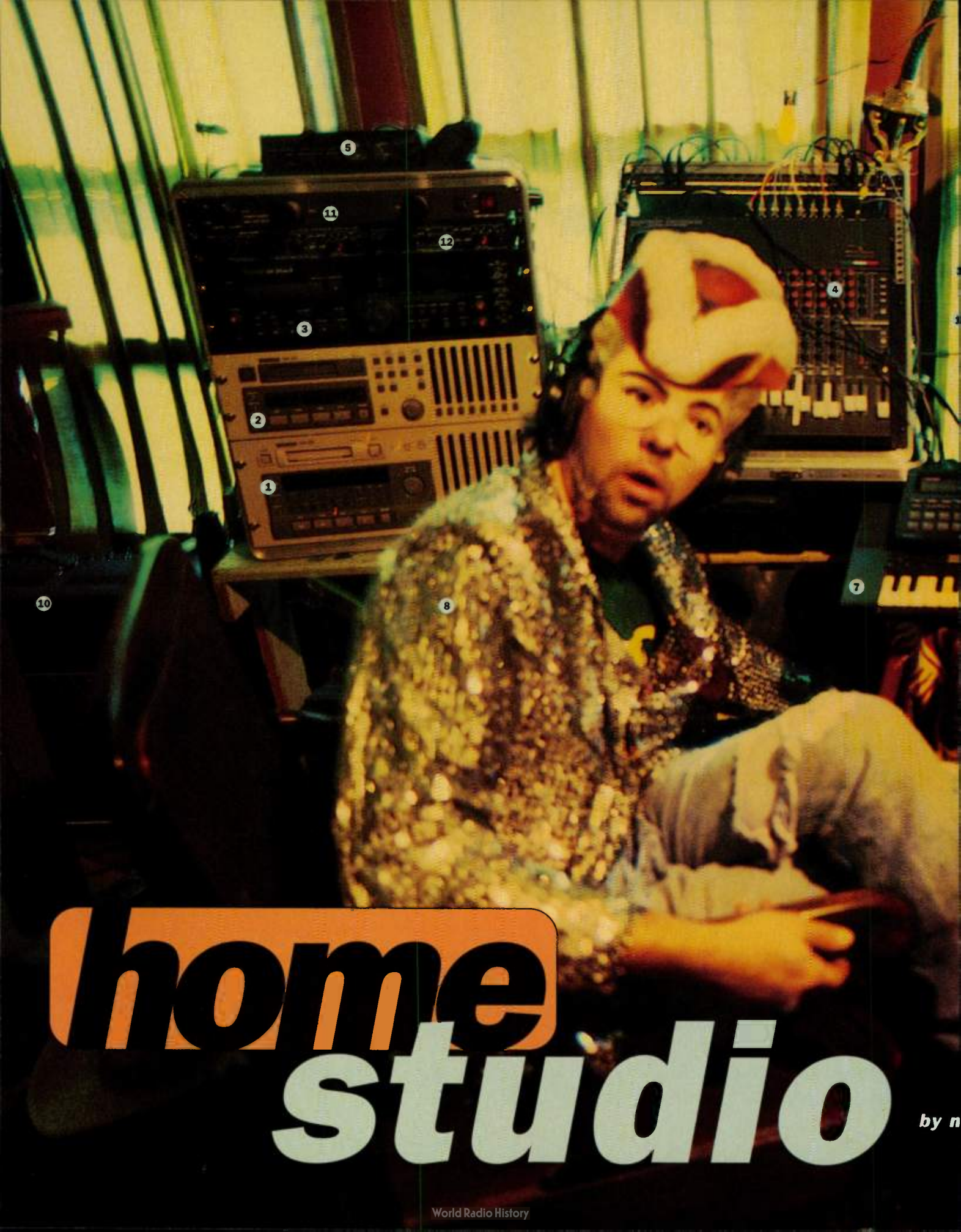
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# home studio

by n



Sparklehorse's

# Mark Linkous

**A** word of advice to anyone visiting Mark Linkous' house for the first time: Watch out for the horses. There are two of them in the field out back, and they don't always keep to themselves. Recently, when *Musician* was chatting with Linkous on the phone to get a progress report on his band Sparklehorse's second album, he interrupted his own sentence to observe laconically, "Oh, one of my horses is coming in." Right into the house? "Yeah." Might that not present a problem? Linkous considered the question for a moment, then answered, "No, as long as he doesn't eat my breakfast."

Between the horses, three dogs, and two cats, it's amazing that Mark gets much work done. Yet work he does, principally in the home studio he's set up in the second-story double bedroom of his rented farmhouse in rural Virginia. Four tracks on Sparklehorse's *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot* (Capitol), were recorded in this room, which Linkous has dubbed Static King. This time around, Linkous wants to do the whole album here; at press time, he's about half done, and so far he's succeeded in his aim.

The four homebrewed tracks on *Vivadixie* were recorded on a TASCAM Portastudio 688 eight-track cassette machine that Linkous had borrowed from Cracker's David Lowery. But last year, with the help of some advance money from his record company, Linkous purchased a **TASCAM DA-88** and **DA-38**, giving him a total of 16 digital tracks to work with. He also acquired a **TASCAM MT-30 MkII** DAT machine for mixdown purposes, and a **Mackie CR 1604** console.

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HOME STUDIO PRESENTED BY  
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c randall photographs by lisa pearl

Among Static King's other tape machines are a **Marantz** portable cassette deck **5**, which is used principally for field recordings; these often end up in the **Akai S900** sampler **6** for further manipulation. A recent country fair gave Mark plenty of sampling fodder: "They had a bunch of old steam-powered tractors and farm machinery there. I recorded them on the Marantz, then brought the tape home, sampled it, and used the sounds to

build percussion tracks."

Linkous' studio is also home to several relatively familiar keyboards, including a **Casio SK-1** (not shown) and a **Yamaha PortaSound PSS-480** **7**, which runs a **Roland Dr. Synth** module **8**, and an ancient **Casio** **9** he bought at a thrift shop for fifty cents.

Far more exotic is an ancient **Gibson Vanguard** guitar amp (not shown), with a belt-driven echo unit mounted on the back. "That

amp belonged to a preacher; I got it at an auction that a guy had in his trailer. The echo unit's called the Adineko Memory System, made by a company called Tel-Ray Electronics. You can put your finger on the wheel and manually slow down the echo—sounds *beautiful*. I told a buddy at a music store about it, and he'd heard of them, and he told me that I should never open up this round metal canister that's attached to it because there's some sort of toxic material inside." Apparently, good tone can literally be deadly.

Static King's other amps are more commonplace: a new purple **Vox AC30** **10**, two Sixties **Ampegs**—a **Reverberocket** and a **Gemini IV**—a **Sears Silvertone 2x12**, and a **Boss Mascot MA-1**, used mainly for vocals. Linkous' guitars, which also didn't make it into our photo, include a 1960 **Gibson ES 330**, a late-Seventies **ES 335**, and a **Fender Squier Strat**. His bass is also a **Fender Squier**, while for acoustic guitar tracks he switches to a Forties **Gibson Southerner**. Rounding out the guitar gear are a **Dunlop RotoVibe** and **Boss PN-2 Tremolo/Pan, Turbo Overdrive**, and **Analog Delay** pedals; another recent acquisition is a **DOD VoFex** vocal effects processor. For percussives, Linkous generally makes do with an **Alesis SR-16** drum machine, but at the moment, sets of **Gretsch** acoustic and **Roland** electronic drums occupy the studio floor for the ongoing album sessions.

The rest of Linkous' studio setup is fairly basic. Outboard gear consists of a **Furman PL-8** power conditioner **11**, three **Alesis** units—a **3630** compressor **12**, a **QuadraVerb** **13**, and a **MidiVerb** **14**—along with an **ADA Ampulator** **15**. A **Hafler Transnova P-3000** **16** is the power amp of choice, a set of **Yamaha NS-10Ms** **17** serve as the main monitors, and a **TL Audio Vi1** eight-channel tube interface **18** keeps the tracks sounding warm. "I think it's only intended to be used for tracking, but I like to use it twice, to sort of squash things." The Static King mic collection includes two **Shure SM57s**, an **Audix OM-1**, and an **AKG C414**, along with countless "shitty mics," found at various gun shows, trailer-park auctions, and landfills.

And the violin **19**? It's an old German instrument," Linkous deadpans. "I bought it for \$20 out of the trunk of a crack dealer's car. In a blizzard. Really!"

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# The Interview

# The Wallflowers

## Underrated. On Tour & on Trial

Jakob Dylan may be throwing up in the dressing room, but relatively speaking, everything else at Denver's Red Rocks Amphitheater is fine. There's a warm breeze blowing, a perfect starlit sky, and there's a packed house, so just because Dylan—the leader of the Wallflowers, a virtual poster boy for VH1, and the oft-quested son of perhaps this century's most important songwriter—is puking his guts out in the dressing room shouldn't worry anyone.

Everyone knows that rock & roll stardom is inextricably tied to blowing chunks. The show must go on. • You can't blame Dylan for hurting. The Wallflowers have played over 200 shows during a relentless 18-month tour, a tour that's seen them crisscross the U.S. and much of Europe in support of *Bringing Down The Horse* (Interscope), their multi-platinum sophomore release. But that can't be bad, right? It's not.

By Michael Gelfand Photographs by Cynthia Levine

They're grateful that so many people want to see them play because there was a time not so long ago that no one cared, so you won't hear the Wallflowers openly complaining. But if you privately ask any one of them how they feel about touring, they'll all give you the same exasperated look and tell you the same story about how they don't remember what it feels like to sleep in their own bed at home.

Self-deprecating sob stories aside, the Wallflowers have been hitting the road hard, just like their label wants them to do. And they're paying the price for their obedient work ethic; the entire band is rapidly losing



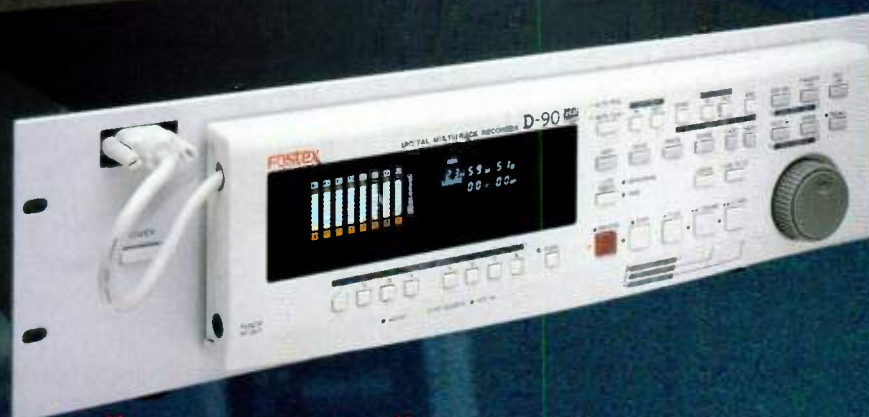
a long battle against exhaustion and persistent colds. So it comes as no surprise when the staff doctor says that Dylan needs a few

band they rocked even though I was sure they wouldn't. Call it pessimism, call it envy, but some part of me expected them to

minutes alone with an oxygen tank—he's suffering from altitude sickness. But after a few minutes, Dylan's nausea subsides, which is a good thing, because 10,000 screaming teens can get pretty obnoxious.

I, on the other hand, wasn't doing much screaming. I spent much of the flight from New York to Denver bracing myself for imminent disappointment, fearing that the Wallflowers would be mediocre and that I'd have to tell the

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bomb, proving once and for all that popularly successful bands are shallow and can't really play. I was wrong.

The fact that Dylan wiped away the puke and went out to perform impressed me, but what won me over was the band's talent. These guys are players, and their success is no accident. The Wallflowers play whatever the songs need. Nothing more, nothing less. Guitarist Michael Ward attacks his guitar with tasteful authority, bassist Greg Richling's purposeful bass lines meld seamlessly with Mario Calire's propulsive drumming, and keyboardist Rami Jaffee's gurgling B-3 organ offers a perfect counterpoint to Dylan's rhythmic strumming and simple vocal melodies. Function before form. Pure and simple.

The Wallflowers are not the most experimental or chic band around, but as I found out over a 24-hour period, they have a lot to offer as a band. They may be on the mountaintop now, but they've struggled through years of ill-attended gigs, signed a deal only to part with their label (Virgin)

after their first record flopped, and lost band members along the way through attrition before rebounding with a new record deal and an album that's sold through the roof. They made it work. They're about talent, faith, perseverance, and integrity. This is not your typical son-of-a-famous-guy with a band of hired guns—no, the Wallflowers are a cohesive unit of skilled musicians whose music is full of a sincerity (live, on record, and in principle) that's undeniable. Whether you like them is irrelevant. Respecting them is the key, and if you don't, you should.

*Bringing Down The Horse is a huge success, but by industry standards, your first record, The Wallflowers, was a dud. What did you do differently?*

**Dylan:** I think we did okay on the first record. We were all 21 years old, and it was done live in the studio. That's the kind of record you should make at that point. We didn't have too much record company involvement; they were supportive of us in

the beginning, but nobody got in our faces and told us how we had to make the record. They let us do it.

A lot of people make records and they let everybody get involved and they compromise and don't sell anyway, and then they're completely miserable. We never had that kind of pressure. We got to make the record we wanted to make.

While I'm proud of that record, it never had a whole lot of potential. I never really thought about selling the record. I was just excited to be in a group that could make a record and go on tour. Radio and MTV never even crossed my mind until everybody started wondering why we weren't on the radio or MTV, and I was like, 'Well, I didn't know we were supposed to be.'

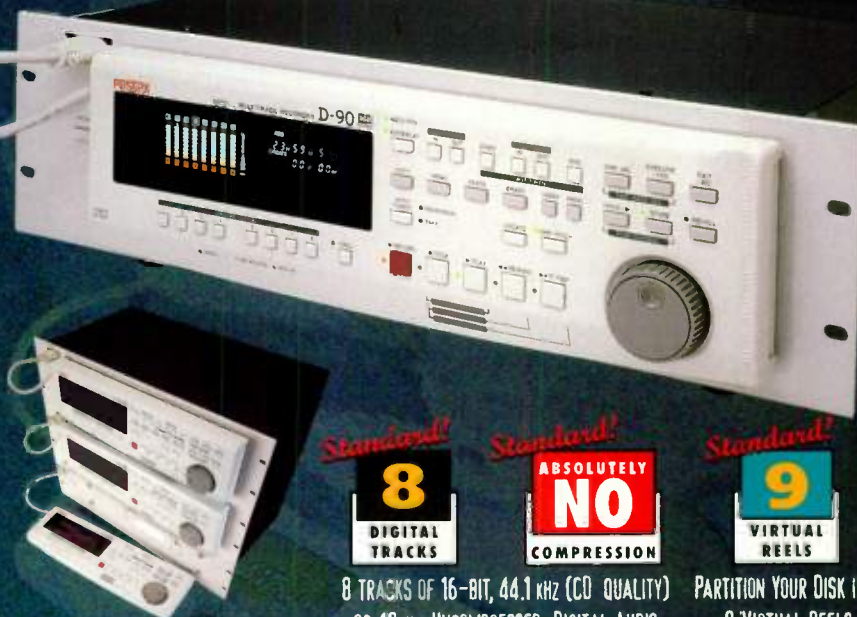
In between those records, we lost our record deal and we had a lot of problems within the group. Basically, the stakes got very high. I don't complain about it, but because of who I was, myself being in the group there was a lot of...

*Who you were?*

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He also admitted he was a  
little embarrassed to tell us something else.

When he brought his Taylor home that first night,  
he kissed it before he put it in the case.

Kissed it twice, in fact.

That's the thing about friends. Some of them  
are friends, right from the beginning.



Dylan: Yeah, you know . . . my family relations. Because of that, it was a unique situation. I was who I was, without a record deal, dropped after one record—not two like most people—and with a reputation for being very difficult. And my group was falling apart for the same reasons that most of them do when you put them together at twenty years old.

Most groups are always changing while they're starting out because you gotta learn who you want to be in a group with, and you gotta learn who's good. After a while

that becomes clear. And we were having a lot of problems within the group. I decided that I really wanted to keep doing this, but I was dug down into a hole, with a long way to go up. And the stakes were going to be very high. That helped solidify the group and it helped edge out people who weren't as serious as other ones.

But I knew we were never that good as a group. At most, I thought maybe we had some character. That's okay when you're a certain age, but when you're in your mid to late twenties, charming is no longer funny.

It's not charming to screw up at shows and have a whole song fall apart on stage; it's embarrassing and you just shouldn't do it. You should go and get a different job or something. So I had to really focus on my thing, and learn to work a lot harder. And I had to ask myself if I was really willing to do it. I knew it was going to be hard and I knew it wasn't going to be okay to be the age I am now and not be a quality of some kind. I mean, Bruce Springsteen made *Born to Run* when he was 26 years old. . .

So I realized the stakes were high, and I wasn't willing to take anybody's faults anymore. If there was someone in the group who wasn't up to the par of the whole band, I just couldn't fight for them anymore. I took it very seriously because I knew this was an important record for me as far as whether people were going to be willing to hear my bands after that. If this record had done as poorly—commercially speaking—as the first one, I don't think anybody was really going to give me another chance.

*So did you purposely change the way the band worked?*

Dylan: We went through a lot of changes in between the records, and at times I didn't really feel like we had a group. There were four of us, but it seemed to always be rotating, and it did leave me feeling a little bit alone in the group. But I never wanted to be the only songwriter in the group. Now, Michael writes, and Rami started writing music. I don't always want to be the focus of the group. I know that I can do it, but I think the band has more to offer as a full group.

*So up to this point you've written the songs. Has it been the kind of situation where you've had to say to the other guys, "Don't play that. Could you try this?"*

Dylan: Yeah. That's a normal position for the songwriter, because when I write something I hear the whole song already. I hear very vaguely what I want. I know that I don't want to hear this [*taps hands in shuffle beat*] as opposed to this [*plays funkier beat on table*]. I'll hear the basic drum beat. I'll hear if I want Greg to play sixteenth-notes or eighth-notes. I'll give everybody basic blueprints. I'll suggest to Mike that he might try playing slide, and



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then he writes his slide part; I only gave him the suggestion of playing the slide. The main reason I do that is I like what they write, I like what they play, and I think it would be hell and pointless to be in a band

where you had some guy telling you, "I wrote your bass line for you. Here it is." No matter how cool or popular your group is, it's totally belittling and it would give those guys no output. I obviously get

a lot because I write the songs, so if these guys didn't get to at least do their jobs, which is why they're in a group to begin with and the reason they fell in love with playing music, it's pointless for everybody.

*Is this your band, are you just a member of the band, or is there something that we're missing?*

Dylan: It feels like a real band, and I think it is, but when you have a situation where there's a guy who's always written the songs, the only guy who's been in the group the whole time, who stands at the center microphone . . . because from the beginning of the group I'm the only one who's really still there—except for Rami, who joined right at the tail end of the original group—I've been the one thing that's been very consistent within the group, meaning the vision of the group and the ideas of the group, as well as the obvious meaning of the songs. This group has been playing for a while now and it finally feels like a real group. I think because of the role I've always had in this group, the guys trust me with a lot of stuff, which is frankly boring and nobody would want to be a part of if they didn't have to be. You know, a lot of stuff you have to deal with on a day-to-day basis that they don't always hear about because somebody's got to do it.

*Like what?*

Dylan: Just menial business stuff.

*You mean like money stuff?*

Dylan: No. Not really money stuff. Just decisions. Should we do an interview for *Musician* magazine? They'll [management] come to me first, and I'll think about it. My immediate answer would be, 'I'm going to check with the guys, see what everybody wants to do.' I think that they trust me with a lot of that stuff. Where I think it's a creative decision or an important decision, then they're always involved.

*That sounds pretty democratic, but at least from a media perspective, it appears as though this is your [Dylan's] band. Is that accurate?*

Ward: Sometimes it's a drag that the focus is on one guy, you know, but most of time, on a day-to-day basis, it's just a relief to us. I think that we can go and get on

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with our lives, you know what I mean? I wouldn't want to necessarily be in Jakob's position.

**Calire:** He [Dylan] has obvious advantages to being the songwriter, but there's a whole other side of it, which is more work, less privacy, and so I'm really happy with my role. I can walk around and most of the time people don't bother me or recognize me. But if you go with Jake, everybody hounds him. That's just the way it is. That's the flip side to success.

**Ward:** And we get enough attention to satiate our individual needs, so at the same time, it's fine.

**Calire:** It doesn't create any tension in the band or anything like that. We all understand our roles and I'm glad that I'm in a band with somebody that has accepted that role.

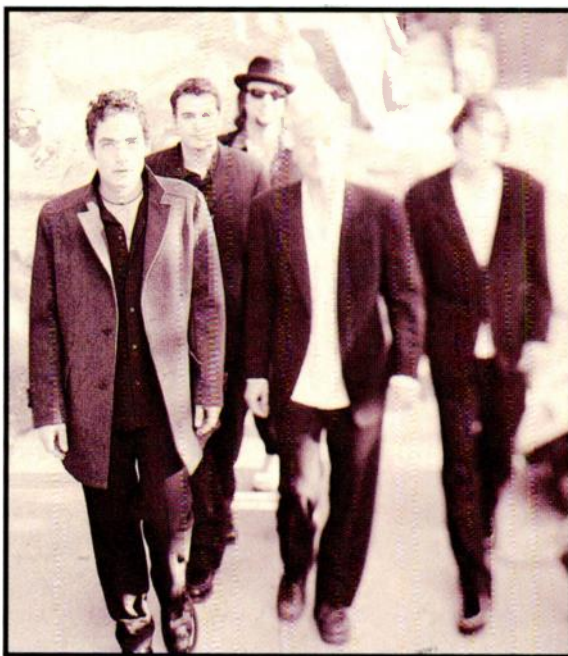
*So what's your role?*

**Ward:** Obviously we're up there to support the song and the singer, but also we've got our own little statements to make

and personality and all that shit, so at this point it's really about Jake's songs. Jake and I have done some writing together, and I hope that it's going to get a little more into a band collaboration thing. I mean, Jake's a great songwriter, and he's got success now with his songs. And because we're getting more established as a band, hopefully we'll be able to start doing more of the band thing. That's what's going to be interesting, to see how it all shapes up. I'm hoping we can strike a fine balance.

*In its current form, this band has barely been together for two years. How have you grown?*

**Richling:** This band basically learned to play together on the road over the last year and a half, and that feels good. It feels like a



band. We were going through a lot of changes during the making of the album, which is the way things go, but it feels good to have the same group of people working together for a long time; you sort of read each other better. You always hope that happens.

*That's kind of an opposite way of what people think is going to happen, that you're going to be this band that's going to start out together and grow with each other. Instead, you guys came in separately and filled in the spaces and made it work. Did it take a different mentality to do that?*

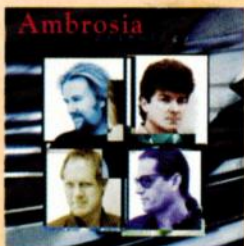
**Jaffee:** I see what you mean, and yeah, you're right—bands usually start and just turn into nothing, and now we're turning into something. I think it's going to continue. It feels great, because it's just the evolution of a band that had to happen. Fate has worked out perfectly, and we're really focused and psyched to do the next record.

*So what do you do if the next record bombs?*

**Dylan:** It's entirely possible. Ultimately, I don't think it's about the records. We've been on the road for a year and a half, and I think that it's always been more of a goal of mine to put together a good show that people will come back to see. If you look through all pop music, it's never really been about the records. There've obviously been amazing records, but those records were

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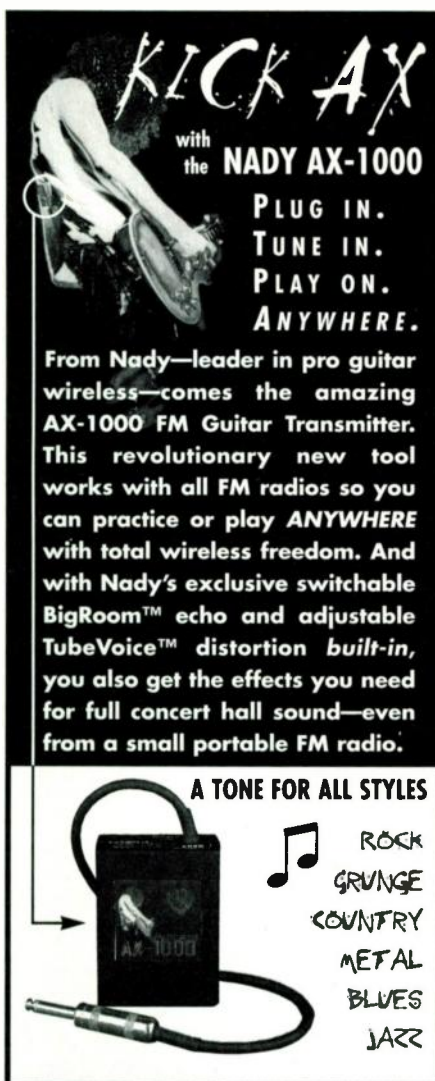
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originally [intended as] promotion for those tours. It's kind of unfortunate that there's so much stock put into the records now. If our next record flops . . . I don't know. I guess it depends on what the standards of success are.

*You guys are a big act unto yourself now, but I'm wondering if you've learned anything from the Counting Crows while touring with them?*

**Ward:** I personally think they're really good at what they do, and I didn't know what to really expect. Adam [Duritz] and the rest of the band know how to rise to a certain level and they're not afraid of being a little bit animated and working that 10,000-person venue, whereas we're a little more understated. Jake's not really huge and over the top onstage. He's actually opened up a lot over the last couple of years. He was kind of quiet and withdrawn, but he's gotten really good at dealing with the crowd and everything in a nat-

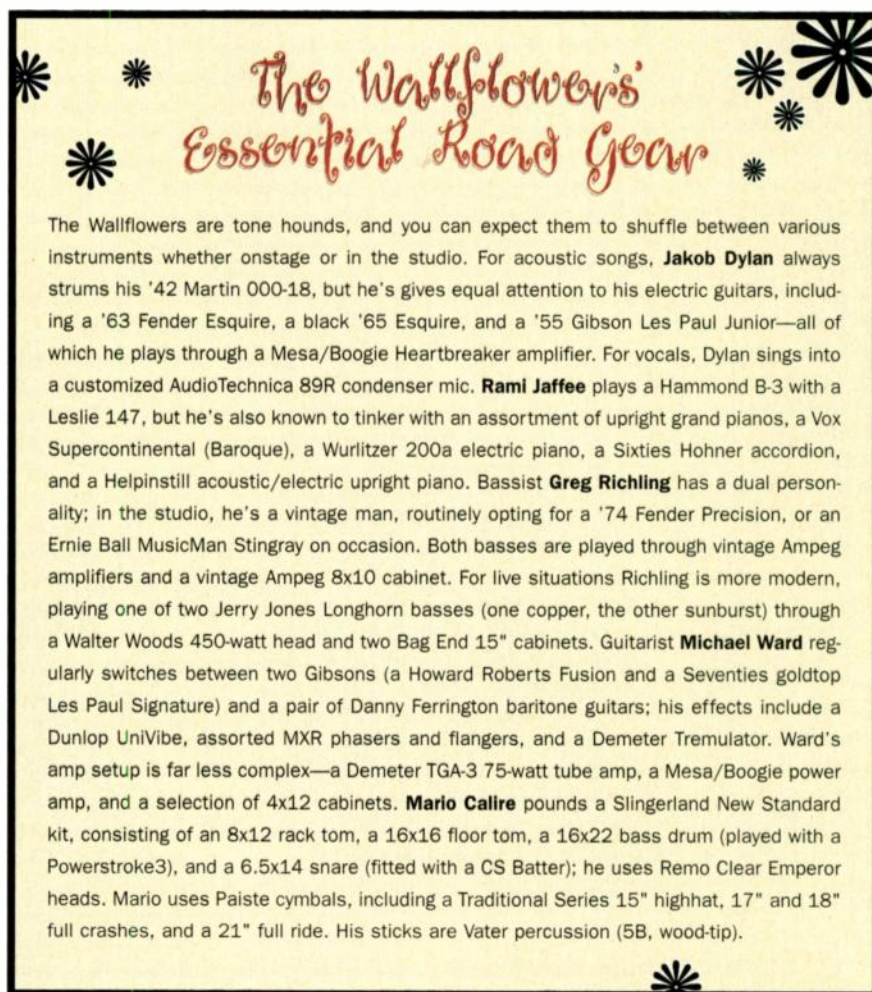
ural kind of way. I mean, I think we've learned that it's okay to go out to go out and play at a huge arena and make a big gesture and be a little animated and not feel like we're really cheesy.

*Like you're a dope . . .*

**Ward:** Yeah, like grunge rockers of '96 would have my head on a platter. It's entertainment, and if you feel good and you feel like doing shit like that, then throw a drum stick into the crowd, you know, throw a guitar pick, stand on the monitor, do whatever . . . you don't need to be afraid of that kind of thing.

*Was there a moment when you realized that the Wallflowers had made it, that you were going to stick?*

**Dylan:** I remember touring behind this record and playing to 60 people, then 100, and then 200. Then I remember our road manager telling me we'd sold out a certain venue. I asked how many people, and he



## The Wallflowers's Essential Road Gear

The Wallflowers are tone hounds, and you can expect them to shuffle between various instruments whether onstage or in the studio. For acoustic songs, **Jakob Dylan** always strums his '42 Martin 000-18, but he's gives equal attention to his electric guitars, including a '63 Fender Esquire, a black '65 Esquire, and a '55 Gibson Les Paul Junior—all of which he plays through a Mesa/Boogie Heartbreaker amplifier. For vocals, Dylan sings into a customized AudioTechnica 89R condenser mic. **Rami Jaffee** plays a Hammond B-3 with a Leslie 147, but he's also known to tinker with an assortment of upright grand pianos, a Vox Supercontinental (Baroque), a Wurlitzer 200a electric piano, a Sixties Hohner accordion, and a Helpinstill acoustic/electric upright piano. Bassist **Greg Richling** has a dual personality; in the studio, he's a vintage man, routinely opting for a '74 Fender Precision, or an Ernie Ball MusicMan Stingray on occasion. Both basses are played through vintage Ampeg amplifiers and a vintage Ampeg 8x10 cabinet. For live situations Richling is more modern, playing one of two Jerry Jones Longhorn basses (one copper, the other sunburst) through a Walter Woods 450-watt head and two Bag End 15" cabinets. Guitarist **Michael Ward** regularly switches between two Gibsons (a Howard Roberts Fusion and a Seventies goldtop Les Paul Signature) and a pair of Danny Ferrington baritone guitars; his effects include a Dunlop UniVibe, assorted MXR phasers and flangers, and a Demeter Tremulator. Ward's amp setup is far less complex—a Demeter TGA-3 75-watt tube amp, a Mesa/Boogie power amp, and a selection of 4x12 cabinets. **Mario Calire** pounds a Slingerland New Standard kit, consisting of an 8x12 rack tom, a 16x16 floor tom, a 16x22 bass drum (played with a Powerstroke3), and a 6.5x14 snare (fitted with a CS Batter); he uses Remo Clear Emperor heads. Mario uses Paiste cymbals, including a Traditional Series 15" highhat, 17" and 18" full crashes, and a 21" full ride. His sticks are Vater percussion (5B, wood-tip).

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told me something like 4,000. We've been out here a long time, too, and we've been here [Denver] four times now, so I've always related it to the actual shows. I think as far as how many times you get played on MTV or how many times you're on the radio, that stuff's not reality when you're living on a bus with the same guys for a year and a half. When you roll into those towns and you see a lot of people, that means a lot more. That shows you more about how things are going.

*Is there a lesson to be learned from this? Is this perseverance?*

**Dylan:** It's a lot of things. Our record doing well this year doesn't give me the attitude of, "Geez, we really *are* an amazing group." All any band can really do is their job. That means you write the songs, you rehearse them, show up for gigs, and entertain however you want to entertain. I can deal with all the other bullshit that goes along with it, like what interviews do you do. But the main thing is you have to show



up and do the work. I have friends back home who I think are better at this job than I am, but I think the band has worked hard. I think we have a really good record com-

pany that has done what every record company says they're going to do.

*Which is what, exactly?*

**Dylan:** Promote you, put you out there, give you the work, and do everything they can for you and fight for you and respect your craft. I got that pitch from every record company I ever met with. When I went to Interscope, I'd already gotten that speech from everybody else, so I never really imagined they were going to do it and they did.

*I talked to a lot of different people before this interview because I wanted to hear other people's opinions of you, to find out what is it about your band that they like. In doing so, I kept hearing that you're the new old-guard for a retro, classic-rock movement. Are you conscious of that?*

**Dylan:** It doesn't surprise me to hear those things, but in no way am I interested in holding a torch for any era of music. I think there are a few reasons why people have put us in that category, but I think "retro" is a negative word.

Sure, we have a Hammond B3, we have a piano, and not a lot of bands have singer/songwriters today. These just aren't the most popular things anymore. I think the arrangement of our group makes people think of Tom Petty, makes them think of Bruce Springsteen, makes them think of the Band. I always thought that this band

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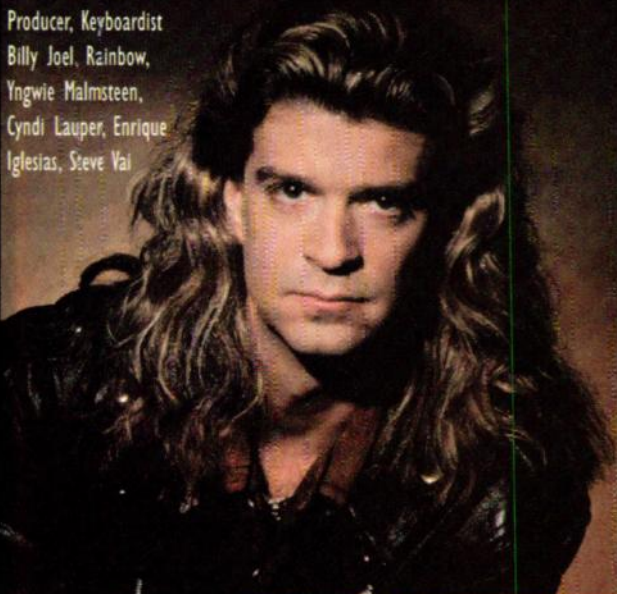
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setup would be the most productive for making rock & roll. A lot of today's bands—the four-piece guitar bands—go into the studio and they hire Benmont Tench to come in and play an organ. They hire somebody to come in and play saxophone. They come in and they hire everybody, but they don't want those people in the band and they go on the road and they have to hire another musician to come out. I always thought that when this group started we were a guitar band. I was writing songs where I was hearing piano parts, organ parts and a Wurlitzer. I just thought that it made the most sense to put one of those guys in the group. I think that's been one of the reasons people have kind of given us that retro tag.

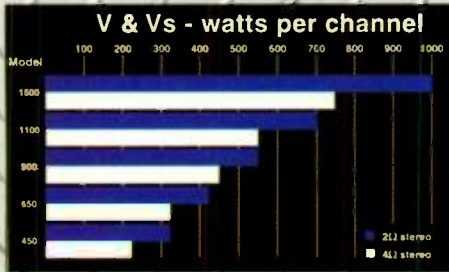
*There's also the family relation thing, as you put it. Your dad's impact on popular music is undeniable, and I'd imagine his impact on you has been considerable. Is it unfair that some people judge your band's music using your father as reference point? Is that comparison fair in the context of this whole retro, classic-rock thing?*

Dylan: I think the only fair comparison in that would be that he was a singer/songwriter also who in a lot of ways invented the job that I have. I think anybody in my position could rightfully be compared to him as a singer/songwriter. But comparing my music to his? I don't know [laughs]. I'm not concerned if it's fair or not, and I don't really know if people still do that to me anymore, but if you think about it, it's completely insane to compare *anybody* to him. Forget about blood lines or styles. It's just totally impractical. I wouldn't wish it upon anybody.

And it definitely wouldn't make any sense to do that because it's not like you'll come to the conclusion, like, "Wow, he is better." That's an impossible judgment in the end. So it's not really comparison. You're not comparing. You're basically pointing out my shortcomings, saying why such and such person was better. That's what happens when they compare me to him, Elvis Costello, Neil Young, or anybody. When people do that, ping-ponging somebody else's career back and forth against his, that's all it is. It's pointing out the other person's shortcomings.

*But people somehow need to pigeonhole*

# for those about to rock



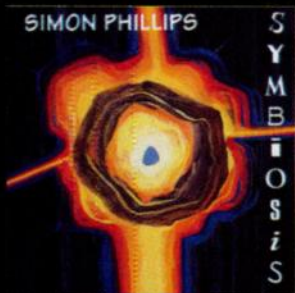
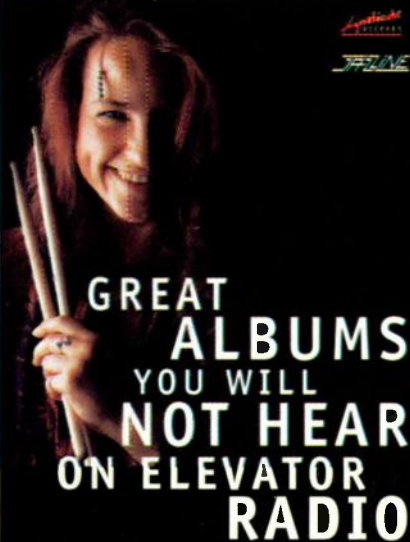
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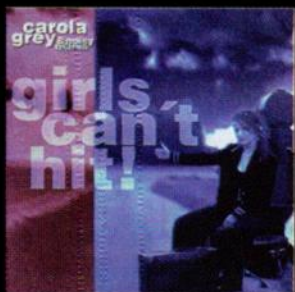
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bands. They have to say, "They sound like this, or they look like that."

**Dylan:** I think that's unfortunate, but it's a major source of how people get their information. You can't hear everything, and you can't watch everything, so you have to get some information to guide what you're about to buy. I think it's unfortunate that it happens, but it seems to make sense. It isn't a good thing, though, because giving people labels can be misleading. Sometimes people don't fall into categories, and I'm not saying we do or don't, but a lot of times people just don't fit into categories. When you try to say, "That's a cross between this and that," it might not make any sense if you were to add it all up. It might turn somebody off from even wanting to hear it because they don't like the comparison.

*What do you think is the greatest public misconception of the Wallflowers right now?*

**Dylan:** I'm honestly not that aware of how we're perceived. We live pretty much sheltered out here. But I'm very curious.

*I think it's that some people think you suck as musicians.*

**Dylan:** That we . . . suck [nervous laughter]?

*Yeah, that you suck from a musicianly perspective.*

**Dylan:** Is that critics or other musicians

in other bands?

*I don't know. Maybe it's a critic thing. What I gathered was that some people don't place a whole lot of value on the musicianship of the band, and I think that's because of the simplicity of the songs. They're very straightforward.*

**Dylan:** It's traditional music, and it suggests musicianship, but a lot of popular music today isn't about musicianship. It's mostly about the vibe and the character. Nobody argues about whether [R.E.M.'s] Peter Dinklage is a great guitar player. I'm not saying he is or isn't, but because he's got such a style and he's within this group that isn't necessarily the most traditional group, nobody's worried about whether he is or isn't a great musician.

I think it's much safer for people today to come along and not bother studying actually how to play music. There's been a lot of artists who, while they may have been really great, I think they've suggested to a lot of people that you don't have to know how to play an instrument. You don't actually have to sit in your bedroom and practice. All you gotta get is the right jacket, find a couple of guys with some great hair cuts, go listen to a bunch of indie rock and you're going to get a four-star review in *Rolling Stone*.

That's what happens. If you look at the way those things are run, the harder you try and the more you say this matters to

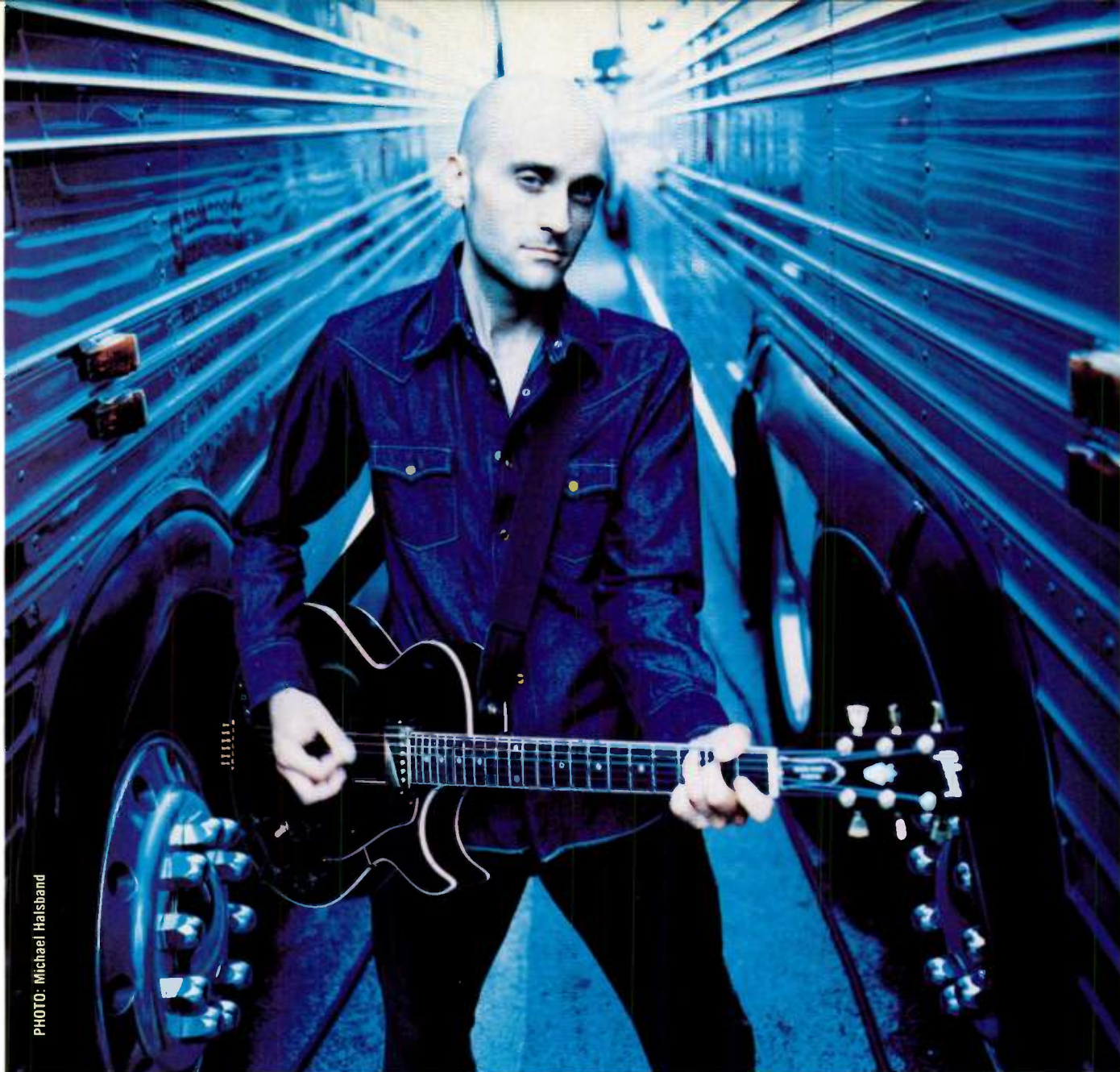


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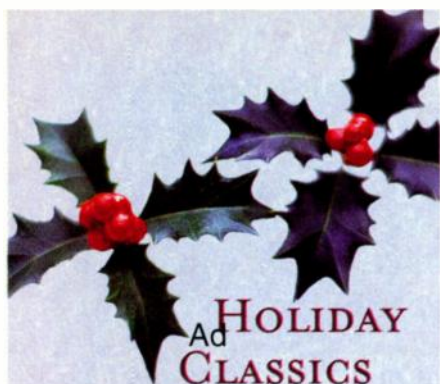
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me, the bigger your stakes are, but if you don't try very hard and you just go out there with your character, play what naturally falls out of you, that's genius. That's how it seems to be a lot of times. I think the Wallflowers for the most part are a traditional rock band. I've never done an interview where I've said we're changing the world. I don't remember *that* interview. I think it's pretty basic. It's pretty simple. It's easy to understand what we're trying to do.

*So you'd rather be perceived in a different way?*

Dylan: I'm not concerned with how people perceive me, because I know what my music has been worth. I know what I've offered. I think I can offer more, and I think the band can.

It's not really about where I fall short because as far as what I've taken on up to this point—what I've set my goals on—I've done. I wanted to write songs. I did that. I've done the basic things that got me where I am today. It's a matter of what I can do with it *after* that. That's what selling records allows you to do—to get people's ears for a little while and see whether you can do something with it, or if you're just going to bomb out and disappear.

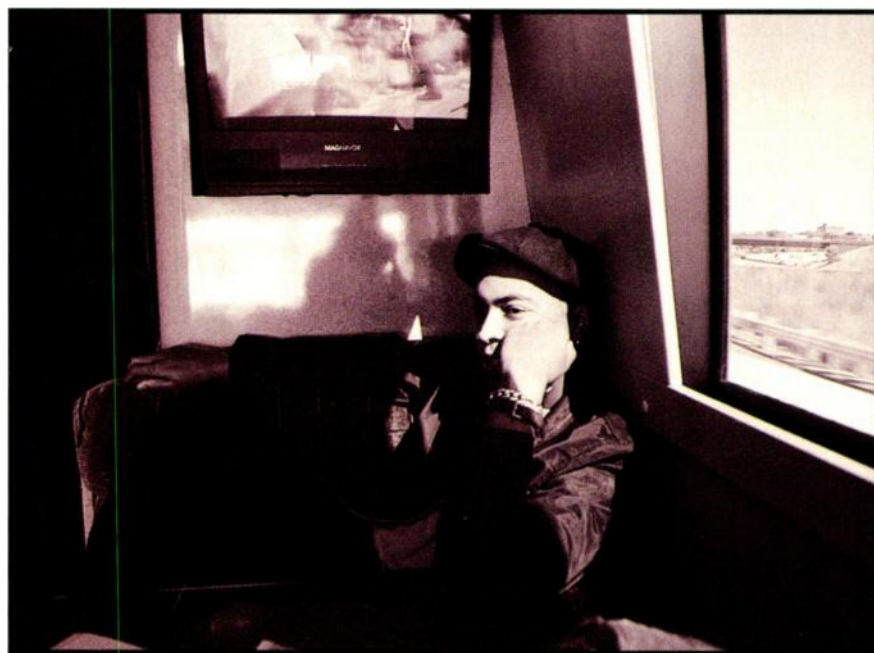
*I don't know if you guys are even aware of this, but at this past CMJ convention, Moby was the keynote speaker, and in his address he told a story about how he was*

*listening to the radio while driving across the country and he couldn't believe how much the radio sucked. He said the dee-jays sucked, and the music particularly sucked. In his words, the music being played was "soulless and anemic." He followed by saying that the music wasn't the Wallflowers, paused, and admitted that, yes, he actually was talking about you guys. Obviously a lot of people don't believe that, so what is he missing?*

Calire: Well, I'm pretty close to being anemic [laughter]. I know that we are conscious of—and afraid of—the fact that we are very exposed and we get a lot of spins on every radio station imaginable. We're aware of over-exposure and it's something that we're afraid of. I totally agree with Moby in that radio used to be more diverse and eclectic, and it still should be today, but I do think there's room for bands like us.

Ward: First of all, I totally agree with what [Moby] says, too. It's fine. I like and respect what Moby does, and he's taken a way more modern approach to making music. Right on, Moby. But if that's all you heard—Moby, Aphex Twin, the Chemical Brothers, and who ever the hell else—and then you heard the Wallflowers, we would probably sound pretty refreshing. Ours is a slightly more traditional type of songwriting with guys just playing their instruments; it's not really electronic, it's a little more organic.

I think the point that Moby is making—



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or this is the way I chose to interpret his point—is that there are a lot of bands who for one reason or another sound similar to what we do. You have the Counting Crows, you have the Wallflowers, you have your Uncle Tupelo offshoots [Sun Volt, Wilco], and then I'm sure there are fifteen more bands that are going to come out next month who are just waiting to spring that sound on you. That's one of the most heinous natures of this industry; by the time everybody clones what's kind of happening and it comes out two years later, it's

so played out and so over done that you've just had it, you know? So probably by the time Moby is in his car driving across America, he's hearing a lot of shit that sounds like the Wallflowers or whatever, whether it's just the Wallflowers or ten other bands that sound kind of similar. Too much of anything can get to be a drag.

I'm sure there's plenty of people that could call modern electronic music the most soulless thing they've ever heard. I like it. We put it on and dig it. It's just a sign of what's going on. But you'll get the same

type of shit for a couple of years and then the next wave will come. I mean, think of all the shitty wannabe grunge music you heard after something great like Nirvana came along. It just sucked. It just drove you up a wall and you're *still* hearing it.

**Calire:** Just to backtrack, I don't take it personally, because we're an easy band to point a finger at right now cause we're all over the radio. But we won't be next year. There's always someone on the radio that's getting a lot of spins. His point about the radio sucking [is valid]. My parents have told me how it used to be, where you might hear the Beatles, Ravi Shankar, classical music, or old folk tunes on one station. Radio stations didn't always have such a narrow focus, but now there are a very limited bunch of formats. Luckily, we fit into a lot of them, but there are a lot of people who are making great, creative, new music who don't have a place, and it's important that they be heard. I think that's Moby's point. I totally agree with that. I don't think that means there isn't a place for people like us, though.

**Dylan:** I don't think I'm qualified to give a discussion on techno, and I would imagine Moby's probably not a great-spokesperson for rock & roll, either. You set yourself up when you become a popular band. A lot of people—including Moby, who probably wishes he was selling a lot more records—wish they were a lot more popular, and they can get very defensive and tend to slam at everything out there.

I don't take it personally. I just think that's the position that bands like the Wallflowers get in. This is clearly not something that Moby's interested in, regardless if it's soulless. He probably wouldn't know if it was or wasn't. Was his problem that we're on the radio a lot?

*I think so. I think he saw you as poster boys for what he thought represented evilness in music.*

**Dylan:** It's always been like that. What can I say? You can't be liked by everybody. The only thing I find interesting about it is when people generalize music, they draw lines. There's a lot of stuff out there I don't particularly like, but who is it going to benefit if I talk about it [negatively]? It doesn't help if I do an interview where I say, "here's what I don't like, I think that guy's terri-

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ble." To pick anybody out and do that [isn't] productive, and it just draws lines and makes people dislike other people.

I don't know. I'd imagine that he's probably frustrated and probably would like to sell more records. That's how people get, especially if they've been around for a while. My group's pretty young. People don't like to see you come out that quickly and do well.

*Why is that?*

Dylan: I think a lot of it is just purely

jealousy. He probably genuinely doesn't like my band and my music, but the source of it is anger. If my band wasn't selling any records and we'd been on the road for 15 years, we'd be really cool. Personally, I don't think there's anything cool about being broke and unexposed and having nobody hear your music. I don't think that's very cool, but you get to a point where if you become a popular band, a lot of people just don't like that. It's always been like that. Popular music by theory is not the good music. It's almost impossible

to be.

*That's indie-credibility. What do you think about the phrase "indie-cred?"*

Dylan: I never understood that [indie-cred]. It never applied to me for whatever reason, whether it was where I come from, or what music I wrote, or where the band played. It's like that Woody Allen movie where he said he'd never want to be a member of a club that would accept him. I don't understand that club very much, and I don't know if it's cool to be in there or not. I don't understand it.

The most you could ask for is to have a lot of people be exposed to your music. I know that disqualifies you from having "indie-cred." A great example of that is Soul Asylum. They were stocked with "indie-cred" through the Eighties. They kept making records, and they wanted to get more popular, but once they got there and had a huge hit, all those people just said they sold out.

There's also a great quote about this from Nash Kato [Urge Overkill]. People were accusing him of selling out, and he responded by saying he was the first guy in line to sell out. I think I have a pretty clear understanding of what my record had to offer and whether or not it was important.

*What do you mean by important?*

Dylan: You know, was it pushing boundaries? I don't have illusions as to whether it did or didn't. I know what my record did and what it sounded like. I'm a big consumer. I know where it falls. I'd like for the band to grow, for the band to get somewhere that's a little more powerful as far as music going forward. I don't think of this music as retro music or progressive music. I think it's just music *right now*.

I'd like to think of us in a line of a lot of rock & roll groups. I think people need rock & roll groups. There's a place for everything. There's a place for Kiss, a place for Moby. There's a place for everybody.

There's no reason we can't all have a job here. Obviously, the Wallflowers have sold a good amount of records this year. Obviously, *somebody* likes it. Who am I or you to say that those people are idiots? Like, the first 50,000 people who buy your record really like it, so they're cool. They're smart. And then, from there on

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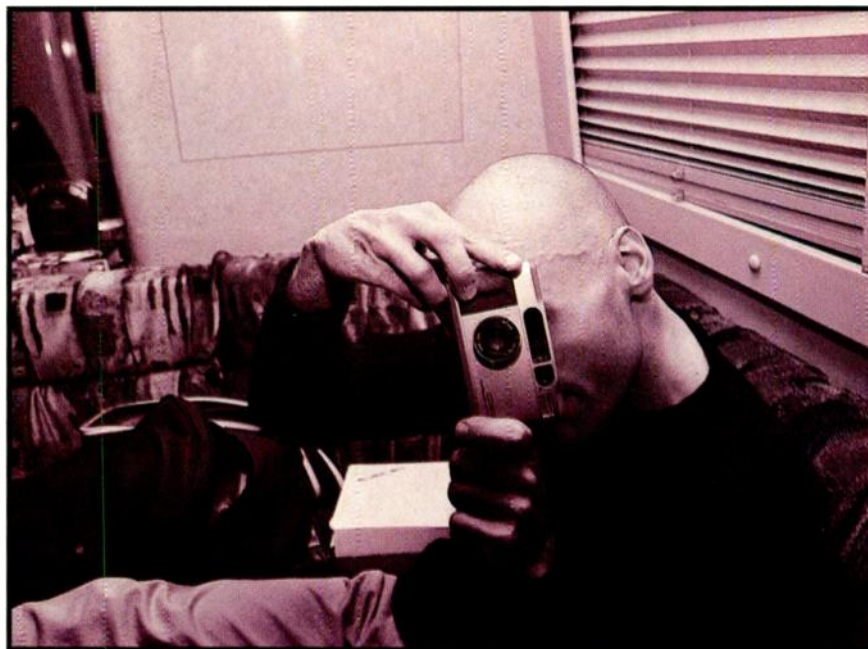
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out, everybody else who buys your record is somehow an idiot. That's the idea that people give you.

*I've read that the song "Bleeders" was your response to people thinking that you are in music for the wrong reasons. What are your reasons for being a musician? What are the right reasons?*

**Dylan:** I don't know what the right ones are for everybody else. For some, it's money. For others, it's fame. For some people it's music. I don't know why anybody else does it. I wouldn't be the one to tell people the right or wrong reasons. I only know why I do it.

I do it because I went and saw the Clash when I was 12 years old and it was the coolest thing I ever saw. It's as simple as that. I started to listen to all kinds of music and it occurred to me at some point that I was going to do this whether it was in my garage or from a tour bus. I was going to be doing it. Who doesn't want to make a living doing what they love doing?



It wasn't a massive cerebral effort to [decide to] do it or not. You wake up every day and you do what feels right. For me, picking up a guitar and playing with four guys in a band has always felt right. I'd be lying if I said that growing up around it had nothing to do with it. If a kid grows up and one of his parents is a carpenter, they might become interested in making tables, too.

*Last night I was talking with Greg and Mario about your dad, and we were wondering if the day will come when you'll play together on stage. Then it occurred to me that you two must have played together in the privacy of your own home.*

**Dylan:** Sure, as a kid. There was a point where I took this on my own, though. It's been a long time. Since I was a kid.

*But playing music together was once a family thing. That used to be a way that families entertained themselves before TV came into play.*

**Dylan:** Yeah. The funny thing about family traditions is that if I was going to hire a plumber, I'd want to hire the guy whose family's been doing it for 120 years; he's probably going to know something the others don't. But when it comes to art and music, people just have a really hard time with that. They get angry at you for having the nerve to do it, too! But it's another craft. Playing guitar and songwriting are crafts, just like making a table is. I've seen it

for many years, and it's just something that was implanted in me and that I wanted to continue doing. I liked the way it sounded and the way it looked and just wanted to be a part of it.

*So do you think that moment will come when you think you and your father will ever play together publicly?*

**Dylan:** I guess anything is possible.

*What song would you like to play?*

**Dylan:** That's the thing [smiles], regardless of the actual interesting side of it, which is why we would or wouldn't...

*"I Got You, Babe?"*

**Dylan:** I don't know. I don't know what the purpose would be, to be honest. It would just be spectacle.

*But if you were going to do it...*

**Dylan:** Who wouldn't want to do it? You can't find a singer/songwriter who *wouldn't* want to. As far as why I would be doing it, I'd have to know why. It'd have to be interesting circumstances.

*Well, who would you want to sing with?*

**Dylan:** Willie Nelson, George Jones, one of those kinds of people. Moby. Maybe we'll do something together [laughs]. I can take some of the blood out of his music.

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## *The Music Industry Takes a Stand*

"When I first got a record deal, you were *expected* to be wild and crazy," drummer Dallas Taylor recalls. "I came to town to L.A. in '65 and my band was signed to Elektra, we were coming in right under the Doors, and the message to me was: 'Be as outrageous as possible.' And that came from my producer! 'Be Marat/Sade, you know. *Watch Keith Moon.*' " Taylor laughs. "And I just thought, you know, I can do this." Taylor proved his point. By the mid-Seventies he was one of rock's premier drummers, touring and partying around the world with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. By the late Seventies he was a world-class drug addict, unemployed and so physically debilitated he'd eventually need a liver transplant to survive. Thirteen years sober, he's got a full-time gig again—as a drug counselor to wayward musicians. "It's pretty weird to watch *me* happen over and over again," he says dryly. "But it's escalated to the point where kids

*By Mark Rowland Illustration by Yücel*



are dropping dead all around us." Until recently, however, record industry response to drug and alcohol problems has been negligible—not too surprising in a business that has never provided health insurance, pensions or long-term benefits to its artists.

Enter Buddy Arnold, a street-wise, septuagenarian jazz saxophonist who'd kicked his own drug habit after 31 years and emerged into sobriety with a vision to help others. Adding a crucial new wrinkle to successful twelve-step rehabilitation programs like Alcoholics Anonymous, Arnold founded the Musician's Assistance Program (MAP) in 1992, featuring after-care support groups comprised exclusively of other musicians—a literal "buddy system" at home and on the road. "Musicians trust us," Arnold says simply, when asked about the key to the organization he runs out of two offices on the second floor of the L.A. Musician's Union. "MAP has no agenda except to do what it does."

In a profit-centered industry where ulterior motives usually begin with the

word "hello," Arnold's selflessness struck a chord. Donations public and anonymous from industry sources began to trickle in, including a \$50 thousand grant from the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS) in 1993. "I think part of it is that Buddy's so old," says one admiring industry executive. "You don't envision him going on *Oprah* or putting out a public offering for five hundred other MAPs. It doesn't feel like a career for him, it feels like a service."

But despite MAP's efforts, the spate of high-profile musician drug deaths proceeded apace. In 1994 Kurt Cobain killed himself after walking out of a treatment program arranged by MAP. Jerry Garcia and Blind Melon's Shannon Hoon died in 1995. Last year marked the deaths of Brad Nowell of Sublime and Smashing Pumpkins sideman Jonathan Melvoin, among others. NARAS president Mike Greene, who'd befriended Hoon and describes his death as a personal moment of epiphany, decided to take action. In 1995 he expanded the human services agenda of

NARAS's MusiCares Foundation to include a drug treatment and recovery program. He also conducted conclaves in New York and Los Angeles that drew hundreds of professionals from around the industry, many of whom had been scarred by close encounters with some form of chemical abuse. Greene's call to band the industry together while raising awareness of treatment options clearly struck a chord. At the same time, his initial accusatory tone, inveighing against an "industry in denial," rankled some observers.

"No one is more preachy than the newly converted," observed one industry executive. "And Mike had a big megaphone. His sincerity was there, and the notion of saying 'Here's a resource' is good. But he became messianic; if you didn't go to his meeting you were 'in denial.' People became offended by that. I think he himself regrets the way he first handled it."

Actually, he doesn't. "It's pretty hard to get people's attention by going, 'You know, we really should do something about this,'" Greene declares. "You have to shake people up. The problem is not really even the [addicted] musicians—it's obvious they're gonna be in denial. The people I had a problem with keeping it hidden were the managers, agents, entertainment attorneys, promoters, A&R people, anyone profiting off the pain and suffering of an addicted artist and looking the other way. Which is a pretty logical response when you think about it, 'cause when you get someone who's strung out and you try to confront them, the first thing they'll do is fire you."

To counter such institutional "enabling" Green established several industry-wide committees—label heads, attorneys, managers—to, as a recent MusiCares press release puts it, "foster and promote solution-oriented dialog . . . for addressing the issue of addiction and intervention within the music community." Manager Chris Jones says that his committee, for example, has discussed making common cause not to sign an addicted artist: "I think everybody in the community needs to know, hey, there's a red flag on this guy, he needs help."

But the notion of industry heavies colluding on strategies to deter artists from drug use—not to mention the phrase "red



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flag"—can conjure more sinister scenarios. "It's like censorship: Who do you trust to censor?" asks veteran journalist Dave Marsh. "Who do I trust to tell me that Steve Tyler or Jerry Garcia or Tupac [need treatment]? If we let this stuff go uncontested, we're setting ourselves up for a blacklist, run for reasons that can be vindictive."

In any event, as Greene admits, there will always be managers, lawyers, and record label reps willing to exploit an

addicted artist: "All you can do is make the climate so bad for those people who become obvious ambulance chasers that it becomes incredibly un-cool to do it." However, ambulance chasers aren't necessarily concerned about their image. "Will you ever have a situation where record companies band together to stop a prolific but addicted artist from having a career?" asks manager Susan Silver. "No. There will always be an outlet if the artist is still able to produce. It will just be a much shorter-

lived career."

MusiCares' attempt to unite the industry under one umbrella was also undercut by the appearance of an August 17, 1996 *Billboard* commentary by entertainment attorney and MusiCares board member Owen Sloane, proposing that record companies administer drug tests to their artists and garnish the royalties of those who fail. The idea was roundly jeered: As manager Steve Stewart notes, such a program would provide an excellent incentive for unhappy artists to get out of their record deals by becoming addicted to drugs.

MusiCares officials say they've never endorsed Sloane's proposals (though his *Billboard* commentary is still included in their press packets) and express exasperation when the subject is broached. "When are we going to stop talking about that and start talking about all the positive things?" asks MusiCares resident psychotherapist Dr. Nancy Sobel. But suspicions die hard; when drug counselor and interventionist Bob Timmons outlines MusiCares' goals at industry gatherings, he admits, "I start out talks with 'This is what we don't do: We don't advocate drug testing, we don't advocate attaching royalties. . . .'"

In any event, the two programs are barely distinguishable today. MusiCares and MAP staff are in daily contact with each other, frequently share costs for musicians in treatment, and count several music industry heavies on both boards of advisors. Both are non-profit organizations with tiny staffs that rely on outside donations and fund-raising to pay the bills. "The methodology is different, the end result is the same," concludes Tim Collins, who serves on both organizations' board of advisors. "Buddy is a little less bureaucratic. But I think it's hysterical that they're in 'competition' to help musicians with drug problems, whereas a few years ago, nobody could get shit."

### Enter Sandman

The success of drug and alcohol recovery programs is difficult to measure; as any ex-addict will tell you, it's a lifetime effort to stay straight. Relative to other programs, MAP's success rate—Buddy Arnold claims that sixty percent of the musicians who've entered its treatment programs since 1992 remain

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sober today—ranks unusually high.

Equally difficult to discern is why one becomes addicted in the first place. After all, the overwhelming percentage of people who experiment with alcohol, cocaine and heroin—the big three in terms of numbers and notoriety—don't become addicted, and frequently have a good time doing it. As Steven Tyler likes to put it, "some of the interviews I *don't* do these days are about how drugs were *wonderful*."

Timmons and Arnold insist they're not

judging or arguing the pros and cons of recreational drug use, only addressing the problems that ensue when that use gets out of hand. But both agree that when it comes to musicians, unique circumstances enter into play. "Drugs are more available to musicians," Arnold says flatly, "for the simple reason that groupies or whatever you want to call them will come around and want to turn you on—that way they get to hang. And when you're on the road and not working and there's nothing hap-

pening and there's this thing that's just a phone call away that has this incredible attraction. It's the obsession that you have to get through." As a result, MAP and MusiCares are creating a network of support groups on the road, across the U.S. and into Europe; Timmons asks recovering clients to fax him their tour schedule.

The logistics of touring and record-making can be literally disorienting. "What are the two reasons people in the music industry start being exposed to drugs?" Marsh observes. "There's a recreational hipness factor, but in 1997 I believe that most people do it because they're working under conditions, certainly on the road, where they don't sleep right. When sleep cycles are disrupted in this society, a common response is to medicate and often self-medicate, especially if you're too poor to have health care. If you read biographies of people dealing with drug problems, you run into some who are dealing with an emotional crisis, and at the other extreme, it's 'stay up all night and get that record done.'"

Indeed, the record industry's tendency toward shorter, disposable careers might dissuade any musician from putting his own on hold. When Greene says, "I would like to see what [famous 28-year-old addicted rock star] will be doing when he's 35," one applauds the sentiment. But drugs or no drugs, statistics suggest that by then his career will be over.

Self-destructive behavior also shields a maze of personal issues. "Most of us are nerds who spend our lives learning our instrument without developing any social skills and then all of the sudden you're on stage with the girls comin' at you and we don't know how to deal with it," Dallas Taylor says. "And if you don't feel good about yourself to begin with, and you add success, it's like, 'Uh-oh, they're gonna discover I'm a fraud.' So you're caught with, do I let them take it away from me or do I self-destruct before they can? Unconsciously, we self-destruct as a form of taking control."

In one sense, celebrity musicians are luckier than most other addicts: They can afford lawyers. On the level of national policy, the so-called war on drugs has turned out to be a great boon for prison guard unions and a disaster for everyone

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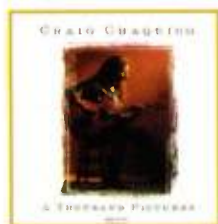
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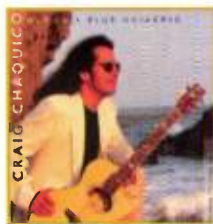
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else. Addicts cannot control their chemical abuse. The possibility of prison sentences because their chemical of choice may be illegal—alcohol is just fine, of course—creates another burden.

"Shannon Hoon got arrested a number of times," Chris Jones relates, "and each time he'd been doing drugs or drinking. We'd get him out of jail, pay the bail, and the lawyer would say, 'There are conditions.' I'd say, 'Make the condition that he has to go into a thirty-day program,' and each time that worked. The last time, if he didn't stay out of trouble he was going to spend six months in a New Orleans prison. I was thankful to the authorities for understanding what was going on, but each time I had to point it out to them. It shouldn't have to be my idea."

For Dallas Taylor, the threat of prison had no more effect on his drug habit than the threat of losing his gig with Crosby Stills, Nash & Young. As a drug counselor, "I've actually had guys where the choice is jail or rehab, and the guy has said, 'Well, give me a minute to think about it.'" But if

the national debate about drugs could use an elevating dose of intelligence and plain talk, the music industry might not be its most effective courier. As one exec puts it, "The general population views us all as drug addicts to begin with."

Instead, MAP and MusiCares are expanding their educational agenda to reach younger record buyers. For that, Greene promises a more realistic approach than 'Just Say No'.

"I'm not talking about trying to shock kids into some kind of change of attitude. I'm talking about giving them the facts. If you look at those ads, fried eggs and that shit, kids don't care about that. The reason *Trainspotting* was probably the best drug movie in fifteen years is that it showed both sides: It's like a thousand orgasms and it's like a thousand deaths. If you give kids that information, they'll form their own attitudes and opinions about it. But until we as a society give kids more credit in that regard, they'll keep doing what we tell them they shouldn't do. That's something our government has never figured out."

Troy Nowell, widow of Sublime's Brad Nowell, is currently organizing a benefit concert for MAP while persuading other musicians to provide public service announcements on TV, speaking honestly and directly about their experience with drugs. "We're not trying to preach or do anything like that," she says, "but to raise awareness to kids who are listening to these musicians who are dying from drug overdoses. A lot of bands haven't wanted to be in that position [of making a public stand] because it wasn't cool. But now I think it's getting more cool, because more of them are losing people that they knew, and they realize that it reflects on all of them."

"When one musician dies, the whole community has to look at themselves, because kids are out there wondering, 'Is that what you have to do to be a musician, to write songs?' I think more musicians are wanting kids and their fans to know: No, that's not what this is all about."

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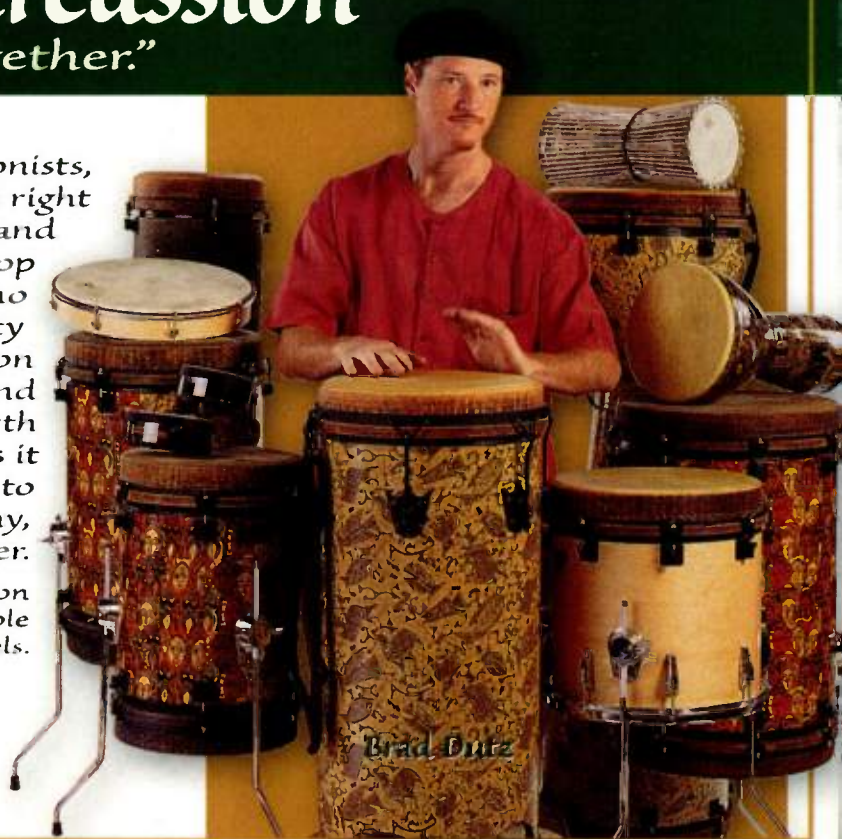
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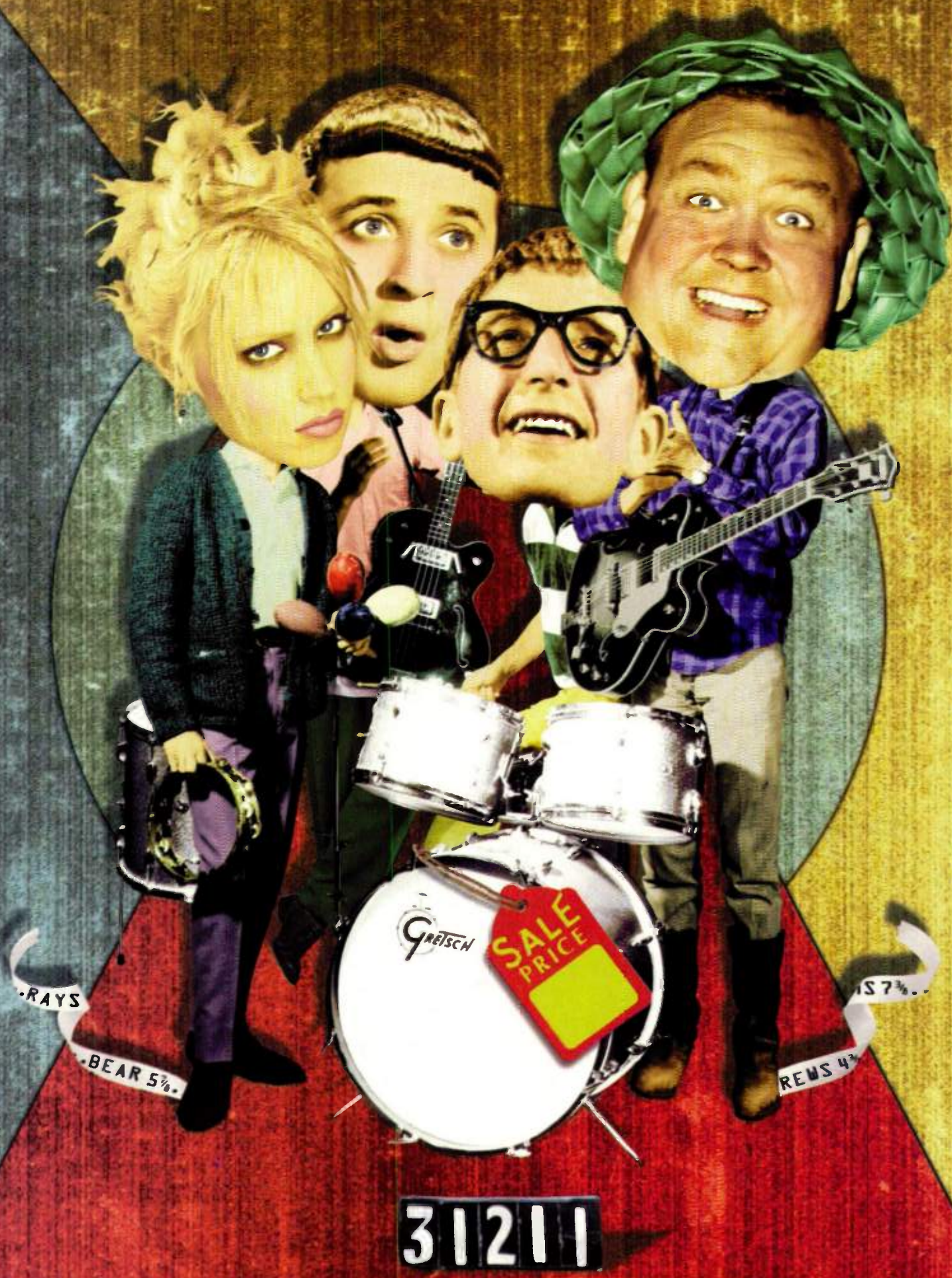




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# What PRICE Glory?

## FINDING THE RIGHT PRICE

to charge for your band is not always just a matter of numbers; the state of mind of the people who might hire you can be just as important. Consider the wealthy New Jersey guitar collector who purchased a one-of-a-kind, D'Angelico archtop guitar for \$150,000. The instrument was built in 1958 and originally sold for \$400. After it was bought by the New Jersey collector, another collector offered him double the amount for it, only to be turned down. The moral? It takes more than a calculator to formulate pricing strategies that you and your client can accept. • Step one is to establish a realistic basic minimum fee, or the price that you and your band cannot fall below. It's important to not make a habit of compromising it just to get a gig. If you give in too much to those who aren't willing to pay what you're worth, your minimum fee becomes nothing more than a gate without a lock. Picture your minimum fee as the foundation upon which your house is built. You wouldn't chip away at the edges . . . would you? • To get a feel for how much you should charge, look to your

HOW TO CHARGE THE RIGHT PRICE FOR THE GIG YOU WANT

competition. Do your own survey by calling at least three of your local competitors. Pretend you're a potential customer; better yet, have a friend call for you. Don't say, "I'm Joe Blow, I need a band, and I just want to know what you guys are charging." While it's generally good to be upfront with people, a direct approach to a potential rival may only yield false information, or none at all. Once you've compiled your responses, you'll be surprised at how many variations in price you'll hear. Now put yourself somewhere within the price brackets of what you've collected, perhaps by totaling up all the different prices and dividing by the number of bands to calculate the average.

After getting an idea of what you can comfortably charge, you can decide on the lowest fee you'd be willing to accept. Here again, you can randomly pull a figure out of the air, or calculate a percentage off your normal price.

When your prospect asks what you charge for your services, the way that you

respond is important. State your price with confidence. Look your potential client in the eye; avoid holding your head down or looking away, which could indicate a lack of confidence or trustworthiness on your part. Remember, people will try to read your body language. If you seem unconfident while stating your price, your prospect will likely test it with a lower figure.

Once you've built your price list and established your minimum fees, you'll be able to make "on-the-spot price quotes" for standard engagements, such as local clubs or wedding receptions. But even though this seems to contradict the whole idea of working with a firm price range, be

*careful when quoting prices for less common bookings, such as annual corporate parties or out-of-town jobs. Unusual expenses are often involved for these gigs, and your prospect will have no trouble remembering the first price you quote—especially if it's surprisingly lower than what he or she expected. Don't let a prospect in these situations pressure you into quoting a price on the spot. Instead, take their name and number, and assure them that you will get back to them the following day or early the following week.*

Even once an agreement is reached for a gig that takes you out of town, time and distance can make it difficult to enforce, even in critical areas such as payment. When working with a distant client, it's important to make detailed notes regarding all arrangements. Aside from filling out a contract, it may be necessary to attach a *profile sheet* to cover first and secondary contact persons, directions, and so on.

When you accept a gig that's out of town or out of state, your responsibilities and risks increase. You may need to rent additional equipment or a van to haul both your gear and your band, thus creating a higher cost factor that should be passed on to your client. Your price should reflect this. For example, you should feel free to

charge a *travel fee* based on mileage, or double or even triple your price. It's not considered tacky to ask for a fifty percent deposit for an out-of-state engagement. In fact, your prospect will usually understand and often want to prove his or her sincerity by offering a fifty percent deposit without your asking.

In any event, be *very* sure to collect a non-refundable deposit for any distant gigs. The details of the deal are up to you, but it should cover your rental or serve as compensation in the event your client cancels.

Ultimately, the details of the deal are up to you. What matters is that you make it all worth your while.

On occasion you will be asked to submit a written price quote, sometimes referred to as a price bid, for a gig. One of the greatest benefits of a written price quote is that it forces you to think out your price and eliminates any misunderstandings. Be sure that performance times and total hours are indicated in these written quotes.

There's another advantage to getting it in writing: The formality of a written price quote, submitted on your business stationery in your own unique designed envelopes, will often impress a potential client. The fact that you are a musician is all the more reason to make every effort to project a professional image. Generally, the public doesn't expect musicians to display business smarts. Give yourself the upper hand. When you put forth a polished image, your prospect will remember and respect you for taking the time to be professional.

## Local Price Sensitivity

AS YOUR BAND PICKS UP work through referral by former clients, you'll find that a growing number of your prospects may be connected in a network of personal acquaintance. This is important because these referrals will likely include



*If you seem unconfident while quoting your price, your prospect will likely test it with a lower figure.*



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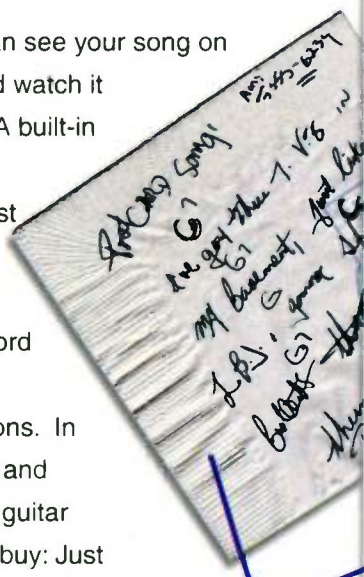
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the prices you quoted to the initial client. In this scenario, uneven pricing can create friction and mixed feelings toward your band and greatly affect the chances of finding repeat work with people who hired you in the past. Be aware of this and be prepared to justify significant price variations to other prospects when necessary. An example would be when someone asks that you add another musician to your lineup for a particular gig or to perform longer than usual. Make it clear to your prospect—and to those who call you through his or her recommendation—that these types of changes will affect pricing. No one should expect you not to charge extra for a longer gig or a bigger band.

Be sure to let your prospect know where your price breaks are. For instance, if your prices are based on a three-hour evening and your band is required to play four hours, make the necessary price adjustment. You may want to charge an additional per hour fee past your normal time frame.

## Bargain Pricing

SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL be approached by either an acquaintance or a nonprofit organization that will ask you to cut your price to below your minimum fee. This request is usually accompanied by an explanation of how some committee only allows a budget of X amount of dollars for entertainment and special events.

In most of these cases I've stood my ground and stuck to my minimum fee, but when a request is persistent and unyielding I have occasionally agreed to work for less. In each instance, however, I made sure to impose a few of my own stipulations, such as a shorter performance or a barter trade-off. In any event, make this a rare practice, and ask your client to keep your arrangement confidential. Make your prospect feel as though you're doing them a favor, not the other way around.

But what's this barter tradeoff? It's nothing more than a form of compensation you might at times consider in lieu of payment. Let's say your prospect wants to hire you but doesn't have the budget to meet your price. Let's also say that he or she owns something of value that interests you and is willing to offer it in exchange for your services. That's barter. People do it every day, on all levels of business. You may want to try it during those rare times when money isn't a pressing concern. If a barter arrangement involves your band, make sure that all your members agree and can benefit from it.

Since I work a lot as a solo jazz guitarist, barter opportunities present themselves more readily than if I were with a band. For one thing, depending on your position, getting some major exposure may compensate for low or even nonexistent wages. But know where to draw the line. Since many prospects would love to hire you under a barter agreement, you can barter yourself into a cash flow problem. On the other hand, if you can persuade your local grocer

or utility company to accept a weekly serenade in lieu of payment for their products or services, more power to you.

I was once performing at a family restaurant in Oklahoma City when a group of women got my attention as they were leaving and asked if I would consider playing a job for them in exchange for airline tickets. It turns out that one of the women worked for a major airline. Her idea was to hire me for a surprise birthday party for a friend who had in fact told her she wanted me to play at her birthday. It so happens I was planning a trip to California to attend a trade show a few weeks after the party, so I accepted the offer.

Barter opportunities, then, will present themselves at the most peculiar times. Check this out: At one point my business partner and I needed to secure a trademark, along with other expensive legal services. With the aid of an acquaintance, I was introduced to a trademark and copyright

attorney with a very prestigious firm. We agreed to a consultation, where I assumed I would be quoted outrageous fees for the services our company badly needed. As it turns out, that's exactly what happened.

But then, just as I was leaving his office, the attorney stopped me and said, "For what it's worth, I would be pleased to represent your company in exchange for your services on occasion."

Needless to say, I was floored by his offer—but not too floored to accept the offer. You might say it was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

**Contributors:** Maurice Johnson is a jazz guitarist in Oklahoma City. He is a co-founder of the D'Leco Guitar Company and author of the *Monthly Planner for the Professional Musician and The New! Working Musician's One-Year Organizer*, both published by Mel Bay. This article is excerpted from his upcoming book, *You Can Book Your Own Gigs*.



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Ever wished you could play both guitar and bass on the same instrument? Well, thanks to New York-based guitar builder Sergio Santucci, now you can. And the Santucci Treblebass (\$2,480) isn't one of those cumbersome double-neck jobs, either; both guitar and bass strings are on the same 10-string neck. Excitingly enough, the guitar part of the five-piece maple neck is fretted and the bass part is fretless. (How you tune it is your business.) A 45mm-thick alder body, active circuitry, and separate pickups for treble and bass sides add to the fun. ► **Sergio Santucci, 69 W. 38th St., New York, NY 10018-5512; voice (212) 302-6805.**

### 2 Marshall JCM2000

If you need that extra amp growl, you've gotta call in the specialists. And Marshall will be happy to oblige with the new JCM2000 Dual Super Lead head, available in 100-watt (\$1,599) and 50-watt (\$1,449) configurations. Powered by four specially matched Svetlana EL34s, the JCM2000 has two channels (CLASSIC and ULTRA-GAIN), each with a mode switch that alters their respective gain structures across the entire tonal spectrum. The DEEP switch adds low-end boost, the Tone Shift switch is most metallic, and both channels have individual reverb controls. ► **Marshall Amplification, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747; voice (516) 333-9100**

### 3 E-mu E-Synth

Versatility is at the heart of E-mu's E-Synth (\$3,995). A 64-voice, 76-key, semi-weighted keyboard using Digital Modular Synthesis—which provides 64 digital six-pole filters, 32-voice layering, 128-voice velocity switching, and an easy-to-use virtual patch-cord architecture—is enticing enough. But that doesn't take into account the E4-class sampler, with 4MB of RAM and a SCSI interface, or the 48-track, linear-based sequencer with full loop-record features. And let's not forget that the E-Synth is also a MIDI controller; every one of its 1,000 RAM presets can be split into MIDI zones, each with its own key and velocity range. ► **E-mu Systems, 1600 Green Hills Rd., Ste. 101, P.O. Box 660015, Scotts Valley, CA 95067-0015; voice (408) 438-1921.**



# fast for



#### 4 Passport Memphis

Writing out chord charts for a band can be a real drag. But if you've got a PC running Windows, then Passport's latest software creation, Memphis (\$79), can be a big help in this department. The chart template is already there waiting; simply type the chords in where they're supposed to go. If you're using unusual guitar voicings, you can indicate the fingerings with those handy guitar chord boxes. And if you've already got the lyrics figured out, you can type them in and sync them up to the chords as well. ► **Passport Designs, 1151-D Triton Dr., Foster City, CA 94404; voice (415) 349-6224.**

#### 5 Bag End Q10BX-D

Most people would like a little more depth in their lives. And so Bag End introduced the Q10BX-D bass cabinet (\$1,180). Closely related to the company's Q10X-D quad-10 cabinet, the BX-D beats out its predecessor by adding six extra inches of depth (it's 18 inches deep in total). That extra depth gives the cabinet a surprisingly rich, warm sound for what is still a relatively small (27 inches high, 22 inches wide) and portable (102 lbs.) enclosure. For those of you who like specs, the 10BX-D can handle 800 watts at an 8-ohm nominal impedance. ► **Bag End Loudspeaker Systems, P.O. Box 488, Barrington, IL 60011; voice (847) 382-4550.**

#### 6 Big Briar Series 91 Theremins

Last month's *Musician* mentioned that synth pioneer Robert Moog is currently making theremins with a company called Big Briar. For further edification, here are three of the company's "concert" models: the Big Briar 91A (\$2,500 walnut finish, \$2,650 black finish), 91B (\$2,600), and 91C (\$2,900 cherry or walnut finish, \$3,050 black finish). These are the only known instruments that do not require contact to be played; waving your hands around in front of their antennae alters pitch and volume. Yes, you could buy a theremin kit and build your own for much cheaper, but it won't look halfway as cool as these babies do. ► **Big Briar, Inc., 554C Riverside Dr., Asheville, NC 28801; voice (704) 251-0090.**

# ward

How to lose  
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**editor's pick**

**You Don't  
Have To Be  
Big To Be  
Beautiful**

# The Alesis NANO SERIES



by **howard massey**

**G**ood things come in small packages, or so they say. Compact discs. Tic-Tacs. Mary Lou Retton. (Okay, maybe not Mary Lou.) But now there's a hot addition to this list: the five new "Nano" products from Alesis (NanoVerb, NanoBass, NanoCompressor, NanoSynth, and wonderfully alliterative NanoPiano). Each of these is small enough to pop into your gig bag on a whim and affordable enough that it won't make much of a dent in your bank account—but, boy, do these little suckers deliver big time.

Alesis, of course, is a company renowned for pioneering affordable music technologies, first with their inexpensive MidVerb multi-effects processor, and later with

the wildly successful ADAT and ADAT-XT digital multitrack recorders. While not as revolutionary as these products, the Nano line—three MIDI tone generators and two signal processors—does break new ground in terms of size-to-bang-for-the-buck ratio. Each weighs just a few pounds and is barely larger than a guitar stompbox, so at live gigs it will sit nicely on top of your keyboard or even the smallest guitar amp. In the home studio, Nanos can be placed on any flat surface or mounted in a standard rack, three across, using an optional adapter. To be sure, their ultra-compact size is a bonus wherever space is at a premium.

The NanoPiano (\$399) and NanoBass (\$299) are conceptually similar in that they are both basically specialized boxes of sounds. Both provide 256 presets (all in permanent ROM—there's no RAM in which you can store edited user sounds) and both are monotimbral, meaning that they respond to just one MIDI channel and play just one sound at a time, though you can play up to 64 notes simultaneously. But what a sound these guys make! The NanoPiano is packed with dozens of acoustic and electric piano samples, plus organs, string ensembles, synth leads and pads, and plenty of split and layered patches for those one-man band

gigs. As a bonus, there's a handful of eminently usable bass, vibes, marimba, xylophone, and synth effects sounds. If bottom end is what you're after, you'll want to check out the NanoBass, which is loaded with every kind of acoustic and electric bass sample imaginable, plus a myriad of synth bass sounds. These range from retro analog to all the latest techno, industrial, and hip-hop sounds, all fresh off the dance floor. There's a lot to choose from here, and pretty much all of the presets are guaranteed to make your windows rattle. Plus, these boxes are really easy to use—you'll be dialing up sounds within minutes of unpacking them. The front panels of both units are identical, with dedicated knobs for setting overall volume, effect level (there's one preprogrammed for each patch), and the MIDI-receive channel. The presets are organized into sixteen "categories" of sixteen programs each, selected with the two remaining front-panel knobs. It's all so simple, even your drummer will be able to use 'em.

The NanoSynth (\$449) is the newest of the line and perhaps the most chameleon-like of the five, and it's also the most expensive, but there's a lot under the hood. Even though its front panel is virtually identical to the NanoPiano and NanoBass, the NanoSynth is capable of responding to all sixteen MIDI channels simultaneously, playing sixteen different timbres (again, with a maximum polyphony of 64 voices). And there are lots more presets here: 640 of 'em, including a General MIDI-compatible bank of sounds, making it the ideal box for playing back Standard MIDI File (SMF) sequences. In addition, there are three ROM banks of alternative sounds, plus a user bank into which you can store your own edited or downloaded sounds. Although there are no editing capabilities from the front panel (the voice architecture is

▲  
**The Nano-  
Compressor:  
killer  
compression  
for pocket  
change**



almost identical to Alesis' QS6 keyboard synth), there is provision for computer control, either via MIDI or by using the onboard serial interface for direct connection to any PC or Mac. Clearly, the NanoSynth is aimed at computer aficionados. For example, it provides RCA jacks instead of standard 1/4" jacks for signal output, and there's another pair of RCAs for line-level input from a computer sound card. Plus, it's bundled with a CD-ROM packed with MIDI files and both PC and Mac software, including a "lite" version of Mark of the Unicorn's UniSyn patch editor program. So there's something here for everybody, whether you're developing sound for multimedia or are just plain looking for a box loaded with great samples (and the NanoSynth's got quite a few of them, including some great synth effects and techno loops).

The NanoVerb (\$179) is the plainest vanilla of the Nano family. It provides sixteen different effects: ten basic reverbs (three halls, three rooms, three plates, and one gated room), three pitch modulation effects (chorus, flange, rotary speaker), two composite effects (chorus


plus two different room reverbs), and a delay of up to 1.27 seconds. The front panel sports input and output level controls, a wet/dry mix control, and an ADJUST knob, which is used to alter one factory-predetermined parameter within the selected effect (reverb decay, pitch modulation speed, or delay time). The sound quality is okay—almost identical to Alesis' larger and more comprehensive MidiVerb, in fact—and certainly more than acceptable in live performance, though its sonic limitations (a kind of hissy graininess, for want of a better description) would probably be too apparent in a recording environment.

But it is the NanoCompressor (at \$119, the least expensive of the Nano line) that is the sleeper in this lineup. Quite simply, I don't think you'll find a better stereo compressor/limiter than this for the money anywhere, anytime. If you haven't been turned on yet to the magic of judiciously applied compression—the punch it can add to bass, the crack it imparts to snare drums, the whoomp it gives kick drums—you owe it to yourself to start experimenting. True,

the NanoCompressor isn't the easiest compressor out there to use—it actually gives you so much control, you really do need to know what you're doing to get it to function at its best—but it is certainly one of the most affordable and best-sounding of the entry-level compressors on the market. In fact, given its price, the feature set of this puppy is absolutely phenomenal. In addition to the familiar threshold, ratio, and output gain controls, there are continuously variable attack and release times (attack times range from 0.1 to 200 milliseconds; release times range from 50 milliseconds to 3 seconds). What's more, front-panel switches allow you to select between soft-knee and hard-knee compression modes (the former is a bit more subtle) and between peak or RMS detection. (Peak detection will give better transient response while RMS detection allows for a more dynamic signal.) There are also front panel meters that show the amount of gain reduction and either the input or output level (switchable), plus there's a bypass switch. There's even a sidechain input on the rear panel that allows you to perform frequency-dependent or signal-dependent compression such as de-essing or ducking. Best of all, the NanoCompressor sounds great: In my studio, it clearly outperformed a number of other, considerably more expensive solid-state compressors in my effects rack. Onstage, connected between a guitar or bass and amplifier, it can work wonders in adding punch and sustain to your axe.

To be sure, there are some things about all the Nanos that could be improved—provision for optional battery power, for one thing, would be most welcome, instead of the dreaded wall-wart supplies that are used, and I missed not having headphone jacks. And all the units except the NanoCompressor would, in an ideal world, provide a little more in the way of front-panel controls and displays. But there's something really cool about the concept of having five different yet similar, compact, affordable boxes, each of which is dedicated to doing a single job. What's more, with the possible exception of the NanoVerb, each of these boxes does that job very well indeed. All of which proves, I guess, that you don't have to be big to be beautiful. Hey, go ask Mary Lou . . .

*Special thanks to Jim Mack and Jeff Klopmeier at Alesis.*



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In the September issue of *Musician*, we talked about the process of posting audio files on the Internet for users to download and then listen to. This is a good way to make your music available on the Web, but the last year has seen the emergence of a new technology that bypasses many of the pitfalls of posting sound files for download.

This new Web audio technology is called streaming. Streaming audio starts playing as soon as the user selects the file by clicking on your Web page. This means you can use larger files—with much greater fidelity—because unlike downloading files, the user won't have to wait to hear anything.

Before you leap ahead and decide to fill your site with streaming audio files, be forewarned of a few caveats: Listeners must have the appropriate plug-ins (which are

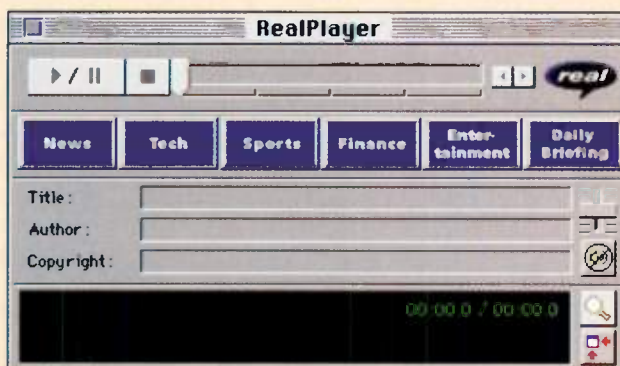
format your files for that platform. This article will take a look at the various formats that are leading the pack at the moment.

You'll need to weigh the features that each format offers against the number of people that are already set up with the requisite plug-ins when making your decision. (It's a drag to open a Web page and attempt to hear some music, only to be informed that you must download and install the appropriate plug-in first, so choose wisely.) The best strategy may be to provide both a downloadable and a streamed version of your music.

While it's feasible to post full-fidelity, full-length versions of your music on the Web, you may still want to keep your

Networks website ([www.realaudio.com](http://www.realaudio.com)) to prepare your files properly. Like the plug-in, it's free and is fairly simple to use.

To create a RealAudio file, open your audio file into the RealAudio encoder and choose your desired bandwidth from a pull-down menu on the encoder. Selections on the menu allow the file to be optimized for projected connection speeds, ranging from 14.4 bps/mono to dual ISDN/stereo. Once your optimum target speed is selected, a message appears on the encoder interface telling you what the best use of the selected format is. For example, if you select 28.8 bps mono, medium response, you are advised as follows: "This option may improve clarity for music with snare drums, cymbals and voice. If audio artifacts occur, encode with the narrow response option." It's not a bad idea to provide several versions



**RealAudio's player panel.**

# NOTHING but NET, PART II

free) and up-to-date browsers installed on their computer in order to hear your streamed music. On top of this, your Internet service provider (ISP) must have a server that is properly configured to successfully deliver your files to the user. (It's best to give your ISP a call to confirm that they can handle the type of files you plan to use.)

Streaming files also present more of a challenge for you as the webmaster of your site since you'll need to properly configure your sound files for the streaming format you plan to use. At the moment the field is pretty thick with companies that have developed proprietary versions of the streaming technology, so you'll need to pick the formats that make sense for you and then

*Streaming audio provides immediate audio delivery*

audio files as slim as possible. Larger files are much harder to handle, both for you at the server end and for the user. When I post audio on the Internet, I usually provide a downsampled "clip" of my music instead of an entire full-fidelity file; it's too much to ask users to wait for an entire CD-quality song to crawl over the net and into their computer, and a clip can serve as a teaser that entices the listener to want to hear more of your music.

## REALAUDIO

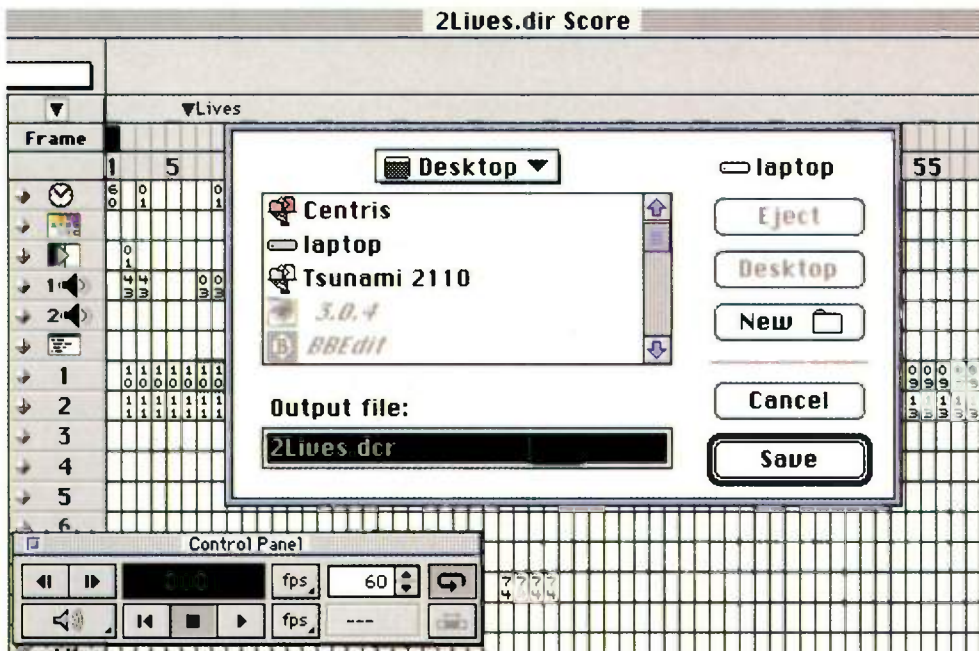
In order to create RealAudio streaming files, you'll need to grab a copy of the encoder from the Progressive

of your file at various bandwidths for posting, so that your users can choose the one that best suits their set-up.

At this point, you can add title and copyright information that will be embedded in the final file. The encoder interface also indicates your selected sampling rate, whether the file is mono or stereo, and how large the final file will be once it is compressed. Clicking on ENCODE starts the wheels in motion and saves the file with an ".ra" extension.

As promised, things get a bit more complicated at this point. In order to get your file to play you must set up a file structure that works as follows: A link on your Web site will

**by robert ra'nes**



## A file being saved on a Mac for Shockwave.

way to check your file "locally" is via the encoder when processing the file. (See the RealAudio Web site for detailed instructions.) By the way, it's a good idea to create another link on the page where your music appears so that users can download the appropriate plug-in if they need it. For example, `ahref src="www.realaudio.com"` Download the RealAudio plug-in (a).

## SHOCKWAVE

Another option is Macromedia's Shockwave (whose plug-in is available for free at [www.macromedia.com](http://www.macromedia.com)). About half of the

reference—or call—a text-only file, which you must create and then give the extension ".ram." (The .ram extension contains the Universal Reference Locator [URL] of the .ra

audio file.) This text-only file enables you to properly address the actual audio file on your server. You must post these files in order to check that the links work properly—the only

users on the net have now downloaded the Shockwave plug-in for their browsers, and the sound quality is excellent. These files can be created by adding a plug-in to SoundEdit16

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172	2/93	100 Greatest Guitarists, Paul Simon, Robben Ford
173	3/93	Mick Jagger, Hothouse Flowers, Annie Lennox
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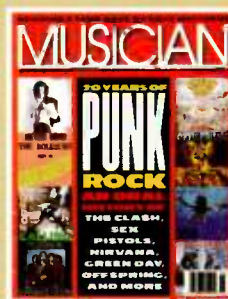
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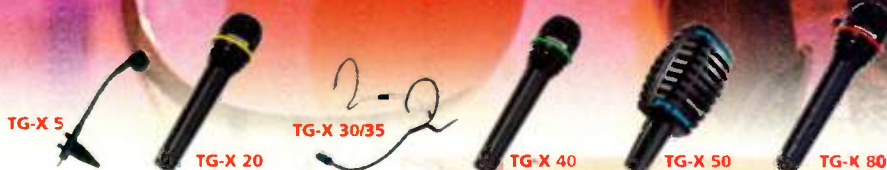
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# beyerdynamic

that's made by Macromedia. This plug-in allows sound files to be exported as "shocked" audio files for Web use. In addition to batch editing, Shockwave also allows "local" testing of your sound files. This means you can put your Hypertext markup language (HTML) links and Shocked files through their paces before posting.

To create your Shocked file in SoundEdit, you don't need to go through a downsampling process. (In fact, Macromedia recommends working with a 16-bit, 22 kHz or 44 kHz file.) After opening your file in SoundEdit, select Shockwave for audio in the extras menu. After choosing the proper compression settings (for instance, mono 16 kbps compression, which is optimized for 28.8-bps modem connections), export your sound as an .swa file (an option in SoundEdit). Now you're ready to post your Shocked file. When naming files for posting on the Internet, remember to add the required .swa suffix to the end of the file name and follow the proper naming conventions for your server. (This usually means using eight characters or less with no spaces or special characters.)

The Macromedia site contains free HTML templates that you can download and customize in order to get your Shocked sound playing on your own site. While you're there,

check out Flash, which is another Macromedia product that offers Internet audio capabilities.

## BEATNIK

Thomas Dolby's company, Headspace, has recently weighed in with Beatnik, which is a browser plug-in that offers superior sound quality and the ability to mix sound on the Web via the use of Java. In addition, while retaining sonic quality, the file sizes are very small and can be interactively controlled by the user.

As with RealAudio and Shockwave, users need to download and install the Beatnik plug-in in their browser. In order to create files in the Beatnik format, you'll need to have the Beatnik editor, (free at [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)). The editor outputs files in Headspace's Rich Music Format (RMF). Again, details of implementation are available at the site.

When you're ready to start selling digital version of your music online be sure to thoroughly explore Liquid Audio. (For more on Liquid Audio, see "Internet Update: New Vistas in Music Distribution," September 1997, *Musician*.) The next few months will no doubt see an explosion of new options for musicians on the Internet, so stay tuned. ☺

Robert Raines ([www.rrcreative.com](http://www.rrcreative.com)) is a

musician and Web site designer who's work includes sites for Barnes & Noble, Disney and the New York Times. His new CD of electronic blues is available online, from Robert Raines Creative at (516) 261-2263 or [rraines@iab.com](mailto:rraines@iab.com)

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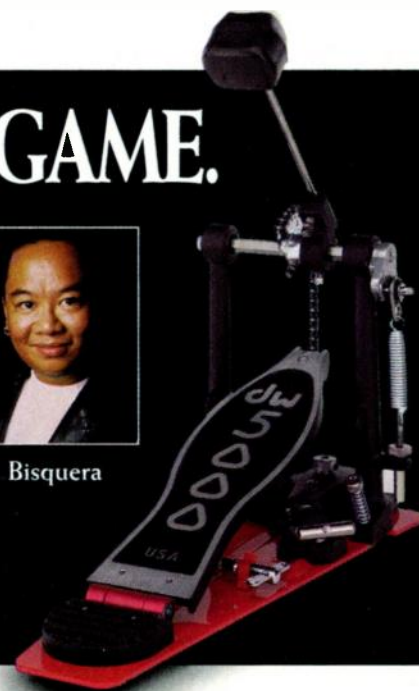


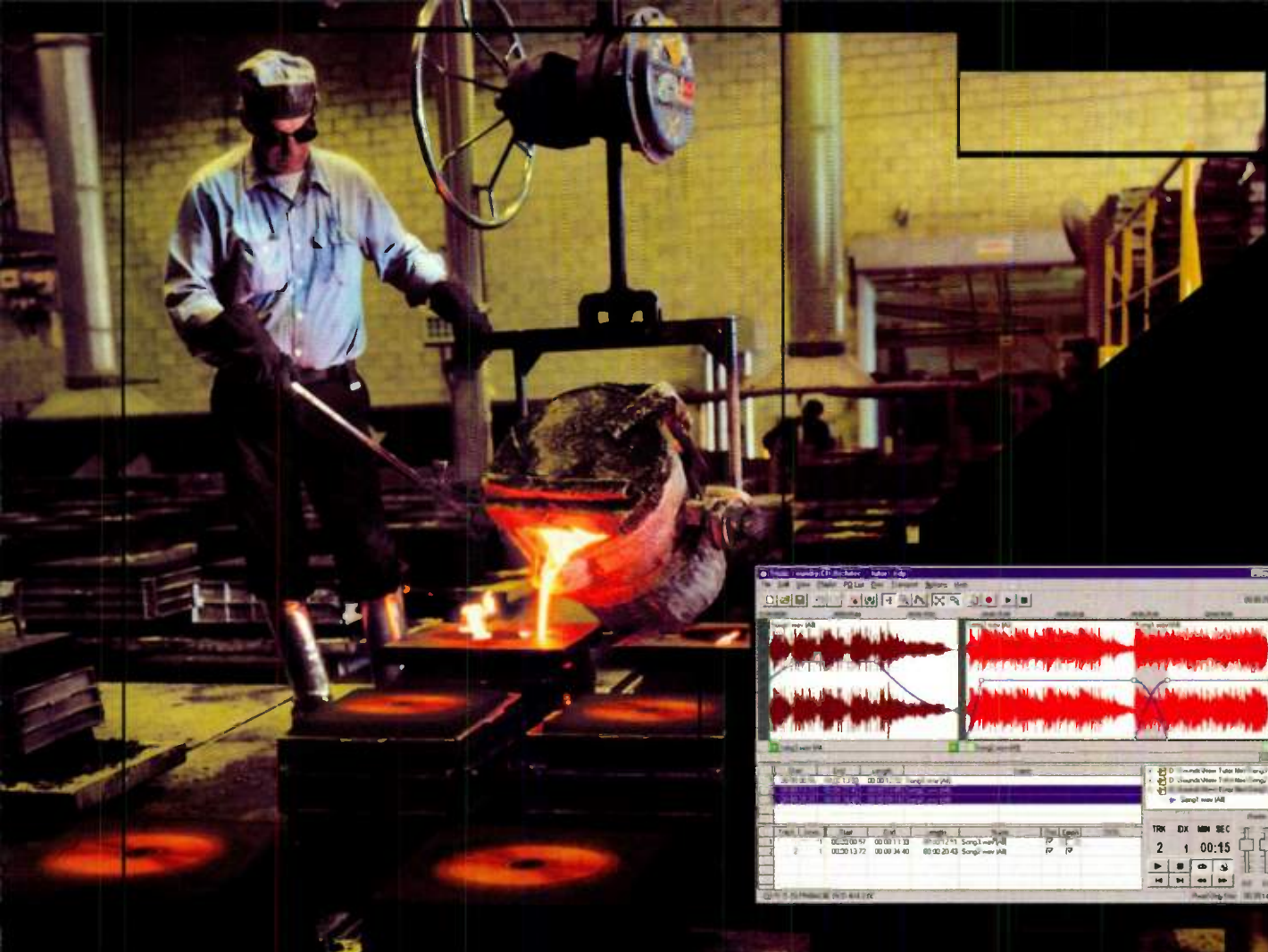
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tools," Rodby says. "I'm lucky I haven't had to use it all yet." The Pat Metheny tracks he works with, after all, reach his hard drive after they've already been carefully produced, so there's not much need to fuss with them.

Though he'll dive into the software when he has to. Take, for instance, the noise-reduction plugin, which Rodby uses mainly for non-professional projects, such as transferring battered old LPs to CD for his personal use. "It works extremely well," he reports, noting that Sound Forge offers detailed ways of removing clicks and other noises but that there's also a "Vinyl Restoration" default setting that does a fine job right out of the box.

Rodby also delves deep into Sound Forge when he needs to cut a section from a song. He'll highlight the portion of the wave display that corresponds to the passage he wants to remove. Then comes the magic: With a quick keystroke he can tell Sound Forge to start a few seconds before the cut—the exact starting point can be easily configured—and skip the selected music when it plays. That way Rodby can audition the cut before he makes it. If he doesn't like the results, he can adjust the start or end of the selection simply by clicking and dragging with the mouse, then listen again.

Another feature he loves is what Sound Forge calls the Preset Manager. "You can take all the settings in the program, any preset in any of the effects, anything that's user-specifiable, and save them in a separate file. That way, you can save and load different preferences, in case different people use the program, or if you need one set of preferences for making CDs and another for recording."

# SMOOTH 'n' EASY

By Greg Sadow

**W**hy do we like our favorite gear? Steve Rodby—bass player in the Pat Metheny Group and co-producer of their records—has a simple answer. He likes Sonic Foundry software for Windows because it looks good on his computer screen.

"But," he hastens to point out, "that's more than cosmetic." He might spend fourteen hours a day with Sound Forge, the Sonic Foundry audio editor, and "when you spend that long staring at waveforms, you want to like the way they look."

There's more, of course. "The Sonic Foundry stuff is real stable, and it displays very fast," he

notes, thinking not just of Sound Forge but of the company's de-noiser, batch processor, and other plug-ins, as well as CD Architect, a program for making compact discs. "And it *sounds* good."

Beyond all this, though, lie many more stories. "The cool thing about the Sonic Foundry line," says Rodby, "is that it's consumer-affordable but pro-quality." It offers a wide range of options, from standard items like reverb, chorus, and EQ, to delicious noise effects and the ability (via yet another plugin) to model the acoustic character of any space. "It's a

**Metheny  
Bassist  
Greg Rodby  
Digs Into  
Sonic  
Foundry**

Rodby's eyes *really* seem to shine when he talks about using CD Architect to make CDs. The idea, he says, is to save money when an album eventually goes to a professional mastering lab for final tweaks of dynamics and EQ. Surprised that someone producing a major player like Pat Metheny still worries about cost? "We're blessed," Rodby acknowledges, "and we can spend more time in the studio than most jazz groups do. But we still have to watch every nickel."

That's why he wants to settle as much as possible—the relative volume of each track, plus any fades between one track and the next—before sending the album to be mastered. CD Architect helps him do that. For one thing, he says, "you have much more control of the PQ code. What this means is that, unlike some competing programs, the software doesn't automatically insert silence between tracks, so you can make songs flow into each other, or give a lengthy intro a track number of its own, thus making it possible for people to listen to the song with the intro or without."

More crucially, CD Architect does audio editing on its own, so Rodby can arrange much of what he needs without going back to Sound Forge to mess around with the original audio files. "You can graphically draw a dynamic curve," he says—which means you can create fades that aren't in the audio, or remove fades that you decide shouldn't be there.


Sometimes he'll do complex maneuvers. "Once I had to take a short fade and make it a long one," he reports. "So first I removed the fade by drawing a dynamic curve upwards. Then I copied that section several times and crossfaded each repetition into the next. [Yes, CD Architect lets you do crossfades.] Now I had a long chunk of repetitious stuff, perfect for a fade. I could save it as a separate WAV file, then tack it on the end of the piece where the first short fade used to be, and put a new fade on it."

You can even make cuts and fine-tune transitions. "In one of our tunes," Rodby remembers, "we had two repetitions of something. I had to cut a lot and use the passage only once. But I couldn't just cut from the beginning to the second repetition, because the second time through we'd

added four background lines and the music got incredibly loud."

Solution? Create what CD Architect calls "regions." The first half of the first statement of the passage was one region; the second half of the second repetition was another. He then told CD Architect to cut everything between the first region and the second, and to crossfade from region A to region B. "It was a very long crossfade," Rodby says. "It

made all the extra stuff sound like it was entering very gently and then building. The build was a little bizarre, but at least it was a build. And the CD Architect crossfade algorithm is strong enough to do that on its own."

At this point Rodby is beaming. "All those crossfades," he says, thinking of all the details that go into mixing and producing. "And with this software, I can do them all right here at home." 

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The 12 winners will each receive extended coverage in Musician magazine upon completion of the competition, including on Musician magazine's "Best of the Unsigned Bands" CD compilation manufactured by Atlantic Records and carried to radio and major label A&R departments, a Musician's Guide To Touring & Promotion and a Musician magazine T-shirt. All winners will receive copies of the CD for their promotional purposes. The Grand Prize winner will receive all of the above plus a premium gear package consisting of a Yamaha D30 Digital Mixer with digital I/O card, a Yamaha P1600 Amplifier, a pair of Yamaha NS10M Studio Monitors, a pair of Yamaha BHSM Headphones, a Fostex CR200 CD Recorder and a Fostex D90 8-Track Hard Disk Recorder/Editor.

RULES

To enter the Musician magazine "Best Unsigned Band Competition" send a completed entry form (no photocopy), or post band/art name, contact name, name/address of each musician in band, as well as a 3.5 inch floppy disk, along with a 3-song cassette of original material and a \$20.00 non-refundable processing fee (check/money order payable to Musician magazine; US funds only) to Musician Magazine, 1515 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036. All entries must be postmarked on or before 12/31/97. Not responsible for late, lost, misdirected or illegible entries. Entries submitted must be original (professional musicians not currently signed to a recording contract) or be a self-produced independent or major label artist, retain all rights in this material. Incomplete entries cannot be returned. If selected as a winner, artists are responsible for their own legal and promotional expenses. "Best of the B.U.B." CD does not demonstrate any contractual relationship with Atlantic Records. "Best of the B.U.B." CD is not for sale and will not generate any royalties. Artists 17 years or older will each receive extensive coverage in Musician magazine upon completion of the competition, including on Musician magazine's "Best of the Unsigned Bands" CD, one (1) Musician's Guide To Touring & Promotion (\$30.00 a/c), one (1) Musician magazine T-shirt (\$15.00 a/c), one (1) Grand Prize winner chosen from the 12 final winners will receive a gear package consisting of one (1) Yamaha D30 Digital Mixer (\$399.00 a/c), one (1) Yamaha P1600 Amplifier (\$699.00 a/c), two (2) Yamaha NS10M Studio Monitors (\$470.00 a/c), one (1) Yamaha BHSM Headphones (\$67.55 a/c) and one (1) Fostex CR200 CD Recorder (\$225.00 a/c) and one (1) Fostex D90 8-Track Hard Disk Recorder/Editor (\$199.00 a/c). Open to all unsigned artists except employees and their families of Musician magazine, Atlantic Records, Atlantic Records, their respective affiliated entities, dealers, sponsors, officers, directors, agents, independent contractors and licensors. Submit all federal, state, and local laws and regulations, that where prohibited or restricted by law. No submission/transfer of prizes permitted except by winner(s). Taxes are the sole responsibility of the winner(s). Grand Prize winner must provide Release, Grant of Rights, and Affidavit of Eligibility and Prize Acceptance to winner prior to receipt of prize(s). Noncompliance/return of prize notification as withdrawal will result in disqualification and other rules selection. All judges' decisions are final. All winners will be announced in Musician magazine's summer '98 issue(s).

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# Let the **BIT WARS** Begin

by howard massey

**Yamaha GA Series  
live console**

**T**he Audio Engineering Society (AES) convention is an annual conglomeration of recording engineers and producers, studio owners, tech-oriented musicians, and pro audio dealers and manufacturers, so it always serves as a good barometer of the current state of the industry, along with providing an intriguing glimpse into what lies ahead. Plus, it gives lots of people an opportunity to play with new toys and party hearty.

The audio industry is clearly in a state of transition. There is no question that digital recording rules; the technology is at the same time advancing rapidly and becoming more affordable to the average musician. Yet somewhat perversely the tube revival continues undaunted, along with new digital emulations of the sound of tubes and analog tape. With its eye on the imminent arrival of

DVD-audio, the industry is expanding both upward and downward simultaneously. There were several new \$100,000+ consoles and \$1,000-a-track-or-more digital recorders, but there were also lots of products for the rest of us, including an under-\$5,000 all-digital mixer and several \$500-a-track-or-less MDMs (Modular Digital Multitracks).

And there was certainly no lack of controversy. Everywhere you turned, marketing people were trumpeting the need for higher sampling rates and more bits, even though many design engineers and golden ears at the show were trying to act as voices of reason. Higher sampling rates yield better frequency response, and although there is little actual evidence that we can hear very high frequencies, it seems probable that we perceive them somehow when they are mixed in with other, related, lower frequencies. Audio CDs utilize a sampling rate of 44.1 kHz, while the greater storage capacity of DVD will make it possible to use a much higher rate, which will probably be 96 kHz. (A number of manufacturers already make converters that operate at that frequency.)

More bits translate to greater dynamic range (the difference between the softest and loudest sounds you hear), with each bit yielding approximately 6dB of improvement. The audio CD of today, along with most digital recording systems, uses 16 bits to digitally define sounds, thus yielding 96dB (16 x 6) of dynamic range. The average human being can detect approximately 120dB of difference in sound (130dB is the threshold of pain), although in the real world, there will always be a good +5 -10dB of ambient noise

floor masking the very softest sounds. Clearly, then, 16 bits don't deliver all the sound to us, though, at least in theory, 20 bits should (since 20 x 6dB = 120dB). But the consortium of manufacturers

developing DVD-audio seem to be determined to make it a 24-bit system, even though those extra four bits may not carry any kind of perceptible information. One design engineer I spoke to ex-

**Innovation  
Comes From  
All Sides at  
AES**

pressed the sarcastic opinion that the only way a human being would be able to hear the extra 4 bits would be if he or she were encased in liquid nitrogen. (At absolute freezing, all molecular motion stops and, in theory, there would be no noise floor at all.) At one AES workshop, Grammy Award-winning engineer George Massenburg coined the phrase "marketing bits" in describing this apparent discrepancy between the laws of physics and the exigencies of commercial enterprise.

Be that as it may, lots of manufacturers were jumping on the higher-bit bandwagon at AES. Leading the charge was **Digidesign**, whose Mac-based Pro Tools hard disk recording/editing systems predominate in both postproduction and music recording studios. The new Pro Tools 24 is a 24-bit system, as you might guess from the name. It almost completely obsoletes the company's until-yesterday-current Pro Tools III system, but it has the same base price as the old one (\$7,995, plus an additional \$3,495 for the breakout box) and all TDM plug-ins will work with the new system. If you always wanted to get into Pro Tools but couldn't cough up the requisite big bucks, now is definitely the time, since the company has simultaneously slashed the prices of older systems. Pro Tools III now lists at \$4,995 (plus breakout box) and Pro Tools Project (our October '97 Editor's Pick) can be had for a mere \$1,995. The biggest bargain of all, though, is that you

opens up a whole new world of technology to starving musicians everywhere.

Speaking of TDM plug-ins, there was a number of exciting new entries. **Line 6** debuted its AMP FARM (\$595), which emulates various guitar amplifiers using the same physical modeling technology as found in its AxSys 212 (our Feb. '97 Editor's Pick). **Waves** showed its MaxxBass plug-in (price TBA), which adds extra-low "whoomp" to digital audio files with feats of psychoacoustic prestidigitation. **Lexicon** unveiled its LexiVerb plug-in (\$795), with that classic Lexicon sound and great 3-D graphics. And **Opcode** demoed its Fusion:VOCODE plug-in (\$149), which brings the classic analog vocoder effect to the computer desktop. Other hip new standalone software products included **Arboretum Systems'** MetaSynth (\$249), which allows you to perform all kinds of audio synthesis from a phenomenal graphic-based interface, and version 2.11 of **Mark of the Unicorn's** popular Digital Performer, which includes its eVerb plug-in for the addition of reverb from within your computer. **Steinberg** also announced the release of Cubase VST for Windows (\$399).

But AES isn't really about software—after all, engineers are used to having lots of faders to move and plenty of knobs to twiddle. Accordingly, there were scores of significant new hardware announcements. **Ramsa** raised more than a few eyebrows with its announcement of the DA7—a compact 32-

all three contenders due to ship in early 1998. There were also more than a few new analog mixers, including **Yamaha's** GA Series (available in both 32- and 24-channel configurations), **Soundtracs'** MXD Series and RX-8 (price TBA), the Peavey SRM 2410 monitor mixer (\$2,999), the **Crest** V12 and X-Eight Series, and a slew of new consoles from **Allen & Heath**, including the GL3300 and MixWizard Series.

Those of you shopping for a dedicated hard disk recorder will be glad to hear that prices are plummeting. **E-mu** dropped the list price of its 8-track Darwin system to just \$1,995, and **Akai** did the same with its 8-track DR8 while also slashing the price of its 16-track DR16 to just \$2,995. Both the Akai units come without an internal hard disk; adding a 2GB internal drive to either system will set you back another \$400, but that's still a whole lot less than an equivalent system would have cost you just a few months ago. Akai also issued a challenge to the popular Roland VS-880 (our June '97 Editor's Pick) with the release of its DPS12 digital recorder/mixer combo, which provides 12 (as opposed to 8) tracks for the recording of uncompressed 16-bit data, with balanced analog inputs and built-in onboard effects. But **Roland** was doing anything but standing pat, demonstrating third-party software support from **Cakewalk** and **Airworks** that enables audio to be transferred digitally (via SCSI) between the VS-880 and host comput-



can now download an older version of Pro Tools software (v 3.2) free of charge from the Digidesign Web site ([www.digidesign.com](http://www.digidesign.com)); this will allow you to do hard disk recording on any Power Mac without the need for any external hardware. The company hopes, of course, that you'll ultimately fall in love with its system and want to shell out to upgrade to the newer software and higher audio quality provided by its hardware. This is a brilliant marketing strategy that at the same time

input, 8-bus, 24-bit console, complete with surround sound mixing capability, moving faders, onboard dynamics, subgroup outputs and optional interface cards that provide digital I/O in all the popular formats—all for just \$4,995. The company now joins **Mackie** (Digital 8-Bus) and **TASCAM** (TM-D8000) in pursuit of the pioneering Yamaha O2R (our Oct. '96 Editor's Pick), with



ers for full graphic editing, a Video-MIDI Sync Interface (the SI-80S, price TBA) that allows VS-880 audio to be synced to consumer video equipment, and a kit (\$695) that allows you to burn your own audio CDs directly from the VS-880 (the kit includes a JVC CD recorder). Roland also unveiled an entry-level version of the 880, the VS-840. Priced at just \$1,395, this digital 8-track recorder/mixer combo has no onboard hard disk but records directly to a built-in Zip drive, providing five to

# SM58

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eight minutes of compressed audio per disk (the VS-840 will also be able to read VS-880-formatted Zip disks); an optional SCSI interface (\$149) will allow archiving to other higher-capacity media.

Of course, it wouldn't be an AES show without lots of new signal processors. **T.C. Electronic** led the charge with its aptly named FireworX (\$2,195), which produces ring modulation, vocoder, and distortion effects as well as more conventional reverbs and delays. **dbx** showed its table-top MC6 Mini-Comp compressor (\$140) as well as the new 1086 mic preamp/dynamics processor (price TBA). **BSS** unveiled the latest addition to its Opal line: the DPR-944 (\$899), which provides four discrete input/output channels, two of which can be used for parametric equalization, and two for dynamics processing. **Symetrix** introduced the 562E expander/gate (\$579), which has a unique "windowing" function that slightly delays the



signal so that transients can't slip by. And the trend toward tube products continued with the **Digitech** VCS-1 dynamics processor (\$1,000) and with **Peavey's** decidedly retro VC/L-2 compressor/limiter (price TBA), which is said to contain absolutely no solid state electronics in the audio chain.

Tubes, of course, can be used in every

kind of audio device, not just in signal processors. The **AKG** Solid Tube Microphone includes a bass attenuation switch and 20dB pad, as well as a ground lift on the included power supply, all for just \$1,195. Other new microphone announcements included the **Neumann** TLM103 large diaphragm, transformerless condenser mic (with a new capsule based on the

K87 used in the U67 and U87 mics) and a trio of new products from **Audio-Technica**: the ATM23HE dynamic snare drum mic (\$235), the ATM87R boundary condenser kick drum mic (\$299), and the ATM89R condenser vocal mic (\$325). Last but not least, there was also a number of new amplifiers at AES: **QSC** showed several new additions to its popular PowerLight line, and **Crest** debuted its new Pro II and TKS Series.

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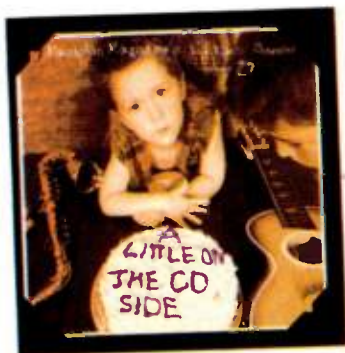
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World Radio History

# records

## Edwyn Collins

### Edwyn Collins

*I'm Not Following You (Epic)*

Call him the laughing hyena of the alternative savannah. Turn off the radio, stand watch all night, it won't matter; crafty ex-Orange Juicer Edwyn Collins will somehow manage to dash into the pop pup tent and disappear with an historic bone or two. Cackling, of course, all the while. That's how his recent worldwide smash "A Girl Like You" came about—from his sneaking nocturnal raids on yesterday's carrier, via vintage styles and instruments that few of today's hi-tech hunters would touch. Naturally, *I'm Not Following You* circles the campfire even closer, tossing in such dusty personal-London-studio novelties as an Arpeggio-matic organ (with samba/bossa nova beat buttons), a 1969 Neve console (literally blessed by its devout Christian inventor, Rupert Neve), ancient Telefunken/General Electric mics, and a converted 4-track Ampex machine that once captured the Doors themselves on tape.

But Collins isn't completely rooted in the past. Mad-scientist style, he's tinkered with synths until he's birthed a new animal—the Cyclaxian Voose, used here on the Joe Meek tribute "No One Waved Goodbye"—and also commissioned his own prototype photoelectric compressor from former Who helper Vic Keary. Says Collins of the latter contraption, "In layman terms, it's a valve limiter that squashes sound, à la Beatles records made after 1965."

Does all this tinkering pay off? Definitely. Excepting a blatant "Girl Like You"—

ism ("Keep On Burning") and a particularly bothersome disco cut featuring Mark E. Smith on vocals ("Seventies Night"), *Following* achieves its intended retro-cool perfection, sounding so déjà-vu in places it's downright creepy. "No One Waved Goodbye," for instance, achieves the same subtle gallop and mausoleum echo of "Wichita Lineman" and "Everybody's Talkin'." And if it weren't for Collins' ale-thick, cabaret-camped delivery, you'd be hard pressed to separate the track from its Sixties and Seventies forebears. Not that you'd want to. The song feels comfortable. Easy to accept.

Collins doesn't stop there. "Magic Piper" recaptures a spark of free-wheeling Motown. "Country Rock" simultaneously slams the genre lyrically while nailing the sound of Poco/Eagles gentleness. "Adidas World" evokes blustering mid-Seventies metal. But the biggest rewards come around the second or third listen, when you stop marveling at his pop-curator profile and start hearing what he's actually singing: cynical, hilarious wordplay that boasts more barbs than a James Thurber yarn. "Adi Dassler have you heard the news," Collins booms. "Gonna stomp all over your three-stripe shoes/ Don't wanna live in an Adidas world with the Adidas boys and the Adidas girls." Anti-Britpop? Just a tad. And the hyena—femur in fangs—exits laughing.

—Tom Lanham

## Javon Jackson

Good People (Blue Note)

**F**our albums into his solo career, and saxophonist Javon Jackson is quickly making a name for himself as an unselfish bandleader. Like Wynton Marsalis, Jackson initially came up through the ranks as a member of the late Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. And like both Blakey and

Marsalis, he has placed less emphasis on his own playing than on the creation of dynamic and unusual ensemble recordings. Now, with the help of producer Craig Street (who has helmed two previous Jackson efforts, as well as CDs by Cassandra Wilson and k.d. lang), Jackson carries on Blakey's one-for-all/all-for-one tradition with a disc that often spotlights his bandmates rather than himself. At the

same time, he successfully traverses several musical styles without becoming either conventional or predictable. *Good People* was recorded live to two-track (a Studer analog 1/2-inch machine), which Street says was "a financial necessity." With the mixing handled by setting levels prior to recording, all that was needed were great performances. The seven-cut CD was recorded in two days, but be-

# When All Else Fails, Play Backwards

IN THE MIX WITH 60 FT DOLLS

**T**ucked away on the fifteenth floor of a midtown Manhattan office building is a tiny recording studio called Room With A View. On this particular September afternoon, the control room is occupied by five individuals—veteran producer Lou Giordano, engineer Jack Hersca, guitarist Richard Parfitt and bassist Mike Cole of the Welsh trio 60 Ft Dolls, and your intrepid *Musician* reporter—along with an imposing SSL console, a Studer tape machine, tons of outboard gear, and the sound of about 14 people yelling alternately "Hey!" and "Whooo!" blasting out of the monitors.

"Actually, it's seven people double-tracked," Parfitt says. "We recruited whoever happened to be in the studio at the time. It's amazing how together they all sound."

"We wanted 'I Am The Walrus'-type 'Whoo!'s," says Cole.

Parfitt listens for a bit, then comments with a smile, "Our A&R man's on there—and he's out of tune."

"We were thinking of crediting him on the sleeve as 'Linda McCartney impersonator,'" Cole quips.

Two more days of mixing remain before this project, the Dolls' second album for DGC, is officially complete. (At press time, a release date and title had not yet been announced.) Sixteen songs, recorded over five weeks at Water Music in New Jersey, are being mixed down; of those, ten to twelve will make the album. What we've heard so far sounds light-years away from the Dolls' urgent-sounding yet very basic punk-pop debut, *The Big 3*. Cole agrees with the assessment: "For the first record, we basically set up and played just as we did live. This time around, we wanted to experiment more."

"We also wanted to record with an American producer, in a different environment," Parfitt adds. "The first record was done at Rockfield in Wales, which is out in the country, not far from where we live. Working in New Jersey and New York is much more intense, and I think that's worked for us. Going with Lou Giordano was a bit of a gamble, but it's paid off—his taste is impeccable, and he doesn't care about sticking rigidly to arrangements."

That particular trait was most helpful, as arrangements for most of the songs hadn't been definitely established before the sessions. Rehearsals had been kept to a minimum, so the band (which is rounded out by drummer Carl Bevan) could start in fresh. Judging by the four songs we hear during this afternoon session, the approach worked.

"Let It Show" and "I Want You" are punchy, up-tempo rockers set to scorch; "Baby Says Yeah" combines a booming, "Tomorrow Never Knows"-inspired drum part and lacerating electric guitar with a luscious vocal sound that's part old Roland tape echo (an RE-301, if you must know) and part natural phasing, caused by Parfitt moving his head as he sang into the mic with headphones blaring.



But the main focus of attention today is "Summer Has Gone," the song with all the "hey"s and "whoo"s. The expansive guitar sound on this ultra-catchy number was produced by two tracks of Martin D-18, one track of Rickenbacker 12-string, and one track of distorted Telecaster, all in an open C# tuning. The opening percussion part is highly reminiscent of Steely Dan's "Do

It Again." In fact, the Dolls originally wanted to use a sample from that very song, but "they wanted too much money," Giordano says, "so we just programmed a similar part into a drum machine and looped it."

A modal guitar lick improvised by Parfitt toward the end of the song has been sampled and placed at the beginning and in the middle for continuity, but the problem of where exactly the song should end is still vexing. As recorded, the modal lick goes almost straight into a John Lee Hookerish slide riff, which Parfitt definitely *doesn't* want to keep. Should the lick's final note be cut off or faded? Should they sample it and then loop it? Giordano has an idea. "I've wanted to do this for a long time," he says with a slight grin, heading over to the Macintosh in the corner and calling up Pro Tools.

Within a minute or so, the solution to the dilemma is reached. The closing lick now turns back on itself, after playing once, it immediately plays again, but this time it's backwards. Parfitt likes the idea, but feels that the last few notes of the backwards part sound "wanky." Giordano responds by quickly fading the lick out after it goes backwards—and eureka, we have an ending. The final moves are then punched into the fully automated SSL console. "So that's done?" Parfitt asks. "Of course," Giordano replies, "it's all part of the mix now. I'm telling you, this is the easiest board of all time to work with. That's why it costs a fuckin' half million dollars."

—Mac Randall



cause some tunes had to be redone, most of the album was laid down on tape during "one lo-o-ong day," Street recalls.

Of the musical guests who joined Jackson on his journey, guitarists Fareed Haque and Vernon Reid shine most brightly. With deft solo work and singular chordal voicings, Haque dazzles in a version of Coltrane's "Exotica"—in fact, he was so enthused that he hums along during part of the tune. Rather than go for a cleaner take, Street wisely opted to keep the performance, saying that he doesn't mind "a few sonic scars" if the feeling's there.

Reid and Haque infuse vitality into the title track,

Jones, and he's not that sure. We didn't get a chance to ask Fahey. More on that later. John Fahey, of course, is the rock from which the weeds of new age guitar have risen. This is no fault of Fahey's; way back on his Sixties albums he was creating music far deeper and more disturbing than anything we've heard from his mellow mutant disciples. This quality guides his collaboration with Cul de Sac, whose abstractions highlight the guitarist's vision, like lightning jabbing through thick, ominous clouds.

Judging from Jones' liner notes, the *Epiphany* sessions added up to one week of misery. They had rehearsed and worked out a bunch of material,

but as soon as they hit the studio, Fahey refused to play any of it, for reasons that remain mysterious. "Everything came to a screeching halt," Jones says. "But it ended up being good to have all our work fall into a heap. The main thing is, it put the project very firmly on John's terms, which meant that we had to react much more quickly and spontaneously to what we were hearing from him."

On some cuts, this meant letting the guitarist play, then coming in to improvise around it. "Tuff," a definitively Fahey-esque open G rumination in sleepwalking tempo, places the guitar way up in the mix,

with discrete white noise and burbles added later by Robin Amos on an EML 101 synth; each nailed his part in one take.

Other tracks were more ambitious—and just as compelling. "Magic Mountain" is based on a loop of a theme from the Richard Strauss *Alpensinfonie*, which Jon Williams taped, treated, and wove around dirgelike strums from Fahey on lap steel; the bottom three strings are in slightly detuned octaves, giving his simple part a funereal resonance.

Stranger still is the last performance on the album. "Nothing" is the result of a dead end in the sessions, when Fahey announced his intention to "interview" the band, presumably to get a creative flow going. With everyone set up and ready to go, the guitarist instead picked up a ukulele and began strumming enigmatic discords. A deadpan monolog transpired, in which Fahey glumly describes his search for "something," only to come up repeatedly with "nothing." Responding to his hand cues, Jones began wandering around the studio, turning amps on and off, knocking things over, while Williams set up a whining effects loop on his Korg MS-20. The effect is at once hilarious and awfully depressing.

*Epiphany* defines the essence of Fa-

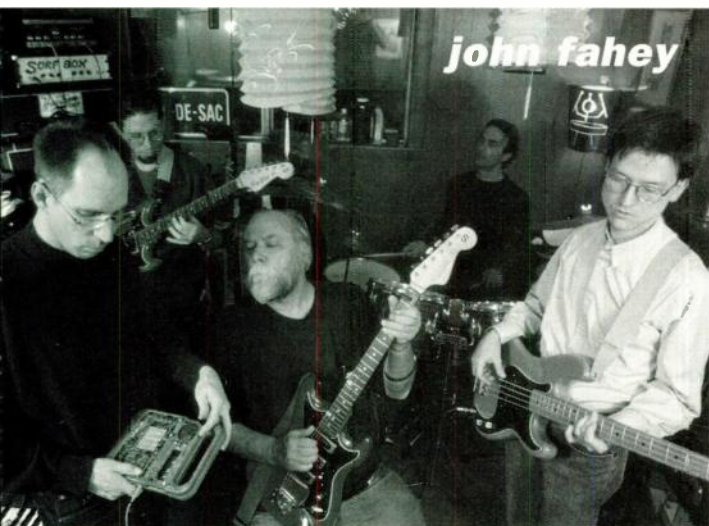
hey, both his "American primitive" guitar and early electronic experiments on Vanguard, through Cul de Sac's unusually intuitive interactions. Jones and Amos both expressed satisfaction with the work, but we're not sure about Fahey. Problem is, we had an interview set up with him, but he changed the time. We wrote it down in the wrong place and missed making the call. We tried several times to reach him again, to no avail. Somehow it all seems to make sense in the context of this work. Chalk it up as another epiphany.—Robert L. Doerschuk

## the Gravy

*Hangman's Pop (Q Division)*

**B**ear with me as I make a grand prediction: No other album released in 1997 will sound remotely like this. The fourteen tracks that make up *Hangman's Pop*, the debut offering by the Gravy, manage the difficult feat of being both infectious and completely crazed. Over and over, these songs introduce inventive melodies and establish enticing moods, only to bust them open with bursts of noise or graft on a seemingly unrelated section in the most jarring manner possible. Chord progressions fall apart, mixes are oddly askew, the whole thing sounds like it could collapse at any minute. In fact, it just keeps getting more brilliant.

This is one of those albums for which the term "labor of love" was invented. It took the Gravy, a Boston-based conglomeration led by Todd Spahr of the late lamented Cavedogs, a year to make *Hangman's Pop*, due primarily to financial pressure on the part of the musicians. The recording process was unorthodox, to say the least—Spahr and his cohorts visited the Q Division studio in Boston on an average of once a week, with each session lasting usually only a few hours, a technique Spahr now refers to as "guerrilla recording." Once the album was completed, it took nearly two more years to be released; in the interim, it was resequenced three times, and two songs from the original track lineup



Clay McLachlan

an infectious funk number sporting some deliciously rough edges. When Jackson first states the melody, Reid tops it off with a squeaky, high harmony part in which his electric guitar sounds almost like a blaring, Maynard Ferguson-like trumpet, only somewhat back in the mix. Street is unable to give that trade secret away: "That's just Vernon's thing, some combination of his dozen or so foot pedals." But Reid's distorted electric sound rarely over-balances the other musicians (excepting few indulgent spots on Santana's "Flor de Canela"), thanks to the studio strategy of having him play through a small amp, then using baffling to prevent his high-powered sonics from bleeding into the other parts.

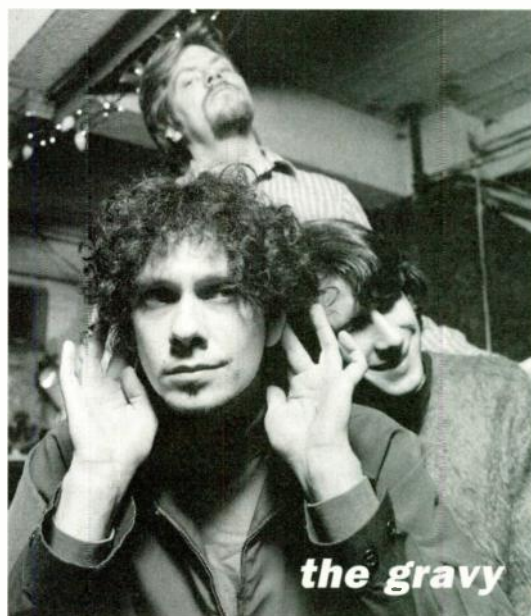
Although listeners may think otherwise, Street claims that most of the record's wilder touches were Jackson's ideas. That's good to know, because while Jackson proves himself to be a solid team member, his playing exhibits neither the originality nor the character of Haque's and Reid's. Still, he has masterminded a CD that, in its concept and execution, stands out proudly from the pack.

—Bob Remstein

## John Fahey & Cul de Sac

*The Epiphany of Glenn Jones (Thirsty Ear)*

**F**ahey dreamed up the title of this album. Jones plays guitar with the avant-garde quartet Cul de Sac and is a lifelong fan of Fahey's. What was the nature of the epiphany? We asked



Nathan Logus

were excised.

The work paid off. Those who fondly remember the edgy pop that the Cavedogs made on their two early-Nineties Capitol releases will find much to admire here, from the double-tracked fuzz bass and marvelous take-no-shit vocals on "Memory" to the Who-like fury of the instrumental "A Scary Tree With Eyes Eating Someone." (A 1959 Les Paul Special and a cranked Vox AC30 provide the glorious guitar dirt on that track and several others.) But the overt wackiness of some of this music—the warped bongo breakdown on "Pretty Krishna," for example, or the frantic style-swapping of "Embrace Your Plague," in which the same eight-bar melodic phrase is handled in six vastly different ways—may come as a surprise.

Spahr reveals that "the *Smile* ethic," i.e., recording in bits and pieces and then joining them together à la Brian Wilson's unfinished magnum opus, was the artistic goal from the start. "I wanted to do editing old-style with tape, but that's just too expensive and time-consuming. So we used [Digidesign] Sound Tools, which was fine, because it made a few things possible that wouldn't have been otherwise."

One feature of the album that was definitely not computer-assisted was the eccentric playing of drummer Andy Harris, a master of the falling-down-stairs fill. "Actually, there are drums falling down the stairs at the end of 'The Song,'" Spahr says. "But they're mixed in with other things. We threw drums down the stairs, but they didn't sound like

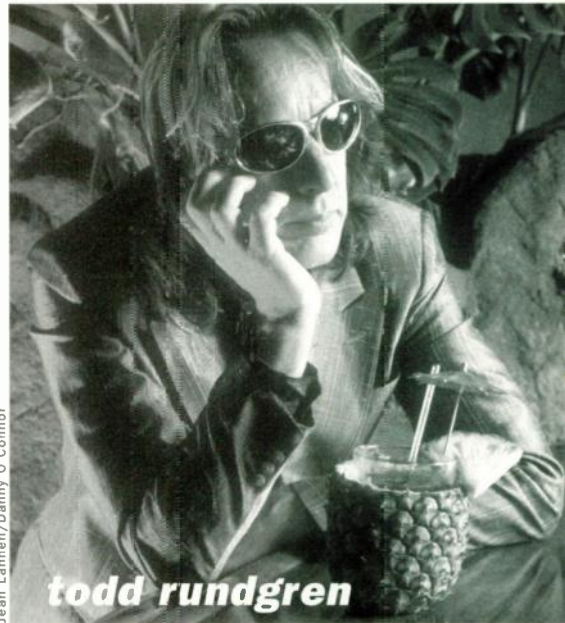
they should have. Once we threw some cymbals and a vacuum cleaner, that sounded more like drums. It's amazing how hard it is to get that old-fashioned drums-down-the-stairs sound." Making an album this insidiously ear-grabbing is no mean feat either. (Q Division, 443 Albany St., Boston, MA 02118; (617) 542-0081)

—Mac Randall

## David Holmes

*Let's Get Killed (GoBeat/1500/A&M)*

Many a strange character walks the streets of New York City. For visitor David Holmes, an Irish DJ/producer/remixer with a fondness for vintage funk and classic movie scores, it was all the inspiration he needed to create the cinematic soundscape of *Let's Get Killed*. More than another techno/dance workout, the musical atmosphere here is enhanced by Holmes' clever use of DAT recorded snippets from his Gotham encounters—with drugged-up street kids, a preacher, a fortune teller—to set the tone for each song. Upon returning to Belfast, Holmes began assembling parts in his home studio, relying chiefly on an Akai S3000 sampler and a Macintosh computer, before entering a commercial studio to finish the tracks. While techno-based, the results maintain an organic vibe that also stems from Holmes' use of vintage samples and use of live instruments.



todd rundgren

"I use a lot of obscure live drum samples off vinyl," he elaborates. "When I was in New York I picked up a bunch of really rare 7" records from the Seventies to use. I sort of took a journey from the early Sixties through the early Seventies when you had all sorts of rhythm&soul, Sixties pop, lounge-core, jazz, latin, dub, reggae, funk, and tripped-out, drugged-out rock."

Holmes disparate tastes combine to make one of the most musical techno/dance albums in recent memory. He even employs a thirty-piece live orchestra on the album's epic take of Serge Gainsbourg's "Melody." Fleet strings saw across a deep, sexy beat, spliced with Hendrix-happy guitar soloing (courtesy of Warm Jets guitarist Paul Noble). The track—and album—ends with the standard NY taxi-cab sendoff: "And don't forget to get a receipt from the driver. Thank you for riding with us." Like the rest of *Let's Get Killed*, it's an exhilarating ride.

—Dev Sherlock

## Todd Rundgren

*With a Twist... (Guardian)*

It's a natural: Rundgren's lifelong fascination with thick voicings fits right into the language of bossa-nova. In this sense, *Twist* was inevitable, and while one might question why this album comes out toward the end rather than on the cusp of the lounge curve, it works as a meeting of mindset and material.

Each track is propelled by Jesse Gress' idiomatic acoustic guitar plucks and Prairie Prince's stylistically correct stick and brush drumming, but it's Rundgren's illumination of his song structures that distinguish these performances. Some songs don't adapt that well: With its I-VI-V foundation, "It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference" is too close to cliché to fit the bossa format, and his update of "Never Neverland" is too tied to the beat to let the words flow as smoothly as on his original version from *A Wizard, A True Star*. But most of his stuff slips into a Brazilian feel like hand into glove. With backbeats melted down and rhythm streamlined

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into a quicksilver samba stream, even the knottiest Rundgrenisms, prickly minor seconds and jagged bitonalisms, slide easily over bossa grooves coated with slick E-mu Proteus strings and reverb-washed vocals.

"The challenge was to take changes and motifs that people may have become very familiar with, then start to read things into them that gives them greater levels of nuance," Rundgren explains. "One of the signature elements of this jazz samba thing is the passing chord; it's about what sort of tension and release you can create as you go from one section of a song to the next, because you're not going through a lot of other sorts of flourish. You don't go to a big drum fill to set up the next section."

But there's a tradeoff: For all the cool harmonies the genre allows, there's a kind of sameness to the rhythm. Aside from tempo and minor details, the feel throughout *Twist* doesn't change much from track to track. "I realized that any interest in the songs wasn't going to come from that part," Rundgren admits. "We couldn't do much about it, because there's always the danger that if you over-arrange an element it becomes a distraction. One thing I did was to mix up the sounds of the rhythm instruments. Like, the clavé had too hard of a sound on 'Mated,' so we went out and found a couple of pieces of driftwood. In some cases we

wanted a big guiro sound, but a real guiro was too itchy, so we got a liter-sized spring water bottle. You know those ribs down the side of a plastic bottle? We used that, with a big plastic brush."

Couple the hypnotic rhythm with the loss of high-contrast dynamics that you get with bossa, and *Twist* as a whole becomes an even more trance-inducing experience. Rundgren compensates for this loss of dramatic effect through arrangement; where the original version of "Love is the Answer" features a gospel-choir crescendo, the updated version gently nudges milky backup voices from middle to upper range. Though the volume never rises, the intensity does, at least to a degree.

Listeners wedded to vintage Rundgren may have trouble adapting to these mutations. But true fans have learned to expect the unexpected from their Wizard, and musicians above all should appreciate the polished technique and low-key ingenuity of *Twist*.—**Robert L. Doerschuk**



**delbert mcclinton**

Tony Baker

At Gordy's insistence, the band wasn't allowed to hear full-fledged demos before cutting backing tracks, instead learning from a bare-bones tape that included just the rhythm and Delbert's scratch vocal. "If musicians are put on the spot, they'll tend to reproduce what's on the demo," Nicholson notes. "This way, they played the songs without any preconceived notions." Of course, it doesn't hurt to have sure hands like drummer Jim Keltner, keyboardist Benmont Tench and slide guitarist Lee Roy Parnell. As for capturing McClinton's "official" vocals, "We had a shoot-out with a bunch of different mics, including some real expensive models," notes Nicholson, "but the winner was the one I use for everything in my home studio, a little Audio-Technica 4033 that costs about \$550. With Delbert's voice, if a mic has too much clarity, it doesn't work as well."

When it came time to assemble the odds and ends into a finished whole, the boys opted for a technical upgrade, using Pro Tools to blend different takes. "Records can be edited together from tiny little bits, but that's not the case with Delbert," Nicholson hastens to note. "Large sections of his vocals are from a single pass." Still, cut 'n' paste was the rule: Many of Delbert's finished vocals are spliced from four or five different takes, while even guest B.B. King's soulful guitar on "Leap of Faith" was the composite of multiple versions. Perhaps it's telling, though, that the best track is also the least calculated. McClinton's original guide vocal for "You Were Never Mine," a mournful lament in the tradition of Otis Redding's "I've Got Dreams to Remember," struck all concerned as so powerful, so impossible to improve upon, that the producers let it be, simply removing hiss from the analog tape as best they could. Thank goodness, 'cause it's brilliant. Makes you think all this elaborate labor to create a bluesy, down-home sound seems like using a state-of-the-art stove to cook a cheeseburger when a hot plate would do just fine. But the results speak for themselves: *One of the Fortunate Few* is a greasy delight

—**Jon Young**

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## Delbert McClinton

*One of the Fortunate Few (Rising Tide)*

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If Delbert's passionate rasp continues to thrill, the prospect of hearing him trudge through a hoary repertoire doesn't. Happily, *One of the Fortunate Few* avoids rerun-itis with a killer batch of new songs, most co-authored by McClinton himself. From the scorching "Honky Tonk Women" attack of "Old Weakness" to the loose, back-porch vibe of "Better Off with the Blues," you've heard these grooves before. But there's always some inventive twist to keep things fresh. The giddy "Too Much Stuff" cleverly reworks Chuck Berry's "Too Much Monkey Business," recruiting John Prine and Lyle Lovett to trade verses with McClinton for a rousing rant; in "Lie No Better" he growls, "If you can't lie no better than that/You might as well tell the truth," brusquely dismissing a faithless lover. Ironically, creating an album with a live, vibrant feel in 1997 entails a process that's anything but spontaneous. According to guitarist Gary Nicholson, a longtime writing partner who co-produced this CD with McClinton and veteran Emory Gordy, Jr., the recording sessions combined old-fashioned sweat and new-tech ingenuity.

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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.

**ADA** 420 Lesser St., Oakland, CA 94601, (510) 532-1152: Ampulator, 26  
**AKAI** 7010 Soquel Dr., Aptos, CA 95003, (800) 433-5627: MPC 3000, 18; S900 sampler, 26; DR8, DR16, DPS12 digital recorder/mixer, 88; S3000 sampler, 98  
**AKG** 1449 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37217, (615) 399-2199: C414, 28; Solid Tube Microphone, 90  
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**AMPEQ** 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133, (314) 727-4512: Reverbrocket, Gemini IV, 28; heads and cabinets, 40  
**APPLE** 1 Infinite Loop, Cupertino, CA 95014: Macintosh, 98  
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**DUNLOP MFG** 150 Industrial Way, P.O. Box 846, Benicia, CA 94510, (800) 722-3434: RotoVibe, 28; UniVibe, 40  
**E-MU** 1600 Green Hills Rd., Scotts Valley, CA 95066, (408) 438-1921: ES1 32 sampler, 18; E-Synth, 72; Darwin system, 88; Proteus, 98  
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**HOHNER** 10223 Sycamore Dr., Ashland, VA 23005, (804) 550-2700: sixties accordion, 40  
**JERRY JONES GUITARS** 913 Church St., Nashville, TN 37203, (615) 255-0088: Longhorn basses, 40  
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**backside**



# Wah-Wah *Pedals:*

## **Bane or Scourge?**

**W**hy is it that really lame concepts, fads, and inventions can only be killed off temporarily? No matter how bad an idea something was in the first place, someone will eventually bring it back and expect us to be nostalgic for it. *Everything* does double duty: You hated it then, and now it's time for everyone to gather together and hate it again.

Patchouli oil, space-age bachelor pad music from the Sixties; *I Dream of Jeannie*, cocaine, the career of Ryan O'Neal: None of these things was meant to last. In fact, none of these things should have happened the first time.

Which brings me to today's topic: the wah-wah pedal. My question is, why can't they all be burned, or blown up, or destroyed in some way?

Or could we at least kill the person who first had the idea? According to Chris Cush at Mojo Guitars in New York City, one of the earliest wah-wahs was made by Vox and was intended to make an organ sound like a trumpet. *That* was a surprise, as I thought it was invented by Jimi Hendrix to make a guitar sound like a duck. I used to picture a big board meeting, where some old guy in a suit is loosening his tie and saying something like, "You know, Pete, a guitar's not a bad sounding instrument—if only we could get one to sound more like a duck!"

But it turns out that none of this was Jimi's fault at all—even though he did sort of wreck everything when he found a way to actually sound okay with a wah-wah, thus giving millions of whimpering, drug-addled, ersatz guitarists a false sense of worthiness. The earliest Vox wah-wah was called the Clyde McCoy and featured the swing-era trumpeter's like-

***"I thought it was invented by Jimi Hendrix to make a guitar sound like a duck."***

ness on the pedal itself—the idea was to cop the sound of his famous muted wah-wah solo on "Sugar Blues"—but it was originally intended to be used with an organ! See, you guitar players aren't even using it right!

The worst part is when you're innocently listening to a new CD, and a mood of some substance has been established, and you're starting to think, hey, these guys are really onto something . . . and suddenly, right when you least expect it, here's some idiot guitarist trying to bring back horribleness with a stinking wah-wah solo.

You expect this on any Beck CD, where it sounds hep. It's not too much of a shock with Mono Puff, who are proudly and flamboyantly incoherent to begin with. But sometimes it pops up on things that are acoustic and smart and flannelly, like on a recent Palace Music album that chugs along atmospherically for a while until, four or five songs in, there it is, the musical equivalent of leprosy. Is nothing safe?

If only people would go by this simple rule: Don't ever use a wah-wah pedal for anything audible, unless you're Jimi Hendrix. Okay?

—Thurston Kelp



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