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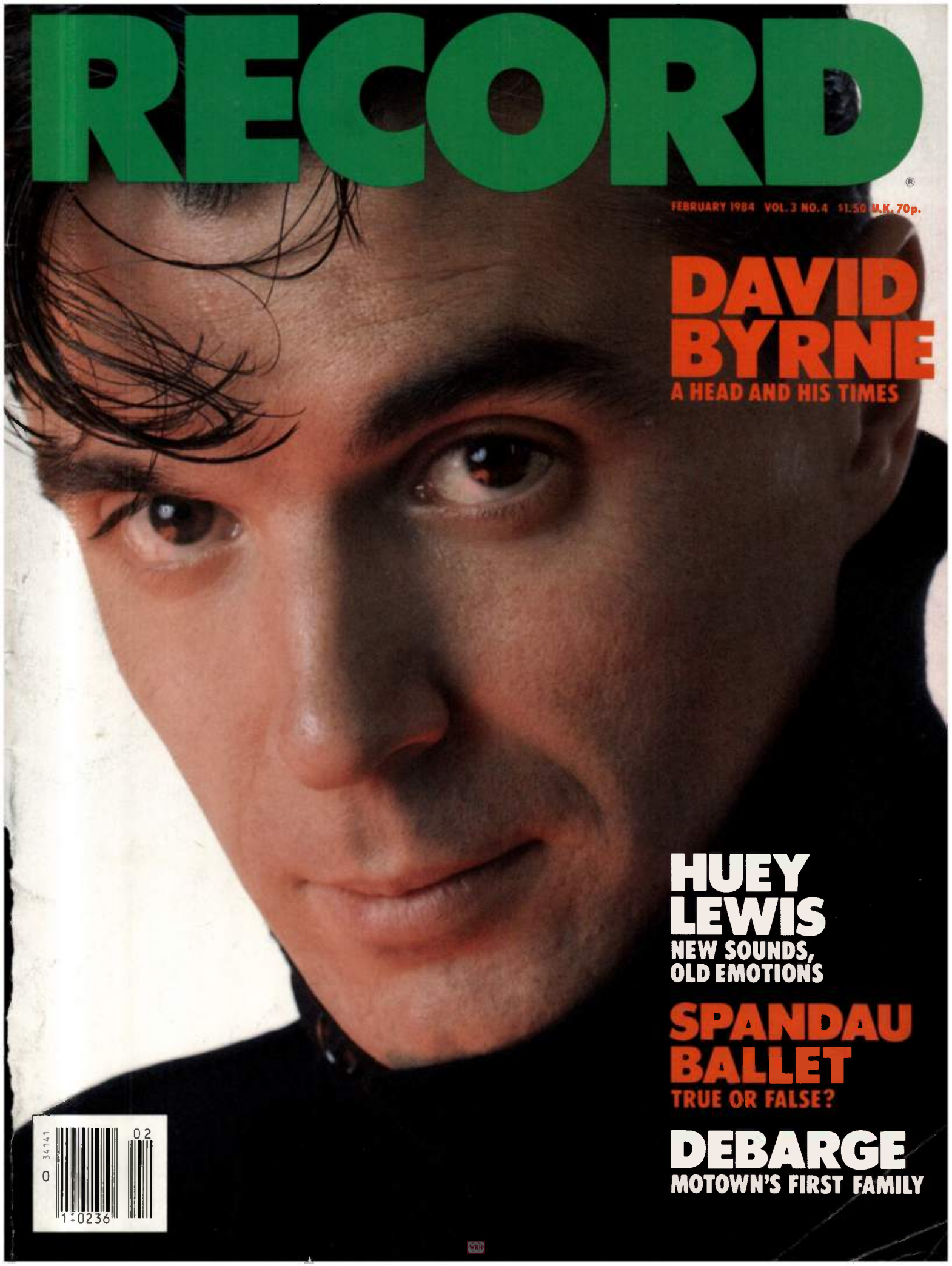

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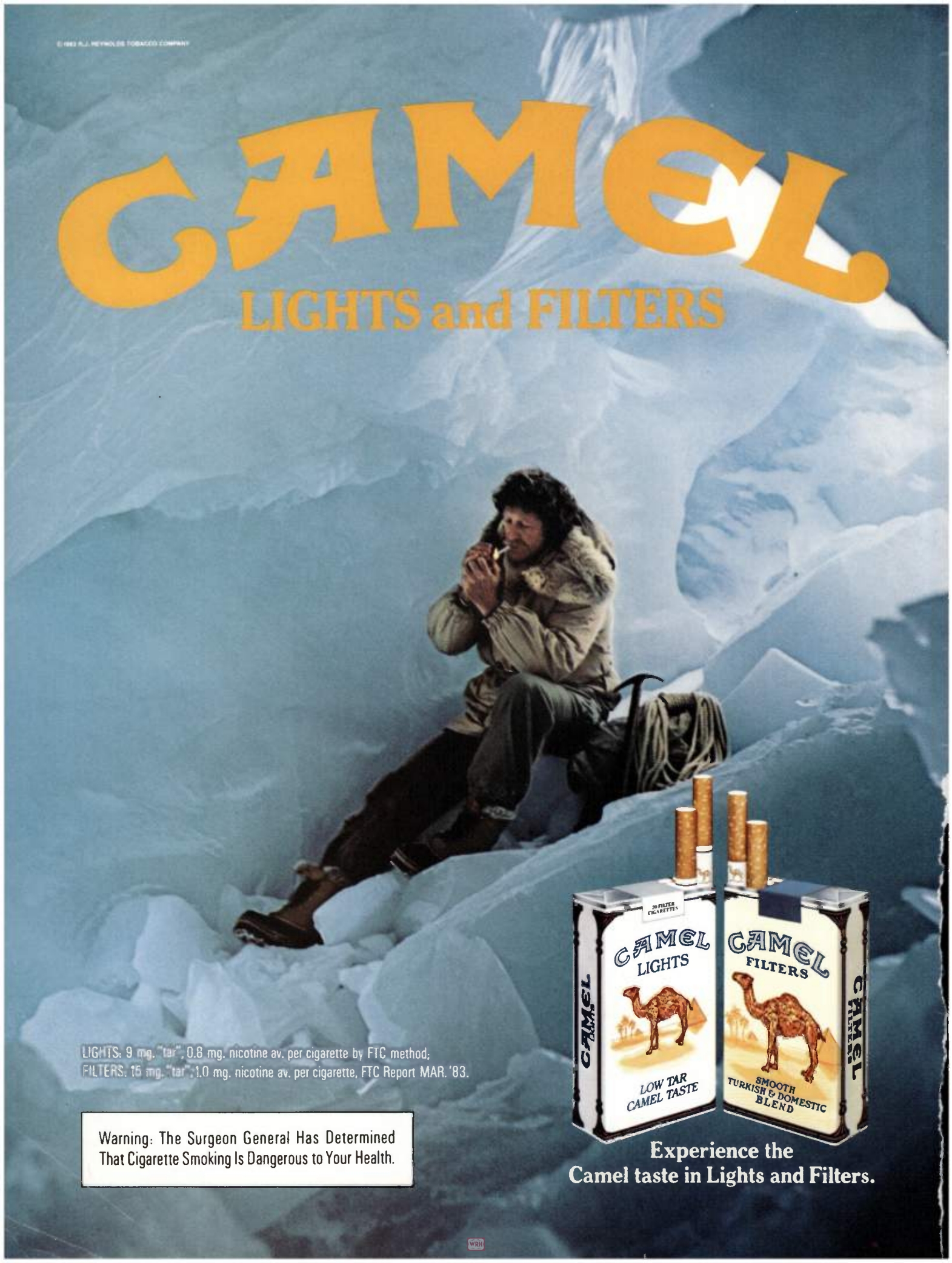

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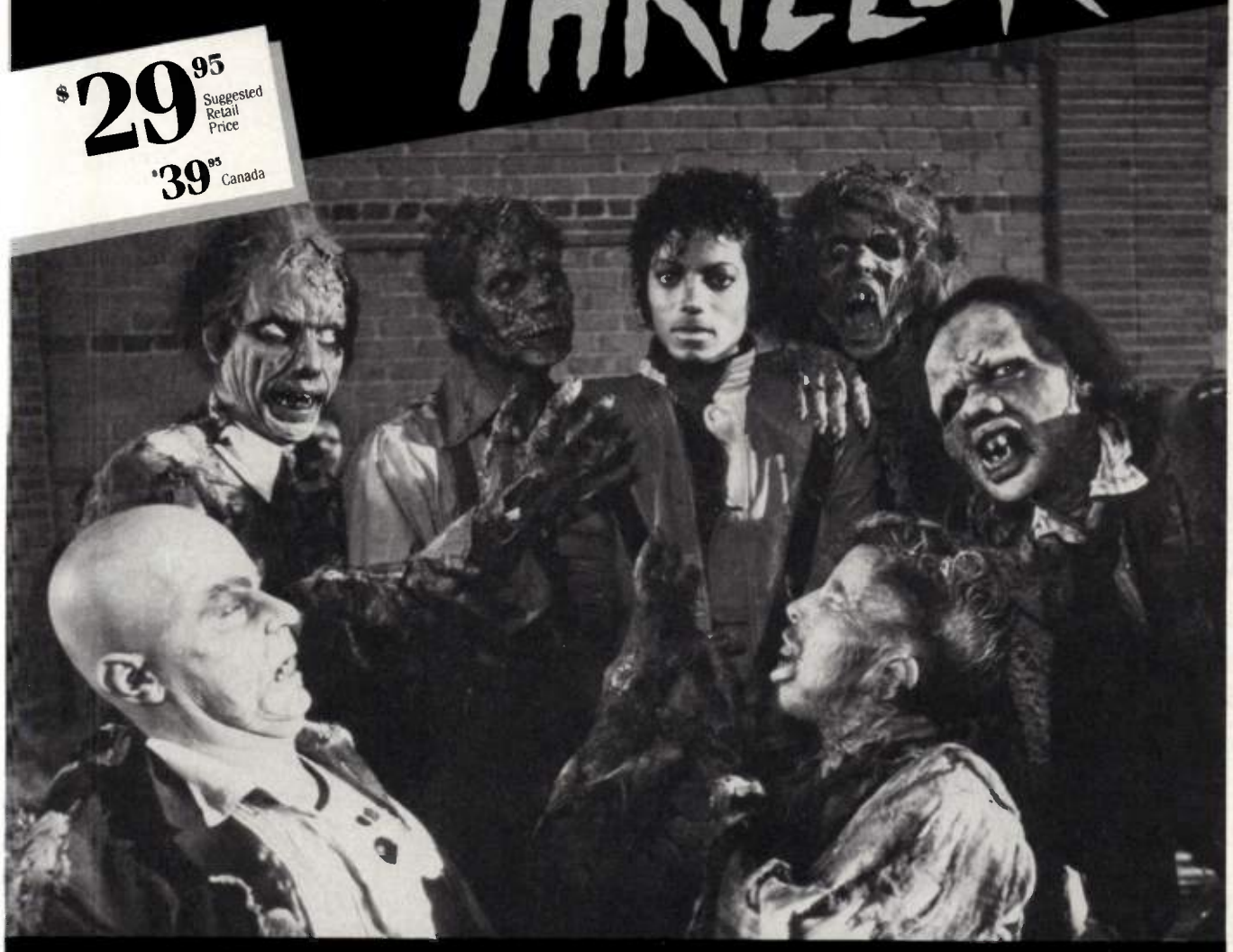

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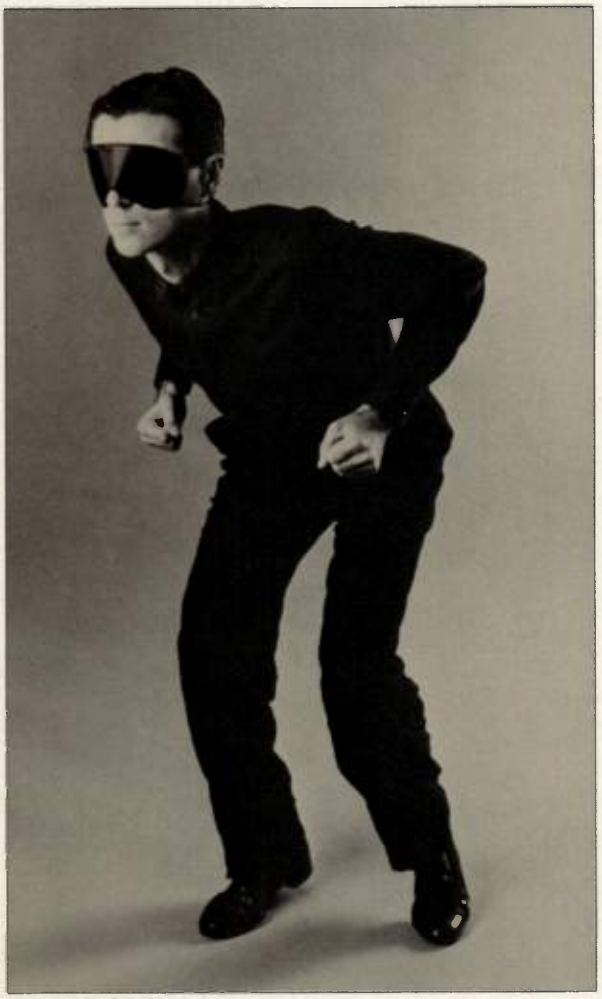

PHOTO BARRY MCKINLEY

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RECORD

FEBRUARY 1984 VOL. 3 NO. 4

Cover photo of David Byrne by Barry McKinley

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LIVE FROM LONG ISLAND

ALLENTOWN
MY LIFE
PRELUDE/ANGRY YOUNG MAN
PIANO MAN
THE STRANGER
SCANDINAVIAN SKIES
MOVIN' OUT
PRESSURE
SCENES FROM AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT
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LETTERS

ON JAMERSON

I APPRECIATE THE NECESsity of rock paying its last respects to James Jamerson (American Grandstand, November RECORD). I see the injustice rock crit, by and large, has done Jamerson, and understand the desire to balance the scales. But let's not confuse Affirmative Action with art. Retroactive justice may make good public policy but it don't make good rock criticism.

When Dave Marsh says "Jamerson deserves as much credit as any instrumentalist for changing the way rock sounds," does he really mean Jamerson or Motown itself? Marsh's contention, on the face of it, is absurd. Accepting for the moment that Jamerson had as much creative control of the Motown arrangements as he says he had (personally I'm skeptical) it was the way Jamerson's bass was featured, and not his creative "genius," as Marsh and Marvin Gaye imply, that changed the way rock sounded. On their own, Jamerson's bass lines were nothing a competent guitarist couldn't perform; and should we put Jamerson, merely because he or someone at Motown thought to put the bass out front in the arrangement, in the same league with rock instrumentalists like Chuck Berry, Paul McCartney, Jimi Hendrix, Duane Allman and—gaffe!—the great jazz sidemen? I think it patronizes Jamerson's important, *limited* achievement to do so, because he simply can't match these artists expressively. And I wonder if we should take as gospel all Jamerson's revelations to Nelson George. My inclination is to trust the art before the artist.

JEFF HAMILTON
St. Louis, MO

MAD ABOUT THE BOY

AFTER READING YOUR article on Boy George ("What You See Is What You Get," November RECORD) I was left speechless. You made him sound like a jerk! And those lies about his so-called "romantic" relationship with drummer Jon Moss—give me a break! Instead of focusing on his personal life (which is none of your business), why not focus on his and the band's outstanding musical talent. Boy George is the best there is and you had no right to put him down the way you did. It's like putting down God.

KELLY DANDO
Piscataway, NJ

Ah, come on men, give in just a little will you? Where's your sense of adventure? If you can stop raving on about the Boy's appearance you just might learn something. Men take note: you don't need those muscles, fast cars and loose talk to be masculine. Thanks, George, for breaking down the barriers between masculinity and feminity. Men were beginning to get boring.

LINDA KEATE
Midvale, UT

CAUGHT

AFTER SPENDING THE past five months researching and beginning a novel based on the life and music of Robert Johnson, I was gratified to learn that there is to be a film about this influential artist. However, David McGee's article concerning Keith Richards' involvement in the project ("Keith Richards Pays A Debt," November RECORD) contained two inaccuracies. First, a rare photograph of Johnson taken professionally in Memphis *does* exist, though few people have seen it. Also, "Love In Vain" was the first Johnson song the Stones recorded, but not the only one. "Stop Breakin' Down" (*Exile On Main Street*) was also written by Johnson. Incidentally, the Stones, chose not to give Johnson composing credit on either song. So much for paying tribute, Keith.

DAVID GREENLAND
Rockland, IL

David McGee replies: Greenland is right on both counts. However, a couple of comments are in order: a photograph of Johnson is apparently in the possession of a disc jockey named Steve Levere. I attempted to contact Levere, but he no longer works at the station I called, and the person I talked to there didn't know how to reach him. Unless Alan Greenberg alters the ending of his script for Love In Vain, *though, a photograph of Johnson will appear on the screen as the closing credits roll.*

As for the Stones failing to give Johnson composing credit on "Love In Vain" and "Stop Breakin' Down," Greenland has surely noted that the credit on the latter song is "Trad'l, arranged by Jagger, Richard, Wyman, Taylor, Watts." This is in accordance with the copyright laws. Since neither Johnson's family nor anyone representing him renewed the copyrights on his songs years ago, those compositions have gone into the public domain—as a specialist in copyright law explained it to me, the songs are, in effect, no longer Johnson's and no one collects royalties for their performance.

"Love In Vain," on the other hand, is credited to Woody Payne. At the close of our interview I asked Richards why this happened. His verbatim answer: "I think it was from a totally different song, some country song or something. We just gave it to our office, or record company, said, 'We don't know who wrote this for sure, we think it was Robert Johnson,' da-da-da. They went through the bloody books and came up with a song called 'Love In Vain' and credited it to this . . . it was one of those, you know, executive slips, 'administration foulups.' "

You can make of that what you will, but I see no reason to question the depth of Richards' feeling for either Robert Johnson or any of the blues artists who continue to inspire his music.

CORRECTION

THE STORY ON TOM Waits in the November RECORD stated that his soundtrack for Francis Ford Coppola's film *One From The Heart* was nominated for a Grammy Award and that Waits had a role in the film *On The Nickel*. In fact, *One From The Heart* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Song Score, and Waits did not appear in *On The Nickel* but did write the movie's theme song.

TOP 100 ALBUMS

1. THRILLER — Michael Jackson *Epic*
2. AN INNOCENT MAN — Billy Joel *Columbia*
3. SYNCHRONICITY — Police *A&M*
4. WHAT'S NEW — Linda Ronstadt *Asylum*
5. GENESIS — Genesis *Atlantic*
6. CAN'T SLOW DOWN — Lionel Richie *Motown*
7. LIVE FROM EARTH — Pat Benatar *Chrysalis*
8. COLOUR BY NUMBERS — Culture Club *Virgin/Epic*
9. FLASHDANCE — Soundtrack *Casablanca*
10. FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF LIGHT — Bonnie Tyler *Columbia*
11. THE CROSSING — Big Country *Polydor*
12. PYROMANIA — Def Leppard *Mercury*
13. METAL HEALTH — Quiet Riot *Epic*
14. SPEAKING IN TONGUES — Talking Heads *Sire*
15. TRUE — Spandau Ballet *Chrysalis*
16. BIG CHILL — Soundtrack *Motown*
17. REACH THE BEACH — The Fixx *MCA*
18. LET'S DANCE — David Bowie *RCA*
19. UH-HUH — John Cougar Mellencamp *Riva*
20. PIPES OF PEACE — Paul McCartney *Columbia*
21. FEEL MY SOUL — Jennifer Holliday *Geffen*
22. ROCK 'N' SOUL, PART 1 — Hall & Oates *RCA*
23. ALIVE, SHE CRIED — The Doors *Elektra*
24. ELIMINATOR — ZZ Top *Warner Brothers*
25. INFIDELS — Bob Dylan *Columbia*
26. PRINCIPLE OF MOMENTS — Robert Plant *Atlantic*
27. THE WILD HEART — Stevie Nicks *Modern*
28. BORN AGAIN — Black Sabbath *Warner Brothers*
29. LITTLE ROBBERS — The Motels *Capitol*
30. PASSIONWORKS — Heart *Epic*
31. MORE FUN IN THE NEW WORLD — X *Elektra*
32. HEARTS & BONES — Paul Simon *Warner Brothers*
33. CARGO — Men At Work *Columbia*
34. PUNCH THE CLOCK — Elvis Costello *Columbia*
35. LAWYERS IN LOVE — Jackson Browne *Elektra*
36. HELLO BIG MAN — Carly Simon *Warner Brothers*
37. SPORTS — Huey Lewis & The News *Chrysalis*
38. SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS — Eurythmics *RCA*
39. THE PRESENT — The Moody Blues *Threshold*
40. MIKE'S MURDER — Joe Jackson *A&M*
41. RANT 'N' RAVE — Stray Cats *EMI*
42. RHYTHM OF YOUTH — Men Without Hats *MCA*
43. COLD BLOODED — Rick James *Gordy*
44. FLICK OF THE SWITCH — AC/DC *Atlantic*
45. DURAN DURAN — Duran Duran *Capitol*
46. SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY — Donna Summer *Mercury*
47. WAR — U2 *Island*
48. EVERYBODY'S ROCKIN' — Neil Young *Geffen*
49. THE REAL MACAW — Graham Parker *Arista*
50. FASCINATION! — Human League *A&M*
51. TWANG BAR KING — Adrian Belew *Island*
52. MURMUR — REM *IRS*
53. TEXAS FLOOD — Stevie Ray Vaughan *Epic*
54. KEEP IT UP — Loverboy *Columbia*
55. 1999 — Prince *Warner Brothers*
56. PLAYS LIVE — Peter Gabriel *Geffen*
57. TRASH IT UP! — Southside Johnny & The Jukes *Mirage*
58. NO FRILLS — Bette Midler *Atlantic*
59. PLEASURE VICTIM — Berlin *Geffen*
60. STATE OF CONFUSION — The Kinks *Arista*
61. CLOSE TO THE BONE — Tom Tom Club *Sire*
62. ALPHA — Asia *Geffen*
63. MADNESS — Madness *Geffen*
64. STAYING ALIVE — Soundtrack *RSO*
65. THE HURTING — Tears For Fears *Mercury*
66. PIECE OF MIND — Iron Maiden *Capitol*
67. BUSINESS AS USUAL — Men At Work *Columbia*
68. KILLER ON THE RAMPAGE — Eddie Grant *Portrait*
69. LISTEN — A Flock of Seagulls *Jive/Arista*
70. FRONTIERS — Journey *Columbia*
71. GET IT RIGHT — Aretha Franklin *Arista*
72. CUTS LIKE A KNIFE — Bryan Adams *A&M*
73. ALBUM — Joan Jett & The Blackhearts *MCA*
74. TRAVELS — Pat Metheny *ECM*
75. NAKED EYES — Naked Eyes *EMI*
76. WHAMMY — The B52's *Warner Brothers*
77. GIRL AT HER VOLCANO — Rickie Lee Jones *Warner Brothers*
78. SECRET MESSAGES — ELO *Jet*
79. KISSING TO BE CLEVER — Culture Club *Virgin/Epic*
80. TOO LOW FOR ZERO — Elton John *Geffen*
81. INFORMATION — Dave Edmunds *Columbia*
82. FIELD DAY — Marshall Crenshaw *Warner Brothers*
84. OUTSIDE INSIDE — The Tubes *Capitol*
85. NEW GOLD DREAMS — Simple Minds *A&M*
86. YOU BOUGHT IT, YOU NAME IT — Joe Walsh *Full Moon*
87. TAKE ANOTHER PICTURE — Quarterflash *Geffen*
88. BODY WISHES — Rod Stewart *Warner Brothers*
89. THE KEY — Joan Armatrading *A&M*
90. THE HIGH ROAD — Roxy Music *Warner Brothers/EG*
91. DEEP SEA SKIVING — Bananarama *Polygram*
92. WHITE FEATHERS — Kajagoogoo *EMI*
93. H_2O — Hall & Oates *RCA*
94. KIHNSPIRACY — Greg Kihn *Beserkley*
95. NON-FICTION — The Blasters *Warner Brothers*
96. LIONEL RICHIE — Lionel Richie *Motown*
97. AFTER THE SNOW — Modern English *Sire*
98. IN YOUR EYES — George Benson *Warner Brothers*
99. THE FINAL CUT — Pink Floyd *Columbia*
100. LOW RIDE — Earl Klugh *Capitol*

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CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION

Mitch Easter, the man who has everything, wants more

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Mitch Easter has his own recording studio (Drive-In, in North Carolina) where the Individuals, Pylon and other bands have recorded. He produces R.E.M.'s acclaimed records. He's touring the country with his own band, Let's Active, whose debut EP, *Afoot*, was released by I.R.S. in October.

But is the fair-haired southerner satisfied? Heck no: "I think producing is a real cool thing, but I wouldn't want people to think Let's Active is just a side project. A lot of people already think, 'Yeah, he thought it would be cool to play like those bands, so he got a guitar.' That's not true!"

Actually Let's Active—Easter, bassist Faye Hunter and drummer Sara Romweber—began working together about two years ago. The band's sound has some of the same dreamy quality as R.E.M.'s, but with a jangly pop feel a bit like the Monkees' *Headquarters*. Easter—a tough guy to satisfy—thinks these pop aspects are being exaggerated by the press.

"We've had all these reviews that say, 'Pure '60s Merseybeat revival,' " he sighs. "I don't see that at all."

PHOTO: PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Easter (right) with Hunter and Romweber: Why is this man smiling?

For one thing, Easter points out, his lyrics tend to be dark and downbeat. "Leader of Men" was inspired by the film *Missing*, and Hunter describes *Afoot*'s other songs as "all about disastrous love."

"No," Easter corrects, " 'Edge of the World' is about people with dead-end lives."

"Oh," the bassist smiles, "I didn't know."

So what is the deal, Mitch? Easter shrugs. "I don't know. My songs have to have at least a touch of something dark. I like happy songs but I somehow feel stupid writing them. I just saw an Al Jarreau video and everything in it was happy. I was shocked!" Easter smiles. "I'd forgotten you could write songs like that."

—Bill Flanagan

FORMERLY MICHAEL JACKSON

Michael Gregory plays the name game

BOSTON—What's in a name?

Well, suppose your name was Michael Jackson. Suppose you were a black singer-songwriter making dance-oriented pop music. And suppose you didn't sing "ABC" and "I Want You Back" as a child, "Beat It" and "Billie Jean" as an adult, and recently record "Say, Say, Say" with Paul McCartney. You might just have a severe identity problem on your hands.

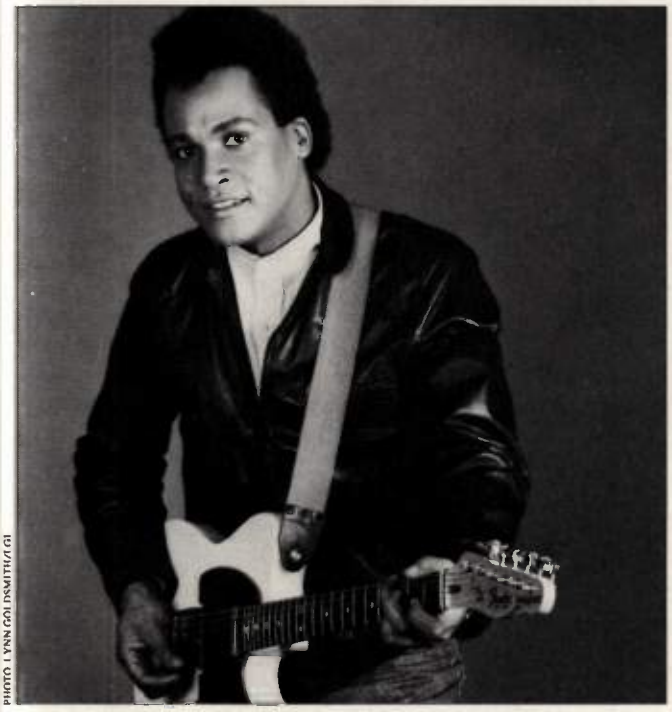


PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH/LGI

Gregory: Can't shake that name

"It was confusing even for me," says Michael Gregory Jackson, who changed his name to Michael Gregory nine months ago and has released a new solo album, *Situation X*, on Island. "It's just too complicated. He's all over the place. It's just impossible to get away from that name."

Actually, Gregory—who, incidentally, quite likes his namesake's music—got along for a number of years as Michael Gregory Jackson. But those were the '70s, when he was pursuing a critically-acclaimed avant-garde jazz career, recording on the Arista/Novus label and playing with Anthony Braxton, Oliver Lake, Jack DeJohnette and others.

Situation X is Gregory's first full-fledged foray into the pop field and it's his first album period in three years. "I wanted to get into some more immediacy with the music, as opposed to the cerebral," he explains. "I've always been into more rhythm-oriented music; I don't see it as much of a change. I still feel I'm using very different forms for pop and rock music, very specific chord voicings and things like that."

At the time of this interview, Gregory was making plans to put together a crack five-piece band in hopes of touring starting in December. "There hasn't been a band around for a number of years that has really blown me away," he says. "I can think of a Hendrix or the first Mahavishnu Orchestra—that's what I'm going for. I won't be presumptuous and say (it will be as powerful), but I'm going for a band that is very strong live. And I think the solos I'll take will definitely pique someone's curiosity as to who this guy is playing guitar."

—Jim Sullivan

WARMTH IS THE HOLY GRAIL

Peter Godwin pushes the emotional content of his music

NEW YORK—"All this, of course, is just part of my consumptive, melancholy, Ailing Artiste aura," Peter Godwin says angelically, coughing and sneezing his way through his first-ever American cold at PolyGram Records' Manhattan offices. "Behind all the synthesizers, I'm really very 19th Century."

PHOTO: EBET ROBERTS

Godwin: "I don't feel cool and detached."

Somehow, you'd never guess it. Must be the clothes. But with the attention paid, first to his 1982 *Images of Heaven* EP, and now to his first U.S. solo album, *Correspondence*, Godwin's European reputation as a Swell Dresser/Man Ahead of His Time is attracting notice over here.

As co-founder (with Duncan Browne) of the British band Metro back in the mid-'70s, he helped pioneer the languid, synthesized morphine-and-French-cigarettes pallor that has since become *de rigeur* among certain English Bands in the Know. Today, though, warmth seems to be Godwin's personal holy grail. "You can use synthesizers to make music that's soulless and cold," he observes, "but that, I think, has been a bit over played." Yet some critics have been casting a jaundiced eye toward the number of dance-oriented tracks on *Correspondence*. "On my album, there are three songs which are slow songs," Godwin explains. "They're deliberately there because I wanted an album that started in one place and took you somewhere else. I mean, 'Soul to Soul' is my favorite track. I like soul music and I was quite consciously trying to push the emotional content of the song. Still, I *have* had quite a lot of compliments on my 'cool and detached vocal approach' recently, which is funny because when I sing, I certainly don't *feel* cool and detached."

It almost sounds as if he's disappointed by the reaction, though it seems to have strengthened his resolve not to get painted into the corner that the success of "Baby's in the Mountains" and David Bowie's *Let's Dance* cover of Metro's first single, "Criminal World," could easily lead to. "I'll be doing gigs in America soon," he says. "I'm sure, through the live medium, that I'm going to get that rock edge back into it, which is something you lose a bit of in the studio. There'll be no drum machine on stage."

—Dan Hedges

AIMING FOR THE HORIZONTAL

Mental As Anything plugs in and hopes something happens

NEW YORK—"We write about a lot of traditional rock 'n' roll themes—romance, drinking, the things we like—but we give 'em a bit of a twist," says keyboardist-vocalist Greedy Smith, the looniest and most affable of the five ex-art students who formed Mental as Anything in Sydney, Australia, six years ago. "It's really important to us to aim our lyrics on the horizontal rather than talking down to anybody or setting ourselves up as macho heroes. We don't take ourselves seriously; *nobody* has ever taken us seriously."

Creatures of Leisure, the Mentals' fourth Australian album, is their second American release (*If You Leave Me, Can I Come Too?*, released in the States in 1982, was assembled from their first three LPs). "It's just a coincidence that it's got a lot of songs about broken romances," Smith observes, noting the consistently antic approach taken by the band's four writers—himself, guitarists Reg Mombassa and Martin Plaza and bassist Peter O'Doherty (drummer Wayne Delisle sticks to the skins). "We just go in and record about 25 songs, and the best 12 get on the album. We don't think about theme—we just put the best songs on." He characterizes the Mentals' sound as "pumping music, something you can dance to when you're drinking. It's pub-rock, Australian-style, I guess.

The Mentals: Is this any way to run a band?

"Our manager says we're supposed to play the songs like the records if we're going to get successful, but he's been asking us to do things for years and we haven't paid attention," Smith adds with a goofy laugh. "Let *him* have the ulcer—this is still really a hobby for us. We're supposed to be painters; that's what we're trained for. Music is good fun, but I don't think it's a career." Really? "That's what we keep telling our parents, anyway."

—David Gans

LOOKING FOR THE PAYOFF

Will The Payolas have to come in under the table?

TORONTO—"When people in the States find out we're from Canada, they're amazed we don't sound like Rush or Triumph. Those bands did not inspire us."

Generally, when Bob Rock of the Payolas speaks, you can take it to the bank. One of Canada's most important bands, the Payolas successfully marry lean urban reggae and punk, much like labelmates (A&M) UB-40, for a beguiling and topical filigree. Their third album, the Mick Ronson-produced *Hammer On A Drum*, finds the Payolas coming of age as a recording entity, coupling their propulsive sound to a clutch of songs on such timely subjects as child abuse ("We felt as artists we should have the freedom to write about this kind of thing," Rock says of "Where Is This Love"), nuclear horror and the joys of Christmas. Forceful and compelling music on a variety of levels, *Hammer* gives the quintet—Rock, Paul Hyde, drummer Chris Taylor, keyboardist Chris Livingston and bassist Alex Boynton—their clearest shot yet at a much-needed U.S. breakthrough.

The Payolas: "Our influences are only good records"

"We're one of those bands that had no intention of getting signed," chuckles Rock. "But if we really want to continue as a band we're going to need the States. The worst thing is to have to stop the writing process because you can't afford it."

Still, the goals remain simple, breakthrough or no. "All we want to do is make good records. Our influences are only good records and good songs, whether it's Tony Bennett or whoever. If some of the stuff sounds like Mott The Hoople and isn't like current headbanging music, it's because I like this kind of music. I can honestly say we've always done whatever we've wanted."

—Jonathan Gross

'MATES DON'T SEND TELEXES'

Tartan Terror leaves Elton in the lurch

LONDON—A joint world tour by Elton John and Rod Stewart, which was apparently never on, is now definitely off. Such are the mysterious vicissitudes of rock superstardom. According to John, the two multi-millionaires had reached a gentleman's agreement which would take them through Europe and the U.S., but Stewart opted out.

John, who is continuing his comeback with the single "Kiss the Bride," appeared on the British television show *American Football* in his capacity as part owner of an English soccer team. Betraying obvious bitterness, he commented: "We weren't going to play our old hits, but just new stuff and whatever struck us as fun to do at the time. I really thought it was a smashing idea. It was all set, but now it looks like it's not going to come off at all.

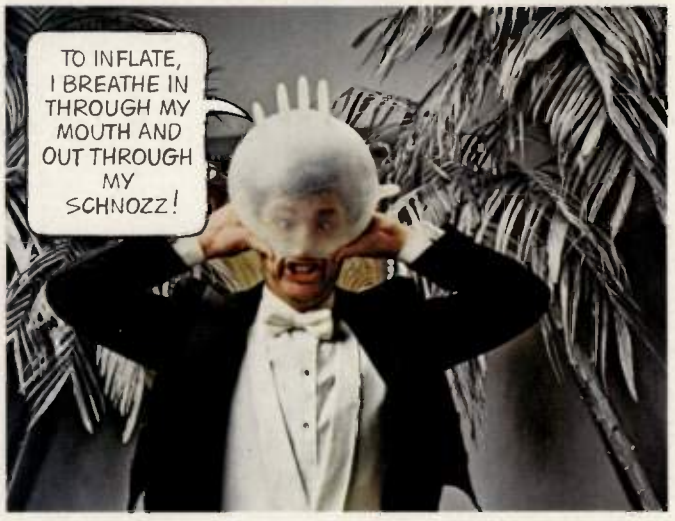
"I haven't really heard from Rod; he hasn't even given me a ring," he continued after comments on the relative merits of the Raiders and Cowboys. "Rod sent me a telex, cancelling out. And I thought Rod was a mate, but you know mates don't send mates telexes."

A spokesman for Stewart expressed surprise at John's anger. "I doubt it was anything more than a lark," he commented. "There certainly were no contracts or formal discussions. Frankly, I don't know what Elton's so upset about."—**Crispin Sartwell**

PHOTO: RICHARD YOUNG/RETNA LTD

Elton and Rod: Goodbye gold-paved road.

Miller Brewhahas



STEPPING INTO THE VOID

Big Twist bridges a blues generation gap

CHICAGO—The small town of Colp didn't rate a dot in the 1983 edition of Rand-McNally's Road Atlas map of Illinois. But 20-odd years ago, it was the unlikely black Las Vegas of the Southern Illinois region known as "Little Egypt"—the biggest stop on the R&B "chitlin' circuit" between East St. Louis and Cairo.

Colp had a predominantly black population of 200, nine nightclubs (you can nearly see some of their names in lights—Jr. Hatchett's, the Glass Pitcher, the New Orleans Room), and two churches. The house band at Jr. Hatchett's all through the '50s was a blues trio called the Mellow Fellows.

Big Twist (center) and the Mellow Fellows: Pioneering old audiences as well as new

"It was the liveliest spot around," recalls Larry "Big Twist" Nolan, whose resurrected version of the Mellow Fellows, based some 300 miles north in Chicago, has released a new LP on Alligator Records, as well as what may qualify as the first scripted video clip in the blues idiom. "At the time," Twist continues, "Colp was wide open for gambling—paid off, of course. Acts like James Brown, Hank Ballard, Ike Turner and Little Milton used to come through. A lot of times they didn't travel with a group, so the Mellow Fellows would practice the songs in the afternoon and we'd back 'em up that night."

The nucleus of the late '50s Mellow Fellows was a trio of brothers from Terre Haute, Indiana, incomprehensibly named Larry Nolan ("Twist"), Ronnie West and Larry Williams (the latter sibling notorious at the time for not denying he'd originated the hit "Boney Maronie"). It wasn't until the early '70s that this on-again, off-again house band was "discovered" by saxophonist Terry Ogolini and guitarist Pete Special, a couple of white Chicago emigrants making camp in the nearby university town of Carbondale. Special recalls being "practically kidnapped" one night by Ogolini and taken to Buckner, Illinois, sort of a "subdued" Colp. In a roadhouse called Lyin' Sam's, where the band was partitioned from the rowdy crowd by chicken wire, two worlds made contact.

"There he was, playing drums and singing country and blues standards in this Godforsaken honky-tonk," Special says of his first encounter with Twist. "The thing that impressed me was that he had a trademark on everything he sang. Every time he told a story through a song, it was very much a Big Twist story."

Special suggested they start up a band and go on the road, "but Twist was leery—unsure of what my story was and where I was coming from. It took a year for me to persuade him I was for real."

Twist confirms his skepticism: "I thought Pete was full of shit that first night. I'd heard it all before. He finally convinced me to get ambitious, 'cause he's a doer. He's persistent."

From meager origins as a four-piece blues combo (Special, guitar; Ogolini, sax; Twist, vocals and drums; and Twist's brother Ronnie on Hammond B-3 organ and bass pedal), the reconstituted Mellow Fellows did eventually catapult their rotund frontman into a blues land of milk and honey—Chicago. But not before Special and Ogolini received their baccalaureates in the blues (neither member ever having made it to classes at Southern Illinois University once they'd discovered the action in Colp and Buckner).

"We travelled three primary circuits," says Special. "We'd play the college scene in Carbondale. Then we'd do Holiday Inns. Then we'd steer down to Kentucky and Tennessee and play the chitlin' circuit.

"To college kids, we were the authentic Chicago blues band. To the Holiday Inn crowd, Twist was a Fats Domino figure. In the South, we played to a black blues crowd. Surprisingly, we didn't have to change our music from one to another."

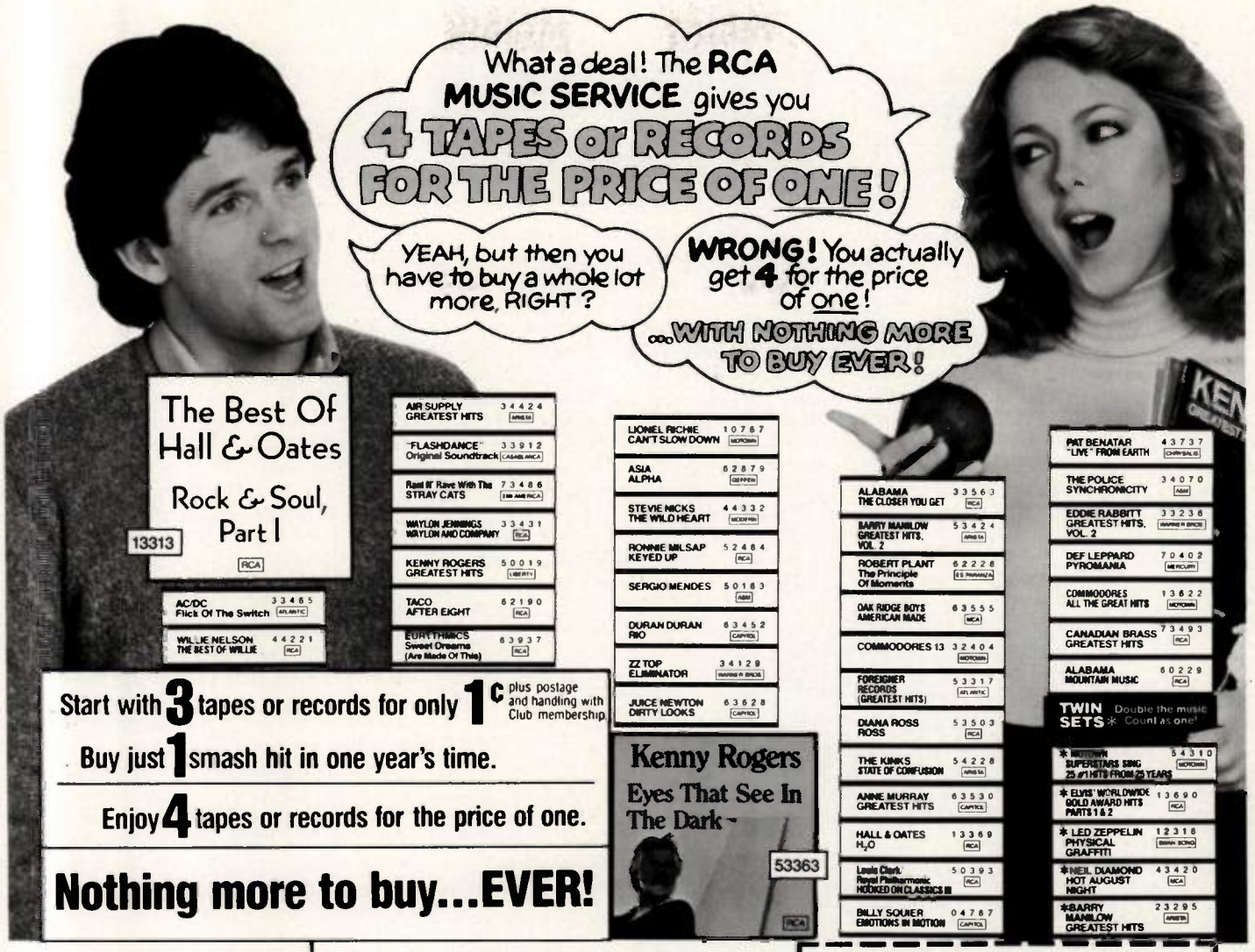
In 1979, the band signed with the heretofore bluegrass-bent Flying Fish label, and cut two albums that, according to Special, "were good, but a little off-base. We spent far too much time making things sound clean and nice and pretty and not enough time concentrating on the heart and guts of the sound. Of course, we were in the studio for the first time and weren't really in the driver's seat."

That's all changed now that Twist and his eight-piece rhythm and brass revue have gone across town to Alligator Records, which, like Flying Fish, is operated out of a wood-frame house by a staff of five. The difference is that Alligator's knowledge of blues marketing is second to none. When AOR ceased to be a viable market for Alligator releases, label exec Bruce Iglauer began to notice black stations like WXOL-AM, Chicago, and WLOK-AM, Memphis, rolling back to their roots. Twist, in his refined, post-honky-tonk state of voice, evoked the feeling of Little Milton or Clarence Carter. He was a natural to fill that void. To make sure of it, the band tapped Gene "Daddy G" Barge, a former staff producer for Chess Records, to co-produce (with Special) its Alligator debut, *Playing For Keeps*.

"Pioneering old audiences as well as new ones—that's important," says Special, who, of course, was weaned on the chitlin' circuit when it was still wild and woolly.

"A lot of the singers from the Little Milton generation aren't around these days," echoes Twist. "But that audience never went away. If we're heard on the radio, there's an audience that'll buy our record. They've been lookin' around for our sound for years."

—Cary Baker



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- Oak Ridge Boys: Gt. Hits 44417
- John Cougar: American Fool 40331
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- Rick Springfield: Living Oz 53844
- A Flock Of Seagulls: Listen 33905
- Lionel Richie 44354
- Rubinstein: Beethoven Con. 5 24408
- K. Rogers: We've Got Tonight 34557
- Quarterflash: Another Picture 33973
- John Denver: It's About Time 24563
- Triumph: Never Surrender 53938
- Sylvia: Snapshot 14747
- Rush: Moving Pictures 43915
- Best Beach Boys 23946
- Hank Williams, Jr.: Gt. Hits 34553
- Elton John: Too Low Zero 10196
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BUNNY MATTHEWS

NEW ORLEANS

'TIME FOR A BRIGHTER DAY'

Remembering James Booker, 1939-1983

"There's always an exception to quite a few rules," New Orleans pianist James Booker, who died November 8 at the age of 43, once said. "If you're qualified to be an exception, that's something that's quite natural to draw all kinds of negative responses and it's very difficult to deal with and for this reason, I've been just about on the brink of insanity three or four times. So I usually keep myself kinda posted on what time it is. It's time for a brighter day because we've had a whole lot of the other way."

The exceptional Booker, son of a professional dancer from Texas turned Baptist preacher and a gospel-singing mother, was born December 17, 1939 in New Orleans and spent most of his childhood in the Gulf Coast town of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. He was considered a keyboard prodigy and began classical piano lessons while still a toddler. At 10, he taught himself to play the saxophone and the same year, he was critically injured after being hit by a speeding ambulance.

PHOTO SYNDEY BYRD

Booker: A lifetime quest for euphoria

Booker would later attribute his lifetime quest for "euphoria" (which included the use of large quantities of alcohol and heroin) to the accident, explaining: "I was given morphine and that's probably the first experience of euphoria I ever experienced. You know if you get hit by an ambulance, they're not going to let you just lay there and suffer. So if some of these rumors about me are true—about me being a drug addict—I didn't ask to be hit by that ambulance. It was an accident."

At 11, Booker began a regular stint on a New Orleans radio station, displaying his keyboard prowess on the piano and organ. As "Little Booker," he cut his first single, "Doing the Hambone," three years later, under the direction of bandleader Dave Bartholomew, who, at the same time, was introducing Antoine "Fats" Domino to the world. According to Booker's recollections, he was the man (or boy) responsible for the piano on several of Domino's greatest hits. His friends, Booker said, warned him to stay away from the less-than-angelic Bartholomew but Booker, as throughout his career, had his own idiosyncratic method of judging business associates: "I went to his house, counted his Cadillacs and I said, 'Well, if that's the way you do it, then shit, me and Dave gonna be partners.' "

Booker, however, would never have the commercial success of either Fats Domino or pianist/bandleader Huey "Piano" Smith during the '50s or early '60s. His one hit record, "Gonzo" (named after a character in the film, *The Pusher*), landed on the *Billboard* charts on November 11, 1960 and rose to 43 before peaking. Ironically, the record—an organ instrumental—owes more to latter-day surfing sounds than to the slow simmer of New Orleans second-line funk. Not that Booker ever owed allegiance to any one particular style—during the course of performing a single selection, Booker would meander from the etudes of Chopin to the polyrhythms of Professor Longhair to a snippet of something he'd once heard in a Jerry Lewis movie (Booker's favorite actor) to a sordid, gutsy blues which neatly evolved into "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," the perennial Sunday School favorite.

"I like variety," Booker said. "I like the freedom to express that variety. That's something that has to be earned and you can't earn it overnight."

In 1970, at New Orleans' most famous rhythm and blues nightclub, the Dew Drop Inn, Booker was arrested by police officers, who had observed him attempting to conceal a bottle of white powder in his coat pocket. The same year, Booker pled guilty to "attempted possession" of heroin and was sentenced to two years at hard labor at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. Because the crime was his first offense, Booker was released after serving approximately half his sentence.

Producer Richard Perry, who had first encountered Booker while producing a Fats Domino album, hired Booker to play piano for some Ringo Starr sessions, and Booker cut a string of live albums in Europe, generally recording for anyone who had a spare $1,000 in cash.

Rounder Records, which had released Booker's 1977 Swiss album (*New Orleans Piano Wizard: Live!*) in the U.S. in 1981, sent producer Scott Billington down to New Orleans in October of 1982 for a three-day session which resulted in Booker's *Classified* album. The week before the session, Booker was hospitalized with a seizure and when the session finally commenced, Booker spent two days in a corner of the studio, staring at the wall. On the third day, as Billington prepared to return to Massachusetts without any tapes, Booker cut the entire album in four hours. In the middle of Professor Longhair's "Big Chief," Booker looked at his watch, stopped playing and walked out of the studio, announcing that he had to get to the bank to cash his session check.

Booker's death, according to the coroner's report, was due to intestinal bleeding and heart and lung failure. As Jim Russell, a veteran New Orleans record man who had presented Booker at sock hops during the '50s, said the day of Booker's funeral, "Booker was a man who lived 430 years in 43 years."

Booker himself issued his own epitaph during an interview five years earlier: "If he handles the ivories right, he's the Ivory Emperor. If he's just a piano player that oughta be making zillions and ain't, he ain't nothing but a Piano Prince." ○

CHEATING THE FANS

GINA ARNOLD

The hype surrounding David Bowie's American tour this summer reached epic proportions 'round about July when, in a *Time* magazine cover story which made him out to be the progenitor of every style of music to hit the airwaves since 1969, Jay Cocks called Bowie "the perpetual next big thing." Since that story, every Sunday section in every paper from North Platte, Nebraska, to New South Wales has had a feature on the former Thin White Duke, even though 12 years ago these same "respectable" papers would hardly devote even one column inch to the more daring Ziggy Stardust. The backlash of all this misplaced publicity has yet to hit, but hit it will, the same way it hit Bruce Springsteen in 1975 when his face became the third ever to grace the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek* in the same week.

The difference between the Bowie overhype and the Springsteen debacle is fairly marked, however. The faith that Jon Landau, Dave Marsh and Jay Cocks had in Springsteen has yet to wane, and although the hoopla of 1975 was premature, the truth of the claims made by the artist's supporters bore fruit with a bullet in years to come. The David Bowie hype, on the other hand, is of a more insidious nature and its implications are far more sinister than the innocent raves parlayed into big publicity for Springsteen. Besides being about 10 years overdue, the Bowie raves were utterly unfounded on any immediate claim to rock 'n' roll genius. His latest album, *Let's Dance*, met only lukewarm praise upon its release in April, with reviewers quick to criticize the record's dearth of new material, among other things. Three of the eight tracks on *Let's Dance* were remakes of previously-recorded material, and the five others did not match the excellence of his earlier work. The album was certainly accessible and polished, thanks to producer Nile Rodgers, but, far from breaking new ground, this merely underscored Bowie's acumen as an employer.

That Bowie didn't sell out a number of his stadium concerts this summer is not so surprising in light of these facts. After all, who are his fans? Either they are cult followers dating back to the days of Ziggy, or they are teenyboppers who think Bowie's cute. Under ordinary circumstances he would have played the larger arenas and all his dedicated followers could have lined up for front row seats. Instead, the unquestioning acceptance of the tour as last year's Big Rock Event succeeded only in puffing up the potential audience to include some celebrity watchers: behold the wonders of rigorous and constant promotions and advertising. The ordinary rock fans, the legions who fill stadiums, don't know or care about David Bowie, despite *Let's Dance*, despite *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*, despite what *Time* magazine says. They've never heard "Heroes" or "Panic In Detroit," and frankly, they wouldn't like them if they did. The industry's creation of a huge media event out of Bowie's tour to some extent backfired. The manufactured hysteria didn't fill stadiums, though it did sell more tickets than otherwise would have been bought, but it also alienated some of the aforementioned long-time and/or newly-impassioned fans.

> A complete separation of performing artists and recording artists may be the next step necessary in the revitalization of rock 'n' roll.

As it was I stayed home with a lot of other disillusioned fans. Seeing an artist in a 16,000 seat arena is no great joy but at least there is a semblance of it still being a rock concert. There's something unholy about stadiums, even apart from the discomfort and the indignity of paying to go watch a television screen. In rock 'n' roll atmosphere is everything, especially for an artist like Bowie who capitalizes on glamour. There is nothing glamorous about a stadium, and I didn't have to make a personal appearance to find that out.

One can only hope the lag in ticket sales for groups like Asia, Bowie, and Culture Club, all of whom are selling lots of records, will teach the industry the difference between a concert and an event. The disparity between the excellence of a lot of new records on the market and the inconsistency of the accompanying performances—or lack thereof, in the case of Michael Jackson and some other popular recording artists—demonstrates what's wrong with today's vision of rock 'n' roll.

"Rock of the Eighties," the phrase used by so many new music radio stations, is obviously meant to be heard and not seen—at least, not seen live. In the music business, apparently, all the energy and spirit inherent in rock itself is considered dead weight. And who knows—maybe that's a good thing. A complete separation of performing artists and recording artists may be the next step necessary for the revitalization of rock 'n' roll. When Michael Jackson spends nearly a million dollars on a video project instead of going on tour, one begins to see the gap MTV and its cohorts are creating. Record companies that pour money into video in order to increase record sales will most likely end up ignoring groups whose live show transcends their records or who might not be photogenic enough for television. If this happens, then artists who are really dedicated to rock 'n' roll in the old-fashioned sense—the Fabulous Thunderbirds, the Blasters, Bob Seger, Bruce Springsteen and the Clash all spring to mind—will go back to plying their trade on the club circuit. They'll probably have more fun at it anyway, to hell with the big bucks; and I know the fans will have more fun. The irony of it all will be that this could come to pass because of the new music, which in turn stems from punk rock, whose central tenet was a rejection of vinyl perfection, tours, stadiums and superstars.

The Bowie situation may not portend all this. It may simply be the apex of all the bad aspects of the last 10 years of rock 'n' roll: the marketing, the mass producing and the media hyping of a very fine artist. Ultimately, this process cheats the fans. Perhaps Bowie's tour will come to symbolize the ultimate separation of the visual and the spiritual aspects of rock. Let's keep our fingers crossed, anyway, because the way things stand so far, to quote Johnny Rotten via Bowie's old friend Iggy Pop, "This is no fun, no fun at all." ○

Gina Arnold is a freelance writer based in Palo Alto, California, and editor of Waves, *an in-house publication for radio station KFJC in Los Altos Hills, California.*

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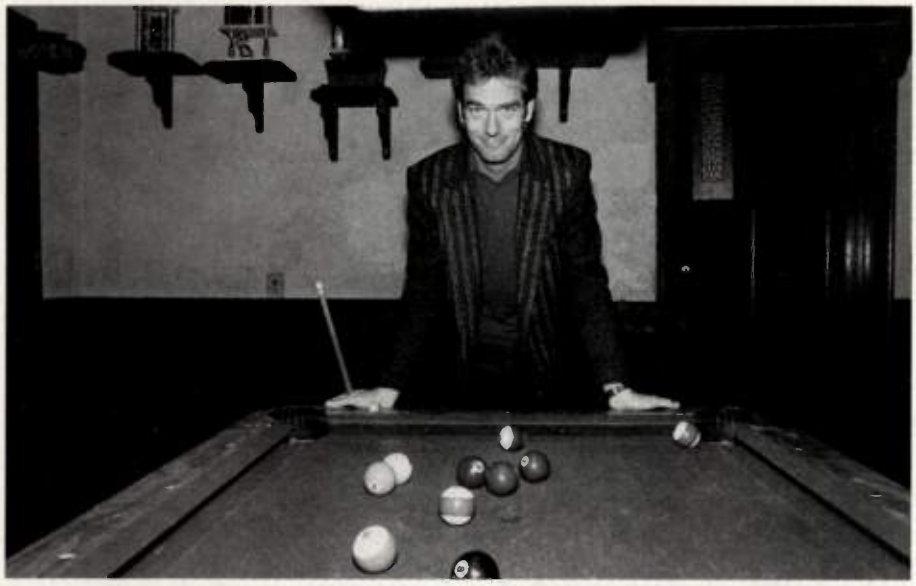
INFILTRATE AND DOUBLE-CROSS



A bit of covert action pays off for Huey Lewis and the News

BY DAVID GANS

HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS HAD a great year in 1982: Their second album, *Picture This*, earned them some serious respect in the form of airplay, MTV exposure (for "Do You Believe In Love?"), critical approbation and record sales. It's all in accordance with a strategy which Lewis—vocalist, harp blower and songwriter—flippantly describes as "infiltrate and double-cross." Loosely translated, this means "make the music the record company wants to hear, and then once you've got some dues under your belt, slide on over to the stuff *you* dig and go for the gusto!"

So why did Lewis and the News sweat out most of 1983 in a holding pattern with no record in the stores? "Because Chrysalis Records went through a reorganization," Lewis explains as he takes a seat behind his manager's desk. (The label abandoned its independently-distributed status last year in favor of affiliation with CBS, a move which could be seen as a reduction of the relative sizes of Chrysalis' fish in the expanded pond of a multinational combine). "We didn't feel they were in a position to promote our new record properly, so we held on to the tapes." For emphasis, he reaches behind him into a closet and pulls out a carton containing a reel of 2" tape—one of the actual master reels of the third News LP, *Sports*.

The News-vs.-Chrysalis scenario was similar to that of Tom Petty's famous holdout prior to *Hard Promises*, but the good-natured Lewis refused to let it get him down. "In fact, we recut a couple of songs—'The Heart of Rock & Roll' and 'I Want a New Drug'—because after going on the road and playing them for two months, we finally arrived at the arrangements we should have had in the first place.

"We flirted with other record companies, but when it was all said and done, Chrysalis got themselves back together and made us an offer we couldn't refuse." The legal battle to escape their contract would have been a long, drawn-out affair, Lewis notes, "and we wanted to put the record out anyway." The label guaranteed the band enough additional money to make up for any shortfall that might have occurred had the company's business changes affected its ability to move the LP.

Lewis' musical "double-cross" seems to be paying off for all concerned. "Heart and Soul," the first single from *Sports*, charged up the charts, taking the LP with it, and the video is in heavy rotation on MTV. The songs on this third album evince more soul and blues influences than the first two LPs, and there's even a cover of Hank Williams' "Honky Tonk Blues."

"Our philosophy has always been that there are only two kinds of music: good and bad," Lewis observes. "I like a lot of modern stuff, but I also like the old songs. Why can't we have the same kinds of songs—the same kinds of emotions—as the early rock'n'roll, but with modern kinds of sounds?"

Which takes us back in time to Clover, a hard-luck band whose personnel roster tells a tale of talent ill-served by circumstances. In addition to Lewis and keyboardist Sean Hopper (now a member of the News), Clover included multi-stringsman John McFee, a frequent sideman on Elvis Costello and Carlene Carter albums (and others) and a member of the last edition of the Doobie Brothers, and Alex Call, a songwriter (Tommy Tutone's "867-5309/Jenny," Pat Benatar's "Little Too Late," et al.) and singer whose whose debut solo album included "Just Another

PHOTO: WARING ABBOTT

Saturday Night," a popular video on MTV.

In their Sonoma County hippie days, Clover recorded two albums of countrified rock for Fantasy Records. From 1972, when Lewis and Hopper joined, until 1976, the band languished in California playing gigs and hoping for an opportune record deal. A gig at Los Angeles' Palomino club caught the attention of Nick Lowe and his manager, Dave Robinson.

"It turns out these guys were fans of Clover," McFee recalls. "Nick was in a band, Brinsley Schwarz, that was like a Clover copy band. One of their songs had a lyric that went, 'Gonna saddle up and ride away, back to the hills where Clover plays.' And Jake (Riviera, Robinson's partner in Stiff Records) was saying, 'If you guys came to England you'd kill 'em.' " When Robinson and Riviera landed them a recording contract, Clover moved lock, stock and babies to England—just in time for their eclectic, countrified rock'n'soul sound to be blasted back to the Stone Age by the Sex Pistols. After cutting two unsuccessful albums and backing Elvis Costello on *My Aim Is True*, Clover was over.

But Lewis had to keep playing—"I couldn't be a carpenter any more, it was too late for that." He arranged a series of jams at Uncle Charlie's, a tiny club nearby Corte Madera, and invited the neighbors in to play. From these informal sessions, dubbed "Monday Night Live," a group coalesced that was briefly known as Huey Lewis and American Express, then took the name Huey Lewis and the News. In addition to Lewis and Hopper, the lineup included guitarist Chris Hayes and three former members of a funky, jazzy Marin rock band called Soundhole: bassist Mario Cipollina (younger brother to ex-Quicksilver guitarist John), drummer Bill Gibson, and saxophonist-guitarist Johnny Colla. It was also during the Monday Night Live gigs that Lewis emerged as the confident vocalist and frontman we see today.

As the popularity of the News increased, representatives of the major record labels started to haunt their gigs. Signing with Chrysalis in 1980, the band recorded *Huey Lewis and the News* with engineer-producer Bill Schnee, who'd worked with Pablo Cruise and Boz Scaggs, among others. "The first album had some great songs on it, but the sounds could have been better," says Lewis. It also showed a stylistic focus much narrower than that displayed by the band in its club performances—but that's what "infiltrate and double-cross" is all about. Slowly, carefully, Huey Lewis and the News reintegrated the R&B, blues and soul into their material, and by the time they went to record their second album the skinny ties and vaguely New Wave posturings were put aside in favor of a more natural presentation, both musical and visual.

"The reason we (produced) the second album ourselves was because it was a 'do-or-die' album," Lewis explains. "It was obviously going to have to be 'commercial,' with a hit single or two—or three. I felt that if someone was going to draw that line and still not lose the personality of the band, it ought to be us.

"It took us five or six months of 'going to lunch in LA' to convince everybody—including ourselves—that we could produce it." The gamble paid off when "Do You Believe In Love" cracked the charts and became a favorite video on MTV. "I knew it was commercial, but I didn't know it was going to be a hit until I heard it on KFRC (San Francisco's leading Top 40 station). When I heard the song on the radio, in the scheme of things, it took on a life of its own. It was 77 on the singles chart, but I knew it was going to be a hit."

Despite music video's contribution to the success of Huey Lewis and the News, the singer has mixed feelings about its increasing importance to a recording artist's career. "It's good because it breaks new acts," he says. "Until MTV, music was going nowhere. A lot of deserving bands have broken on MTV that wouldn't have made it otherwise.

"But just like the book is usually better than the movie, the song is usually better than the video. Sometimes I think videos are best made to songs that don't mean anything. If you have a song that's lyrically very visual—maybe it's ambiguous—a video just makes that three-dimensional song two-dimensional."

Video isn't what Lewis is most interested in, though. "I'm more concerned with the music," he asserts, "but nowadays you'd *better* be interested in the visuals, because that's what sells. There's no question about it: video is the cutting edge, where FM radio was before. And," he admits, "M-T-Bee been bery, bery good to me." ○

SPA

PHOTO: CHESTER SIMPSON

SPANDAU BALLET

THEIR AIM IS TRUE

HOW CAN A BAND BE ACCUSED OF SELLING OUT WHEN ALL IT EVER WANTED TO DO WAS BUY IN?

BY MARK HUNTER

PARIS

TONY HADLEY'S ACCENT IS North London working class, but his look is urban gentleman: the puff of an ascot at his throat, shirt buttoned nearly to the collar, pressed, pleated slacks, and a short haircut that emphasizes a mild wave in his dark hair. He's the image of a young man on the rise, and that's appropriate, because Spandau Ballet, for whom he's lead singer, are rising quickly indeed. With their single "True" having reached the top ten in America, England, France, and elsewhere, and the album of the same name ascending to the top 20, Spandau's five members (none older than 24) have gratified their outspoken desire "to be on the pedestal of high success," in Hadley's words.

Sipping a drink in a hotel bar, Hadley projects a sense not only of triumph, but of vindication. "We were considered superficial when we started," he recounts, "in the sense that the music press didn't believe we could be honest, *unless* we were contrived. It was as though a band that could come along and be fashionable and *visual* had to be contrived. Which was nonsense."

It was, in a way. It's Spandau's natural advantage that Hadley's circa 1940 matinée-idol looks (he's influenced in that direction by a lifelong admiration for Frank Sinatra) and bassist Martin Kemp's tough-guy features photograph wonderfully. So well, in fact, that in 1978, a year before Spandau was formed, Kemp was doing bit parts in TV series, while Hadley was featured in a three-part photo serial for a true love magazine (as the blackmail victim of a jealous girl, saved when she's killed by a hit-and-run driver). When Spandau emerged from the London "soulboy" disco scene with a blast in 1980, wearing kilts and dashing blouses draped over them by up-and-coming designers, shock waves were felt throughout the British music industry. "Here were five people, very young, dressed very fashionably—which was a part of growing up—being pretty rebellious," says Hadley with a half-rueful grin.

The rebellion consisted mainly in saying that being young and looking sharp mattered, and that "old men" (a favorite Spandau expression) playing rock didn't. From the start Spandau has made no bones about their disdain for the established stars of rock 'n' roll, either as artists or as models for their own career. As "True" indicates, they learned their music by "listening to Marvin (Gaye) all night long," not all that revolutionary a procedure. But one might say Spandau has helped create a bit of a revolution, all the same. They—especially songwriter keyboardist Gary Kemp and manager Steve Dagger—did so by exploiting superbly two still-growing media for pop music, discos and video. These channels for music are in Spandau's veins, the keys to both their sound and their success.

American musicians were burdened by fear and loathing of disco music in the mid- to late '70s, despite several new bands, like the Talking Heads and Blondie, scoring early hits with tracks tailored for discos. Spandau's members, however, never went through the "disco sucks" phase. In the 1970s, when they were all students at North London's Owens Grammar School, they were hanging out in the soulboy clubs, where the fare was Donna Summer, the Trammps, and Bootsie Collins. "It was a massive scene," recalls Hadley, "which no one was paying attention to. The music industry and press were more interested in groups playing smelly bars. But a lot more people go to discos than go to concerts." It was a crowd to whom the right look mattered, and one which lacked a band to call its own. "We never actually created a scene," stresses Hadley. "It was already there." As Steve Dagger said in 1981, "All you needed was a band to go onstage wearing those clothes"—the clothes the kids in

ing those clothes"—the clothes the kids in the soulboy discos were already wearing—"and they'd have it made."

There were some details to work out first, of course. Gary Kemp, the best musician in the band—he'd been writing songs since his parents gave him his first guitar at the age of eleven, in 1970—spent the time between leaving school and starting Spandau living off odd jobs and the dole, while checking out the punk movement. "The punk thing was doomed to failure," comments Hadley. "It was a welcome change from the boring mega-groups, but its main effect was to lay the ground for future generations of groups, like us." Kemp would say later that "punk wasn't smart enough, it wasn't interesting enough, and there weren't enough girls." His first attempt at finding an alternative was a power pop band with Hadley, guitarist-reedman Steve Norman and drummer John Keeble, all of whom would later join Spandau Ballet (a name taken from a graffito in Berlin). The addition of Kemp's younger brother Martin, who had never played a note of bass before joining Spandau, seems as much a tribute to punk's head-first amateurism as it is a shrewd acknowledgement of the right image being as important as the right sound. After six months of intensive rehearsals, the band played its first gig—a private party for 50 enthusiastic friends—on November 17, 1979. A month later Spandau gave a concert at the soulboy Blitz club, for an audience packed with record company heavies, nearly all of whom immediately offered contracts. (Chris Blackwell of Island Records reportedly wanted to sign Spandau after hearing the first three songs.)

A lot of young bands would have lost their heads at this point, but not Spandau. They knew exactly what they needed: power over the direction and promotion of their career. This theme and desire runs through everything the band does, in business and in music. You can catch a hint of it in "True" when Hadley croons (remember, he's a Sinatra fan) that he wants to take "the sound of my soul" and "bring it to the world." He comments, "We had to change things—the industry had become bland and set in its ways. We wanted to create music for the people in clubs and discos, in an environment where the group had control." In practical terms, this meant that when Spandau finally signed with Chrysalis (after "playing the companies against each other," admits Hadley), the band also demanded, and received, a monetary commitment for a video with every single. Spandau also established their own production company, described by Hadley as "a framework to get into things like video, books"—they're releasing a history of the band soon—"and signing other groups, when we're not so bloody busy." Not incidentally, the group also retained the right to choose their own video and record producers, to ensure control over their image and sound.

Spandau used their power by tapping the disco medium in a new and impressive way. "We looked heavily into the medium of 12-inch singles," says Hadley. "Black American artists were doing 12-inchers, but they were just instrumentals—there wasn't anything different. We turned it upside down, so there was always something new happening. You were entertained completely in seven minutes, and you couldn't get away from it on the dance floor." The concept is exemplified by "True," which moves from quiet instrumental passages to full vocal harmonies, climaxing in Norman's spare sax solo.

Spandau released 12-inch singles, starting with "To Cut a Long Story Short," three weeks before edited radio versions, in conjunction with video clips. That first single sold half a million copies in England, and, as the band had hoped, eliminated the need for extensive touring. "We said, you don't have tour to promote records," comments Hadley. "It could be better done with 12-inch singles, to give people an appetizer. We don't play out that often, but the most important thing is that when we do, the kids come and see us." What the kids see is a well-rehearsed, elegantly staged show, in carefully-chosen venues like London's Royal Albert Hall—"Instead of walking into a grotty, beer-stained place, they're in one that's architecturally beautiful."

Spandau knew exactly what they needed: power over the direction and promotion of their career. This theme and desire runs through everything the band does, in business and in music.

It's not Spandau's fault that there's a tremendous irony in the success they've gained through soul formulae worked out by Black artists, who are largely denied access to the video outlets that have brought Spandau to the world (for example, only Michael Jackson, and to a lesser extent Prince, Eddy Grant, and Shalamar have won regular airplay on MTV, which slotted "True" in heavy rotation). "To be honest, every form of pop borders on Black music," says Hadley. "You can't get away from it." Like Pat Boone, whose stardom in the '50s derived from covers of black rhythm and blues hits, Spandau have made it big partly because the originators of their style are unacceptable (especially on the visual level) to a young, white mass audience. Yet Spandau are not merely imitators. As Hadley says, "We're not a rock'n'roll band at all"—nor, for that matter, a soul band, despite their evident influences—"we're a *pop* band." That is, a band that uses current genres effectively, without creating one of their own.

What they have created, or rather revived, is the concept of pop artists not as youth leaders (in the manner of the Clash, for instance) but as youth representatives. Spandau are acutely aware of the difference. Hadley explains, with just a touch of a sneer: "If you look at the '70s groups, the demi-gods, they either lost contact, or never had contact with their audiences. They were like puppets on a string, in glittery suits and outrageous costumes, which was not significant to the audience—there was no parley. Our audience is into the same things as us, clothes- and idea-wise. We could say, 'Let's design an outfit that would shock the world,' but that wouldn't mean anything. Sally Jones down the road wants to feel she can get involved, too." Dressed to match her style, playing the beats she knows how to dance to, Spandau gives her the chance. And when Sally goes to the scene, Tommy who lives next door goes after her.

"I like to think," Hadley opines, "that the audience can gain confidence out of what we have to say. We were exactly like them four years ago, doing a job." They still are, actually, only now for their own limited company, with offices in London. "It shows that you don't have to have a lot of money to be a success," Hadley concludes. No; you only have to *want* to make a lot of money, an attitude Spandau has never kept secret. Consequently, unlike the punks, whose initial audience smelled betrayal when their heroes graduated to the big time, Spandau can never be, and never has been, accused of selling out.

Or, as Hadley puts it, "We didn't have a neo-political stance, or say the record companies stink. That'd be ridiculous—you need their muscle to promote effectively. What we said was that the existing framework in which we wanted to promote the music wasn't right, and *that's* what we wanted to change."

In the process Spandau, along with Duran Duran, Culture Club, and a few other "new, young, visual bands," in Hadley's phrase, have brought pop music back to an earlier era, when its message, if it had one, was entirely implicit in its style and attitude. It's an approach perfectly suited to the emerging visual trend in pop music, and it's to Spandau's credit that they were among the first to realize how the times have changed. "We really wanted to prove a point," states Hadley, "and we proved it." True. ○

DEAN JOHNSON

'WRONG' SONGS, RIGHT PLACE

In defiance of South African policy, Juluka plays on

Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu are outlaws. Not rock 'n' roll outlaws who throw chairs through motel windows, mind you, but serious musicians who face years in prison should they sing what the authorities in their homeland of South Africa deem the "wrong" songs; outlaws whose performances in South Africa are "technically illegal," according to Clegg, because their band, Juluka, refuses to obtain a government-required permit to play for integrated audiences; outlaws who refuse to hold their tongues in public.

"I've said some incredible things on stage," Clegg states. "I've said the only future is a non-racial future and that we don't need politicians. For two hours our audience gets to see a non-racial future acted out on stage." Politics, the outlaw image and good old-fashioned sweat—all central elements of the rock 'n' roll myth—are uniquely combined in this multi-racial sextet. The simplest part of the story is that Juluka's name is the Zulu word for "sweat."

Sweat is something that comes naturally to South Africa's most popular live act, whose music blends western folk styles with the traditional sounds of the Zulu. Courage, too, seems native to the personalities of Juluka's principals, Clegg, a 30-year-old white Englishman, and Mchunu, his long-time Zulu friend (the other four bandmembers—drummer Zola Mtiya, keyboardist Glenda Millar, bassist Gary Van Zyl and flute and sax player Scorpion Madondo—are essentially backup musicians with no say in the group's direction).

Clegg himself has been arrested and threatened with deportation. Though he's lived in South Africa since he was seven (his family moved there from Zimbabwe after moving to Zimbabwe from England), he is still an English citizen. Mchunu has been shot at by police who didn't recognize him. Juluka has had shows stopped in mid-song, others shut down before they even began, with police using dogs and tear gas to disperse the audiences.

But this is business as usual for Clegg and Mchunu, who began performing together 15 years ago. Clegg's mother, a native of Zimbabwe, had married a Royal Air Force pilot stationed there and returned to England with him. Six months after Johnny's birth they divorced, and she moved back to Zimbabwe. A Zulu flat cleaner who worked in the Clegg's building became a father figure of sorts to young Johnny and it was he who introduced Clegg to Zulu music and customs, which the latter immersed himself in with the fervor only a convert can muster. Mchunu, now 32, was a gardener and street musician who had heard tell of a white kid in town who played Zulu music as if he'd invented it. He searched out Clegg and the two formed an unshakable friendship, though the government and many of its citizens frowned on such biracial fraternization.

PHOTO: GEORGE LANGE

Mchunu (left) and Clegg: Music for a non-racial future

"It wasn't easy for us to get together," Mchunu remembers. "We used to meet in the bush sometimes. He would take me to his house, but I wouldn't feel happy there because if the police caught me they would lock me up."

Formed in 1981, Juluka has to date recorded four albums, including their U.S. debut, *Scatterlings*, recently released by Warner Bros. One might expect the songs to be heavy on political rhetoric; instead, they're airy and upbeat, designed for dancing. As Clegg sees it, those whose only exposure to African music has been via the Nigerian pop of King Sunny Adé have much to learn about Zulu sounds.

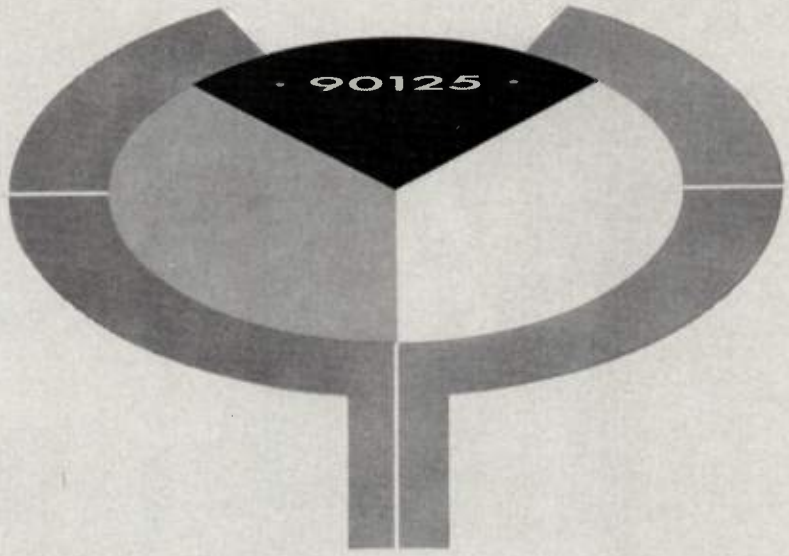
"The Bantu speaking people of South Africa do not have the incredible polyrhythms and drum poetry of the tribes of Nigeria. What we do have that they haven't developed as much up north are chants, incredible melodies and rhythmic use of language. In nearly all of our choruses you'll find the rhythmic use of words, even the English ones."

Yet Juluka has its critics, particularly purists who feel the group's fusion of Western and Zulu music is not only a bastardization of a proud musical heritage, but a blatant attempt to cash in on America's burgeoning interest in African music. If Mchunu and Clegg have a *modus operandi*, though, it's simply to use music as a unifying force in their segregated land. "We are not an English group or a Zulu band," Clegg asserts. "We are a South African group. We are African. If Juluka is seen as a Zulu band, then we're just fitting into the government's policy. We are trying to provide a music that stands for a unified Africa and for non-fragmentation. We have to have a multi-national and multi-racial peg in our music on which to hang our hopes and aspirations for a non-racial future in my country. That's important.

"We don't want to come here on a bandwagon," Clegg stresses. "We've made our stand in our country. We've been arrested. We've had shows closed. But I love my country and Sipho loves it, and we're not going to leave it. It's not a matter of coming over here to enlist sympathy; we're here because of what Sipho calls the Driver, some force, and we never expected it.

"It's just unfortunate that for a long, long time we won't be able to come here and just play our music. People will expect to hear our story, too." ○

YES



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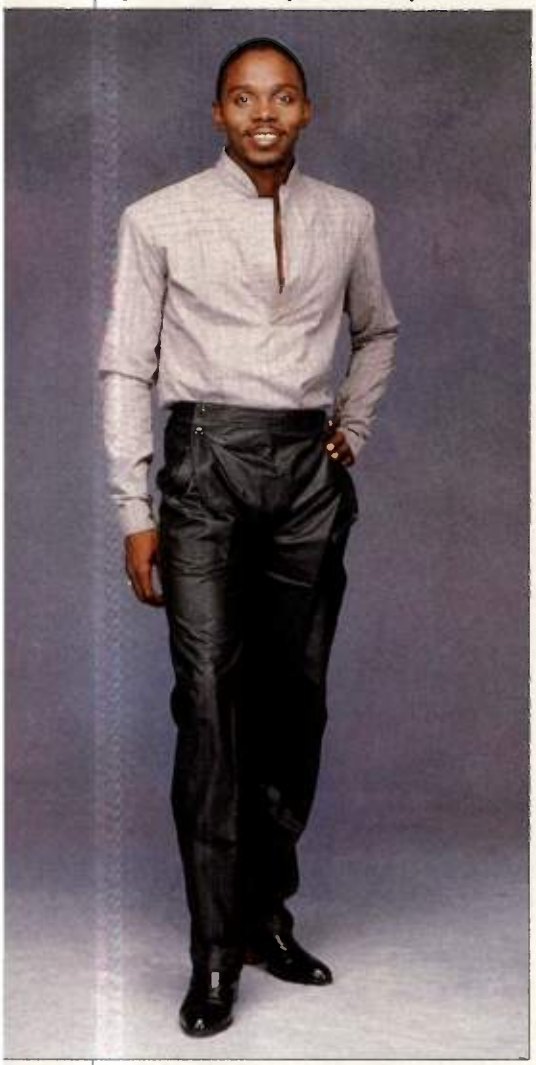
TEMPERED IN THE FIRE

EW&F's Philip Bailey withstands the test of his solo testimony

DAVID McGEE

NEW YORK

Onstage with Earth, Wind & Fire, Philip Bailey is the flamboyant falsetto voice behind, and occasionally in front of, Maurice White. Offstage, his demeanor matches his comparatively conservative attire of (for this day, at least) blue jeans, sport shirt and black leather jacket. He speaks deliberately, but frankly, and in the measured but confident manner of, say, Stevie Wonder, whose speaking voice Bailey's resembles. Clearly, this long-standing member of one of the world's most popular bands is acutely conscious of not only playing a specific role in EW&F but of the need to divorce himself from that role—and he will tell you it is only a role—in order to keep body and soul together. He's done this by refusing to make EW&F the sum total of his life. In Los Angeles, where he lives, Bailey leads a gospel group called the Living Epistles and helps coordinate a weekly Bible study for entertainers, held on Thursday nights in Donna Summer's recording studio. He's also a family man, with four children ranging in age from three to 12.



Bailey: "The character of one's life is measured by the trials he's going through and the temptations he stands against."

Finally, he's set himself apart from EW&F in one other important way—by recording a solo album, *Continuation*, for Columbia Records. Produced by George Duke, whose most recent achievement behind the board was Jeffrey Osborne's acclaimed *Stay With Me Tonight* LP, *Continuation* is Bailey's foray into black pop, a showcase certainly for that familiar falsetto (like Luther Vandross, Bailey claims Dionne Warwick and Aretha Franklin as his primary vocal influences) but also for the full range of Bailey's voices from baritone to first soprano, all in service of a strong collection of songs, including some co-written by Bailey himself.

This then is a man who seems to have the best of many worlds. So why not ask for a little bit more, especially when you know it's there for the taking? Don't misunderstand—it's not ego run wild we're talking about here, but simply a refusal to recognize limits. Or as Bailey puts it: "There's so much more to me than what's on my record. And perhaps that's always gonna be; perhaps that's something all artists feel, that there's still more and if they get a record where they can say, 'That's it, I got it, that's me,' then it'll be over for them. Even though my record's been accepted as a fairly good record, I think it could be better. But then, I think things can always be better."

Hence one of a couple of sources of Bailey's anxiety to do well. He set out to make his first solo project "a more progressive record that would have a good balance of popular commercial songs as well as a more innovative and progressive type of music." Thus the selection of Duke as producer—but what Bailey was looking for was not the man who seems to have an uncanny facility for black pop but rather "the jazz-oriented George Duke" who could do justice to some of the left-field material Bailey had prepared. "George was a little apprehensive about that," Bailey says. "Being a popular producer now, he knows what's going to sell records and what's not going to sell. So he had to make me happy, but he had to get a record out too. What he did contribute was a comfortable atmosphere of love and support for me. I was under a lot of pressure coming out of Earth, Wind & Fire."

And right there is the second level of Bailey's concern. No matter where he goes, Maurice White follows. "There was a whole lot of different head trips I was going through to do this album. It's like being in the shadow of the fire of Maurice, and not wanting to disappoint him. I was a hard client. I'd listen to certain stuff, then start to compare it—'Oh man, that's not progressive enough, doesn't have enough changes in it. Wonder if Maurice is gonna like that? What's he gonna think?' It was incredible.

"Finally," he adds, "I realized I was establishing a new market for myself, and perhaps if the album had been way out there it wouldn't have been received the way it has been. I have to understand that *my* audience is going to grow with me; I can't take for granted the Earth, Wind & Fire audience. It was really like walking a tightrope to get this project done, but it turned out the way it was supposed to turn out. That's all I can really say."

Well, not quite. Looking back, Bailey gains a fresh perspective on the experience, one born of the understanding gained from being washed in the blood. "There's never a testimony without a test," he points out. "There's no goal that isn't tempered in the fire. I think the character of one's life is actually measured by the trials he's going through and by the temptations he stands against. One way my spiritual beliefs have helped me is in teaching me not to take this thing too seriously. I realize that life is not for always and try to keep my objectives in order. I have my priorities—God, family, then everything comes after that. I'm not going to sit here and scream, 'Why didn't I get what I wanted!?,' you know, and mess up relationships, because *that is not cool!*"

Oh, and about the album title. This is, after all, an artist's solo debut, yet it's dubbed *Continuation*. "I've always thought of records as report card evaluations," Bailey offers. "You listen from album to album and figure out where you're at and kind of evaluate your talent. I always said my first solo album would be called *Continuation* because it would just be a continuation from one facet of my musical career to the next."

So the second album will be titled...

Bailey laughs his warm, soft laugh. "I think I'll call it *The Eleventh Grade.*"

With graduation day in sight. ○

THE RECORD INTERVIEW

DAVID BYRNE

BY ANTHONY DECURTIS

A HEAD AND HIS TIMES

SINCE EMERGING FROM THE NEW York underground in late 1977, Talking Heads have set the standard for progressive music that rocks both the mind and body. Their debut LP, *Talking Heads 77,* fused catchy, wound-tight rhythms drawn from soul music and white pop with edgy lyrics that depicted love as a dangerous distraction from work, extolled the virtues of civil servants, and celebrated a polyglot "psycho killer" incited to violence by boring conversation and bad manners. Clearly, a weird new day had dawned in American music.

Four subsequent studio albums have consistently refined and developed the compelling synthesis the Heads' first record forged. Singer-guitarist David Byrne, keyboardist Jerry Harrison, bassist Tina Weymouth, and drummer Chris Frantz seemed driven to repel complacency; the band pushed to greater avant-rock heights with each release, while deepening their funk groove.

The Heads' artistic breakthrough came with the 1980 masterwork, *Remain in Light.* Under the guidance of all-purpose experimentalist Brian Eno, who had produced their *More Songs About Buildings and Food* (1978) and *Fear of Music* (1979) LPs, the band expanded its four-person line-up to incorporate more percussion, a fatter bass sound, richer keyboard textures, and a host of ideas derived from an intense immersion in African and other tribal aesthetics. The result was satisfying on virtually every level. Not only was the concept intellectually visionary, but the Heads' live shows with the ten-piece band were raucous, funked-up stomps that left audiences in sweat-soaked wonder.

Commercial success finally came in 1983, when the dance-groove "Burning Down the House" soared into the Top Ten, carrying *Speaking in Tongues,* their fifth studio LP, along with it. This popular recognition came not a moment too soon. *Speaking in Tongues* arrived on the heels of a spate of solo projects that had Heads fans concerned about the band's possible break-up. Byrne had collaborated with Eno on the theory-laden, ethno-disco LP, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts,* composed the score for choreographer Twyla Tharp's performance piece, *The Catherine Wheel,* and produced records by The B-52's (*Mesopotamia*) and Fun Boy Three (*Waiting*). Frantz and Weymouth headed for the tropics with Tina's sisters and some friends, invented the Tom Tom Club, and scored a hit with the street music soul homage, "Genius of Love." For his part, Jerry Harrison delivered an ominous, darkly textured funk study, *The Red and the Black.*

Speaking in Tongues draws life from all these sources, and has left the band not only richer, but more unified than before. And sitting at the heart of the Head's unity like a tense, art-boy Buddha is 31-year old David Byrne. Wrapped in a long, black coat that made him appear even paler and more attenuated than he is, Byrne sidled in for our interview at precisely the appointed time. After scouring around for an ash tray and some black coffee, he was ready to begin work. Cooperative, gracious, and painstakingly thoughtful in his responses, Byrne continuously rearranged himself in his chair, as if physical comfort were an ideal he believed one should ceaselessly strive for but could never seriously hope to attain. After each question was presented, and occasionally in mid-sentence, he would think silently for extended periods, seemingly considering both exactly what he wanted to say and what his questioner's justifiable expectations were.

When he felt his answers were completed, which was not always apparent by any means, he would simply stop speaking. If I hesitated too long against the possibility that he might want to say more, he'd eventually look up with a benign expression that implied it was perfectly fine if I wanted to sit with him in utter silence, but another question would be okay too.

Byrne would occasionally chuckle and glance over shyly when he said something humorous. His obvious, if controlled, delight at these moments suggested that he inwardly believed these remarks to be hilariously funny, but thought it might be immodest to take too much public enjoyment in his own wit.

All in all, I can't really agree with Byrne when he brays in "Burning Down the House" that he's an "or-di-na-ry guy." He's still pretty strange, folks, and very special.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY MCKINLEY

When Talking Heads first formed as a trio in 1976, with you, Tina Weymouth, and Chris Frantz, did you have any ideas about why you were forming a band, what you felt you could add that was missing from the musical scene?

I think that like a lot of other bands at that time here and in England, we weren't hearing the kind of music on the radio that we felt spoke to us, or we were hearing a lot less of it than we wanted to. So we felt we had to make it for ourselves and for each other. Why a band rather than something else? I suppose it probably runs through a lot of people's heads in our generation to be in a band at one point or another when they're growing up. I think Chris said once that if we didn't at least try it, even if we failed, we'd probably kick ourselves. So we tried it. We grew up with the notion that it was something you could do and be creative on your own terms, and yet speak to a real mass audience, speak to your peers, speak to people who were older than you and younger than you. There was no set audience or set lines you had to follow. It was a pretty free and open area to work in. I must say, for me the big attraction was that it was mass-produced and it's part of mass culture, but yet it has the kind of creativity in it that's as good as anything going.

You spent a great deal of time in the early days, when The Talking Heads were beginning to get some attention, distinguishing yourself from other bands like The Ramones, Blondie, and Television on the new wave circuit in New York. At this point can you look back and see some of the similarities among the things you were all trying to do?

Yeah, there were a fair number of similarities, not so much in the directions we were going in or what we were trying to do musically, but in the fact that at the time a lot of the major rock bands had gotten very big and pompous. You couldn't go from nowhere to being big and pompous. You couldn't go from practicing in a loft or in your basement to being a huge act. That just seemed totally improbable. The major acts seemed to be making a kind of music and presentation that was really distant and inaccessible. So I think a lot of bands wanted to bring their music down to a closer level, a level that maybe was more intimate with the audience and that they could handle. A lot of the bands got lumped together at the time musically, but it was obvious to the musicians that, given their druthers, they'd go in very different directions.

Many people seemed to feel that *Talking Heads 77* over-refined the band's live sound at that point. Were you happy with it when it came out, and how do you feel about it now?

At the time we thought it was okay, but I don't think we were completely *thrilled* with it. But hardly anybody's thrilled with their first record, because their first record represents everything they've been doing and everything they feel they are. I mean, it's their first shot at getting across what they represent or what they feel is in their soul. And if it doesn't say *all that* in one record, they're disappointed. Looking back on it now, it seems a lot more quirky and peculiar than I thought it was then.

How did your working relationship with Eno come about?

PHOTO BARRY McKINLEY

Just before that first album came out, we had a single out which he had heard in England. We went over to play there as a support act for The Ramones, and on one of their off days we played a date in a little club in London, and he and John Cale came and saw us. We had known John Cale before, but that was our first meeting with Brian, and we quite liked him and hung out with him for a while. Then he came to New York on a vacation and we chatted and hung out together then. So we sort of just got to know him. It might have been almost a year that went by before we got around to making another record, and it seemed natural to ask him to produce, since we already knew him and liked some of the things he'd done. We were still a little unsure of ourselves, and it would have been difficult for us to work with someone else who maybe was a very good producer, but who overpowered us.

Do you feel Eno's involvement with the band eventually became divisive?

It's hard to say whether it was just him. When we were making *Remain in Light*, he and I had formed a close relationship, because we had already been working on the *Bush of Ghosts* record. And so that set up some sort of split between he and I, who had a close working relationship, and the rest of the band, who weren't so close to the main songwriter and the producer any more. So that made things a little difficult. It didn't *have* to, but it did. We were both very excited about what we thought was this new kind of music, this new kind of synthesis, that we were working on, and we were fairly determined that that was the future, and we wanted to keep going in that direction with the band. And the band did too. But at the same time, we sort of felt that it was "our idea" or something like that, which was probably a bad thing.

You once said you and Eno felt at that time that you were on some kind of "mission."

VITAL TRACKS: A BYRNE'S EYE-VIEW

BECAUSE IT SEEMED THAT BYRNE WAS BEING, BY HIS OWN STANDARD, open and candid during our interview, I decided to ask him directly about what I regard as some key Heads tracks. At points he seemed a bit uncomfortable speaking with such critical detachment about his own songs, but under ruthless interrogation that showed absolutely no respect for the mysteries of the creative soul, Byrne gave it up. And here it is.

—**Anthony DeCurtis**

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT"

(from *Talking Heads 77*)

I thought for a while that I should try to write songs from the completely opposite point of view from what seemed to be the easy way to write. The easy way would be hating the government, hating people's ordinary lives. I thought that was too pat, and everyone will like it automatically. I thought it would be more of a challenge to write a song that was sympathetic to people who live in the suburbs or who live in high rises and work in offices. I think my voice at the time wasn't quite up to it. The writing was fine, the song was fine, but my voice gives an edge to it that wasn't quite what I was trying to say. I wanted it to sound sincere and genuine and sympathetic, and I think it sounds like I'm being ironic.

"PSYCHO KILLER"

(from *Talking Heads 77*)

That was the first song I ever wrote. I had been listening to some Alice Cooper records, and I thought I would write a song about a very dramatic subject the way he does, but then write it from a very *personal* point of view, from inside the person, and play *down* the drama of some dramatic event. I had an idea of what I wanted to say in the French verses, and Tina and her sister helped out with the French. After I did that, it gave me the confidence that I could write songs. People liked it. So after that, I more or less gave up on writing about such extreme personalities.

"THE BIG COUNTRY"

(from *More Songs About Building and Food*, 1978)

I hoped that the description [of American suburban life] would sound almost clinical. Benign and sympathetic, but still kind of clinical. And then all of a sudden to have this extreme emotion attached to it ["I wouldn't live there if you paid me," etc.], I thought was kind of a shock, because there was nothing leading up to it; there was no reason given for it at all. I sort of had to do that song as an answer to the other one ["Don't Worry About the Government"].

"I ZIMBRA"

(from *Fear of Music*, 1979)

That song was inspired by an African record I have called *17 Mabone*, and on the cover of it it has a picture of a car with seventeen headlights. I believe it might be South African, and it has guitars and fiddles and saxophones, completely unlike some of the African music that's known, like Fela and Sunny Ade. It's a completely different genre. It's almost like reels, British reels or something like that. So we took that as a point of departure and Brian Eno suggested the melody after all the instruments and the arrangement had been recorded. And the words came from an old Dada sound poem. It seemed to fit, so there was no reason not to use it.

"THE GREAT CURVE"

(from *Remain in Light*, 1980)

That one started off based on a riff we heard on a Fela record. That started off the recording process, but never made it onto the finished song. And the words were inspired by some reading I had done about the Yoruba religion, or whatever you want to call it. I guess it's not a strict religion; I mean, it doesn't have a dogma. It's based on the cult of the Great Mother, the Great Woman. The only thing we have left of that kind of sensibility is our idea of Mother Nature. That's the only hold-over from that, but it's a very, very old idea.

"ONCE IN A LIFETIME"

(from *Remain in Light*, 1980)

That's a song that juxtaposes the ordinary with the sublime. The choruses are about the sublime and submission and ecstasy, and the verses are about the ordinary and *not* about disliking the suburbs or something like that, as some people have misinterpreted. To me it's more about someone just being puzzled about the fact that they exist and they find themselves wherever they are.

"BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE"

(from *Speaking in Tongues*, 1983)

The phrase "burning down the house" I first heard at a P-Funk concert, I think. And I think I might have misheard something else, but that's what I *thought* I heard. It seems to me to imply letting go, and giving it up, tearing things up. It's kind of an old idea, that to transcend things you have to smash them. In this case, burn them up!

"THIS MUST BE THE PLACE (NAIVE MELODY)"

(from *Speaking in Tongues*, 1983)

That's a love song made up almost completely of non sequiturs, or phrases that may have a strong emotional resonance, but that don't have any narrative qualities. It's a real honest kind of love song, and I tried to write one that wasn't corny, that didn't sound stupid or lame, the way so many do. I think I succeeded; I was pretty happy with that.

We felt we had discovered a new synthesis, using very modern sounds and very modern working procedures—writing and improvising in the studio with studio sounds and what not—but with a lot of the structure in the music being based on ancient forms, and forms that were closer to the Third World. Those musical structures implied a very different attitude than was common in rock 'n' roll at the time, and implied a union between the mind and body, no longer a split between the two. So we felt the music was very transcendent and ecstatic, or it could be, and very ancient and modern at the same time. Oh, that seemed really exciting! To some extent, we were rediscovering the wheel. I mean, we listened to a lot of travel music and worked on things by layering little pieces of rhythm and sound and building up a rhythm piece by piece that in the end sometimes sounded like one good funk drummer, or one *mediocre* funk drummer! But it's very different to discover something by starting from the bottom and *re*-discovering it and putting all the pieces back together than by looking out the window and just seeing. It's like kids who take their car engine apart and then put it back together again. You have a very different relationship with the automobile if you've done that than if you just look at an old car and go, "That's a great car."

Were you ever concerned that there might be a kind of easy exoticism in your interest in African and other Third World music, almost a kind of cultural imperialism?

Yeah, sometimes it occurred to me that there is a danger in just being exotic for the sake of being exotic. There's a danger in doing something that uses Arabic scales that ends up sounding like Hollywood Arabic music. But then in the course of listening to a lot of pop records and ethnic records from other countries, *they're* more guilty of it than we are. If you listen to the most popular music in India, their film soundtrack music, they use riffs from Western pop songs and somebody'll sing a little melody from a Bee Gees' song that then has an Indian backing to it. There's a story we heard about some groups, I think in Nigeria or the Congo, where Indian pop music was very popular. They loved the music, but they couldn't understand what the words were. So they'd redo the song and put African words to it and put an African rhythm into it. That kind of thing seems great; that's the way new things happen. As much as possible we tried to always acknowledge that that's what we were doing. We *were* stealing; we were putting this thing from here with this thing from here. We tried to give credit to our sources, which is a little bit different from other people taking, say, a Jorge Ben song and rewriting the words and having a hit with it, but never giving him credit.

How did you go about making the decision to expand the band for purposes of recording and touring?

We had toured quite a bit up till then, and I didn't want to do it again the same way. I either wanted to go out with a vastly different line-up, which we did, or go out with the same line-up but play, say, all new songs, or improvise on stage in front of people, find a way of improvising that didn't sound like jazz. I just didn't want to get into the rut of going out there with four people trying to reproduce a recorded sound and just slogging it out. One thing that helped was that the feeling of *Remain in Light* was very different from the others. It was much more about a lot of different sounds that popped in and out and a lot of people working together. It seemed much more a communal kind of sound and much more an ecstatic and transcendent kind of sound, which wasn't the kind of feeling that is generated by a small rock group on stage, generally. So in order to reproduce the feeling that the record was trying to generate, we had to have a different kind of stage presentation as well. And it worked. Whether or not you liked the performances, they did generate a different kind of feeling than what we had done before. To me, it wasn't rock 'n' roll anymore; it had gone over into some other category.

Why were the band members' various solo projects necessary and how successful do you feel they turned out?

Those (projects) gave us a chance to do things that no one would have expected to be on a Talking Heads record. The *Bush of Ghosts* record . . . we thought some of the numbers were quite danceable. I heard some of them played at discos, not the rock discos, the *real* discos, which was pleasing, although the record never really was all that successful. Malcolm McLaren really did that a lot better, doing something kind of bizarre, but then having a mass success with it. The record did go over real big with dance companies, I guess because they're not quite so locked into a rock beat or a disco beat. They find other ways to move to it that aren't the kind of moves that you would do in a club. I think everybody—I don't mean *me*, I mean everybody in the business—was surprised at how good the (first) Tom Tom Club record was. Even *they* were. They originally thought they'd just make a single and see how it did. And originally their single was just to be marketed in France; it was "Wordy Rappinghood," and they had some French lyrics on it. But it did so well, they had time, and they kept working and came up with a hit record. And it was really amazing. I think it did everything they dreamed would happen, things they never expected. Chris listens to quite a lot of rap records, and so it was sort of a dream come true that people would take that riff from "Genius of Love" and rap to it. And it was a real honest success as well; it was a record that just took off on its own, fairly spontaneously. (Jerry Harrison's *The Red and the Black*) was a more difficult one. There were some good songs on it, although they weren't so pop-oriented as *Tom Tom Club* was. And so it didn't sell as well, but I think quite a lot of people liked that one.

Since you worked on *The Catherine Wheel*, it seems to me that the Talking Heads' live show has taken on a number of aspects of performance art.

That was somewhat influenced by things other people were doing, but mainly by the fact that I had seen some theater from other countries, from Japan and China, Bali, India, Africa, their own popular theater or rituals. I had to acknowledge that performing on stage is theatrical and dramatic; it's not just a bunch of musicians standing up and playing. If you just get up as a bunch of musicians and play, then that's the statement you're making. Whatever you do, you make a statement that's theatrical in one way or another. I realized that it was a very natural impulse to get dressed up for a performance and to act in ways that you wouldn't in normal life or on the street. From there I made the decision to start incorporating a greater awareness of the way I moved and the way I looked and the way the stage was set up, so that the performances got more involved with being a stage presentation.

Is that how you came up with the idea on last year's *Speaking in Tongues* tour of having all nine musicians enter the stage separately, adding one at a time for each song in the first set, and then having the entire band come on together for the second set?

Uh-huh. That was done specifically for that tour, because we did a lot of dates in outdoor amphitheaters, like Forest Hills in New York and the Greek Theater in L.A., places where the seats are in sort of a shell around the stage. The shows would usually begin when it was still twilight, so we

couldn't make a dramatic entrance with lights. I also felt that, although it's very nice to have an opening act and present a local band or a somewhat unknown band, they generally are not very well received. Although they think you're giving them a big break by having them open for you, they end up feeling lousy after the show because your audience can sometimes be pretty apathetic to something new. So we thought that we'd make it with no opening act, that we'd do the whole night. Then it made sense to just build the stage during the first half, and then, when it was dark, use the lights for the second half.

It also seemed a good way to introduce people to each of the sounds that each musician in the band contributes.

Yeah, I heard that. That didn't occur to me, but it does do that too. You really see how each element adds to the total sound.

You've made interesting videos for "Once in a Lifetime" and "Burning Down the House." What do you think about most of what's being done with rock videos? What is their purpose, aesthetic or otherwise?

Well the purpose for me, for the short ones, is to do something that, on one level, serves the function of promoting the song, the way all rock videos are supposed to do. And on another level, I would hope that it stands by itself as another piece of creative work that holds its own as well as the song, and that is independent of how well you like the song, or what the song means, or anything like that. It's sort of a parallel kind of thing. I don't think it's that for everyone. For some people it's really just a way to promote the song. In most cases, the performers or the writers of the song are not involved in creating the video. And I don't think *everybody* should be; some people should stay clear of it. Some bands who are great on record or great live should never do videos, because they don't need them. There are other bands who may make songs that work very well on video, but are sort of boring on record. It would be nice if videos developed into a really separate creative entity, other than just being a support mechanism to sell records.

Have you seen any videos recently that seem to you to indicate some of the directions in which videos should go?

Boy, I haven't watched 'em in a while, so I'm not really hip to the latest videos. I haven't been to clubs, where they show a lot of them. So I'm really not qualified to say, especially since I just finished shooting one the day before yesterday for "This Must Be the Place." Generally, when I'm doing that, I stay away from watching them. I haven't seen the rushes yet, but I was pleased with the way it went. Half of it'll be Super-8 movies and home movies, and then the other half is slicker.

Is there any particular kind of music that you've been listening to lately?

Opera. I went and saw *Carmen* last night, the one staged by Peter Brook. I have one, *Parsifal*, from the film by the German director, Hans Syberberg. When we were on tour I went to the Smithsonian, and they have this huge collection of country music, a boxed set of about ten records. It's really amazing stuff. It goes almost up to the present, but there's hardly a bad song on there, and there's some that are really quite bizarre! Ones I hadn't heard before. Sometimes it's really surprising how people's images have changed from what they did twenty years ago to what they're known for now.

What kinds of projects are coming up for you and the band?

If all goes well, we're going to film a show, and Jonathan Demme is slated to be the director—*Melvin and Howard* is what he's best known for so far. I'm doing some music and getting involved in the production of a long theater piece by the avant-garde director, Robert Wilson (who staged *Einstein on the Beach*). I'm doing the music for one section of it, and helping out with the stage direction.

It's generally believed that the upbeat feel of *Speaking in Tongues* had a lot to do with positive developments in your own life. Are you still feeling pretty good?

Yeah, I guess so. I guess so. Yeah. I have more confidence in my abilities and my work's been accepted over the years. So that's all pretty good. Of course, you never know how long it'll keep up. The music business is pretty notorious for people rising and falling.

On that note of caution, do you think much about the larger political and social framework in which Talking Heads, and all the rest of us, operate?

I'm worried about this country, I'll tell you that. The quality of life and the quality of manufactured goods, and politically, everything seems pretty poor at the moment. When you see the manufactured goods and the way people live, when you compare this country with Japan, and the educational system and all those kinds of things . . . it's *hopeless*. Unless really radical things are done, this country is gonna be down in there with the Third World nations we're invading. I don't have any fool-proof solutions. From our point of view as a band, I suppose our political statement is that we're evidence of people working together and doing something that has, we would hope, some kind of quality in it, and yet isn't elitist. That's the best we can do as a band at the moment: be a living example. ○

PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH

Byrne and Eno: Rediscovering the wheel but dividing the band

Jesus Was A Standup Guy

DEBARGE FINDS A ROLE MODEL THEN STRIKES CHART PAYDIRT BY BALANCING THE SACRED AND THE SEXUAL IN THEIR MUSIC. THUS BEGINS MOTOWN'S NEXT GOLDEN ERA

By Susanne Whatley
Los Angeles

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE surrounded by some of the most formidable artists in contemporary music and have to deliver the goods before a national TV audience as well?

You prevail, that's what.

During the taping of *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today and Forever*, the DeBarge family may well have ushered in the label's next golden era. Clocking in ample time onscreen with "Can't Stop" and the title song from last spring's *All This Love* album, the quintet eschewed synchro-steps and put movement to their music with a free-flowing grace that was remarkable for a group which had never performed a concert. At the very least, the siblings' brief turn in the spotlight marked them in some eyes as the best of Motown's new generation. And the veterans on hand nodded approval.

"A lot of people backstage were really rooting for us," recalls Eldra DeBarge, 22. "I guess it was because they knew we were young and this is a really big thing for us. They'd pat us on the back and talk a bit. 'Hey man, you guys are great. I know you're going to do a good job.' And by the time we got out there we kind of had a proudness about ourselves. We just went out there and did it."

This demonstrable grace under pressure is common among musicians who, like the DeBarges, have spent their entire lives set apart, living in the weird half-light of being both controversial and ignored. The children (there are 10) in the DeBarge family were frequently the focus of attention growing up—much of it disdainful, or curious at best, since their mother Etterlene is black and their father Robert white. It's a tantalizing notion to think that the legion of *Motown 25* viewers who were beguiled by these talented singer/songwriters might include their many Midwest neighbors whose morality just didn't stretch far enough to enfold 10 exuberant mulatto kids. Undeniably, society's view of their mixed-race family made them a tighter bunch, and they quickly discovered that coming together in the bond of music made the cold stares a little less bruising.

It was an early-morning interview at Motown's Hollywood offices, but DeBarge was already looking for a conductor for its nervous energy through the little in-jokes, asides and tune-sputtering that usually keep the brood cracking up. In the months since a similar encounter last spring, James, Bunny, Eldra, Mark and Randy had ditched their cable-knit sweaters and skinny ties in favor of bright-colored, new wave fashions and splattered tunic tops. Their third and most recent album, *In a Special Way*, was just beginning to show its mobility on the black and pop charts on the strength of "Time Will Reveal" 's heavy radio airplay, and the group was looking forward to an upcoming video shoot of the single and, at long last, a concert tour. *All This Love* was on its way to platinum, but everyone seemed as generous and eager-to-please in their conversation as ever, radiant in the kind of spontaneous joy that comes out in inspired company.

"We all watched out for one another as children," says Bunny. At 28, she's the oldest and herself the mother of two girls. "So we're best friends. Right here—I've got all the opinions I want right in one family."

Her brothers laugh and offer a dozen at once.

"It's hard to make friends once you're grown, because you don't know who to trust," she continues. "So we have to be each other's best friends. Other people don't have any input in what we're doing. They're just there . . . if we want them . . ."

With the latest album DeBarge has taken even more control. Eldra, who had shared production duties with Iris Gordy on *All This Love*, has now taken over the producing himself.

"It wasn't a quick decision," he says. "We wanted to do it with Maurice White. My brother Bobby was talking to me kinda at the last minute as we were getting ready to go into the studio. He was trying to build my confidence up, saying 'Hey, we can do this ourselves.' "

(Bobby and yet another brother, Tommy, were the first to head west from their Grand Rapids, Michigan home. They recorded six albums for Motown with Switch, and introduced their siblings to the label and to manager Jermaine Jackson before leaving the group. Commercial music, you see, is a family affair, with only the three youngest DeBarges still at large.)

After he made his decision, Eldra "told Maurice I had my confidence back, and he wished us good luck. Bobby helped me out. He was right there for me, and we really put it through. The group gave me some good material to work with, so it wasn't all that bad. I mean, for it being my first time producing, jumping in like that."

Giving the elements in the mix room to breathe is the most obvious of Eldra's touches. DeBarge's music fits into a relatively uncrowded niche of '80s pop—jazz-backed and up-tempo, with a light soul touch on the lush manicured ballads. But compared to their previous album, *In a Special Way* has a lightened instrumentation that allows more opportunity for subtle shading in their vocals. Brazilian percussionist Paulinho DaCosta introduces an understated exotic feel on several of the new songs (he's recorded with Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, James Ingram, EW&F) and the skills of star session drummers Ricky Lawson (Al Jarreau tour), Harvey Mason Jr. (Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, George Benson) and Leon "Ndugu" Chancler (Jackson, Jones, Donna Summer) and keyboardist Greg Phillinganes (Jackson, Steely Dan, you-name-it)

PHOTO: JEFFREY SCALES

(From left) Mark, Bunny, Eldra, James, Randy: thanking God and Berry Gordy for their break

provide the sort of interesting jazz textures needed to illuminate the vocals.

Gone, too, is *All This Love*'s 11-man brass section. Though the new songs are for the most part free of the heavy-handed flourish of horns (and better for it), it was partly by accident that this particular change occurred. During the recording of some horn parts on *In a Special Way* there was a technical problem that fouled up the tracks. After a little experimentation Eldra and engineer Barney Perkins found a way to sneak them in and out without making it sound as though something's missing.

On the new album, Eldra's aim was to keep it clean. "I don't like that muddy, cluttered sound like too much is happening," he affirms. "The tracks are too busy, and you can't appreciate this groove in the song because something else is going against it. Just too much going on. I've noticed it in a lot of records and we made a vow not to ever let that happen . . . you can only get so much in your ear at one time."

So far DeBarge has offered all original material on its albums, and all its members contribute. Eldra writes, or co-writes with Bunny, most of the tunes and you'll find them taking a front seat as vocalists as well. 24-year-old Mark has a song on the new LP, "Stay With Me." James, however, is making impressive come-from-behind strides—although the group's debut album, *The Debarges*, was recorded in 1981 before he joined, he wrote and sang "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" on the second LP and contributed three songs to the latest, one co-written with Billy Preston. His "Be My Lady" may be tapped as the follow-up single to "Time Will Reveal."

20 years old and the youngest in the group, James hasn't yet shown the stylistic range of brother Eldra, but his saucy ex-

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Salem Spirit!

ON THE BEAT

TRANSITION

American music lost one of its most influential artists with the death of **Merle Travis** on October 20 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Cardiopulmonary arrest was cited as the cause of death. Travis was 65 years old. Though several of Travis' songs are now country and folk standards—including "Nine Pound Hammer," "Dark As A Dungeon," "I Am A Pilgrim," and "Sixteen Tons" (the latter a major national hit for Tennessee Ernie Ford in 1955)—it was as a guitarist that he made and left his mark. His lasting contribution was the development of a unique style of playing termed "Travis picking," which involves maintaining a distinct separation between constantly alternating bass and simultaneously-played lead passages. Easier said than done, Travis' legacy lives on in the work of such estimable pickers as Chet Atkins, Doc Watson, Leo Kottke and John Fahey, among others . . . another superb instrumentalist, **Kirk McGee**, died at his home in Franklin, Tennessee of a heart attack on October 24. He was 83. A Grand Ole Opry star since 1926, McGee was best known for his prowess as a fiddler; yet he was also a skilled guitarist who often teamed with his brother Sam on guitar duets that began at a deliberate pace and worked up to a fever pitch, with nary a missed note between them. (Sam was the more heralded picker, to whom both Kottke and Fahey owe a sizable debt.) Following Sam's death in 1975, Kirk continued on the Opry, appearing as a soloist at times and as a member of a group called the Fruit Jar Drinkers. His final Opry appearance came on the weekend immediately prior to his death . . .Looks like two orchestras are calling it a day. Japan's **Yellow Magic Orchestra**, who had a few records out here on A&M and Alfa, were pioneers in the electro-pop field, but Americans may best know of the band through the appearance of member Ryuichi Sakamoto opposite David Bowie in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, for which he did the soundtrack. The band's farewell tour was SRO in Japan in November and December. And—if anybody cares—**Electric Light Orchestra** are rumored to be dimming their bulb, prior to some legal action by bassist Kelly Groucutt. "Irreconcilable differences"are mooted as the reason for the split . . . Further grist for the rumor mill is supplied by **Pink Floyd** and the **Kinks**. **Roger Waters** is said to be leaving the former (strange indeed, since *The Final Cut* was virtually a Waters solo outing), and the Davies siblings seem to be resuming their decades-old squabbles, with some U. S. concert dates blown out as a result. ■

The new Pretenders should be touring the U.S. by mid-February on the heels of a two-week swing through England scheduled to end on January 22, coincidentally the first birthday of Chrissie Hynde and the Kinks' Ray Davies' daughter. The band—shown above with new members bassist Malcolm Foster and guitarist/keyboardist Robbie McIntosh—gave a taste of their new *Learning To Crawl* LP with the November release of the "2000 Miles" 45 in England (collectors' note: there's a 12-inch version over there which includes a live take of "Money" done, appropriately enough, at last year's US festival). If you do go to see the Pretenders, don't get there late: the high energy Welsh quartet the Alarm are pencilled in to open up the shows.

PHOTO: HULBERT COLLECTION/CENTER FOR SOUTHERN FOLKLORE

Six years after Congress officially declared Memphis "the home of the blues," the town is restoring the area which gained it that reputation in the first half of the century. The renovation of Beale Street, which housed theatres, restaurants, juke joints and a thriving market, began last spring and is due to be completed this fall. Clubs, two of which are owned by Charlie Rich and Lou Rawls, will co-exist with boutiques, galleries, offices, parks and a sprawling choice of places to eat. Somehow, it doesn't sound as if Beale Street will revert to the raunchy atmosphere of its heyday when—as even the developers' press release puts it—"gambling, drinking, prostitution, murder and voodoo thrived."

THE VINYL WORD

NOT FOR HISTORY BUFFS ONLY: Unless you're a fan of Rounder Records recording group Riders In The Sky, you probably don't hear too many cowboy songs. That's unfortunate, because the cowboy's special relationship to the land and to his fellow human beings has inspired one of the richest, most evocative—and largely forgotten—legacies in American popular music. Recently the roots and development of that legacy have been impressively traced on *Back In The Saddle Again*, a two-record set from New World Records (231 East 51st, New York, NY, 10022). Tracks range from the 1925 Carl T. Sprague hit, "When The Work's All Done This Fall," which helped make cowboy singers commercially respectable, to Riders In The Sky's 1980 homage to the genre, "Cowboy Song." In between there's a veritable Who's Who and what's what of cowboy song, including tracks by such estimable artists as Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Autry and the Sons of the Pioneers. Yet lesser-known artists make important contributions, too, particularly Patsy Montana, who checks in with her 1935 hit (the first million-selling record by a female country singer), "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart." In his extensive and well-researched liner notes, Charlie Seemann, curator of collections at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, describes Montana as the "archetypal singing cowgirl." Montana did more than sing, though. Implicit in her expressive voice was a self-sufficiency uncommon to female singers of the mid-'30s; standing by her man wasn't enough—she was determined to pitch in and help, certain she belonged in the cowboy's life. She was clearly the progenitor of a long and distinguished line of tough/tender, strong-willed women artists, including Kitty Wells, Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn, Rose Maddox, Grace Slick, Chrissie Hynde and others.

Most of the other artists here don't quite match Montana's stature historically, but Seemann's thumbnail biographies are often enlightening, always entertaining and help render these unheralded performers as something more than voices out of a very distant past. Though Bob Nolan, the Poet Laureate of the cowboy song, is given short shrift (a founding member of the Sons of the Pioneers, he and the group appear only once in this collection, singing a Nolan-Tim Spence song, "One More Ride"), *Back In The Saddle Again* is a project conceived with great care and respect. In addition to Seemann's notes, the cover features a reproduction of the famous Charles Russell painting, "Jerked Down," and the back cover includes both a selected bibliography and discography. And that's just scratching the surface of recorded American music, since *Back In The Saddle Again* is only the first in New World's Recorded Anthology of American Music Series. A label source indicates a rock 'n' roll set is forthcoming, compiled and annotated by *Village Voice* critic Robert Christgau. ■

‹DOC› POMUS

Long before he started writing hit songs for the Drifters, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley and others, Doc Pomus was a highly-regarded blues singer who recorded for numerous small labels in the '40s and '50s. While these recordings did wonders for Pomus's reputation, none were major hits, and all soon went out of print. Until recently, only a few hard-core collectors had Doc Pomus sides—even Pomus himself retains only a few of his singles. But Dan Kochakian, editor of a small, lively blues aficionados magazine called *Whiskey, Women, and . . .*, tracked down both Pomus and his recordings and released them on the Whiskey, Women, and . . . label, available by import only. Pomus himself writes extensive liner notes detailing his aborted career as a recording and performing artist and his decision to pursue songwriting full time. 16 cuts in all, many of them gems, show Pomus to have been a Joe Turner-style blues shouter, plus, in the words of Lloyd Price, he got a great big heart. Among the musicians accompanying Pomus on these sessions: Mickey Baker, Bill Doggett, Freddie Mitchell and Panama Francis. The cover photos show Pomus today and as a child, shortly after he was voted most beautiful baby in Brooklyn.

BOOKS

Pleasant additions to the rock reference bookshelf are two updates, of previous efforts. Pete Frame's *Rock Family Trees 2* is a fine companion piece to his earlier *RFT* volume, with the lovingly sketched trees detailing every conceivable facet of their subjects, this time mainly British groups and phenomena. And *Rock Record*, that monument to both the computer and rock and roll fanaticism, has just had its new edition published here. The listings, an A-Z of almost every rock artist with complete discographies and musicians listings for each entry, are as dense, and as fascinating, as the first time around . . . For a trip down the darker side of the rock generation, try Deborah Spungen's *And I Don't Want To Live This Life* (Villard, $14.95). It was Spungen's daughter Nancy whose brief and torturous life was snuffed out by *Sid Vicious*; this mother's viewpoint of their pathetic relationship and Nancy's disturbed twenty-year existence delivers the personal touch which usually escapes our scanning of still another sensationalized tragedy . . . For those of you who didn't get enough Police action this past year, try Lynn Goldsmith's photo book, *The Police* (St. Martin's, $9.95). If the sayings at the bottom of the pages seem a bit too heavy for the subject matter, one can revel in the variety of pictures presented. And for Andy Summers' point of view, check out *Throb* (Quill, $12.95) . . . Guitar innovator/pioneer *Les Paul* is scheduled to tell his own story in the tentatively-titled *Les Is More*, due out later this year. ■

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YAMAHA

CONTENTS

MUSIC VIDEO

A MOTHERLODE OF VINTAGE ROCK VIDEO

By Martin Porter
and Steven Schwartz

JAMES KARNBACH ISN'T THE kind of collector who likes to show off his possessions; he doesn't even own a trophy case for his valuables. He prefers a low profile and is hesitant to submit for publication what everyone else in the world of rock video already knows: If you need a rare snippet of rock 'n' roll footage or an expert with an encyclopedic memory of every bit of pop music preserved on video or film, you go to Karnbach.

Take Max Weinberg, Bruce Springsteen's drummer, for example: Weinberg is at work on a book about legendary rock drummers and needed to see the masters in action. Still photos and personal reminiscences are fine, but being able to see the subjects plying their trade would be far more instructive. Retiring to Karnbach's apartment, Weinberg planted himself in front of one of the video monitors, set up simply with a 3/4 inch VCR and editing desk, to watch the legends at work.

With a collection of rock videos and films that he will only estimate is "under 10,000" pieces—ranging from mint installments of the legendary '60s rock show *Shindig* to a comprehensive number of record company promo films from the British invasion era—Karnbach the collector is riding high on the revival of rock 'n' roll visuals. He and his partner Ron Furmanek (who declined to be interviewed) have successfully tracked down rare performance footage for several notable rock video projects, including *Let's Spend the Night Together, The Kids Are Alright, The Compleat Beatles, Heroes of Rock and Roll, Girl Groups* and HBO's *The Day the Music Died.*

Apparently, it took the overnight success of MTV to convince the TV networks and producers what James Karnbach has known since 1969 when he began collecting what may very well be the largest privately held collection of rock 'n' roll videos in the United States: rock 'n' roll fans love to watch rock stars in action and "the next best thing to being there" is to get it on film.

Now 33 years old, Karnbach the consultant still gets a collector's gleam in his eye when he speaks about the subject of vintage rock videos. His latest assignment has been a search for a film of the Rolling Stones performing "Pretty Thing" at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond, England shot in 1963 by then-manager Giorgio Gomelsky, which Gomelsky evidently lost about 15 years ago and is still trying to retrieve.

PHOTO LISA LEAVITT

Karnbach: Riding high on the revival of rock 'n' roll visuals

"I believe I've located it," Karnbach says with a touch of pride. "I haven't obtained it yet, but I've tracked it down and the next time I go back to Europe I think I'll be able to get my hands on it.

"But you know, I've had to crawl around in old ladies' basements looking through film cans covered with cobwebs and spiders. There's a lot of that and sometimes you come up with nothing but shots of Aunt Sadie's visit or the kids at camp. But . . . that's what collecting is all about."

Karnbach has crawled around in many basements over the years and it is clear from his tone of voice that he wouldn't have it any other way.

Karnbach's passion for rock video began when he was a teenager in the mid-'60s buying records of his favorite group, the Rolling Stones. One day he discovered that there were songs on the Stones' British import albums and EPs that didn't make it to American vinyl. Struck by the revelation that the world of rock extended further than the record department at the New York discount store E. J. Korvette's, he set out to find what else he'd been missing. What he found was miles of forgotten performance films and videotapes.

He explains, "The biggest part of my collection are promo films from the British acts of the '60s. That's when the whole rock video thing really started to happen."

In fact, he adds, the recent emphasis on the visual promotion of rock records is far from a new phenomenon. The European acts used UK shows such as *Top of the Pops* for years as a prime vehicle to expose their newest songs. One of the earliest pieces in his collection is a 1954 promo of Bill Haley. His favorite is a June 1964

into a hip, black, early 1960s nightclub. Easy enough. But it took 10 days to find this joint, because a lot of bars in this part of Brooklyn weren't keen about having their establishments filled with black extras for an afternoon. But at this bar, $500 from producer Jon Small helped persuade the owner that he should "go Hollywood."

Still, as the shooting drags on, the regulars, who are crammed near the doorway, barely contain their displeasure with the guests. Some trade racist jokes at the bar as they drink.

Another problem is that Jon Small told the owner that he would be finished by 6 P.M. but at 4, the crew hadn't even begun shooting. And a camera crew from NBC's *Friday Night Videos* is streaming through the door to do an on-location interview with Joel, who is at this point absent from the increasingly maddening scene. The bar owner seems annoyed that another crew is setting up in the back of his place. He tells Small he wants another $500. After a few minutes, $200 changes hands.

Billy Joel: Treated like a Hollywood star for "Tell Her About It"

Finally, at 4:30, Billy Joel's huge van pulls up to the front of the bar where policemen have roped off the entrance. A crowd of 100 strains to see the star. Joel strolls past his fans, ignoring the pens and paper thrust out for autographs. He walks through the tightly packed bar and waits in the tiny backyard, under a large tree, flanked by brown and gray tenements. This is where NBC tapes Joel while he waits for his scene. But he's clearly not thrilled about being interviewed. When it's over, one of the NBC producers openly wonders aloud why Billy was acting weird.

Inside the stifling bar, Joel sits with ice cubes pressed to his arms and cheeks as they tape the blacks in the bar watching *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Joel smiles at the scene. It was, after all, a scene he helped conceive.

After a few minutes, Joel and his hairdresser slip out of the bar into the van, where he changes his outfit. The bodyguard camps out in front of the van. At 6:30 he emerges, in shades, dressed all in black, with a cigarette dangling from his mouth. He plays a bartender. He stands behind the counter with smoke flaring from his nostrils. He's supposed to be serving a beer. He keeps swigging from the glass and jokes with the cast, "I like to know what I'm serving my customers." For 30 minutes they try to get one good take of the line "... trust in you." After the sixth take, the director shouts, "Perfect."

Joel retreats to his van again. The seven shots are in the can. The crew starts carrying equipment out of the bar. Ten miles to the west, dark storm clouds gather over the skyscrapers of Manhattan. In minutes the sky will open up and wreak havoc on a Diana Ross concert in Central Park that is being broadcast live on Showtime. The situation in Brooklyn is also serious. The storm could set back the shooting schedule one day, a delay that could cost thousands of dollars.

The crew decides to wait out the storm in a restaurant across the street from an appliance store where the scene is set. Joel's limo bears him away to another cafe. At 10 P.M., Small decides to go ahead and shoot the seven shots they need. Once more, the star's cumbersome van pulls up across the street.

As the rain subsides, workmen wheel out tons of equipment. Cops rope off their sidewalk. Girls in '60s dresses and high heels, who are needed for this four-section scene, clip-clop across the damp street. Residents hang their heads out of the steamy apartments to watch the confusion.

Finally, the skies clear, enabling Jay Dubin to get his seven shots. But it will take him, for the third night in a row, until 4 A.M. For most of the night, Joel remains secluded in his trailer, watching TV. He appears briefly in two shots. Then, well after midnight, he's taken by limo back to his home on Long Island.

The following two days are spent editing the tape. On Monday morning, the completed four-minute, 19-second video is presented to Columbia Records. Word quickly drifts through the hallways that Billy's new video is a smash. More than 100 video copies are immediately duplicated and shipped around the country and overseas. The following Sunday, July 31, the video debuts on MTV. Because the song is expected to be a big hit, MTV predicts that it will be in rotation for at least six months.

Joel's management company includes a letter with every copy of the video. The tape, the letter says, cannot be edited in any part. Because the tape opens and closes with 50 nonmusical seconds, a rarity in the world of rock video, it's feared that time-conscious MTV will snip these segments.

To the producers of the video, this would be criminal.

In their opinion, they've produced a rock video with style, wit and bounce. They feel they've accomplished more than producing what's essentially a lavish commercial designed to sell an album. The producers believe that what they have created is Art.

" 'Tell Her About It' is a step beyond a video clip," says Jeff Schock of Joel's management company. "It's really a mini-movie."

With most videos, that comment would sound like a pompous overstatement. But in the case of "Tell Her About It," with its considerable investment of time, talent, money and artist ego, it could turn out to be no more than a modest description of what might someday be considered a landmark production. ○

By Alan Hecht

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

A consumer guide to low-cost VCRs

FORGET THE UNDERWATER Walkman. Forget the talking camera. Save up and get videoeyezed. Now's the time to buy a low-priced VCR and get into some serious music video. Here's why.

This month, the movers and shakers of video hardware convene in Las Vegas for the Consumer Electronics Show to usher in their '84 models. That leaves those unsold '83 models gathering post-Christmas dust on store shelves all over the country. But hey, they're still new. Even Max knows that (see "How To Become Videocool," November RECORD).

JVC HR-D120U: New, low-price and full of features

Manufacturers are finally filling out their product lines by introducing more low-priced, stripped-down models this year than ever before. The new models need exposure, so, that's right, all the old inventory goes on sale. It's not unlike the car game.

At an average discounted price of $450, the VCR becomes an alternative big buck buy to those new set of speakers you've been saving for. Come on, admit it: you want the same relationship with video that you have with your stereo, banging buttons, flipping channels, recording, dubbing and bombarding yourself with signals. How about satisfying those urges to create your own "best of MTV" tape? Or that sudden impulse to see *Night of the Living Dead* at midnight. What if you could borrow Ernie's dad's copy of *Debbie Does Dallas* for a private screening with your main squeeze? Forget the speakers. Get a VCR.

Admittedly, in this quick change video-crazy world, whatever model VCR you buy becomes obsolete immediately. This includes those fancy Dan high-priced numbers. But "state-of-the-art" considerations are not why you're buying a low-priced VCR. These machines can satisfy your video needs and allow you to make a reasonable short-term investment while saving up for the more permanent future-tech hardware that won't really arrive until '86.

What are your video needs? What follows is a discussion of some of the low-priced VCR features that make a difference in your viewing experience.

• *Format*—Buy VHS. When Sony Video 45s are being offered in the VHS format instead of exclusively in Beta, you know Beta's in trouble no matter what Sony says. Beta software is not widely available anymore and you won't find many people to swap tapes with since VHS outnumbers Beta in the US by roughly two-to-one.

• *Recording Speeds*—SP and SLP (sometimes called EP) are the only two speeds that matter and both are found on all low-priced VCRs. In the SP mode the tape runs faster, achieving a cleaner recording but allowing only two hours of program material on an average 120 tape. The SLP mode, on the other hand, allows six hours of program material per tape (up to 8 hours with 160 tape) but at the cost of lower quality images that deteriorate faster. The LP mode available on more expensive machines means zilch. No one records at this speed, which gives you four hours of program per tape. Either you want to keep your recordings (SP) or you don't (SLP). LP only exists to play back tapes made in the LP mode when it was the state of the art.

• *Search*—The ability to visually scan a video at high speed is the single most important VCR feature. I mean, you have to be able to shoot past Aldo Nova when you're playing back the eight-hour recording you made of MTV. The higher priced the machine, the better the quality of image you see while searching and the greater the speed with which you can search. But low-priced VCRs can search nowadays, an improvement over early stripped-down models which lacked this feature and were useless. Search you must.

And you must search in as many recording speeds as possible! Because most low-priced VCRs are only two-head systems, all special effects are concentrated in one recording speed, the SLP mode. There *are* some low-priced four-head systems, however, and they can also search in the SP mode. Since pre-recorded tapes come in the SP mode, you lose a critical degree of control over the picture if your machine can't search in this mode. And it's control you want.

• *Remote Control*—Okay, you won't get wireless remote with most low-priced VCRs. But the umbilical cord effect of a wired remote is actually kind of cozy. Check the number of functions on the remote. More is not necessarily better, but you'll want search, pause and stop. Not having a stop button could cost you your "remote control" abilities, since most VCRs require you to hit stop before you can go into rewind.

RCA VJT 250: Fine design, good recording but limited remote control

• *Audio*—It's monovision, buddy, definitely the biggest compromise you'll have

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Quasar VH5031: Panasonic innards at a lower price.

to make with a low-priced VCR. But run it through your stereo, slap on some eq and it'll come very close to what they're calling "stereo VHS." Then if you're videocool, you can flip on the synthetic stereo switch on your receiver. Alternately, you've purchased a simulated stereo adaptor like the **Rhodes TA-400** ($99.95 list). Any of these options will help you pump out the best video sounds available on tape outside of the Beta Hi-Fi. Beta Hi-Fi is a quantum leap ahead in stereovideo (see MusicVideo Testing, October RECORD), but it's still Beta. VHS Hi-Fi is reportedly able to match the Beta sounds and JVC, Jensen and other manufacturers will bring it to the marketplace by mid-'84. But these machines will sell for $1000 or more; and if current marketing strategies prevail won't be available, low-priced units until late '85 at best. For now, process the mono signal and be patient.

• *Recording Quality*—Most low-priced VCRs produce average recordings. But if you record those events you want to keep in the SP mode, you'll probably never notice much difference between the recordings you make and those Ernie makes on his dad's big ticket baby. Look for a machine that can reproduce detail clearly. Ask to see a recording made on the machine. If it's a discount house, read comparison tests before buying. Remember, generally the more heads the better. With four-head decks, different sets of recording and playback heads can be dedicated to different speeds and therefore achieve optimum performance. Two-head decks only allow special effects playback in one speed. Five-head decks are the new trend on higher price models, but what's one more head among friends?

• *Tuner/Timer*—Probably the greatest difference between VCRs lies in the tuner/timer capabilities. Rest assured, it's much ado about nothing. Are you really going to take the time to program 14 different shows, three weeks in advance? No way. The action in timers is overnight. You're going out and something's on that you don't want to miss. Flip on the timer. End of story.

The tuner section is more limiting. Most low-priced VCRs have only 12 channel tuners. In non-cable areas that's plenty, but most cable systems now carry more than 12 channels. Since the tuner can only be programmed to 12 channels, if you want to record one show while watching another, you can only record one of the 12. Of course, there are hardly 12 cable channels worth recording anyway, so this isn't as much of a limitation as it might seem.

• *Loading systems*—Front-loading systems are sleeker, more accessible and easier to store. They're not widely found on low-priced VCRs. For the price difference, the old style top-loading systems are a mild inconvenience.

So what do you buy? Hands-on testing of some low-priced VCRs reveals that one of the best buys is the **JVC 7100U.** For a list price of $699 (discounted at most stores to $425, even this price is dropping in light of the unit having been discontinued), you'll get JVC excellence in a rugged package. Huge color-coded controls that you can bang around to your heart's content dominate the front panel. It's top loading so you'll need some head room to set it up. Search functions in both the SP *and* SLP mode (called EP on JVCs) with a minimum of noise, and the wired remote gives you play, record, fast forward, rewind, search, pause and stop. There's no frame advance, but then you'll have to decide if seeing each frame of the latest Billy Joel video is worth the extra bucks. With up to eight hours of recording on a 160 tape, the 7100U gives you a chance to minimize your recording costs while retaining above-average recording quality.

Actually, machines costing twice as much as the 7100U have trouble matching its recording quality and therein lies the value. The tuner/timer is a straight 10 day, one event feature, while the tuner has only a 12 channel capability.

The 7100U's only real flaw is the location of the video, audio and remote control terminals on the front panel. This means you'll have cords running out the front of the machine if you want to do any dubbing or if you run the audio through your stereo—way too much spaghetti.

JVC also offers a new front-loading version of the 7100U. The **HRD 120U** ($750 list, $460 discounted) offers some extra goodies including wireless remote and a new picture sharpness control improved definition of the video image. If you can find the right price, this is an excellent new piece of hardware.

Another manufacturer, **Matshushita**, uses as many brand names as GM to market its machines, so you'll find this company's low-priced models almost everywhere. The **Panasonic PV-1320** ($650 list, $439 at discount houses) isn't as solid as the JVC but it's a sleeker, more compact design. A front-loading feature allows you to stack it on your stereo rack, and, if you put a premium on looks, the steel-grey machine gives you a high-tech profile.

Features are another matter. The 1320 has only a four function wired remote, forward and reverse search, pause/still and frame advance. And search is only available in the SLP mode. However, by depressing the frame advance and the still button at the same time you can achieve something on the Panasonic that the JVC can't deliver—rudimentary slow-motion, but again, only in the SLP mode.

Panasonic's organizational design is not so hot. Unlike JVC, the 1320's audio and video inputs are safely tucked away in the back where they belong. But the main control buttons are bundled too close together and lack distinct markings. This makes it too easy to hit eject when you want to hit the rewind button directly above it. The on/off/timer bars are also too closely bunched for these fat fingers, and gee, fellas, did you have to make them so damn thin. Recording quality is slightly above average. On the whole, the features/performance/price ratio of the 1320 makes it a recommended choice.

There are two other low-priced VCRs of note. **RCA's VJT 250** ($600 list, $385 discounted) has a higher recording quality than the Panasonic but a more limited function remote control (only pause/still). **Sharp** has the new "My Video" model **VC363**, the first low-priced portable to hit the marketplace and one that contains many of the same excellent features as the already proven VC3500. At a list price of $650, this model is one to look for, especially when it hits the discount houses.

If your birthday's coming up and you're ready to bust your savings, go for a VCR and become a certified citizen in the music-video nation. One VCR, one vote. Now, the price is right. ○

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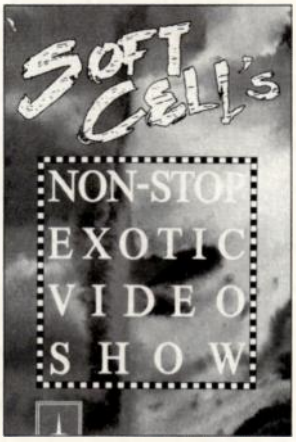
THE PRINCE'S TRUST ROCK GALA

Filmed in London in July '82, *The Prince's Trust Rock Gala* stands, for now, as the definitive non-essential charity all-star revue videocassette, infinitely inferior to *The Secret Policeman's Other Ball* and *Rock For Kampuchea*. Presented as a straight concert video, the approach is basic: each of the performers (unannounced) plays a song or two either with the "house" band or unaccompanied. The talent includes Pete Townshend, Ultravox's Midge Ure, Phil Collins, Gary Brooker, Japan bassist Mick Karn, Magazine keyboardist Dave Formula (these six making up the core backing group), Kate Bush, Robert Plant, Ian Anderson, Madness and Joan Armatrading; but it is Armatrading who turns in the only inspired performance when she sings "Give Me Love," playing alone on twelve string with the passion so sorely lacking in the rest of the program.

The "all star" band acquits itself admirably; the level of playing is fairly tight for an affair of this sort, but the sparks never do fly. The only two spontaneous moments in the show are inadvertent, and highly amusing. The first occurs as Prince Charles congratulates Unity (winners in a previous Prince's Trust competition)—the sight of the future King of England cracking jokes with the dreadlocked reggae group will appear hilarious to the American viewer. The second unscheduled highlight takes place near the end of Kate Bush's "Wedding List," as a strap on her halter breaks, but the event that British pop has breathlessly awaited lo these many years never does come off.

Everyone comes out for a finale of Sly Stone's "I Want To Take You Higher," given so dispiriting a rendition that it could be musical director Townshend's revenge for the Family Stone's scorching Woodstock performance which threatened to blow the next-in-line Who clear back to England. Whatever, it's the end to an hour probably better spent elsewhere. *Director: Mike Mansfield, MGM/UA Home Video. 60 minutes. $39.95.* **—Wayne King**



SOFT CELL'S NON-STOP EXOTIC VIDEO SHOW

This work has been in hiding for over a year and rumor had it that Soft Cell's record label didn't want it released because it was too controversial. Let the truth be told: this jumbled mess of insulting images and bumbling music should never have been released.

Drawing on music from the band's *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* and *Non-Stop Ecstatic Dancing* LPs, director Tim Pope utilizes an unappealing—no, make that plain sleazy—potpourri of snakes, graveyards, porn palaces and hirsute women to visualize the material. Pope, who directed the popular Psychedelic Furs clip, "Love My Way," usually has a flair for the bizarre. Here his common sense appears to have taken a vacation, as a plethora of effects substitutes for substance.

It's not enough that one has to be exposed to Marc Almond's sickly features and off-key singing; you have to put up with his whining between-songs raps as well (thank God for the VCR's Fast Forward option). And if you dug Soft Cell's version of "Tainted Love," you'll have second thoughts after seeing the video version in which a toga-clad Almond is shown leering at a young girl and encouraging her to stick her hand in a fish tank full of piranhas. A sick, synthesized piece of nonsense. *Director: Tim Pope. 55 min. EMI Music Video/Thorn EMI Video. Stereo. $49.95 (Beta, VHS).* **—Alan Hecht**

MUSICVIDEO TOP TEN

1 **POLICE AROUND THE WORLD**
POLICE
I.R.S. Video

2 **DURAN DURAN**
DURAN DURAN
Thorn-EMI Home Video

3 **LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER**
ROLLING STONES
Embassy Home Entertainment

4 **GIRL GROUPS: THE STORY OF A SOUND***
MGM/UA Home Video

5 **WHO ROCKS AMERICA: 1982 AMERICAN TOUR**
THE WHO
CBS/Fox Home Video

6 **THE COMPLEAT BEATLES**
THE BEATLES
MGM/UA Home Video

7 **OLIVIA IN CONCERT**
OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN
MCA Home Video

8 **ADAM ANT REVUE***
ADAM ANT
CBS/Fox Home Video

9 **CAROL KING: ONE TO ONE**
CAROL KING
MGM/UA Home Video

10 **STEVIE NICKS IN CONCERT***
STEVIE NICKS
CBS/Fox Home Video

*Denotes new entry
The MusicVideo Top Ten indicates the fastest-moving sales and rentals titles in music product as reported by the country's leading video retail outlets.

VIDEO CLIP TOP TEN

1 **ROCKIT**
HERBIE HANCOCK
(Columbia) D: Godley-Creme

2 **PARTY TRAIN**
GAP BAND
(Mercury) D: Don Letts

3 **ALL NIGHT LONG**
LIONEL RICHIE
(Motown) D: Bob Rafelson

4 **UPTOWN GIRL**
BILLY JOEL
(Columbia) D: Jay Dubin-Jon Small

5 **ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER**
THE FIXX
(MCA) D: Rupert Hine

6 **SAY, SAY, SAY**
PAUL McCARTNEY-MICHAEL JACKSON
(Columbia) D: Bob Giraldi

7 **CHURCH OF THE POISON MIND**
CULTURE CLUB
(Virgin/Epic) D: Chris Gabrin

8 **TELL HER ABOUT IT**
BILLY JOEL
(Columbia) D: Jay Dubin

9 **LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD**
PAT BENATAR
(Chrysalis) D: Bob Giraldi

10 **BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE**
TALKING HEADS
(Sire) D: David Byrne

Compiled by RockAmerica (27 E. 21st Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10003), the Video Clip Top Ten indicates the most popular rock video clips being played in over 250 clubs, colleges and record stores. In addition to title, artist and label, each entry contains the name of the clip's director. These charts reflect video play for November.

NSTRUMENTS + AUDIO

AUDIO & ELECTRONICS
How the audio industry continues to create new problems for the record industry in the latter's fight against home taping; also, new developments in auto-reverse technology are demonstrated in several impressive new cassette decks now on the market. 46

SOUND SIGNATURES
Adrian Belew on creating sound out of the air, and Booker T. Jones on the subtleties of producing. 48

MARTIN PORTER

NEW ISSUES, NEW BREAKTHROUGHS

HOME TAPING: NEW ISSUES LOOM

OKAY ALL YOU HOME TAPERS—the jig is up.

The record industry and the audio industry, once the best of friends, are in the midst of a showdown that indicates the "one hand washes the other" philosophy the two businesses shared during their heydays is all but kaput.

Historically, the conflict has its roots in the late 1970s when record business profits started to slide and the industry chieftains began looking around for ways to buttress their shrinking bottom line. Music video grew out of this reshuffling. So did the realization that the record business was losing money because of the proliferation of home cassette decks and, thus, home taping.

The record industry then instituted federal lobbying efforts to tax cassette sales based on the assumption that anyone who bought blank tape did so to tape copyrighted music. The audio business, meanwhile, balked and maintained that the right to tape is as integral a part of American life as the right to free speech (certainly more than the right to bear arms).

Here's what a recent record industry sponsored survey revealed: if you are between the ages of 18 and 34 you are most likely to be a home taper. Home tapers and their cohorts tape over 550 million albums a year, most recorded directly from LPs with the next largest source being the radio. The end result is in excess of $1.4 billion in sales lost, according to economic advisor Dr. Alan Greenspan, who testified before a Congressional subcommittee on Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks in late fall. "Unless something meaningful is done to respond to the home taping problem," Greenspan claimed, "the industry itself is at risk."

Sanyo's MWL dual cassette recorder: Illustrative of a basic deadlock between the audio and record industries

Greenspan and other record industry representatives were testifying before a subcommittee evaluating a Home Recording Act that would require manufacturers and importers of blank audio tapes to contribute to a royalty pool that would be distributed among music copyright holders—from the artists to producers to the record company.

It now appears that the ultimate decision will come instead from the Supreme Court, which is expected to rule this year on the so-called "Betamax" case pitting Walt Disney and Universal (both Hollywood filmmakers) against Sony (maker of the Betamax VCR), the claim being that video hardware manufacturers are liable for losses in revenues the filmmakers suffer due to "illegal" home video taping.

Yamaha's K-700 B auto-reverse deck features automatic fade-in/fade-out when tape direction is being reversed

In the meantime, though, the record business has been busy reshifting production gears to stifle home taping as much as possible. The popularity of Walkman-like portables (an audio industry invention, mind you) has sent sales of prerecorded cassettes skyrocketing. According to the industry's own survey, the duplication of cassettes from prerecorded tapes is one of the least likely sources of home taping (even less than taping from concerts).

Then again, this statistic is in for some changes due to a proliferation of home tape recorders with dual cassette mechanisms. Take the example of the MWI from Sanyo: This unit, selling for under $100, features "play only" and "play/record" cassette drives for convenient tape dubbing. A variable monitor system permits volume adjustments without affecting the recording level; there's also a pause control on both tape sections and two built-in condenser microphones for "live recording." It's the kind of product that must send shivers down the spine of any record company executive, though Sanyo only admits these "double recorders" permit the user to easily produce a "second copy" of a favorite cassette for use in a home or car stereo system.

The product points to a basic deadlock between the audio and record forces. The former aims to sell convenience which, in turn, helps sell music. The record business only cares about convenience when it helps sell records. Shall the twain never meet?

Take another example—the Compact Disc. When this new digital playback technology was introduced it was claimed that the attention to audio quality would itself deter copying since the public would opt for tip-top sound rather than an analog (as in taped) copy of digital perfection.

However, proponents underestimated the public's need for audio quality and, in

fact, the Compact Disc has become the preferred master for many tape pirates, according to recent reports. Furthermore, the Japanese tape hardware manufacturers are developing what may prove to be the ultimate in home taping technology—digital audio cassettes.

To date two digital cassette standards have been proposed and those configurations that have been shown to the trade are seriously hampered by short playing times and low-end specs. Nonetheless, Sony, JVC and Sharp are clearly on the trail of a home digital audio recorder capable of reproducing the Compact Disc's hi fidelity and standard analog discs without tape hiss or degradation in sound.

Again CD proponents claim the convenience of the next generation of Compact Disc portables and car stereos will negate the need for digital cassettes of any kind. That is, unless it remains cheaper to tape than to buy.

BREAKTHROUGHS IN AUTO-REVERSE

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CONVENIENCE and quality is a battle the audio industry has been fighting for years.

The biggest trend in cassette recorders of late has been auto-reverse, a technology that will immediately flip the playback (and in some cases record) head when the tape reaches the end of a side. While the audio consumer has taken a liking to this new feature, audiophiles have snubbed the convenience due to significantly reduced sound quality.

The earliest auto reverse cassette decks suffered from a considerable loss in high frequency response because of problems with head alignment. This was particularly true for three-head auto reverse decks. However, new products come close to eliminating this inherent technical gaffe via several innovative solutions.

JVC has solved the auto reverse/head alignment problem with a so-called "Flip Reverse System" consisting of two basic parts: a head mount base and a rotating head holder. The head holder swivels 180 degrees back and forth and is restrained in each direction by an azimuth adjustment screw. This system thus makes it possible to adjust the head alignment for each path of tape travel independently.

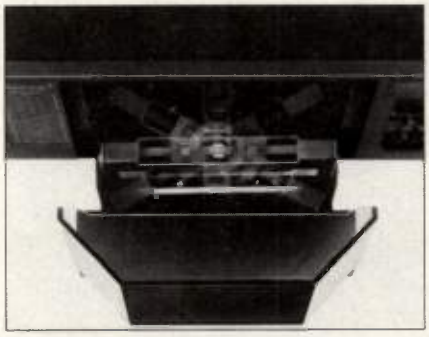
The technology was incorporated in the company's Model **DD-V9** (about $800), one of the first auto reverse decks to feature a three-head configuration offering both automatic recording and playback as well as monitoring while in Record mode. The DD-V9 tape transport is run by three motors and a direct drive capstan motor. Other features include automated tape-type analysis and adjustment, index scan which lets the user review the first 10 seconds of every song on a tape and a blank search function which permits the repeat

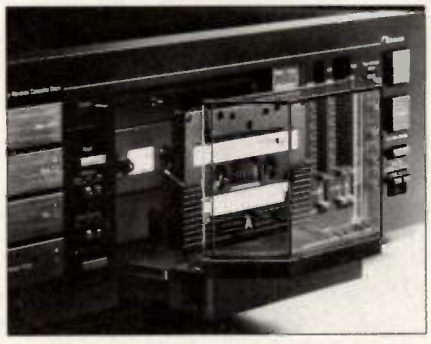
Onkyo's TA-R77 decks are noted for good alignment specs in the auto-reverse mode

of any cuts between two designated points on the deck's digital counter. Other auto reverse decks from JVC incorporating the Flip Reverse System range in price as low as $290.

Yamaha has added a nice touch to its Model **K-700** auto reverse deck ($450). With its auto fade in/fade out feature, when the end of a tape is reached the sound automatically fades out and then fades back in after the tape direction is reversed, thus eliminating breaks in songs recorded on both sides of the cassette.

The deck also boasts perfect head alignment in both directions, as well as the pro-





Rather than reversing tape direction, Nakamichi's RX-202 rotates the cassette shell

grammability of up to 15 selections in any order. Another interesting feature is blank skip; when the deck detects a 15-second blank space it automatically shifts into fast forward to reach the next selection. If that selection is on the reverse side, tape travel is automatically reversed and playback is resumed.

The natural extension of auto reverse is continuous cassette play. What better way to keep the party happening than by flipping in a cassette and letting it repeat until musically exhausted? This is one of the many features offered by the **Onkyo TA-R77** auto reverse deck ($400) that is noted for its particularly good alignment specs when in auto reverse mode. The unit utilizes a photo sensor that instantly detects the beginning of the transparent leader tape, making it possible to reverse the direction of the tape transport in less than one second. This means virtually no gap between sides A and B in either the Record or Play mode. The continuous mode will play back until otherwise instructed, though the unit automatically shuts off after both sides have been recorded to avoid accidental tape erasure. Other features include Dolby B and C noise reduction and an auto space button which automatically puts five seconds of blank tape between your musical selections.

Perhaps the most unique solution to the auto reverse dilemma comes from **Nakamichi**, a manufacturer noted for its high end audio products. The company recently announced a new concept in cassette technology—UniDirectional Auto-Reverse—on its **RX-202** cassette deck (about $650). Unlike conventional auto reverse decks, the tape mechanism doesn't reverse the direction of the tape—it actually rotates the cassette shell itself, eliminating alignment problems caused by bidirectional playback.

It is Nakamichi's belief that even the most stable auto reverse heads will create a loss of high frequency response (and thus a dull playback sound) unless electronically corrected. The company first addressed the problem with the so-called NAAC (Nakamichi Auto Azimuth Correction) system which it incorporated in its Autosound and Dragon cassette decks.

An internal microprocessor gives this unique device its considerable smarts. If the "flip" mechanism is obstructed it automatically shuts down and it can be overridden if the user prefers doing his cassette reverses manually. Meanwhile, additional automatic novelties include a music sensing circuit which monitors playback and fast forwards the tape to the end of the side when it detects a 40 second blank. Once turned around, the RX-202 automatically fast forwards through the tape leader and resumes playback. And the age-old problem of ending one selection on side A and beginning the next on side B is now a one step operation since a dual speed fader allows either four or two second fades at a touch.

MARK MEHLER

MUSIC TO HIS EARS

Adrian Belew on creating sound out of the air

When a conceptualist named Yankee Doodle stuck a feather in his cap and called it maccaroni, it was page one stuff. But when Kentucky-born Adrian Belew stuck his ear out into the din of 7th Avenue traffic and called it music, nobody made a fuss. Which goes to show that sometimes the experimentations of an artist are accorded less attention than those of an idiot.

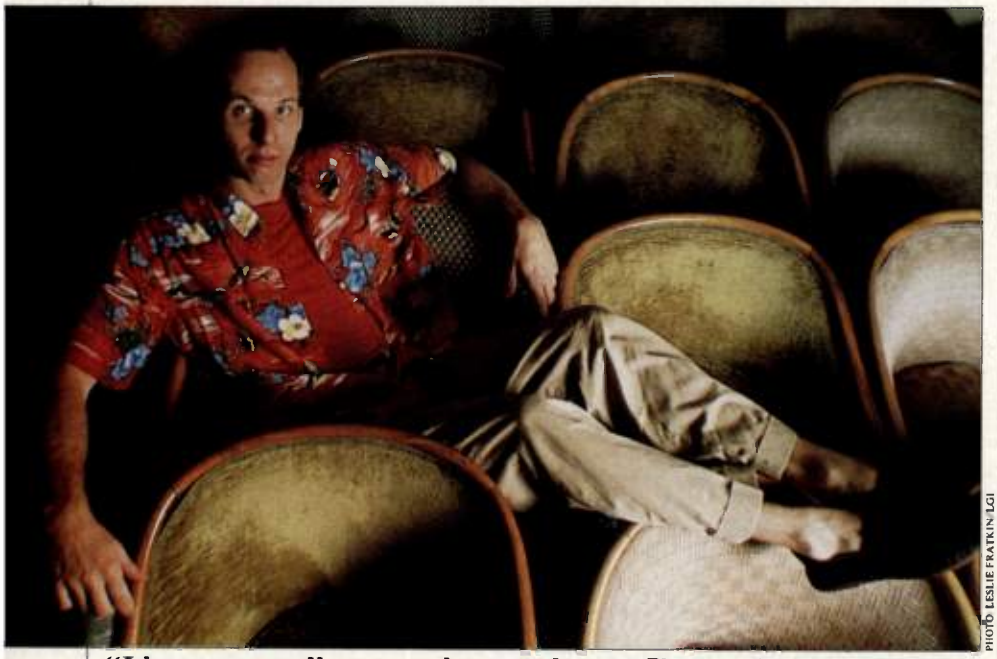


PHOTO: LESLIE FRATKIN/LGI

"I hear a seagull or a car horn and, once I've worked through it, it comes out as music."

Nevertheless, Belew—whose work with Frank Zappa, David Bowie, Talking Heads, and most recently, King Crimson, has gained him a growing reptuation as an innovative and versatile guitarist—is undaunted by those commercial realities.

"My passion has always been creating sound out of the air," he says. "What I am is a good receiver. I hear a seagull or a car horn and once I've worked through it, it comes out as music. Being a musician means arriving at a sound and being able to reproduce it, catalog it, write down the settings and nuances of the equipment, and then being able to use the sound later in a song context. That need, to keep redefining myself, that's what keeps me interested, not fame or money."

Belew describes just such an act of creation on the title cut of his first solo LP, 1982's *Lone Rhino*: "At 3 A.M. I was lying awake and suddenly the thing came into my head as one piece of music. I heard it like a record, but I had no guitar to work it out on, so I memorized it out of the air. I knew what 'Lone Rhino' needed was that snorting sound and when I got a flanger to open up the filter in a certain way, I got that breathy, *whoof* sound. I came up with this sort of odd cluster, where I turned up the volume, hitting the guitar with the slide all in the same sweep, and there was no percussion effect, just that great *whoof*."

With the release last fall of his second solo LP, *Twang Bar King*, however, Belew says he's finally begun to arrive at genuine artistic maturity. He notes the *Rhino* LP, on which he played both drums and guitar, was more a "retrospective of where I'd come from and who I'd worked with for the past seven years.

"It was all done in factions, me as guitarist with the band, then me on drums with band . . . . We never worked it all out together. On *Twang Bar*, I put together a real band (with the estimable Motown drummer Larrie Londin), and started flexing some arrangement muscles. Most of this record was played live, and the chemistry was incredible."

As a further part of his never-ending battle to psyche himself in the studio, Belew says he "did one of the simplest, most effective things I've ever done to make me completely rethink the way I play chords. I changed the G-string to an A, one note higher, and because it's in the middle of the guitar, every bar chord sounded different, a little dissonant. Suddenly everything I was playing sounded new. I'd been trying to find a tuning like that for 10 years and always thought it would have to be some elaborate re-tune of every string. I believe every old habit I had was broken on this record."

Born 33 years ago in Covington, Kentucky, Belew was the drummer in a popular local Beatles-cover band called the Denims. At 18, he took up guitar "in hopes of becoming a songwriter," having been influenced primarily by John Lennon's enigmatic revelations. When Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton came along and popularized the guitar virtuoso, Belew got hooked.

In his first major association, with Zappa, "my whole perspective changed.

"Everything was bigger and faster, I couldn't sit back and write simple pop songs anymore. Frank made me realize the importance of saying something. When you move from clubs with 50 people to making records with a major artist, you say to yourself, 'Hey I better straighten up.' I started reading dictionaries and thinking up concepts and concentrating on being deep and succinct at the same time."

Having met Robert Fripp through Bowie, Adrian toured briefly in a band opening for Fripp's League of Gentleman, and joined the reformed Crimson in 1981.

Currently, that group is completing its third LP, due in early '84. Belew says, "Robert's come up with some great metallic guitar sounds and I've been working on getting my guitar to sound like an electric power tool."

Belew, who recently began using a customized Fender with built-in Roland electronics ("I finally stopped feeling alienated by a guitar synthesizer"), continues to work on new hand techniques.

"I sit home a lot now and play unamplified. Outside of a couple of electronic effects, everything I'm doing—the use of volume control, right-handed fretting, playing on the guitar in different areas, playing behind the bone, bending notes, using the tremolo arm, feeding back—it's all technique designed to bring out the natural tendencies of the instrument."

The guitarist's future solo project will feature heavier orchestration, more extensive use of guitar synthesizer and of eastern instruments, including the Indian sarod, which is featured a bit on *Twang Bar*, and the 13-string, six-foot-long Japanese koto.

"I feel like I'm just beginning," says Belew. "Playing with my own band has opened my eyes." ○

HI-FI TO GO

PIONEER'S TWO-WAY COMPONENTS, a system of modular stereo equipment, offers an assortment of seven compact, mix and match home stereo components. What sets it apart is its mobility: you can attach a handle to the entire package and take it with you.

The system includes a choice of two tuner/amplifiers with a five-band graphic equalizer, tape deck, two types of detachable speakers and an optional turntable pair for the CS-C7 two-way speakers; $289.95 for the FA-C7 tuner/ amplifier; $209.95 for the FA-C5 tuner/amplifier; $179.95 for the CT-C7 cassette deck. The M-C11 optional power amplifier is $139.95, while the optional PL-C7 front-loading turntable is $164.95.

Pioneer's Two-Way Components: FA-C7 digital/stereo tuner/amplifier, CT-C7 cassette deck, CS-C7 two-way speaker, AD-C23 handle

and power amplifier. Both the CS-C11 three-way and CS-C7 two-way detachable speakers feature a flat woofer design, using a new flat plane diaphragm with acoustic damper panels that results in distortion-free sound and enhanced bass. A coaxial cone tweeter and a ribbon super tweeter (usually found only in home-hi-fi speaker systems) provide clear midrange and high frequency sound reproduction. The FA-C7 tuner/amplifier incorporates quartz PLL digital tuning with feather-touch controls, 15 station presets and search function for AM, FM and short wave bands. The LCD digital clock/timer displays constant time and, at the touch of a button, will switch to frequency display and preset times for system turn on/off. A five-band graphic equalizer uses click-stop operation to help accurately align frequency levels. Pioneer also offers the FA-C5, an analog tuner/amplifier with a five-band graphic equalizer. Both models feature a high power output of 12.5 watts continuous average power per channel minimum at six ohms, from 60-20kHz. The CT-C7 cassette deck features Dolby noise reduction, three-program skip search, metal and Cr02 tape capability and a manual record function, allowing for hand-set of recording levels.

Suggested retail prices for the Two-Way Component Systems are: $119.95/pair for the CS-C11 three-way speakers; $79.95/

CUTAWAY BARGAIN

GUILD'S F-45 IS THE FIRST CUTaway guitar to offer 24 fret access. Its acoustic/electric design consists of a custom-made Barcus-Berry bridge pickup, coupled with Guild's new pre-amp and active EQ. The thin electric neck offers the feel and playability of a solid body. The F-45 is crafted with a solid spruce top, arched mahogany back, mahogany sides and rosewood fingerboard. It's available in either a sunburst or natural finish. Left-hand versions can be ordered. Price: $799.

EXPANDED MEMORY

OBERHEIM ELECTRONICS HAS INtroduced optional drum sounds and retrofitable new features with expanded memory (more than double its present capacity) for its DMX Programmable Digital Drum Machine. The new software allows for over 45 new features, including: 5000+ event internal programming capacity, 200 sequence patterns, 100 songs, programmable tempo displayed in frames per beat, songs and sequence length displayed in minutes and seconds, and selective cassette interface for loading single sequences or songs from tape. The retail price of the DMX remains at $2895. Current DMX owners should contact their nearest Oberheim Service Center for the new DMX memory expansion update. The charge for the update is $150, including installation. All of the voice cards in the DMX are USER changeable to any of the other sounds in the DMX Sound Library. Some of the new optional

Oberheim's updated DMX Programmable Digital Drum Machine

percussion recordings include congas, timbales, cowbell/clave, and a complete set of electronic drums as well as special sound effects. The voice cards are available from Oberheim dealers and can be installed without the need for any tools. Most voice cards retail for $100 each.

FENDER MICS

ONE OF THE NEWEST ENTRIES IN Fender's line of professional sound equipment is the D-series vocal microphones featuring 0 to 90 degrees off-axis response for enhanced mic technique and perfor-

Fender's new D-Series vocal mics: (from left) the D-1 economy model, the high-performance D-2, the slim-line D-3

mance. The D-series consists of three models: the high-performance D-2, retailing at $137, the D-1 economy model priced at $70 and the slim-line D-3, designed for both stage and broadcast applications at $149. All feature a durable satin gunmetal finish, easily-replaceable filter balls and Fender's one year Road Hazard™ warranty, which provides for free repair or replacement of the microphone if it fails for any reason. ○

PHOTO BILL KING

TENDER IS THE KNIFE

UNDERCOVER
The Rolling Stones
Rolling Stones Records

By Anthony DeCurtis

Violence of both a sexual and political nature is never more than a shout away on *Undercover,* the Rolling Stones' first studio LP since 1981's much more emotionally balanced *Tattoo You.* Through a thoroughly unsettling combination of camp posturing and diabolical identity shifts on this record, Mick Jagger slips into the skin both of those who crack the whip and those who feel the lash. This maneuvering subverts our contempt as well as our pity, and leaves us not exiles on Main Street—it's 1984, friends, and we *live* on Main Street—but in the back alleys of oppression and gender warfare.

Undercover really has less to do with its most immediate, noteworthy predecessors—*Some Girls* and *Tattoo You*—than with the dark, explosive, morally shaded, and altogether compelling records of the Stones' 1968-1972 Golden Age: *Beggars Banquet, Let It Bleed, Sticky Fingers,* and *Exile on Main Street.* These albums undercut '60s hopes and ushered in '70s cynicism and indulgence with a sated, sneering fierceness that stopped just a razor's edge short of delight. While *Undercover* isn't up to the level of these classics, it derives its power from the same provocative impulse.

"Undercover of the Night" opens the first side with a machine-gun run of synthesized drumming that crashes into a barrage of percussive disco bottom and patented Stones guitar chords. The song's political references—to secret police, guerillas, surveillance and terror—creep into the bedroom and provide the underpinning for *Undercover's* thematic frame.

This frame completes itself as the album roars to a close with the "Soul Survivor" reprise, "It Must Be Hell." As he did on "Sympathy for the Devil," "Midnight Rambler," and "Brown Sugar," Jagger here adopts a morally and politically reprehensible persona. As "Sympathy"-style

AFTER 500 PLAYS OUR HIGH FIDELITY TAPE STILL DELIVERS HIGH FIDELITY.

If your old favorites don't sound as good as they used to, the problem could be your recording tape.

Some tapes show their age more than others. And when a tape ages prematurely, the music on it does too.

What can happen is, the oxide particles that are bound onto tape loosen and fall off, taking some of your music with them.

At Maxell, we've developed a binding process that helps to prevent this. When oxide particles are bound onto our tape, they stay put. And so does your music.

So even after a Maxell recording is 500 plays old, you'll swear it's not a play over five.

IT'S WORTH IT.

falsetto whoo-whoo's pierce the murky guitar mix, this pragmatic devil first drawls Orwellian advice ("Keep on a straight line, stay in tune/No need to worry, only fools/End up in prisons or conscience cells/Or in asylums they help to build") and then offers his taunting, chilling condolences: "It must be hell/Living in the world, suffering in the world *like you.*"

On the personal front, *Undercover's* porn-as-art cover offers a teasing invitation to sodomy and steels us for the sexual Armageddon documented in "Tie You Up (The Pain of Love)," "Too Much Blood," "Pretty Beat Up," and "Too Tough." The issue on these tracks isn't sexism, but a vision of relations between the sexes that shreds hip, "enlightened" attitudes about jealousy, friendship, and caring. These songs are about lust, anger, the desire to possess, and the frustration of loss and compromise.

As Keith and Woody lock into one of the toughest Stones guitar grooves since "Ventilator Blues" and David Sanborn rips the joint with a feral sax solo, Jagger moans "Since you left me, since you put me down" in "Pretty Beat Up," evoking a person so pulverized by emotional defeat that he can barely articulate. That these groans eventually become screams brings us to the muscle of the next track, "Too Tough," where Jagger struts over the "Jumping Jack Flash" arrangement to kick in the door of a nightmare and spit out a challenge to an ex-lover whose grip will not be loosed: *I was married yesterday*
To a teen-age bride
You say it's only physical
But I love her deep inside
I still see you in my dreams
with a kitchen knife
With it poised above your head
Now who you gonna slice?

The only relief we get from all this rage are Keith's tender, and rather lame, "Wanna Hold You"; the sensual Caribbean dream, "Feel On Baby"; and the Chuck-Berry-by-way-of-The-Faces rocker, "She Was Hot." Otherwise, it's once more into the breach with the Stones, who have again turned up the underside of the times, implicating themselves in the corruption they uncover, and daring us to exonerate ourselves when, after all, it was you and me.

. . . . . .

PIPES OF PEACE
Paul McCartney
Columbia

By Craig Zeller

It's no secret that Paul McCartney has always had his schlocky side. You can go all the way back to *Meet The Beatles* and cock an ear as he warbles away on "Till There Was You." A couple of years later he revealed genuine MOR aspirations with the muzak-bound "Yesterday." But at the time, these records just seemed to be minor indulgences because Paul could always be depended upon to redeem himself as a rocker with an "All My Loving" or a "Day Tripper."

Now, some thirteen years after waving bye-bye to the Beatles, McCartney has unabashedly turned those minor indulgences into an unbelievably successful solo recording career. He's one of the few gods left that AM radio abjectly worships and he's scaled the heights of superstardom a dozen times over—something no one's accused George or Ringo of lately. But he does have one thing in common with those other two ex-Beatles: he's forgotten how to rock.

In the last thirteen years Paul McCartney has made one great rock 'n' roll record: "Jet." There've been a few other attempts here and there, along with a handful of entertaining pop-rock hits like "With A Little Luck" and "Coming Up"—plus the occasional moving ballad ("Maybe I'm Amazed"). But as for unencumbered, full-throttle rockers . . . there's only "Jet." For Paul McCartney rock 'n' roll has become a minor indulgence.

It's painfully obvious when you listen to his albums. Every single one of them is mediocre, and a lot of them are just plain garbage. The *only* McCartney LP worth holding onto, by any stretch of the imagination, is *Wings Greatest* because it collects most of his good hits (along with some silly ones). And seeing sluggish hodgepodge efforts like *Band On The Run* and *Tug Of War* garner critical raves is as bad a joke as hearing the Beatles described as Paul's old back-up band.

I don't know what the general consensus will be on *Pipes Of Peace* but I'm here to tell you in no uncertain terms that *it's just another lousy McCartney album* with a couple of halfway decent cuts, a load of hummable pablum and the usual no-risk coasting.

On the title cut and "Tug Of Peace" (what a mind for sequels), Paul flashes arthritic peace signs and makes like a Haight-Ashbury dropout (those rattling love beads were a nice percussion touch). "The Other Me" and "Through Our Love" are fully submerged in sticky-sweet marshmallow emotions. The man makes absolutely no connection whatsoever with anything approaching passion or—perish the thought—lust. He just wanders around in a daze murmuring inanities like, "You've got the power of love/And love has the power to turn on the light." Not with that kind of faulty wiring.

McCartney's latest angle is to muck up past and present Motowners. In 1982 he took Stevie Wonder to a new low in triviality on "Ebony and Ivory" and then he and Michael Jackson got mutually dopey on "The Girl Is Mine." Jackson pops up here as co-writer and co-performer on "The Man" and "Say Say Say." The former is as inconsequential as they come; at least the latter makes a stab, albeit a lame one, at being tentatively funky. The horns work to good advantage here, rushing forward with the same oomph that helped to bolster "Take It Away."

"So Bad" tries a little tenderness without getting unbearably moony and "Keep Under Cover" actually percolates. I wouldn't be opposed to singing along with either one on the radio. Jeez, that's getting to be high praise for this guy. He'll probably go on like this forever, specializing in infectious vapidity and barely recalling a time when his music had magic in it. Groucho once suggested, "Why don't you bore a hole in yourself and let the sap run out." If Paul McCartney ever did that he'd dehydrate in a minute.

. . . . . .

INFIDELS
Bob Dylan
Columbia

By John Swenson

Bob Dylan is the most consistently misunderstood figure in pop music history. Dylan's approach to songwriting, and to his public persona in general, has always been perverse enough to suggest an apparent meaning that throws you off the track of what he is actually saying. Those who took his conversion to fundamentalist Christianity on *Slow Train Coming* and *Saved* at face value a couple of years ago may well have been confused by the subsequent *Shot Of Love,* in which he eulogized Lenny Bruce and likened his need for religion to Bruce's need for heroin.

It's tempting to view Dylan's "conversion" to Christianity as merely a prelude to his "return" to Judaism, especially when he professes the deliciously ironic justification that "Even Jesus only preached for three years." In fact, *Infidels* is a lot closer to *Shot Of Love* than a superficial view of Dylan's recent career would indicate. The despairing world view that has closed in on Dylan's writing inexorably over the years drove him to need a shot of love and continues here to inspire his blackest vision of mankind.

Two songs on *Infidels* epitomize the deep pessimism Dylan's observations have resulted in. "Neighborhood Bully" is generally perceived as Dylan's defense of Israel, and a few lines do bear the unmistakable

stamp of the Jewish tourist filled with pride upon returning from an Israeli holiday. But you must ask the question: if this is meant to be a patriotic song, why the title? Dylan poses himself a songwriting challenge worthy of the elaborate conceits he has broached in the past—who feels pity for the neighborhood bully?

Dylan's point in "Neighborhood Bully"—that the bully is playing out a predestined role—is one of his most fatalistic conclusions. Its tone is matched on the album's other central song, "Union Sundown." The song is not, as some have speculated, about labor unions. The Union Dylan refers to is pointedly singular—it's the United States, what they used to call the Union. Dylan's criticism is of the entire system. "Capitalism is above the law," he states with a world weary anger we haven't heard since *John Wesley Harding*. "Democracy don't rule the world," he continues. "This world is ruled by violence." The difference between this and "Masters Of War" is only in the resignation of Dylan's tone—he apparently no longer feels that singing about it will make any difference, even to himself. This cynicism is also applied to Dylan's view of wealthy philanthropists as the devil incarnate in "Man Of Peace" and his observation in "Sweetheart Like You": "Steal a little and they put you in jail/Steal a lot and they make you king."

Dylan may no longer believe that his songs can change the world, but he is still an obvious advocate of the power of rock 'n' roll. He's never put together a better band—the crack rhythm guitar team of Nick Taylor and Mark Knopfler. Knopfler is well suited to Dylan's newfound work ethic in the studio, while Taylor adds the kind of off-the-cuff blues leads and slide guitar passages that have characterized his best work. On songs like "Man Of Peace" and "Union Sundown" Taylor plays with a fire he's kept damped since the Rolling Stones classic *Exile On Main Street*. For his part Dylan hasn't sung this well in quite some time, a fact which indicates his ultimate commitment to this material.

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UH-HUH
John Cougar Mellencamp
Riva/Polygram

By Christopher Hill

Rock and roll loves voices from Nowhere, and a good part of the middle-western part of this country is Nowhere. Bruce Springsteen, a man with a keenly felt sense of Nowhere-envy, senses this, and so makes an album titled *Nebraska*. But where Springsteen goes wrong is in thinking that he can apprehend the essence of Nowhere's people simply by bleakening and blackening his picture, like turning down the brightness control on a TV set. A real citizen of Nowhere, like John Mellencamp of Indiana, generally senses that despair is just as facile and inaccurate as optimism. In Mellencamp's view, the dynamics between rock 'n' roll energy and the walls of Nowhere is complex and shifting. Maybe rock is the way out; maybe the walls have some real claim on us; maybe rock's simply a more attractive wall; maybe a good party is all we can expect, anyway. *Uh-Huh*, Mellencamp's first record under his real name, is also his first conscious effort to speak collectively for the people of his state and his state of mind. Though not always successful, the rough grain and savor of parched Midwestern earth that comes through makes this a bracing, provocative antidote to the bleak romancers of the "Badlands."

Mellencamp gives us his credo right off the bat in the album's most effective cut, "Crumblin' Down." "My opinion means nothin'," Mellencamp spits at all those who look down their noses at the tattooed dopers of the cornfields. "But," he avows, "I know I'm a real cool dancer." Is this a victory over the people to whom he's nothing, or is it just a "screw it" retreat into hedonism? Mellencamp offers no answers, but the sheer, wonderful sound of his music (as fashioned by producers Mellencamp and Don Gehman) speaks of triumph. It's one version of primordial rock 'n' roll noise, out of country blues by way of the Rolling Stones—a dense, dirty acoustic guitar onslaught, hooked around a sexy start-and-stop backbeat.

The sentiments of "Authority Song"—"Growing up leads to growing old and then to dying, and dying to me doesn't sound like all that much fun"—may sound like nihilistic heavy metal bravado, but the lyric and the music deliberately evoke "I Fought The Law" by Bobby Fuller, another midwestern rocker who tried to understand why the wide-open power of the sound he created had no effect on the crushing limits of his environment. Mellencamp begins "Serious Business" with a belch, and proceeds to put on his bad boy face in a passable tribute to *Exile*-period Stones, the scrawny tomcat chords and loose-jointed drums fleshing out a typical "party hearty" scenario. But then, on "Lovin' Mother Fo' Ya," he whips around and pokes sharp fun at just those Lotharios of the small town cruising strips who would be most captivated by these intimations of "decadent" hi-jinks. Only on "Play Guitar" does Mellencamp wholeheartedly present rock energy as a key to anything more worthwhile than the endless party. "Forget all about that macho shit," he impatiently lectures all the deadenders with the "greasy hair and greasy smiles" to "learn to play the guitar," while a ratty echo of "Gloria" 's central riff lurches out of the song's grinding, martial step. Anyone who thinks it's worth it to try to speak for a whole subculture—as John Mellencamp is legitimately attempting with *Uh-Huh*—obviously has a vision which sees beyond blasted hopes and wasted self-indulgence. It's a vision that comes through, however hesitantly, on this album. And precisely because Mellencamp's not purveying working class oratorios to college kids—because in important ways he is his audience—it's a vision that might make a difference.

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CAN'T SLOW DOWN
Lionel Richie
Motown

13
Commodores
Motown

By Steve Bloom

The marriage between Lionel Richie and the Commodores lasted eight wonderful years and generated enough chart toppers to fill out two Greatest Hits volumes. The ensuing divorce in 1982—Richie left the group, not the other way around—was long rumored. Few were as concerned about Richie's career as they were about the Commodores', for the obvious reasons. Clearly, Richie had been carrying the group (with gold-plus singles like "Three Times a Lady," "Still," and "Sail on") since "Brick House" in 1977. Fans had every reason to worry.

Like the spurned lover, the Commodores have been searching for a solution to Richie's absence. On the group's 13th album (aptly titled *13*), the five remaining Commodores take it upon themselves to try to replace Richie's songwriting and balladeering talents. This is a major tactical error. The Commodores should have instead concentrated on finding a compatible voice from *outside* the group to complement drummer Walter Orange's gritty tenor. As a result of not having done this, Orange and Harold Hudson (a member of the Commodores' back-up band) share the vocal chores.

Both try to reposition the group by aping every black pop male singer from James Ingram to Teddy Pendergrass—with little success. Only Orange's "Nothing Like a Woman" and "Touchdown" (a send-up of "Brick House"), which feature him in more familiar (i.e., funky) territory, sound genuinely like the Commodores

VERY AMERICAN

...AND A TIME TO DANCE
Los Lobos
Slash

One of the most amazing things about rock 'n' roll is how easily it puts our cultural diversity into perspective. With their Spanish name and *musica nortena* roots, Los Lobos ought to seem fairly exotic to an Easterner like me, yet no sooner did I drop the stylus on "Let's Say Goodnight," the sax-spiked rocker that leads off this seven-song EP, than I was hooked. The dramatic pauses and cool confidence of the vocal reminded me of what I liked best about Joe Turner's jump blues, while the combination of accordion and shuffling snare recalled the rhythmic excitement of zydeco. But the incisive guitar work and down-at-heels jollity of the lyrics suggested no one more than the Fabulous Thunderbirds, and by the time I'd gotten to the lively *ranchera* harmonies of "Anselma," my musical frame of reference was stretched all over the map. So I gave up trying to nail down *why* I dug it, and simply turned the volume up.

Los Lobos is a quartet of East Los Angelenos who, bored with the drudgery of working the Top-40 circuit, set about discovering their Mexican musical roots and have since worked their way back to rock 'n' roll. In one sense, this development is not unlike the way blues-rock got its start, except that instead of rethinking their roots on rock and roll terms, Los Lobos have made a much more fluid connection between the two.

An excellent example of just how even the balance is would be "Ay Te Dejo en San Antonio." Los Lobos' version is firmly entrenched in the *nortena* style right down to the traditional instrumentation of accordion, bajo sexto and bass, but if you compare their rendition to the Santiago Jimenez original, it's impossible not to notice how much more swinging Los Lobos are, how the vocal cadences have become more smoothly syncopated, how the bajo sexto afterbeats imply a loose backbeat instead of the stiffer polka-rhythms of Jimenez's group. Of course, that doesn't make Los Lobos any less traditional, but it does in some way make their sound more universal without pulling it away from its roots.

Los Lobos' cultural fusion cuts both ways, too. "How Much Can I Do?" alternates the sort of verse that could as easily fit into any roadhouse blues number with a spritely accordion figure that's pure Tex-Mex even as it carries over the same slamming backbeat and loping bassline. But "Walking Song" works the same formula without the ethnic interlude—instead, that song cuts its jump blues with a quasi-bebop guitar figure (augmented by co-producer Steve Berlin's baritone sax, on loan from its usual gig with the Blasters) that seems to have been borrowed from Texas Swing. And Los Lobos' treatment of Richie Valen's "Come On, Let's Go" features a bass figure that sounds uncannily like something Duck Dunn might have laid down had Valens been a Stax/Volt artist. In all, not the usual set of musical connections.

But Los Lobos is not the usual kind of rock 'n' roll band, either. That's why, despite the obvious threads running through their sound, I'm hesitant to refer to them as "roots music"—. . . *And a Time To Dance* sounds far too lively and contemporary to deserve a pigeon hole as dusty as that. Much better to simply call it American music, and remember the words of the Blasters: "It's the greatest sound right from the U.S.A."

—J.D. Considine

we've come to know over the years. Guitarist Tom McClary's "Welcome Home" is more of a step into the present as Hudson's husky voice is paired with a singalong vocal arrangement that reminds of Earth, Wind & Fire. The other five cuts reveal a group that has lost its identity and is trying just about anything to capture (the track "Captured," could have been written for Gladys Knight & the Pips) a new audience.

Richie, of course, has no such problems. Not only did he leave the Commodores in a position of strength, he stole the group's long-time producer, James Anthony Carmichael. Additionally, *Can't Slow Down* is a significant improvement over last year's painful middle-of-the-road exercise, *Lionel Richie*. Gone are his "You are the sun, you are the rain . . . I'm truly, head over heels, with your love" banalities. (Well, not totally, as evidenced by "Penny Lover." When will he stop writing greeting cards with his wife?) Two songs in particular point to Richie's songwriting development: "Love Will Find a Way," his first jazz-oriented piece which suddenly puts him in a class with George Benson, Al Jarreau and Bobby McFerrin (who Richie sounds like here), is a corny message, but at least it comes across in a musically hip and sophisticated fashion. "Hello" is more bluesy than anything Richie has ever done. But it is Richie's transformation, at least in this song, from his usual unbounded optimism to a more guarded stance ("I wonder where you are/I wonder what you do/Are you somewhere feeling lonely/Or is somebody loving you?") that is cause to cheer. Wisdom is hard-earned in this world, of course, but perhaps Richie has finally discovered that greeting cards do come in all shapes and sizes.

As for "All Night Long," what can I say? Harry Belafonte should be proud, and Stevie Wonder has publicly called it his favorite song of the moment. Richie's insistence on mimicking others, though, does get to be a problem. At various times you'd swear you're listening to Kenny Rogers, and then there's his Michael Jackson-like oohing and cooing on "Can't Slow Down" (which reminds me of "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin" anyway) and his Jim Croce-like treatment of "Stuck on You." If Richie thinks so much of Croce then why doesn't he just cover one of his songs?

The best of both albums combined would make one solid "Commodores Featuring Lionel Richie" record, but unfortunately that's neither here nor there. The fact is the Commodores had better get busy finding a serious replacement for Richie before people start saying "Commodores—who?" Richie, as I said, has no such problems. Except maybe a minor battle with guilt.

NIGHTLINE
Randy Crawford
Warner Bros.

By James Hunter

Singer Randy Crawford—as rightfully celebrated and well-known in Europe as she is not in her native United States—sounds like Gladys Knight, but where Knight sometimes travels more deeply inside herself, exploring the bluesy interior of her fertile claustrophobic throb, Crawford will steal outside, sneaking up on a light jazziness that's tougher and less erratic than, say, Chaka Khan's. *Nightline*, Crawford's seventh album, is a clear triumph of loose and leathery old-fashioned soul tunes, lost-in-themselves big ballads, and synth-snappy dance tracks, all pulled together by her unfailingly sumptuous singing; the record is what rare studio smarts and an even rarer vocal talent are all about at their co-operative best. With a singer less authoritative than Crawford and a producer less consistency-minded and steely-eyed than Tommy LiPuma, the

old and new pop modes of *Nightline* might well have emerged a mess, a disorienting clash of styles and intentions. But cleanly teeming out with LiPuma's tight-focus, history-blind sound, it isn't.

On the unusually vibrant and tuneful second side of this record, Crawford sings four songs written for her by Cecil and Linda Womack, and wonderful they are. Without any loss of sly, soulful groove, she goes from the testifying, knotty rhythms of "Happy Feet"—sort of Chic in church—to "This Ole Heart of Mine," a mid-tempo ballad that gracefully glides along to the subtle sigh of the title phrase, which is unshowy but as unforgettable as the sleekest championship hook. The killer number here is "Lift Me Up," a relaxed plea for love as emotional salvation that Crawford makes with freshly committed backup assistance from the Womack Brothers and Linda Womack, whispery and energized as they sweep out behind Crawford with "Baby, don't you bring me down." Still, the swirling, vivacious title cut and "Living On The Outside," a more serious piece of pop-funk, don't sound out of place next to the Womack wonders—they just sound like their eyebrows are arched higher. And on "Why," the album's most stunning ballad, James Newton Howard's synth can parade itself as opulently as it does because by definition its no match for Crawford and her beautiful raw verve as she warmly reasons out her love troubles. Why should only Europe appreciate a singer this special? Especially when her latest record covers so much ground as convincingly as *Nightline*.

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TOOTS & THE MAYTALS
Live at Reggae Sunsplash
Sunsplash

CHALICE
Live At Reggae Sunsplash
Sunsplash

YELLOWMAN
Live At Reggae Sunsplash
Sunsplash

BEST OF THE FESTIVAL—DAY ONE
Sunsplash

By Ken Braun

These four albums—all recorded live at the August 1982 Reggae Sunsplash festival in Montego Bay, Jamaica—constitute the initial releases of Sunsplash Records, a label that intends, apparently, to survive on strict fare of *Live at Reggae Sunsplash* albums. At least a half-dozen more are already scheduled for release. This first batch makes for a mixed bag containing some old-timers, some young bloods, somehot performances, some tepid ones.

The artists identified as *Best of the Festival—Day One* all qualify as old-timers to one degree or another. Byron Lee has been a prominent figure in Caribbean music since the 1950s; his reggae of late has been dismal, but his calypso still sparkles, and it is with a calypso song—"Mek We Jam"—that he and his Dragonaires are represented on this album. John Holt began his very successful career in the mid-'60s as the leader of the Paragons ("The Tide Is High"), and as a soloist he's maintained his popularity into the '80s; "Sweetie Come Brush Me," his mildly lascivious selection here, gives no hint of the sentimentality that has marred too many of his songs over the years. But Roy Shirley, who also began his career in the mid-'60s, recording several very fine rocksteady sides ("Musical Train," "I'm a Winner"), suffers here from an inappropriate choice of material—Brook Benton's "Endlessly."

U Roy and Big Youth, two early '70s pioneers of dee-jay toasting, put in the best performances of the Day One roster, Mr. Roy with his popular "Wear You to the Ball" and Mr. Youth with an incantatory version of the Abyssinians' "Satta Amasagana." Youth, however, ruins the mood he has created by launching into his silly "Every Nigger Is a Star." More disappointing, though, is the album's sample of Toots & the Maytals: Toots Hibbert has been a concert legend (justly) for twenty years, but not because of maudlin "tributes" like "(Marley's Gone . . .) His Songs Live On."

It must have been a rare "off" night for Toots & the Maytals, for the entire album devoted to his set is disappointing. Perhaps it's because Toots was appearing without his long-time harmonizers, Jerry Mathias and Raleigh Gordon (their places filled by a nameless duo of women), that he sounds so disoriented. But that doesn't explain his band's lack of spirit. They make even such high-voltage generators as "Pressure Drop" and "Monkey Man" sound defused, rushed as if they wanted only to be done with the show. To hear how electric these songs can be when Toots & the Maytals are "on," listen to Mango Records' *Toots Live* (1980), recorded—ironically—in England.

Chalice is one of Jamaica's odd self-contained reggae groups (groups in which singers play their own instruments or instrumentalists sing, whichever it is). Such alignments are usually modeled after rock groups, and the predictable result is that certain ideals of reggae—"country" harmonies, spare rhythms—are compromised. Chalice is not the crass show-

business package Third World (another self-contained, so-called reggae group) is, but rock-styled guitar solos and drum flourishes disrupt nearly every song in what is otherwise a surprisingly likeable set.

The prize of these four albums is Yellowman's, Jamaica's latest—and perhaps biggest-ever—dee-jay star. Yellowman has made some terrific records, but the full scope of his talent is revealed only when he's performing live, when the instant demands of interacting with an audience galvanize his wit, his sense of timing, and his freakish magnetism. While a band vamps steadily behind him, Yellowman opens his tongues' gate to a flood of rhymes, scatologisms, puns and vocal effects. Whether his topic is politics ("Soldiers Take Over Tanka," "Gunman Connection"), religion ("Jah Jah Made Us for a Purpose"), recreation ("Sit Under You"), love ("Get Me to the Family Court On Time"—a personalized parody of the Lerner & Loewe favorite), or himself ("What a Pumpy Bubble 'Pon Me Fronty," "Me Too Sexy"), his rhythm never falters, his tongue never trips or dulls, and he keeps the crowd dancing, laughing and cheering. This album is the best representation of Yellowman on vinyl at this time.

Live recordings are a risky investment: occasionally, like Yellowman's, they triumph; usually they flop. Sunsplash Records will have to diversify if it hopes to stay in business. (Sunsplash Records, Inc., P.O. Box 7778, Silver Springs, MD 20907.)

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BABES IN ARMS
MC 5
ROIR

THE BLOW UP
Television
ROIR

ONE WAY SYSTEM
Dub Syndicate
ROIR

FUTURE FUNK!/UNCUT
Alfonia Tims and the Flying Tigers
ROIR

By Jim Green

These recent Reachout International releases show the spunky, eclectic cassette-only independent at its best: testaments to two defunct but seminal bands and showcases for two bright new talents with innovative styles.

Babes In Arms compiles a combination of rare early local singles and alternate versions/mixes of album tracks primarily from the out-of-print second and third LPs (*Back In The U.S.A.* and *High Time*). Collectors' considerations aside, the 16 selections provide both a neat overview of the band's career and a valid compendium of its finest moments. Even the couple of "psychedelic" quasi-jazz clinkers display the intensity of commitment and execution that allows the other tracks' street-rebel rhetoric to retain most of its credibility, even at this late and cynical date. A genuinely exciting scrapbook of these generals from the guitar army.

Television is best remembered for its idiosyncratic approach to improvisation, represented only in tidied-up studio crystallization on its two albums. This first (illicit) document of the phenomenon in situ, so to speak, is a double-length set from TV's final tour showing the group's characteristic occasional lapses into sloppiness, yet is also (again, characteristically) consistently gripping, riveting, even transcendently marvelous. At the top of his writing form, Tom Verlaine imbued conventional rock forms with perception and even heart, which is rare but hardly radical: TV's nonmusicianly approach to musical self-expression was a typically rare and radical triumph of transmuting emotions into sounds, in one way like the best jazz, in another kind of like watching blind men walk a tightrope without a net. Highlights for fans and non-fans alike include the two previously unvinylized cover versions, the Stones' "Satisfaction" and the Thirteenth Floor Elevators' "Fire Engine" (mysteriously retitled "The Blow Up"), as well as a 15-minute exploration of "Little Johnny Jewel."

Adrian Sherwood is a young white Englishman who is enchanted with reggae. His carloads of producer credits on LPs issued by his own On-U Sound label are chiefly for constructing frameworks for ad hoc ensembles composed of regular working bands (mainly visiting Jamaicans). *One Way System* is a dub LP, largely adapted from tracks laid down for his New Age Steppers' *Foundation Steppers* LP, on which he plays the musicians and studio like one large synthesizer.

Jamaican dub masters such as Lee Perry and Scientist can at turns be divinely lunatic and messy as a fingerpainting toddler; Sherwood's more methodical approach is no less stunning for its precision, marshalled as it is for his own "mad," good-humored visions. The grooves he's chosen are as varied as his techniques, which range from cunningly employed standard devices—echo, reverb, etc.—to more imaginative techno-tricks, even using "scratch" techniques to good effect. A wild and playful ride.

Alfonia Tims' is the saddest story of the bunch, since the young black guitarist/bandleader/composer passed away mere weeks before *Future Funk* was released, yet his is the most effervescent and convivial of the four styles represented here. He and his interracial septet (rhythm section and horns) blend jazz (including the "harmolodic" strain developed by Ornette Coleman and James "Blood" Ulmer), funk and rock into a continuous musical high. Driving, shifting polyrhythms, wittily tuneful riffs comically rattled off by the horns and guitars, ensemble playing that's stretched so tight/pushed so hard it has to fly apart, all spearheaded by Tim's querulous, high-pitched vocals and guitar playing that's alternately just as nearly self-parodic and (on the two live cuts) capable of baring sharp fangs, too. Unflaggingly hilarious, exhilarating and motion-inducing, it's like a sonic Osterization of Ulmer, Richard Pryor, James Brown and Frank Zappa.

All four cassettes have detailed session info, pictures and liner notes (Tims' by jazz great Gil Evans, the MC 5's by ex-manager/White Panther theorist John Sinclair and journalist Mick Farren); the sound is generally no worse than satisfactory (the vagaries of transferring old acetates and of live recording notwithstanding); the music is outstanding, and none of it is available on vinyl. These four tapes alone constitute ample reason to invest in a portable cassette player—wouldn't you like to experience rock epiphanies in the street? (ROIR, 611 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.)

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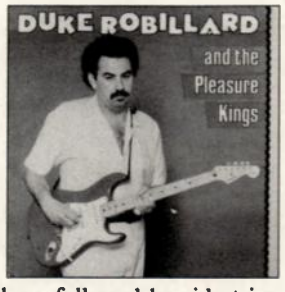
DUKE ROBILLARD AND THE PLEASURE KINGS
Duke Robillard & The Pleasure Kings
Rounder

By Jonathan Gregg



After a long stint as frontman/guitarist for Roomful of Blues, followed by side trips with Robert Gordon and the Legendary Blues Band, Duke Robillard has recently been tearing up the East Coast circuit with his trio, the Pleasure Kings, and the years of experience show on their first LP. Rather than Stevie Ray Vaughan's in-the-face flash, Robillard goes for depth, and his nods to Earl Hooker, T-Bone Walker and the Kings are less obvious and more varied than the brash young Texan's Hendrix fixation.

The level of sophistication Robillard's playing brings to the basic blues and rock 'n' roll format sets him apart from the crowd. Judiciously phrased single note solos expand smoothly into chordal pas-

sages, and the clean, biting sound of his Stratocaster never lets inspiration get in the way of control.

Robillard's songs cover a variety of moods and tempo in a bluesy vein, with his robust and personable baritone lending the right shade of grey to the rocking shuffles "Let Me Love You" and "One More Time," and the harder rock groove of "If This Is Love." But the real news here is the guitar playing. Alternately fluid and chordal ("What That Means to Me," the wink to Les Paul on "My Plea") and stinging and low-down ("One More Time," the wild slow blues "Just Kiss Me"), Robillard is clearly a master stylist of American music. Drummer Tommy de Quattro and bassist Tom Enright provide strong and supple support throughout, and overall the band creates as much of the spirit of the blues as is possible in a studio.

It is high time America started taking stock of its own musical heritage, and Duke Robillard is a living resource too good to ignore.

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LOVE IS THE LAW
The Suburbs
Mercury

By Jim Green

Love Is the Law is a fine example of a band confronting frustration and desperation as lyrical themes closest to them, yet avoiding the gloom-doom of many of their British counterparts by looking for a laugh. This isn't to label them a gag band like their goof-rocking Minnesotan predecessors, the Trashmen (remember "Surfin' Bird"?); when they laugh, it's usually with well-honed irony, *à la* their "Monster Man," who asks, "What can a poor monster do, except murder flowers and give them to you?" It's a situation we (nominally) non-monstrous types ought to consider.

The 'Burbs also are to be commended for an intuitively wise blend of styles. I say "intuitively," since it'd be awfully unlikely that anyone could calculatingly plot the blend of modern dance-rock and jump-blues that transforms "Dem Bones" into "Rattle My Bones," an energetic number that'll put an itch in your ischia and make your phalanges flap (along the way updating the anatomical rundown: "the headbone's connected to the headphone"). "Hell A" is rap 'n' roll, connecting three expositions of personal struggle and failure (one taken verbatim off the wall of a phone-booth in LA) with urgently rousing injunctions to dance; the title tune bounces along spryly, despite its verses' despair, framing its stubbornly optimistic chorus with a jolly brass riff; excepting some "merely" pleasant moments on the second side, the record has a full measure of stimulating entertainment.

It's a "monster world," say the Suburbs, and on *Love Is the Law*, they make their invitation to get "bent straight into the scene" a mighty enjoyable one to accept.

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SHOWSTOPPER
Jamaaladeen Tacuma
Gramavision

PLUG IT
Oliver Lake and Jump Up
Gramavision

By Greg Tate

Gramavision's second set of releases from jazz popsters Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Oliver Lake demonstrates how pragmatically this fledging progressive label is going about surviving in the pop marketplace without losing its avant-garde integrity. In case you haven't heard, Tacuma's name carries weight in new jazz circles for his brinksmanship bass performances with Ornette Coleman's Prime Time, while Lake, through his reed work with the World Saxophone Quartet, has established a reputation as a major jazz modernist. But neither Tacuma's *Showstopper* nor Lake's skanking LP, *Plug It*, is solely about flashing preternatural chops. Instead, the records show off how thoroughly both have absorbed lessons from the black pop lexicon.

Showstopper was clearly designed to highlight Tacuma's harmolodic bass style and his Philly bebop and funk roots. The A side of this jam runs the gamut from the opening chamber symphony snooze that fronts off of *Diva* star Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez to a black rock stomp featuring James "Blood" Ulmer and guitar synthesist Chuck Hammer. In between comes an exercise in freebop with altoist Julius Hemphill and trumpeter Olu Dara at the helm and a solo bass testimonial, "Tacuma Song," written by Ornette Coleman for his protege. This tune's touching mirth, melancholy and melodicism will be familiar to anyone who appreciates the prankish pathos of Coleman's distinctive lines. Following it comes another bass workout buttressed by Latin percussion and upgirded by an Arabian figure. The thread of continuity in all this eclecticism, is, of course, Tacuma's versatile bass playing, which proves only cliche-ridden on

the chamber work, more than competent on the freebop romp, aptly Chaplinesque on the Coleman work and ably funktional in tandem with Ulmer and Hammer. Tacuma's strength as a player is that he possesses the rare ability to flash chops as he supportively moves with regards to the music's melodic, rhythmic and harmonic imperatives. These skills find their hippest expression when Tacuma takes his second-lead position in the Coleman band but are also present on *Showstopper*'s second side which features Tacuma's funk unit, Jamal. While none of the players are really in Tacuma's league, they more than adequately give expression to his locomotive dance tunes.

The reggaefied funk of Oliver Lake's Jump Up band is less exultory than Tacuma's but still hardhitting. In drummer Pheroan Akh Laff (who has a lyrical EP of his own out on Gramavision now) and bassist Darryl Mixon, Jump Up possesses one of the skankingest ridim sections outside of Jamaica. Though their funk moves make them less fluid than Jamaican players, their integration of African-American backbeat and island bubble makes for a killing rumble out on the dance floor. Jump Up's club hits have to date proven more moving than what they've managed on record, but *Plug It* comes closer than their previous LP to capturing the band's spirit. What distinguishes Jump Up from any other funk or reggae band around is Lake's fired-up and exploratory alto work, and his comical, almost embarrassing singing. If you can hear Lake's voice as a satirical take on reggae and black pop vocalese it becomes passable—if, like me, you can't, it becomes an irritant when combined with Jump Up's rhythmic and improvisational thrusts.

FIGURES
Jeff Waryan
Twin/Tone Records

By Anthony DeCurtis

If combos like R.E.M. and Big Country have succeeded in reestablishing a hip audience for guitar bands, Jeff Waryan may have little trouble getting the hearing he deserves. But if the way has not already been laid, Waryan's debut album, *Figures*, should blaze a trail for him on its own considerable merits.

Assured, accomplished, and well-crafted, *Figures* was possibly the finest independent LP debut of 1983. Waryan's music combines the bruising intensity of Graham Parker or Bruce Springsteen with the lyricism of Tom Verlaine. While he is not yet fully independent of these well-chosen and demanding influences, Waryan manages their virtues capably and emerges with his own identity intact.

Waryan wrote all eight songs, played all guitars, and supplied all lead vocals on *Figures*. The songs sketch out emotional vignettes with enough specific detail to draw the listener in, but with sufficient open space in which the imagination can roam. Singing is the most limited of Waryan's talents, which is to say it's merely serviceable and emotionally charged. As a guitarist, Waryan is consistently outstanding, with a demonstrable flair for original and timely phrasing—the ascents and descents of his more extended solos render each tune a thoroughly satisfying journey through the emotional landscape his lyrics set out to explore.

One of Waryan's attractive qualities is that, unlike many songwriters drawn to the thrilling world of high romance, he understands that romance has necessary limits. In "In the Shadows" he resists the lure of a rendezvous under the stars, insisting on a love that can stand up to the light: "I won't meet you in the shadows/Deep in the night/Not in the shadows/It's just not right." We can use another songwriter with this kind of smarts.

While the transcendent rush of *Figures*' opener, "To Get Away," was enough to keep the album fixed to my turntable for weeks, at least five of the remaining cuts should appeal to any reasonably sympathetic ear. A conventional rocker both toughened and sweetened by the new wave, Jeff Waryan is one Young Man With A Guitar worth watching and hearing. (Twin/Tone Records, 445 Oliver Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55405.)

RESCUE
Clarence Clemons And The Red Bank Rockers
Columbia

By Barry Alfonso

In the service of Bruce Springsteen, saxman Clarence Clemons has done more than add honks and wails to his employer's tunes. "The Big Man," as he's been dubbed, is a bonafide Springsteenian *character*, a living symbol of the commonfolk heroes who populate the records he plays on. Both the man and his sax style evoke a distinct mood: tough but sensitive, the classic swaggering hood with a 14 Karat heart.

This persona comes through intact on Clemons' first recorded outing as a bandleader. *Rescue* will more than satisfy the fans he's won as a part of Springsteen's E Street Band; whether it challenges his abilities as a sax player is another question, despite the LP's value as a rollicking party-perfect effort.

Perhaps it was the well-defined niche that Clemons has already claimed for his own which led to *Rescue's* conservative approach. The album glories in the fat, frolicsome R&B band sounds of the '60s. Rather than the sleeker stylings typified by Motown artists, Clemons and his group ladle on the horns and background vocals heavy a la a Muscle Shoals or Stax soul revue. *Rescue* conjures up mental pictures of a recording studio crammed to the monitors with players, friends and hangers-on shouting out choruses between sipping brews.

As indicated, the feel captured is right on the mark—such tracks as "A Man In Love," "A Woman's Got The Power" and "Savin' Up" (the last-named a Springsteen composition) have the funky nobility that big-band R&B has always traded in. The LP works better in this idiom than did last year's similarly-intended solo album by another Springsteen crony, Miami Steve Van Zandt. What is lacking is a touch of something more, both instrumentally and lyrically.

Clemons himself far from dominates the album—he's content to step out for his solo break on most tracks, though a reworking of "Resurrection Shuffle" gives him some extra stretch-out room. The real star of *Rescue* is the Big Man's lead singer a feisty soul shouter named John "J.T." Bowen. With little previous recording experience, Bowen's commanding presence on the LP is impressive indeed. Mitch Ryder and Levi Stubbs are two figures that his beseeching-to-frenzied style suggests, but, mainly, he has the air of an unstudied natural. Bowen makes a good deal of *Rescue's* predictability forgivable. He lends to Clemons the same sort of urban bravura that Clemons brings Springsteen. It may not be new, but it still packs a wallop.

CREATURES OF LEISURE
Mental As Anything
A&M

By Jody Denberg

If Mental As Anything weren't so serious about being funny, they would probably be better at it. Their second U.S. release, by this cerebral Australian quintet, *Creatures Of Leisure*, boasts enough witty wordplay and

all-around twisted verbosity to sink several songs under their own weight. But when Mental As Anything don't try so hard to please, they usually do.

The four singer/songwriters in this quirky band from Oz compose with a singular voice that seamlessly weaves rock, pop and country into a sound that is more Rockpile than rockabilly. The vocal touches alternate between '50s-type crooning which offsets their loquacious nature ("Close Again") and somber Moody Blues' style harmonies which makes their whimsy wobbly ("Spirit Got Lost").

The results are pleasant enough, but it's hard to accept Mental As Anything as literate popsters with lines like "I'm not a heretic as far as true love goes/but I've changed denomination and I guess it shows" from Greedy Smith's "Fiona," or "Just one more transaction in the currency of joy" from Reg Mombassa's "Drinking Of Her Lips." The tension that sets up Elvis Costello's successful puns, or the timeless pop intuitiveness that makes Nick Lowe's best witticisms click, just isn't here, no matter how hard you look.

What is here, though, is a playful sense of humor that could give Madness a run for its money if allowed to surface above the word clutter. After all, the title *Creatures of Leisure* is a pretty funny swipe at that other ever-popular Aussie band. Maybe the videos will prove just how funny Mental As Anything can be.

ROAD GAMES
Allan Holdsworth
Warner Bros.

By J-C Costa

Like some splendid mutation, Allan Holdsworth is worshipped by guitar minions the world over for his distinctive, often perverse blend of "big guitar" timbre and advanced melodic/harmonic ideas played fluid and laser fast, yet critics shudder and dismiss him as an idle noodler of little or no musical consequence.

Road Games, a more focused and better-packaged presentation of six characteristically elliptical Holdsworth compositions in a mini-LP format, will doubtless do little to resolve this virtuoso guitarist's schizoid musical image. Even with the extra-competent support of Jeff Berlin on bass, Chad Wackerman on drums and Jack Bruce on occasional lead vocals, too little of the material sticks to the brainpan after repeated listenings.

When you're reduced to describing individual album tracks with thoughts like: "Road Games" is the one with a nifty triple-tracked quasi-funk riff that goes out, goes nowhere and comes back later, or "Tokyo Dream" is the one that starts out with that quaint kind of oriental texture (Bowie's "China Doll" too)—you've got trouble. Holdsworth has the undeniable ability to create cryptic and compelling melody lines played with a fat, burnished guitar tone voiced like a saxophone or violin. But after successfully navigating the "head" of the tune's arrangement he seems to get bogged down by too many options and loses the compositional thread.

Even more surprising is that as a soloist—which, to his eternal chagrin, is still what he's best known for—Holdsworth seems progressively isolated from the musical context he's soloing in. Bouncing off the angular construction of tunes like "Three Sheets To The Wind" or "Was There?," his solos blast forth with mind-bending shifts in speed and direction as Holdsworth negotiates maze of controlled melodic pathways in an obsessive desire to avoid the obvious device.

Pushed along by the marvelously supple and delicately shaded bass playing of Berlin, some genuinely lovely and atmospheric moments emerge from time to time. And Holdsworth's technique still inspires awe—albeit from a distance. But even the most impressionable student of the electric guitar must recognize that, when you add up the total, a lot of *Road Games* is indeed more of your basic magnificent noodling.

DEBARGE

Continued from page 31

pression and the sly baby-talk way he plays with certain key words introduces an appealing carelessness that's in ironic contrast to the meticulous vocals of the others.

"James has a part in DeBarge that fills a gap," says his sister, answering a question for him. James is clever but seems shy, and he's content to sit quietly or cut up with 25-year-old Randy while others speak his mind. Adds Bunny: "El is more of a ballad writer. El can also write up-tempo songs, but then, he can contribute to what James has."

PHOTO: RON WOLFSON/LGI

The DeBarges have spent their entire lives set apart, living in the weird half-light of being both controversial and ignored.

Though DeBarge performances have been limited to promotional events and TV appearances, February finds them hitting the road for a four-month U.S. tour, followed by a month in Europe. But though this marks their first extended test as musicians (Randy plays bass, Eldra and James play keyboards and Mark doubles on percussion and trumpet), as singers they've always had an audience. DeBarge kids virtually overran the choirloft in the Bethel Pentecostal Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where their Uncle James was the choir director and Uncle Bill the pastor. Uncle James, it seems, recognized their talent at an early age and polished their pipes through the years while instilling in them the techniques and love of gospel music. The accomplished youngsters were circulated around in chorus and as soloists. Every Sunday they would sing on a local gospel radio broadcast. "Hallelujah, Jesus, buckle my shoe," went the refrain of one of their favored tunes.

Given the secular (and often sexual) nature of their commercial music, returning to the church in which they grew up is often awkward for the DeBarges. Although Bethel's hard line of no smoking, no drinking and no partying has mellowed somewhat since the time their family filled the place, the DeBarge kids—show biz people, you understand—are eyed warily by the congregation.

"When we walk in the door the first thing they do is make sure we're still down-to-earth," says Mark. "They start talking to us to see where the wild hairs are. They used to be strict, but now it's kind of 'Hey, you can do what you want to, but it's not right to do that.' "

"I think it was a no-no in our church to do this kind of music," Bunny adds.

Eldra chides them gently. "Well, let's not get into all that, talking about religion."

How I luv to see you move your sexy body
The way you move and groove
When you whip it down the street

Come along with me I promise I'll be good to you
Don't you make no plans
Let it happen naturally
Yeah, Lordy Lord . . .

. . . Be my lady . . .

DEBARGE WOULDN'T BE EVERYwhere on your radio if their songs simply mirrored the group's religious bent, and therein hangs the dilemma for these high-spirited performers who must thank both God and Berry Gordy for their break.

The point, however, is that religion *inspired* music in their lives, whether through the hymnal or their mother's prayers.

"I remember moving into different places and people looking out the window and going 'ohhhh . . . ' " says Bunny. "It was kind of hard on us, and Momma was always pregnant. I remember her crying at times, and saying 'How am I going to raise all these kids?' She finally just put it in God's hands and said 'Lord, you wanted these kids to come into this world, you make them a blessing to me, and to someone else.' She would put her hand on her stomach and she would pray 'Lord, make them a blessing.'

"My mother was very musically inclined, so I can say that it came from her and her faith in God that we went off into music. That's why I say we knew at an early age why we were here in life, because we were told as little kids from God, not from anyone else, that we were here to sing and to inspire people with our songs and with our lyrics."

She recalls her own prayerful requests in uncertain times—"Please, God, make our record a hit"— that were twice answered: "All This Love" would have been last spring's number one soul chart listing if "Billie Jean" hadn't been the monster hit it was, and the rise of "Time Will Reveal" didn't leave the latest LP time to languish.

Eldra remembers their early music making wasn't merely kid stuff. "Music was so emotional for us," he says. "It was more than just a plaything. We'd write a song when we were little, I mean five or six, and tears would come streaming down. It was real spiritual. Everyone went directly to the instrument they were meant to have."

And if you were to take DeBarge's themes in their grown-up songs and balance them against today's standards, the sexual references would seem pretty mild. But for now, the family continues to thank Jesus in the inner sleeve and dot their conversation with grace notes praising His name while avoiding direct lyrical references to their faith.

Says Bunny: "When we get out here on stage it isn't a sex thing. We want to reach out to those people and tell them about love. And God is love. We don't want to get off into the sex thing. It's not something that stands. We want it to be more firm than a sexual thing. The songs I write—I pray to God before I write them and ask God to give me the words."

Eldra stresses that DeBarge is not oblivious to the responsibility they now have to their young fans. "Even though you can be God-conscious, you still are human and you still have human desires, human needs. Like, there's nothing wrong with a man wanting a woman, and a woman wanting a man, but God's way is to pursue a marriage situation before you start.

"So I think expressing those desires about love, even secular love, that we have for each other isn't in any way sinful— it's very natural. It's okay to write songs about it if that's the way you feel. But when you start getting deep into all that lustful stuff, you're promoting fornication."

"We want to be an example," adds Mark, "just like Jesus was. He came down to Earth and showed people, 'Hey, you can make it.' And they didn't take nothing from him. *Nothing*." ○

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LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

DAVE MARSH

Hope you got your things together
Hope you are quite prepared to die
—John Fogerty,
"Bad Moon Rising"

Before ABC broadcast *The Day After*, on Sunday, Nov. 20, the media and "responsible" educators warned against the TV movie because it was allegedly too graphic and horrifying in its depiction of nuclear holocaust. This was fairly crazy—I don't know about you but I *want* my kids to be scared shitless of the Bomb, since that's the only way it can be stopped—but even worse was the reaction the day after the broadcast. We were told that all that one hundred million viewers had seen was a fairly ordinary TV docudrama, and that it had made no substantial difference in the lives of those who watched.

I wish those who took this attitude could have been with the teenagers with whom I watched, two people to whom the idea that they lack a future is new, unforgettable and utterly, bitterly transfiguring. And I wish they could have been there to explain to me and the other adults present how we could console those kids without resorting to the cruelest, stupidest lie: "It's going to be all right."

For those who know that it won't be unless we change the way the world currently runs, the Give Peace a Chance exhibit at Chicago's Peace Museum offers a media experience more powerful, challenging and reassuring than *The Day After*. As someone who was at the museum the day before the broadcast, it inspired what few positive thoughts I had. (The Chicago run of the exhibit may have ended by the time you read this. You owe it to yourself to contact the Peace Museum at 364 W. Erie St., Chicago, IL 60610 to make sure that as the show goes on the road, it comes somewhere near your town. You might also consider sending the Museum $8.95 for a copy of its fine catalogue, which contains some terrific photos, many in color, of some of the exhibited material, along with a number of worthwhile articles on the show and rock's relation to the peace struggle.)

Being a cynical media veteran, it hardly seemed likely that Give Peace a Chance would strike a very powerful chord with me. On the contrary, it was one of the most powerful experiences I've ever had. That's not because the displays show so many martyrs to the endlessly possible dream of ending war, but because they showcase peace as an over-riding, traditional theme in American popular music, from Big Bill Broonzy to Talking Heads.

The exhibits run chronologically, from the folk and blues protest singers of the Thirties to Sixties (Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Tom Lehrer, Joe McDonald) to contemporary names ranging from Jackson Browne and Stevie Wonder to Bob Marley and the Clash. It's not only superstar music that's represented here, either. You're as likely to hear Edwin Starr's "War" or Freda Payne's "Bring the Boys Home" as anything by a superstar. All of them are rendered more effective by the tapes that play as you wander through. But the real movement of the exhibits isn't from folk to rock or from acoustic to electric, but from relatively isolated individuals to a huge mass movement. That's true not only because Bono Hewson and Graham Nash speak to much larger constituencies than Seeger or Guthrie ever did, but because those listeners are ever more aware of the importance of their role.

What's on display in Give Peace a Chance is irrefutable evidence that rock has helped sustain hopes of an American peace movement through one of the most apathetic periods in our culture

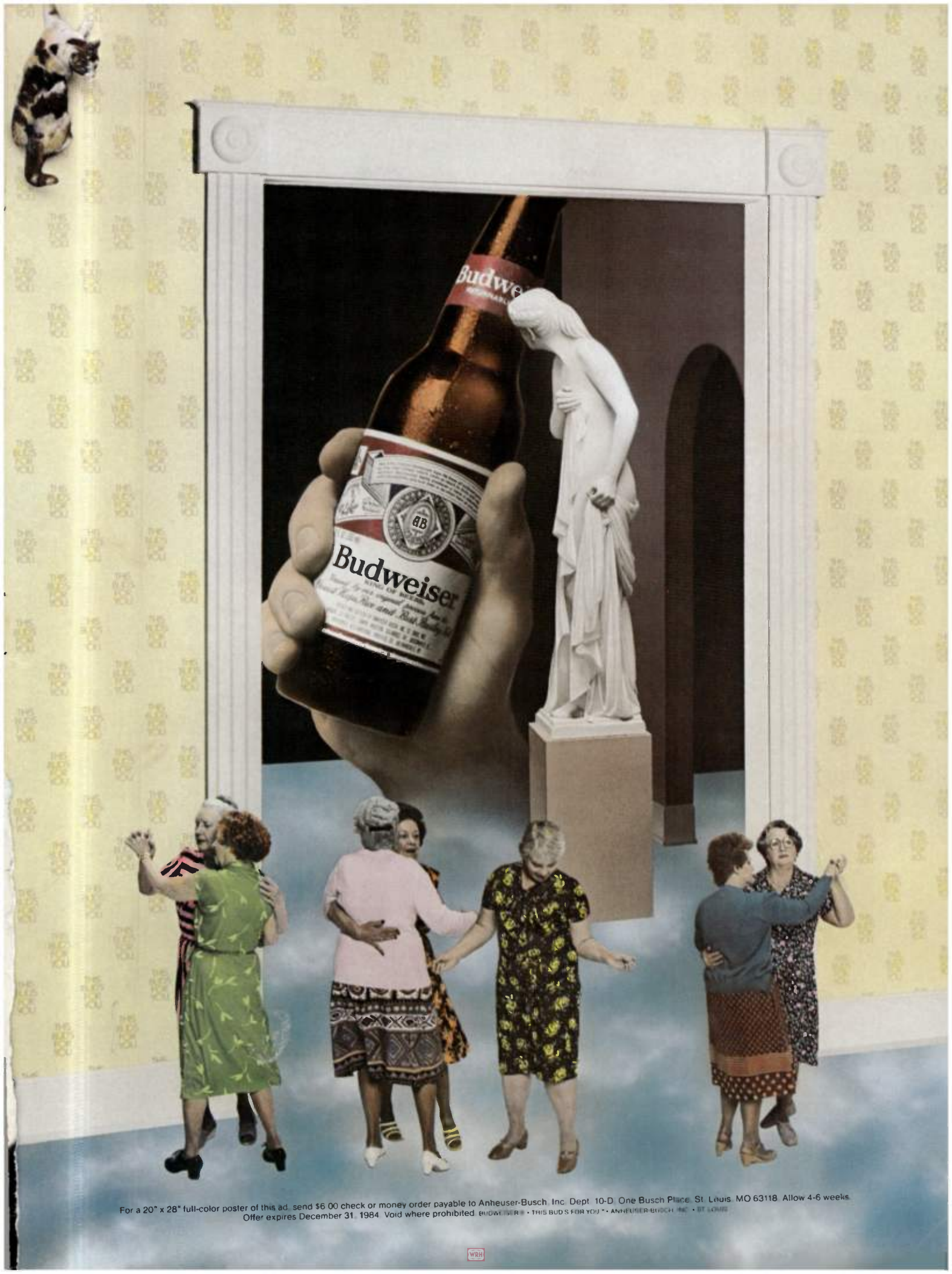
Indeed, given the incessant drone that rock is just irrelevant "entertainment," it's enlightening to observe the development of peace-related events. Start with Woodstock ("three days of music, *peace* and love" remember?) where half a million hedonists boogied, and move to Peace Sunday, 1982, where twice that many turned up for an event whose focus was not pleasure but politics, a demonstration with fewer superstars but more clearly focused connections with the issue. What's on display in Give Peace a Chance is irrefutable evidence that rock has helped sustain any hopes of an American peace movement through one of the most apathetic periods in our culture.

It isn't only one or two genres of music that have done the job either. In the photos near the end of the exhibit, there are pictures of Jackson Browne and Stevie Wonder putting their heads together onstage, of Rita Marley, John Hall and Peter Yarrow backstage. Given that the nonmusical organizers of events such as Peace Sunday have almost always been white, middle-class and folk-oriented, it's astounding how many other kinds of players and singers have been able to insinuate themselves into the process. And from "Bring the Boys Home" onward, it's impressive how much of the best antiwar music comes from supposedly superficial quarters.

The best thing about Give Peace a Chance is that it makes you question a variety of assumptions about our culture. In fact, for me, the center of the show isn't even the John Lennon material, though there is a huge volume of it, making it seem possible that he really did "leave the Beatles to join the peace movement," as someone has written. The evidence is here, not only in the many songs John wrote, but in the material from the art exhibitions, publicity stunts and benefit concerts, the newspaper stories and press conferences he and Yoko so often held. Given this context (which keeps things in proportion, by placing the acoustic guitar on which he wrote "Give Peace a Chance" in the middle of the room), John seems the very incarnation of what this movement's all about. It's the first encounter I've had with his memory in years that doesn't seem uselessly sentimental.

Yet the real cutting edge of the exhibit is four carrels, side by side near the end, featuring the work of Stevie Wonder, U2, the Clash and Bob Marley. Nothing could establish of the antiwar movement as one that cuts across all ordinary boundaries more effectively than seeing and *hearing* the work of four of the most significant contemporary rock artists, put together into a space so tight that it's reminiscent of a neighborhood. I'm not ashamed to say that the sight, coupled with U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday" on the soundtrack, moved me to tears.

Give Peace a Chance won't make everything all right. Only direct action can do that. But at least it establishes that those of us who are determined to remain alive aren't a lonely minority but ultimately, a vast if disorganized majority. It suggests we have a chance, which though it isn't enough, is at least a start. ○



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