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PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH/LGI

The Cars (from left: David Robinson, Greg Hawkes, Elliot Easton, Ric Ocasek and Ben Orr) contemplate their next studio album.

Cars: But What About The Band?

By Chip Stern

NEW YORK—Having made an appearance at the Us Festival in California on September 4, the Cars won't work together again until late December in order to accommodate a series of solo projects designed to clarify the distinctive stylings and options of each band member. By Christmas the group will reunite in the studio to begin work on a new Cars album, aiming for a February or March release and an extensive tour shortly thereafter.

Singer-guitarist Ric Ocasek, the conceptual focal point of the Cars, is currently completing his first solo album for Geffen records at the Cars' Syncro Sound Studio in Boston. The rest of the band is waiting for Ocasek to vacate the premises so that they can use the facilities, but as drummer David Robinson explained, "Ric looks like he's really getting through it fast. He's already down to the overdubs, and should be done real soon."

"It's an ideal way to work," keyboardist Greg Hawkes adds, "because with our own studio we're not slaves to anyone's schedules, and we're free to try a lot of ideas out. Still, I can't see us ever fussing over things for six months—we like to record fast. It gets to a point where you pick things apart so much they sort of overripen, and by the time it comes out you're so sick of it you can't even listen to it. We never spent more than two months overall to record and mix."

Hawkes has been working on a one-man band synthesizer project which he frankly expects to garner little airplay. Bassist Ben Orr is working in his home studio on the music for his solo album, while guitarist Elliot Easton has played with ex-Nervous Eater Steve Cataldo and produced tapes of Andy Paley (for Elektra) and Jules Shear, formerly of Jules and the Polar Bears (for CBS). Robinson has been playing with the band Ooh-Ah-Ah and "doing a big dance single called 'Punch Talk' that's all African drum beats, tribal chants and synthesized percussion—I was seriously hypnotized while doing it," he recollects.

Robinson calls "Punch Talk" a "whole different perspective from what I've been doing with the Cars. I don't even play real drums. I play rhythm machines hooked up to synthesizers and two outboard electronic drums; the only acoustic drums are a set of timbales and a crash cymbal. Acoustic drums seem somehow limiting at this point. I'm not a real technical drummer, and the dynamics on acoustic drums don't really mean very much to me; maybe a jazz drummer who gets a chance to play softer and explore the full range of acoustic sounds can appreciate them more. Since I just have to pound, it's easier to play electronic drums. I think I'll be doing more with electronic drums on whatever the Cars do next.

"It required so much concentration," Robinson adds, "and at the same time, so little concentration. You know what I mean? Where you look down and your arms start moving by themselves, and when you concentrate on what you're doing too hard, you make a mistake. So you have to be really loose. It was fun; I learned a lot of things I'd never experienced before."

And how does all of this fit in with what the Cars are or might be doing? "I don't know if it will fit in at all," answers Robinson. "The way the songs are written, I don't know if this kind of thing would be right. Maybe Ric will write a song where that seems plausible, but offhand it doesn't."

Perhaps so, but as the band's third LP, *Panorama,* indicated, the Cars, in attempting to redefine the group sound and defuse "commercial" expectations, are opting for a much more complex brew than one might expect from a band of this type. "We weren't sure if anybody would get the idea," Robinson agrees, "but we thought that album was great. I love it, and when I hear it now, I'm always surprised at how good it sounds. You read the reviews and you think, well, maybe it is like that. But I put it on, and no, it *is* great."

"I don't know if all these projects we're doing will necessarily be a breaking down of the band's elements," observes Hawkes. "It's just a different way of growing, and of stretching some of the boundaries of pop."

Neil Young: A New Phase

By David Gans

REDWOOD CITY, Ca.—Neil Young is one of the few singer/songwriters who has never stopped treating his art as a living thing. He has yielded to no one in pursuit of his mysterious vision, and his work has rubbed nearly everybody the wrong way at one time or another.

His partisans and detractors have found themselves swapping roles from time to time throughout his career—perhaps the surest sign that an artist is alive and growing—and Young's forthcoming album, titled *Trans* at the time of our interview in mid-August, is sure to cause yet another realignment of opinion. In between some conventional sounding songs ("Little Thing Called Love," "Hold On To Your Love," and "Like an Inca") are such unsettling titles as "Computer Cowboy," "We Are In Control" and "Sample and Hold," featuring digital synthesiz-

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Arista Dumps On Allmans

NEW YORK—The fate of the Allman Brothers next album—if not the band itself—hangs in the balance as this goes to press, and may ultimately be decided by a court of law.

After recording some basic tracks last spring in Florida and booking studio time at Young'un Sound in Nashville, the band's label, Arista, cut off funding for the LP.

"What's happening," according to Bert Holman, a spokesman for the Allmans' management, "is that Arista is trying to exert creative control over the band, and the Allmans said no. What's strange is that the label hasn't defined what they want the band to do, cut a particu-

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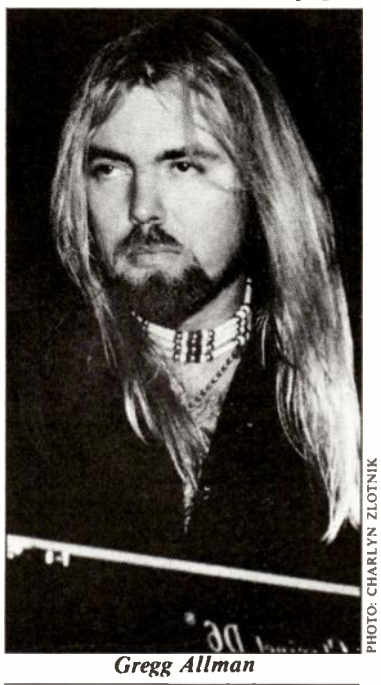

PHOTO: CHARLYN ZLOTNIK

Gregg Allman

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PHOTO: NEIL ZLOZOWER

LETTERS

Whither The Hitman?

OKAY YOU GUYS, WHO hired a hit man for the hitman?

When my copy of the Record shows up in my mailbox, I open it on the spot to find out what the Hitman has to say. When the last issue arrived I frantically searched through a few times hoping you just banished him to some back page. But nooooooooo, he wasn't in the damn magazine at all!!

He is the only person who writes *exactly* what everyone knows but is too wimpy to say. So what does he get? The AXE! Whatsamatter, can't you wimps handle the truth being shoved in your collective faces? I know the truth hurts, but you've already admitted you're into pain simply by being in the music biz in the first place, so you've got nothing to lose.

THERESA LEVY
Manager: Polyrock, the Reds
New York City

WHERE THE HELL IS THE Hitman? He's not in my August issue of the Record. I certainly hope he is on a vacation or something similar. The Hitman has an exceptional column. Any writer who gets his point across well using humor and biting satire simultaneously is very talented. The Hitman is the only writer I've ever read continuously and whose work I've waited for in anticipation. I expect his column to be back in your September issue. I certainly hope he is on vacation or something similar.

TONY VORDARO
Edison, New Jersey

HEY, WHAT IT IS, RECORD. I think it's great that you got Dave Marsh writing a column for you—who better to comment on the contemporary rock scene than he?—but here's hoping he will, at least when the occasion warrants it, take up the Hitman's fallen banner. I'm looking back over some old Hitman columns as I write this: "Duke Jupiter: Ready For Meltdown"—what a right-on sizzler that was, and something that was crying out to be said; "Deport Ozzy Osbourne"—right on, again. "Beware the Yellow Peril"—what a riot! No wonder the music business sucks! The Hitman was out there giving all us rock fans some answers, and I, for one, miss the old fellow. Any chance he might return?

LARRY GIBSON
Hamilton Egg Farm
Tulsa, Oklahoma

The Editor replies: The Hitman *was last seen on a pier overlooking the Hudson River, where reliable sources report seeing him being fitted for a pair of cement boots.*

Pete Townshend

I'VE BEEN A WHO FAN FOR ten great years. In my opinion Pete Townshend has always been the blood and soul of that band. He's about 75 percent of the Who. I also think he's the only rock *musician* who has ever known what rock and roll is *really* all about. Thanx for a great interview ("Sects, Drugs, Rock and Roll," August RECORD). He is truly a gifted man, and *Chinese Eyes* has got to be the best thing since *Tommy*.

CHRIS HOUBAUGH
Chicago, Illinois

Editor's note: In the August issue Pete Townshend said, ". . . the feedback I need the most is letters . . . people know they can get through if they want." Thus, many readers wrote in saying they'd like to address their remarks about the interview directly to Townshend, but didn't know where to send their letters. Here's an address:

Pete Townshend, Twickenham, TW1 1Q2, England.

BOC

I WANTED TO DROP YOU A line about your great publication. As a radio announcer it really whets my musical appetite each time out. One thing I noticed in your August issue, the Blue Oyster Cult live album is mentioned as being their second live album, when it is actually their third (*On Your Feet Or On Your Knees* and *Some Enchanted Evening* being the other two).

STEVE WILHOIT
Mosheim, Tennessee

Jerry Garcia

I RECENTLY READ YOUR article on Jerry Garcia ("A Report From The Dead Zone," June RECORD) and found it very good. But there is one statement made that I don't understand. At one point the writers say, "By all the rules by which other musical aggregations play, you guys are failures." I would appreciate it if you could shed some light on what you mean by this.

JON HOLMES
Santa Clara, Ca.

David Gans replies: My statement refers to the fact that the Dead make absolutely no concessions to the conventional "music industry" way of doing things. Their shows are long and lazily-paced, their arrangements are laissez-faire happenstances rather than conscious constructions, their staging and lights are low-key to a fault, and their records are—by their own *standards—unrelated to the truth of Grateful Dead music. And they don't get played on the radio and they don't sell albums to fans outside their hard core of followers.*

TOP 100 ALBUMS

1 **FLEETWOOD MAC** *Mirage* (Warner Bros.)
2 **THE GO-GO's** *Vacation* (IRS)
3 **ROBERT PLANT** *Pictures at Eleven* (Swan Song)
4 **JOHN COUGAR** *American Fool* (Riva)
5 **CROSBY, STILLS & NASH** *Daylight Again* (Atlantic)
6 **SURVIVOR** *Eye of the Tiger* (Scotti Bros.)
7 **ASIA** *Asia* (Geffen)
8 **STEVE MILLER BAND** *Abracadabra* (Capitol)
9 **ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS** *Imperial Bedroom* (Columbia)
10 **BILLY SQUIER** *Emotions in Motion* (Capitol)
11 **PETE TOWNSHEND** *All The Best Cowboys Have Chinese Eyes* (Atco)
12 **THE ROLLING STONES** *Still Life* (Rolling Stones)
13 **ALAN PARSONS PROJECT** *Eye in the Sky* (Arista)
14 **DONNA SUMMER** *Donna Summer* (Geffen)
15 **CHICAGO** *16* (Full Moon/Warner Bros.)
16 **STEVE WINWOOD** *Talking Back to the Night* (Island)
17 **GENESIS** *Three Sides Live* (Atlantic)
18 **THE MOTELS** *All Four One* (Capitol)
19 **THE CLASH** *Combat Rock* (Epic)
20 **PAUL McCARTNEY** *Tug Of War* (Columbia)
21 **WILLIE NELSON** *Always On My Mind* (Columbia)
22 **HUMAN LEAGUE** *Dare* (A&M)
23 **A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS** *A Flock of Seagulls* (Jive/Arista)
24 **JOE JACKSON** *Night and Day* (A&M)
25 **STRAY CATS** *Built For Speed* (EMI/America)
26 **LOVERBOY** *Get Lucky* (Columbia)
27 **HAIRCUT 100** *Pelican West* (Arista)
28 **ARETHA FRANKLIN** *Jump To It* (Arista)
29 **ROXY MUSIC** *Avalon* (Warner Bros./E.G.)
30 **REO SPEEDWAGON** *Good Trouble* (Epic)
31 **JUDAS PRIEST** *Screaming for Vengeance* (Columbia)
32 **TOTO** *IV* (Columbia)
33 **STEVIE WONDER** *Original Musiquarium I* (Tamla)
34 **MARSHALL CRENSHAW** *Marshall Crenshaw* (Warner Bros.)
35 **FRANK ZAPPA** *Ship Arriving Too Late...* (Barking Pumpkin)
36 **.38 SPECIAL** *Special Forces* (A&M)
37 **WARREN ZEVON** *The Envoy* (Asylum)
38 **ROCKY III** *Soundtrack* (Liberty)
39 **VAN HALEN** *Diver Down* (Warner Bros.)
40 **SCORPIONS** *Blackout* (Mercury)
41 **EDDIE MONEY** *No Control* (Columbia)
42 **GAP BAND** *Gap Band IV* (TE/Polydor)
43 **SQUEEZE** *Sweets From A Stranger* (A&M)
44 **MEN AT WORK** *Business As Usual* (Columbia)
45 **RICK JAMES** *Throwin' Down* (Gordy)
46 **KANSAS** *Vinyl Confessions* (Kirshner)
47 **KING CRIMSON** *Beat* (Warner Bros.)
48 **GLENN FREY** *No Fun Aloud* (Asylum)
49 **X** *Under the Big Black Sun* (Elektra)
50 **APRIL WINE** *Power Play* (Capitol)
51 **AIR SUPPLY** *Now and Forever* (Arista)
52 **MICHAEL McDONALD** *If That's What it Takes* (Warner Bros.)
53 **DREAMGIRLS** *Soundtrack* (Geffen)
54 **ELTON JOHN** *Jump Up!* (Geffen)
55 **TED NUGENT** *Nugent* (Atlantic)
56 **ALABAMA** *Mountain Music* (RCA)
57 **RICK SPRINGFIELD** *Success Hasn't Spoiled Me Yet* (RCA)
58 **SOFT CELL** *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* (Sire)
59 **ADRIAN BELEW** *Lone Rhino* (Island)
60 **PAT METHENY** *Offramp* (ECM)
61 **HEART** *Private Audition* (Epic)
62 **PATRICE RUSHEN** *Straight From the Heart* (Elektra)
63 **KARLA BONOFF** *Wild Heart of the Young* (Columbia)
64 **JUICE NEWTON** *Quiet Lies* (Capitol)
65 **DAVID JOHANSEN** *Live it Up* (Blue Sky)
66 **CHEAP TRICK** *One on One* (Epic)
67 **JOAN JETT & THE BLACKHEARTS** *I Love Rock 'n' Roll* (Boardwalk)
68 **ASHFORD & SIMPSON** *Street Opera* (Capitol)
69 **ALDO NOVA** *Aldo Nova* (Portrait/CBS)
70 **GARY U.S. BONDS** *On the Line* (EMI/America)
71 **RAINBOW** *Straight Between the Eyes* (Mercury)
72 **JOURNEY** *Escape* (Columbia)
73 **DAVE EDMUNDS** *D.E. 7th* (Columbia)
74 **E.T.** *Soundtrack* (MCA)
75 **PETE SHELLEY** *Homosapien* (Arista)
76 **THE GO-GO's** *Beauty and the Beat* (IRS)
77 **QUEEN** *Hot Space* (Elektra)
78 **J. GEILS BAND** *Freeze-Frame* (EMI/America)
79 **VANGELIS** *Chariots of Fire* (Polydor)
80 **RAY PARKER JR.** *The Other Woman* (Arista)
81 **CAMEO** *Alligator Woman* (Chocolate City)
82 **THE POLICE** *Ghost in the Machine* (A&M)
83 **BLONDIE** *The Hunter* (Chrysalis)
84 **BLUE OYSTER CULT** *Extraterrestrial Live* (Columbia)
85 **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS** *Picture This* (Chrysalis)
86 **GRAHAM PARKER** *Another Grey Area* (Arista)
87 **BONNIE RAITT** *Green Light* (Warner Bros.)
88 **THE O'JAYS** *My Favorite Person* (Phila. Int'l.)
89 **SAMMY HAGAR** *Standing Hampton* (Geffen)
90 **TOMMY TUTONE** *Tutone 2* (Columbia)
91 **SPLIT ENZ** *Time & Tide* (A&M)
92 **XTC** *English Settlement* (Virgin/Epic)
93 **ATLANTIC STARR** *Brilliance* (A&M)
94 **RY COODER** *The Slide Area* (Warner Bros.)
95 **LAURIE ANDERSON** *Big Science* (Warner Bros.)
96 **DENIECE WILLIAMS** *Niecy* (ARC/Columbia)
97 **SIMON & GARFUNKEL** *The Concert in Central Park* (Warner Bros.)
98 **GANG OF FOUR** *Songs of the Free* (Warner Bros.)
99 **TOM TOM CLUB** *Tom Tom Club* (Sire)
100 **TALKING HEADS** *The Name of This Band Is...* (Sire)

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New Artist

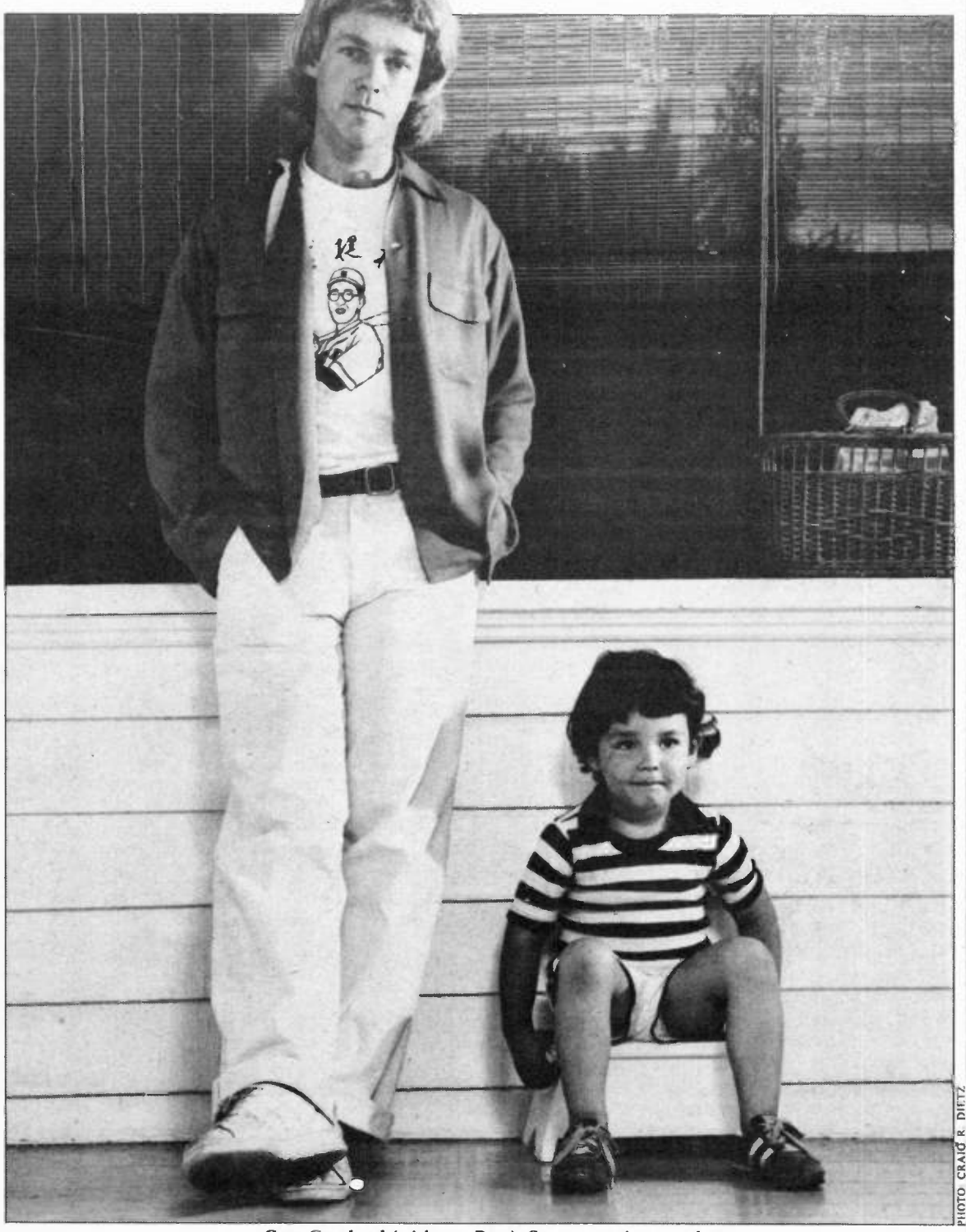


PHOTO: CRAIG R. DIETZ

Greg Copeland (with son Ross): Some avenging angel

The Truth, Per Greg Copeland

By David Gans

LOS ANGELES—Greg Copeland had never played an instrument or sung in a band—never even owned a stereo—before he recorded *Revenge Will Come*, his debut album. But he's no art-school punk with an anti-virtuoso manifesto as an excuse for playing and singing shitty songs shabbily, nor is he another scion of the Police/IRS Copelands. Greg Copeland is a poet who uses music to propel his powerful, principled and important point of view.

In a voice that combines Randy Newman's reedy timbre and Jackson Browne's diction, Copeland sings about ideas that are at once personal and global in scope. His songs are more catholic than Browne's, who's more concerned with achieving personal resolution than societal redemption. And Copeland is more openly angry than Newman, who lacks the nerve to speak so plainly, and can't adequately circumscribe such ideas in his black-comedy songs.

Revenge Will Come is about the morality of politics and the politics of morality ("Looking out for number one/don't you see what that has done"), problems between people ("you're the one who spent the nights away/But I was the faithless one") and between peoples ("El Salvador" and the title song). Like *Garp*, the world according to Copeland is one in which our personal lives and the world's social climate are absolutely intertwined. Private happiness doesn't count for much without a liveable world in which to enjoy it. And the truth is central to living, not just an appendix to be dispensed with when it becomes irritating.

If you're not concerned with honor in your own dealings, Copeland demands to know, how can you expect society to traffic in it? An individual can literally get away with murder these days, and that's why it's up to each of us to take responsibility for his own square foot of the planet. Society has seen fit to abandon the long view of events, and their consequences, in favor of short-term capital gains: "There's blood all over the bottom line!" Copeland shouts, but "revenge will come for every man put down."

It's not coincidental that *Revenge Will Come* sounds similar to a Jackson Browne album: because Copeland is an untrained musician, it was Browne's job to create chord voicings, rhythmic underpinnings and harmonies from the song-writer's monodic renditions. He framed each song in sympathetic surroundings, from the raw rock 'n' roll of "Wrong Highway" and "Full Cleveland" to the tender balladry of "Eaglestone," touching on country and folk styles along the way.

After listening to *Revenge Will Come* I expected to meet a hollow-eyed and wrathful capitol-C Christian. What I discovered was a man with an easy laugh and prematurely-gray hair, offering a striking contrast to his youthful face and lively eyes.

Some avenging angel. "I couldn't even recite the Ten Commandments," he confesses. "But if all the information you have to form an opinion about me is my record, I can see why you might think I'm born-again.

"Religious imagery is like a lightning rod: people feel the need to take some sort of stand about it, and I find that interesting," he continues. Copeland isn't obsessed with morality, but he couldn't see blowing his opportunity to make a record on inconsequential expressions. "The record company said, 'Here's 40 minutes—sing anything you want.' So I thought, 'Let's not waste it. What are the important issues here?'

"In order to sing, I have to say something that has meaning for me. The point is not to be commercial—it's to say what needs to be said."

Copeland, 36, graduated from Sunny Hills High School in Orange County a couple of years ahead of his friend Browne. He went to college, thumbed through Europe a couple of times, married, divorced, tangled with the draft and did alternative service at Goodwill, married again and started a family, then went back to school to study literature. He maintained sporadic contact with Browne over the years, and when the latter learned that Copeland was writing songs he asked to hear a sample. Copeland recorded a "demo" *a cappella*, sitting in his car, and sent it to Browne, whose response was, "Let's make a record."

Copeland's days are spent practicing the guitar and working on songs for his second album, due to be recorded in early 1983 (he has no plans to tour or even play local club dates in the immediate future). "I wake up in the morning, I deal with all the stuff that has to be dealt with, and when everything's settled down, I go to work. Then I go back for supper, and when Suzanne's putting the older boy down and reading him stories, I go back to work until I can't stand it anymore.

"I thought I had a work ethic before, but now I feel like if I'm not working everyday until my eyes cross, I don't deserve it," Copeland laughs. "It's fun—I wish I could stay awake all the time."

American Grandstand

By Dave Marsh

The Who Sell Out

"Put Your Product on Tour . . ." read the full-page advertisement in a recent issue of *Advertising Age*, the Madison Avenue trade magazine. "The Who Tour of America," it said just below. The rest of the page contained the pitch: "Who: The hottest, most celebrated Rock 'n' Roll band in the world. What: A precedent-setting, high-profile corporate sponsorship. When: Fall/Winter, 1982. Where: The Top U.S. Markets: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and many more important A.D.I.'s. Why: Capture the Young Adult Market! Sponsorship of the 1982 Who Tour of America will generate positive brand image and product loyalty which means high volume and high profits! You'll reach tens of millions in a specially produced media campaign. An unparalleled cross merchandising opportunity." And it concludes with How: the name and address of some marketing clown in St. Louis.

Well, I ask you . . . It was one thing when Rod Stewart, and then the Rolling Stones, decided to cash in on greedy corporations by performing beneath their logos. Neither the Stones nor Stewart has ever been anything but frankly shameless, in the first place, and it is hard for me, at least, to imagine that anyone continues to invest very much idealism in them.

The Who, however, is the band which cares more about its fans than even their own parents, according to Pete Townshend. Personally, I believe this to be true. I know for a fact that if Sony or some other company of sufficient size were to offer my father two or three hundred thousand dollars with the single stipulation that once he grabbed it, my rent would rise, that I would soon be writing larger checks on the first of the month. Two to three hundred thousand dollars a man is about how much the Who can expect to pull down, if they can find a sponsor for their American junket (which was publicly announced for the first time in this same ad).

"When you get right down to it, there's something a little disconcerting about rock bands performing in front of banners advertising Musk oil or cassettes."

But what about ticket prices? The most amazing aspect of the phenomenon of corporate sponsorship of superstar rock tours is that no one has been savvy enough to rationalize that this sort of deal is necessary to keep the cost of admission from soaring even further. Consider this in light of what rock fans have been asked (and are willing) to believe about tour economics. I mean, if $13 is a reasonable price for a tee shirt, then the sky's the limit for the ticket that gets you into the building where the tee shirt is sold, right?

In the end, if corporations are going to throw around the stockholders' cash on ads convincing people to buy things they don't want or need, I would just as soon have them spend it on rock bands as on network television. (Magazine advertising is another issue, with which I will not screw around, at least in these precincts, thank you.)

It's especially hard to begrudge such infusions of cash to a band that is, according to Townshend's recent interviews, absolutely, positively, without a doubt, unquestionably, probably making its last tour of the United States, maybe.

Now I know what you're thinking: Mick Jagger wasn't going to be singing "Satisfaction" when he was 40, and David Bowie has said "Never again" more times than B'nai B'rith. And I know how revocable rock breakups are: Wouldn't surprise me a bit to find a press release announcing the Cream/Blind Faith reunion tour in tomorrow's mail.

The Who have a long history of break-ups—Roger Daltrey was first fired in 1965, and as far as I have been able to determine in a year of researching the history of the group for a book I'm writing, they have split on at least a biannual basis ever since. Still, Pete Townshend is one of the most honorable guys I know, and if he says this is their last go 'round, why it is. Unless he changes his mind, or was misquoted, or forgot, or gets threatened by John Entwistle, or something.

At least, with this extra million dollars, the Who won't have to play together again because they're broke. And I think this is terribly important. Because when you get right down to it, there's something a little disconcerting about rock bands performing in front of banners advertising Musk oil or cassettes. And if the sponsor turned out to be from a company like Nestles, which likes to help third world babies starve while feeding American kids candy bars, or a cigarette company, when the Who have a lead singer who is a strident anti-smoker and are probably the only band who ever did a song attacking the habit, the results could be downright embarrassing (unless they work the logo into their laser display, and pass it off as art).

It's also interesting to contemplate just who might be an appropriate sponsor for this particular band. How about Everlast, the boxing glove manufacturer? Remy Martin—they could really drink to that. A hearing aid manufacturer might be nice, or a company specializing in telephoto lenses, for those who don't get good seats. Or maybe the group should recycle *Tommy* and sell themselves as an opera, letting Texaco pick them up as it has the Metropolitan Opera telecasts for decades. It is hard to imagine how else we can introduce any dignity into the sponsorship of those bands who need it least, but not even Odorono can disguise naked greed.

London Calling

By Chris Welch

Rock Music Takes A Dive

London calling—for help! The music scene traditionally takes a nose dive in high summer, when record buyers and concert-goers are more concerned with rolling up their trouser legs and going for a paddle off Brighton Beach. But that is still no excuse for some of the gruesome hit records and depressing new acts that have been surfacing in recent weeks. The charts, and BBC-TV's *Top Of The Pops,* the nation's musical cardiograph, all reflect a scene that seems to have lost its sense of purpose and its ability to foster new talent.

Biggest impact is being made by a creation called Haysi Fantayzee with "John Wayne Is Big Leggy." Avoid them like the plague. A couple sporting dreadlocks and Artful Dodger gear can be seen nightly on TV and heard constantly on radio with a song of such banality that most eight-year-olds would raise eyebrows and curl lips with contempt. Some five-year-olds do, however, find it amusing. Even worse are the Associates with "8 Carat Love Affair." The band's lead singer looks like an impoverished operative baritone and makes you want to take a few steps backwards before planning a more elaborate escape.

Even the much-praised Dexys Midnight Runners have dressed up like a bunch of idiots for their "Come On Eileen": in promo videos shot on backstreet locations, they parade about in baggy dungarees that are inexplicably offensive.

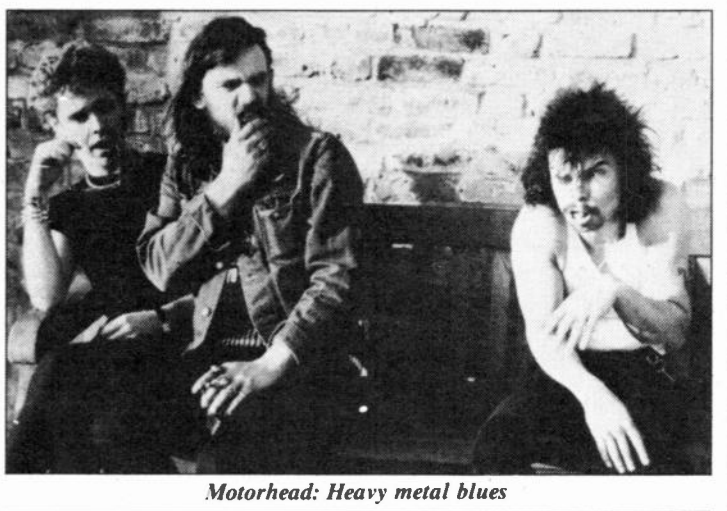
The disappearance of creative rock music continues with the emergence of a whole wave of bumptious juveniles whose main talent seems to be for grinning, dancing like fools and giving embarrassing radio interviews. Hot on the heels of Haysi Fantayzee come Toto Coelo, a clutch of pretty girls who chant, "I Eat Cannibals Part 1." The only points in their favor are that one of the girls wears stockings and all are clad in some erotic shiny plastic material. It's a long way from Sgt. Pepper.

A New McCartney Soon?

Paul McCartney plans to release another album soon to follow up the super-successful *Tug of War.* There was so much good material left over from the sessions with producer George Martin (including cuts

Paul McCartney: A new album soon?

with Michael Jackson) that McCartney apparently wants it out before Christmas . . . heavy metal has taken a bit of a battering in England, with several major rock festivals noting a shocking slump in attendance. When Saxon and Motorhead played at a Hell's Angels-organized bash at an East End motorcycle speedway track, only a thousand or so turned up. Maybe fans were scared of their hosts. But the Angels, beefy guys covered with obscene tattoos, spent most of the festival soundly asleep on the grass, soaking up the sunshine, and only rousing themselves to burp loudly at the conclusion of each band's set.



Motorhead: Heavy metal blues

Rock Around The Curtain

Budgie was the first British rock band to tour Poland since the military clamp-down when they penetrated the Iron Curtain in August. Fans went wild as the group blasted out material from its next album, *Deliver Us From Evil.* At least the group had the sense *not* to play one of the tracks, *Bored With Russia.* The Boomtown Rats would have been the first to entertain the music-starved young Poles, but had to cancel out. So Budgie, a 15-year-old trio led by bassist Burke Shelley, got there first . . . have Thin Lizzy split up? The old groaner, Phil Lynott, has recorded a new solo album, *The Philip Lynott Album,* which would suggest the singer is more interested in his own career. But Phil says there is no break-up threatening the group he has led these last ten years and adds, in fact, that Lizzy should start recording a new album in the autumn . . . Ray Coleman, ex-editor of Melody Maker, is writing the definitive biography of Eric Clapton, which is expected to join the dozens more titles on the rock music history due to flood the market this Christmas. One of the most recent book releases is *You Don't Have To Say You Love Me* by Simon Napier-Bell, ex-manager of the Yardbirds, who lifts the lid off the Sixties music business with lots of amusing and revealing anecdotes.

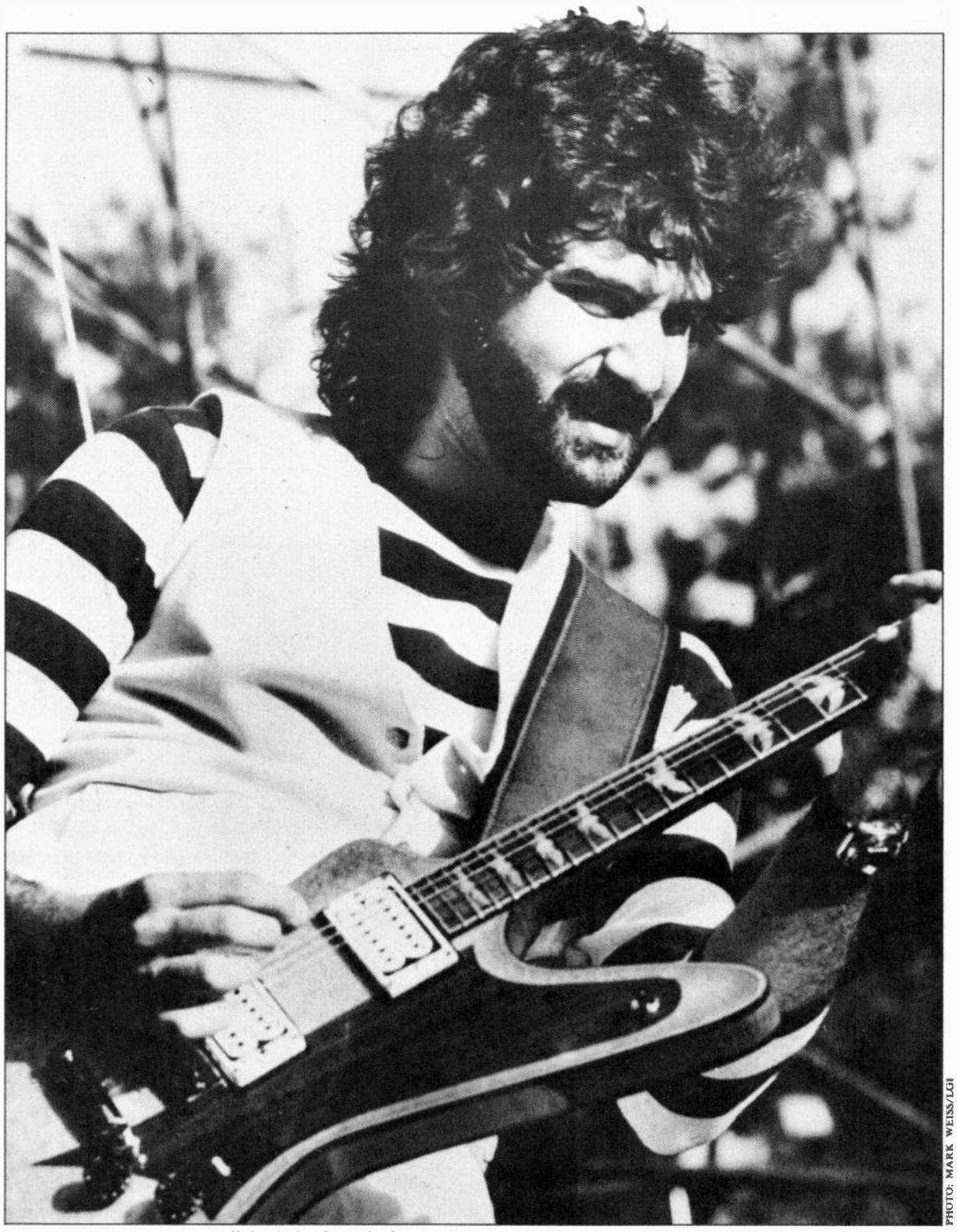


PHOTO: MARK WEISS/LGI

Jeff Carlisi: "Everybody contributes equally to make us winners."

.38 Special Begins To Sense 'A Feeling Of Permanence'

By David Gans

OAKLAND, Ca.—"The longer it takes for you to get there, the longer you'll be there when you make it," says Don Barnes, guitarist, vocalist and co-producer of .38 Special. "We really believe that, because you learn so many lessons along the way." Having been taught ten years worth of lessons in the gritty grind of American rock 'n' roll, Barnes and his five bandmates have of late developed a more sophisticated sound in an effort to escape the "southern boogie band" label that has dogged them since they emerged from Jacksonville, Florida. Their struggle wasn't helped along any by lead singer Donnie Van Zant's kinship to Lynyrd Skynyrd's late vocalist Ronnie Van Zant (Donnie's the middle button in the Van Zant clan, with brother Johnny being the youngest of the three); and, as Barnes admits, the early .38 Special wasn't all that special.

"On our first two albums we tried to get into that little niche of what was successful at the time," he says, referring to the hard-attack style popularized by Lynyrd Skynyrd and capitalized on by dozens, if not hundreds, of bands. "All that did was make everyone categorize us as 'Lynyrd Skynyrd junior.' "

.38 Special began to evolve musically in 1979 with their third album, *Rockin' Into The Night.* The title track received substantial FM airplay, paving the way for the massive success of 1981's *Wild-Eyed Southern Boys* and the breakthrough single, "Hold On Loosely."

The band's latest album, *Special Forces,* and the first single, "Caught Up In You," have reached the trade charts' top ten, indicating that sales will equal or surpass its predecessor's platinum-plus performance. "People ask us if we feel like we're selling out with a pop sound," says Jeff Carlisi, who shares guitar and production duties with Barnes. "We're just trying to fit into what radio wants. We've been educated over the years about what the industry needs—all the elements—but we're playing because there's nothing any of us would rather be doing. Everyone in .38 Special gives his full 110 percent."

Barnes, Carlisi and Van Zant—along with stage manager Larry Steele and Survivor's Jim Peterik (who penned "Eye of the Tiger") write the lion's share of .38 Special's songs, with occasional contributions from bassist Larry Junstrom and drummers Steve Brookins and Jack Grondin. On *Wild-Eyed* and *Special Forces,* Rodney Mills (of Atlanta Rhythm Section fame) is listed as producer, with Barnes and Carlisi credited as "production associates." But Barnes notes that Mills "doesn't override us. It's actually a three-man production team. Nobody can tell the group how to sound or direct them better than somebody who's been in on the molding of the band for ten years."

The collaborative approach to songwriting and production extends to everything .38 Special does. That's one part of the "good ol' boy" stereotype that doesn't bother Barnes and Carlisi. "No one person is the star in this group," Barnes asserts. "We approach everything as a team. It's no different from anything we've been exposed to with Skynyrd. They approached it pretty much like an athletic team."

What holds .38 Special together more than anything is friendship: the six band members have known each other since they were kids in Jacksonville, and Barnes points out that this near-blood relationship creates "a feeling of permanence." Their bond proved especially important early on, when Peter Rudge, who managed Skynyrd and .38 Special, became, as Barnes says, "disenchanted" with the music business after the Skynyrd plane crash. "He wasn't helping us at all, and we saw that as our time to get out," he relates. "A&M figured we'd break up, because that's what most bands would do. They sent a little bit of money to keep us going, but they were astonished that we were still writing songs and staying together after all these problems. But it never entered our minds to break up."

Instead, the crisis pulled the musicians together even tighter. "After the first two albums, we realized we were going nowhere fast," says Barnes. "We revamped the formula, updated everything, and tried some new things. We learned from being so close to Skynyrd that you have to put your own character into the music. People relate to character more than proficiency in playing."

Although the material rewards of a pair of platinum albums cannot be denied, both Carlisi and Barnes maintain that .38 Special's values are the same as they've always been, "We came from point zero, Saturday night in a bar with ten people who didn't care if we lived or died," Barnes explains. "We were exposed to the big time before we were big time—whatever that term means—and we've seen so many people get taken down by the business. We've had the chance to learn from other people's mistakes.

"It's nice to have financial independence, but soul and spirit and character are more valuable. We're richer in spirit and character and camaraderie within ourselves and our friends than we are in money."

Summers-Fripp Tour Off; Police Get Set For Next LP

NEW YORK—"We live in a pretty volatile situation," Andy Summers muses about the Police's on again/off again creative axis. "The group's always breaking up, really, but it's not breaking up as much as it used to," he laughs. "There has to be that inner dynamic which comes from the slight scrape of people against each other. You can't expect to play rock music and give those kinds of performances with a sort of bovine band—it's part of the job in a way. Humble is not our forte, and all the good groups that ever connected with audiences have the same problems."

Thus did the Police's versatile guitarist sum up the creative forces that bind the trio (yet drive them constantly in search of new alternatives), during a month-long swing through the States that began August 9 in Virginia. Autumn found the group absorbed in various solo projects, and in writing music for their new studio album, scheduled to begin production November 15. Sting's movie, *Brimstone And Treacle*, opened in September and Stewart Copeland busied himself doing the percussion score for a new Francis Ford Coppola film, while Summers began collaborations with the legendary drummer Max Roach and Ornette Coleman's flash bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma for future performance projects and possible recording work, made a live BBC appearance with Robert Fripp, (following the release of their duo album *I Advance Masked* on A&M) and completed work on a book of photos.

In a word, busy. Too busy in fact for Summers to go ahead with plans for an extended fall tour with Fripp. And barely enough time to sort out his contributions to the next Police album and each man's role in the group. "Yeah, Sting and Stewart are both real assholes. How's that? God, that's a hard question," he grimaces. "I can't say like Sting's jolly, Stewart's moody and I'm cheerful. What we contribute obviously goes along with the see-saw-ing back and forth of personalities on a musical and emotional level."

But what of the distinct absence of concert material by either Copeland or Summers? "Well, it gets difficult, because having all that material we obviously can't do it *all* on stage, and basically people want to hear singing, and Sting is obviously more likely to sing his songs than somebody else's. *I* don't assume that people have to have singing . . . I would play instrumentals, personally, but that's not an argument I've ever won." —**Chip Stern**

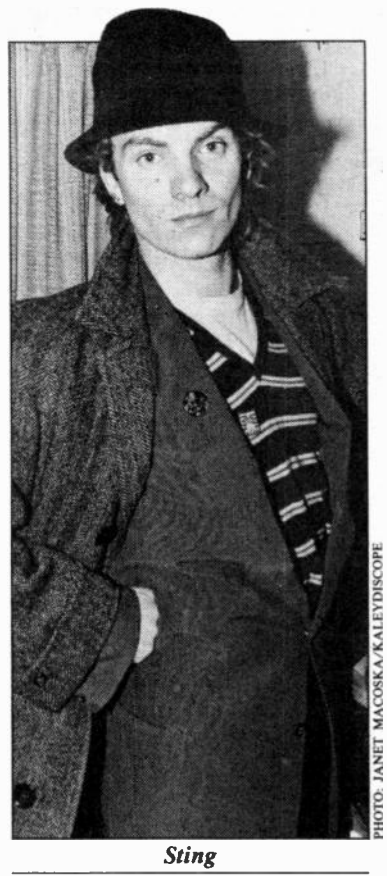


PHOTO: JANET MACOSKA/KALEYDISCOPE

Sting

McCafferty Claims Nazareth Still Has A Point To Prove

NEW YORK— "We made a few albums where we didn't have any material, but we made it up as we went along," admits Pete Agnew, the bass player of Nazareth.

"There's only so far you can go that way, Agnew adds. "We'd rather concentrate on the songs."

Agnew and Dan McCafferty, founding members of Nazareth 12 years and 15 LPs ago, believe their latest LP offering, titled *2XS*, is the most commercial record they've made in more than half a decade, primarily due to the strength of the songwriting.

"The kids who've been our fans for years, they'll like it pretty much no matter what," argues Agnew, "but we think there's something here for people who never heard of Nazareth." Examples of atypical Nazareth tunes are the rockabilly rave-up "Gatecrash," and the reggae-flavored "You Love Another." As on past LPs, each song bears the signature of all six group members—one way the band avoids ego conflicts.

"If you don't want five other guys messing with your song," says Agnew, "then you can go off and make a solo record."

Which is exactly what Agnew and McCafferty, as a duo, are doing. The resulting LP, they claim, will be as different from Nazareth as the Kingston Trio from the Kinks.

"It's Weavers' music," explains McCafferty. "It'll have a very heavy ethnic Scottish influence, like Horslips' music is to Ireland. It's a record about Scottish families coming and settling in America."

Chris Newman, an American guitarist who has toured with Nazareth, was recruited for this solo project. No other members of Nazareth will be involved.

With Agnew and McCafferty branching out, it seems natural to ask about Nazareth's future. Their response is that the band will continue indefinitely.

"We've still got a point to prove," McCafferty says, referring to those who believe Nazareth may have peaked commercially in 1975. Adds Pete Agnew: "I'm getting off on recording songs I can hum."

— **Mark Mehler**

Dregs Ponder Their Future

NEW YORK—The Dregs, the unsung heroes of instrumental rock, don't seem to know if they're coming or going these days. First came the word that they'd broken up, then that they'd re-formed as a four-piece minus 20-year-old violin flash Mark O'Conner (whose return to the fold is seen as highly unlikely). Now they're out doing gigs in the secondary markets of the southeast, without the services of their former management or (as they see it) any tangible show of support from their record company, Arista.

"I think we're a marginally profitable act for them with a minimum of effort, and that's why they've never done anything, and that's the way they want to keep it," bassist Andy West shrugs. "I'm satisfied with our level of achievement, but I'm frustrated by the things I think we could've achieved if we didn't have so many roadblocks in our path."

Those roadblocks, both real and imagined, have prevented the Dregs from breaking through to a natural constituency with their explosive yet intricate blend of instrumental rock styles. The formal aspirations of guitarist/composer Steve Morse seem constantly at war with his natural talent for kinetic, high-distortion riffing.

Vis-a-vis their aborted breakup, West observes that "Morse got real burned out and freaked out about everything. Like, 'Wow, we sold out and did vocals on *Industry Standard*.' I mean, I thought it was cool, but it's Morse's ball game, ultimately. Also, some of the stuff we've done in jams, man! I'll say why don't we go out and do this shit. But the concept of doing that to Steve is so painful."

Meanwhile, West and keyboardist T. Lavitz have completed work on a recording project with ex-Little Feat guitarist Paul Barrere; Morse has been delving into some classical pieces he wants to develop; and projects between the Dregs and the Doobies' (ex- of, one supposes) Patrick Simmons—though still very much in the discussion stage—remain an open possibility for the future. And, somehow, the Dregs go on. "Maybe if we did something different for awhile, when we returned it would be fresher," sighs West. "Because I just think we've got something that's too good to lose, and I want to keep it going."

—**Chip Stern**

Hey, Move Over, Robert Plant –Here Comes Rhett Forrester

OAKLAND, CA.—If he hadn't turned his harmonica into a money-maker, says Riot's Rhett Forrester, "I would have been dead or in jail—one or the other. I was brought up on the south side of Atlanta, without any money or anything. I was pretty desperate at times.

"Even in rock 'n' roll it's been pretty lean. You're talking about eatin' white rice and drinkin' black coffee for close to 10 years, y'know?"

The 25-year-old harpist/vocalist joined Brooklyn-based metal mashers Riot early this year, replacing founding screamer Guy Speranza. "I drove to New York from Baltimore with literally everything I owned in the trunk. I had an audition with Rod Price, from the old Foghat period. That fell through but he gave me some money and told me to stick around New York."

While doing some work on a movie called *Vigilante*, "Eddie—the guy who was producing—said that Riot needed a singer. As soon as he heard my voice, he said, 'You've got the job, Rhett. Give these guys a call.'

"They looked at my videotape and pictures the first day, the second day we started writing songs for the new album, and the third day we popped the cork and signed the contract. It was that fast—the chemistry was just right. We started on the album right away." Forrester wrote or co-wrote four of the ten tracks on *Restless Breed*, the quintet's fourth album.

Forrester says he was "saved" by rock. "I was in captivity for close to three years—two in the Navy and close to a year in prison" for robbing a gas station in his home state of Georgia. "Less than three days after I came out of the Naval Academy, I picked up with a group in Hilton Head, North Carolina, and asked if I could jam with 'em. I wasn't even singing then. I just walked onstage, started jammin' on the harp, and they hired me immediately. I've been on the road ever since."

—Lance Carson

PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH/ LGI

Riot (Rhett Forrester, center)

Huey Lewis And The News Are Working For A Living

SAN FRANCISCO, Ca.—"We're well on the way towards sustaining ourselves as musicians, but we ain't shoppin' for houses, y'know? A couple of years ago, with two hits and a third one coming, our record would have been—dare I say it?—gold by now."

Huey Lewis isn't complaining. He's just observing that times are tough in the record business and sales aren't what they used to be. But he and his band, Huey Lewis and the News, are having the time of their lives. They just returned from a four-and-a-half month road trip across America, Canada, Europe and Japan. They've got a new single, "Working For A Living," heading up the charts, and their second album, *Picture This*, is holding steady in the top 100 half a year after its release.

The heavy airplay afforded the News' latest release (plus the popularity of their videos on MTV) keeps the band hopping and bopping. "We haven't played in the northwest yet, so we're going there pretty soon. If 'Working For A Living' is a hit, we'll go across the country again," says Lewis excitedly.

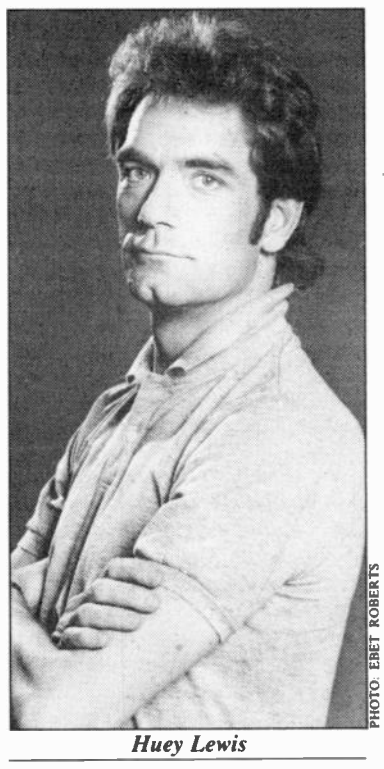


PHOTO: EBET ROBERTS

Huey Lewis

Sessions for the band's third album should begin before the end of the year, with an eye toward a February '83 release. "I'm ready to have a new album out," Lewis says, "but it's tough to write when you're on the road. We get sorta vague ideas, but it's hard to actually get down and arrange and rehearse; so songs don't really come together until we get home."

Like everything Huey Lewis and the News do, songwriting and record making are band efforts. They produced *Picture This* themselves, and plan to produce the next one, too. "I know that bands are obsolete," Lewis admits. "It's tougher to keep six people alive than to keep yourself alive and hire musicians once in awhile. But I think there's a certain personality that comes out of a band, and it gets onto the record if you do it right.

"We are friends first, and guitar-keyboard-drums second," Lewis asserts. "We are a real band, a *live* band. Playing is what we enjoy doing the most." —David Gans

Arista Dumps On Allmans

Continued from page 1

lar song or whatever. They've created a complete vacuum around the group."

Holman says that in July, after sitting around and growing increasingly "stagnant," the musicians scattered to various points of the globe. Dickie Betts and Butch Trucks formed Dickie Betts and Friends, a country-oriented combo that toured briefly; Gregg Allman and Dan Toler formed part of the Gregg Allman Band, a blues outfit that played across the east last summer; and Chuck Leavell joined up with the Rolling Stones in Europe.

Arista president Clive Davis did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Meanwhile, if and when the Allmans' next LP is released, some of the featured tracks will be: "Anything Goes," a mid-tempo rocker written by Allman; Betts' "Let Me Ride," a rocker with "a 'Rambling Man' feeling"; "Don't Lead Me On," another mid-tempo song co-authored by Allman and Dan Toler; and "Feel Your Love," a Chuck Leavell ballad. The group also covered Johnny Cobb's "Lorraine," for which Betts has written a new arrangement and some lyrics.

Holman says the Allmans still have hopes of hiring a producer and going back into the studio to complete the project. "The guys are out there now writing songs and keeping busy," he says. "But it's frustrating when you don't know what's going on." —Mark Mehler

Walk It Like You Talk It: Freddie Salem Stays Hungry

NEW YORK—Freddie Salem of the Outlaws understands the expression, "You gotta walk it like it you talk it." So here he is, recovering from a bout of flu that's left him with a voice just this side of Tom Waits', and praising Lynyrd Skynyrd for being true to the tradition. "That band lived it to the bitter end," he croaks. "That's what I like to see. I'm into living rock 'n' roll as much as I can without hurting myself.

"If you go out on a tour and after every gig you go to your hotel room and watch television, it's not good. The people see it, and your image begins to break down a little bit. You have to get out there after the show, after the interviews, and kick butt some more with the public. You have to enjoy what you're doing when you're out there. Once a musician loses that hunger—the 'eye of the tiger,' as they say these days—it starts slipping away from you. It was happening to me, but I decided I didn't want that yet. Maybe when I'm 40 years old I'll be ready to return to civilization."

This is Salem's way of explaining why he chose to record a solo album, *Cat Dance*, while remaining a full-fledged member of the Outlaws, a hard-working southern rock ensemble if ever there was one. Early this year Salem assembled a crack band—himself on guitars and vocals, the estimable Fernando Saunders on bass, Myron Grumbacher (from Pat Benatar's band) on drums, Peter Wood (last seen on Pink Floyd's "Wall" tour) on organ and synthesizer and David Jackson on piano and synthesizer—entered MediaSound Studios in New York and, 19 days later, emerged with a completed album.

"I didn't want three- and four-minute airplay songs," states Salem. "I wanted a little texture, a little depth in the music, and that's pretty much what I got. I just wanted to make the album quickly and have it be as raw and energetic as possible."

As for the Outlaws, Salem says the entire group should be in the studio by September or October, but warns that it's time for them to "buckle down and write real good Outlaws music. We've been steered away from that, particularly on the last album, which was just an abortion from the producer's standpoint, from the band's standpoint, from the record company's standpoint. I'm not pointing a finger at any one person here; I think the whole unit was responsible."

Salem lets out a gruff chuckle. "Boy, I hope they read this!"

—David McGee

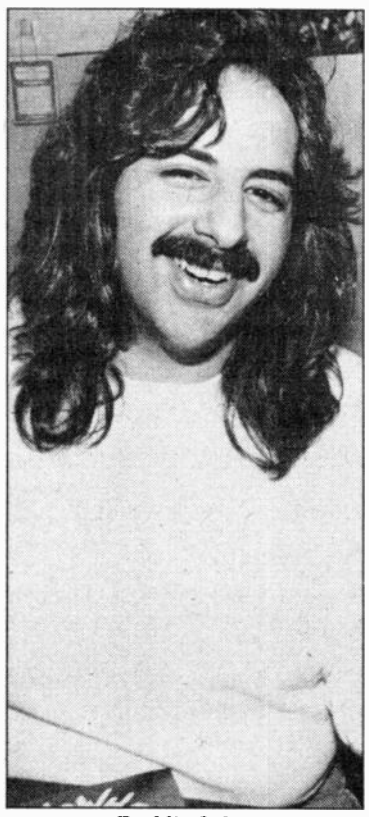


PHOTO: LAURIE PALADINO

Freddie Salem

Oingo Boingo LP Chronicles 'Things That Sap Our Souls'

NEW YORK—Danny Elfman, lead vocalist of Oingo Boingo, took an extended vacation in Africa some years ago. A short stay in Uganda coincided with Idi Amin's rookie year in power.

"I remember talking to cab drivers who were jokingly complaining about Amin banning miniskirts, but you could tell people were worried that maybe this buffoon wasn't so funny after all."

Amin's reign, of course, proved to be no barrel of laughs. And neither is Oingo Boingo's second LP, *Nothing To Fear*, which makes the point that there is *everything* to fear.

"Each verse," explains the affable, red-haired Elfman, "is about another paranoid fear. We start off with the Russians, move on to child molesting, and end up singing about things that sap our very souls." Idi Amin would probably be amused.

Stylistically, *Nothing To Fear* is the eight-man band's most experimental project to date. "(Let's Take) The Whole Day Off" is the group's first slow tune; the title cut is Oingo Boingo's initial foray into funk; and "Wild Sex" features a dash of new wave frenticism plus, as part of the bridge, an East African chant.

"I'm not comparing Oingo Boingo to the Beatles," says Elfman, "but I remember one of the best things about them was you could play the first song on the record and have no idea what the next song would sound like, or the one after that . . . that's what we're going for."

Elfman says Oingo Boingo's emphasis is on "heart and muscle, not technique.

"I'm looking for people who can grow in the band. I couldn't play guitar for shit when the band started, I never had a lesson, but I picked it up."

Oingo Boingo, which has just concluded a U.S. tour, intends to remain an octet, despite continuing business pressures to trim down. "We would have had a record deal two years earlier if we'd cut down to four people," relates Elfman. "We may not have million-selling records, but we got one thing a lot of pop bands don't: an element of endurance."

—Mark Mehler

Joe Tex Dead At 49

NAVASOTA, Tex.—Soul singer Joe Tex died here on August 13, three days after suffering a heart attack. He was 49 years old.

Although he began singing professionally in the late '50s, Tex bounced around on half a dozen different labels before winding up at Dial and scoring his first national hit in 1964 with "Hold On To What You've Got." For Tex, this began an eight-year run of pop and soul hits, all of which fell broadly into the categories of either melodramatic advice to the lovelorn or stomping, grunting, almost vaudevillian rave-ups on the order of his 1967 hit, "Show Me."

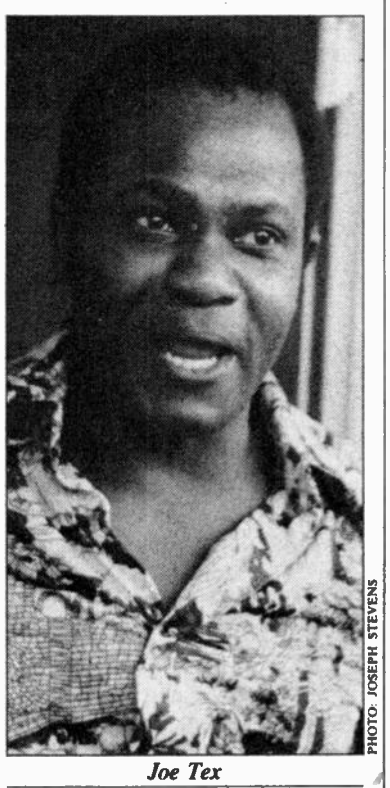


PHOTO: JOSEPH STEVENS

Joe Tex

In 1972, Tex converted to the Muslim faith, adopted the name Joseph Hazziez and retired from show business. He made a successful return as a recording artist in 1977 with a humorous send-up of a current dance craze, "Ain't Gonna Bump No More (With No Big Fat Woman)" on Epic. Although the bulk of Tex's recorded work is now out of print, various *Best Of* collections are available as imports or domestically as cut-outs; of particular interest is *Live & Lively*, a live LP recorded for Atlantic in 1968 that captures Tex in a peak performance.

NEIL YOU
A New Phase

Continued from page 1

ers and heavily processed vocals. Young has taken advantage of the newest in electronic music technology to create disturbing sounds that are as machine-derived as they are human.

The Neil Young Sound, 1982 Edition, is exemplified by his new recording of "Mr. Soul," which originally appeared on the 1967 LP, *Buffalo Springfield Again*. The new "Mr. Soul" throbs with computerized dance-wave rhythms and electronic instruments, and, in a resounding nod to the circularity of his world, features a note-for-note reprise of the electric guitar solo Young played on the original version 15 years ago.

Young's third film, *Human Highway*, premiered recently at the Mill Valley film festival, and may be showing in American theaters by the end of the year. It's a black comedy, visually indebted to the Muppet movies, with disjointed plotlets played out in a truck stop located in the menacing shadow of the Linear Valley nuke plant. All of Young's favorite themes—planetary suicide, human miscommunication, show-biz shallowness, and love (lost, found and missed by a mile)—are encompassed in this quirky and charming film.

Young stars in *Human Highway* as Lionel Switch, a doofy garage mechanic who bears no small resemblance to Kermit the Frog: both are sincere, loveable and good humored dreamers who do what makes sense to them while life carries on in slapstick fashion all around. Young's screen incarnation is as friendly and accessible as his vinyl persona is sullen and distant.

As a writer and film maker, Young doesn't deal in slippery, slick imagery. "Clunky" is the word that persists in my mind when I try to characterize his verbal and musical style; his work is often as inelegant but always as undeniable as a rusty fender beside a desert road. Neil Young's truth doesn't demand agreement, but it'll stare you down until you at least understand.

Driving into Young's vast ranch in the coastal mountains of northern California, I was not surprised to find several oases of decaying American cars—some gutted, some reasonably intact—tucked into hillsides and roadside depressions, corroding in the sun while cattle idle nearby.

Face to face, Young seemed at first to be as low-key as I expected. But like his music, the surface calm eventually yields up the complexity beneath. His voice is under-inflected—flat, almost monotonous—but his ideas are rich and peaky. And *nothing* gets past this guy, no matter how unconcerned he might seem.

There was some subjects I had hoped to cover that didn't come up, and at least one that we both avoided when it arose. While we were discussing Young as a band leader having to take responsibility for other people's lives, the ghost of Danny Whitten (the Crazy Horse guitarist whose death from a drug overdose was confronted by Young in his most difficult and challenging album, *Tonight's the Night*) seemed to materialize between us. For one chilling moment we both felt its presence, and then we waved it away without a word and turned to less painful subjects.

One thing I learned from your new film that in 15 years of listening to you I had never realized was that you have a couple of characters in your songwriting. It wasn't until I saw Lionel (the character Neil plays in the movie) that I figured out that he's been singing a lot of your tunes—

Yeah, right [laughs].

Something about seeing it . . .

Yeah, makes it a little easier to understand. There's always been a lot of characters in the songs. A lot of times the only way to write it is to get into a different trip. I find myself changing roles as albums come by. I'll get into one thing and write about that, then get into something else and write about that. But this is the most free expression I've been able to have, because it's so technical. I love the machines, and I think the machines are where it's at.

This new technology has opened up a whole new thing for me. I don't have to use my voice any more—I can use any voice I want.

This is just the beginning; I've got these other machines that can sample people's voices and bring them up on my keyboard, then I can sing with their voice. The better we get with this enunciation and everything, I'll be able to completely disguise myself.

Is that a goal of yours, Neil?

Yeah. I think it'd be real good to be able to do three or four different . . . to create characters, like what's-his-name, the guy who did Bugs Bunny.

Mel Blanc.

I would like to develop three, four, five, maybe six characters. I can just write songs for that group, then recreate the group . . . take it one step further, rather than it always being me that's doing it. I can use different vehicles.

But yet you don't seem bound by the technology. One thought that jumped to mind while listening to the record this afternoon was, "This is Devo with conviction." I find Devo a little shallow—

Too cold, kinda?

I came away from their concert thinking, "These guys are exploiting this, rather than making statements with it." I've always found Devo a little unsettling because I think that they're not as serious—

Well, they're very unsettling. What they've already done, I think, is great. What they're doing now and what they're going to do in the future, I don't really know about. But what I've seen them do in the past, I thought was great.

I loved how a lot of my friends were really turned off by Devo. I found that to be refreshing. These people thought they knew what the hell was going on until they saw Devo, and many other groups like them, that just disturbed the old wave.

I don't mind being disturbed or shocked—I just didn't feel that they were making serious statements, while you've always spoken to me, since the beginning. After listening to your new album, I thought the electronic tools were finally in the proper hands.

That's good. That's great. I think (Devo) probably have people who listen to them who feel the same way about them as you do about me, and also feel the same way about me as you do about them. I think they have a whole group of people that started with them. That's important, you know, because when you're just getting into music, when you're really open to it, the first things you grab onto you really believe in heavily. The more things you believe in, and the more time goes by, the more you question everything. Devo would be really easy to get into, I think, for a younger person just getting into music.

Yeah, in a 1980s way, I guess they are accessible. If you never experienced real raw, four-piece rock 'n' roll, it's probably easier.

Yeah, much easier.

I've been brought up along the path, pretty much, from the Beatles to now.

That's all bullshit to them. They don't want to hear about it—it's all a joke. You know what I mean? The more of the past you have, the less validity you have—and I really understand that concept. The music business has just got too big, so that it ate itself, and started shitting out all these new groups. And they're great, you know, but they don't want to have anything to do with the old way of things. They're new; they're starting from where they are and rebelling against everything else, which is basically what I was doing when I was with the Springfield. I understand the concept of "underground," basically, even though today everything is so commercial it's hard to relate to that.

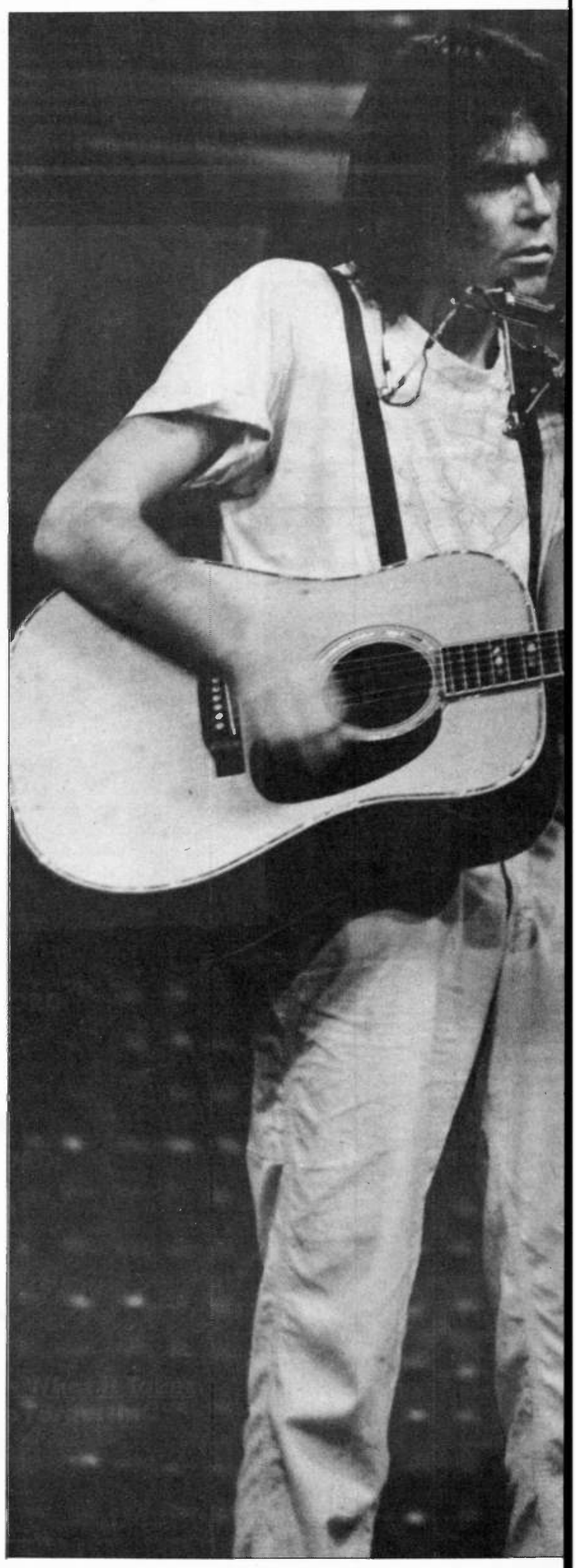
You haven't concerned yourself much with commerciality.

No, I really haven't. It's probably just as well that I haven't concerned myself with it too much. I see some records of mine sell a lot, and some of them don't sell too many. It doesn't matter: they all feel the same to me when I put 'em out.

It's not a matter of deadlines, or "is there a single on here?"

Yeah. I mean, shit, obviously I don't worry too much about singles. I don't think we've had a hit single in ten years. But you know, sometimes things come out . . . like this record here, if everything goes right it'll come out on time for the tour. But if everything doesn't go right, it won't come out in time for the tour. That's just the way it goes.

I would also imagine that you're not



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too concerned about the fact that the record industry seems to be shutting itself down.

I hope it shuts down and fuckin' turns off for a while. It won't bother me; I'll just keep putting records out.

They're all gonna fall on their asses. It's not if—it's when. That's how I feel. Especially some of the big ones. I think there's gonna be a resounding thud. I'll just keep on going as long as there's an audience.

What is your audience like? Compared to what it was in '65?

It's funny—they're the same age. The people who come to my concerts are generally 19 or 20 years old.

Do they understand you? Do you feel like you're getting through to them?

Oh, I know I'm getting through to them. But I don't mean to them what I mean to somebody else who may have been watching me since '65 and who is now old and mature and doesn't want to go through the hassle of getting a ticket, or doesn't care. Obviously, as you go through life, things change.

When you get down to the average Joe, music represents sort of an audio trigger for their memory. The things that they remember are tied to the music that they heard when they were doing them; the songs they liked when they were young and they were changing. That's why people stick to eras—there's all these blue-haired people who are into the Big Band era. That's all they think about. And there's a lot of people who are stuck in the '60s.

Been to a Grateful Dead concert lately?

That's a funny group. They're like huge dinosaurs, compared to what's happening now. The bands that are out now . . . the more distance they get from where we're from, the better off they are.

How do you reconcile that with your own desire to continue producing art for people?

That's my own choice. I'm doing that anyway. I love it. This is what I do. To me, my creation is not from a logical thought pattern; it's from a sub-dominant hemisphere of the brain. It's from another place. When I'm really writing, really playing, I'm not thinking at all. So the two things don't go together.

I got into an argument with a colleague because he criticized *Human Highway* for all the wrong reasons. He said something about "this art for art's sake bullshit," and I said, "It's art for compulsion's sake!" I was maintaining—correct me if I'm wrong—that you were doing what you *had* to do, that it wasn't a calculating thing at all.

Oh, yeah. Art for art's sake, I don't know what that means. Four years I worked on that film. I did what I wanted to do; I had a picture I wanted to paint. To me, the film was something I did out of love.

If I only made records, I'd be very boring by now. You have to do different things to stay fresh. You have to get away from it and come back to it. I hear people say. "Why don't you just make records? Forget it, you waste so much money doing this." It doesn't matter. The idea is to keep doing things that I can't do very well. Keep me alert. I'll get better and better; I know I'm not a great filmmaker, but I've only made three movies. I didn't go to film school—I bought all my equipment and figured out how to work it. So I'm doing it myself. I'm doing it because I like to do it. If I ever make money on a movie, it's going to be an accident. Anybody who has seen any of my movies will tell you that.

They're like home movies—especially the first one (*Journey Through The Past*)—but they're things that I wanted to do. I don't want to be Robert Redford; I don't want to make those kind of movies, although I think those are great movies. A lot of the movies that are in the mainstream of today are great, like *E.T.* and stuff. But I make personal movies. Even if it's a broad comedy it's personal.

Is *Human Highway* a comedy?

I think it is.

Don't get me wrong—I laughed at it plenty. But it scared me.

Yeah. You're laughing and you're going, "Oh, my god—this can't be real. They're making fun of this and that," and all this stuff.

I love the scene when Booji Boy starts doing his version of "Blowin' In The Wind." When I first heard it, I went "My God! He's mocking 'Blowin' In The Wind.' " I had my '60s reaction right away [laughs], and then I heard this voice saying, "Neil, Neil! Listen to your deprogrammers [laughs]." I listened to them, and I started laughing at Booji Boy making fun of "Blowin' In The Wind," because that's what's happening today. Nothing changed really radically, so what the fuck? Why *not* make fun of "Blowin' In The Wind."

But there's no real need to cut yourself off from history.

Mm-mm. No, there isn't. My show doesn't cut me off from my past—it goes all the way through all of it. Everything. It's like true confessions or something. It's all there, all the music—scatterings of it from my whole life, you know. And it starts and ends up with the same, this early Springfield stuff—the old version at the beginning and the new version at the end.

But I used the whole thing to get to where I am now, which is computer music, which I really love, and I think is going to be my future. Although it may not be—I may do a blues album next. I haven't really figured out what I'm going to do. It depends on what happens. I've got one new song that's a three-chord rhythm 'n' blues-oriented song.

I'm thinking computers, but when I wrote the song, it's like Jimmy Reed or something. I don't know what the hell is going on. I still can't control it—I just do it. Here I am thinking, "I'm going to do all this with my machines," and I'm writing blues songs. So I don't know what the fuck I'm doing.

I interviewed Warren Zevon recently, and he said, "If I *don't* put that pistol on that plate with the peas and carrots, what *am* I gonna do? I don't know why it's there, but something told me to put it there, and you gotta do what you gotta do."

Yeah. Right on. I feel good about people who think less and just do what they feel, and not question it. Let everybody else question it. I like that way of doing it.

In the mid-'60s our generation listened—I mean *listened*.

Really listened to everything.

We looked for the meanings; we listened to it backwards, every way we could, because it all *meant* something. Nowadays, music that means something—that stands as art—is damned hard to find.

It's passé.

That's my problem with a lot of the new wave stuff—

That's what's good about it, though.

Cutting off history.

Yeah, but they're cutting off that part of it for the sake of the survival of the new part. It's like a trade, and the old part isn't dead—but it's gonna be ignored for a while, until it regains a little validity. This *feeling* business, this lonesome, personal thing where the guy writes his heart out and everything . . . everybody has written so many songs like that, and there are so many songs for every occasion, that it's just passé. It's boring, like Perry Como was to me when I was 18.

You've just trashed half your own body of work.

That's okay. Kick it out the window, I don't give a shit. It was good then, but it's no good now [laughs].

I expected you to be a little more protective of your own history.

No, fuck it.

You know what's really meaningful in today's music? That it has a computer rhythm; it has perfect beat. Subliminally, it's very reassuring. I programmed the drum computer myself. You don't have to program soul into it; if the programmer's got soul, the product is gonna have soul.

I think you can play music with *machines* better than you can without 'em. It's very *reassuring*. Today's world is run on a digital clock. Everything is running on computers, from the heaters that run their buildings to the traffic lights they pay attention to on their way to work. Just because *the music's* mathematically correct and it's reassuring doesn't mean that it's not inspiring. If you press the button at the right time, and you've got the right thing on your mind when you press the button, it doesn't matter if it's a machine.

What happens when you're gone and your heirs don't know what it used to be like? What happens to the flesh and blood? What happens when the next guy runnin' your machine doesn't have the inspiration?

Well, when I'm gone there's gonna be a digital copy of everything I did.

Yeah, so the Neil Young Museum will continue in perpetuity.

Not only will it continue in perpetuity right back to the very first record I ever made, but the copies won't disintegrate like the ones did in the '40s and '50s and '60s.

Who's going to create the new stuff?

The machines are going to create the new stuff [laughs]. They will! All you have to do is aim them in the right direction.

Are we becoming obsolete?

No. This is just a phase we're going through. At the other end of this maybe acoustic music will come back. But it's never going to come back until it goes away. You don't want to hear James Taylor come on and sing "Fire and Rain" in 1982, the new "Fire and Rain," whatever the fuck it is, or my new "Heart of Gold." The people who are the age we were when we heard those songs—our counterparts in today's society—will have no part of that. It's like having Frank Sinatra and Perry Como come back and try to do a concert for us. It's bullshit; it's what their parents like. The same reason it's not good is the same reason their parents don't understand them. It's not right for the times; it's passé. As is all the soul and feeling that we're talking about. It has nothing to do with reality today. Reality is in cubicles and digital blocks.

It doesn't matter because the kids don't even know the difference.

They don't give a shit. They don't care what Perry Como thinks.

I don't either, but I care what Neil Young thinks.

But Neil Young's Perry Como! It's the same thing, you know. Neil Young from the '60s and early '70s is like Perry Como. That's the way I look at it. If I was still taking that seriously, I'd be where Crosby, Stills and Nash are today.

"But Neil Young's Perry Como! Neil Young from the early '60s and early '70s is like Perry Como. That's the way I look at it. If I was still taking that seriously, I'd be where Crosby, Stills and Nash are today."

It would seem that as individual and unique as you are, it would be hard to find people that you could mesh with—since Buffalo Springfield, maybe—people that it would be *appropriate* to play with.

People that feel good to play with are hard to find. Usually I like people who are extremely erratic, or irregular in their playing quality compared to the professional musician.

Guys with a little more immediacy to them?

Absolutely. If it's a bad day, it's a bad day. If it's a good day, it's a good day. It's not this guy who plays great on a bad day, and great plus one on a good day. It's the guy who plays great on a great day, bad on a bad day—that's the guy I want. I like people who interract with each other, and are connected emotionally to what they are doing. Peaks and valleys, as opposed to deserts, is the way I look at it. Long, flat expanses of professionalism bother me. I'd rather have a band that could explode at any time. And I think that's what people like, too: soul and expression and real fire and emotion more than perfection.

How much give-and-take was there in the Buffalo Springfield, in terms of writing and arranging? How collaborative was that?

Most of it was pretty collaborative,

Neil Young

as far as working out the instrumental parts of different guy's songs. Everybody came up with their own basic parts. Each guy would write his song, and that would be a separate thing. There were a few collaborations in the writing of the songs, but the arrangements were collaborations. It was just a matter of five guys putting the songs together, just a band like any other band. It was good; everybody was there.

It was the best of the bands that I've played in in my life, because of the fact that there was no one in it that was any more than anybody else. Everybody was the same; we were all in the band together. That gave an urgency to the music which I haven't experienced since. I've experienced different things, but I haven't gotten back to that—where I was in a group where everyone was my peer—since then. That's the unique thing about Buffalo Springfield.

What about Crosby, Stills and Nash?

Well, there were two other guys on the stage with us who were hired. It wasn't like a real band.

Did that really radically change the nature of it for you?

Oh, yeah. There'd be different guys playing bass and drums every time I played with them. It wasn't the same guys every time, but they were great players, all of them. But it wasn't like a band that got together and played. It was a different thing.

I get the feeling Crazy Horse was more like a band for you.

More than any of the other ones. Still, it was *my* band—it wasn't *a* band.

What about the compromises of being in a band with *partners* versus being the *auteur* of your own group?

I don't think it's a compromise; it's a luxury.

Not having all the responsibility yourself?

Absolutely.

Why don't you do it more often?

Well, who can I do it with?

Aren't there people you'd like to play with?

Sure there are people I'd like to play with, but I don't know who I could go with that wouldn't think it would be . . . a big move for them to play with me. That sets me apart from a lot of people. There's a few people that I could play with—but I don't know them—where if we both went on the same stage I'd know that (the audience) was just as interested in hearing his song as they were in hearing mine, and just as interested in looking at him. Chances are they came to see him as much as they came to see me. That equalizes the pressure.

But you asked me, Why can't I just go out and do that? Well, I don't know why I can't. I'd like to be able to just play under those circumstances so I don't feel that pressure, but I'm real happy to be playing the way I am. I look around, and I'm glad I'm not playing Las Vegas.

That you're able to have a career?

Yeah, right!

You're one of the few people who is uncompromising and can still function economically.

That's because I've done all these other things. It gets me away; when I come back I'm fresh—instead of constantly pounding away every year doing tours and records, trying to keep it going.

Do you enjoy touring?

I love to play. It's been four years since I've been on the road, and I only played one gig in four years—a benefit, and it was like a little island in the middle of the ocean or something. So now I'm back playing again—feels real good. I had other things to do that were more important to me, things having to do with my own life and my own family, that transcend the importance of my career or music or anything else. So, now that I'm playing again I'm real happy. I'm ecstatic to be able to get in front of people again and experience the feedback and everything. And I love my band.

I just wanted to say . . . when I was going on that thing about "Why can't you just step out and be one of the band?" I've just gone through getting a band together for six weeks where I had to change members and tell people to come and go, and then go nuts when people weren't together in the crew and all this stuff. That's one of the big differences between being in a band and having a band. I'm responsible for people's lives—what they're doing, how they feel about what they're doing. It's not like you're part of something. You're part of something, but you're also responsible for it.

"Long, flat expanses of professionalism bother me. I'd rather have a band that could explode at any time. That's what people like, too: soul and expression and real fire and emotion more than perfection."

The one kind of music you've done up to now is a pretty broad-based thing. You range from acoustic guitar and the shaky voice to the absolute guitar torture of "Hurricane," from the loudest thing I've ever heard in my life to the quietest thing. There's such a basis to go with here already. It's not like this is your first experience in full color after being black and white 8-millimeter all your life.

Right. But on the other hand, it is different enough to start a whole new thing with. If you wanted to talk about everything I've done up until this as an elephant—the trunk was this and the tail was that, one foot was this, and it all went together to make this huge elephant—you couldn't take the computer music as easily and put it in the elephant. If you did, it might look like a metal patch on it, or something. I figure you've got to build the Trojan Horse over here, like made of steel with electronics inside it. This is a new visual thing—this is what separates it in my mind. I have a visual association.

But you're not giving up the elephant.

No. We're still feeding the elephant; it'll pull the Trojan Horse, but pretty soon the Horse will take off by itself.

One of the things that's always been satisfying is your willingness to fall on your face with an album, to do what *needs* to be done whether it's what the market needs or not.

Yeah. I feel this new album could go either way, but I've had a positive reaction to it, and I wasn't expecting that. I was expecting it to be a little rocky coming from where I was to where I'm going. People come up to me and say, "I loved your concert, but I didn't like the song at the end ("Sample and Hold")." That's refreshing. It's not reassuring to them; things are not like they were, so they react. If somebody sees something and they're not ready for it, it's wrong to them. But to me, that's a positive reaction, because overall, in a period of time, it turns around. The change comes along.

I trust my instincts all the time. I have a lot of respect for my instincts, musically. I feel if I ignore an idea I'll never get it again, that that'll be it. If I close the door too many times and don't write when I feel like writing, if I'm doing something else and all of a sudden I start thinking of a song, I have to remember I'm a songwriter and that's what I do and stop doing what I'm doing and write it down—or remember it in my head, take a few minutes to really let it happen.

What's the longest you've gone between inspirations?

I don't really know. I know that there have been periods of time that have been longer than other periods of time, but it's all relative to other things. It's all relative to input, how much you get in. Like with computers: "Garbage In, Garbage Out."

George Thorogood's Advice? 'Everyone Get Up And Dance'

By Mark Mehler

NEW YORK—On a warm Saturday night in the early '70s, George Thorogood and his slide guitar staked out a grubby street corner in downtown San Francisco. Thorogood played long and hard, and with the passage of time, a small crowd gathered to cheer him on.

"Me and this other cat were playing our hearts out for more than an hour, and finally about 40 people were listening," recalls the guitarist. "Then suddenly, an enormous van pulls up and out jumps this big guy in a leopard suit and about $10,000 worth of conga, and that was it for me. You never saw a crowd evaporate so fast. And the really terrible part is the guy wasn't even good. His name—I'll never forget it—was Mr. Voodoo.

"Later on," continues Thorogood, "musicians would walk up to me and say 'I hear you met Mr. Voodoo.' Apparently he'd been doing the same thing to street musicians all around town. Hey, let's face it, the man had a gimmick and all I had were myself and a slide."

The moral, of course, is simple: George Thorogood and his slide guitar are currently playing headline dates across the country, while Mr. Voodoo and his $10,000 worth of conga drums are not. A gimmick will take you just so far. And those who have witnessed George Thorogood and The Destroyers in a concert setting over the past five years know there is little chance of them being upstaged by anyone. The group, whose latest LP, *Bad To The Bone*, was released in late August, is one of the most infectious, exhilarating, rollicking live acts extant.

"Playing the street was like Army basic training. You take all the balls you can muster and carry them out there with you every day. With me, it was a matter of survival, earning two dollars for a cheeseburger. I was on the street eight to 10 hours a day, dirty, underweight, with a ratty, torn jacket. If you can make people listen to you under these conditions, you're on your way."

The daily street grind paid off most recently with a major label deal (with EMI-America) and opening stints for The Rolling Stones (on last year's U.S. tour) and J. Geils (on the 1981 winter tour). Having recorded for years for the small, innovative Rounder Records label, Thorogood is ready for a new way of life and a new tax bracket.

Bad To The Bone spotlights Thorogood more than ever before. In fact, three tunes on the LP are Thorogood originals, unusual for an artist who made his name re-interpreting blues and rockabilly classics. "Back To Wentsville" is Thorogood's unabashed tribute to Chuck Berry; "Miss LuAnn" relates the passionate tale of a girl everybody wanted but nobody got; while the title cut is a Bo Diddley-ish raveup.

Though he professes eternal allegiance to this style of music, Thorogood says he's preparing for something a little different—a country & western album.

"Lately, I've been listening to a lot of C&W, mostly Marty Robbins and Gene Autry . . . real gunfighter songs. 'Wanted Man' on this album is in that vein. It sounds mellow, but the attitude is bad, aggressive—a drifter wanted by the law. It's a very personal tune with me."

For the present, however, Thorogood must still contend with cynics who question his "roots" in basic rock 'n' roll and downgrade him because he plays this old stuff.

"In Boston, somebody came up and said I was a nostalgia freak, I was just playing old music. I said Freddie King plays 'Dust My Broom'. 'Yeah,' the person said, 'but that's his roots, he's a black man.' I said what the hell is the difference. I've been listening to Elvis and Chuck Berry and Elmore James, and all that stuff since I was 14 years old, and that is *my* roots.

"If I had my way," he adds, "I'd play for nothing but 17-year-old girls. They don't care how old the music is, or who wrote it. They like to dance. Nothing makes me more nervous than people sitting there just staring at me when I play. I wish everybody'd get up and dance. I want to hang a sign at every one of my concerts saying, there's a dance here tonight. The best thing about girls is you don't have to educate them or get into critical discussions. They're less inhibited."

The current U.S. tour, which runs through Christmas—tentative plans call for a 30-60 day tour next year—has the band back in its familiar role as headliner.

Says Thorogood: "When we were starting out, we opened for Muddy Waters, Hound Dog Taylor, Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker, John Hammond; that was cool. Once I came out and jammed with Muddy Waters. I think I played too loud for him. That was okay. And last year I agreed to open for the Stones and J. Geils because I think they're the only bands alive that can cut us. But when it comes down to it, when we show up at a club or a concert hall, we're there because people want to see the Destroyers. You wouldn't go on a date with a girl and bring another guy along. When we're there, it's our show. When I'm on a date, the girl's with me."

Having come by his musical self-confidence the hard way—he was in his teens before he got the nerve to pick up a guitar—Thorogood is now the softest touch on the eastern seaboard. While in New York recently, he went broke in minutes handing out coins to street-corner performers, in-whom Thorogood sees a piece of himself, before he learned about image and projection.

"The biggest compliment I can get is for somebody to say how small I am (he's 5'10"), how they thought I was much bigger. You learn to create a big image in people's minds."

Mr. Voodoo, if you're out there, I would advise you to watch whose street corner you mess with in the future.

PHOTO: BOB LEAFE

George Thorogood: "If I had my way, I'd only play for 17-year-old girls."

On Stage

King Crimson's New 'New Music'

King Crimson
The Pier
New York City
August 2, 1982

By Mark Mehler

Anchored majestically at Pier 86 in New York, awaiting the morning crush of tourists, was the aircraft carrier Intrepid, now de-commissioned and turned into a museum. The carrier was a fitting dockmate for the quartet playing nearby at Pier 84. King Crimson—re-commissioned by Robert Fripp last year after several years in mothballs—is nothing if not intrepid.

Over the course of a two-hour show that was heavily weighted with material from the band's last two LPs, King Crimson hung firmly to the cutting edge of contemporary music. Theirs was a bold, ballsy, alternately minimal and grandiose, but always intriguing set that never stopped challenging its audience.

Drawing from a wide range of sources (African tribal rhythm, Romantic symphony, even a dash of "New York, New York"), Crimson fashioned a totally new "new music": neither rock nor jazz, it was nonetheless as rhythmic as the former and as free-wheeling as the latter.

The band—guitarists Robert Fripp and Adrian Belew, Tony Levin (on Stick and bass) and drummer Bill Bruford—are, individually and collectively among the most accomplished and exacting musicians in the trade. By employing thick conversational polyrhythms; rich, interweaving guitar lines; intricate, polymetric melodies and hypnotic repetition, the group creates an astounding amount of tension onstage. At the same time, however, their rhythmic grooves induce the sort of reverie that can never last too long.

To cite a few examples: on "Frame by Frame" (from the *Discipline* LP), Belew and Fripp offered a breathtaking, undulating duet, with each musician playing a series of scales that form their own kind of language, and hence, their own conflict. This instrumental dialogue, coupled with the group's substantial visual presence, proved to be strong theatre.

On the symphonic "Matte Kudakai" (also from *Discipline*) Bruford's crisp, spare drumming held Belew's melodramatic impulses in check. "Heartbeat," as poignant and hypnotic a piece of pop as can be found among bands making their living at it, got a fittingly lush treatment. "Thela Hun Ginjeet" and "Indiscipline," both futuristic-type rap tunes, found Belew engaged in his own style of performance art. Suggestions that his vocals are imitation Bryne and Bowie do not wash; like those artists, King Crimson uses vocals more as a textural, musical element than a mere lyric focus—all comparisons end there.

PHOTO: JOHN BELLISSIMO/RETNA LTD.

Robert Fripp

A thrilling Bruford drum solo near the show's end summed up the evening, and the group's approach. As the pounding ceased, Fripp, Levin and Belew seemed to fuse their guitars into the dying drum sound, giving the effect of one, dense instrument. It was ensemble playing of the highest order.

One curious sidelight was the selection of the Alley Cats, a punkish power trio, to open the concert. With fans holding signs reading "Get Off" while mounting a steady buzz of discontent, the group gamely completed a 30-minute set. Of course, the tight, very gutty performance was completely wasted on this crowd. Here's hoping the Cats get some sympathetic bookings in the future.

Joe Cocker: The Flame Still Burns

Joe Cocker
The Pier
New York City
August 4, 1982

By Mark Mehler

There was a moment in Joe Cocker's concert at Pier 84 when the singer was flailing about, the backing vocalists were dancing, and the band was rocking in a frenzy that recalled those bygone days of Mad Dogs & Englishmen. It was but a flicker of nostalgia in a 90-minute set, and it was not repeated.

Still, chaos is only one manifestation of passion, and what Cocker lacked of the former, he more than made up for in the latter.

Cocker's moving rendition of Marvin Gaye's "Make Me Wanna Holler" (which Joe recorded last year, though it has yet to be released—anybody listening?) transformed a soulful lament into an angry demand. It was followed by a biting medley of Dylan's "Seven Days" (off Cocker's excellent new LP, *Sheffield Steel*) and "Watching the River Flow." The singer then weighed in with his now-classic version of Lennon-McCartney's "With A Little Help From My Friends," and delivered it in the typically-urgent manner of his that illuminates a completely new side of a song.

Backed by five pieces—alto, keyboards, drums, bass, and guitar—Cocker freely mixed selections from the new album ("Shocked," "Look What You've Done") with vintage material ("The Letter," "Many Rivers To Cross"). Having pruned his act of much of its excess, the artist has thus found a tighter, and considerably more mellow, groove. The voice is still sturdy enough to withstand the threat of a hard-rocking backup band, though, and the impish humor is intact.

But the enduring memory one took away from this show was of a 30-ish couple embracing near the front of the stage and then swaying in time to Cocker's haunting reading of "You Are So Beautiful." That's what a good song stylist can do to people.

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Go-Go's

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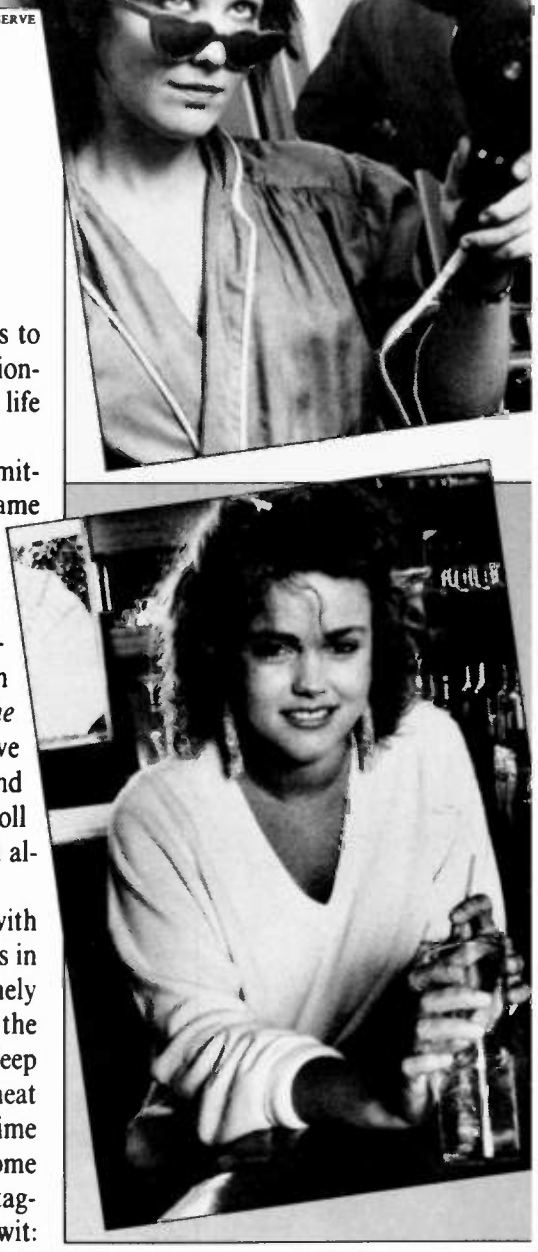


Do It Again

August 3 is a typical summer day in these parts: sunny, hot and oppressive. Oh, and smoggy, too, needless to say—one of those delightful "first-stage alerts," when the atmosphere is declared "unhealthful" for all functioning mammals, meaning that if you take a few deep breaths, you'll likely choke, wheeze and see your whole life pass in front of you. All things considered, you'd rather be in Philadelphia.

The Go-Go's could readily be excused if their moods matched the air quality today. After all, they've submitted to a full schedule of interviews, answering a lot of the same questions and inevitably giving a lot of the same answers, and that's only the beginning. Still to come this week are intensive rehearsals for their latest national concert tour, photo sessions and, yes, more interviews. The Go-Go's are quickly finding out that life at the top, for all its rewards, can be mighty demanding.

Still, when the last interview of the day rolls around, the five band members—vocalist Belinda Carlisle, guitarists Jane Wiedlin and Charlotte Caffey, drummer Gina Schock and bass player Kathy Valentine—are in good spirits. They have reason to be, of course. In the past year, they've seen their debut album, *Beauty and the Beat,* achieve the status of a platinum seller and claim the number one spot on most record charts; they've toured constantly, as openers for the likes of the Police and the Rolling Stones and as headliners both home and abroad; and they've evolved from a band that would do just about anything for a little attention to rock 'n' roll cover girls—one of the most in-demand attractions around. The Go-Go's are on a heady roll as their second album, *Vacation,* hits the streets.

A warning has been issued that interviewing all five Go-Go's at once is an unwieldy proposition at best, with girl talk and giggles certain to dominate the conversation. It doesn't turn out that way, though. What emerges in an hour with the quintet is a kinetic portrait of some aware and attractive young women, who seem genuinely interested in letting their fans know that they are five distinct personalities, not really all that different than the kids plunking down allowances to buy records and concert tickets. Not that there's anything extraordinarily deep here. Any band writing songs like "Beatnick Beach" ("We'll groove on that groovy beat/It'll be boss keen neat yeah!") and attacking their instruments like a 1982 version of the Surfaris is hardly going to spend all their time searching for the meaning of life—hey, the Go-Go's are fun, not Kansas. So in probing the quintet for some insight into the peculiar pressures brought to bear on their personal and professional lives as a result of their staggering success, one must be prepared for a bit of levity, for *non sequiturs,* for *reductio ad absurdum*. To wit:

By Samuel Graham

LOS ANGELES

A lot of what one hears and reads about the Go-Go's is expressed almost with surprise: "Gee, I didn't know these girls could actually play," or "I'm amazed they can write their own songs."

Gina Schock: Yeah, "They can really talk."

Right. That must get a little tiresome.

Kathy Valentine: It's probably more tiresome to people who read it, who really want to find out about us. But *we're* not surprised. I don't know. Well, now that you know what I think about *that* subject (laughs) . . .

So none of you is really surprised by what's happened in the last year or so?

All: No.
Charlotte Caffey: That's the worst kind of answer, right? Just one word?

Not at all. I really didn't know what to expect.

Belinda Carlisle: It's exciting, but I can't say it's a big surprise, like all of a sudden (she gasps delightedly) "Oh, a number one album!"
Schock: Everything has been gradual, working up to this point. It's sort of a surprise when the album goes double platinum and everything, but mostly at first.
Valentine: It's more of a question of looking back at something and realizing that you didn't have it a year ago, the little things that come with success.

Belinda, you were the quickest to say you weren't surprised by all of this. Did you envision a year ago what would be happening now?

Valentine: She's psychic.
Carlisle: Yes, I'm psychic.
Caffey: You mean psycho.
Carlisle: I think I did always know we'd be successful, but I didn't think we'd be to this extent, actually.
Jane Wiedlin: I think the most surprising thing is what success is like.

How so?

Wiedlin: Well, it's no different than not being successful.
Valentine: The main way I notice it is in comfort. Travelling isn't as much of a hardship as it was a year ago; we don't have to cram into a van and drive across the country. Now we cram into a coach.
Schock: Things are just getting a bit more comfortable for us, like on the road. Things are now a lot more organized—our new tour is really organized well, and hopefully it'll run really smoothly—whereas in the past, we didn't have that much say over things.

Clearly the Go-Go's are enjoying the material perquisites that accompany success. They talk enthusiastically about having individual wardrobe cases on their current tour ("I'm gonna decorate mine all up," says Carlisle). The Big Time offers other comforts, too. Aside from better travelling conditions, including the luxury of flying—instead of driving—to gigs that are considerable distances apart, they'll have their own concert lighting, separate hotel rooms and priority at sound checks—all for the first time. What's more, they'll be headlining at huge arenas this year, places like the Hollywood Bowl, instead of the 250-1500 seaters they played their last time on the road in the States. But what about the more subtle, intangible effects of their new-found celebrity?

Carlisle: I think I've changed, a little bit. I'm real selfish with the time I do have, which isn't very much. And I think I'm a little more neurotic and paranoid when I go out; I'm afraid to say hello to certain people that I used to like, for fear that they think I'm a snob, or that I've changed. But actually, I'm just afraid of what they think, you know. It's just a little bit of paranoia.

Also, none of us has as much privacy as we did. I mean, if any sort of journalist can get one inkling of what we're doing in our private lives, it's usually printed up somewhere.
Schock: I don't notice where any of us has changed that much. I think people around us have changed, because of what's happened to us. That's what I notice more. We're all still the same; there're some slight differences here and there, but basically we're all the same as we were a couple of years ago.
Valentine: It's mainly acquaintances. Sometimes it's just a drag when you go out. You'll sit down and somebody will want to say hi, which is fine, but then they'll start asking questions. It's like being interviewed, and that's kind of a drag.
Carlisle: You don't always want to talk about *your* day. And you like to talk about things other than business.
Caffey: I always make a point of talking about the other person, or trying to change the subject. That's why we always start asking interviewers questions.
Carlisle: Yeah, how did *you* feel when we went to number one?
Wiedlin: Has our success changed your life?

The latest biography issued by the Go-Go's record label, I.R.S., makes a big point about how the group has "redefined the role of women in rock, proving that they can be masters of their own destiny." That's a pretty high-falutin' statement to make about a band whose new album cover pictures them on water skis wearing silly, frilly bathing costumes. Nevertheless, the Go-Go's are aware that they serve as role models for a lot of young girls. But as Jane puts it, "It doesn't change your life any," and since the Go-Go's don't pull any outrageous stunts on stage—like, say, breathing fire or biting the heads off defenseless little animals—they hardly have to worry about setting a bad example for kids to follow.

Valentine: What we mainly give people is a positive thing, I think. We give a lot of 13- and 14-year-old-girls in school another option, maybe, another direction they can turn in their lives that they might not have considered before. I think they look at us and see that we're basically very similar to how they are, whereas if they looked at Nina Hagen or someone, they'd think, "Oh, you have to be a weirdo." On the other hand, a lot of girls think you have to be beautiful like Debbie Harry to make it, or you have to dress this way or that way. We're just fairly . . .
Schock: Cute.
Carlisle: Fairly gorgeous, you mean.

Perhaps the most telling comment comes from Charlotte, who recalls a chance encounter she had with two young female fans in New York City not long ago. "They said, 'Charlotte, we know you must think we're really creepy, but we just want to talk to you.'" Caffey then invited the girls to accompany her on a shopping trip, much to their surprise and delight. What the girls didn't know, she adds, was that she was flattered, and a little embarrassed, by their adulation. "I realized that that's exactly how I used to be," Caffey says, and when the Go-Go's return to play Madison Square Garden, those girls will have a couple of free tickets waiting for them at the box office.

Throughout the interview it's apparent that the Go-Go's are treating the issue of their musicianship a good deal more seriously than they used to. No longer are they "lucky amateurs" getting over not only in spite of but perhaps because of their very air of incompetence. This is not a particularly new development; Schock and Valentine were seasoned players when they joined founding members Carlisle, Caffey and Wiedlin, and they quickly injected a healthy dose of professionalism into the band. But since Beauty and the Beat *was released in 1981, the Go-Go's have played so many shows that they have improved—naturally and considerably—and they have done so as a band, not as individual players who've spent six hours a day honing their chops in some isolated practice room. "It's not like it's a spotlight band, where everybody comes to see one member, so we work together to create the sound," says Caffey. As for those who persist in claiming that the Go-Go's, like the Monkees, don't always play their own instruments, Valentine says simply: "Some people flaunt their ignorance, you know?"*

Vacation *will help put to rout that old saw about a band's having a lifetime to write its first album and just one year to prepare its second, if only because several of the songs were not, in fact, written specifically for the new record. The title song, "Beatnick Beach" and "The Way You Dance" and their cover version of the Capitols' "Cool Jerk" (which the girls agree is probably the album's weakest track) were all in the Go-Go's' concert repertoire long before the* Vacation *sessions began. Two or three other tunes were written some time ago and simply perfected in the studio with the help of producer Richard Gottehrer. The Go-Go's were worried about the fabled "What do we do for an encore?" syndrome—remember the second Boston album, to name one prominent example?—but they believe as well that this sophomore slump business is overrated.*

There is also the matter of image, and the Go-Go's certainly have one: America's rock 'n' roll sweethearts, the girls next door with a touch of glamor, the cute but feisty party dolls—call it what you will. In a lot of cases, one gets the impression that the gap between image and reality is a small one, whereas many other times the public persona is obviously a total fabrication. How large is that gap when it comes to the Go-Go's?

Wiedlin: The thing about our image is that it does go with us to a certain extent, but we don't consider ourselves one-dimensional. An image makes you appear one-dimensional, and there's other aspects to our characters.
Caffey: We don't deny our sexuality. We like being girls . . .
Valentine: There *is* a lot more underneath. But how much can a given interviewer get to know about us in half an hour or an hour?
Schock: I don't think they *should* know all that much, either. There's supposed to be some mystery to it.
Valentine: The thing that's mainly been played up is how wholesome we are. I don't know why that is. There are other bands that don't have a reputation like Ozzy or Van Halen; there's a lot of male bands that aren't that extreme, but they don't get written up as wholesome.
Caffey: Well, the Beatles got written up as wholesome. But when I read back on the stuff that they did. . . We don't do anything like that.
Schock: We're all really just foul-mouthed sluts. At any given moment, you never know . . .

The question really is, regardless of who made this image up, whether it was the media or someone else, do you find yourselves cultivating it?

All: No.
Wiedlin: Yeah, but how can you say that when we do things like the *Rolling Stone* cover (on which the Go-Go's posed in their underwear, albeit rather demurely)? Is that what your point is?

"What we mainly give people is a positive thing. We give a lot of 13-and 14-year-old girls another option."

I'm not sure there is a point. I'm just trying to present both sides of the question.

Valentine: I wanted to do the cover because I thought it would be controversial, and people would stop saying that we were wholesome.
Caffey: And it was a striking photo idea.
Schock: I wanted to do it because I thought maybe we could get on the cover of *Playboy* next.
Valentine: Actually, I guess I didn't think it would be controversial; I thought it would be a joke. The things we think are gonna be jokes usually backfire.
Carlisle: Well, I thought it might tarnish that whole wholesome image, but it didn't seem to work that way.

The five Go-Go's, then, are not wild about being thought of as pop darlings, entertaining but harmless, although they'll admit that such an appraisal is not wholly inaccurate. Temper that with a little reality—yes, they can be bitches, too, even if they're not as rough 'n' tough as Joan Jett—and you're probably closer to the truth.

Talk turns, as it often does with the Go-Go's, to female bands of old. There's Fanny and the Runaways, along with more obscure outfits like Birtha and Isis ("Weren't they a militant lesbian band from New York or something?" asks Schock). But when it's pointed out that the Go-Go's seem closer in spirit, at least, to the tight-skirt-and-trash sound of the Shangri-Las or the Crystals, who did not play their own instruments, the girls are skeptical.

Wiedlin: I don't feel close in spirit to them at all.
Carlisle: In spirit, but that's about all. People compare us to them because they feel safe with the comparison, but even if they compare our harmonies, ours aren't really like the girl groups', although it's always a compliment to be compared to them.

It's more a matter of the feel of the records. The Ronettes' and your records are fun and uplifting, whereas those all-girl bands—

Schock: They try to come off real heavy.
Valentine: I think some girls, when they decided to become musicians, they'd see a guy playing music and they'd think that that's what they had to act like.
Wiedlin: Like Suzi Quatro.
Valentine: That's the main difference. We don't really act like men.
Caffey (in a husky, affected voice): Whaddaya mean, honey?

What's next? Well, there's a lot of talk about a Go-Go's movie of some kind. The model that usually comes up is the Beatles' A Hard Day's Night. The parallels are plain enough, as here again the image of both groups as clever, fun-loving, fresh-faced kids is brought into play. The Go-Go's, however, refuse to submit to the stereotype.

Valentine: We don't really want to do that kind of movie. We want to do a movie, but something where we're not the Go-Go's. We want to be characters.
Wiedlin: Oh really? I was just saying that we *wouldn't* want to do something where we had to be characters.
Carlisle: *A Hard Day's Night* is the obvious group movie. We'd like to do something that isn't obvious—like maybe *The Go-Go's In Outer Space.*
Valentine: I guess we haven't decided whether we want to be the group or not in a movie, but we do know that we want it to . . .
Wiedlin: Have a story.
Carlisle: Robby the Robot's gonna be my leading man.
Valentine: And we want our third album to be a sound-track for the movie.
Schock: Do we? I didn't know that.
Carlisle: Well, the second album's only been out a week, so we don't really know yet.
Caffey: Yeah, but we're thinking ahead!
Wiedlin: Right. And then, on our tenth album . . .

I'm glad everything's under control. Just one more question, though. You all said earlier that you weren't surprised by anything that's happened so far. What do you think could happen from here on out that would surprise you?

Wiedlin: If this building blew up in 30 seconds, I'd be surprised.
Carlisle: I'd be surprised if we got nominated for a Grammy next year—or if we ever do again. (The Go-Go's were nominated for a Best New Artist Grammy Award this year, but lost to Sheena Easton.)
Caffey: I'd be surprised if Gina's hair turned green all of a sudden.
Schock: I'd be surprised if our new album was a total flop. I really would, 'cause I think it's so great that I couldn't imagine anything like that happening.
Valentine: I wouldn't be surprised. I'd be crushed.

"Lucky amateurs" a year ago, the Go-Go's are now making a case for themselves as musicians. Shown above, top to bottom: drummer Gina Schock, bassist Kathy Valentine, guitarist Charlotte Caffey, lead vocalist Belinda Carlisle. At right is guitarist Jane Wiedlin.

ALL PHOTOS: ROGER RESSMEYER

Sound Signature

The King Of The Surf Guitar

By Dan Forte

If the motor home parked in the driveway, emblazoned with a caricature of a left-handed guitarist riding an enormous blue wave, weren't a big enough clue, the reverb-laden version of "Peter Gunn" blasting through the front door should remove all doubt—you have arrived at the Newport Beach home of Dick Dale, past, present, and forever King of the Surf Guitar.

Dick is up bright and early this morning, padding around in a pair of red swim trunks while a tape of his new live album fills the two stories of this adobe mansion.

"Listen to this part here," he shouts, as his band, the Del-Tones, starts up "The Wedge," one of Dale's most energetic early '60s instrumentals. "It sounds like the roar of a lion." An echoing Stratocaster glissando rumbles like the roar of a wild animal. "Now this part," Dale continues, "this is where the wave folds over the surfer and crushes down on him." The guitarist hits a thundering chord, pounding the listener to the sand along with his imaginary surfboard. A stream of rapid-fire staccato bursts explode at ear-splitting level.

"Sounds like a machine gun," I offer.

"Yeah," Dale exclaims. "I like that—a machine gun."

Whereas most guitarists rely on vocabularies of tried-and-true licks to build solos, Dick Dale's vocabulary consists of sounds and images—the sound of wild animals, the power of the ocean.

"My music is more native than intricate or technical," he admits. "It's a sexual, sensual drive—that low rumbling sound. When I started surfing, you'd hear this neat rumbling sound when you take off and go for the drop, and when the wave is lipping over the top of you it makes this hissing sound—and that's the intermittent squeals on the top that I do with my guitar. The music is a collective togetherness between the ocean's power, the animal power, and the human power that we have inside our abdomen."

Dick Dale is more than a distinctive stylist or an individual voice on his instrument: he is the inventor of the genre known as surf music. Not the Beach Boys/Jan & Dean variety about dragsters, beach bunnies, and high school, but an aural representation of the feelings one gets only from riding the waves. In the late '50s Dale began surfing and started playing original guitar instrumentals like "Misirlou" (one of the few classics in his repertoire that Dale didn't write), "Surf Beat" and "Let's Go Trippin'" based on his new-found passion. The Dick Dale sound inspired a deluge of Southern California garage bands: the Chantays ("Pipeline"), the Pyramids ("Penetration") and the Surfaris ("Wipe Out").

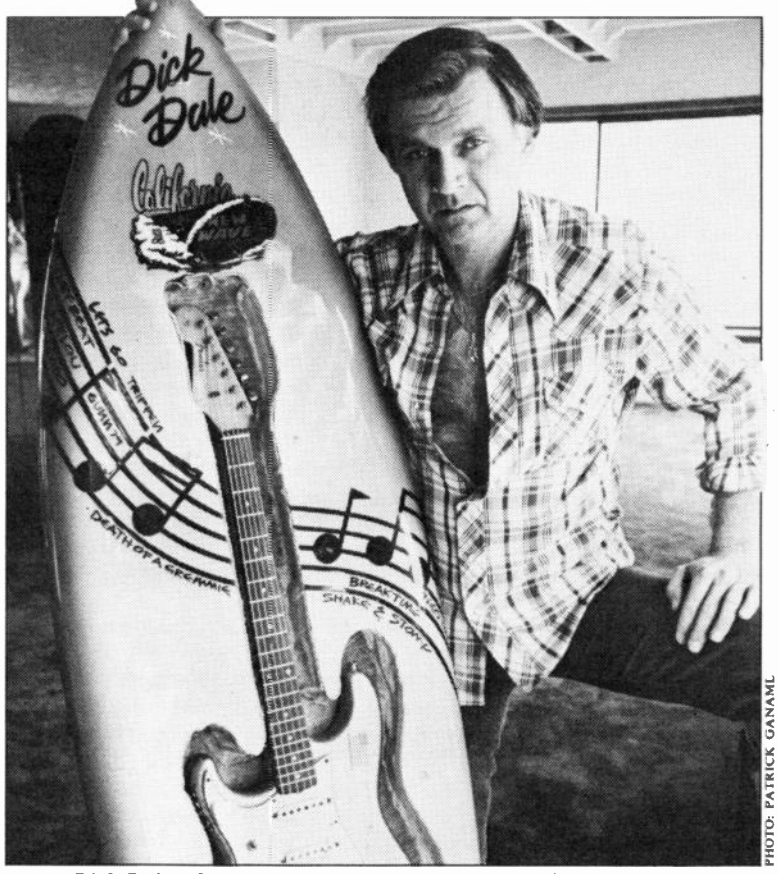


PHOTO: PATRICK GANAML

Dick Dale: The past, present and forever King of the Surf Guitar.

In the early '60s, when instrumental rock was at its peak, Dale was one of the country's biggest regional phenomena. His dances at the Rendezvous Ballroom in Balboa, California were so successful—drawing 4,000 teenagers a night, with cars backed up along the Pacific Coast Highway—that he never had to go on the road, except once to do the *Ed Sullivan Show.* He was also the first rock act to sell out the Los Angeles Sports Arena (15,000), in 1961. But the arrival of the Beatles pretty much obliterated instrumental groups; Dale retired in 1966 after doctors removed six cancerous tumors and four cysts from his intestines and told him he had three months to live. For 10 years he got by comfortably on the fortune he'd made in real estate, restricting his playing to an occasional gig on the Lake Tahoe/Las Vegas lounge circuit. He also opened two Rendezvous nightclubs, in Garden Grove and Huntington Beach.

In the late '70s, instrumental surf music made an unlikely comeback on the back of new wave groups like the Go-Go's and B-52's, who owe more than a little of their guitar sound to the reverby twang of Dick Dale, Duane Eddy, and the Ventures. Revivalists like Jon & the Nightriders, the Raybeats, and the Wedge sprang up, and groups like the Ventures and the Surfaris once again hit the stage. Dale put together a new group of Del-Tones and attacked his music with the same intensity as he had twenty years ago. At 45, he retains the rugged, weathered but youthful good looks of the bandleader he portrayed in several *Beach Party* movies in the early '60s (he also had a part in Marilyn Monroe's *Let's Make Love*). And despite the emergence of some pretenders to the throne, Dale's return to the active list has rendered all competition null and void. Talk about the technique, the hardware and the philosophy of surf music, and it's obvious that little has changed: Dick Dale's been on a two decades-plus pipeline run that's left a mess of ho-dads wiping out in its wake.

Before Dick Dale, most electric guitarists could more accurately be termed *amplified guitarists.* Dale was one of the first to exploit the electric capabilities of the solidbody guitar; he also used the amplifier to *modify,* rather than merely broadcast, his guitar sound. "When I started playing the Rendezvous Ballroom," he recounts, "I went to Leo Fender, and he gave me some stuff he was experimenting with. He'd give me these amps, and they sounded great in the factory, but onstage they'd get sucked up by the people. The bottom sound wasn't there. So he and Freddy Tavares came down to see me play. Then he'd call me in the middle of the night and say, 'Dick, I've got something I want you to try.' I blew up about 48 amplifiers and speakers before he came up with the Dual Showman. He made it in tweed, and then I got the first cream-colored one just as an experiment."

Like most self-taught guitarists, Dale's playing technique is idiosyncratic. He plays left-handed on a guitar that's strung for a rightie—even though it has a left-handed guitar body (as opposed to Jimi Hendrix, who would use a right-handed guitar body, flip it over left-handed, and then reverse the strings so as to be standard for a southpaw). But Dale is far from ignorant about the components that comprise his sound, and is fairly adamant about using a particular guitar strung a specific way played through a certain amp at one setting: "It's all been pioneered, right down to the plastic in my picks."

The gold metal-fleck Fender Stratocaster he plays is, in his words, "the finest guitar in the world. Because the thicker the wood, the purer the sound. I'm still using the original equipment that Leo Fender made for me. The first Strat he gave me was right-handed. I turned it upside-down, but my hand would always hit the knobs. Finally he made me a left-handed Strat body, with the knobs on the bottom and the tuning machines on the top of the peghead. And the neck on mine is ¼" thinner in width than what they have out now, and more tapered. There's only two pickup positions I use. When it just had the 3-position switch, the bass pickup sounded too heavy, so I used to move the switch in between the bass and middle pickups, and that gave a real pretty muted sound up high, so it wouldn't be too piercing. Then when I wanted to dig it, I'd go to the treble pickup, and it's real shrill."

To make things simpler, Dick had an extra toggle switch installed, which when activated turns either the bass or middle position on the 3-position switch to a combination of those two pickups (When the toggle switch is not activated, the 3-position switch works as usual). Dale also took the tone controls completely out of the guitar, so that the pickups' tones are always full-out. "I adjust the tone on the amplifier," he explains, "and by the way I play and muffle the strings and where I pick. I play by the manipulation of my hands, and I crank the whole thing up loud."

The Fender Dual Showman amp, according to the guitarist, "has something no other amplifier in the world has—an output transformer that Leo Fender designed, and he only made a few thousand of those things. It used to cost him $85.00 or $90.00 to put that transformer in, whereas when CBS took over the Fender company they started using one that cost about $20.00, because Leo took the rights to that design when he left Fender. It gives you a high, medium, and low range and a sweet sound—it's the best of all three worlds. All the other transformers have only one world. I've got the original output transformer in my Showman; in fact, when Leo sold the company he gave me four of them. And I've never blown one. I've got the original speakers, too—two 15" Lansing D-130F's. I like the D-130 speaker because it's got the dust cover in there, and that gives you a little edge on the sound. I like a fat sound with an edge on it. Everybody lost the sound when the Beatles came out. They were pushing Vox stuff, and the Vox sound is so terrible—sounds like a paper speaker. Only the Lansing has that fatness with an edge. That's my sound, and I've always stuck with that. It's a combination of the guitar, the amp, the reverb, the pick I use, and the way I pick. It's the heaviest gauge pick there is, a sideman pick. I dig into the strings, and when I want to go real fast and light, I pull my hand back. I don't let the pick do the bending—I do the bending."

Aside from the obvious obstacle of playing upside-down—fingering chords backwards—most guitarists would find Dick's setup impossible to play. "You have to develop your fingers for it," he says, with great understatement. "The thicker the string gauges, the purer the sound. That's why I used to use .059's and .060's on the low E. Now I use a .058, because you can't get the heavier ones anymore. My gauges are .058, .048, .038, then two unwound .018's for the G and the B, and .014 on the high E. I was using these Ernie Ball hard picks, but the company that was making them for Ernie Ball doesn't make them anymore. The ones I have now melt so goddamn fast—because I *dig* them right into the strings."

That's not an overstatement. Guitarists wear out picks, but as unbelievable as it sounds, Dale's heavy-handed barrage of tremolo runs inflicts mortal damage. According to Del-Tones bassist Steve Soest (a respected guitar repairman), "Dick will play two or three songs, just toss the pick onto the stage and grab another. Sometimes I'll pick up the one he just threw away and it'll still be hot, and the tip will be melted down."

Along with the Showman amp, Dale was instrumental in pioneering Leo Fender's outboard, portable reverb unit. "The reason I like that full, reverb sound," he says, "is because when people sing over the radio, unless they have a vibrato like an opera singer, it comes out sounding flat. So I felt the same way about a guitar string. Why not put a little more edge on the guitar string? You can overdo that. I set the reverb's controls on 3½ for the dwell, with the mix and tone controls almost all the way over, backed off one notch. I set the amp's volume on 6 or 6½, the treble three-fourths of the way up, with the bass straight up and down, and the presence all the way up."

Dale feels his followers never get the *true* surf sound unless they duplicate his entire setup. "Some of these kids who try to play surf music," he moans, "it's almost sacrilegious—trying to play surf music through a Jazzmaster or a Jaguar. Because it isn't wired for that, it doesn't have that sound. They were designed for something else, as was the Fender Jazz Bass. The Precision Bass is *the* rock 'n' roll bass. And the only guitar that will give you that fluid, full-bodied sound is a Stratocaster through a Showman. Not a Bassman amp or something like that—it doesn't have that punch. Compare their setups to the original and you'll see the difference."

But, one may well ask, isn't there room for more shades and colors within the category of surf music, using different instruments?

"No," answers Dale matter-of-factly, "because I feel I've explored it and milked it to the fullest, fattest sound. If there was any other, I'd sure be playing it. If someone else had come up with a heavier sound after me, I would've copped it and changed my style. But put their sound against mine, and who will move you more? Nobody is more driving. You can put the Surfaris up there and have them play "Wipe Out"—very thin. But get the old man up there, have *him* play it, and the walls are coming down!"

Of the revived interest in surf music and the emergence of new instrumental bands in general, Dick says, "I think it's great. John Blair (of Jon & the Nightriders) is trying to capture that sound as close as he possibly can. He's getting there—because I scream at him on the telephone, 'Get rid of that goddamn Jaguar you're using!' Now he's using a Strat. I'm proud of these people. Anybody who gets out there and does it, I'm proud of them."

And now Dale himself is ready to "get out there" and tour. His first step in that direction was to record two sold-out shows in July at the Golden Bear in Hermosa Beach for an upcoming live album on his own Balboa Records. Judging by the rough mixes, it is possibly the most overwhelmingly powerful surf music ever recorded, and Dick feels it is the first time his primal-scream energy has been accurately captured on tape.

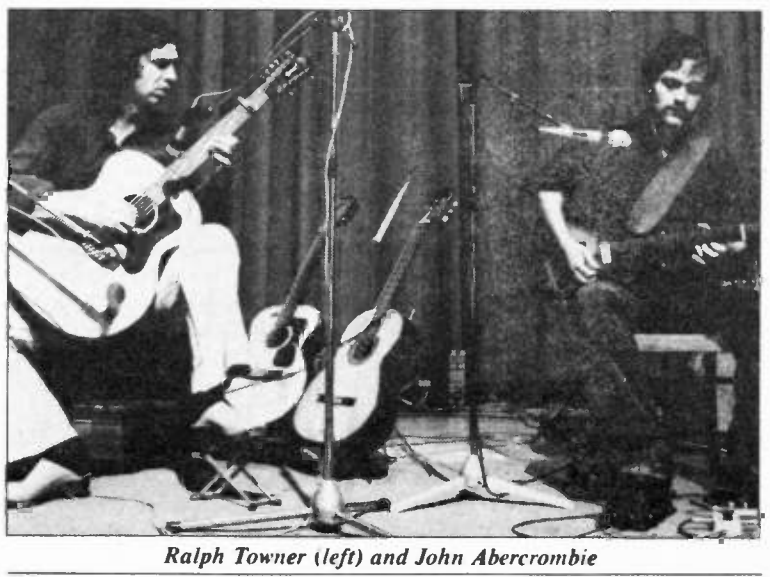
And, as he tells the screaming throng midway through the second set, "Hey, I'm just getting warmed up now."

"Guitarists wear out picks, but as unbelievable as it sounds, Dick Dale's heavy-handed barrage of tremelo runs inflicts mortal damage—he melts them."

Dan "Moon Dog" Forte is the lead guitarist for a top California surf band, Cowabunga. Aside from this article, his most notable achievement has been to master the descending "Pipeline" lick and subsequently insert it in every song in Cowabunga's repertoire.

Sound Signature

Towner & Abercrombie: Fusing Acoustic and Electric Guitar



Ralph Towner (left) and John Abercrombie

Ralph Towner and John Abercrombie treat the barriers between electric and acoustic music, between composition and improvisation, as if they simply don't exist. The seamless guitar interplay on their recent ECM album *Five Years Later* incorporates the folk textures, European classical harmonies and African-derived rhythms that rock bands like Heart or the Police often draw on. But Towner and Abercrombie create their music in a more personal dimension, where space is as important as the sound that occupies it, the roles of soloist and accompanist can shift at any time, and the ideal of creation in the present moment is paramount.

Both Towner, who studied composition at the University of Oregon (he says his degree is "like being toilet trained or something") and Abercrombie, whose Berklee training was preceded by an adolescent period of "sitting with an alarm clock, the Mel Bay book and a Harmony guitar, listening to everyone out in the street playing football," were inspired by the Miles Davis Quintet of the '60s, with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. "Bill Evans is a strong influence," Towner adds, "and Jim Hall, too." Abercrombie in particular was impressed by Hall's dark tone, legato technique and musical approach, "He improvised more melodically," John recalls, "things that I could actually sing. When I was attempting to become a great bebop guitar player I could sing all the solos from Sonny Rollins' album *The Bridge*."

"Now when I practice I just sit down and play, and try to make it flow and sound musical, whether it's a long line or a strange intervallic thing."

Towner's practice is more disciplined, partly as a result of his classical guitar studies with Karl Scheit in Vienna. "I sit down with a metronome," he says, "and write a new exercise for whatever's ailing me. The middle finger and ring finger on my right hand might be slow as sludge, or really uneven, and I'll write an exercise that will be musical enough so that I have to play it with expression, really holding the notes down. I'm totally occupied with it, hearing whenever there's the slightest stumbling or variation. I'll do that until I can play it perfectly."

The sound signature of the Towner-Abercrombie duet stems as much from their choice of instruments as the music they write. Unlike most guitar duos—which sound like four hands playing a classical or arch-top jazz guitar—Ralph and John have created a distinctive blend between acoustic and electric instruments. Towner mikes his Ramirez classical and Guild 12-strings (custom made with wide classical-style necks) with a Beyer M-110, avoiding a pickup "because it adds just enough of a sustain sound that it throws me off. My specialty is dealing with the rapid decay of the acoustic guitar. It's mostly attack and very little sustain. For any classical, any acoustic player, it's a lot of sleight of hand, creating the illusion all the time of sounding like a sustain instrument."

"I was a piano player before I even considered the guitar, and I just didn't like electric guitar. That was pre-Hendrix, and the guitar that I heard in the jazz idiom just sounded too sleepy to me. The classical guitar struck me as more of a pianistic instrument. I really did have an idea of what I wanted to do, and I liked that sound, being able to move the voices around and deal with it as a keyboard and not as a strummed instrument."

Abercrombie sometimes plays a Guild F-50 acoustic, but his main guitars are a Les Paul Deluxe, an ES-335 12-string, and a Ken Schwab electric mandolin. He uses a Walter Woods amp (solid state), and a Dynachord digital delay/reverb unit "for that nice 'swimming' sound." Recently he added a Boss Chorus to his stage setup to enhance the instrumental blend. "The classical guitar is so rich and full," he sighs, "that the electric instruments need some help."

"I can play what I play on other guitars, but this particular Les Paul suits my playing. It's a combination of the feel of the neck and the sound. It has the small humbuckers on it, which aren't as thick sounding as the regular ones. They're a little sweeter at low volumes. Of all the guitars I've had in the past ten years, this one is the most consistent. It's a factory second."

In his '70s work with Billy Cobham, Gil Evans, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette, Abercrombie's sound was lean and ferocious, yet he also legitimatized the use of solid-body guitars for dark, ringing jazz lines—in effect, creating the silky illusion of a chamber sound through his touch and the sustaining quality of the Dynachord. And his love for the aggression of rock guitar notwithstanding, Abercrombie consciously cooled out his distortion mode to grow as a musician. "I realized one day," he says, "that everything coming out of my amp was like fuzztone. I found myself playing the volume, the electronics. It was the sound I was looking for, in a way, but I was losing a certain sensitivity by playing so loud all the time, and I didn't have the subtle technical things that I wanted. By practicing on acoustic guitar and playing at a lower amplified volume, I'm playing much more precisely. Now when I play with the duo I don't feel compelled to play to fill up the space, but I also don't feel like I'm spacing out. I play more like I play with a group, which is what I always wanted."

In the five years between their debut, *Sargosso Sea*, and it's follow-up, Towner and Abercrombie have developed that orchestral fabric to a point where it's hard to believe that *Five Years Later* was recorded live in the studio without overdubs; or that half of the music on the record is totally improvised. "We are *improvisers*," Towner states, "so I think it's important to maintain that beyond just a few solos on some prearranged tunes. We'll improvise whole sections, and even whole tunes. It's free form, but it's not formless music. We're trying to create form."

—Chris Doering

Audio

Hi-Fi Without Fear
The Art Of Mastering, Part II: Enhancing The Mix

In our first installment on the art of mastering we tried to give you some perspective on why records sound like records and not like real life; on the physical limitations and pitfalls of the cutting process; and the physics of what happens to the signal in its path from the master tape to the cutter head. Among other things, it should be clear that when producers put eighteen minutes (or less) of music on a side, they're not necessarily trying to rip you off—simply to provide extended dynamic range, and to cut the maximum amount of level per side.

It's really remarkable how much influence a mastering engineer exerts over this final sound. With their various signal processors and equalizers, they can, for all intents and purposes, re-mix the record. As CBS Mastering Labs engineer Joe Gastwirt put it, "recording engineers get to play with the instruments, but I get to play with the frequencies." Obviously there are as many approaches to playing with sound as there are ways of hearing, so while Gastwirt doesn't represent the first or last word, his ways and means are indicative of the craft—and above all, musical.

There is, however, one point on which Gastwirt is emphatic, though he readily concedes that some mastering engineers would dispute it, and that's on the subject of *moves*—the manual adjustments of level and frequency made while cutting the master lacquer. "It's not easy," Gastwirt laughs. "Sometimes I'll bring in another equalizer and patch it into the board; and I'll switch from one equalizer to another, press the spiral button, throw in the compressor—all in one motion. You become very musical in the way you work sometimes, but because you're doing all this manually you're increasing the chances of something going wrong, so I believe in making as few moves as possible."

So how exactly does a mastering engineer enhance the sound of the master tape? Two of the main tools of the trade are *parametric equalizers* (which allow you to sweep five frequency bands and selectively bring out—or attenuate—the parts of the music you want to hear) and *compressors* (compression being the sum of limiting and expansion, where the levels are kept within a certain range). How these are used is very subtle and personal, depending on the particular engineer and the desired results.

"You never want to overload a record with bass," Gastwirt asserts, "because you'll sacrifice a lot of clarity and definition, and you'll have to cut at a lower level. There's a way to make your signal *seem* to come out hotter; there's *meter level*, which is what you can see; but more important is *apparent level*, which is what your ears are telling you. One way to fake that is by boosting the midrange and the highs with the parametric EQ. Then you'll hear the vocals, cymbals and bass drum kick coming right at you, and there'll be more appearance of stereo image, spread, separation and depth."

Mistaken concepts on the use of compression in mastering are quite persistent. On some things it's a good idea to compress signals for sound effects, but you don't have to compress all the dynamic range out of the music to get it on a record loud—that's the theory of 1967. Gastwirt concurs. "What you do is figure out what your peaks are, then figure out what your cutter heads can handle, and you gauge the level of your record to those peaks. Now suppose that there's some detail in the music that's veiled in the background and you'd like to bring it out. That's where just a slight bit of compression comes in. A lot of people use compressors as limiters, but I don't like limiting for the most part, particularly in rock and roll—I'd rather use it for expansion. Expansion will bring things up, whereas a limiter will *clip* things—especially the cymbals—by setting a ceiling on the sound, and if the signal reaches that it'll automatically roll back—whereas I want a full dynamic range on my records. I'd rather send a signal into the compressor *lower than its threshold*, right? And what it does is make that part louder. I never actually reach the threshold of my limiter, so when I switch my compressor in, it'll expand instead of limiting. And when it hits its threshold, *if* it hits its threshold, it will not touch it, it will not soften it. This is the way I use my compressor—to open up the sound for a very dynamic, transparent record. That's how I cut, and that's one of the reasons I was able to cut Paul McCartney's *Tug Of War*."

Some *Tug Of War* tracks required very little enhancement, while others needed work to bring out certain parts, boost the apparent level or get them ready for the cutter head. "If you listen to 'Here Today' or 'Tug Of War' you'll hear where I boosted the highs around a dB or two at 14 kHz, just to bring out the airiness and the attack when he strums the guitar strings; I like that, it's all part of the acoustic sound, but I didn't want to bring up any hiss by boosting the highs too much. It sounded fine the way it was—no compression at all. On the strings on 'Tug Of War' there was a 3 dB boost at 1.7 kHz to make them a little sharper; that isn't high midrange, that's punchy midrange, which also gives the snare drum more kick and snap."

So it doesn't have that dead body sound.

"Yeah, I hate that, too. On the cross-fade to 'Take It Away' I added some subsonic bass in the range of 40 Hz to bring out the depth and ring of the tom-toms on the intro, then pulled that back when the bassline came in because it would have been too much. On 'Somebody Who Cares' there's a lot of top-end EQ on the drums—4 dB at 14 kHz and 4 dB at 9.6 kHz—plus some expansion to make the drums sound drummier, and increase the attack on the snare and cymbals. The cymbals I'm able to bring up through a combination of EQ and expansion, but the expander alone would tend to go more for the midrange—more where the snare would be—rather than the highs, unless you equalize it *and then* expand it.

"On 'What's That?' there was too much separate left-right bass, and for that I used my *elliptical equalizer*, which centers off everything from a specified frequency on down, like below 150 Hz, the real bottom stuff; which most people can't hear and your turntable couldn't track. Without that we have to cut at a lower level. Then I brought out some highs, some punchiness in the midrange and some expansion so the drums would pop. I had to really work on that song. 'Ebony And Ivory' was tough, too, because they made the last song on the side the single, when it should have been *anything but* the last cut, because this is running closest to the distortion area of the disc—right in the center. There was a quick move right at the beginning where I brought up the level about 2 dB, took away some of the highs and midrange, and left the bass alone. And as the song was progressing I brought the bass down about a dB in 1/2 dB increments, because I wanted the song to start off nice and loud, but I was also running real tight as far as room on the record. So you couldn't really hear the change in the song and it came off as loud or louder than the other songs but I managed to save space on the disc to preserve the fidelity. Which is the whole idea when you're mastering, you know?"

Chip Stern

RECORDS

Jump To It
Aretha Franklin
Arista

Instant Love
Cheryl Lynn
Columbia

By Vince Aletti

One of last year's most impressive and appealing solo debut albums belonged to Luther Vandross, a long-time session singer whose self-produced (and largely self-composed) *Never Too Much* was remarkable for its impassioned vocals and understated settings. Working in an entirely modern, subtly sophisticated style, Vandross managed to bring off performances of classic economy, intensity, and grace. Avoiding nearly all the traps of self-indulgence, the album was a model of restraint and balance, one of those rare records where technique doesn't overwhelm expression. This in itself was no mean achievement, but Vandross has gone on to accomplish something many of us had all but given up hoping for: after nearly a decade of other producers working in vain, he's turned out a great—make that an *extraordinary*—Aretha Franklin album.

Of course, there were definite signs of life on Franklin's last album, *Love All the Hurt Away* (1981), but it was difficult to sustain them under producer Arif Mardin's familiar layers of showy lacquer and it remained for Luther to perform the real miracle of Aretha's resurrection on vinyl. Happily, Vandross doesn't attempt to transform Aretha—he merely rediscovers her, or, more to the point, lets her rediscover herself, from the inside out. For the first time in years, Franklin seems to be working on pure instinct, pure inspiration. She hasn't entirely escaped the stiff, self-conscious sort of professionalism that's confined her for so long, but she's in touch with something much deeper, much truer again. Aretha sings like she's just been set free: she sounds rapturous here, and utterly relaxed. She also sounds absolutely in control once more—Luther lets her loose on a song, lets her run with it, and trusts her enough not to put 25 tracks of extraneous frills between that performance and your ear. As with his own album, Vandross, with amazing discipline, keeps his production here vibrant, fluid, and relatively straightforward; the embellishments, the accents, are left up to Aretha.

Luther's genius lies not just in his sensitive handling of Aretha within this production—perhaps only another singer could understand how to make her feel (and sound) like a natural woman again—but in his original songs and the selection of material from others (including a minor gem by Smokey Robinson, "Just My Daydream," which cleverly evokes Aretha's own "Day Dreaming"; excluding a tired version of "It's Your Thing," very likely not a Luther choice at all). The obvious coup is the single, "Jump To It," the essence of what an Aretha Franklin dance record should be: sassy, snappy, seductive. Aretha sings with an amused breeziness—hardly a line gets by without some joyous zing to it—and she hooks you, holds you, from beginning to end, dishy patter and all. The song and Luther's invigorating production are so perfectly on target they sound almost effortless; Vandross makes Aretha's first truly exciting record in ages sound as if it were second nature. In other songs—"(It's Just) Your Love," "Just My Daydream," and a brilliant duet with Levi Stubbs called "I Wanna Make It Up to You"—he elicits a glowing intimacy and emotion that seemed buried in most of Aretha's recent work. One song in this mood, "This Is For Real," seems to sum things up: Aretha, her fervent delivery thrown into high relief by the delicacy of the orchestral backdrop here, is confessional, pleading, intense, and she sings, "Everything that I'm saying/Every word that I'm saying/ Is the thought of a brand new woman." No, she insists, "Miss Ree ain't playin' this time." And neither is Mr. Vandross.

PHOTO: LINDA MATLOW/PIX

Shades Of A New Woman: Aretha Rediscovers Herself

The other current Luther Vandross production, Cheryl Lynn's *Instant Love*, deserves much more than a footnote here. Though it's hardly the personal breakthrough represented by the Franklin album, Lynn's is a luminous, beautifully sung record that takes her smoothly sophisticated soul style to new heights and depths.

Lynn, best known for her early hit, "Got to Be Real," has an agile, tangy, endlessly pleasing voice and, again, Luther provides the ideal setting: generally more lush and high-gloss than Aretha's but similarly open and unobtrusive. There's much to admire here—in particular Lynn's handling of the up-scale romantic ballads—but one cut is enough to make this an essential album right now: when Lynn meets Luther to update Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell's "If This World Were Mine," sparks fly and nearly all the other recent star duets sound tepid and mechanical by comparison.

Donna Summer
Donna Summer
Geffen

By Deborah Frost

On her debut, Donna Summer demonstrated fifty ways to fake an orgasm in sixteen minutes. "Love To Love You, Baby" was the great novelty hit of 1976, and there was nary a hint that Summer would do anything other than what most one-shots do—disappear (calling Vicki Sue Robinson . . . paging Amii Stewart). Instead, Summer emerged as a rare personality amidst the decade's factory assembled disco acts (even if the personality she originally emerged with had all of Diana Ross's costume changes and none of her grace). Summer's not a natural singer, nor a particularly adept one—a third of her *Love Trilogy* got gooked up in her larynx. But by 1979's *Bad Girls*, her best Casablanca album, Summer had, uh, come a long way—from pillow talk to dance fusion. On *Donna Summer*, she goes even further out in pursuit of her own style.

Where she goes and how she gets there has a lot to do with Quincy Jones, who coached every syllable of her performance and set it against one of the most opulent productions in pop-soul history. What Jones creates is an aural-theatrical experience, the studio equivalent of a modern mega-buck Broadway spectacular. Every moment is precisely choreographed, every measure designed to dazzle.

From the opening track, the hit single "Love Is In Control," not a synthesizer mode is left unplugged. Armies of electronic devices attack single line country-funk guitars, concede to urban funk bass, mass again beneath celestial celebrity choirs and counterpoints of brass. The star (and/or her limitations) is never around long enough to wear out her welcome. And when she is in the spotlight, the scenery constantly shifts. Enter, stage left: a male romantic hero for a rhapsodic duet ("The Mystery of Love"). In the wings: a calypso cadre ("State of Independence") prepares to pick up the pace. Glittering throughout are some of the most sophisticated horn charts and intricate vocal arrangements ever laid down in Hollywood.

Jones weaves the Euro-rock crash-thump Summer developed with ex-producers Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte (the toot-toot whistle buried in "Love" 's frenzy is one kind of editorial aside) into the background of his lavish, stylized R&B scenario. He assumes that the disco audience is a cult, and that white teenagers may never cotton to a black Benatar. He concentrates on make-out masterpieces ("The Woman In Me") and get happy MOR ("(If It) Hurts Just A Little"). Jones' up-scale soul isn't the sound of the street, but the purr of a limo—with climate and cruise control. His cast-of-a-thousand session extras aren't compressed into a wall of sound; they're installed as deluxe wall units.

Given Summer's surprisingly good job on Springsteen's "Protection," it's too bad that she and Jones can't damn demographics and make more concessions to rock. There's only one real mistake here—Summer can't yet handle the subtleties of Billy Strayhorn's standard, "Lush Life." More effective are songs about holding tight to dreams and working hard to achieve them because that's what Donna Summer understands, and that's why she's entering the '80s as a superstar. Even "Livin' In America" and its almost corny kiddy chorus, and "State of Independence" with its almost corny adult chorus, escape mawkishness. Donna Summer delivers them like someone who honestly believes in God, love, and America and whose belief in all of the above hasn't come cheap or easy. She gets so carried away in "Livin' In America" she practically falls right off the top of her register. If she gets us putting our hands together, it's not because the woman's a born preacher. On *Donna Summer*, she does what she says the mama in "Love Is In Control" used to say: she gives it her best shot every time. And she's not faking it for a second.

Somewhere In The Stars
Rosanne Cash
Columbia

Walk On
Karen Brooks
Warner Bros.

By Robert K. Oermann

Change is definitely in the air in Nashville, and it's coming from the distaff side of this male-dominated, Southern Baptist country music community. We're talking about far more than the sass and spunk of Dolly and Loretta here. Women like Gail Davies, Juice Newton and Lacy J. Dalton share a casual perspective on country stardom, a relaxed approach to sex and a certain openness that's quite distinct from previous generations of female country musicians.

Rosanne Cash and Karen Brooks are thoroughbred residents of this stable of new Nashville talent. Their coltish, devil-may-care views of life and their dead-serious attitudes about music brand them as trendsetters as surely as the others.

Cash's third album, *Somewhere In The Stars,* is a distinct departure from last year's breakthrough *Seven Year Ache.* For starters, it downplays the performer's tough, rock qualities and emphasizes her dreamy, chanteuse side. Though lacking the brightness, beat and bite of *Seven Year Ache,* it nonetheless has singular delights. Cash still sounds best when she snarls and snaps a bit on tunes like Susanna Clark's feminist "Oh Yes I Can" or husband-producer Rodney Crowell's thumping "Ain't No Money." Her other vocal affectation is a lazy, barroom-bored drawl that works best on Leroy Preston's "I Wonder" and on the eerie, spacey title cut.

Two John Hiatt songs, "It Hasn't Happened Yet" and "I Look For Love," are mid-tempo rockers illustrative of the artist's taste, class and care in song selection. "Third Rate Romance," on the other hand, is a serious miscalculation, mostly because Cash's indifferent vocal performance suggests she's going to bed alright, but only to sleep, if you know what I mean.

Throughout the LP, songs and vocals are given marvelously sympathetic support by Crowell's superb, spare, new wave-country production. In acknowledging Cash's voice as an awesome instrument, Crowell has become the master of the casual riff or lick that can add just the right amount of edge to her delivery without calling undue attention to itself (and I've got to believe Crowell had more than a little to do with sneaking a taste of Jorgen Ingmann's "Apache" into "Ain't No Money").

The same can sometimes, but not always, be said for Brian Ahern's production of Karen Brooks's debut album, *Walk On.* He occasionally swamps rather than supports her; and on the remake of Bacharach-David's "Anyone Who Had A Heart," Ahern's lifeless arrangement gives Brooks nothing to react to. He left out all the dynamics on that track, but elsewhere he provided Brooks hooks a-plenty.

Brooks is the composer of "Couldn't Do Nothing Right" (a country hit for both Tracy Nelson and Rosanne Cash) and of "Tennessee Rose," a 1982 country hit for Emmylou Harris. *Walk On* showcases three more of her first-rate songs. More to the point, though, *Walk On* is the most exciting debut record from a Nashville woman since Lacy J. Dalton came out of nowhere a couple of years ago.

If there's a spirit hovering over this work, it's that of Roy Orbison: two of Brooks's songs, "Every Beat Of My Heart" and "Walk On," are pounding wailers that build to dramatic crescendos—unmistakeable Orbison-style song structures. And, perhaps as a more overt homage, Brooks delivers her sexiest vocal on a cover of Orbison's "Candy Man."

"Under the Stars," co-written by Brooks and Hank ("Queen of Hearts") DeVito, recalls a lilting, sentimental, beloved old pop melody. "If That's What You're Thinking," with its vibes and guitar filligrees, has a Spanish flavor. Brooks's version of Rodney Crowell's "Shame On The Moon" is beautifully electric and atmospheric; but it's "Shores Of White Sand" by Jack Routh (Carlene Carter's ex-) that is arguably the loveliest song on an album full of them.

Because of the Ahern connection, Karen Brooks will probably be tagged as an alto Emmylou Harris. But like Rosanne Cash, she is spirited and independent, and will inevitably cut her own path. Don't be fooled for a minute by any "country" tag that might be applied to Cash and Brooks: these ladies are liberated from musical categories and have at least as much to offer hard-rocking city slickers as they do to back-porch-rocking hillbillies.

Under The Big Black Sun
X
Elektra

By Christopher Hill

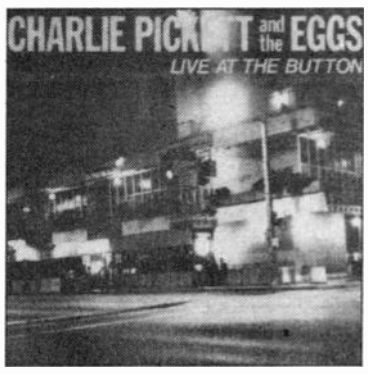
Just as the letter "x" takes its unique shape from the meeting of two lines, so X, the band, emphasizes connection over knee-jerk punk alienation. This is what gives X's music the emotional third dimension that so many of the bands in their Los Angeles peer group lack, and on their newest album, *Under The Big Black Sun,* producer Ray Manzarek has given them a correspondingly rich sonic context.

Instead of opting for the ambient roar with which most producers of punk bands obviate their subject's technical shortcomings, Manzarek cleanly delineates the four musicians—but in a way which serves to highlight each one's relationship to the rest of the band. Thus, the range of guitarist Billy Zoom's talent becomes clear—in the "I Want Candy" riff that kicks off the title song; in the almost country-style picking of "Have Another"; in the ripe power chord fills that energize "Because I Do"—without unbalancing his ability to slip imperceptibly into John Doe and D.J. Bonebrake's rhythm section.

A lot has been written about the uniqueness of Doe's and Exene Cervenka's vocals. It should also be said that neither instrument— Exene's in particular—is, in itself, particularly interesting. Here again, producer Manzarek opts for clarity rather than obscurity. Exene's reedy, lily-white voice, with no savor of region or roots, is given prominence, and allowed to attempt what is almost too much for it. This frankness eventually forces you to hear her singing as the expression of a different kind of disenfranchised population, i.e. the exiled obsessions of our upper middle class coming home to roost.

And what strangely Gothic stuff it is flying around inside these clean California heads. The music is infused with a neo-Catholic sense of the dark night of the soul. A recurring motif is the death of Exene's sister, Mary. In "Riding With Mary," Billy Zoom chords quietly and monotonously, while those uncanny harmonies moan like a disconsolate wind, singing of a young girl and her lover riding to their deaths. Even when the album is at its jauntiest, as in the almost folk-rock chorus of "Motel Room in My Bed," a mood of desperation is everpresent.

And yet X is not cynical. They battle the darkness blow for blow, using as their weapons wry (if sometimes black) humor, and unapologetic love. While so many of their Los Angeles compatriots make their blubbering surrender to a bleakness they may never have even faced, X nurtures the spirit that causes man to dance most nimbly on the edge of the abyss.



Live At The Button On Ft. Lauderdale Beach
Charlie Pickett and The Eggs
Open Records

By Wayne King

Three theories about this record. One: this is The World's Greatest Rock And Roll Band, playing pseudonymously in a beach strip beer joint, all for the love of the music. Yessir, the guitars whip and whine, the drummer lays down the steadiest, sweetest, skin-crackin' beat you'd ever want to hear, and the singer, off-key though he may be, grabs the words and puts them over. You didn't really think the sounds on the "official release" were what made millions swoon last year, did you? No way, man—that sly cat with the big lips knew he had this raw, steamin' set of rock and blues on tape and could put it out once the other record shot past the platinum mark.

Two: the Flamin' Groovies have come back to America. No one in his right mind really believed that this country's greatest expatriate band would stay in Europe forever, churning out cover versions of Fab Four numbers, right? Forget it! If the usual obsession with great British guitar music didn't alert you (Yardbirds and Johnny Kidd and the Pirates tunes are resurrected here), then surely their raveups on Freddie Cannon's "Tallahassee Lassie" and the Groovies' classics "Slow Death" and "Shake Some Action" should have tipped you off. Could it be that head Groovie, crazed Cyril Jordan, sought to avenge his group's exile from the U.S. by sneaking back and launching a rock revival from Ft. Lauderdale, heretofore known in rock circles only for being the setting of the Connie Francis sex and surf epic, *Where The Boys Are*?

Three (and this is the wildest hypothesis yet): there actually is a band named Charlie Pickett and The Eggs who thrive on slashing renditions of various rock and roll gems and some promising originals. But to buy that line would require such a suspension of belief—would demand that the listener presume that shit-hot traditional rock music could still be heard in the country which *actually created it*—that I'm almost chagrined (nay, embarrassed) at allowing such a demented idea to roll off my pen. Who'd believe it, huh?

(Open Records is located at 901 Progresso Dr., Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33304.)

Abracadabra
The Steve Miller Band
Capitol

By J.D. Considine

Because twisting pop conventions into pretzels is generally thought to be the province of smarty-pants like Nick Lowe or Randy Newman, Steve Miller will probably catch a lot of people unawares with this one. Not only is it funny in its own deadpan way, it's also catchy as hell—something the other pranksters don't always work in between pratfalls—so jokes never have to act like stand-in hooks, nor does your appreciation depend on knowing when to smirk. And you thought he'd already *done* one called *The Joker*....

Part of the fun has to do with the territory Miller mines. Unlike most parodists, who seize upon the idiosyncrasies of some classic form, like '60s girl group pop, say, or Tin Pan Alley torch songs, Miller rummages through the glitz and pre-fab pop of the mid-seventies, pulling out lyrical ideas and sound effects which have degenerated into benign ridiculousness but whose familiarity keeps us from laughing right away. Thus as Miller croons "Ring me up, don't bring me down" over a perfect Anne Murray rhythm arrangement in the chorus of "While I'm Waiting," or drops a calliope organ into "Give It Up" right where you'd expect something along the lines of Elton John boogie woogie, it's hard to decide whether to chuckle or sing along.

Still, what did you expect from a guy who actually worked out a rhyme for "abracadabra"?

No Control
Eddie Money
Columbia

By Mark Mehler

Eddie Money must be getting better—the new publicity handout doesn't mention that he is an ex-cop until the fourth paragraph. And sure enough, *No Control* does represent a major improvement, being the first of Money's four albums to contain more meat than filler. And with Tom Dowd's production emphasizing mood and melody over bombast, the artist's performances seem more natural and less the product of someone who's bent on impressing us as a hard-core, high-powered rock 'n' roller.

Though he remains a limited vocalist, in both octave and emotional range, Money's wise guy veneer—which had grown increasingly tiresome—is gone. In its place is a mature California rock style similar to that of the Eagles' Don Henley. Money's phrasing has also improved immeasurably in the two years since his last album.

Lyrically, Money also borrows a page from the Eagles, exploring in some depth the pain side of the pleasure/pain axis ("Now you're free living fast/It's so hard to make a good thing last/And it gets harder every day/When you're running away").

Though *No Control* does falter briefly during feeble attempts at the blues ("Keep My Motor Runnin' ") and Billy Joel-ish punk ("Take A Little Bit"), Money appears to have found a musical identity without the aid of hype. By his next LP, you'll never know he once carried a badge.

Fast Times At Ridgemont High
Various Artists
Full Moon/Asylum

By Dan Forte

You're driving home from a movie, you stop by the local record store and pick up the soundtrack album to the film you just sat through—you expect to be able to put it on the turntable and hear the songs you just heard in the movie theater, right? Seems like a fair assumption, but apparently Irving Azoff had another idea when he produced the film and soundtrack LP to *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*. As a two-record set, it's mediocre enough; it should be retitled *Leftovers From The Mellow Mafia Ripen And Then Rot.* But as an alleged soundtrack, it's a complete ripoff, since nearly half of the nineteen songs included never appear in the film (even though they are credited on the screen), while some of the movie's most prominent tunes (the Go-Go's' "We Got The Beat," Tom Petty's "American Girl," Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir") are nowhere to be found among the selections by Graham Nash, Jackson

Browne, and the former Eagles.

Of the songs that appear in both the film and the album, Browne's new single, "Somebody's Baby," is catchy enough, but I could swear this was on his last album . . . and the one before that. "Speeding" is probably the most shallow song in the Go-Go's catalogue; it makes "Vacation" sound like "Ballad Of A Thin Man." Oingo Boingo's attempt at rockabilly, "Goodbye, Goodbye," is about as authentic as Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." Joe Walsh's "Waffle Stomp" is the LP's best offering, but owes more than a small debt to Billy Vera. And Tim Schmit's version of the Tymes' classic "So Much In Love" should be Exhibit A in the case to outlaw any more '60s covers.

As for "Don't Be Lonely" by Quarterflash, "The Look In Your Eyes" by Gerard McMahon, "Never Surrender" by Don Felder, and Jimmy Buffett's "I Don't Know," these and several other songs were either totally absent from the movie or so buried beneath dialogue that they have no place on a "soundtrack" album.

And let's face it—high school kids no longer listen to Graham Nash and probably have never heard of Jimmy Buffett. The music that most accurately reflects the lifestyle depicted in Cameron Crowe's book and screenplay is Van Halen, AC/DC, Ozzy Osbourne and Rush. And though the film depicts a campus with at least three Pat Benatar clones and an enterprising scalper pushing tickets for Cheap Trick, the characters are forced to deliver their lines over new songs from yesterday's stars and tomorrow's has-beens. Which makes Full Moon/Asylum's double set a vivid illustration of how out of touch most major labels are with the audience they're trying so desperately to reach.

American Workers
Bus Boys
Arista

By Jonathan Gregg

Neither as funny or funky as its predecessor, *American Workers* is the Bus Boys' second serving of "minimum wage rock & roll"—but if there's a minimum of anything on this record, it's new ideas. In fact, the band's dispensed with many of the old ideas as well, notably the hooky, jiver-than-thou flippancies which made them mildly provocative at the outset.

The results present more problems than promise for this self-proclaimed "only black rock & roll band in the world." Whereas the quirky keyboard and vocal touches that leavened the first album showed a distinct new wave influence, *American Workers* embraces the timeless mediocrity of second-rate heavy metal. Kevin O'Neal's elastic bass lines are the only traces of black music to be found, and rather than rock or roll the songs just sit there under a pall of ham-fisted guitar.

The pale ghosts of Hall & Oates and Bryan Ferry hover briefly in Brian O'Neal's songwriting, but fail to materialize into any memorable melodies, whereas the lyrics, deprived of their former comic sting, bumble around aimlessly, alternately vapid and absurd. Thematically the album fails as well; most of the songs have nothing to do with American workers or anyone else for that matter. You don't have to be the Clash to wonder if the world's only black rock & roll band shouldn't have something more substantial to offer.

Robyn Archer Sings Brecht
Robyn Archer
Angel

David Bowie in Bert Brecht's Baal
David Bowie
RCA

By J.D. Considine

If Bertold Brecht is known at all in rock music, it's probably for "Mack the Knife," and ironically enough the Bobby Darin version which became a hit turned Brecht's lyrics into a hopeless jumble. This low profile is understandable, however, because aside from the show music written with Kurt Weill (of which "Mack the Knife" is a prime example), most of his lyrics were strongly polemical and set to the austere, vaguely martial melodies of Hans Eisler or Paul Dessau. Not exactly party-hearty material, it is for the most part foreign to rock's basic urge for release.

Yet Brecht's influence as a writer has kept him as an unlikely influence anyway. Drawn to its haunting melody and ineffable despair, the Doors included the Brecht/Weill "Alabama Song" on their debut; updated slightly, David Bowie resurrected it for his *Stage* tour. But where the Doors never further defined their affinity for Brecht, Bowie has by taking the title role in a television production of "Baal." As an album, his performance of five songs from the play is something of a gyp—at barely eleven minutes long, the notion of forking over $5.98 verges on the criminal. But as a glimpse into Bowie's vision of romanticism, these tart, cynical ballads may well be worth the price.

For an understanding of Brecht's songs in a more conventional context, Robyn Archer's offering would seem more the ticket. Although far from perfect—her diction isn't crisp enough for some of the tempo she attempts, and as a result words are occasionally lost—it provides a good representation of Brecht's output, from the world-weary "Alabama Song," to the bitterly funny "Ballad of Sexual Obsession" to the caustically anti-Nazi "Ballad on Approving of the World." While there are better versions of some of the songs available (such as Teresa Stratas' all-Weill disc on Nonesuch or the Joseph Papp production of *Three Penny Opera* on Columbia), it's impossible to find a better overview, and Dominic Muldowney's accompaniment, as on the Bowie disc, adds an appropriate sense of atmosphere.

Billy Idol
Billy Idol
Chrysalis

By Nick Burton

Generation X were one of the most entertaining and vibrant bands to spring from the initial British new-wave explosion of the late '70s. As lead vocalist, Billy Idol sang with an angry, youthful urgency. The band vanished after two LPs, but re-surfaced last year under the name of Billy and GenX with the wonderfully catchy "Dancing With Myself," after which Idol released a dance-oriented solo EP. Idol's first solo album contains a lot of his Generation X energy, but it also has a suprising amount of dull spots.

Idol's vocals have taken on a throaty quality here, and in some cases—particularly "Come On, Come On"—he sounds eerily like Jim Morrison. "White Wedding (Part 1)" and the Gary Glitter-ish "Love Calling" both find Idol in top form, but the best tune here is "Nobody's Business," a cross between Generation X and "Dancing With Myself" featuring Idol's Steve Stevens' choppy rhythm guitar, pushing Idol to his most impassioned performance. Most of the tracks, however, tend to ramble and run out of steam before they're half-finished.

Keith Forsey's full-bodied production works well, and Idol's backing band is a competent outfit. But given the talent involved, *Billy Idol* should have been a much stronger work.

Countryman (Original Soundtrack)
Island

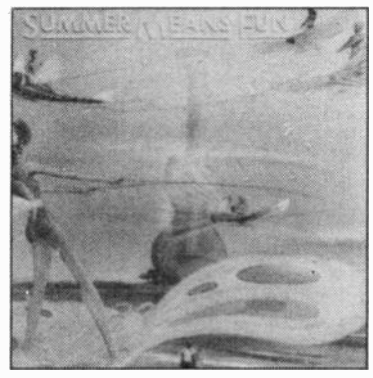
By Ken Braun

Like the soundtracks from *The Harder They Come* and *Rockers*—two movies about the Jamaican counter-culture that are *Countryman's* obvious antecedents—this soundtrack album amounts to a reggae sampler, containing choice cuts by some of the form's leading musicians.

As with *Rockers*, many of the songs on the two-record *Countryman* soundtrack—Toots & the Maytals' "Bam Bam," Steel Pulse's "Sound System," Dennis Brown's "Sitting and Watching," and eight by Bob Marley & the Wailers, including "Three O'Clock Roadblock," "Rat Race" and "Small Axe"—are likely to already be in the collections of American reggae fans. So to make this set more attractive than *Rockers*, Island's Chris Blackwell (producer of both the movie and the album) has re-mixed the familiar songs to provide a subtle transformation of sound, supplementing hits with less-familiar songs and passages of *Countryman* theme music.

In spite of the 20 minutes wasted on Wally Badarou's synthesizer- and rhythm-machine theme music, Blackwell succeeds in making the set attractive. Bob Marley's "Jah Live" has, until now, been available only as a Jamaican import single since its 1975 release on Marley's Tuff Gong label. Lee Perry has never written a better song nor sung one more compellingly than "Dreadlocks in Moonlight," retrieved here from obscurity. Marley's "Time Will Tell"—in a re-mixed version which pares the instrumentation down to acoustic guitars and hand-percussion—is breathtakingly beautiful. If it were one minute longer, it alone would be worth the price of the double-album. And selections by Fabulous Five, Human Cargo, Rico, Aswad and Jah Lion are good examples of some of the directions reggae took in the late '70s.

Countryman cannot be expected to have the impact of *The Harder They Come*—it is not a revelation, it is not an essential—but reggae discophiles will want it for its rarities and neophytes looking for an up-to-date reggae sampler will find it an appropriate sequel to *The Harder They Come*.



Summer Means Fun Various Artists
Columbia

By David McGee

Do tell. If any of the performances on this two-record set had been passed off as fun when I was a kid, I would have slit my throat or at least opted for the clergy (six of one, half dozen of the other, right?). Some sage appears to have had the bright idea to recognize the lesser-known achievements of Bruce Johnston and Terry Melcher, seeing as how they've cut such a wide swath through pop history. Well, I'm still trying to figure out what's so stud about Bruce Johnston, since there's no empirical evidence in his favor; and as for Terry Melcher, he may have done a swell job producing the Byrds and Paul Revere and the Raiders, but as a recording artist he was nowhere—the guy could barely carry a tune. No wonder Charlie Manson sought out Melcher as a producer: he probably heard one of these lousy Rip Chords cuts and figured the guy's not only got connections, but can be easily intimidated!

Anyway, those who love summer and surf music will be extremely offended by the Rip Chords' (one-half of whom were Bruce and Terry) disgustingly limp, utterly pointless version of "Surf City," and might well go head hunting over the inclusion of an alternate, unbelievably horrid take of the Chords' fabulous "Three Window Coupe" that features milquetoast harmonies and limp-wristed guitar work—it really stinks up the joint. Had this version been released as a single, the Chords would be even more inconsequential than they are now. Besides "Coupe," the only other song the Chords ever cut that was worth the vinyl it was pressed on was "Hey Little Cobra." Yet there's *seven* other Rip Chords tracks here; never mind three by the Hot Doggers (Bruce and Terry, primarily), all of which were done definitively in their original forms by the Beach Boys ("Surfin' USA" and "Surfin' Safari") and Dick Dale ("Misirlou," misspelled, of course, on this album jacket).

In short, nothing contained herein justifies the money spent to produce it. *Summer Means Fun* displays total contempt for summer and surf music, and everyone associated with it ought to be ashamed: it is vile garbage.

Escape From Planet Earth The Alley Cats
MCA

By Charles Paikert

The Alley Cats are a power trio for their time: their gritty tales of urban nihilism are fashionably revved-up and relentlessly choppy, but have enough smooth edges to be commercially palatable (MOR punk, anyone?). Though the music itself is rather ordinary, the Cats' songs (all written by guitarist Randy Stodola) are blessed with some sparse, to-the-point lyrics that vividly convey scenes of a wasteland as viewed through the eyes of searching, confused and cynical youth. The instrumentation, in its own raw way, gives this lyrical vision a certain amount of power.

At the moment, however, the band is still developing. They haven't sharpened their identity, and they attempt to occupy, at various times, the new wave beachheads already claimed by Blondie and X. Also, Stodola and bassist Dianne Chai are still struggling to master their instruments, so their playing tends to be predictable and cliché-ridden. John McCarthy's sharp, steady drum work is a bright spot, though, and if the other musicians improve, the Alley Cats could well claim a considerable constituency for themselves.

Convertible Music Josie Cotton
Electra

By Jonathan Gregg

Following the success of last year's single "Johnny Are You Queer," Josie Cotton has released *Convertible Music*, a debut album that would make a welcome addition to anyone's poolside party.

Although her vocal style is in the tradition of Ronnie Spector and Brenda Lee, the album's impulse leans more towards the sassy, cheerleader-gone-bad spirit of Lesley Gore's "Its My Party" or the Shangri-las' "Leader of the Pack."

Cotton and her cohorts—boyfriend/producer Larson Paine and his brother bandleader Bobby—are not mining a particularly radical vein of songwriting, but her spirited vocals and the band's taut, punchy arrangements make for an unpretentious, well-executed album whose

reach rarely exceeds its grasp. Paramount among its virtues is the fact that Josie takes her fun seriously. Boyfriend/producer Paine notwithstanding, Cotton is every bit her own woman, penning six of the album's 11 songs and managing to strike a balance between humor and yearning that gives life and credibility to the most mundane themes.

In addition to the piquant pop of "Johnny Are You Queer," the high points include the Buddy Hollyish "Systematic Way," "So Close" (which sounds like Chrissie Hynde with a sense of humor), and "No Pictures of Dad," a lovely ballad that Dolly Parton might have sung. Only on "I Need the Night, Tonight" does a wash of overdubbed harmonies make her momentarily lose her identity to a Go-Go's kind of sensibility, not so well suited to her style as the snappy, bright eyed delivery which characterizes the rest of the album and constitutes its chief asset. With a few more substantial tunes to match her verve Josie Cotton will be playing to converts as well as convertibles.

Lexicon of Love
ABC
Mercury

Looking for You
Kit Hain
Mercury

By J.D. Considine

Like any commodity that falls prey to the pressures of mass production and quick obsolescence, pop music is frequently a pretty shoddy product. Instead of going for substance and depth, it's far more profitable to substitute a cheap, ear-catching gloss; rather than break new ground experimenting with form, it's far easier to rely on the formulaic, the tried-and-true. Consequently, style becomes more important than content, until eventually style *becomes* content and the whole thing collapses on itself.

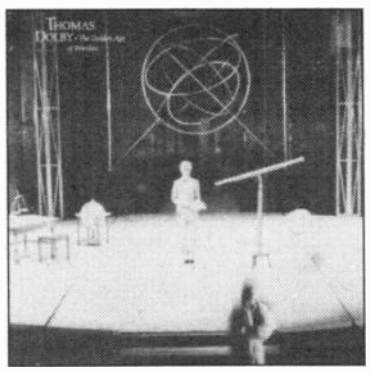
Or becomes incredibly vital, which seems to be the case with ABC. How so? Because ABC puts its stylish veneer across with such fervent passion it actually takes substance despite its basic inanity. Thematically, the group deals with love above all else, and the moon-June-spoon variety at that; musically, they trade in lush strings, bombastic keyboards, plaintive saxophones and blunt, disco-style rhythm tracks. Yet they play their musical tricks so hard, and lead singer Martin Fry delivers his lines so earnestly, that ABC consistently transcends any sense of artifice.

No doubt because for ABC, such effects aren't devices, they're just a matter of craft. In this sense, consider ABC as an extension of the value system that produced Roxy Music. Roxy Music championed camp because they were intrigued by the possibilities of pure style, of image for its own sake. ABC, on the receiving end of that aesthetic, came to believe in those images as one would believe in an idea, so that instead of representing form devoid of content they themselves became content. Thus, Fry's soliloquy in "The Look of Love (Pt. I)" is treated not as romantic cliche but as romance itself, and when he breaks off from singing to recount, "My friends ask me, 'Martin, maybe someday you'll find true love,'" his fatalistic sigh before answering, "I tell them maybe . . ." is devastatingly effective.

It's things like that which make this album sizzle, and sizzle it does, from first track to last. ABC's widescreen sensibility and sure-shot melodies would be a winning combination on their own, but abetted by the production know-how of ex-Buggle Trevor Horn they achieve just the right mix of grandeur and studio-slickness, with wooshing synthesizers and pizzicato strings working in luscious harmony. This is pop the way it should be played.

Kit Hain, on the other hand, tends more to pop the way it's usually played. A shame, really, because Hain is by rights a more interesting writer and singer than Fry and the ABC crowd; her weakness is that rather than use flash and dazzle to amplify her strengths, she ends up having her thoroughly modern production values bury her.

Essentially, it's a problem of scope. Where Fry goes for panoramic backdrops, Hain asks for tight, backlit close-ups, and as a result the brisk, synthetic surfaces of her backing tracks tend to distract. At times, as on the title track, "Looking for You," Hain's perceptive lyrics and dark, husky delivery (strongly reminiscent of Joan Armatrading), come through anyway, thanks to the sheer power of the material. But for the most part, Hain needs either to perk up or quiet down her backing tracks.



The Golden Age Of Wireless
Thomas Dolby
Harvest

By Nick Burton

Among the current crop of English synthesizer acts, Thomas Dolby's American debut album comes as a breath of fresh air. Not only is Dolby an outstanding songwriter with an ear for engaging melodies (he wrote Lene Lovich's excellent "New Toy" single), he is also one of the few synthesists who doesn't let technology get the better of him.

Dolby's music is basically rooted in pop, but his songs have a subtle majestic quality about them, not unlike some of Peter Gabriel's solo work. What makes *The Golden Age Of Wireless* such an enjoyable album is the fact that Dolby varies the mood and tone of the album (although his vocals are rarely expressive) without losing sight of his direction. "Radio Silence," for example, is a breezy pop/rock tune with energy to spare. But Dolby is also effective with more somber material such as "Leipzig" and the plaintive "Airwaves."

The line-up of musicians here is as impressive as the music. Lene Lovich and Les Chappell are on hand, as well as Bruce Woolley, guitarist Kevin Armstrong, and XTC's Andy Partridge. *The Golden Age Of Wireless* may not leave you with a lot of futuristic insights, but on a purely musical level, it's a fine record with a lot to offer.

Benefactor
Romeo Void
415/Columbia

By Toby Goldstein

If Columbia's distribution of San Francisco's 415 Records does nothing more than bring Debora Iyall's heartfelt chronicling of destructive relationships to a larger audience, it will have fulfilled its purpose. *Benefactor*, Romeo Void's second album, is a disturbing exercise in accepting human frailties. While our toes may tap with varying degrees of jollity, our heads must deal with the pain.

Iyall's lyrical perspective is apparent from the first track, a remixed version of "Never Say Never," with its dare-you refrain, "I might like you better if we slept together..." Iyall's voice is soaring and defiant, but has a vulnerable undercurrent—as if she was told "girls don't say those things" once too often.

Romeo Void's four instrumentalists skillfully recall—via free-flowing rhythms—San Francisco's imaginative, ethereal legacy, but they're not merely nostalgists.They superimpose a contemporary dissonance upon their weaving dances, primarily through Benjamin Bossi's brash saxophone fills.

Producer Ian Taylor, working out of the Cars' ultra-modern Syncro Studios, has kept the special effects to an effective minimum. An overlay of escalating echoes upon Larry Carter's percussion and Iyall's vocal on "Undercover Kept" serves to heighten that song's brooding narrative.

Romeo Void's very name denies the existence of romantic illusions, and there is no lifesaving "benefactor" to be found on this album. Such truths may be hard to take, but they are absolutely necessary.

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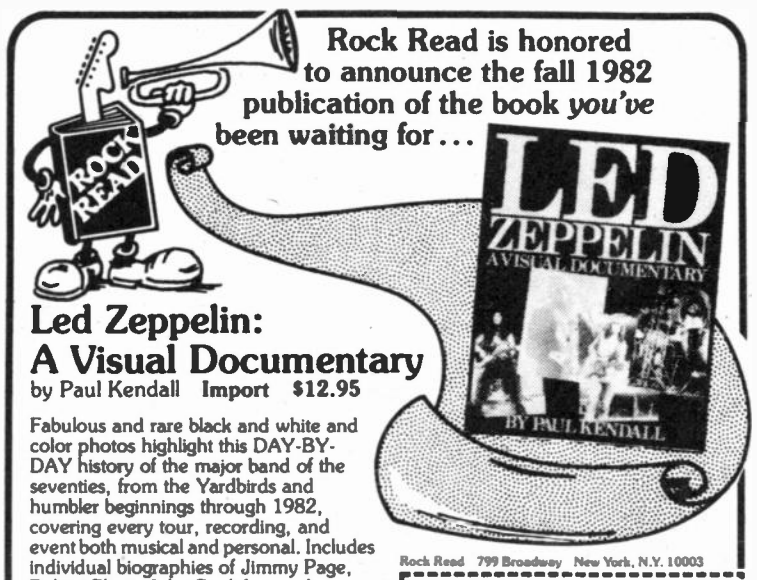

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tv & video calendar

September

Tues/21

6 PM also 9/24, 9/29 Cinemax
Rockshow
Film chronicle of Paul McCartney and Wings' 1976 "Wings Over America" tour. Songs include "Band On the Run," "Silly Love Songs," "Yesterday" and "Lady Madonna." Has moments.

Wed/22

8 PM Nickelodeon
Special Delivery: The Pointer Sisters
Filmed at the Attic Club in Greenville, North Carolina. Performance includes "Fire" and "We've Got The Power."

8 PM HBO; also 9/24, 9/26, 9/28
Country Music, U.S.A.
Roy Clark, who's contributed virtually nothing positive to country music, hosts a festival from his home town of Independence, Kansas. See Clark get blown off the stage by his superior guests: Merle Haggard, Charlie Rich, Johnny Lee and Lacy J. Dalton.

Thurs/23

10 AM HBO; also 9/27, 10/1, 10/5, 10/9
Teddy Pendergrass In Concert
Videotaped at London's Odeon Hall, this concert was Pendergrass' last before his near-fatal automobile accident in March. In a 60-minute performance, the vocalist performs most of his hits, including "I Don't Love You Anymore," "Love TKO," "Over and Over (Just Can't Get Enough)," "I Can't Live Without Your Love" and "Reach Out And Touch."

8 PM Nickelodeon; also 9/25
Livewire
New Wave: guests include Penelope Spheeris, director of *The Decline of Western Civilization;* Polyrock.

Sat/25

10:30 AM, 6 PM Cinemax
How I Won The War (1966)
Director Richard Lester's satirical comedy about war and the films that glorify it. Featuring John Lennon in a starring role.

October

Fri/1

3:30 PM, 5:30 AM HBO
Video Jukebox
A half-hour of rock video clips

Sat/2

5 PM, 5:50 AM HBO
Stevie Nicks in Concert
An hour-long special, previously broadcast in March, featuring the Fleetwood Mac vocalist performing songs from her best-selling solo album, *Bella Donna*, and from the Mac's repertoire. Taped at the Fox-Wilshire Theatre in Los Angeles. Nicks is backed by an all-star band.

11 PM MTV
Cheap Trick
The boys from Illinois in a sort of homecoming concert at the Navy Pier in Chicago.

Sun/3

5 PM Nickelodeon; also 10/24
Special Delivery
Roger Daltrey: Ride A Rock Horse—solo performance by the Who's lead singer features concert and concept footage.

11 PM MTV
Profiles In Rock: Asia
1982's top new supergroup is featured in an in-depth profile that includes interviews with Carl Palmer and John Wetton, as well as concert footage.

Wed/6

12:45 AM HBO; also 10/6, 10/10, 10/14, 10/18, 10/22, 10/26
The Jazz Singer (1980)
A remake of the Al Jolson creaker (the first talkie) about a cantor's son who wants to be, in this modern day version of the story, a pop star. Neil Diamond and Laurence Olivier star, and Diamond wrote the ponderous score. All together now: "Love on the rockssssssss . . ."

Thurs/7

7:30 AM, 7 PM HBO
Video Jukebox
A half-hour of rock video clips

Fri/8

6 AM HBO; also 10/12, 10/16, 10/18, 10/20, 10/24
The Commodores In Concert
One of the best live bands extant in a fiery performance. Songs include "Three Times a Lady," "I Feel Sanctified," "Wonderland," "Sweet Love" and "Easy."

Sat/9

11 PM MTV
Kansas In Concert
Boasting a new lead singer (John Elefante) and a new album (*Vinyl Confessions*), one of rock's reigning arena heavies is shown in concert at the Omaha Civic Auditorium (concert filmed in July, '82).

Sun/10

11 PM MTV
Joe Cocker In Concert
He's not in the headlines much anymore, but Joe Cocker has, in his own quiet way, become one of the best song stylists/interpreters in popular music. The years haven't been kind to Joe, but there's an inherent dignity shining through his work. *Sheffield Steel*, his new album, is easily as good or better than anything Cocker's ever done. In this concert, from the Jubilee Auditorium in Calgary (Canada), Cocker delivers some inspired performances of the new material, and reprises some oldies but goodies ("With A Little Help From My Friends," et al.).

Thur/14

1 PM, 7 PM HBO
Video Jukebox
A half-hour of rock video clips

Fri/15

5 PM, 8 PM Nickelodeon
Special Delivery
ELO In Concert At Wembley—on a flying saucer set, amidst laser beams, ELO perform their hits to a packed house. Songs include "Standing In The Rain," "Turn To Stone," "Telephone Line" and "Rock Aria."

Sat/16

6:30 AM, 12 noon,
Video Jukebox
A half-hour of rock video clips

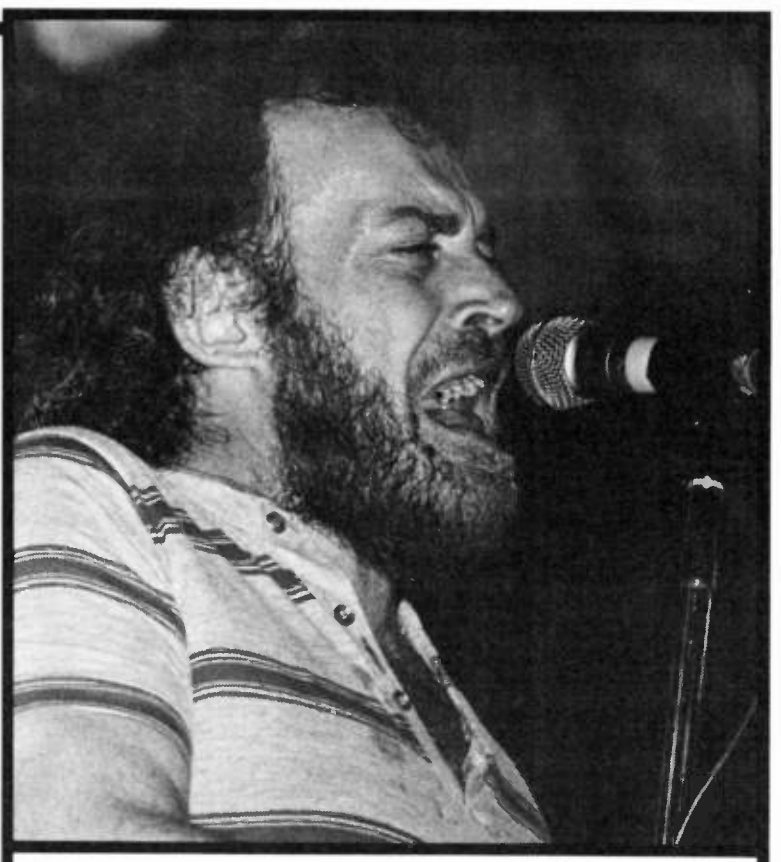
5 PM HBO 11 PM MTV
Double Feature: Garland Jeffreys & Marshall Crenshaw
Garland Jeffreys is seen in concert at the Country Club in Los Angeles, while the much-heralded Marshall Crenshaw gives viewers a chance to decide for themselves in a performance at the Store in San Francisco.

Sun/17

11 PM MTV
Police In Concert
The best of the new wave in concert from Montserrat.

Sat/23

10:30 AM HBO
Video Jukebox
A half-hour of rock video clips



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Joe Cocker in Concert

There's an inherent dignity shining through Joe Cocker's work in this concert taped at the Jubilee Auditorium in Calgary. Features some inspired performances of new material from Cocker's *Sheffield Steel* and reprises some familiar oldies. October 10, 11 PM, MTV

8 PM HBO; also 10/26
Crystal Gayle In Concert
Premiere of a 60-minute concert taped at the Hamilton Place Theatre in Hamilton, Ontario. The versatile songstress, backed by a 22-piece orchestra, surveys country, funk, blues and a bit of rock. Set includes most of Gayle's hits ("Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue," "Talkin' In Your Sleep," "I'll Get Over You," etc.).

11 PM MTV
Loverboy In Concert
Premiere. Concert filmed at PNE Coliseum in Vancouver. Clearly, Loverboy is one of Canada's lesser contributions to rock music. View at your own risk.

Sun/24

11 PM MTV
Hall & Oates Documentary
An exclusive MTV documentary. Behind-the-scenes footage of Hall and Oates' new LP-in-progress, taped at Electric Lady Studios in New York. Also includes some concert footage.

Sat/30

11 PM MTV
Halloween Double Feature
The illustrious Ozzy Osbourne is shown in concert at Irvine Meadows Amphitheater in Irvine Meadows, California on one of the last stops of his "Speak of the Devil" tour. Very amusing. The second half of the double bill features a repeat showing of Frank Zappa's '81 Halloween show at New York City's Palladium.

Sun/31

11 PM MTV
Night Of The Living Dead
The classic George Romero film. Nice way to kill an appetite.

THE 3 TOPS

TOP OF THE CHART

ANCHORED BY THE TERSE, sinuous rhythm pulse of Mick Fleetwood and John McVie, Fleetwood Mac's singer-songwriters Lindsay Buckingham, Stevie Nicks and Christine McVie always seem to be on the brink of reaching critical mass, so different are their conceptions. Yet when they blend together into one sweet harmony there isn't a sound like it in all of pop.

Mirage might just as well have been called son-of-*Rumours*, depicting as it does a singular sense of unity against a backdrop of discord and dissolution.

The sound is richly tempered and detailed, with Mac's usual wealth of airplay anthems, like Buckingham's futuristic '50s rock ("Can't Go Back" and "Book Of Love"), Stevie Nicks' gruff, sensual country airs ("That's Alright") and Christine McVie's bluesy lover's pleas ("Hold Me"). The strength of this band is the way they accent *each other's* songs—hopefully Fleetwood Mac will continue to grow together, because the sum is clearly greater than the parts. ◆

TOP NEW ENTRY

IN THE PAST YEAR, THE GO-GO'S have seen their debut album, *Beauty and the Beat*, achieve the status of a platinum seller and claim the number one spot on most record charts; they've toured constantly, as openers for the likes of the Police and the Rolling Stones and as headliners both home and abroad; and they've evolved from a band that would do just about anything for a little attention to rock 'n' roll cover girls and one of the most in-demand attractions around.

Vacation proves last year's model was no fluke, and strengthens the case for this band's staying power. Songs such as the title track and "Beatnick Beach" are imbued with Belinda Carlisle's smooth, heartfelt vocals and some crackling instrumental support. It appears to be a cinch for number one (since it's coming on our chart at number two), but more important than that is the image the Go-Go's see themselves projecting. To wit: "What we mainly give people is a positive thing," says Kathy Valentine. "We give a lot of 13- and 14-year-old girls in school another option, maybe, another direction they can turn in their lives." ◆

TOP DEBUT ALBUM

SURVIVOR, LIKE THEIR MID-western arena brothers REO Speedwagon, are a testament to the kind of tenacious commitment it takes to breakthrough to an audience in today's splintered array of record markets and radio formats.

The songwriting team of Jim Peterik and Frank Sullivan have hit upon the combination of elements that allows them to have their cake and eat it, too. That is, a blending of heavy metal's (well, real loud rock 'n' roll, anyway) surging riff power—where massed electric guitars suggest larger than life string sections—and the taut, centered big beat of contemporary pop, with lyrics that emphasize the pull of relationships and a will to persevere.

Perhaps best known for penning "Vehicle," Peterik and collaborator Sullivan put it all together on *Eye Of The Tiger*'s cocky title tune, but programmers should also take note of the massed vocal harmonies on "Children Of The Night," the upbeat ballad "Ever Since The World Began," and the cruising "The One That Really Matters" if they want a clue as to why this best-selling record is this month's top debut album. ◆

Vol.1 No.12 $1.00

Go-Go's Do It Again / The Who Sell Out

October 1982

RECORD

EXCLUSIVE

Neil Young

The Record Interview

FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Aretha's Triumph

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