

Pulp  
Oasis



George  
Harrison

JULY 1996 \$2.95

# MUSICIAN



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Blur Boo Radleys Cast Radiohead Robert Smith of the  
Inside the UK hitmaking machine Why  
George Harrison tells all to Timothy White

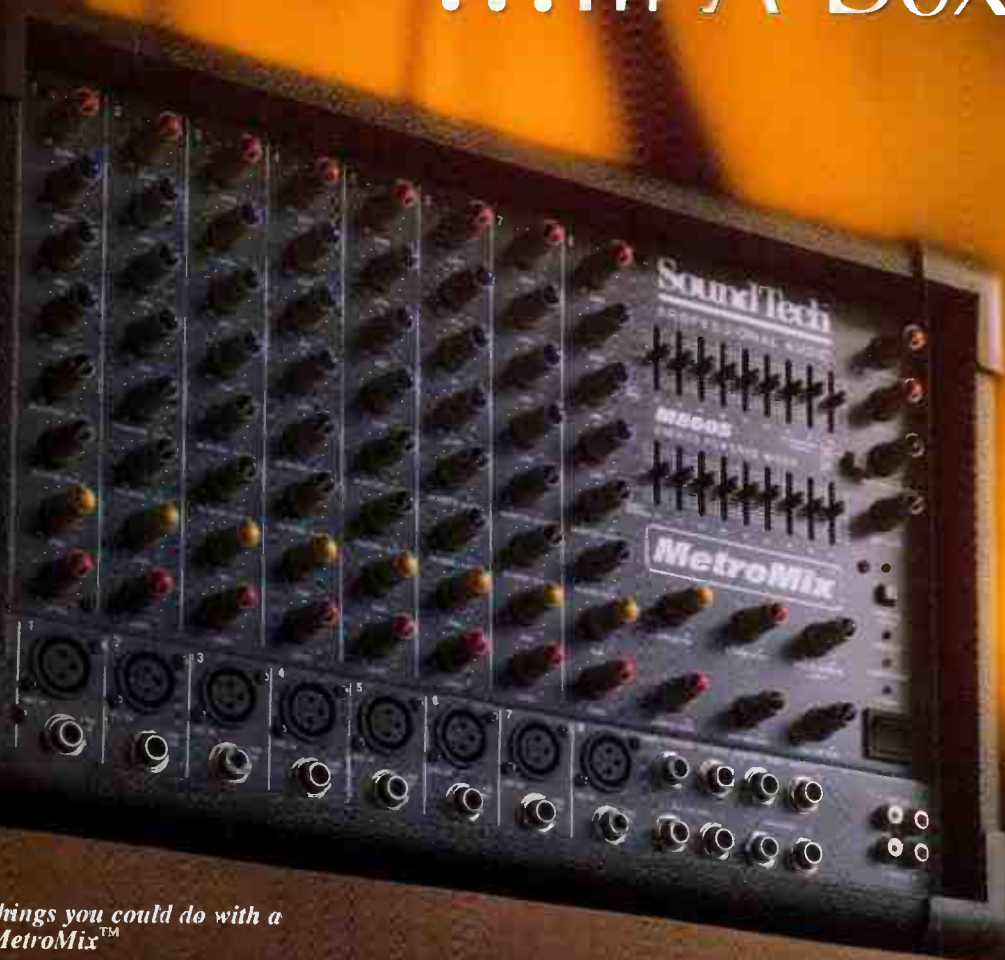


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Insets: L to R Pulp's  
Jarvis Cocker, Oasis'  
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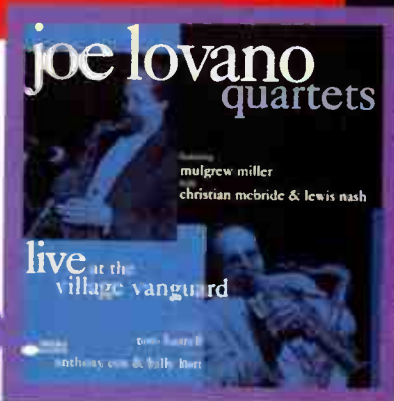
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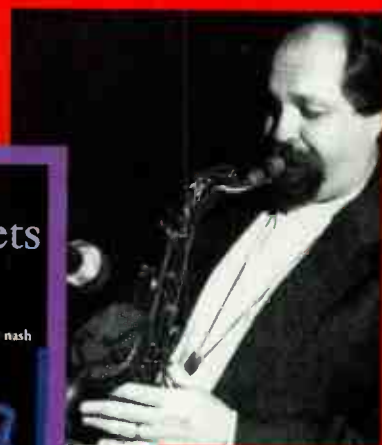
The saxophone master reigns supreme on this *double* CD set, capturing two quartets live at the Village Vanguard. Band one features **Mulgrew Miller**—piano, **Christian McBride**—bass and **Lewis Nash**—drums. Band two is composed of **Tom Harrell**—trumpet, **Anthony Cox**—bass and **Billy Hart**—drums.

Joe Lovano

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(29125)



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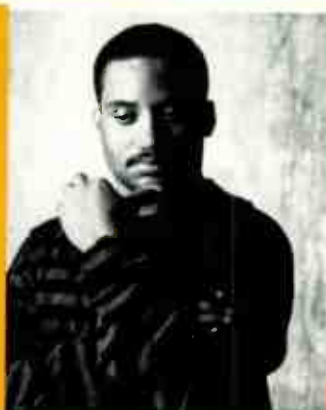
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(30491)



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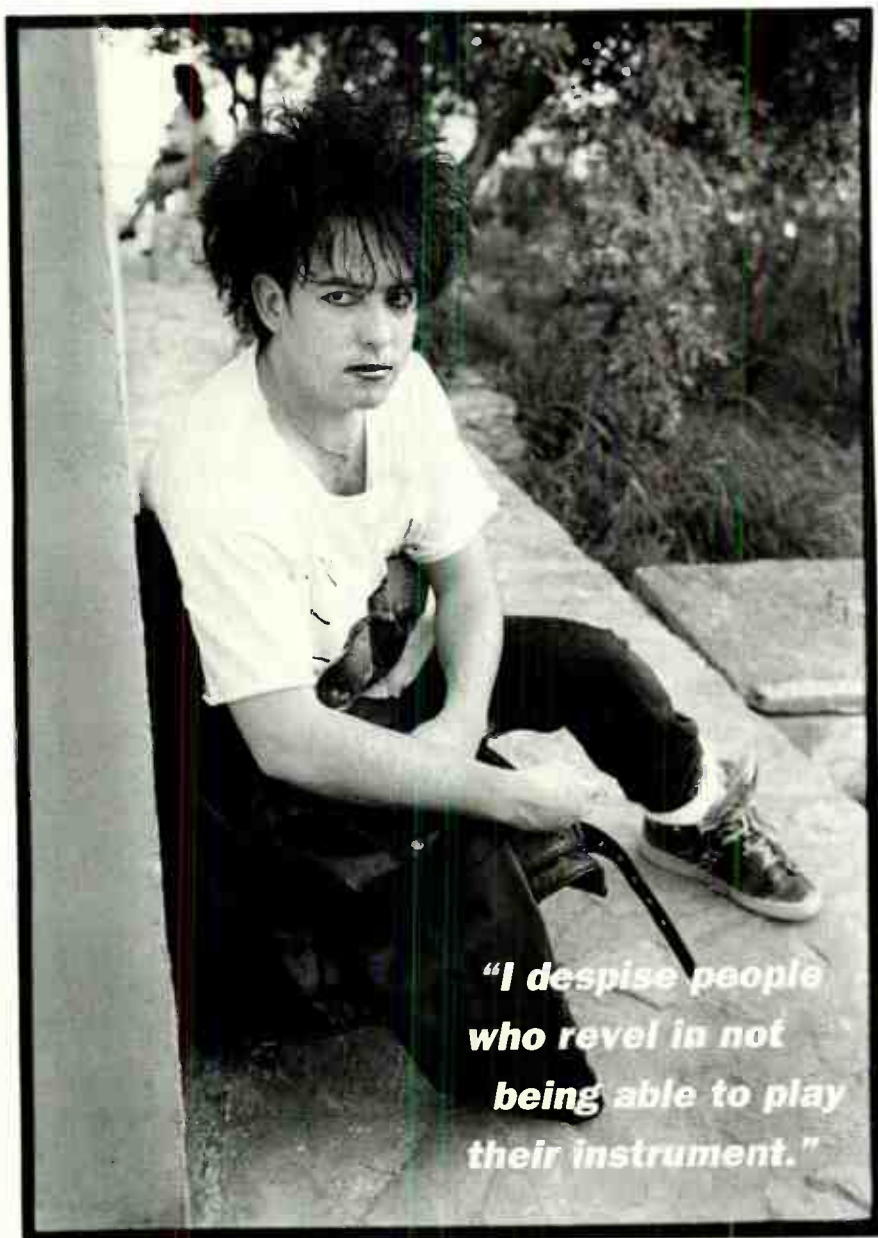
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PM





**"I despise people who revel in not being able to play their instrument."**

**T**here's been talk for years about your doing a solo project, yet here you are with *Wild Mood Swings*, a new Cure album. What was it that made you decide on another band record?

I think I enjoy the social side of it as much as anything. It would be much more lonely if I was making a solo record. I'd have to draft people to play instruments I couldn't play, and if I'm making a record with a bunch of people, I may as well make it with a bunch of people that I like.

With recent changes in the band's lineup, does this feel like a new Cure?

The group is actually like a very different group to the one that made the *Wish* album. Roger [O'Donnell] has made a difference.

# Robert Smith

He's really been the only person in the history of the Cure who's been able to play keyboards competently. So that's allowed us to experiment more with keyboard sounds, in particular just playing very simple piano, but playing it well.

*Competence doesn't seem to be in vogue in Britain at the moment.*

Well, I've never held that disingenuous punk ethic that "we can't play, we won't

play." Boris [Williams] is a phenomenally good drummer, and replacing him was the most difficult thing, because once you've had someone that's that good you can't take a backwards step. The audience expects us now to have a certain standard of playing. I like the idea of being able to play; I think it's to be applauded. I despise people who revel in the ignorance of not being able to play their instrument. There's a kind of pathetic side to it really.

But the problem is that I have limitations. Porl [Thompson] is a far more fluent guitarist than me, much faster, much more able to kind of change shape quicker and have a range of styles. But ultimately, people equate my guitar playing with the Cure, so in some ways he was kind of isolated. A lot of what he played didn't really fit—which was proved when he walked into Page and Plant. He was given free rein to express himself in that set-up, whereas with the Cure he was always being reined in: "Please don't do this, please don't do this."

*Any reflections on Oasis vs. Blur vs. Pulp vs. the British press?*

I don't think very much changes. That is one part I remain very cynical about. It's a media-driven movement, really. I don't think it's aimed at me, and I certainly don't get a lot of it. I think there's a couple of them will transcend the movement—when the movement dies they won't go down with it.

The English media has the incredibly stupid attitude that this is the center of the musical universe. It's patently untrue. The stories that they run—"The Groups That Conquered America"—because Oasis has managed to get into the charts...you think, "Hang on, this opens the door for the new wave of Britpop," and it doesn't work like that. They'll find out, I suppose.

—J.D. Considine

Ebet Roberts



**Y**ou and your two partners—alto and baritone saxophonist Simon Clarke and trumpeter Roddy Lorimer—comprise the hottest horn section in British rock. How do you prepare for your diverse studio and concert dates?

**Tim Sanders, tenor & soprano saxophonist:** The main thing is to keep our ears open and arrange as close as we can to the brief that we get from the producer or the band. We've gotten called in just to do a couple of stabs on dance tracks. And when we did *Connected* with Stereo MC's, the singer sang us his ideas for horn parts at the session; we learned them on the spot and recorded them. Then they took these little riffs and things away and assembled it like a jigsaw puzzle in the final mix. On the other hand, when we did *African Woman* for Baaba Maal, Simon did this stupendous arrangement with a huge African *cum* salsa vibe. So there's a wide spectrum.

*You've gone on the road*

*with bands like the Who and Eric Clapton. Is it hard to find parts in songs by artists who normally aren't associated with horns?*

There was criticism in the American music press when we went out with the Who in '89. It was a 17- or 18-piece band, and we were accused of toffing it up. But when you listen to records like *Quadrophenia* there's a lot of orchestral stuff, and there were plenty of places even

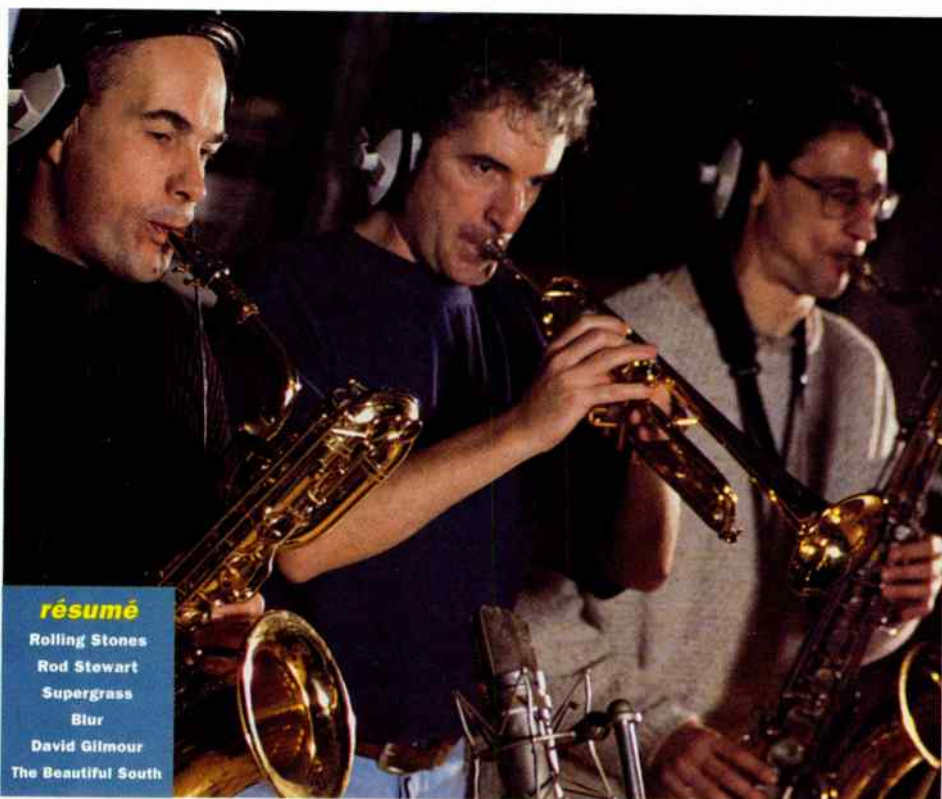
**We would rather  
not play  
than play something  
inappropriate.**

on *Tommy* where John Entwistle would play French horn. We just tried to provide excitement in the context of the Who's music—which wasn't very hard to do.

*If you're playing on a song where there was originally no horn part, do you try to create a more subliminal than overt impression?*

There's very little point in playing something that's going to be subliminal. If a song seems to be working well enough without us, we'd rather not play than play something inappropriate. So we try to add, whether it's dynamic information, like coming in on a chorus to create extra excitement, or an intro where there wasn't one before. As an example, for his recent shows at the Royal Albert Hall, Eric Clapton specifically requested horns

# The Kick Horns



## résumé

Rolling Stones  
Rod Stewart  
Supergrass  
Blur  
David Gilmour  
The Beautiful South

## ◀ L to R:

**Simon Clarke,  
Roddy Lorimer,  
Tim Sanders**

for an unplugged version of "Layla." He sang the sort of thing he was looking for, and we came back with an arrangement he liked. He also wanted horns on "White Room" and "Badge." We wound up putting unison licks behind the solos on "White Room" and doing something similar behind the verse, so that the horns were still in the spirit of the track.

*How do British and American horn sections differ?*

It probably depends on the material more than the geography. The kind of thing that Jerry Hey did with Michael Jackson—that very thin, bright, hard sound—is more the result of working in a rock context because the sound needs to cut through. If Jerry was asked to arrange for a rootsy soul, I'm sure he would take a different approach and write more in the low to mid range area. And we certainly would as well.

—**Robert L. Doerschuk**



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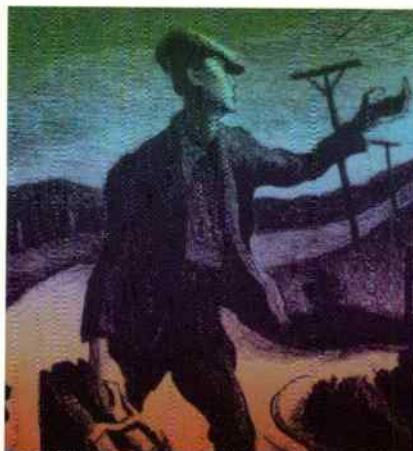
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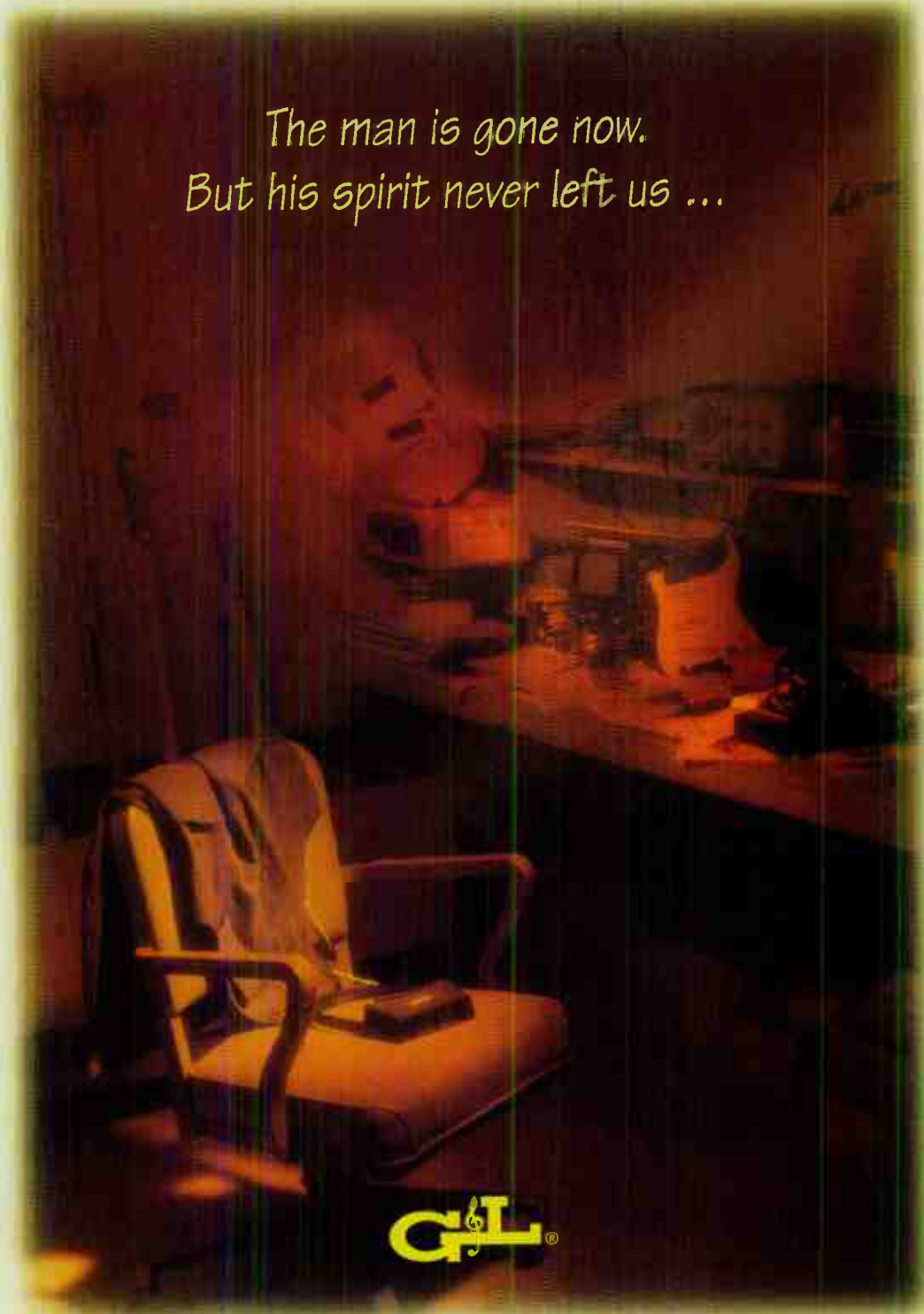
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## tori amos

No argument here about Tori Amos' command of her voice and playing (May '96), but please, Tori, lose that marketing strategy. If any male artist released an album called, say, *Girls for Thor* and posed with a gun and mud-as-blood, he'd be laughed off the planet. I'm so tired of subtle and not-so-subtle sexism aimed at men but packaged as female empowerment. Until she explores the depth of all humanity, Tori will remain nothing more than the K-mart Kate Bush.

**Robert Capra**  
Everett, MA

Yo, Tori, the "c" word isn't "cunt"—it's "confused." Who really cares about "the girl in the bathroom"? Get a real job for a month! Typical male, right Ms. Amos?

**Philly Frank**  
Philadelphia, PA

You accomplished two great things in your Tori Amos article: You got a picture of her with her legs crossed, and you got her to talk about the actual mechanics of her music. Considering her usual habit of pointing her vagina at us and having "tea with the devil," I found this a refreshing change.

**David Barr**  
Plymouth, MA

## gin blossoms

I've been surprised by a few of your choices for recent cover features. The Gin Blossoms (Apr. '96), for instance. How many other bands have a silly sitcom single, music videos, previous nationwide exposure in all media, and *still* can't get the ball rolling in sales for their most recent release? They needed help because their music is sellout weak, not "fun." Lesser-known bands who don't have this kind of exposure might not get the kind of assistance you've given the Gin Blossoms.

**Bill Roess**  
New York, NY

In your article on the Gin Blossoms, singer Robin Wilson comes off as a dictator in the way he says he rewards drummer Phillip Rhodes with a piece of the publishing on a couple of songs, just to encourage him to be more enthusiastic. As a drummer, I'm just as important in my band's songwriting process as the other three members. In fact, several of our songs started with the drum part. If Wilson really wants to encourage his

bandmates, he should give them more credit and worry less about who gets the rights for the songs.

**M'liss**  
Pittsburgh, PA

## ich bin ein berliner

I was surprised to learn that my grandfather, Emile Berliner, "had become wealthy improving the transmission quality of Alexander Graham Bell's telephone" ("The Cheatin' Art," Feb. '96). For him to have become wealthy, instead of tak-

Berliner magnetic recording device is on exhibit at the Smithsonian. In any event, it is now acknowledged that the true inventor of magnetic recording was an American, Oberlin Smith, who developed it at about the same time Emile Berliner introduced his disk.

**Oliver Berliner**  
Beverly Hills, CA

## the tangled web

I just read your article, "Welcome, You've Got Gear!" (Apr. '96). Then I spent the better part of an hour looking for all the neat stuff I read about. The Alesis URL came up with a page with the Alesis logo and no text or links. Oh well, I thought, maybe I can find out what year my Fender Mustang is. After searching all over Fender's site I was referred to a book store on their FAQ page. I did, however, find out what year my ES-335 was made at Gibson's site. Thanks for contributing to all the hype about the Internet and wasting my time.

**Robby Groover**  
groovercac@mm.com

## er-ah-tah

Apologies for the Lyle Lovett flashback that kicked off J. D. Considine's March '96 Short Takes long after the review had originally run; for mention of the Gin Blossoms song "Until I Walk Away" (actually titled "Until I Fall Away") in our Apr. '96 issue; for mislabelling Fishman's Acoustic Performer Pro in our May '96 review of acoustic guitar amps; and for erroneous product titles in our references to Vic Firth 5B drumsticks and the Gibson Chet Atkins Tennessee in our June '96 gear list for Hootie and the Blowfish.

Apologies also to the Nields, who were featured in last month's New Signings. Or, should we say, not featured: Due to a production error, most of the article didn't make it into print. You'll find the entire Nields piece, along with a story on another up-and-coming band, in next month's New Signing double feature.

Finally, we note with regret the passing of Monika Dannemann, whose role in the last days of Jimi Hendrix was examined in our Feb. '96 cover story. She was found dead in her exhausted Mercedes on April 5.

Send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Email us at [musicianmag@earthlink.net](mailto:musicianmag@earthlink.net).

## From The Editor

Seems like only yesterday—actually, it was in June '94—that *Musician* asked its readers: Has America had it with English rock? We thought the question was rhetorical: Of course America was fed up with Cockney accents, ditty raves at Stonehenge, and those squishy egg sandwiches in *Quadrophenia*. Right?

Not quite. Yet another musical wave has crossed the Atlantic and crashed into our shores. Many of the bands who ride this tide share traits with the original British invaders, including a fondness for catchy melodies, tight arrangements, crisp and clean harmonies. The chasm of years that separates Merseybeat from Britpop is spanned by similarities in sound and even appearance.

Perhaps we're seeing a return to musical values pioneered long ago by the Beatles. Even in their most adventurous work they celebrated coherence—a good tune, built on foundations Gershwin could relate to. Their craftsmanship as writers and players made it possible for psychedelic rockers to experiment without lapsing into chaos—and, ironically, for today's Brit bands to rebel against all that by excavating their pop roots.

So, in addition to this month's interviews and essays on England's music scene, we offer a rare encounter with George Harrison, undeniably one of the godfathers of the Britpop revival. His dialogue with *Billboard* editor Timothy White gives the historical and musical context we need to appreciate Oasis, Pulp, Blur, and the other trendsetters of English pop.

What's it all mean? That we were wrong two years ago—and glad to admit it today.

—Robert L. Doerschuk, editor

ing cash from Bell for the microphone—which my grandfather invented—he should have taken the AT&T stock he was offered, which as of the Bell system's 1984 breakup, would have grown in value to one billion, eighty-six million dollars. Now, *that's* wealthy.

Also, contrary to author Colin Escott's contention, Vlademar Poulsen did not discover magnetic recording. My grandfather experimented with it years before Poulsen's "discovery"; the



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L-R: Colin Greenwood, Ed O'Brien, Thom Yorke, Jon Greenwood, Phil Selway

JOY BLAKE/GETTY

# How We Wrote That Hit Song

## Radiohead's "High and Dry"

**Thom Yorke:** That song was pretty much mine. Originally, I wrote and four-tracked it with a Soul II Soul rhythm underneath, taken off a 12-inch. I honestly don't know now where the lyrics came from. It was something we didn't know what to do with. We did a version in the studio one day, didn't like it, left it. We didn't even listen back to it; we finished it and just said, "This is fucking dreadful."

**Ed O'Brien:** It was over two years ago, wasn't it? We recorded it with our sound engineer.

**Yorke:** They'd just put a new skin on the bass drum, and that was the inspiration for the sound. I played the opening bit on

acoustic, which we thought was hilarious. Colin Greenwood [bassist] and Phil Selway [drummer] laughed, 'cause they thought it sounded like Rod Stewart.

**Jon Greenwood:** I played the solo, but that was the same guitar line that Thom had come up with on his four-track.

**O'Brien:** "High and Dry" was one of the few tracks we've done where we haven't actually been in the studio at the same time. We weren't really into doing the song, so we all came in, did our separate parts, and bugged off, and our soundman put it all together.

**Yorke:** Anyway, two years later, someone dug it up and said, "Hey, how 'bout this? It's pretty good." We were quite sur-

prised. It was one of those things where you record something and can't even remember doing it. We had to relearn it all.

**O'Brien:** We never did another recording of it. The version on the album is the original demo version, just remixed by Sean [Slade] and Paul [Kolderie]. It's interesting, because at the time we recorded it, it didn't fit in with what we were doing, so we forgot it. But two years on, when we were putting the next album [*The Bends*] together, it made sense.

**Yorke:** We're still working on it live. The nicest arrangement we've had is the one we just did on Jay Leno, where it just ends on "it's the best thing that you've ever had." I always hated playing that last chorus over again. Actually, it would still be better with that Soul II Soul rhythm.

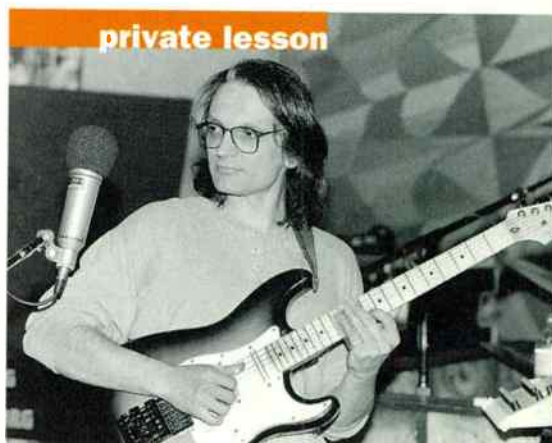
**Greenwood:** That's why we buried the song.

**Yorke:** Yeah, 'cause we couldn't do a convincing Soul II Soul rhythm. Well, we didn't really want to, so we did a dodgy Rod Stewart version and then ditched it.

**Greenwood:** So we're proud of it.

**Yorke:** Yeah, it's all right.

# rou



private lesson



# Chuck D: Take Rap Back to the Edge!

By Chuck D

There's a severe lack of development for rap artists on major labels. When a rap group gets signed to a label, suddenly they have a \$140,000 video budget and the promotional expenses might exceed \$600,000. But at the end of the day, the artist is left with no money and unlikely chances for a career.

One thing these companies can do is stop pushing rap into black music departments. Rap is at its best when it's edgy and close to alternative marketing. It's basic and down to the roots, as opposed to R&B, which is champagne and caviar and promoted with money to R&B stations. Rap can't play by those pop or R&B rules, because we don't have the radio outlets.

To get rap music back on the air, we



Michaelangelo Chester

need to go back to the idea of singles and EPs. Less is more, especially when retail is so carefully making its decisions about what to sell. I also believe in doing videos for \$25,000 and less. Video directors are probably making more than the artists. *Everybody* is making more than the artists! You see these record company

presidents making four million dollars a year while their artists are scraping. You've got lawyers working as record company presidents. That is blasphemy. The biggest single thing hampering rap now is the lack of taking chances.

Basically, rap is the vocal, somewhere between singing and talking, over music. When rappers tend to have one type of music underneath, it gets predictable. The best part of rap is when it's unpredictable, when it can be put over any type of music at any given time and keep it on the edge. That's why we have to take rap back to the future, where rap artists will work harder, sweat harder, perform where need be, and be accessible instead of treating themselves like stars. We

need to be anti-stars again.

*Chuck D is a co-founder of the revolutionary rap group Public Enemy. Recently he launched Slam Jamz, a Columbia subsidiary dedicated to furthering the cause of rap music. The label's first EP, featuring Hyenas In The Desert, will be released in early June.*

# ugh mix

## Sonny Landreth: Squeezing Out Notes

By Dan Forte

Growing up in Lafayette, Louisiana (which explains everything), guitarist Sonny Landreth didn't fantasize about being the next Slowhand, Beck, or Page; his air-guitar dreams cast him as the six-string answer to zydeco accordion king Clifton Chenier or creole fiddler Canray

Fontenot. Landreth's innovative technique of combining fretted notes with slide has been chronicled many times. Less attention is paid to the striking way Sonny can imitate the sound of Chenier's and Fontenot's chosen instruments.

Affecting not only the voicings but the percussive nature of the accordion

involves more than just note choice. "It's the whole thing," Landreth explains, "the fact that it's push-pull and you've got that gasping quality. One thing is you bounce between open strings and notes at, say, the 12th fret, using your [left-hand] palm to damp strings behind the slide. [Note: Sonny wears the slide on his pinky.] Even slight pressure there can drastically change the sound. You can get a tremolo effect, and literally control its speed, by the pressure you use on the strings—muting and letting off, tension



Jay Blakesberg



Tuning: Open A (E A E A C# E)

\* w/slide and slight P.M. throughout

TAB

\* Slide remains stationary at 14th fret while fingering other fret positions in traditional manner (i.e. "behind-slide-fretting")

and left-hand muting are also useful for approximating fiddle, as in Ex. 1. "A lot of times," Landreth says, "they [fiddlers] are playing off an open string against fingered notes. The muted

and release. Higher tunings, like open G and A, are really good for accordion-type things because you've got that

midrange honk, but the ear perceives the upper frequencies."

Open A tuning (E-A-E-A-C#-E)

quality really changes the effect—rather than if you were just playing it open on the guitar."

## talent

Judging by the sound of their debut, *Workshy* (Big Pop), **Animals That Swim** are perfectly content to be sat in a pub safely across the street from where the current Britpop celebration is taking place. Lyricist and frontman Hank Starrs is a classic storyteller in the darkly humorous tradition of Pulp's Jarvis Cocker, the Tindersticks, Jazz Butcher, even Leonard Cohen. His songs tell of life on the dole, an actual encounter with an embittered Roy Orbison, and going to see Vic Chesnutt perform. His melancholic verses are set to thick, Pastels-like strumming that gives way to bright,

uplifting choruses and sparkling trumpet bursts.

Despite their penchant for beer (they even have a song called "King Beer"), one thing ATS take seriously is band practice. "We don't drink during rehearsals," says Hank. "Which is funny, because when we play live we're frequently drunk. It's just that the atmosphere of rehearsals tends to be quite dry and focused."

"Plus, we don't practice very often," adds guitarist/brother Hugh Starrs. "So when we do, we tend to work quite hard at it."

—Dev Sherlock

In a quiet cold preceding the record-breaking January blizzard, pianist **Rachel Z** was at the Power Station, New York City, cutting rhythm tracks for *A Room of One's Own*, her new CD on Mike Mainieri's NYC Records, with bassist Tracy Wormworth and drummers Terri Lyne Carrington and Cindy Blackman. Her decision to use a trio of women emphasized the theme of the project: the difficulty female musicians have



faced being accepted as men's equals.

"Throughout history, biases have affected women in the arts," she says. "Yet, we have a strong lineage of women—from day one there were women in the jazz scene."

Each of the ten tunes on the CD was written in tribute to a woman, from the Virginia Woolf-inspired title track to "Talking to Electronics," written for Joni Mitchell. Rachel's music bears the influence of the jazz tradition of Herbie and Miles. She herself cites her profound regard for Hancock's *Speak Like A Child* as a major contributor to the harmonic intricacy of her writing.

The experience of working with women musicians is less about "trying to establish dominance over each other," Rachel says. "Not so with men—they try to muscle the music more. I'm hoping this record will make for a solid explanation to young women and men that women are serious artists, that they always have been, and that men need to take a look at their own prejudices and why they may feel funny about having me in the band."

—Roberta Lawrence





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World Radio History





Noel Gallagher

**B**y January this year, the dream was over. The much-trumpeted Third British Invasion of America was clearly never going to happen. Then suddenly, from out of nowhere, the five-headed Mancunian beast that is Oasis began selling records, flogging hundreds of thousands of copies of "Wonderwall" and (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory*? to Alanis Morissette fans all over the country. The pillaging miracle had come to pass.

The irony was this: After all the jingoistic brouhaha about Britpop, which had only succeeded in irritating the hell out of most Americans, here was a band who transcended the very issue of "British" pop music, a band whose timeless rock riffs and Angry Young Man lyrics connected with America in a way that their Britpop rivals definitely did not.

Back in England, "Britpop" has paradoxically become a dirty word. Too many bands have jumped on the Blur bandwagon, packaging themselves as the spiritual grandsons of the Beatles and the Kinks only to find that the cheeky, knowing Britishness of Blur's *The Great Escape* is proving, in the long run, to be a bit of a handicap. Some of them

# WHAT IS BRITISH POP?

WHY DOES IT KEEP COMING BACK? ★ BY BARNEY HOSKYNs

Jill Furmanovsky

**"Oasis must die. Do not buy Oasis records. They will come to rape and pillage our women and invade America."**

**—Courtney Love, on the 'Net, early February**

are even beginning to envy the unsung American success of Brit grungesters Bush, who've sat pretty much in the upper reaches of the U.S. charts with their American-sounding *Sixteen Stone* for the better part of a year.

All of which rather begs the question of just why is it so important for British acts to make it in America. At the root of the obsession, of course, are those indelible images of the Beatles arriving at New York in 1964: images of mass adulation, fueling a thousand fantasies of megastardom. And it hasn't exactly hindered Britpop's U.S. prospects that the first two *Anthology* albums have done so well in the States.

And yet, ever since Beatlemania, a lurking suspicion has persisted among limeys. "They loved the Beatles," remembers Ray Davies, "but there was this undercurrent in middle America of 'these limeys coming over when we invented rock 'n' roll.'" The same resentment could be detected in the American press shortly before "Wonderwall" and *Morning Glory?* began their chart ascensions: A headline in the *L.A. Weekly* jeered "Bluh [sic]—Britain can 'looking well keep it," while *Rolling Stone* reported that the "giving spirit" at KROQ-L.A.'s Acoustic Christmas show "faded fast when Oasis emerged with angular cool, casting a Scrooge-like shadow on an otherwise splendid set."

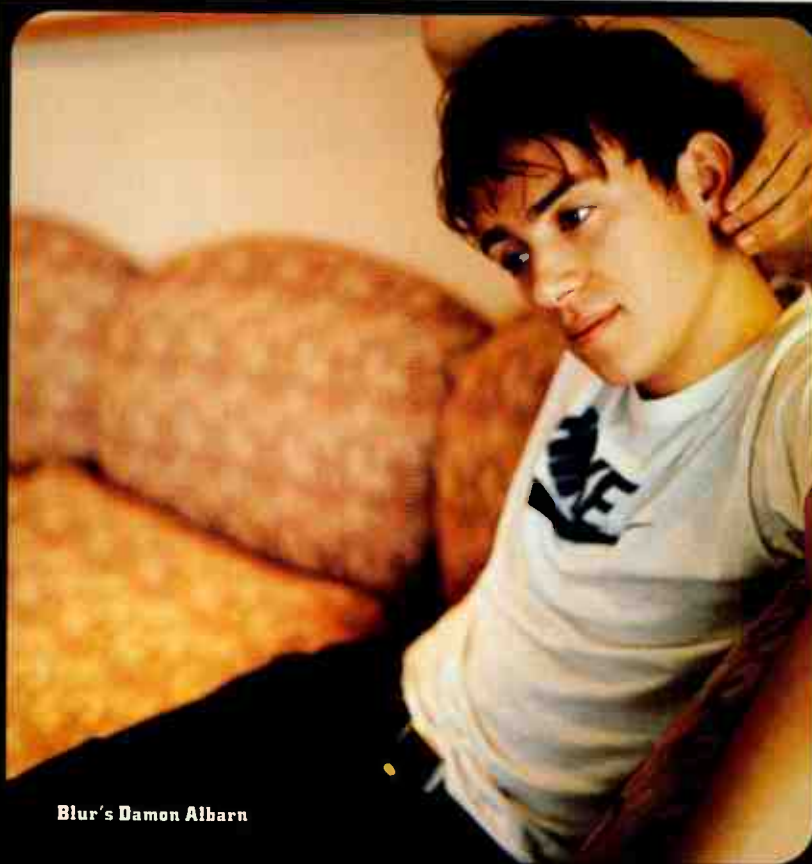
As it happens, "Britishness" in pop has always enjoyed a chequered history. Ever since our first national "hit parade" was instigated by the *New Musical Express* in 1952, America has

directly and indirectly determined much of the pop music made in Britain. Yet Britishness has always been present in our music. Even skiffle king Lonnie Donegan, who celebrated America in songs like Leadbelly's "Rock Island Line," wound up singing English pop-folk novelties like "My Old Man's a Dustman" and "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight?"

Still, for all the acts who've succeeded in America by stirring British flavors into the American stew, there have been just as many whose ultra-Englishness has made it harder to secure a foothold in the States.

America loves it when we camp it up (Queen, Boy George) or become honorary Americans (the Stones, George Michael) but is less sure about songs that reflect British culture or tradition in any very meaningful way. In fact, the British rock that has succeeded in America over the past 30 years has tended to be the more accessible, mid-Atlantic variety: the Stones and Led Zeppelin, Elton John and Rod Stewart. Small wonder that Blur and Pulp are having problems appealing to Middle America's lowest common denominators. Only the Irish—most obviously U2 and the Cranberries—have consistently grasped what it is that Americans want in a band: big anthemic songs, amorphous sentiments, huge self-belief, the willingness to ask, "How ya doin', Cleveland?!!"

The pronounced failure in America of the "Madchester" bands (Stone Roses, Happy Mondays) and of contemporaries like Primal Scream



Blur's Damon Albarn

**Contributors:** Barney Hoskyns is associate editor of *Mojo*.

Donald Milne



left a yawning gap filled only fleetingly by the American successes of EMF and Jesus Jones in 1991. No songwriter the stature of Kurt Cobain mounted any kind of resistance to grunge; Britain's blissed-out, techno-entranced youth was in any case oblivious to the old values of melody and craftsmanship.

Then out of the blue came Suede, whose superb 1992 debut single "The Drowners" announced a defiant return to the swooning, sexually ambiguous panache of '70s glam, of David Bowie's "Starman" and Mott The Hoople's "All the Young Dudes." By the summer of '93, the trend was a living, breathing reality. Rejecting the droning angst of Seattle's survivors, British bands were singing bright, sardonic, solid songs about Blighty that took their cue from the Anglocentric portraiture of the Kinks' "Waterloo Sunset" and the Small Faces' "Lazy Sunday." With its artful sketches of cockney life in London, Blur's *Parklife* (1994) was by almost universal acclaim a masterpiece.

But, where the Beatles and Boy George had embraced America, the new Britpop bands behaved as though American success was their birthright, even as they were slagging the place off in interviews. It was significant that when Suede flounced back to England in a huff after falling foul of an American backlash, their Irish support band the Cranberries carried on touring and cleaned up, with five million sales of *No Need to Argue*.

The problem of excessive Britishness is one that besets bands as different as Black Grape, the loutishly funky group led by ex-Happy Monday Shaun Ryder, and the sub-Smiths quartet Gene. A certain Anglo-runtishness may even prove to be a fatal flaw for Radiohead, whose "Creep" was a big college radio hit in America and whose rapturously received second album *The Bends* would reproduce well onstage in an



Supergrass (L to R): Mickey Quinn, Gaz Coombes, Danny Goffey

American stadium. If singer Thom Yorke looked a little more like Bono—or, dare we say it, Liam Gallagher—Radiohead's frenzied grandeur would make them world-beaters.

A better bet to succeed Stateside is the three-piece Supergrass, whose singer-guitarist Gaz Coombes not only has the talent and charisma of a young Prince but writes punk-pop songs that break through the parochial self-consciousness of Britpop with the same bravado as Noel Gallagher's songs for Oasis. With their second Capitol album due this

September, Supergrass are a lot more fun than the *lumpen* late-'60s rock—all sub-Steve Winwood vocals, Gibson SGs, and wah-wah pedals—being relished by Britpop godfather Paul Weller and his protégés Ocean Colour Scene. And what, pray, happened to the Stone Roses, the warmed-over Led Zeppelin whose unwisely titled *Second Coming* album has yet to reap dividends for Geffen Records? [*They broke up.*—Ed.]

Will Britannia rule the airwaves again? Will Oasis prove to be a Beatles for the '90s, bursting open the floodgates so that today's Hollies and Herman's Hermits can rape and pillage in their wake? Will Northern Uproar take North America? One thing seems sure: In the current rock climate, the loudest will go furthest. In the words of an MTV vice-president, "We need rock stars who think they are rock stars."

Hope you're listening, Mr. Vedder.

**"When you go,  
will you send back  
a letter from  
America?"**

**—The Proclaimers**

By Dev Sherlock

**W**e're called Oasis. We're from England. And we're shit-hot." Swagging up to his microphone, Noel Gallagher greets a screaming, sold-out crowd of more than 10,000 at San Francisco's Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. It's the third gig on the West Coast leg of Oasis' current world tour. They've just finished three weeks of European dates and a month of Midwest/East Coast shows in America. And, truth be told, Noel's right—Oasis is shit-hot right now. Onstage, their playing is instinctively tight; Noel's harmonizing with brother and frontman Liam is stellar, and a tangible spirit of confidence emanates from the whole band.

Noel, of course, knows he's right. He knows it when he stops and restarts his solo acoustic version of "Wonderwall" in the middle of the first verse because some joker is shining a flashlight into his eyes. He knows it when his acoustic version of "Whatever" morphs into a bright-eyed "Octopus's Garden" (at soundcheck, it turned into "All The Young Dudes"). He knew it the night before when a sold-out crowd in the jaded music town of Seattle held lighters aloft and sang every word. And he knew it the night before that in Vancouver when, after someone threw coins, the band left the stage only four songs into the set—end of show.

In the summer of 1994, when Oasis sat down with *Musician* for their first American interview, just before releasing their debut *Definitely Maybe*, they were feeling most self-assured, and songs like "Live Forever" and "Slide Away" backed up those feelings. But, we asked, what if America just doesn't



Liam and Noel Gallagher

get it? "If they don't get it, then we come back, and we come back, and we come back again until they *do* fookin' get it," shrugged Noel. "Our music doesn't belong to England or to any particular time or place. I *know* that if

reflects, his face widening into a big cheeky grin. "But we came back with 'Wonderwall' and 'Champagne Supernova' and, lo and behold, yet again, *I was right!* It's a pissar being right all the time—it bores the tits off me!"

It's been a big year for Oasis—disrupting England's Brit Awards ceremony (where they also won Best Album, Best Video and Best Group); seeing the very band who inspired them to form, the Stone

Roses, break up; and, not least, becoming certifiable rock stars in America. With *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?* sitting in the *Billboard* Top 10, a sold-out tour in progress, and a promising gang of new English bands arriving in their wake, Noel Gallagher, Oasis' songwriter and driving force, sat down with *Musician* to take stock.

**OASIS**

*Definitely Maybe* doesn't get them, then the next one will. And if not, then the third one. Oasis *will be* where it's meant to be."

Two years later, Noel Gallagher is sitting in rainy Seattle. "It's too bad 'Live Forever' and 'Slide Away' didn't get the exposure they deserved," he



**MUSICIAN:** *First of all, the Stone Roses.*

**GALLAGHER:** Yeah, we're all shocked. I feel sorry for the fans because so many people believed in that band—I know *we* did. Actually, a lot of our road crew used to work for them—we're all from Manchester so we heard about it before it came out in the papers. It's too bad.

**MUSICIAN:** *How about Pulp's Jarvis Cocker invading the stage during Michael Jackson's performance at the Brits—is he guilty or innocent?*

**GALLAGHER:** Totally innocent, man! Jarvis is a star! I mean, all he did was get up onstage and get his belly out, but in England people thought it was so shocking. It's not as if he cracked [Jackson] on the head with a baseball bat—which is what I woulda fookin' done if I'd gone up there.

**MUSICIAN:** *You were quite misbehaved yourselves at the Brits—swearing, mock-shoving awards up your ass, calling Michael Hutchence a “has-been.” Have you taken heat for this?*

**GALLAGHER:** Oh yeah. The music press thought we were great, but the national newspapers said we were a disgrace to our country. Which is fine by me, because our country is a disgrace to us.

**MUSICIAN:** *You're still doing your solo acoustic sets live. Any friction from the rest of the band?*

**GALLAGHER:** Plenty of it, but who cares? Everybody knows it's all about me [laughs]. It's just a nice break in the set, it gives people's ears a rest.

**MUSICIAN:** *You've been touring constantly, and that can take its toll on a band. How does Oasis keep it together on the road?*

**GALLAGHER:** We've never known anything else. We were always on the road, even before we got signed. Having time off is what would probably destroy this band. We had a month off recently and it was like [sighs], “What are we gonna do?”

**MUSICIAN:** *Spend some of your money, perhaps?*

**GALLAGHER:** Yeah, but what on? I've got everything I want. I could only go and

buy two of everything now—that just gets boring.

**MUSICIAN:** *The first time we spoke, you seemed pretty intent upon becoming the biggest band in the world.*

**GALLAGHER:** Well, we're certainly not the biggest yet—we're in the top five. But to be the biggest, you've got to be big in America. So it's good to see people outside of England digging the music. The best thing about it is when we go back home and all these shitty little indie bands who hate us back in England actually have the audacity to come up to you when you're out in a club. They say, “How's it goin'?” and I say, “Great.” And then they go [affects empathetic voice]. “Tch, you know what, man? I'd really hate to be in your position, man. You must have no privacy at all, man. I mean, your life must be really hard.” And I'm thinking, what? You sell two fookin' records in Gloucester, and you're telling me you'd hate to be in my position? I've got a fookin' Rolls-Royce and a fookin' bastard mansion and an airplane and you'd hate to be me? Ha, not as much as I'd fookin' hate to be you, you daft cunt—living in a fookin' squat with your bird and a fookin' dog! Yeah, being a multi-millionaire is a big, bad pain in the ass, man—you wouldn't want to wish that on anybody.

**MUSICIAN:** *There was a lot of talk in both the American and the English press about whether Oasis would be the one British band that finally breaks through in America. Do you feel as though you've won a race of sorts?*

**GALLAGHER:** No. The English press actually put a lot of pressure on us. And if it didn't happen, we'd have been considered a failure. We never said, “We're gonna go out there and conquer America.” All we said we'd do is just go there and play and if it happens, it happens. And now all these bands are saying, “It'll be easy for us to go to America now because you've opened the door.” I'm saying, “No, you've got it all wrong, mate.” It doesn't fookin'

work like that, man—you've got to be good. Americans aren't interested in fashion—they're interested in music. If you've not got good songs, forget it.

**MUSICIAN:** *You've mentioned guitar lessons recently?*

**GALLAGHER:** I've been learning a bit off my mate Paul [Weller]. I'm getting better, I feel. I'm really a rhythm guitarist—I never wanted to be a Slash. I wanted to be [Oasis rhythm guitarist] Bonehead, but he can't play lead guitar to save his fookin' life. So it was like, “You can't play lead guitar? Well, I suppose I better do it then.”

**MUSICIAN:** *Alan White replaced Tony McCarroll on drums last year. How did you find him?*

**GALLAGHER:** I was up at the Manor when Paul Weller was recording *Stanley Road* and got to talking with his drummer Steve White who, it turns out, had a younger brother who also played drums. I asked Steve if he was any good and he said, “Well, I taught him.” So that was that. I was really down to my last straw with Tony—he was really pissing me off. I mean, on a song like “Wonderwall” Tony would never in a million years have been able to drum like Alan did.

**MUSICIAN:** *I certainly don't recall Tony ever using brushes.*

**GALLAGHER:** Yeah, to fookin' sweep up, maybe!

**MUSICIAN:** *What are your plans for the next album?*

**GALLAGHER:** I'd like to get away from the wall-of-sound guitars. We did *Morning Glory* in 15 days. We were in and out—a track a day. So I'd like to do, like, a track a *month* on the next album. We'll record each track as we normally would, but then we'll hang the drum kit from the fookin' ceiling, stand outside in a cardboard box playing the guitar part and shit like that, just to see what it sounds like, then piece it all together and see what we come up with. I'm hoping for a cross between *Revolver* and the White Album—that would be ideal. ☛



Left to right: Steve Mackey, Candida Doyle, Jarvis Cocker, Nick Banks, Mark Webber, Russell Senior

## By Mac Randall

**I**t's hard to think about Pulp now without thinking about The Incident: On Feb. 19 at the Brit Awards (the U.K. equivalent of the Grammys), Pulp's frontman Jarvis Cocker rushed onstage in the middle of a performance by Michael Jackson, pranced around, and waved his hands. Security came to the rescue, and in the resulting confusion three children onstage with Jackson were mildly injured. Jarvis was arrested and briefly detained, but no charges were brought. In a post-show statement, MJ expressed disgust at Cocker's "lack of respect for fellow artists" and claimed that the children were attacked. Jarvis countered by saying he didn't touch anybody (which sources who were there confirm as

true). "My actions were a form of protest at the way Michael Jackson sees himself as some Christ-like figure with the power of healing," he stated. (Jacko's performance included his being lowered from the ceiling by a giant crane, dressing in flowing robes, and "blessing" the children onstage.) "People go along with it even though they know it's a bit sick. I just couldn't

mony saw what happened. (The Brits aren't broadcast live, and Jarvis' antics were edited out of the national telecast.) Pundits speculated on The Incident's meaning. *The New York Times*' Neil Strauss called it a "declaration of war" on American pop culture by British musicians. Brian Eno declared his support. Jarvis Cocker had become a national hero.

The only problem is that the hoopla threatens to overshadow the great musical advances Jarvis' band has made. With its newest album *Different Class* (Island), Pulp has finally come into its own after more than 15 years of struggle.

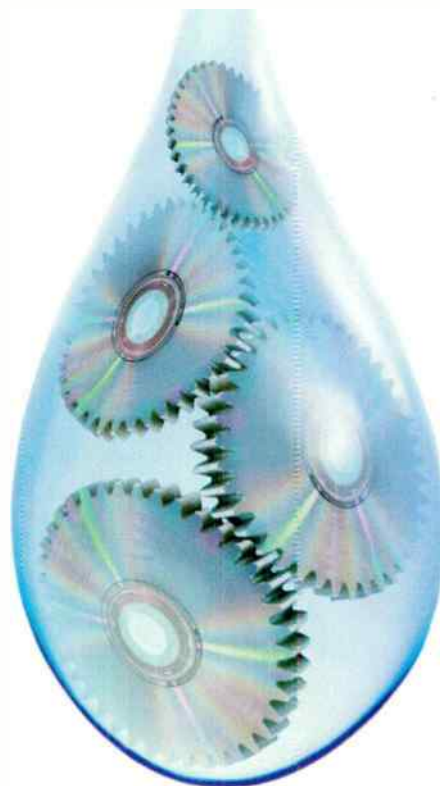
They've established a definite sound—lush, dramatic, with a hint of cabaret tawdriness, and on songs like "Mis-Shapes" and "Common People," Jarvis distinguishes himself as something of a spokesman for the disaffected.

**PULP**

go along with it anymore."

The media went crazy. Within a few days, the episode had taken on a mythical quality, aided by the fact that only the people who were at the cere-





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World Radio History



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Four days before The Incident, at a tiny restaurant a few blocks away from the Kensington Olympia exhibition hall, *Musician* chatted with Jarvis about his band, its songs and its slow, slow rise to fame. The words "Michael" and "Jackson" were not mentioned once.

**MUSICIAN:** *You write Pulp's lyrics, but the whole band is credited for the music. How does that group songwriting process work?*

**COCKER:** It's not always the same. A lot of songs come out of... not really jamming, but making a noise. I tend to be like the conductor. I'll say stop if I hear a bit that's good, and we'll work on that. If nothing's good, then I'll get frustrated and I might try and write something on my own. On the last record, because we've now got six members and that can get cacophonous, we employed a system a bit like when you're living in a shared house and you have to make sure that the pots get washed. So we'd have different people come in and play each day, three at a time; I was the only person who'd always be there.

**MUSICIAN:** *And everything's improvised at the beginning?*

**COCKER:** Not everything. Sometimes rather than banging away for the sake of it, it's better to have an idea in mind, even if it's just a title or one line. We used to do these things where you'd have to imagine you were somewhere, like a forest. And one person had to be the trees, and another person had to be a bear, and you had to make sounds like that. It was fun, but we didn't get many songs out of it.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do you play anything during these sessions?*

**COCKER:** Yeah, I'm playing guitar, and keyboards sometimes. I don't play either very well. But I think it's good to use instruments you're not familiar with, because instead of showing off, you're just glad to get a slightly musical sound out of them. That's how I

wrote "Common People." I bought a little rubbishy Casio keyboard for 25 quid at this place in Notting Hill, and it had these auto chord things, so I got that going and just played a little melody over the top. It's only three chords, which I thought was an achievement. I like that, getting more into the sound of something than any complexity of chords.

**MUSICIAN:** *You obviously believe in musical simplicity.*

**COCKER:** The best songs are the simplest. Quite a few of the songs on *Different Class* came out of a rule of not allowing anybody to play full chords. You couldn't play more than two notes at once. That actually gives you more harmonic possibilities, because you aren't necessarily tied down straight away to being major or minor. You put notes together that you wouldn't normally. Then the real chords end up suggesting themselves after a while.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do the lyrics always come last?*

**COCKER:** They always seem to come the night before we go in the studio, because then I know I've got to write them. The lyrics for *Different Class* were all done in two nights, seven one night and five the next. Most of the subject matter is things that have happened to me since I moved to London. You're brought up in one place and your attitudes are formed there, then you move to another place and see it

through a foreigner's eyes. When I lived in Sheffield, I thought the idea of the class system was an absolute joke. It wasn't till I came here that I realized it did exist, because the differences between people are much more extreme in London.

**MUSICIAN:** *That realization seems to have brought out a great deal of anger and bitterness in your songs.*

**COCKER:** I don't know exactly why. When the songs were written, I had less reason to feel bitter than before. "Common People" [released in England as a single several months before *Different Class*] was already a hit, or in the process of being a hit. Maybe it was that, maybe it was because I knew that I'd escaped it that I could sing about it. I could admit those feelings to myself because I knew I wouldn't have to live in that same situation anymore. I don't believe in becoming bitter. It cuts you off from new experiences, because you have this jaundiced view that everything's shit.

**MUSICIAN:** *How long a lifespan do you think this band has?*

**COCKER:** We've already existed for 16 years, and most groups are long gone by that time. This is a bad time now, to be honest. The record's out, it's done well, and it's getting to that time where you can't just sit there reaping the glory. That's the time I hate, because you start to doubt yourself and there's lots of gnashing of teeth. But I hope I do have more to say. ☺

## Pulp Pickings



**ARVIS COCKER** plays a Hopf semi-acoustic guitar and a Vox Marauder ("it's got push buttons that make it sound ridiculous"). For microphones, Cocker favors Audix. **MARK WEBBER** plays a Gibson ES 345, **RUSSELL SENIOR** strums a Fender Stratocaster guitar, and **STEVE MACKEY** uses a Music Man Sabre bass.

D'Addarios are Pulp's strings of


choice. **CANDIDA DOYLE**'s keyboards include a Roland SH-09 monophonic synthesizer, Micromoog synth, Farfisa Compact Professional II organ, Eurotec Phase Piano, Korg Trident II, Fender Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos, Hohner Clavinet, and Steinway grand piano. The Ensoniq ASR-10 sampler Pulp bought for the road had a few problems, so it was replaced by an Akai S3000 sampler. **NICK BANKS** plays a Yamaha drum kit and Zildjian cymbals.





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World Radio History

By Mac Randall

**D**amon Albarn, the leader of Blur, is sitting at the end of the bar in New York's Roseland, waiting for soundcheck. In a few hours, his band will take the stage of this 2000-plus-capacity venue to the cheers of a sold-out crowd. It's the biggest show Blur's played in New York, but Damon isn't congratulating himself. Instead, he's searching for an answer to a tricky question: What sets Blur apart from their British brethren? "Well," he finally replies, "we're one of the only bands from Britain that hasn't been sued for plagiarism in the last couple of years."

Albarn's obviously having a dig at several recent U.K. artists who've liberally applied the fine art of borrowing: Oasis, Menswear, even Elastica, the group led by Damon's girlfriend Justine Frischmann. But his quip also says something about the band's method. Blur doesn't steal riffs, words, or melodies from the great bands before them. Instead, they pick up something less definable: a style that's distinctively British, pleasantly familiar, yet not always easy to trace. The Beatles, Kinks, and Small Faces are there certainly, along with Madness, Squeeze, and XTC; hints of Jam-era Paul Weller and the Buzzcocks' Pete Shelley can be detected in Albarn's vocals. But Blur's music is meant to be enjoyed on its own terms. And on those terms, the songs on their latest album, 1995's *The Great Escape* (Virgin), are unqualified successes, by turns jaunty and bittersweet, gracefully melodic and elegantly witty.

"Some bands have their sound as soon as they start," Damon says. "We don't have a specific sound, so we can be flexible." Guitarist Graham Coxon



Blur (L to R): Damon Albarn, Alex James, Dave Rowntree, Graham Coxon

puts it this way: "None of us limits our experience musically." And drummer Dave Rowntree chimes in, "We're interested in music, full-stop."

Along with bassist Alex James, Albarn, Coxon, and Rowntree formed Blur in 1988. (The band's original

note: Damon's father was the lighting designer for the experimental '60s jazz/rock band Soft Machine.

Signed to the British Food label in 1990 after only a handful of gigs, the band recorded a debut album (1991's *Leisure*) much in the vein of so-called "neo-psychedelic" bands like the Stone Roses; Albarn and his cohorts discount it now. Blur's rapid growth over their next two albums, *Modern Life Is Rubbish* (1993) and the widely acclaimed *Parklife* (1994), can be put down to two factors: Albarn's "discovery of myself as a songwriter," and the growing influence of Damon's spiritual godfather, Ray Davies.

Albarn was a latecomer to the Kinks' oeuvre, but he made up for lost time; five years after picking up his

**BLUR**

name was Seymour.) Of the four, James is the only one who wasn't classically trained. "I'm the real one," he says with a chuckle. "But then playing bass is easy, isn't it? You just do the opposite of everyone else." Rock trivia





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first Kinks greatest hits collection, Damon was singing a duet with Davies on British TV's *The White Room*. The song was "Waterloo Sunset," in which one can detect the same concerns that drive Albarn's writing: the day-to-day lives and eccentricities of (mostly) regular people. "It's quite thrilling," Damon says, "when you realize that there's a link between what you're doing and the people you've always adored and considered icons. I don't mean to compare myself to them, but you realize that it's all part of a tradition that's gone from folk songs to music hall to pop. It's a classic English formula. Sad but happy songs."

Like Davies, Damon is the primary songwriter in his band. Though keyboards are his main instrument, he generally writes on guitar because "I'm not very good at playing it, so I'm forced to be simple. If I wrote on piano, I'd write big sentimental ballads all the time. Sometimes it's better to be inadequate when you're writing songs." With tunes and lyrics in place, Coxon, James, and Rowntree are left to put their stamp on the material. Coxon's unfailingly tasty guitar parts are the highlight of many a Blur track. Damon comments, "He just makes the songs better. It's integral to the whole thing." Alex: "He's the best guitarist of his generation." Graham's response to his bandmates' praise: "Fuckers. They never talk like that when I'm in the room."


A good example of the magic Coxon works can be heard on *Great Escape's* "It Could Be You." Graham takes Damon's basic progression (C-Bb-Am-G), breaks it up with choppy strumming that never reveals a full chord at one time, and adds a slightly dissonant sus4 (Eb) to the Bb, sliding up quickly to an E before hitting the Am. "That note's part of the song's main theme," he explains, "and so that's why it's in there. You've got to use the melody as much as you can. Also, I do like using funny chords."

Musically and lyrically, there's great intelligence at work in Blur's songs. Whereas Oasis' music is immediately accessible, Blur's is full of layers, marked by irony and detachment. Such traits have never gone over big on these shores; they tend to make rock 'n' roll fans suspicious. Sitting at the Roseland bar, Damon sounds confused yet resigned to the situation. "Our playing a place like this and selling it out quickly is purely because we've worked at it. We've come here every year for six years and slowly played bigger places. It's not a fashion thing. We're not here because we're on MTV all the time. We don't get played on the radio. We've worked hard."

Blur's show later that night illustrates just how hard they work. In his green polo shirt and slacks, Damon looks a little geeky, but he's a surprisingly commanding frontman, roaming the stage, climbing up on speakers, jumping on top of his keyboards. Graham is the picture of intensity, focusing in on his guitar so much you'd think the thing would explode, as he recreates the multi-tracked parts from Blur's albums on one instrument, blending rhythm and lead with devastating precision. Alex seems less inter-

ested in the P-Bass that's strapped to him than in the cigarette dangling from his mouth or the cup of unspecified liquid that's never far away, but the stunning basslines he pumps out belie that apparent nonchalance. Dave's drumming holds it all down, combining jazz stylings with primal rock energy. (The live band also includes two horn players and another keyboardist. "We take a four-piece horn section out with us when we can afford it," says Alex. "But I don't think we could fit any more people onstage for some of these gigs.")

Live, Blur can be as bouncy or punky as you might expect. But on more ambitious selections like *Parklife's* "This Is A Low" or *The Great Escape's* "He Thought of Cars," they go way beyond expectations, summoning up a sense of pure pop grandeur. Irony be damned; deep down, this band does mean what it plays.

Once this U.S. tour is over, Blur plans to go back into the studio. All four agree that their goal is to have another album out by the end of the year. Will the fifth time be the charm in America? Damon professes to be past caring. "I'd rather be civilized than fabulously wealthy." 

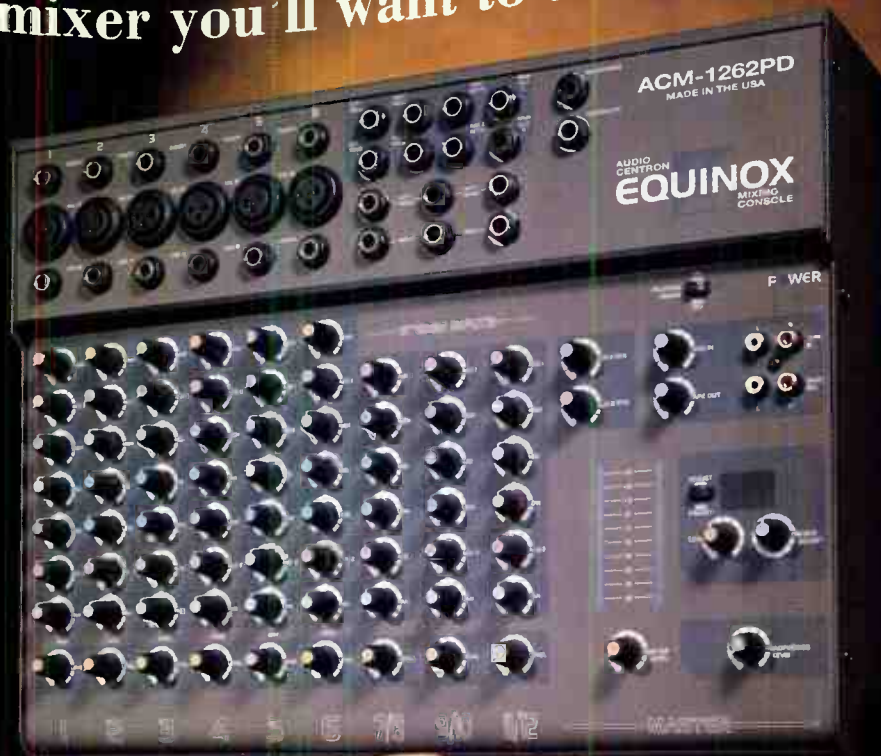
## The Blur Collection

**D**AMON ALBARN's home setup features two Tascam DA-88s, a 24-channel Topaz console, and "every kind of analog synth you can imagine. My favorite is the Sequential Circuits Prophet-5, which I think is the best analog keyboard ever." On the road, Damon uses a couple of Akai S900 samplers and a Korg organ. His guitar of choice for songwriting is an Epiphone acoustic. ALEX JAMES plays Fender Precision Basses—"I use them like Biro pens, really"—through an Ampeg SVT. "Everybody's got those now. I only got them because everybody else was using Trace Elliotts." GRAHAM COXON plays a

recent model Fender Telecaster ("me crunchy non-rock 'n' roll guitar") and Gibson Les Paul Custom ("for the rockness"), '67 Fender Jaguar ("for the indie rock"), and Gibson ES 335 ("for the weepy rock") through vintage Marshalls. On the floor: two ProCo Rat pedals for different volume and distortion levels, a homemade wah-wah (he's also got a Crybaby), Boss flanger, and various other "vibrato/tremolo malarkey." Strings are .010-gauge; Graham favors Ernie Balls, but concedes he isn't always sure what the techs put on the guitars when the band's on the road. As for picks, there's no doubt: nylon Dunlops. DAVE ROWNTREE thrashes a Pearl drum kit and Zildjian cymbals with Pro-Mark sticks.



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By Ken Micallef

**I**n the current British assault on these shores, retro isn't the only thing, it's everything. The latest entrant in the fray, Liverpool's Cast, has logged a string of hit singles in the U.K. with a sound that's equal parts melancholy Merseyside shanty and Who-style punch, coupled with typical Britpop tunefulness. But while Cast's jangle recalls the past, lyricist John Power's visionary hyperbole is pure future days.

"We are not a retro band," claims Power, waking over early morning coffee in a café bordering London's Kensington Gardens. "We are this year's interpretation of an ancient and futuristic source of inspiration that will always be here. It will never go away. We have to look back for our inspiration because the future is imagination. I can take a thought of what I can achieve in the future but the reality is what's been and what is now and what we are going to do with that information for tomorrow. I take my inspiration from the past—it could be London in '66—but is that retro? Is classical music retro? Are shanties sung on boats for hundreds of years retro? Is African blues retro? It's all retro."

As the original bass player in the La's, the most lauded band to come out of Liverpool in recent years, Power learned at the feet of songwriting master Lee Mavericks. "There She Goes" (1990) was the closest the La's came to a stateside hit, but it gave little hint of what was to come. Emboldened by solid working-class roots and not a little optimism, Power now pens hippie-flavored lines like "Watch the world revolving through my eyes/Watch the world evolving in my mind" and "We



Left to right Keith O'Neil, John Power, Liam Tyson, Peter Wilkinson

taste the future today, make the future our way."

Like the La's, Cast has an unerring sense of melody moored by characteristic Liverpoolian earthiness. The singles "Alright," "Finetime" and "Sandstorm" (which have pushed the album *All Change* to gold in the U.K.) are blustery bits of coarse melodic fire, while the ballads, "Four Walls" and the lovely "Walkaway," could be *Real*

George Harrison, Van Morrison and other major acts), Leckie knows whereof he speaks. "There's a sort of purity there. It's almost like English folk music. It's very regional in the way vowel sounds are made, the way consonants are expressed, perhaps where the Liverpool accent merges with the American bluesman accent. That's why Americans like the Beatles, they hear little things the English don't notice."



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"They really are from the heart of Liverpool," says Cast producer John Leckie. As the man behind the La's (as well as Radiohead, XTC, Pink Floyd,

Though the La's' troubled leader Lee Mavericks still writes songs, his well-known frustration with musical imperfection has stalled the band indefinitely; the long-awaited followup to their 1990 debut album still hasn't seen the light of day. "Lee is a great songwriter," says Power. "It's really simple as that. As a young lad of 18 then, I'm only now understanding where Lee was in his disappointment in why things go wrong, making records and



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World Radio History

them not sounding like what they are in your head. But you've gotta have the faith to go forth." Sounds like the Liverpool pop torch has been passed.

As the La's were quickly crumbling due to Mavers' indecision and reported alcohol abuse, Power left the band, eager to pursue his own songwriting career. He soon gathered around him the three friends who round out the Cast lineup: bassist Peter Wilkinson (formerly with Chuck Berry), guitarist Liam "Skin" Tyson (whose grandmother tailored suits for Herman's Hermits) and drummer Keith O'Neill. After rehearsals with "grandmothers, tramps, whatever," the group gained the ear of a true pop legend, the Who's John Entwistle, through longtime Who engineer Bob Pridden, who brought the band in to record demos at Entwistle's mansion in the Cotswolds. Soon the crusty bassist and the youthful upstarts were jamming on old Who tunes.

"Before we even got signed, we were there doing demos for six weeks," says Power. "It would be the four of us with Entwistle behind his Barracuda Bar, all of us just talking, and playing the music. We'd be up all night drinking his 50-year-old brandy. We went through his whole bar till there was nothing left, only that really horrible lager that no one will drink."

Those tapes left Power's hands and ended up with another British songwriter. "Loads of A&R men ran past us, but we sent Elvis Costello a tape and he asked us to play with him. We did three tours with him in Britain. It was then that we realized someone else agreed with us and understood our music."

Paul Adams, A&R director of Polydor, knew Power from his La's days and signed the band after hearing one gig. "John comes from a classic tradition of songwriters. He's got a mission, he believes. I can see them

doing their eighth and ninth albums. They have a timeless sound. In England, there are so many scenes and fashions and trends, but Cast is not Britpop. They're a timeless guitar band."

After lodging a request for the entire Who back catalog as part of their contract, Cast went on to record *All Change* (released in the U.S. on A&M) at Oxford's Manor studios, home to recordings by XTC, Paul McCartney, Queen and Simple Minds. They have the distinction of being the last band to record there. John Leckie was instantly won over by the Cast world view. "I loved the demo tape," says Leckie, "really fresh, powerful, bright. They are all really good musicians, individually. What really stood out was the atmosphere around the band, the camaraderie, their belief in their success and their positive thinking."

Branded by the Brit press as far-out "nutters" who speak volumes about aliens and cosmic consciousness, Cast does radiate an aura of positivity. They might as well be quoting Lennon and his cries of going to "the toppermost of the poppermost."

"What we're doing, it ain't new," says Power. "It's two thousand years old. The source of the inspiration is

exactly the same if you go back to the Middle Ages, back to when they built the pyramids. People are still after the same things: Find someone to love, find peace with themselves and hear some music. That's it. There's always been people singing around the fire and always people getting off on it."

Power doesn't take his Liverpool origins lightly. A true believer in all things, an admirer of Gandhi and Christ, a nonstop-talking, good-vibes-inducing 26-year-old, Power proclaims himself to be on a self-proclaimed "mission to throw the unbelievers out of the temple."

"I do believe in history and echoes and what has come through Liverpool. If you're aware and receptive and perceptive—you might think it's rubbish—but there are people's echoes and music's echoes. Lots of people have traipsed through that town and at the end of the day, the Beatles came from that town. Now, we're not the Beatles, but there is an essence there. You have to believe all of this for it to start to tick and work. If you never recognize it and never see it and never want to hear it, you'll walk right past it and it won't be there for you. But if you're looking for it and you believe in magic and dreams, then everything's there." ☾

## Casting For Gear



**JOHN POWER** strums Martin D-35 and Gibson J-45 acoustics, a Gibson SG and a 1957 Fender Esquire. His favorite amps are a Marshall Bluesbreaker combo and a Vox AL3 6TB, and he effects with a Boss CS-3 compressor/sustainer and Roland Space Echo. **PETER WILKINSON** plays a pre-CBS Fender Precision Bass through a Peavey Megabass amp and Ampeg 8x10 speaker cab. **LIAM "SKIN" TYSON** favors two Gibson goldtop Les Pauls (one with single-coil pickups, one

with humbuckers) and a Gibson ES 335 through two Hiwatt Custom 50 heads with two Hiwatt 4x12 speaker cabs. Among his effects are a Crybaby wah-wah, Melos Effectomatic, Boss compressor/sustainer, Boss overdrive, Mesa/Boogie tube preamp, and Zoom 9050 multieffects processor. **KEITH O'NEILL** plays a Ludwig Classic Maple kit (8x12, 9x13, and 11x15 toms, 14x22 bass drum) with a Slingerland Radio King snare and Zildjian and Paiste cymbals. Shure SM58 microphones are Cast's preferred vocal mikes, and they hold their group together with Rotosound stings.



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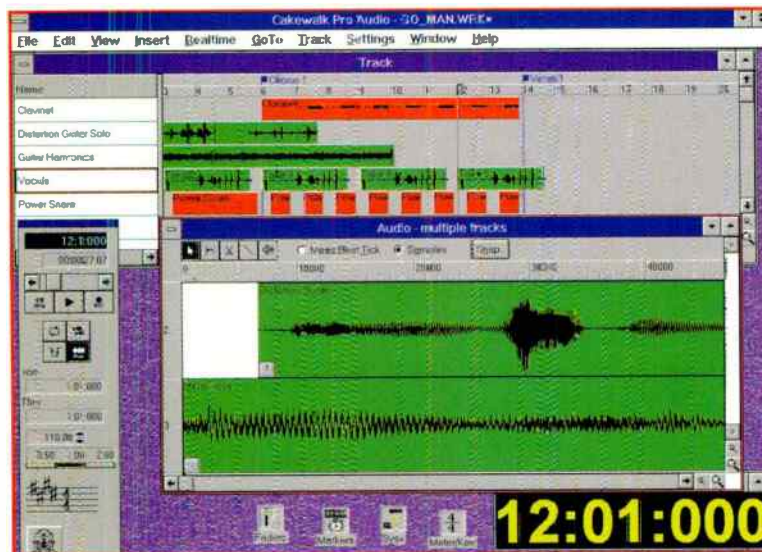
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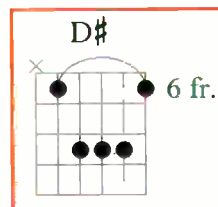


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World Radio History

## By Mac Randall

**I**t's a great city," says the Boo Radleys' Martin Carr of his native Liverpool. "It's got the greatest football team in the world, and the greatest band in the world came from there. And oh yes, the Beatles were from there too." Carr follows his little joke with a big laugh, emphasizing that he doesn't take either himself or the legacy of his hometown too seriously. It's a healthy attitude, considering that as a young musician, Carr had to grow up in the shadow of not only the Beatles but also other Liverpool legends like Echo and the Bunnymen and the Teardrop Explodes. "And don't forget Frankie Goes to Hollywood," he cautions. (Whew, glad we caught that one in time.)

Formed in 1988, the Boo Radleys—guitarist/songwriter Carr, singer Sice (aka Simon Rowbottom), bassist Tim Brown and drummer Rob Cieka—didn't try to sound like any of those bands at first, choosing to forge their own brand of noisy guitar pop instead. But with their two most recent releases, *Giant Steps* (1993) and *Wake Up!* (1995), the band's ambitions grew greater. Capturing a variety of styles and moods in multi-sectioned mini-suites, they revealed a group unafraid to take chances with the sound and structure of popular music. *Wake Up!*'s lead-off track "Wake Up Boo!" also gave the Boos their first taste of major success in England, where it went Top Ten. In the onslaught of feature articles that quickly followed, the British music press took the Liverpool angle to absurd heights, playing up the Boos' Beatles fixation with stories about the first time Carr heard "Twist and Shout," etc. It was all a bit embarrassing. "We were well into our 20s," he says, "and they were writing about us like we were still 15."

But the Liverpool kids who would eventually become the Boo Radleys weren't just listening to the Fabs; they spent at least as much time checking out

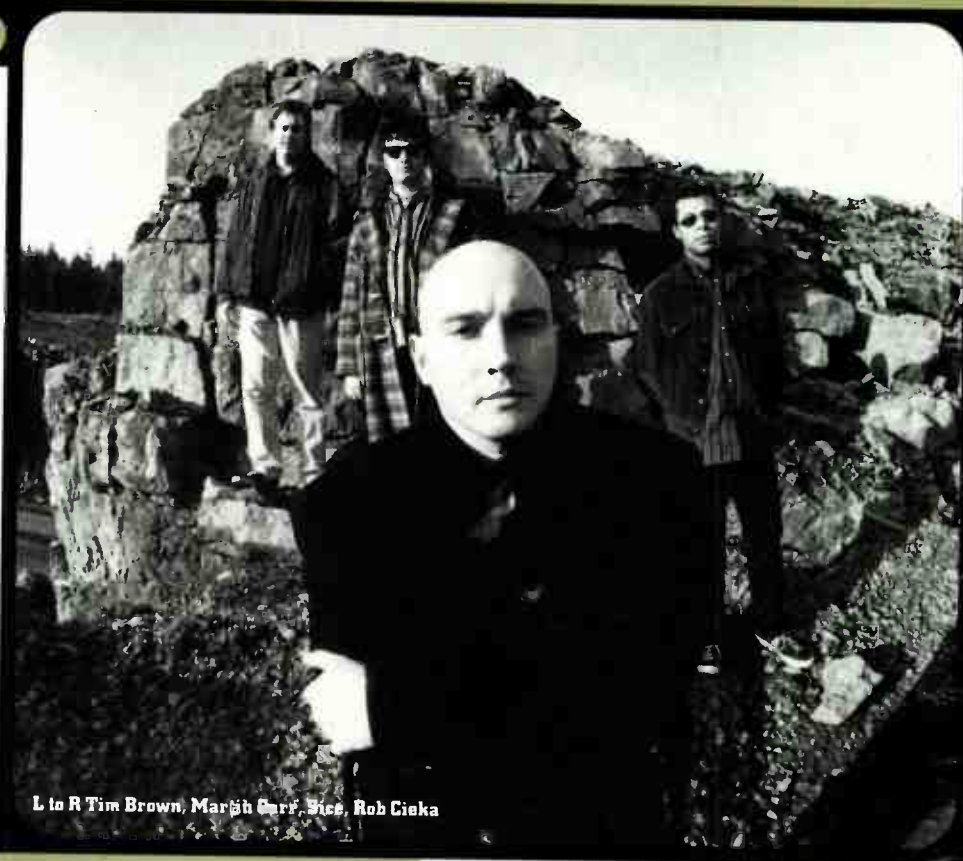
the music of their own era, stuff like Duran Duran and the Human League. In their boyhood, Martin and Sice pretended they were in a band, making imaginary records and holding imaginary press conferences. It would be years before either of them actually picked up an instrument. "We didn't have much money, so we couldn't afford guitars or amps," Carr explains. "And when we finally got them, we couldn't figure out how to use them, so we gave up."

It was the discovery of three seminal '80s bands—the Jesus and Mary Chain, Dinosaur Jr, and My Bloody Valentine—that finally spurred Carr to learn how to play. "I never wanted to be a great player," he says. "I just wanted to write songs." And once bitten by the bug, it didn't take long to get a band together. "Sice and I had no shame. We got a gig, but we didn't have a drummer or bass player and we could barely play

ourselves. We were crap." Apparently, that changed fast. By 1990, the Boos had an album out, *Ichabod and I*; by 1991 they were signed to Rough Trade. After that company folded, they moved to Creation, which would eventually make its commercial mark with another bunch of Northerners, Oasis.

Their second album, *Everything's Alright Forever*, was released in 1992.

Over the course of the Boos' next few releases, Carr's songwriting and arrangement sense would become more complex. The brief psychedelic era of Brian Wilson is a frequent reference, both in



L to R Tim Brown, Martin Carr, Sice, Rob Cieka

# BOO RAD



the multi-tracked harmonies and the often unorthodox song structures. "I listened to the *Smile* stuff a lot at one time," Carr admits, "but I was already writing that way before I heard the Beach Boys. I like that disjointed approach, and I don't naturally write in a pop song verse-chorus-verse-chorus-middle-eight structure. I tried doing that with *Wake Up!*, but failed more often than not."

*Wake Up!* is indeed the closest the band has come to a straight-ahead pop album. The big waves of fuzzy guitar are largely gone. "I didn't feel like playing very much during those sessions," Carr says. "I wanted something with horns for a single, but when people heard 'Wake Up Boo!,' they all said, 'Where's your trademark guitars?'" The sweetness of the music and of Sice's Glenn Tilbrook-ish voice disguises the confusion and despair of some of the words; at the time they were written, Carr was living with his girlfriend in the somewhat depressing Northern town of Preston and wishing he were in London instead. (They've since moved.)

While preparing to record *Wake Up!*, Carr decided to check up on his competition. He bought a few Oasis and Blur records, "not so much to be influenced but because I wanted to write something more direct.

# DIYUS

I don't really like Blur, I love Oasis but they're not exactly pushing back the frontiers of music. I feel that I have more in common with bands like the Flaming Lips or Pavement or Stereolab or Tortoise. That's where music is headed. I think this whole Britpop thing is

## Play It Boo!



ARTIN CARR plays an assortment of Gibson guitars, including a new Tennesseean model, through Marshall amps. An Alesis Quadraverb gets heavy use for live vocals and instruments. TIM BROWN uses a Fender Precision bass and Ampeg amplification. ROB CIEKA plays Yamaha drums with Remo heads and Zildjian cymbals.

going to stop this year, at least over here; in the States you're just getting it now. It reached its pinnacle last year with 'Wake Up Boo!' and Supergrass' 'Alright.' You can't get much poppier than that. So I hope bands get a little stranger this year. If they don't, it's going to be bloody dull."

Up to this point, the Boos haven't made that much of an impact in the U.S., but then again they haven't always gotten that much support; Columbia, their U.S. distributor for the last three albums, didn't put out *Wake Up!* until September '95 (six months after it was issued in Europe) and then largely ignored it. "I don't feel like we've really ever had a record label in America," Carr confesses. While most British bands are interpreting the American success of Oasis as good news for them, Carr distinguishes himself with his circumspection. "I have no delusions on that score," he says.

At the moment, the Boo Radleys' U.S. label status remains uncertain. Undeterred, they're continuing their work, putting finishing touches on their next album, provisionally titled *C'mon Kids* and scheduled for August release in England. According to Martin, it's "weirder" than *Wake Up!*, with more parts and more guitars. "One song's four minutes long and has 11 sections," he reports. "I think it's the best thing we've done." Pause. "And the record company's going to love it." Sarcastic chuckle. ☺

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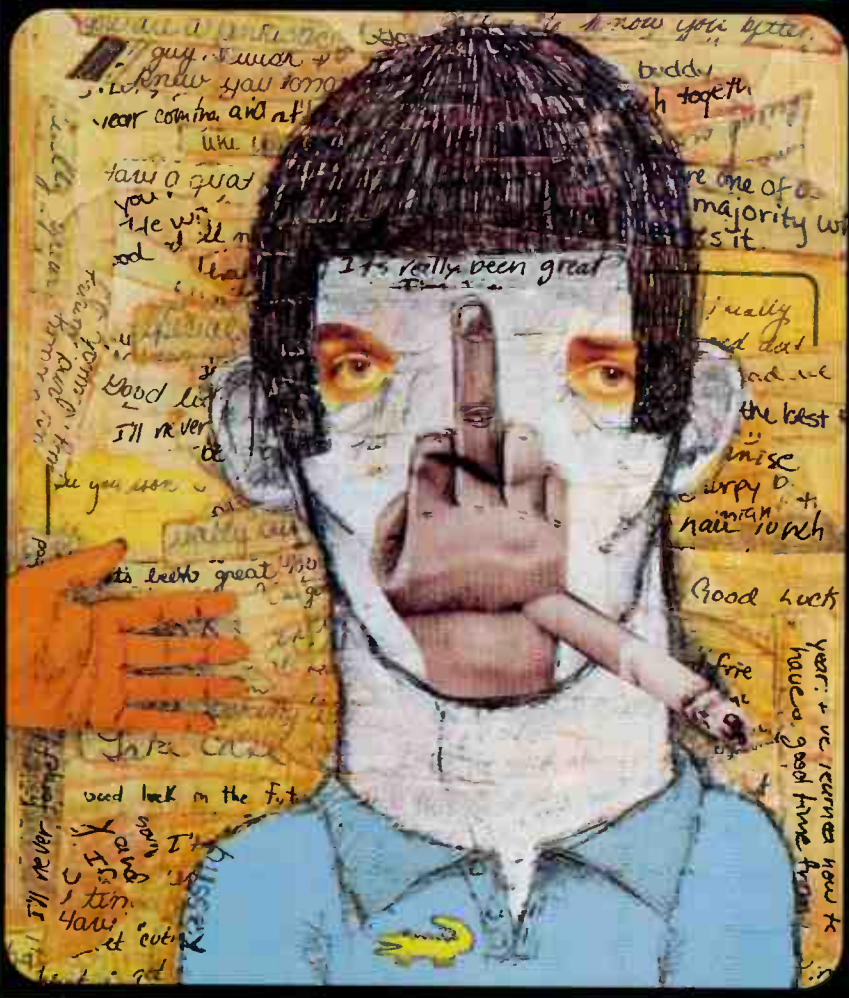
MUSICIAN

World Radio History



# FEAR OF SCHMODOZING

## Weird Trips in the U.K. Music Biz



**B**ack in the days before Dire Straits and U2 had become superstars in America, members of the two bands crossed paths on the road, meeting one night in the bar of the Mayflower Hotel in New York. The musicians from Britain and Ireland

talked of breaking through in the U.S.

"Their attitude then was the same as ours," recalls Dire Straits manager Ed Bicknell. "We're going to conquer this fucking country!"

That attitude lives on, in the determination of young bands such as Oasis, Blur, and Pulp to crack the American

market today. But this Britpop crop also faces the challenge of ending a long dry spell for new U.K. groups in the U.S. which began in the late '80s.

Young British acts also have had to come to terms with differences between how the music business works on either side of the Atlantic, and even more fundamental differences between the cultures of the Mother Country and the Colonies. Understanding those differences is crucial for a British band hoping to succeed in the States—and for any American band touring the U.K.

"When you go over to America early in an act's career, the words 'fear' and 'intimidation' spring to mind," says Bicknell. "A lot of people coming into this for the first time feel out of their depth. They tend to respond in one of two ways. I applied a combination basically of bluff, keeping my mouth shut and my ears open. A different approach is to be brash and arrogant and have lots of attitude. But my general feeling is that Americans don't respond well to that."

U2 manager Paul McGuinness, who now also represents PJ Harvey, looks back at U2's early tours and says: "We were all completely fascinated by America. The big surprise for a lot of the English acts coming over to America is they don't realize the complexity of it."

The character, as well as the scale, of every aspect of the music business in the U.K.—pop charts, radio, press, promotion, touring—is also distinctly different from that found in the U.S.

"There's a common misconception about the British and American markets," says Martin Hopewell, managing



director of Primary Talent, the major U.K. booking agency. "We're two cultures divided by a common language. We probably have more in common with the music business in France or Germany than we do with the U.S."

Yet British labels could not afford to sign any acts without the prospect of sales in America or other international markets. "The [large] size of deals in the U.K. make it imperative to have international success," says Korda Marshall, head of Britain's Infectious Records, home to Ash and Pop Will Eat Itself.

The catch: What it takes to be successful in Britain is often different from what's required to crack America.

"The English music scene is very different from America," says David Massey, senior VP of A&R with Epic Records in the U.S., who has worked closely with Oasis for the past three years. "The U.S. is not a singles-driven market, it's an album-driven market, which led to our decision to not release any Oasis singles at all [prior to "Wonderwall"]. It enabled us to avoid playing a chart game."

The chart game persists in Britain, however, where songs frequently rocket up and plummet down the official Top 75 singles chart in almost senseless fashion. Gaining a high entry for a new single on the U.K. chart—which is based entirely on sales rather than the mix of sales and airplay used with the *Billboard* Hot 100—is an obsession of the U.K. record companies, regardless of its benefit to an act in the long term.

"You've got to have something that will break through quickly, so it's often going to be superficially appealing," says U.K. industry veteran Jonathan King, publisher of *The Tip Sheet*, a weekly trade report. "It's lunacy that the British business is chasing these chart positions with acts that are not right [for the market] outside England."

**Contributors:** Thom Duffy is based in London as international deputy editor of *Billboard*.

The speed with which acts can break in Britain is also a reflection of a very different media climate. A single nationwide radio station, BBC Radio One FM, is still the dominant outlet for new pop, despite losing listenership in recent years to new national commercial operations such as Virgin Radio and independent local radio outlets. And the national music press, particularly the weeklies *New Musical Express* and *Melody Maker*, herald the arrival of new acts in cover stories with a speed that would make an American publicist's head spin.

The role of the singles chart, Radio One, and the music press in creating a rapid buzz on a new band means that touring, while still important in Britain, has been less crucial to artist develop-

**"British acts tend not to learn what touring teaches you."**

—Jonathan King

ment than in the U.S. "British acts tend not to learn what touring teaches you," says Jonathan King.

In the recent past, the likelihood that a band in Britain would get national press, radio play, chart action, and an international publishing and record deal all on the strength of their first singles meant these acts then landed in the U.S. relatively unseasoned and unprepared for breaking in the States.

Even worse, many arrived with heavy cultural baggage, the legendary British reserve, and a cynicism born of British punk. And that attitude ran right up against the glad-handing "have a nice day!" promotion style in the U.S.

"You have to be nice, to grip and grin, to say hi to everyone," says Korda Marshall, describing the American music business. "Because of the heritage of punk, there is a history in Britain of not being nice to your record company."

When bands like the Stone Roses and Happy Mondays went into America and were arrogant, people said, 'Get these guys out of my face!'"

Business differences between the two countries also can create stumbling blocks for unwary young American acts in Britain. What should a U.S. band bound for England be aware of?

"The difference in the power supply," deadpans Martin Hopewell of Primary Talent. "I'm serious," he adds, offering images of acts blowing up their 110-volt American equipment with 240-volt U.K. outlets. Yet perhaps as dangerous to a young U.S. act is the attitude of the British fan on their home turf.

"It's confrontational," says Hopewell. "It's 'go ahead and impress me or piss off.' Audiences want acts delivered to them on a plate at a certain level. And some of our club venues, you wouldn't put your worst enemy into."

Although a record label or booking agency may handle many of the details of staging an overseas tour, "a lot of people don't consider the time frames involved," says Bob Tukipan, whose Traffic Control Group has handled touring logistics for hundreds of acts from its offices in New York and London. "They need to prepare visas in time. You need six weeks in advance on both sides of the pond. They have to have a good production team. And when they're going somewhere else, they're guests in another culture and you have to have an awareness of that. You can't be a bull in a china shop."

As more label brass, managers, and artists acknowledge the differences between the music business cultures of Britain and America, they're better prepared to deal with them.

Manager Chris Morrison recognized that a full-length U.S. tour of several months could risk burnout for his clients, Blur and Elastica, who can tour their entire homeland in a matter of weeks. So he broke up their trips to the

**BY THOM DUFFY**  **ILLUSTRATION BY TIM HUSSEY**

States over the past year. He also knew that the band members might not have been comfortable with the promotional demands made on them in the States.

"But you take what you can and do what you can do to promote your career," he says. "I say to them, 'If it's not undignified, do it.'"

Dave Massey at Epic in the U.S.

says the members of Oasis find more respect while touring in America than in Britain, where the press seems to goad them into headline-making antics. "People here in the U.S., on the whole, are much cooler with the band, so the band is cool," he says. Massey also agrees that touring the full expanse of America "is quite an overwhelming

experience for young [British] bands."

"You can't break America without spending a lot of time in it," says Paul McGuinness. "You have to allow America to take its effect on the artist, by being in America and being exposed to its culture."

The need to recognize and adjust for business and cultural differences may be key to reviving the success of British acts in America. "It also comes down to the quality of the bands," says McGuinness. "Oasis is a truly great band. And the real answer is, they don't come around very often."

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# ghs ACOUSTIC PROFILE

## Laurence Juber

### Background:

A busy LA and London studio musician, Laurence Juber has been playing guitar for more than 30 years. He earned a degree in music from London University and was lead guitarist for Paul McCartney's Wings, winning a "Best Rock Instrumental" Grammy for the track "Rockestra".

### Notable Releases:

Laurence has released three CDs with Acoustic Music Records, "Solo Flight", "Naked Guitar" and "LJ", which is a finger style fusion of folk, jazz, pop and classical styles.

### Current Projects:

Taking a break from his heavy schedule of composing and session work, Laurence produced and arranged Al (Year of the Cat)

Stewart's latest release "Between the Wars" and is touring Europe and the U.S. as a soloist clinician and as Stewart's one-man band.

### Choice of Strings:

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ou mustn't disappoint people who are counting on you," says George Harrison, his soft-spoken admonishment poised midway between a maxim and a mantra. Like any avid record buyer, Harrison has known his moments of disappointment and misplaced trust, and the memory of one such incident still stings.

"I can tell you something that was a real disappointment," he moans, recalling an incident from 1955, when the 12-year-old Beatle-to-be had his heart set on a certain rock 'n' roll talisman. "I'd got the money, and I wanted 'Rock Around the Clock' by Bill Haley, and I asked somebody to get it for me, somebody in my family, and I couldn't wait to get that record. And they came home, and they gave me this record and said, 'Oh, they sold out of Bill Haley, so I got you this one.' It was the Deep River Boys." An R&B vocal quartet formed during the '40s at Virginia's Hampton Institute, the HMV POP/RCA Victor crooners were a far cry from Haley's antic rock 'n' roll act on the Brunswick label. "I thought, 'Awww no, fuckin' hell,' " says Harrison. "It was such a disappointment. That was the first record I didn't get."

One of four children raised on father Harold Harrison's salary as a bus driver, George says that, even as a fledgling Beatle, "I didn't really have any money until after we'd been to Germany," referring to the rock combo's stints playing the Kaiserkeller, the Top Ten Club, and other bistros in Hamburg. "By that time, it was '62, and I was getting records at [band manager] Brian Epstein's shop [a branch of North End Music Stores at 12-14



# WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

George Harrison Flashes Back on *Anthology*

Astrid Kirchherr/Starline

Whitechapel in the center of Liverpool], and then we were just trying to get everything."

More than three decades later, Beatles fans are equally hopeful of acquiring everything of enduring worth still cached among the Fab Four's personal effects and in the Abbey Road Studios vaults. Thus, on March 19, Capitol Records/Apple Corps Ltd./EMI Records Ltd. jointly released the 45-track *The Beatles Anthology Volume 2*, the second of the three retrospective two-CD sets of previously unheard studio rehearsals, hallowed recording variants, and tape library treasures intended for the faithful, as well as a new generation of devotees. Harrison, for one, is keen on ensuring that all comers get their money's worth. He notes that the second and third installments of the trilogy contain "a couple of hours each" of unissued songs, outtakes, and alternative renditions of the Beatles' best work. However, he adds, "we tried to put so much in minutes of music in there," being determined to make every archival tick of the timing clock worth the listeners' while.

This mammoth archival undertaking and its companion television documentary (which Harrison says will be released on home video later this year with two hours of additional footage) are not the first times Harrison has waded through the Beatles trove of professional artifacts. In the late '70s he made a generous helping of the Fab Four film and music annals available to Monty Python alumnus Eric Idle as research material for *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash*, a 1978 television parody of Beatlemania that Idle conceived, wrote, and co-directed. (Rhino Home Video offers the cult title at sell-through.)

"It, in a way, exorcised the things

**Contributors:** Timothy White is editor-in-chief of *Billboard*. Reprint courtesy of *Billboard* magazine.



**Sgt. Pepper Launching, 1967**

about the Beatles that bothered me in that period of time," Harrison says of *The Rutles*. In the years since, the slow-building restoration of concord between Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and John Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, found expression in the full-scale production of the long-awaited *Anthology* series, as well as the 1994 and '95 "reunion" sessions at McCartney's studio in the south of England, during which two Lennon demos ("Free as a Bird" and "Real Love") dating from the late '70s were proffered by Ono to the surviving Beatles for restoration and completion. The "Real Love" single was released on March 4, along with several bonus tracks.

Sipping tea at his Friar Park estate outside London as he recovered from the flu that has swept both the States and the U.K., Harrison spent the afternoon in this interview. The first recipient of the Century Award, *Billboard*'s highest honor for distinguished creative achievement, in 1992, Harrison talked at loving, detailed, and often witty length about the "tight little band" from Liverpool for which he sang, composed, and played eloquent lead guitar, discussing as well both the recent trials and rejuvenated plans regarding his ongoing solo career.

Once mistakenly labeled "the quiet Beatle," Harrison is more likely the most thoughtful of the four musicians who led rock 'n' roll into its artistic



maturity, long suggesting by word and deed that all things must pass in order that we might fully appreciate them.

*The tracks on Anthology Volume 2 encompass February 1965 to February 1968, a span that concluded exactly 28 years ago. Are you happy with the intimate time capsule this second set of unreleased Beatles material represents?*

Yeah! I think this second CD set is really nice, because on the first set that came from the *Anthology* [series] obviously we couldn't ignore all the old stuff. But there was some very rough sound quality, and there were some rough actual tunes in there, like the early demos that were found from Paul's house. But generally speaking, *Anthology Volume 1* was very well accepted, and knowing how people are going after bootlegs all the time, that volume has more or less proved that anything is of some sort of value. Nevertheless, to put together a package that's worth the money was pretty tricky. So the first CD, I thought, was the most difficult in terms of our origins. On the second CD set we're into a period that is a much better period anyway: Everything's from the studio, the songs were getting more interesting. And I like all those little bits of talking in between them—as you say, the intimacy of them.

*Your 12-string Rickenbacker 360-12 semi-acoustic guitar became especially memorable in terms of the Beatles' sound during the period documented on Anthology Volume 2. It was the spark or centerpiece of a lot of the arrangements. When did you get that guitar?*

That was the time we were in New York for *The Ed Sullivan Show*, which was February 1964. When I came over on the plane, I had the flu. I was in bed in the Plaza Hotel, and I missed the press call for all the photos they did against the New York skyline. I'm not in those. And I missed the first *Ed Sullivan* rehearsal. So it was sometime during that rest period of mine that a

man from Rickenbacker [president F. R. Hall] brought these guitars 'round for me. What happened was they had seen some pictures of John playing one, a Rickenbacker 325, and they came and brought some new ones. John had bought his, which was not a 12-string but rather a short-neck six-string, in [the Musik Rotthoff shop] when we were in Hamburg in 1961. We'd seen a photo of a bloke who was in the George Shearing Quintet, and he was the only one we'd ever seen with that Rickenbacker, so when John went in [the Musik Rotthoff shop] and

**"Relative to music made in the '60s, Oasis are pretty average."**

saw that guitar, he just had to have it and bought it instantly.

I bought a Gibson amplifier that day; we got it on what we used to call in Liverpool as the "knocker," which means one pound down and the rest when they catch you [*laughs*], and the man comes knocking on the club door saying, "May I have my money, please!"

As for my Rickenbacker 12-string, I started playing it for the first recording sessions we did after we returned from those three *Sullivan* shows we did in '64. So I believe it was for *A Hard Day's Night*, on "You Can't Do That" and other stuff.

*Similarly, the guitar sounds you recently added to John's entrancing "Real Love" have become the core of that finished record, focusing the listener emotionally.*

I know what you mean. He's got those augmented chords and diminished chords on there, which always featured in the old songs from the '20s, '30s, and '40s, and a lot of us had similar musical backgrounds, because we

grew in the same period and we heard the same type of melodic music that was played on radio in England. But it's true, there are a lot of those chord changes; in particular, an augmented chord, and that's probably what makes "Real Love" sound more like one of mine than one of John's.

*How was that demo worked with?*

Well, more or less, the same as we did on the first song, "Free as a Bird." Except when we did "Free as a Bird," the original tape was just a bit better quality. This one had a lot of clicks on it and a background hum; it seemed to me as if it had come originally off of one of those portable four-track Portastudio things that became available in the '70s, since it was just on a cassette. But it had a number of things on it: There was a tambourine, the vocal was double-tracked, and so on.

They could never find the original tape; the tape that we had from Yoko seemed a pretty far-down-the-line copy. But when we first got the cassettes from Yoko back in '93, I actually preferred "Real Love" as a song; I thought the melody was more obvious. The problem was that it was this bad copy, and it had this tambourine that was out of time and real loud. That was the only reason we passed on it originally.

*You passed on it?!*

Yeah, and the first thing that happened when we decided we were going to do something with the "Real Love" tape was that [producer] Jeff Lynne got a computer program expert, and they put it on this program like they use for cleaning up [the soundtracks of] the old Disney movies, a special program that had been developed that can clean out background noises. He spent a few days with this computer bloke, took away all the clicks and hums, and then that was the cassette we had to work with. So everything that's on "Real Love" is new, except for John's voice and the little intro section that it comes back

to, where there's a pedal harmonium and some old wobbly piano that sounds like it's from the distant past. That was John's original piano and things, but we actually double-tracked it, just to give it a bit more weight.

Having done "Free as a Bird," we knew we couldn't just put the cassette on a 24-track and overdub on that, because the tempo never holds up. So again, we did the same thing we'd learned from "Free as a Bird": We put down a drum at an average speed, because it picks up and slows down a bit here and there. We laid the track down and then "flew" John's voice; once we'd built the track up with drums, bass, guitars, and pianos, we just dropped John's voice into the appropriate places. That way, it enabled us to restructure the song

slightly, which we'd also done with "Free as a Bird," and we put in different things, like my solos.

*What kind of guitars are you playing on "Real Love"?*

Well, there's a combination. There's a guitar I got off of this nice bloke who works on the Ford assembly line in Detroit, and he makes guitars too. He's called Bernie Hamburger. I met him a couple of years ago and got a couple of guitars from him. So that's the one you'll see in the video; it's the solid-body electric guitar [the "Model T" Hamburguitar] that's painted green. That Hamburger is his own make; I like his guitar a lot. He's just a small manufacturer, but it's a very, very well-made instrument, and he does it all himself, including the electronics. That's what I play all the solos

and all the little fills on. But then there's also the slide guitar which comes in at the end, which is a Strat.

Personally, I think that "Real Love" is even more commercial than "Free as a Bird." But I loved the "Free as a Bird" video because it's amazing what they can do digitally with images in it. The one that really blows me away is Brian Epstein standing there putting his scarf on! In the earlier copy, before they went in and finished it, there were all these little cutouts where you could see the background of where they'd lifted film from other footage and plunked it in the background of that room with the Sgt. Pepper people. It was amazing.

In order to shoot all those perspectives, the director, Joe Pytko, discovered this crane that they had in Russia

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— The New York Times



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that, for some reason, was more advanced than anything the Europeans and Americans had. It would go up, down, left, right, any way you wanted to move. It was the closest thing he could get to the bird's point of view.

*Both "Free as a Bird" and "Real Love" have that trademark glide created by your guitar texture. Crazy as it sounds, I always thought a lot of your guitar playing had a vocal quality to it.*

Well, I always remember Eric Clapton saying in the '60s that if you listened to guitar players who sing, their playing usually sounds like their voice. Like, if you'd hear Albert King, he's very staccato, because the guitar is the extension of the voice. That's what I learned from Indian music, because the original instrument is the voice, with the primordial sounds coming from the voice and then all the instruments just copying it.

*The ultimate point here is that even if you never wrote a song or opened your mouth to sing, your lead guitar in all its different shadings was almost another singing voice for the Beatles.*

It's nice of you to say that. The very first time I was even influenced by a guitar, it was purely in a rhythmic sense, as in the rhythm guitar of Lonnie Donegan on the old Leadbelly stuff ["Rock Island Line," "Bring Me a Little Water, Sylvie," etc.]. I think the first person I ever saw playing a guitar was Slim Whitman, either a photo of him in a magazine or live on television.

The thing of guitar infatuation is so widespread throughout the world now that everyone loves the guitar in one shape or form. But I used to try and draw them in the back of the classroom in Liverpool. The first guitarist I actually heard was Jimmie Rodgers, "the Singing Brakeman." And I remember hearing Merle Travis: A fellow I knew as a kid had a Merle Travis extended-play record that had a cover on it that was just this incredible photograph of a guitar—probably a

Gibson—lying on its back, taken from the bottom end of the tailpiece going up and over the bridge and down the neck.

Then came "Blue Suede Shoes" by Carl Perkins and any of the electric Elvis Presley guitar solos by Scotty Moore. And the guitar player in the Johnny Otis Show band [Pete Lewis]—I love him.

Eddie Cochran was brilliant. He

In *Anthology Volume 1* and on the *Live at the BBC* album you hear me repeatedly play a trill of three notes in succession, which was all I could do to come close to what was actually one bend of the third string on these records I loved. My thing sounded a bit twee, actually, compared to how it would sound on a good bent-string solo.

Another of those kinds of string-



held the secret and brought it from America—the secret of the unwound third string! It was unbelievable to us how these people were making these sounds because, see, in England we had these strings that were like steel cables. Then later on we found out they'd just gotten light-gauge unwound third strings. Eddie Cochran came over, and my friend Joe Brown was in his backup band, and Joe found out how they'd use a lighter-gauge second string—meaning a steel string without the copper or brass binding around it—for the third string, so they could do the bending. You need to bend that string, and with the heavy-gauge strings that were all that was available in England in those days, it was virtually impossible.

bending guitar players was Charlie Gracie, who had "Fabulous" [on Parlophone in 1957], and the B-side over here was called "Butterfly." It was this big electric slap-echo sound that was brilliant. Whatever happened to Charlie? That's what I'd like to know!

And Bill Haley had this big acoustic Gibson with a pickup stuck on it, but Frannie Beecher [who played a 1954 Gibson Les Paul Custom] was the most unbelievable guitar player of all time. He must have come out of the jazz field; you had this thing happening where it was swing and rock simultaneously together on those early rock 'n' roll records. I think a lot of those players were jazz players, and Bill Haley & His Comets

were quite an interesting combination, with the big upright bass, sax, and Frannie Beecher. If you just listen, for instance, to the solo on "Rock Around the Clock," it's incredible playing.

Before Bill Haley came to England, he had so many hits in a row, like "Shake, Rattle and Roll," "Razzle-Dazzle," and "A.B.C. Boogie." There were hundreds of them—or it seemed like that when you were 12 years old [laughs].

Later I got into buying some Chet Atkins records, but I was never a technical guitar player; there was always a better player around. There was a bloke who went to school with Paul and me who ended up in the Remo Four—Colin Manley; he was one of those guys who could copy Chet Atkins when he'd be playing two

tunes at the same time.

Somehow I never had the patience. God knows how I ever made anything of myself. I used to sit there and practice as a kid, but I couldn't sit there forever; I wasn't that keen. Paul talks about how we went to the other end of Liverpool because we heard some bloke had a copy of "Searchin'" by the Coasters. Then we went where some other fellow knew the B7 chord, trekking there to watch where he put his fingers. And we'd think, "Fantastic. Now we've got that one."

James Burton's solo on [Ricky Nelson's] "Hello Mary Lou," that was a pretty classical solo. Later on, I also enjoyed listening to Andrés Segovia, because he was so good in his field. So all those things became influences. In fact, anybody with a guitar did. Then

we'd go and watch all the rock 'n' roll movies: *The Girl Can't Help It* [1956] was the climax of them. Everything, all these guitars and voices and images, go into this big curry, and it regurgitates itself somewhere down the line.

*Thinking of voices—in this case, singing voices—and listening to the three-part vocals by you, John, and Paul on the early take of "Yes It Is" from Anthology Volume 2, I wonder if it was easy for the three of you to get that harmony configuration.*

No, no. That was very difficult, I remember. We had to figure out the parts. Like John's part, of course; that was his melody. The harmony that Paul sang was the closest one to it. The third part that I was doing had to avoid the other two: Sometimes I'm up, and sometimes I'm down, and some-

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times it moves in an unfathomable way because it's basically just trying to avoid hitting the same notes the others are on. It was a very tricky one to learn, and not a logical one; it's not one I could naturally come up with. But when it was all put together, it sounded really good, so that was just an example of working out something. We spent a lot of time working on arrangements, both vocal and guitar parts. Like on "And Your Bird Can Sing," you'd think there's a double-harmony guitar part, but we didn't have enough tracks to be double-tracking, so it was always two of us who'd play together, Paul and I or John and I. We'd sit there and work it out and then play it live onto one track.

*In those vocal harmony meshes, you were each good at retaining the normal qualities of your voices.*

Yes! They were just natural voices without any effects or exaggeration.

*A couple of things on the second Anthology are outtakes from the Help! sessions: "If You've Got Troubles" and "That Means a Lot."*

Well, as far as "If You've Got Troubles," the one with Ringo, back when I was going down to Paul's to do "Free as a Bird" somebody had just given me or mailed me these bootlegs. When that song came on I was driving, and it was very strange because I'd never heard it from the day we recorded it [in February 1965] to that day I was driving alone. It was just forgotten about, so it was weird because part of me recognized it and yet the words, the lyrics [laughs], are the most ridiculous lyrics I've ever heard. It's a pretty bizarre song, but it was quite nicely played and recorded.

With songs like "That Means a Lot," sometimes we did a demo for somebody, like Paul would say, "I'm gonna give this song to P. J. Proby." I'm not saying this is exactly what happened here, but it could have been that we just played it so that we'd have

a tape of it, and it was never intended to be a Beatles record. That kind of thing happened sometimes.

*Anthology Volume 2 contains alternate versions of other U.S. Help! deletions. "Yesterday" appears now in both its unissued first studio take and Paul's live debut that you personally introduced onstage in Blackpool, England. Capitol later put "Yesterday" out in America on that Yesterday . . . And Today package, almost as a context for that song.*

The problem always was that we used to put 14 tracks on an album, and then in between the albums we'd have

**"I was never a technical guitar player. There was always a better one around."**

a couple of singles. And sometimes those singles would be EPs, with four songs on a 45. Capitol, for some reason—and it may still exist—would only pay the publishers the fees on ten titles. So what they were doing, unbeknownst to us, was they would take off a couple of tracks and, along with the singles, they would make up another album. It wasn't until we were in America that people would say, "Would you sign this?" We'd say, "What's that?! That's not our album! We never made that!" We'd look at it and think, "What the fuck's going on here?" So there was always that conflict. That's why, now, when you see the original Beatles catalog that's currently being sold as part of our new deal with Capitol, what we've made available is basically the original 13 albums we made in England.

*What did you think of the "butchers and bloody babies" photo session with the Beatles that Capitol initially used in the U.S. for the cover of Yesterday . . . and Today?*

Oh, I hated that! I never liked it in the first place. A friend of mine had this expression. Instead of "avant-

garde" he'd say "aven't got a clue" [laughs]. The situation there was that there was this bloke, Bob Whitaker, a photographer who Brian Epstein had met in Australia, and Brian had given him the job. That fellow came around with us for a period of time and took some photos, and it was his idea to do this picture because he thought it was avant-garde.

I never felt comfortable doing it. I felt it was totally unnecessary. All these experimental things like that are a bit childish, as if there's not enough of that around. Especially because I became a vegetarian, anyway, in 1965,

and I found it hard to look in a butcher shop window! But just because you put out anything in short supply, it becomes this incredible collector's item.

*You've got a previously unavailable "rehearsal" and "take one" of "I'm Only Sleeping" on Anthology Volume 2. The finished song was also on Yesterday . . . and Today in the States yet appeared on Revolver in England.*

And "I'm Only Sleeping" was the first time we ever did a backward guitar! In those days you had to turn the tape over and guess what was happening. Nowadays they make those 24-track machines run in any direction you want.

*How did you come up with the Rickenbacker riff for "Ticket to Ride," one of the most distinctive Beatles guitar signatures ever, which appears on Anthology Volume 2 in an August 1965 live version? Was the riff conceived expressly for that song?*

Yeah! But John was just playing the song to us on rhythm guitar, and I had the 12-string Rickenbacker. It was also something to do with the fact that my



part on the guitar was hooking into Ringo's part. So when I came up with that little staggered riff, it dictated or gave Ringo the cue to play the part that he does.

It had a big effect on Jim McGuinn, as he was named at the time—but later Roger—and a lot of other people. Even me. Years later even I thought that the Byrds had invented it! I forgot [laughs]. In the books about Rickenbacker guitars, McGuinn talks about how the Byrds went to see *A Hard Day's Night* at the movies, and they stayed and watched it through twice, saying, "What's that he's playing?" Afterward, they got the Rickenbacker, and that's where they got that jangly sound I'd come up with on "Ticket to Ride." They also got Gretsch guitars like ours. McGuinn's kind to always mention it.

*You're singing and playing on the*

*live August 1965 Shea Stadium version of the Beatles' cover of Perkins' "Everybody's Trying to Be My Baby." Was that scary, given the early vocal fears you once told me about, or were you confident at that point?*

We'd performed such a lot that I think we had enough confidence just to go anywhere and play. Shea Stadium was a different kettle of fish, though, because it was such a screaming crowd, and it was such a long way to get to the stage, and we all were very nervous. We'd still get nervous doing concerts, even in smaller theaters. I'd always get a little bit of that butterflies feeling.

But at Shea Stadium—although in the films we look very casual when we're lying around waiting to go on—we were very nervous, with that mixture of excitement and anticipation with the biggest crowd that had ever

gathered in history [for a pop concert—55,600] at that point. But once we got out there and got on the stage and started doing it, it became apparent we were doing it for our own amusement, 'cause nobody could hear a thing!

*Yet you were singing in tune and didn't lose the thread of the song.*

It's really a joke if you compare it to these days, because we used to have these little Vox AC-30 amps and then we were thinking we were playing in these bigger stadiums, and Vox decided to make these bigger amplifiers for us. We were so naïve in those days; we could have made anything we wanted, but we were just very modest still in some respects, and they gave us these 100-watt amps. A 100-watt amp, you've probably got that in your motor car these days [laughs]! And the P.A. system, the microphone system, is probably just two microphones on the stage, and they're probably the same mikes that were used to announce the oncoming baseball players. Any sound that comes across from any guitars or drums is purely coming from those two vocal mikes. Nothing else is miked.

Nowadays you'd have the whole drumkit with five or six mikes on it and have its own mixing system being pumped back out through the P.A. system. So it's a miracle, really, that anything came across, but when you're competing with 55,000 people it was ludicrous. You can see in the film of Shea that there's a bit of us just playing to ourselves because we were not quite sure if anybody can even see us, let alone hear us.

*Tell me your feelings on the unreleased version of "Taxman" on Anthology Volume 2, which doesn't have the "Mr. Wilson" and "Mr. Heath" lyric references.*

Again, it's a surprise to me, because we often did some spur-of-the-moment things that never made it onto the finished record. A really obvious one is "And I Love Her," which has a



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nylon-string Spanish guitar on the famous record, with bongos or congas, but when you hear it in the version on the *Anthology Volume 1* it's like a 12-string electric guitar and full-on drumkit. When we came across these other takes, it was like, "Wow, what was that?" It was a surprise to us too.

The same goes for "Taxman." Vocally, we were still working out what to do. It was just a novelty: "Anybody got a bit of money/Anybody got a bit of money." The Wilson/Heath thing came after that.

*The previously unreleased version of "Within You Without You" is an instrumental with just the Indian instruments and the string overdub, yet it has a wonderful flow. Were the instruments originally handled separately?*

That song was done in three segments and edited together. We did the intro and the start and the verses that

*The unissued rendition of "Only a Northern Song" on Anthology Volume 2 has variant lyrics. "I just wrote them myself," you sing at one point, with a different ending than the version on the Yellow Submarine soundtrack. Did you do this one first?*

It's an earlier version, because the version that came out on the original released recording was usually the last thing we did.

*"Only a Northern Song" was a reaction to the Beatles' publishing difficulties, right?*

I think it was put better in the make-believe TV documentary called *The Rutles*, where it was said, "Dick Jaws, an out-of-work music publisher of no fixed ability" signed them up for the rest of their lives.

I think this was at a point where I realized something was going on, because, quite honestly, I always felt retrospectively that I was really ripped off. Paul and John were signed up to

*Michael Jackson controls 250 Beatles copyrights through ATV Music, which he owns in partnership with Sony Music Entertainment. But didn't Jackson gain control of some of your copyrights when he bought the MacKenzie/Northern Songs catalog back in 1985? For example: "Only a Northern Song," "Taxman," "Blue Jay Way," "Think for Yourself," "Love You To"...*

... and "Don't Bother Me"! Yeah, he has all the songs that I ever wrote that were owned by Dick James. He has them right up until, I think, 1967; I'd signed a two-year contract with James. By the Beatles [the "White Album"], that's when I got free of that and had my own company.

*Have you ever communicated anything to Jackson yourself, such as "Please don't make sausage commercials out of 'Within You Without You'?"*

No [laughs], but I have joked to mutual friends, saying, "Do you think that Michael would let me have my songs back now?" See, I don't like to see Beatles songs as commercials, but my main moan was about Dick James. He was the one who originally took the ownership of those copyrights away from me when I was 20 or something. We had no representation telling us the honest truth. And that fella Dick James was successfully sued before he died by Elton John [who had won a \$14 million court judgment from James the week before the publisher's death in 1986].

I think the whole idea of playing on the naïveté of those who don't know the rules or what's in the small print is bad. So it's just the thing now of being locked into a deal with this catalogue that's been sold to Lew Grade, Robert Holmes à Court, and Jackson; in a way, Michael Jackson is just one in a long line of people. I didn't really have a gripe against any of these people; my gripe is with the whole situation that happened back in

## **"John's lyrics made me howl, because I knew where he was coming from."**

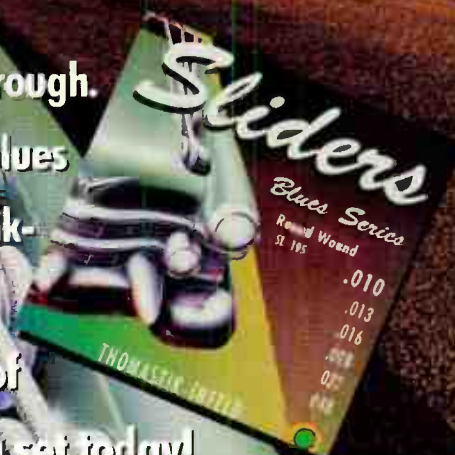
lead up to the instrumental section. So the instrumental version was done separately, and it was very long for those days. Because of the tambouras [four-stringed Indian drone instruments], it was cross-faded together, and then the second section, which was the instrumental, went into 5/4 timing. Then the last section, when it comes back out of that with the tabla and goes into the last verse, was spliced together later. Everybody knows—if they've ever heard it, anyway—the one with the vocal on it. But it's interesting to hear it with just the background instruments. It stuck out a bit, really, on *Sgt. Pepper* because it had no relationship to anything else on that album other than "Getting Better," which had a couple of tambouras forced on top of it.

Dick James, to Northern Songs, and then he came along when I started writing songs and he said how he'd like to publish my songs. Now, nobody ever sat down with me—no managers or lawyers; we never had any lawyers—and nobody ever gave us any advice, that was the thing. And in a way, Brian Epstein was slightly in cahoots with Dick James. But James never actually sat down and said, "I'll publish your songs, and when you sign this piece of paper I will be stealing your copyrights; I will own it for the rest of my life"—which is what actually happened. So I think "Northern Song" was where I was starting to get an idea that this bloke would always show up when you'd only half-written a song, and he'd be trying to get you to assign it.



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the '60s with Dick James. That's what led to the loss of control regarding these commercials.

*And your sore point or moral argument is that writers should be consulted before their songs are used in such commercials?*

Unless somebody out-and-out sells his song and says, "Here, you can do what the hell you like with it," yeah! In these cases where people's songs have been taken from them by one means or another and then, without consulting the writer, they just turn them into commercials, it does belittle them. I'm not against using songs in commercials *per se*. I think they can be used quite well if it doesn't damage the meaning or reputation of the song. But there have been many Beach Boys songs, like "God Only Knows," that I always

loved, and when you hear them in the dumb context of a commercial, it's like, "Ugh."

*What do you think of Oasis, which has a hit inspired by your Wonderwall Music album?*

They're supposed to be big Beatles fans. It's a matter of relativity. Relative to some of the stuff that's been going on for the last so many years, I think they're pretty good. But relative to the music that was being made in the '60s by the '60s bands, I think they're average. I think the drummer [Alan White] is pretty good; he's the one who stands out to me as being pretty cool.

*The sleeve art of Oasis' U.K. single "Don't Look Back in Anger" has a photo inspired by the Sgt. Pepper cover, showing instruments and objects amid a bed of flowers.*

Right, because now there's them and Blur, and I suppose our *Anthology* and the timing of all that has helped them because there's this whole resurgence into that type of thing. The main Oasis song I've heard is the "Wonder-wall" one, 'cause it's had a lot of airplay. Musically, I think they're not bad, but we've heard it all before. The thing that bothers me more than anything about Oasis are the comments the blokes keep making when they're on TV. Did you see the Brit Awards? They were saying stuff on there where they just seemed a bit over the top!

*When the Beatles had their fun in the studio or shared an impish sense of humor with the public, it usually came off well. A treat on Vol. 2 is the alter-*

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nate version of "You Know My Name (Look Up the Number)" that has a ska portion and other unexpected elements.

It was just a little joke thing John had, and I think we recorded it originally just for the Beatles fan club Christmas record. That's what it was. It just developed, and then Brian Jones arrived in the studio, and he played the sax at the end. The fan club used to get us to make these records every Christmas and give them out on those floppy birthday-card-like plastic records. We'd always do a message saying, "Hello, another year has gone by. Thank you for all your cards and presents." This guy Tony Barrow was the press agent. He used to write these things, and we'd stand in front of the microphone and read it. Later, you can hear us saying things like, "It's been a very wonderful year—it says here" [laughs]. In the end we didn't bother with his things at all and just started making up our own ones. But this version of "Number" still has an edit out of it, because it did go on a lot, particularly at the end. There was a bit Paul was doing that just went on and on.

*What are your personal favorites among the demos and alternate takes of classics in Anthology Volume 2?*

"I Am the Walrus," "Strawberry Fields," and "Across the Universe" are overall my favorite songs and records here, and I like these different edits and takes of them. John just obviously had the edge at that point, and the things that he wrote were just more cool.

There are also many things John was writing and able to put into words that won't appear until the last anthology that's coming later. I just gave George Martin demos the other day that I think are called "I Need a Fix," off the "White Album" sessions, and "Mother Superior Jumped the Gun," as it was called on the demo box. Some of these kinds of demos of his just ended up as *Abbey Road* medleys, like

"Polythene Pam," which shows that John had a great sense of humor—also that wacky line, "A soap impression of his wife that he ate and donated to the National Trust" [on "Happiness is a Warm Gun"] that he stuck on the "White Album."

A lot of the lyrics that John was doing I could relate to. Having done this lysergic stuff [lysergic acid diethylamide, i.e., LSD] together, I felt very connected to him. His lyrics often made me howl, because I felt I knew where they were coming from. On "Walrus" there's a lot of stuff that's just a flow of words coming out. But

**"The guitar is the extension of the voice. That's what I learned from Indian music."**

there's also things like, when we were kids in Liverpool, they used to have this horrible little saying, which was [laughs] "Yellow matter custard/Green snot pie/All mixed together with a dead dog's eye/Spread it on a butty/Spread it nice and thick/And wash it down with a cold cup of sick!" A butty was a northern word for a sandwich, usually made with big thick slices of bread. So, see, there wasn't anything that we ever went through or heard in life that didn't wind up in the lyrics of all these songs. We could always get them in there! But that was around that time when [LSD chemist Augustus] Owsley [Stanley III] was churning out those pills.

To sit back and play all those songs through . . . they do evoke a lot of strange feelings, you know? But I do think that *Volume 2* is much better than *Volume 1*, where we had to dredge through our early past, and

*Volume 3* will be even better because of the quality of that material and what we went through.

The main thing that comes across for me—and I've even heard other bands saying it—is that we were a tight little band for four people with just Mickey Mouse amplifiers. It was all still pretty good for its day. And it's particularly good to get our live stuff out, even though no one was into live recording back then or the technology of how to record a rock band live.

*What can you tell us about Anthology Volume 3?*

It's all good, very entertaining stuff, and since it's been laying around for years, it's great it's coming out. I just wish I'd been more aware as it was happening, 'cause we would have had so much more stuff. It's amazing that there's so much material, considering it was such a short period of time, really, that we were so busy running 'round doing these other things.

After I had joked that anything after *Volume 3* should be called *Scraping the Barrel*, George Martin said, "Yeah, we'd have to put a government health warning on it!" That's not to say there may not be something still there to consider, but this is the bulk of everything. I think it stands up, and the main thing is that we tried to put a couple of hours of music in there to give it value.

*Are we going to have another George Harrison solo record soon?*

After all these years of lawyers that I got sucked into after having to handle my own business and find out what happened to it after Denis O'Brien abandoned ship, I've hardly ever picked up the guitar, other than doing the recent Beatles stuff and all the Beatles editing. [Harrison won a summary judgment on January 10 in an \$11.6 million suit against his business manager from 1973 through '93.] It's a help [winning the suit], but I didn't actually get any money. We've got to follow him to the ends of the earth,



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getting the case registered in every different area where he could have any assets. Like it said in my press release, it's one thing winning that, but actually getting the money is another thing. Those years from the end of 1991 have been like hell, so it's just recently that I've written some new tunes, and I'm trying to find the time to not have to

deal with all these accountants and lawyers. O'Brien did put me unnecessarily through a real ugly scene.

If I could have a record recorded during the year, that would be quite nice, and I've got a few tunes that are decent. I'm going to India soon to produce the next Ravi Shankar album following the 75th anniversary *In*

*Celebration* boxed set of his that has just come out on Angel/Dark Horse. The next Ravi record is also for Angel, and it's going to be some spiritual music with Vedic chants. Angel did those big Chant records with the monks, of course, but those monks chanting always remind me too much of being a Catholic [laughs]. That stuff is spooky, I think, whereas the Indian stuff is going to be warm and sweet.

*So what has been the sum effect for you of going back and listening to all of the Beatles' hidden history and archival tapes? Is it like living it twice?*

Some parts of it I can listen to and be more distanced from it than I ever could at the time we were doing it. The good thing, generally, is that with all those years in between it doesn't matter how I used to worry about all the mixes or the performances or whatever. Now I feel liberated from it and more able to enjoy it.

*You've told me over the years about the genuine toil that went into the Beatles' body of work. Do you think the overall excellence of the Beatles, aside from any God-given inspiration, had something to do with applying the professional effort that others often didn't?*

Hmm, I do think so. The only thing we were trying to do was make good records, particularly when we had our first little success and they allowed us more studio time. It just seemed like we were in there all our lives, really, at that period. We worked hard; we weren't working nine to five. We used to have to battle sometimes with the engineers and sometimes with George Martin, to make them stay beyond six or seven in the evening. They probably used to start at ten in the morning and finish at five; then we came into their lives, and we'd start at one or

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two in the afternoon and work right through 'til one or two in the morning.

*During that early '60s era in England, most artists didn't have the studio control you guys got.*

We only got it, though, after we'd had a number of big hits. By the time "Love Me Do" went to No. 17 in England in 1962, there was a sense of

the "nice to see you back, boys" type of thing. It was a little less difficult. Then, when we had that No. 1 with "Please Please Me," their tone lightened considerably.

*Did George Martin play a role in terms of eliminating the bureaucracy?*

Yeah! We were turned down initially by EMI, you have to remember,

so we came into EMI through the back door, because George Martin was the sole producer and the person who dealt with everything on Parlophone, whether it was comedy or whatever. So he took the decision to try us out, even though EMI had turned down Brian Epstein, having listened to the Decca tapes . . .

*. . . which contained "The Sheik of Araby" and other tracks resurrected on Anthology Volume 1.*

Which just shows they had no sense of humor [big laugh]!


*So George Martin, as the Parlophone boss, took you under his wing?*

Yeah, he stuck his neck out. He thought something was gonna happen to us, even if it wasn't musically, you know, because he thought we had a sense of humor or something happening within us that went beyond just making songs. And he recognized that it was worth giving it a try.

*As history has shown. Indeed, you wound up creating something grander than anything you might have intended.*

Listen, everything is like that! I mean, I tried a couple of times to figure out how the Jamaicans played reggae music, and I came to the conclusion that they were listening to the rock 'n' roll that came from England and America, and they couldn't do it! So they just left-footed it, and it turned into their own thing, and so it became reggae. But they were really just trying to play rock 'n' roll.

*Someday musicians may study the Beatles' recordings in conservatory fashion, attempting to perfect the playing of them as if they were part of the classical canon.*

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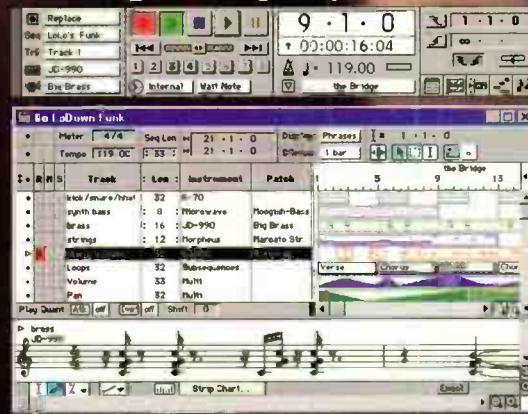


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He also admitted he was a  
little embarrassed to tell us something else.

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



# fast forward

## 1 godin multiac duet

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## 5 panasonic sv-3800 dat

Regular readers of our Home Studio feature have probably noticed that a few items keep popping up every month. One of them is the Panasonic SV-3700, which has become the industry's standard DAT machine. Now Panasonic's introducing the 3700's successor, the SV-3800. The analog/digital converter is the same as in the 3700 (1 bit, 34X oversampling), but the 3800's got 20-bit resolution, meaning wider dynamic range and lower noise. At \$1695, it costs the same as the 3700. • Panasonic, 6550 Katella Ave., Cypress, CA 90630; voice (714) 373-7277, fax (714) 373-7903.

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# Maximum MIDI Power

by howard massey

I used to be afraid of heights. That changed many years ago when I and a few of my similarly lubricated college buddies decided to spend the evening climbing up to the roof of a 20-story building under construction. As we timidly crawled on our bellies to the very edge and looked down (the ledge hadn't been built yet), the fear started to evaporate, and it was gone forever once I got back down to the ground and realized that I was still in one piece. Litigation attorneys please note: I am not recommending that you repeat my Stupid Human Trick—I'm simply making the point that the best way to conquer your fears is to face them head-on.

Many of *Musician's* readers may be intimidated by, opposed to, or even afraid of the advances of technology. In this month's Editor's Pick, we're going to conquer that fear by taking a journey together out onto the so-called "bleeding edge" of technology, as we spotlight the two most advanced pieces of MIDI software currently available. Granted, this may not be quite as thrilling as looking down from 20 stories, but it sure is a lot safer!

The very first MIDI software products to appear back in the Neanderthal mid-'80s were MIDI sequencers—programs that could record a performance from a MIDI keyboard and then play that data back to external MIDI instruments. These allow the computer to act like a player piano, except that the information representing notes, timings, and expression (such as key velocity and pedaling) is stored as digital data on disk instead of as punched holes on a roll of paper. Over

the years, MIDI sequencers have become quite sophisticated, and today's renditions typically provide a slew of advanced features, including graphic displays, musical notation, and extensive editing power.

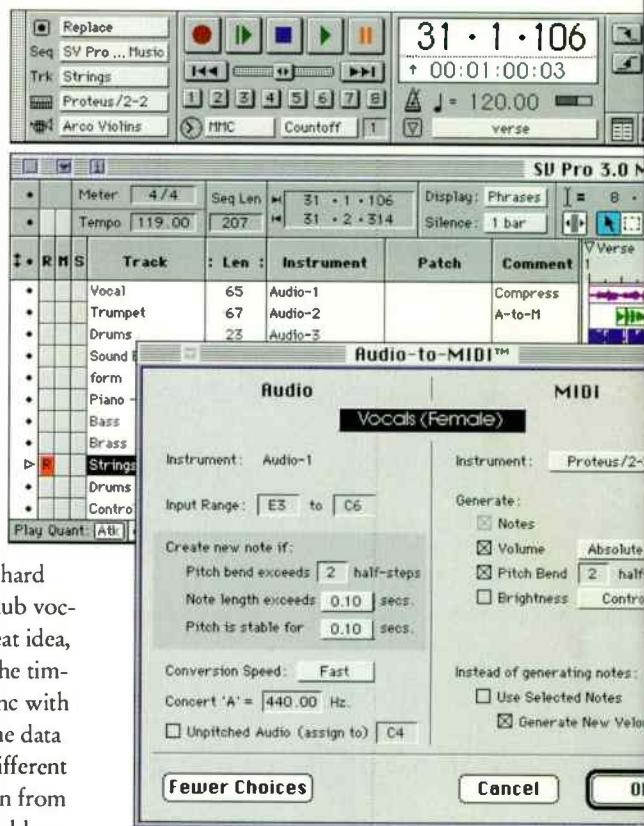
By the late 1980s, computer memory had also become fast enough and cheap enough to allow for the development of

hard disk recording programs that enable actual audio signals to be recorded, in effect turning the computer into a digital tape recorder, minus the tape. Technically oriented musicians soon saw the advantages of using both kinds of pro-

grams together, recording backing tracks and orchestrations with MIDI sequencers and using hard disk recording programs to overdub vocals and acoustic instruments. Great idea, but the big problem was getting the timing of the two kinds of data in sync with one another—a tall order when the data were being played back by two different pieces of software, sometimes even from two different computers. This problem has been largely eradicated with the recent introduction of integrated MIDI sequencer/digital audio software products which allow both kinds of data to be recorded, edited, and played back together from one program on one computer.

Today, there are more than a dozen such products, for both Macintosh and Windows platforms. The two most advanced, however, are both currently available for the Macintosh only: Emagic's Logic Audio (list price \$799) and Opcode's Studio Vision Pro (list price \$995). (We're told that Windows versions

of both programs will be available by the end of 1996.) Both support a wide variety of Macintosh digital audio hardware, including built-in Power Mac audio, virtually the entire range of Digidesign cards, and the Yamaha CBX-D3 and CBX-D5 (Logic Audio even allows you to play back audio through different hardware devices simultaneously). Most importantly, both Logic Audio and Studio Vision Pro take things a step further than any-



## Logic Audio & Studio Vision Pro

thing else out there—they truly represent the cutting edge of this kind of technology, at least for the moment.

Needless to say, both Logic Audio and Studio Vision Pro will enable you to massage your MIDI data in pretty much any way you can imagine, and also in ways you probably never dreamed of—but other programs do this too. And, like other programs, they allow you to process and edit your digital audio in a



variety of ways. But the real strength of these two giants lies in the way they enable you to manipulate digital audio—in some cases, even allowing you to edit audio as if it actually was MIDI. For example, you can apply continuous MIDI control change messages such as volume or panning to audio signal the same as you can to MIDI signal. You can also substitute one kind of audio sample for

will automatically turn your musical ideas into the equivalent MIDI data. We're not just talking about pulling out the correct notes and timing information, either: Both programs can also read the dynamics of the audio signal and generate equivalent MIDI velocity messages (and, in the case of Studio Vision Pro, MIDI volume messages as well). In Logic Audio, this conversion process is blindingly fast, even on a Mac IIci (the bare minimum computer requirement for both programs). Studio Vision Pro, on the other hand, takes quite a while to complete this task (even on a Power Mac), but, to be fair, does much more extensive processing, even generating MIDI pitch bend data and/or MIDI brightness control data to replicate pitch anomalies or timbral changes in the audio.

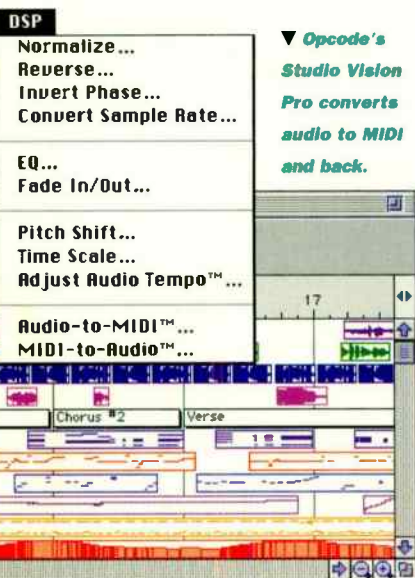
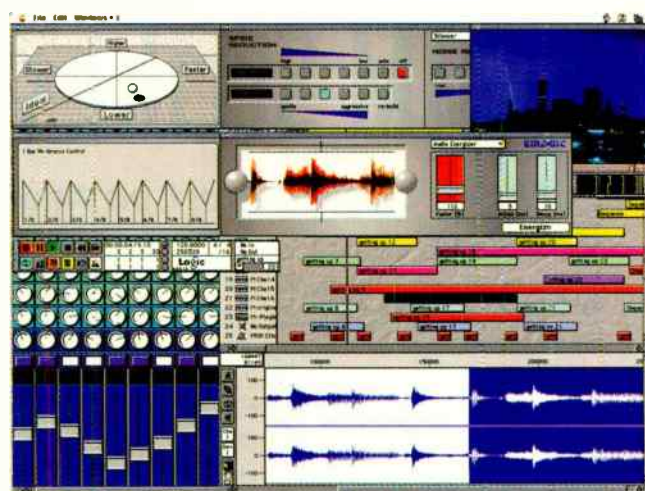
Of course, this whole thing would be of limited utility if the conversion process were not accurate, and the current versions of both programs score mixed results in this area. Certainly, the cleanliness of the audio file is a major factor, but the settings of the various editable parameters offered are absolutely critical. In practice, I often had to go back and change these parameters many times in order to find the optimum settings, and,

▲ **Emagic's Logic Audio can give MIDI tracks a live feel.**

parameter values were determined, both did a credible job even on fairly poorly recorded vocals. Yes, you may

end up with a few spurious notes that have to be erased, and, yes, there may be a few pitches that are inaccurately represented and need to be altered, but, hey, that's life in the fast lane. In any case, these kinds of edits are incredibly easy to apply to MIDI data.

Logic Audio provides a unique function called "Audio-to-MIDI Groove," where the rhythmic feel of your audio data can be extracted and then grafted onto other tracks, making it easy, for example, to closely lock a MIDI bassline to a live recording of drums. Studio Vision Pro doesn't offer quite the same function, but it allows other aspects of the audio—dynamics information, pitch bend, and/or brightness—to be superimposed onto selected MIDI data. For example, you can control the opening and



▼ **Opcode's Studio Vision Pro converts audio to MIDI and back.**

another (just as you can freely substitute MIDI sounds) and can even quantize the start times (or, in the case of Logic Audio, user-specified "anchor" points) of audio events.

And here's where things really start to get cutting-edge, since not only do both programs allow you to edit audio as if it were MIDI data, they actually allow you

## Studio Vision Pro represent the cut-

## ting edge of MIDI technology.

to convert audio to MIDI data! There are a few caveats, however: To be converted successfully, the audio must be mono-phonetic (the current versions don't allow chords to be translated), and it must be a relatively clean, spare recording. But the implications of this are truly exciting: Play in a sax lick (from a real saxophone, not some MIDI wind controller) or simply hum a tune into a microphone, and both Logic Audio and Studio Vision Pro

since neither program provides a preview function, this is quite time-consuming. (However, once you do find the best settings for a particular audio file, they can be stored for future use.) In general, I found that both programs did a better job converting recordings of instruments than they did with vocals, but once the best

closing of a MIDI instrument filter (as in the organ intro to the Who's classic "Won't Get Fooled Again") with your voice, simply by overdubbing a scratch vocal that mimics the volume and timbral changes you wish to achieve.

Studio Vision Pro takes things a step further by even [cont'd on page 75]

with the release of their RE1000 condenser mike (\$950), which combines a large diaphragm with transformerless circuitry for extra low noise. And Sennheiser announced no less than five new mikes: three dynamics (MD431 II, MD735, and MD736) and two condensers (ME64 and MKE104 lavalier).

In the "smaller-is-better" category, Telex unveiled their ELM Micro-Mini series, while AKG debuted their MicroMic Series II line of "thumbnail-sized" microphones. Last but not least, Shure introduced the "second generation" of their popular Beta dynamic mikes, as represented by the 57A and 58A (\$220 and \$266, respectively), both of which provide extended high frequency performance (the 57A also boasts a new hardened grill). The company also showed their new Beta 52 (optimized for kick drums and bass instruments—list price \$310), as well as the Beta 56 (\$240) and Beta 87 (\$434).

## Drums and Percussion

Not content with merely ruling the known Recording Universe (with their ADAT products and effects processors), Alesis used NAMM to enter the drum world with the debut of their ATK Integrated Drum Trigger System, which includes seven custom two-zone pads (coated with Moongel™—a proprietary, rubbery material that's quite a bit different from the hard coatings on most other drum pads), a high-hat pedal, kick drum unit (into which you place your own kick pedal), mounting hardware, cables, and the DM5 Drum Module, with price TBA.

Other top choices for pad-ophiles came from Hart Dynamics. Their ADC pads (\$59.98-\$99.98) have built-in triggers, but they fasten onto regular acoustic drums and dampen their sound just as practice pads do, while their Acupads (\$198 for a single pad, \$258 for a dual

trigger pad, \$349 for the bass drum, \$2549-\$3649 for a complete kit) are the only electronic drums that behave like acoustic drums, with replaceable heads, rims, and cymbals. Meanwhile, those mourning the demise of Kat may be happy to hear that a company called Drum Tech, which used to manufacture

(6-1/2x14), 8x12 and 9x13 rack toms, 14x14 floor, 14x18 bass drum (or optional 14x20), the set features a lovely antique ivory lacquer finish, shell-mounted hardware, and the company's original Stick Saver hoops. Other notable entrants: Ayotte's new wood-hoop drum line (\$865 for a 7x14 snare), Noble and

Cooley's SP series snares (around \$900 for a 7x14 chrome-lug model), and the reintroduction of the Fibes line in fiberglass, wood and clear acrylic (a Crystalite Fibes snare goes for \$445).

Most interesting of all were the various novel drum design ideas at NAMM. Three in particular stick out. Various Artist Percussion's Quick Change Artist snare (\$1030 with triple-flange hoops, \$1080 with die-cast hoops) features a free-floating three-part modular shell design that allows you to change from one shell to another in seconds with no retuning required. (Various

Artist also offers additional shells, all of them 100% maple, ranging from \$100 to \$150.) Drum Workshop's Woofer, meanwhile (\$695 standard, \$900 and up with your choice of fancy lacquer finish), is a small bass drum designed to sit in front of your main bass drum and add resonance to it. And Remo distinguished itself with the Djembek (\$95), an odd combination of a West African djembe and a Middle Eastern doumbek—20"x10" high, with Acousticon shell, pre-tuned drumhead and strap, designed to be played either to the side like a djembe or in the lap like a doumbek.

In closing: We couldn't get to test 'em out ourselves, but we hear from those who ought to know that Zildjian's new line of Edge cymbals, Paiste's new additions to the Signature line, and Sabian's HH series of hand-hammered cymbals are all plenty ace. Bash on. 🥁



Alesis' ATK drum trigger system.

Kat's pads and pedals, is still selling those products, but now under new names: the F.A.T. Pedal (\$239), the H.A.T. Pedal (\$279), the Pole Pad (\$169), Rim Pad (\$189), and Flat Pad (\$119). Drum Tech's also planning to put out several new products this year, the first being a three-zone, two-output cymbal pad, which should be out sometime in April.

As for normal drums, old looks and feels are in once again. The emphasis of most manufacturers at NAMM was on recreations of rare and vintage drums (and parts to refurbish same). Winner in the single drum category: Pearl's limited-edition M-1946 50th Anniversary snare (\$1299), a 5-1/2x14 beauty with gold-plated hardware and a one-piece solid maple shell. Winner in the set division: Slingerland's Bernard Purdie Studio King kit (\$5910). With an 8x14 snare (optional



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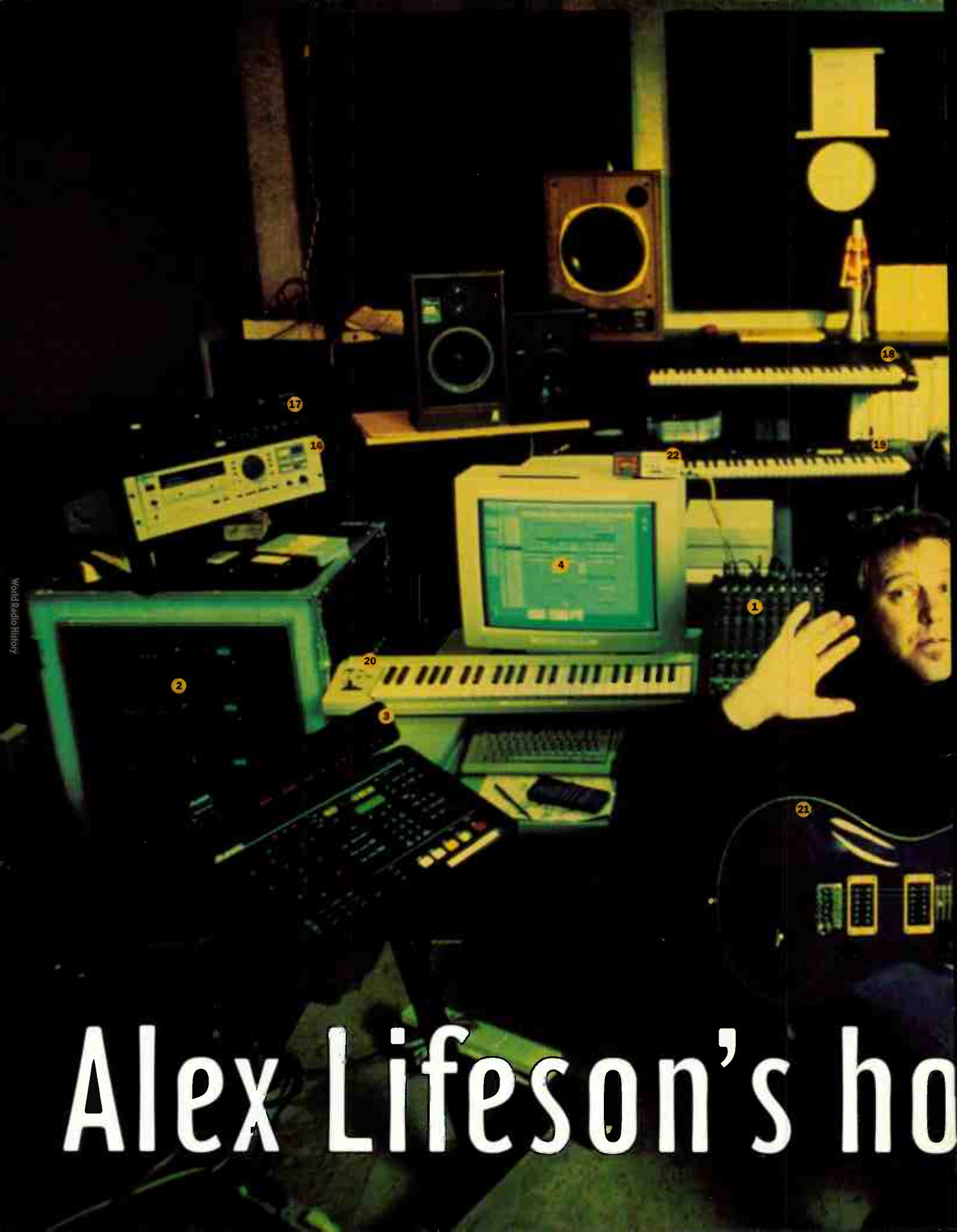


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World Radio History





# Alex Lifeson's ho



## fast forward

FOR SOME musicians, having a home studio is a luxury. For Alex Lifeson, it has become a necessity. The guitarist, co-writer, and co-founder of Rush has recently upgraded his 10-year-old facility to accommodate full-scale recording and mixing. The results can be heard on *Victor*, the self-titled debut album from the band Lifeson fronts as a side project from the ever-active Rush.

"The studio is in my home, in a completely isolated room," says Lifeson, who resides in the Toronto area. "It's a nice-sized control room, and I have a mike panel in an adjacent room, which I use as an office. Prior to the *Victor* project, I used the studio primarily as a place where I could go and not disturb anyone else in the house and mess around with ideas for Rush albums." After getting rid of an old Soundcraft TS12 24-channel console and an Otari MTR-90 multitrack, Lifeson installed a Mackie 32-input, 8-bus console and a four-unit Alesis ADAT system, which is controlled by a BRC. Lifeson says he keeps a fifth ADAT as a spare. "The Mackie preamps are really nice and clean," he enthuses. "I'm thrilled with that board. For what you pay for it, it's a great console."

Lifeson also uses a Macintosh PowerPC 7100 AV, equipped with 16 tracks of Digidesign Pro Tools, and an auxiliary Mackie CR1608 that interfaces with the 8-bus board. For digital recording and sequencing, he uses Emagic Logic Audio software. "In effect, this setup gives me 48 channels of recording," says the soft-spoken Lifeson.

Like many digital recordists, Lifeson tracks selectively through a rack of Neve modules—in his case, a strip of four 1073 pre-amp/EQ boxes that he borrowed from his friend and compatriot Tom Cochrane. Other signals went through the Mackie board. "In the future, I'll get a lot more onboard pre-amp/EQs, but I had a limited budget for *Victor*, so I made the best of it," says Lifeson.

BY PAUL VERNA

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# fast forward

The artist's microphone cabinet contains used AKG 421s; a Shure SM7, which he used primarily for the vocals on *Victor*; a couple of AKG 414s; a Neumann KM-84 for hi-hat; a Neumann U-87; Electro-Voice RE20 and Sennheiser MD408 models; an Audio-Technica AT-63; and Shure SM57s. "The SM7 is a great dynamic mike that you can really

climb on top of," explains Lifeson.

His processing rack includes a Lexicon PCM 70 ⑤; a pair of old Roland SDE-3000 digital delays ⑥; an Alesis Midiverb ⑦; Urei 1176 ⑧ and Alesis 3630 ⑨ compressors; a Brooke-Siren DPR 402 ⑩; Palmer PDI-05 active speaker emulator ⑪; and a Trident compressor ⑫ that he bought at a bankruptcy sale

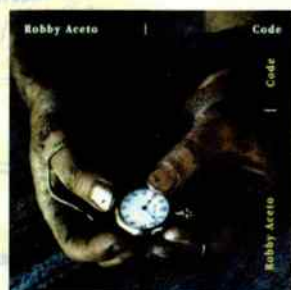
years ago. "I don't think there's even a model number on it," Lifeson says of the Trident. "It's a great compressor, though. It just squashes things to death! I use it for vocals and guitar."

Lifeson monitors through Tannoy Little Reds ⑬, Acoustic Research AR-18s ⑭ or Dynaudios ⑮. For the mixes on *Victor*, which were not done at the house, the guitarist also used the ubiquitous Yamaha NS-10s. "The Dynaudios have a real nice bottom end," he says. "They take a lot of power. And the AR-18s are similar to NS-10s; they're very naked, very accurate. If your mixes sound really good on those, they'll sound brilliant elsewhere." Once they sound good enough, it's off to a Panasonic SV-3700 DAT ⑯ and an NAD cassette deck ⑰ for mastering.

Included in Lifeson's keyboard rig are a Roland D-50 ⑱; Korg Wavestation ⑲, which he used for bassy sounds and special effects; a Roland PC-200 controller ⑳; an E-mu Morpheus keyboard module; and a Roland S-770 sampler. In addition, Lifeson uses Digital Boy sample CDs for keyboard and drum sounds. The artist's arsenal of guitar gear—built up over more than two decades as Rush's high-profile axe-slinger—includes an old Gibson ES 335, which was a staple of the early Rush sound; a PRS Artist CE bolt-on ㉑, which he calls his "mainstay"; a Gibson Les Paul Standard; '62 reissue Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster; a McCarty PRS; a Fender Elite; Ovation Viper and 12-string acoustics; and a Gibson J-55 acoustic. Lifeson also uses a Sekova 10-string mandola. A Boss TU-12H chromatic tuner ㉒ keeps the music harmonically stable. For guitar effects, he prefers the DigiTech 2101 ㉓, a tube preamp "with all kinds of different sounds programmed into it." During mixdown, Lifeson likes to blend the direct signal from the 2101 with the miked electric guitar tracks, most of which are recorded using a panoply of Marshall amps.

Currently in the midst of recording a Rush album with bandmates Geddy Lee and Neil Peart and producer Peter Collins, Lifeson has put his studio on hold. The album is scheduled for release on Atlantic Records in late 1996.

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# products index

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

**AKAI**, 7010 Soquel Dr., Aptos, CA, 95003, (800) 433-5627: **\$900, 32**

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**BOSS**, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: **Flanger, 32; CS-3, 36; Compressor/Sustainer, 36; Overdrive, 36**

**CELESTION**, 89 Doug Brown Way, Holliston, MA, 01746, (508) 429-6706: **Vintage 30, 73**

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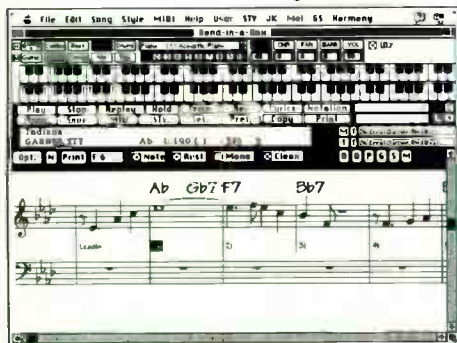
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# records



## **Soundgarden** ***Down On The Upside*** **(A&M)**

**C**hris Cornell has mastered the fist-in-velvet-glove snarl. It's a unique amalgam of fear, ferocity and frustration, roughly the equivalent of how a wolverine might sound after finding only canned goods and no munchable Baby Ruths in the trapper's cabin. Shrieking with rage one minute, murmuring with implied invective the next, his voice is the most potent instrument in Soundgarden's impressive arsenal, something so primal scientists are scrambling to find its proper nomenclature. You buy the band's records to hear patented, brutal-to-the-ears grunge riffs, true; but mainly, you buy a 'Garden disc to hear Cornell emot. And emot some more.

Given that he wrote seven of the 16 songs—and co-wrote seven others, two with drummer Matt Cameron and five with bassist Ben Shepherd—it's safe to assume that Cornell is taking center stage these days. His dark philosophy is best summarized in "Blow Up The Outside World," a gentle, shambling arrangement with surreal, ether-treated vocals and the singer's self-analysis: "Nothing seems to kill me no matter how hard I try." Ironically, it's one of the few moments here where Cornell shows some restraint, but the tension rippling between the lines is as seismic as a shock wave. He's not a happy camper—and the sadder he gets, the nastier Soundgarden seems to sound.

"Rhinosaur," for instance, begins on a minimal but ornate lead but—and it's almost as if guitarist Kim Thayil just can't help himself—the tones soon spiral down, down into a cobwebbed basement hook, while Cornell fires on all shrieking six over the chorus. "Tighter and Tighter" loops muscular leads into constructive coils ("Remember this, remember everything is just black"); "No Attention" beefs up and re-tools Aerosmith's old "Toys In The Attic" riff to a jackhammer pummel; and "Overfloater" slithers along on some of the most sinister, threatening rhythms Cameron and Shepherd have attempted. The vocals are appropriately serpent-hissed: "Close the door and pull the shades/And climb the walls...I'm overflowing alone."

By the time Cornell closes with his reverent childhood reflection "Boot Camp," you figure there's

# Howlin' Wolves



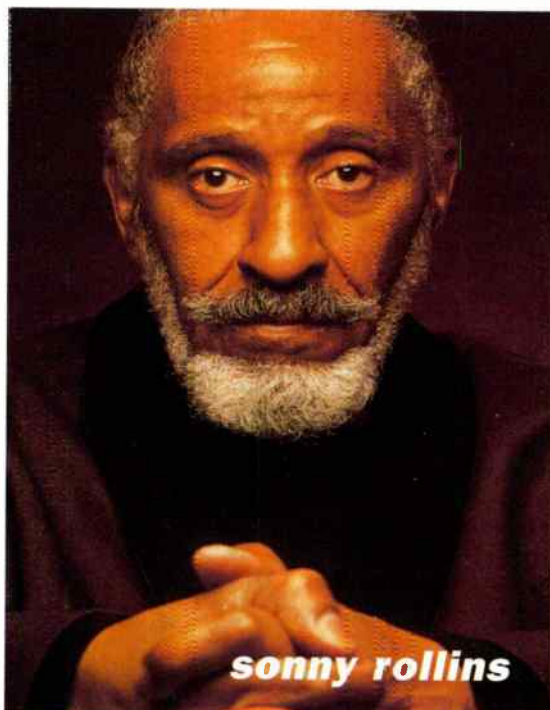
## records

here, blowing and being cheered on by his own sideman, I'll bet he doesn't even care. Just let the man sing. —**Matt Resnicoff**

### **The Cranberries** *To the Faithful Departed* (Island)

**T**he road to banality is often paved with good intentions. Consider "War Child," an elegiac ballad on the Cranberries' new album, *To the Faithful Departed*. "At times of war, we're all the losers, there's no victory," Dolores O'Riordan sings, demonstrating her grasp of the obvious. Or take "I Shot John Lennon"—please—a track on which O'Riordan tries to simultaneously sum up one of the great tragedies in rock history and adhere to an AABB rhyme scheme: "It was a fearful night of December 8th/He was returning home from the studio, late/He had perceptively known that it wouldn't be nice/In 1980 he paid the price."

Perhaps the Cranberries' 24-year-old frontwoman and principal songwriter is trying to accomplish too much too soon. *To the Faithful Departed* is her band's most ambitious album, in terms of both musicianship and subject matter. The central theme here is death, from war-spawned genocide to less momentous trau-



mas like the death of relationships. In the latter arena O'Riordan is more eloquent, and inspires the best work from her band. On "When You're Gone," a doo-wop-flavored confection with sweet backing vocals and gently tangy guitars, her earnest romanticism works. On the folky waltz "Will You Remember?" the singer serenades an old flame with a sincerity that's quite moving.

But the "heavier" numbers seem syrupy and, at times, pedantic. The breathlessly charged "Salvation" advises parents to literally tie their kids down to protect them from drugs, while "Bosnia," another song about the cruel futility of war, is awash in musical shtick, from its military-drumbeat intro to its music-box lullaby coda. "Bosnia was so unkind, Sarajevo changed my mind," O'Riordan sings. Dolores, your conviction is admirably firm, but sometimes your lyrics make me squirm.

—**Elysa Gardner**

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**NEW!**



**Charlie Watts**  
*Long Ago and Far Away*  
 (Pointblank/Virgin)

**Louie Bellson**  
*Their Time Was The Greatest*  
 (Concord Jazz)

**Mickey Hart**  
*Mickey Hart's Mystery Box*  
 (Rykodisc)

The pendulum, if not the music, swings wide on these three drum-dominated discs, hitting opposite extremes with Bellson and Watts before settling into Hart's groove of taste and musicianship.

Like Buddy Rich, the Gorgon of jazz drums, whose squinty glint could reduce his rivals to a stick-dropping stupor, Bellson boasts hyperspeed chops and an agility that guides him easily through intricate charts. Fortunately, Bellson plays more musically, often more quietly, and seems more bent on making the music work than blowing people away. Even so, whenever a drummer leads a big-band date, things often fall out of whack. On *Their Time*, a tribute to great drummers of past and present, most arrangements are built around drum breaks, accents, and solos. All these Bellson executes flawlessly, and not just for a guy his age (71). But his narrow role—which is to swing and only to swing—and the limited timbral palette allowed in this context eventually tax the listener's ears, especially those who have tuned into multicultural percussion. One can take only so many snare fills, no matter how snappy they may be.

The jazz soul of Charlie Watts is similar to Bellson's; it's his chops that sink this ship. Most of *Long Ago* is taken at zombie tempo, with strings gauzing and singer Bernard Fowler applying an ill-advised R&B sensibility to classic tunes. (Like a wedding combo leader, Fowler even introduces the pianist right at the climax of the poor guy's solo on "I Should Care.") Almost all we hear from Watts is cymbal work—far sloshier than Bellson's on the up tunes, with a percussionist often subbing for the drummer's left hand, and little more than a hi-hat, mixed just a hair too loud, blinking sleepily on ballads. Without the personality Watts lets surface on Stones sessions, *Long Ago* boils down to something like Mantovani but with less steadiness of tempo.

Aren't there *any* drummers out there with the moxie and the musicianship to hold our attention? Of course—Mickey Hart, frinstance. The material on his *Mystery Box* isn't memorable, but his integration of Third World percussion over dance beats is effortless and unobtrusive. There's a Peter Gabriel feel to some of this stuff, with bracing yet understated interactions between Hart, Zakir Hussain, Giovanni Hidalgo, and Sikiru Adepoju. The backbeat functions as an anchor for their explorations—a nice combination, even on Robert Hunter's retro-folkie rap "Down the Road Again." They play with sound as much as rhythm, confirming that the giants of the past and many of today's young lions are about as different as drummers can be. —Robert L. Doerschuk

**Tiny Tim With Brave Combo**  
*Girl*  
 (Rounder)

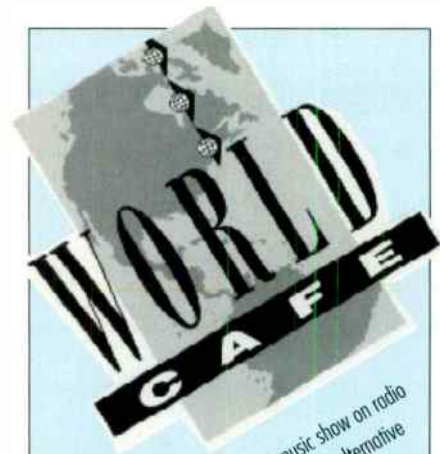
Tiny Tim never deserved his fate. As a television personality in the late '60s, the hirsute minstrel became a one-man hippie parody and was subsequently dispatched to the day-glo dustbin of used pop culture icons, along with metal lunchboxes and scratched copies of his own loopy (and still out-of-print) *God Bless Tiny Tim* album. All of which drew attention from his real talents as a musical comedian and consummate vaudevillian-style entertainer. What other performer would or could render Bob Dylan songs as Rudy Vallee, and vice-versa, flawlessly accompanying himself on ukulele and dressed in a suit of old comic book covers?

Happily, *Girl* revives Tiny Tim not as a campy nostalgia piece but as a serious, quirky, and seriously quirky artist. Brave Combo founder Carl Finch and company are aware of the line between kitsch and class, and they have built their career on breathing new life into neglected musical forms. The band puts the singer through its danceteria paces on a twist version of "Bye Bye Blackbird" and a spacy, cha-cha-cha "Hey Jude." But the album works best when the gang plays it straight and lets Tiny Tim's natural humor emerge. He whispers and sighs through the title track. The 1898 obscurity "Sly Cigarette" becomes a hilarious apologia for the cigarette's "small, little nature." "That Old Feeling" is awash in lush barber-shop harmonies. And on the showstopping "Over the Rainbow," Tiny Tim pushes the limits of his 66-year-old falsetto, calling to mind both the wide-eyed Judy Garland of *The Wizard of Oz* and the aged chanteuse of *A Star Is Born*. It's a bravura performance, and Brave Combo and co-producer Bucks Burnett deserve credit for coaxing these tears from a clown. —Michael Tisserand

**Barondown**  
*Crackshot*  
 (Avant)

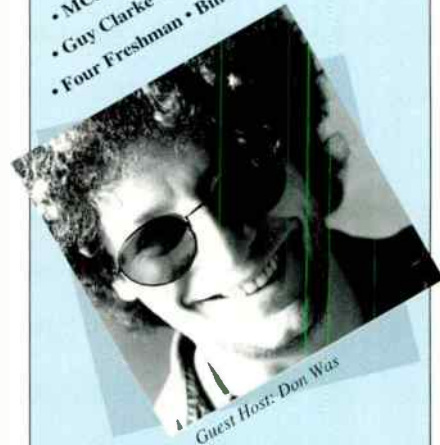
Barondown's aural landscape is like no other band's. No bass, no piano: it's just your average drums/trombone/tenor sax trio. The pieces are free-form mappings of drummer/leader Joey Baron's antic, knotty, authority-questioning inner world. Order slithers into chaos, only to reassert itself. There's one constant: Whatever smears, blats, and atonal adventures the horns get into, Baron is more often than not playing funky, propulsive time. *Crackshot* is one of the most danceable records a so-called avant-gardist has ever made.

"D.B.," a tight little bluesy shuffle, collapses periodically into utter chaos: duck-honks on sax, elephant-shrieks on 'bone, avalanching drums. "Dog" swings just as hard but doesn't collapse; instead, it shifts into a catchy odd-meter phrase and makes a jaunty exit. In "Toothpick Serenade," a blues, Ellery Eskelin and Steve Swell swap choruses, each soloing over the other's simple bass line. Baron, meanwhile, plays as hard as John Bonham, but with brushes. By the end he isn't using brushes anymore, but is still



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playing as hard as John Bonham. "Tantilla Garden" has great, powerhouse drumming, too; the most arranged of the pieces, it is the aural equivalent of James Brown and the Famous Flames peering into a funhouse mirror. Not a bad way to think of Baron-down, itself.—**Tony Scherman**

## Soul Coughing

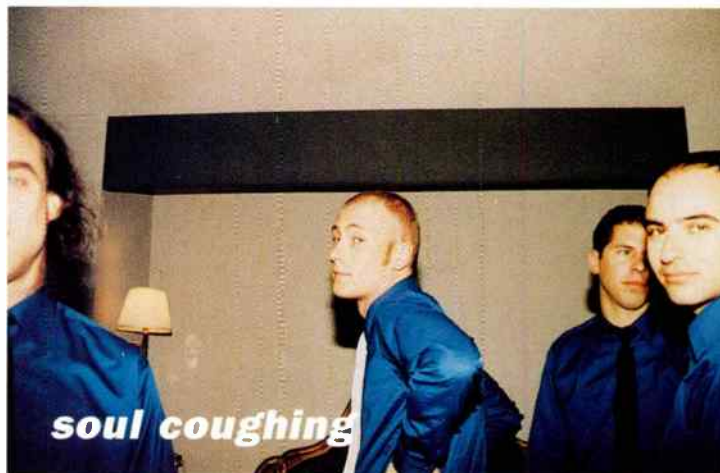
*Irresistible Bliss*  
(Slash/Warner Bros.)

It was hard to resist Soul Coughing's 1994 debut *Ruby Vroom*. The New York quartet stepped forward with a free-swinging attack that tossed funk, punk, jazz, and whatever else was handy into the pot. Unfortunately, its new effort is a less attractive venture that exemplifies the risks inherent in making second albums.

The ingredients that made the initial set so appealing remain in place: vocalist M. Doughty's stream-of-consciousness ramblings, Yuval Gabay's funk drumming, Sebastian Steinberg's loping bass, Mark De Gli Antoni's crashing keyboards. On *Ruby Vroom*, the band had worked with co-producer Tchad Blake, whose anything-goes style, which has enlivened albums by Tom Waits and Los Lobos, among others,

encouraged a manic density in the overall sound. For *Irresistible Bliss*, the group opted for the more commercially-oriented David Kahne and alt-rock pro Steve Fisk behind the board; the resultant mix is simpler, perhaps more accessible, but certainly less devastating and surprising.

The band, and especially the fulsome Doughty, prove that they can still rise to the occasion; the lead-off "Super Bon Bon," "Paint," and "Disseminated" all exhibit an original kick, thanks largely to the singer's unhinged natterings. But the thrilling improbability of a cut like *Ruby Vroom*'s "Down To This," on which Howlin' Wolf, Toots Hibbert, and



the Andrews Sisters collided at one musical intersection, is woefully absent here. In less adorned form, Soul Coughing's music attains a kind of monotony; by album's end, one cringes as another soul backbeat kicks in.

Sophomore projects like this one all too often highlight a band's stylistic limitations. The raw talent is still there; now it's up to the band to find a suitable matrix for raising its game on the third go-round.

—Chris Morris

"COCO MONTOYA has an impeccable blues pedigree. His guitar teacher was the legendary Albert Collins, and he spent ten years filling the big shoes of Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor, and Peter Green as lead player with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. His biting tone, eloquent phrasing and swinging, shuffling grooves reveal the depth of Collins' influence." — **Guitar Player**

## Fuzzy *Electric Juices* (TAG Recordings)

Irrepressible, bouncy but never quite falling on the saccharin side of cute, Fuzzy's *Electric Juices* is full of propulsive energy and perky pop songs. While many of the 13 tracks are sweet and sometimes light as cotton candy, there's a backbone that prevents Fuzzy from falling into the cuddle-core category. Together since '93, the band features Lemonheads drummer Dave Ryan, bassist Winston Braman, and frontwomen/guitarists/keyboardists Hilken Mancini and Chris Toppin. They've got the innocence and enthusiasm of the early Go-Go's, eschewing Alanis anger or Phair bravado and harkening to when female-fronted bands didn't have to vilify relationships to succeed. Fuzzy aren't afraid to hook their often happy, sometimes wistful hearts on their sleeves.

Pleasant surprises lie among the mostly upbeat, if somewhat similar up-tempo tunes. A cover of Brian Wilson's "Girl Don't Tell Me" is sung without irony—or a changing of gender—making it a girl-to-girl love song. Breathly vocals and a moodier musicality move "Sleeper" into Breeders territory. The



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# Heard it through the Grapenuts



I'm sitting in my parents' kitchen reading a preview on an upcoming Iggy Pop concert. I gotta admire this guy, pushin' 50, still singing songs about teenage babes and composing power chord anthems with unprintable titles. On the other hand, I don't envy the old fart, it must be tough keepin' up with those kids when you're only a few tours away from the senior menu. Believe me, Iggy, I share in your Advil-relieved pain, I'm only a few wheezing steps behind on the chronological Stairmaster. It ain't bad, it just takes getting used to. In the past couple of years I've begun to notice that any road trip over 10 days wreaks havoc on my urinary tract, a long load out will kill any thought of post performance romance, and even old familiar phrases have taken on new meanings, such as:

**"Sorry there's not more people at the gig, the paper screwed up the ad!"**

**1980** - The club owner hasn't been seen in three days. He's probably spent your ad money, along with the rent, doing drugs with a famous English rock star.

**1996** - The club owner has just got back from co-dependency treatment in Tucson, and he's really beginning to understand why he shouldn't have let his (ex) wife and (ex) brother-in-law talk him into quitting a good job in sales and cashing in his life savings to

buy this frigging place.

**"Can you guys play a variety of tunes at the reception?"**

**1980** - "Mack the Knife" for the parents.

"Rock and Roll Hoochie Koo" for the kids.

**1996** - "Casey Jones" for the parents

"Mack the Knife" for the kids who are into that "retro thing"

**"You must be in the band!"**

**1980** - You're wearing black leather in the middle of August

**1996** - You're the only 40-year-old in the

place with a shag.

**"It's a partyin' place!"**

**1980** - The whole band gets drunk, the waitress table dances, they pass the hat and tip you an extra 300 bucks.

**1996** - The doorman gets drunk and lets half the place in for free, the owner gets drunk and makes a pass at your wife, the drunk bartender keeps forgetting you're in the band and charges you for Cokes.

**"The club has a P.A."**

**1980** - Two Peavey cabinets, an eight-channel mixer, two mikes that reek of beer and stale schnapps, two Vocal Master columns on milk crates for monitors.

**1996** - The latest digital, unpronounceable 88-channel German soundboard, \$50,000 worth of speakers, and 3 monitor mixers. Unfortunately, the main soundman is working the White Zombie show and the assistant is still "getting used to" the system.

**"We had a great time after the gig."**

**1980** - Somebody showed up with a case of Heineken and an 8-ball.

**1996** - The All-Night Restaurant had a low-fat menu.

**"Let's go back to my place."**

**1980** - A six to go, stop at the Burger King, sneak up the backsteps trying not to wake Aunt Sally, romance till the wee hours, busted in the hall next morning by Aunt Sally, flee down the backsteps in underwear.

**1996** - Stop at Krogers for some Eggbeaters, breakfast to the strains of a Windham Hill sampler, a deep sigh followed by the confession, "My therapist and I have a contract that I won't engage in any casual sex before six months, but you can stay on the couch if you don't mind cats."

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