

PRETENDERS: A TRIUMPHANT COMEBACK ALBUM

APRIL 1984 VOL.3 NO.6

RECORD



\$1.50 U.K. 80p.

GENESIS
REVELATIONS



ABC
BORED WITH
THE BEAT

ROMANTICS
HEAT UP

VAN HALEN'S

**DAVID
LEE
ROTH**

THE RECORD INTERVIEW



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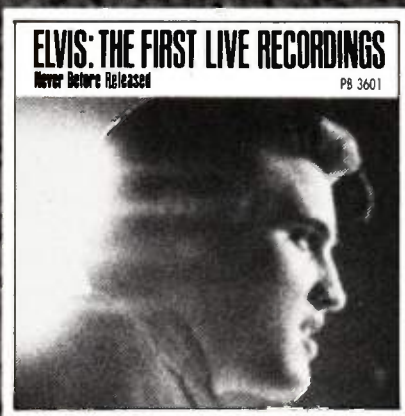
Dallas had its "Big D Jamboree", L.A. had its "Town Hall Party," and of course, Nashville had its "Grand Ole Opry." But none of those country caravans had a more formative effect on American music than Shreveport's own "Louisiana Hayride." Beamed on KWKH, a 50,000 watt station that could reach from the Yukon to the Yucatan, the Hayride ran a weekly stampede of local performers past its audience and, in the process, discovered two titans of pop music: Hank Williams and Elvis Presley.

Presley's catalogue of songs is enormous, but this album is unique. For the first time on records, we can hear him exactly as he appeared to the East Texas "shitkickers" who were his first radio fans: mercurial, vulnerable, and sweet as silk pie. He hadn't begun to refine his merchandise; he was still employed by the Crown Electric company and he could still recall the reaction to his one performance at the Opry—"If I were you, I'd go back to driving a truck." But Presley had found his public. In pink pants and clear plastic shoes, with a wry invitation in his hips and lips, he mesmerized the audience and created rockabilly style.

Presley also established the musical components of that style, combining blues standards with pop/country ditties and charging both forms with the slurred vibrato that was his signature. This album is a stunning reminder of just how musical Presley's instincts were. He injects eroticism into Teresa Brewer's relentlessly perky "Tweedle Dee." He transforms "Let's Play House" from a blues standard into an utterly contemporary stomper. And he invests Chuck Berry's "Maybel-line" with a Southerner's reverence for the world of chrome and speed.

The album ends with a breathless rendition of "Hound Dog," recorded just as fame broke over Elvis Presley. He'd returned from his coup on the "Ed Sullivan Show" for a final performance at the Hayride, before an audience of 10,000 teenage girls. As he sings, their screams wash over him like a tide of shards. No synthesizer can duplicate that innocence in the face of ecstasy. But through this remarkable recording, we can be present at the creation. And ready for its return.

Richard Goldstein



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APRIL 1984 VOL 3 NO.6



PHOTO: LAURA LEVINE

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Will Jump 'n' the Saddle have the last nyuk-nyuk-nyuk? Does Cheryl Lynn get bulk rate when she flies? Does Shannon know the hi-sign? How did Matthew Wilder hit his stride? Don't Rain Parade on my? Are the Long Ryders really Byrdbrains? Does the Pope . . . ?

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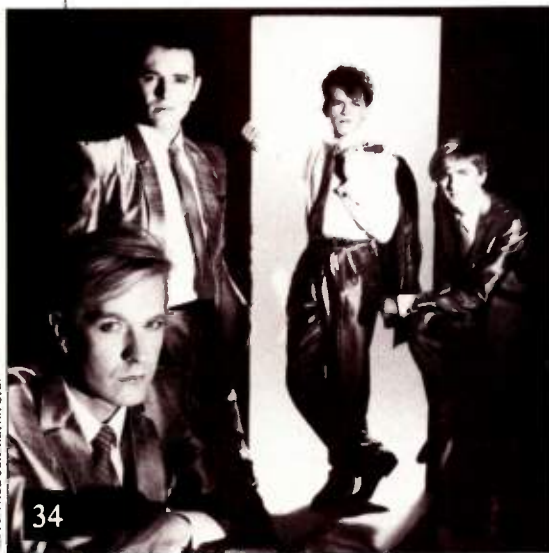


PHOTO: PAUL COX/RETNA LTD.

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TOP 100 ALBUMS

- 1 WHAT'S NEW
Linda Ronstadt *Asylum*
- 2 COLOUR BY NUMBERS
Culture Club *Epic*
- 3 CAN'T SLOW DOWN
Lionel Richie *Motown*
- 4 SYNCHRONICITY
The Police *A&M*
- 5 THRILLER
Michael Jackson *Epic*
- 6 90125
Yes *Atco*
- 7 SEVEN AND THE RAGGED TIGER
Duran Duran *Capitol*
- 8 GENESIS
Genesis *Atlantic*
- 9 AN INNOCENT MAN
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- 10 UNDER COVER
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- 11 THE BIG CHILL
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- 12 ROCK 'N' SOUL, PT 1
Hall and Oates *RCA*
- 13 UNDER A BLOOD RED SKY
U2 *Island*
- 14 THE CROSSING
Big Country *Mercury*
- 15 METAL HEALTH
Quiet Riot *Pasha*
- 16 ELIMINATOR
ZZ Top *Warner Bros.*
- 17 INFIDELS
Bob Dylan *Columbia*
- 18 PIPES OF PEACE
Paul McCartney *Columbia*
- 19 UH-HUH
John Cougar Mellencamp *Riva*
- 20 YENTL
Soundtrack *Columbia*
- 21 BARK AT THE MOON
Ozzy Osbourne *Jet CBS*

- 22 HEARTS AND BONES
Paul Simon *Warner Bros.*
- 23 FLASHDANCE
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- 24 PYROMANIA
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- 25 IN HEAT
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- 26 SPEAKING IN TONGUES
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- 27 REBEL YELL
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- 37 WAR
U2 *Island*
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X *Elektra*
- 39 LABOUR OF LOVE
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- 40 TRUE
Spandau Ballet *Chrysalis*
- 41 LITTLE ROBBERS
The Motels *Capitol*
- 42 ERROR IN THE SYSTEM
Peter Schilling *Elektra*
- 43 REACH THE BEACH
The Fixx *MCA*
- 44 SWEET DREAMS ARE MADE OF THIS
Eurythmics *RCA*
- 45 1999
Prince *Warner Bros.*
- 46 PRINCIPLE OF MOMENTS
Robert Plant *Atlantic*
- 47 PUNCH THE CLOCK
Elvis Costello *Columbia*
- 48 THE WILD HEART
Stevie Nicks *Modern*

- 49 THE PRESENT
The Moody Blues *Threshold*
- 50 RHYTHM OF YOUTH
Men Without Hats *Backstreet MCA*
- 51 LAWYERS IN LOVE
Jackson Browne *Elektra*
- 52 THE REAL MACAW
Graham Parker *Arista*
- 53 CARGO
Men At Work *Columbia*
- 54 FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF NIGHT
Bonnie Tyler *Columbia*
- 55 FLICK OF THE SWITCH
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- 56 PLAYS LIVE
Peter Dinklage *Geffen*
- 57 RANT 'N' RAVE WITH THE STRAY CATS
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- 59 FASCINATION!
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- 60 STATE OF CONFUSION
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PRESENTED
BY MILLER
HIGH LIFE
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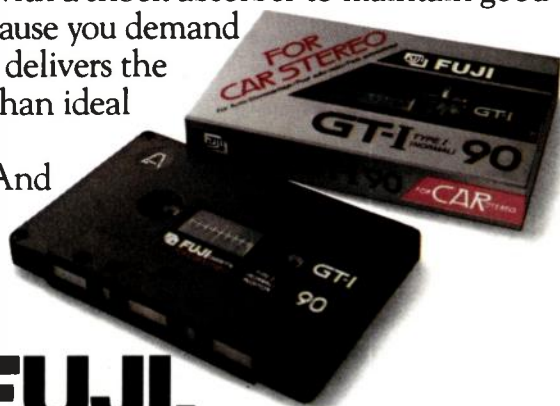
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HAIL DURAN

I WAS OFFENDED BY some of the comments made by Ed St. John in his story on Duran Duran ("Rich Without Guilt," January RECORD). I could sense some negativity on his part towards them. Whatever St. John's opinions may be, though, I don't think a group described by the headline on his story would donate profits from its concerts to a charity, as Duran did. They certainly deserve more credit for their hard-earned fame.

KAREN GAFFNEY
Milpitas, CA

Ed. note: There was no reference in our story to Duran Duran donating concert profits to charity. However, on July 20, 1983, the group gave a benefit performance at the Dominion Theatre in London for the Prince of Wales Trust. Each year the trust donates its profits to a different children's charity. Dire Straits, Kim Wilde and Mari Wilson also appeared on the bill. Three days later, Duran Duran played at the Aston Villa football grounds in Birmingham, England, to help raise funds for Mencap, a charity for mentally and physically handicapped children.

ED ST. JOHN DEFINITELY has something to be proud of. It's nice to read a story about Duran Duran's music rather than what kind of girls they like (or something equally fatuous). Let's not forget that their career is supposed to be in music, not modeling. Realistically speaking, the band is almost cursed by their good looks. Sure, they're getting all the attention and publicity any band could ask for, but is it the kind that they deserve?

WENDY WEDEMEYER
Los Gatos, CA

I APPLAUD ED ST. JOHN'S recent article on Duran Duran. It's the first one I've read that gives them the chance to explain what they're all about. These five musicians are good looking, but they also have brains in their heads, and it's about time people who label them "pretty boys" realized that. They've worked hard to get where they are today,

and I question those who resent their success.

CHRISTINE MCKENNA
Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

UGH! NOT ANOTHER COVER story on Duran Duran! Never has a group with so little to say been given so much exposure in the music press. Let's face it: we're living in an age where you build your image first, then worry about backing it up with something solid.

I'm not too familiar with the music of Herbie Hancock, but his *Rockit* album is a fantastic piece of synth-funk and his video, produced by Godley-Creme, is one of the weirdest and most watchable that I've seen in a long time. But I was surprised to find him quoted in this same issue ("Think Young, Be Young") as saying that he listens to bands like Duran Duran and Kajagoo-goo. Then he says, "The key is to be current but not trendy." Who's he kidding?! Was that said with a straight face? Those are two of the worst examples of the latest British invasion, and for a musician of Hancock's stature to praise them strikes me as ludicrous.

Despite current trends, rock music is not strictly for teenyboppers who will "graduate" to Air Supply concerts; it is, in and of itself, a progression. Too bad more artists don't take the high road and stop pandering to the commercial excesses of the marketplace. Perhaps if they did, they would encourage kids to become mature adults rather than overgrown babies.

GARY KIMBER
Downsview, Ontario, Canada

ROCK 'N' REALITY

THE JANUARY GUEST pass ("Trying Too Hard") was an embarrassment to rock 'n' roll fans. Apparently Jeff Hamilton is disappointed that Bruce Springsteen does not fulfill the cynical rock-star stereotype of a fun-loving, fast-living playboy first, and be an artist only as an afterthought. Hamilton exhibits the tabloid mentality that believes an artist's ultimate reward is a date with a TV star; and that

the only relationships that are "at all sexual" are those reported in detail by *People* magazine.

Claiming that "American rock 'n' roll has lost its cool" by dealing with themes of everyday life, Hamilton says "one of the real pleasures of the music is hearing how stars live . . . I don't think we want them to be like us." This is pathetically true of that segment of the audience for whom the music is not enough. The rock artist is expected to live out our fantasies and report "how stars live, what they do, and how they feel about things" back to us so we can thrill vicariously. The paradox is that the artist who loses touch with the "mass audience" and their "everyday lives" is invariably destroyed.

Rock 'n' roll is about reality—for updates on the latest romance of Victoria Principal, "It's in the *Enquirer*."

JOANNE ZANGRILLI
Oak Park, IL

GRANDSTAND KUDOS

I WOULD LIKE TO COM-
pliment Dave Marsh on a very moving story about the migrant mother, Florence Thompson, in his American Grandstand column in the December RECORD. I had seen her picture in history books, but never knew anything about the woman's tribulations. Marsh's story told me what I always wanted to know about her and the many people just like her.

JIM CRIPPS
Tulsa, OK

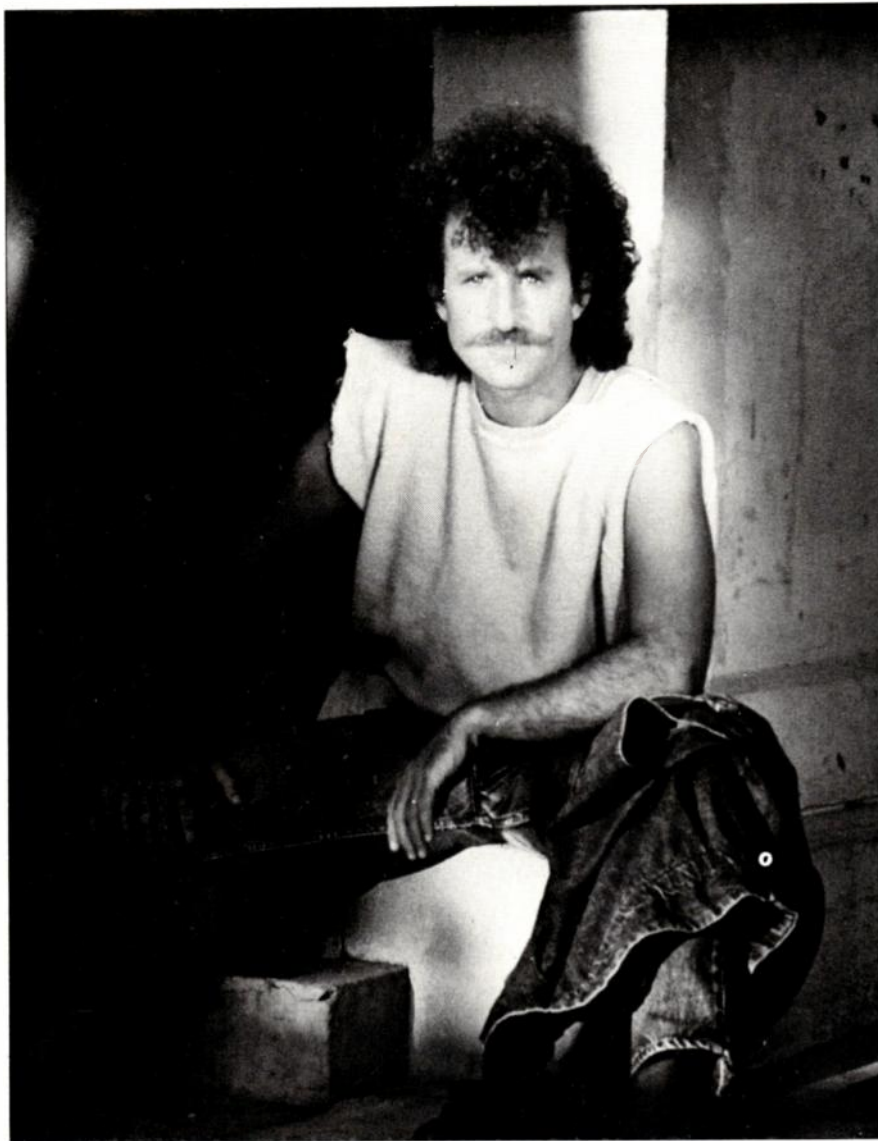
ANT THAT A SHAME

I'D LIKE TO CORRECT Wayne King's music video review of Adam Ant's Prince Charming Revue in the January issue. He apparently hasn't learned that Adam Ant got his name from the word adamant, not from, as King guessed, "the Saturday morning cartoon character, Atom Ant." In the future, King might want to look into the facts before he starts writing.

LISA HOLLIDAY
Oklahoma City, OK

SOME GLIDE IN HIS STRIDE

Perseverance pays off in a Top Ten hit for Matthew Wilder



Wilder: A simple matter of plugging away

OAKLAND, Ca.—While the rock 'n' roll cosmos has busied itself learning how to use video, Matthew Wilder has gone and hit the Top Ten without benefit of visuals. "Break My Stride" is the first release from Wilder's debut album, *I Don't Speak The Language* (on the CBS-distributed Private I label), an engaging set that combines the up-to-date sound of synthesizers with lyrics and melodies that offer somewhat more range and substance than the Flock of Men with Haircuts stuff that's been glutting the bins and airwaves.

Wilder is a synthesizer artist who doesn't wear his tech high on his sleeve, having developed his songwriting chops in front of audiences rather than under headphones with a Portastudio and rhythm machines. Though only 28, he's been around longer than most of the instruments he uses. A native New Yorker, he studied classical piano, then switched to guitar and became a street musician. "At the ripe old age of 15," he says, "I was writing and performing in (New York's) Greenwich Village—either on the streets or in the clubs." As his songwriting developed, Wilder returned to the piano and moved to Los Angeles to find work as a session singer and songwriter. "I've been plugging away for five years like everyone else," he says gamely. He placed songs with several artists, including Eddie Kendricks and Bette Midler, and enjoyed brief chart action with a single, "Work So Hard," two years ago.

The rhythm section/production team of Peter Bunetta, Rick Chudacoff and Bill Elliott took a flyer with Wilder and made a demo of "Break My Stride," then signed him to their fledgling label. "We put the record together on a song and a prayer," the artist quips. "We didn't have any financial backing at all." Not only did that tape get him signed, but it was good enough to go on the album—pretty much as is. Says Wilder: "We went back into the studio to see if we could make the track better, but we couldn't upstage the original version."

—David Gans

NYUK, NYUK, NYUK INDEED

Columbia Pictures pokes Jump 'n' the Saddle in the eyes

NEW YORK—Talk about party poopers.

Here are Jump 'n' the Saddle, a journeyman band from Chicago that finally got a break with a hit single about the Three Stooges, "The Curly Shuffle," when along comes a letter from Columbia Pictures informing the group that it has violated publicity rights to "nyuk, nyuk, nyuk," and threatening litigation.

"We've been instructed by our lawyers not to say anything about the legal situation," says Jump's steel guitarist, T.C. (Tough Cookie) Furlong. "But the guys in the band feel it's a First Amendment thing. It's unfortunate, but what can you do?

Yeah, I think Curly would have appreciated the humor."

Nevertheless, the threat of a lawsuit is not the most serious problem facing Jump 'n' the Saddle. Furlong is aware that a band that hits first with a novelty record had better prove its musical chops quickly if it is to survive over the long haul. Thus the ongoing live dates in support of the quintet's debut LP for Atlantic, *The Jump 'n' the Saddle Band*, are crucial.

"We've been playing together as Jump 'n' the Saddle for seven years and we've never let an audience down yet," declares Furlong. "We're a rockabilly, country-

swing band, with a lot of Bob Wills, Ray Charles and Louis Jordan influences. It's serious music, but we like to have a good time up there." He goes on to insist that even "The Curly Shuffle" is at heart more of a hard-core dance cut than a mere novelty.

Adds Furlong: "I'm not the biggest Three Stooges fan. Peter Quinn, our singer, who the wrote the song, is the one who thinks Curly is the master comedian of all time. But I think we all get a kick out of somebody who tries so hard to entertain."

You can disagree with the description of the Three Stooges as entertainers, but you have to admit that if Curly taught us anything, it was that people can often be very stupid. Take lawyers, for instance. Woo-woo-woo-woo-woo. —Mark Mehler



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Rock Until You Drop



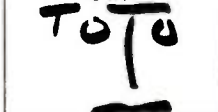
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Accidents Will Happen
(What's So Funny About)
Peace Love And
Understanding
Senior Service
Party Girl



TOTO TURN BACK

including:
Goodbye Eleanor/Live For Today
Gift With A Golden Gun/It's The Last Night
English/Eyes



WILLIE NELSON SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

including:
Mona Lisa/Who's Sorry Now?
Over The Rainbow/In My Mother's Eyes
Especially Like You



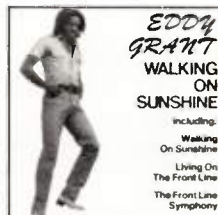
The Charlie Daniels Band Full Moon

including:
In America/The Legend Of Woolley Swamp
No Potion For The Pain/El Torador



EDDY GRANT WALKING ON SUNSHINE

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Living On
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TED NUGENT INTENSITIES IN 10 CITIES

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My Love Is Like A Fire on
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RENOVATING BYRDSLAND

L.A.'s Long Ryders ride their own wave

LOS ANGELES—Sid Griffin, 27-year-old guitarist and founding member of the Long Ryders, machine-guns opinions as well as he emulates the onstage moves of Roger McGuinn. A purist, Griffin is especially vocal in his denunciation of this city's Anglophilic poseurs: "You go to Club Lingerie and see all these people so attuned to what England says is hip," he bristles. "That's pathetic. America gave the world rock 'n' roll music; it has the most marvelous heritage. People should never forget that, but now they're listening to bands like Spandau Ballet—*pathetic*. They're just like Perry Como. There's nothing in that music you can believe in or sweat from—there's no passion."

Putting their music where Griffin's mouth is, the Ryders (who also number pedal steel player Steve McCarthy, drummer Greg Sowders and new bassist Tom Stevens) stand as the most doctrinaire proponent of the newest wave sweeping this trend-devouring town, one that is actually a broader rededication to the hybrid triumvirate of mid-'60s Southern California styles: folk-rock, acid-rock and country-

rock. The Ryders avoid, in Griffin's words, "you and me" songs, and "we certainly can't write about surf or cars. So what's left that we really care about is this country and how it affects us. We're consciously going in a John Fogerty and Robbie Robertson direction."

Nevertheless, the quartet's record (10-5-

60, a mini-LP released late last year on PVC) and live sets resound with references to latter-era Byrds, although these junior Byrdmen didn't quite get the character down, according to Griffin. "When we started the Long Ryders, I thought sure we'd have some of the Byrds aloofness and cynicism onstage, and we kinda didn't," he laments. "Rain Parade has nailed that attitude. Our shows are more like the Spoonful's, with that element of bad-boy fun—like sticking a cherry bomb down a toilet."

—Bud Scoppa

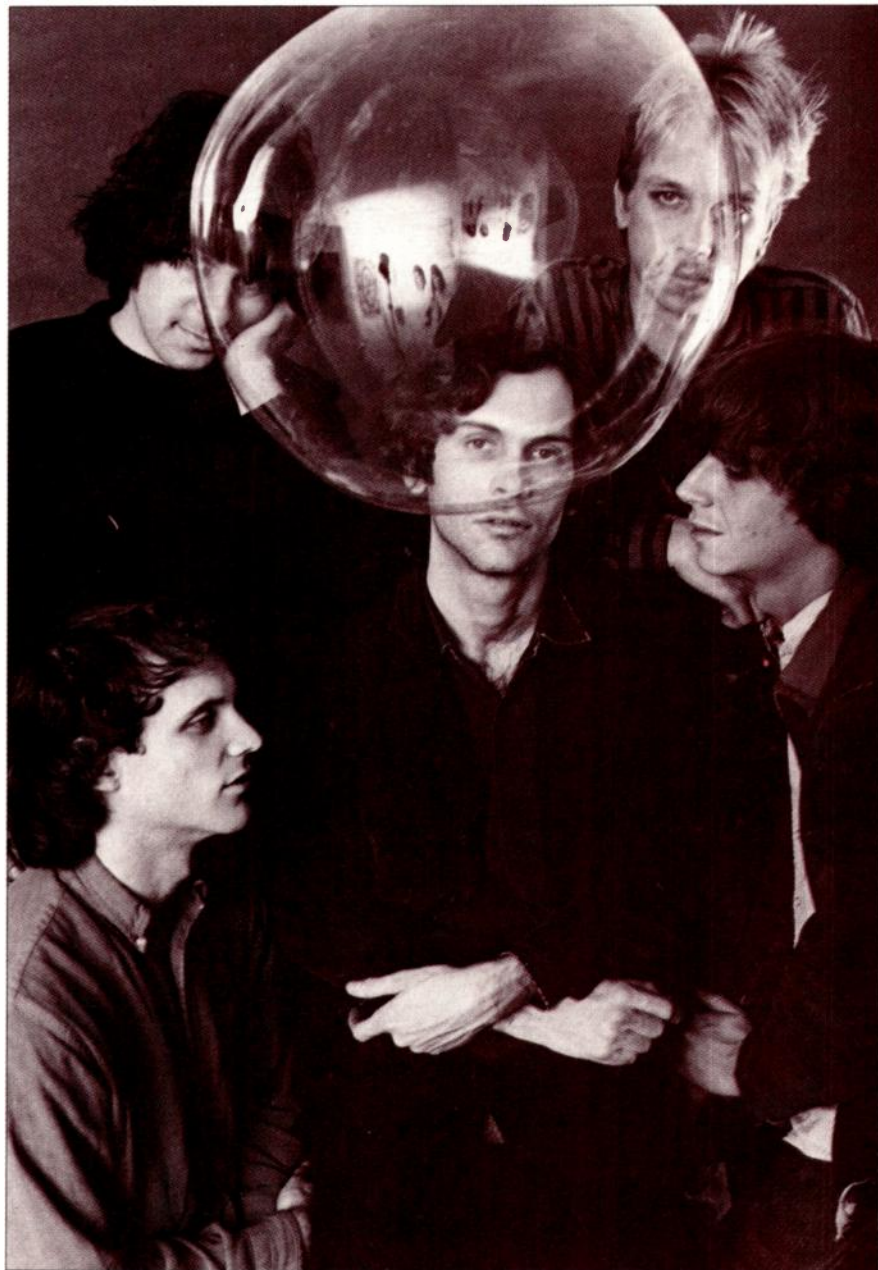
LEAVE YOUR CROTCH AT HOME

Rain Parade's trance rock is for the mind only

ATLANTA—Rain Parade guitar whiz Matthew Piucci bristles at the idea that psychedelic music is for wimps and escapists. "People were absolutely shocked to hear us play acoustic music in the middle of punk shows," Piucci asserts. "To us, that's radical. We're disturbing in that we're a trance-oriented band, not a dance band where people can turn their crotches on to what is happening. They have to turn their brains on to what we're doing."

Lately people have been turning on to *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip*, Rain Parade's independent LP debut on the Enigma label (Box 2896, Torrance, CA 90509). And notoriety has brought repercussions. After their recent national tour, the band "dismissed" main songwriter David Roback, who produced *Third Rail* as well as the highly-touted Los Angeles "Paisley Underground" '60s compilation, *Rainy Day*. The band will continue as a quartet, with Piucci on guitar, Will Glenn on keyboards and violin, Steven Roback on bass and Eddie Kalwa on drums.

Formed three years ago, the Rain Pa-



Rain Parade: More Doors than Archies

rade acknowledges the trippy, mid-'60s ambience of their sound, but also claims Patti Smith, Television and L.A. hard-core contemporaries like the Circle Jerks and Red Cross as inspirations. "While '60s music often explored the pleasant sensations

of drug experiences," Steve Roback explains, "we're less interested in the pleasant ones than the very difficult ones." Concludes Piucci: "We're more like the Doors, say, than . . . the Archies!"

—Anthony DeCurtis

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LEAVING THE MASONS BEHIND

Dues paid, Shannon moves onto a faster track

NEW YORK—Think of all the unlikely places that a New York-bred jazz/R&B singer could hone her craft, and then consider the case of Brenda Shannon Greene (aka Shannon), who prepared for a career on the dance club circuit with a series of engagements at local Masonic Temple dinner dances.

Though she was not made privy to any secret Masonic rites, the 26-year-old Shannon, whose first album, *Let The Music Play*, was recently released by Cotillion (as of this writing, the title track, released as a single, has risen to the top 15 on the pop charts and to number two on the black chart), insists the ancient order can, when the occasion demands it, get down. You just have to keep the customers satisfied.

"I'm a singer, I'll audition for anything," says Shannon. "So when I got a call last May that they needed someone to fill in at one of the Mason dances, I learned 10 songs on the spot and went up and performed. And it was great; they liked me so much they began using me at all their functions. They were a good audience, very nice. I gained a lot of confidence."

Since the single hit the charts, Shannon has moved on to a faster crowd. At press-time her management was negotiating a one-to three-month tour in support of a major R&B act. Indeed, it is all happening very quickly, as these things are wont to do, but Shannon is not yet ready to forget that a mere four months ago she was entertaining groups of middle-aged Masons and their wives with a mix of Broadway tunes and light pop.

"You have to remember where you're from," she says. "But you know, it's a business for young people and that's who I'm out to please."

—Mark Mehler



PHOTO JANETTE ROCKMAN

Shannon: The ancient order can get down

THE MACK TRUCK SYNDROME

Cheryl Lynn makes peace with her body

NEW YORK—The wraps are coming off. Yes, Virginia, there is life below the neck.

"Until now," explains Cheryl Lynn, "I always made sure every time I was photographed it was above the shoulders. Being large was embarrassing. But not any more. I have something to offer, I am beautiful, and when I present that to people, well, either they accept me or they don't."

Thus, the initial video for Lynn's fifth album, the self-produced *Preppie* on Columbia, will offer the artist complete, from

head to feet, for the first time on screen.

Lynn, whose showbiz role model is Diana Ross (who else?), got her start on *The Gong Show* (where else?) in 1976 and, from the time of her 1978 self-titled debut LP (produced by Toto's David Paich), has had the good fortune to work with some of the top R&B producers in the industry, including Luther Vandross and Ray Parker Jr.

Nevertheless, she insists "out of all of them, only David (Paich) really had a ma-

jor influence on me as a producer, in terms of technique. It was the only one of my four previous albums I had a lot of input on." *Preppie*, according to Lynn, is her definitive statement to date. Though one may quibble with her notion of preppiness as a metaphor for "fun-loving, natural, fast-moving," at least whatever it is is finally out in the open.

"The first time I went to a professional audition," she recalls, "it was to please my boyfriend. It was hard. When you're a large person, guys snicker, you feel you have to be Diana Ross in every way. Now I know better. You only have to feel beautiful in every way. That's my idea of a preppie."

—Mark Mehler

THE REVELATIONS OF

GENESIS

How a band's willingness to venture into the unknown makes it healthy, wealthy and wise

THE HOUSE WAS A SMALL, FOUR-square cottage nestled in the English countryside. Its owners had packed up and moved to London because of "problems with burglars" and their son asked if he and his friends could stay in the place for a time. It was winter, 1968, when the group of school chums set up this communal residence. Tony Banks, Michael Rutherford, Anthony Phillips and Peter Gabriel were all, like so many of their contemporaries, touched by music. They had all played a bit and decided to form a songwriting collective. So all that winter, as the rain streamed down the windows, they would take out guitars soon after morning tea and begin to write—melodic fragments, chord structures, verses, choruses, bridges.

Though they started out planning to be songwriters, by the time they quit that cottage those musicians had forged a group identity. Deeply rooted in folk music and

with a penchant for eccentric, atmospheric songs, they called themselves Genesis. With another ex-classmate, Jonathan King, producing, they went into the studio in 1969 to make a first album, *From Genesis To Revelation*.

15 years later the two group members left from those earliest woodshedding days, Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford, lounge in the far more opulent setting of Boston's Meridian Hotel along with Phil Collins, the other permanent member of Genesis. "There were a lot of good moments," Rutherford muses. "Very intense stuff, though. We never let go."

Indeed, their diligence has paid off handsomely when you consider that Genesis has become one of the '80s' most popular rock groups. As we talked the band was in the middle of a massive '83-'84 North American tour to satisfy the legions of new fans inspired by the phenomenal success of the groundbreaking 1981 LP, *Abacab*. Despite numerous personnel changes, neg-

BY JOHN SWENSON

ative critical reaction in England and the sudden emergence of Phil Collins as a major solo artist, the group remained committed to its original ideas long enough for *Abacab* to revive their career in a dramatic turn of events.

The secret to *Abacab* was its return to the approach the band had started out with. "We've gotten back to writing together" is Collins' simple explanation, while Rutherford is more specific: "With *Abacab*, we just left aside the material that sounded like our previous songs and worked on the ones that sounded different. Hugh Padgham, our producer, was a big help. He made us sound like we always have sounded in the rehearsal room. I'm talking about the quality of the sound, the energy and the feeling. With other producers we would re-create our sound as we recorded and mixed it. With Hugh we sounded in the studio like we do on the stage, which to me was very exciting."

When it came time to make the latest album, simply called *Genesis*, the group decided to bring as few preconceptions to the record as possible. "It was written with the three of us in the studio all the time," explains Banks. "We did nothing before we met. Everything that we did on that album was written while we were in the rehearsal room. We felt that the main justification for keeping together while the individuals were all doing solo things was that the group material really is group material rather than just arranging one of Phil's or one of Mike's songs because it's going to be similar to the solo albums, so we thought we'd go about it very differently. We've

done that with various songs over the years, but we've never actually done it on a whole album before."

Abacab and *Genesis* both have a contemporary feel, yet are clearly in an identifiable Genesis style. Banks feels that the resultant sound from this recent approach is fresh enough to warrant a new identity for the band. "That's why the album is just called *Genesis*," Banks points out, "just to establish the fact that the group has a very positive identity of its own which is distinct from the three people in it. I think the audience recognizes this too, because you get very little call for anybody's solo songs in concert, which is great, because obviously it could have been a problem with Phil's amazing success on his own."

It seems that Collins himself shares this feeling. "Every time I start to think, 'Hey, I'm important,' I remember the way the music's written, and the thing that is special about Genesis is the chemistry of the individuals, and that was as a five-piece or a four-piece or a three-piece now. One doesn't want to attach too much importance to anything. We just want to go day by day; we exist from album to album. We don't have any sort of long-term plan. There's no deep meaning for Genesis to be here doing this, no social comment, no politics, nothing other than the fact that we enjoy writing songs together."

That emphasis on songwriting is really the key to understanding why Genesis has stayed together this long. The winter songwriting session that spawned the group instilled values that have stayed with the band all of these years. "It worked very

well for us," adds Banks, "because we were all suddenly put in the same room and forced to make music together. We had nothing else to do, from the moment we got up to the moment we went to bed, but write songs and rehearse them. The songs we wrote during that period lasted for many years, bits and pieces would come back; if you suddenly needed an idea for a song, a bit from that era would come forward again. It was an incredibly important part of the group's evolution—it's where we actually learned to play something on our instruments."

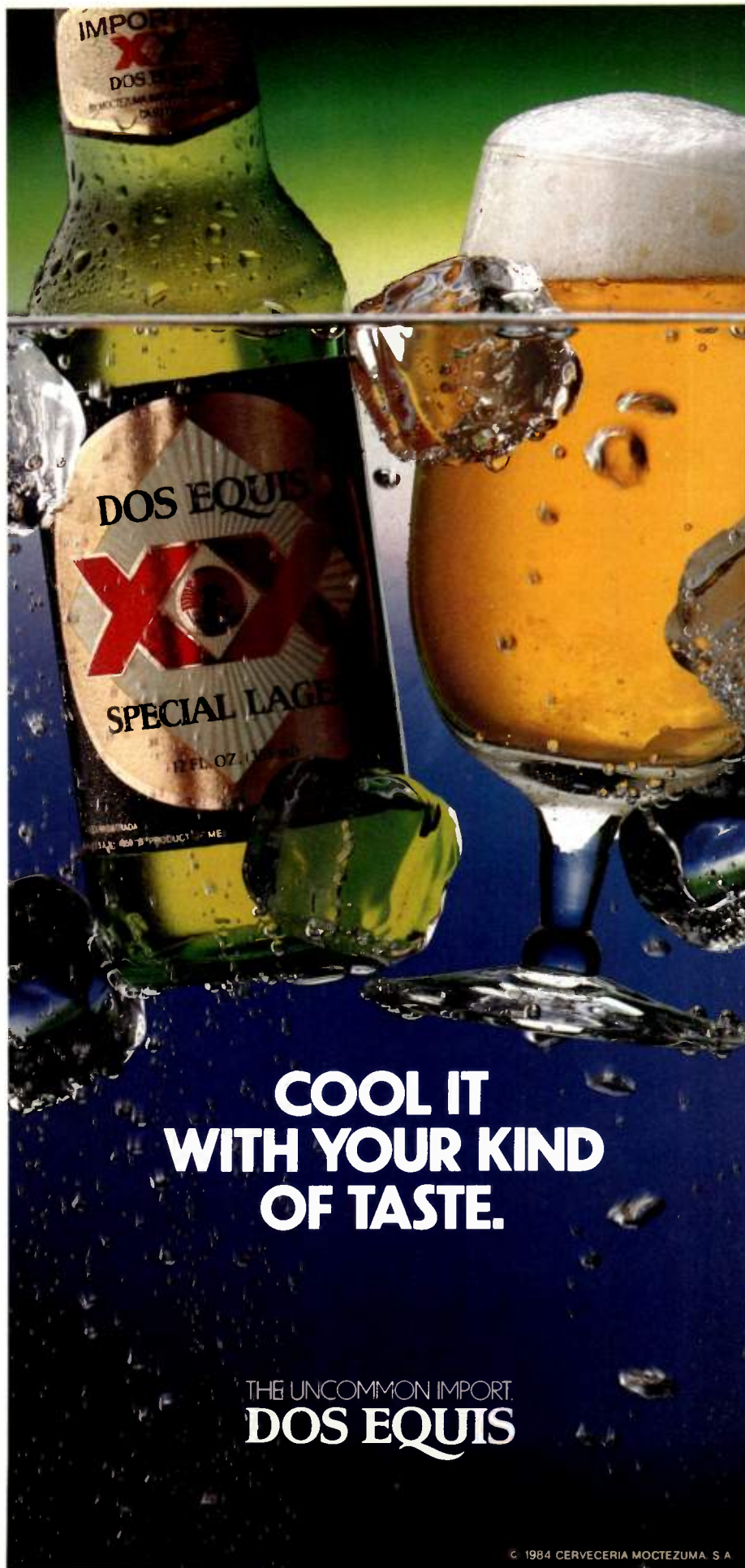
Between their first album and its 1979 followup, *Trespass*, Genesis built a fanatical live following in England. "*Trespass* was a better album than the first record," says Banks, "because we were playing on the road by then and we set a course, which the band has been on ever since, of not worrying about whether a thing is commercial or not and just following our noses just doing what we wanted to do at the time. We were very young and still learning at that point, the production is very peculiar on some of those songs."

"In the early days," he continues, "we had half a dozen songs on which I'd play guitar. We had a system where we'd start the sets off very quietly and keep building it up. We'd do three or four acoustic things, then 'Stagnation' was the first song where the drums come in, and suddenly drums were important because you hadn't heard them in 20 minutes and the audience got very excited. This would build into the final song, which was 'The Knife,' the heavy climax."

BANKS, RUTHERFORD AND COLLINS: MUSICIANS WHO WRITE TOGETHER STAY TOGETHER



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"Our set was different," Banks states proudly. "Most groups had your ears ringing after the first song. Our influences in the early days on the road were definitely groups like Fairport Convention and Family, combined with our own roots which were the Beatles and the Kinks and the Animals. Our own music in the early days was a kind of reaction to what was big in England at that point, the blues underground and heavy metal."

In the year following *Trespass* Genesis made two key personnel changes that refocused their musical identity dramatically. Anthony Phillips was replaced by lead guitarist Steve Hackett and a new drummer, Phil Collins, joined up. Collins' sophisticated percussion capabilities enabled the band to stretch their ambitious, baroque arrangements even further, and the resultant albums, *Nursery Cryme* (1971) *Foxtrout* (1972) and *Selling England by the Pound* (1973), established Genesis as one of England's most successful bands, while winning them a strong U.S. following.

Fame brought on new problems, however. Genesis became increasingly identified with frontman Gabriel's elaborate surrealist costumes and fractured dada lyrics. Phil Collins almost left the group because of this at one point. "Genesis became frustrating to me around '73, '74," Collins admits, "because people weren't writing about the music. They wrote about what Peter wore, and as a musician first and foremost I didn't like that. I was looking for something else to show people I could play, so I joined this group Brand X. At one point when I first joined I was going to leave Genesis to do it full time. I remember people coming up, ignoring the rest of the band and saying to Peter, 'Great show, Pete. Wonderful music,' and I'd be sitting there thinking, 'What about us?'"

Genesis, for all its strengths, was a confusing group during the period when Gabriel became one of rock's most charismatic figures. With strong musical ideas coming from several different directions, there were times when it seemed like they had an excess of talent with no place to put it. That talent glut led to subtle intra-group rivalries that resulted in overplaying. Banks says it was a time when "everybody decided they had to play. Because of the way the group was presented people tended to overplay Peter's role. The rest of us tended to sort of feel that we had to justify ourselves a little bit in our instrumental playing so we'd want to make certain we were there on every track. You'd never get a moment where a person should have just opted out on certain tracks. I remember various songs where we really had to struggle for Steve to have a part."

At the end of 1974 Genesis released their most ambitious album, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, a dense, challenging two-disc concept that served as the basis of a bombastic 1975 stage show. The record marked a major turning point in the

group's fortunes, as Peter Gabriel announced his departure from the band late in '75. Just as Gabriel was considered the most important member while he was in the band, his exit was widely regarded as their demise. But for the rest of Genesis, it was a new lease on life, their chance to show how much of the sound came from sources other than Gabriel. In Collins' case it kept him from leaving altogether.

"I think it's just that we rise to the challenge," says Rutherford, who laughs at himself then adds: "It sounds very British, doesn't it? I don't mean it to sound like that, but we do, we rise to the occasion. It wasn't hard because the first three days of writing the first album without Peter, we wrote a bit of 'Volcano,' a bit of 'Squonk,' it was sounding great. Steve wasn't there at the time—it's an interesting point, actually. He was finishing up his solo album. So the first three days, when we felt we got the album going and we knew we could do it, he wasn't around.

"Once we decided that Peter was going to leave," Banks explains, "we knew we could write the album. We didn't quite know how we were going to sing it. We didn't actually work that out until we got into the studio, that Phil was going to sing it. *Trick of the Tail* was probably the most enjoyable album we ever made in many ways, certainly of the earlier albums it was. We felt so confident. It was kind of weird, though, because people in the press had written the band off completely. They felt with Peter gone, that's it. But (*Trick*) did so much better than *The Lamb...*, which didn't do as well as its predecessor. It's the only album we ever had that didn't do as well as the previous album we'd released."

When Steve Hackett left the band in 1977 ("we had too many members, it was as simple as that," notes Banks), the remaining trio was free to pursue the collective vision that grew out of their earliest woodshedding experience. Genesis was finding a new source of strength at the very moment it seemed to be falling apart. The results were not immediately evident—it took another album, *And Then There Were Three*, and solo projects from all three members, before the air was clear enough for a totally fresh start. The 1977 LP *Duke* introduced a streamlined, contemporary group with a penchant for deep melodic hooks and mesmerizing rhythmic progressions. The key to this new identity was the sudden flowering of Collins' abilities as a singer-songwriter in addition to his percussion work, to which he was no longer strictly tied once Chester Thompson was added in a session musician capacity.

Collins had already worked on a number of session projects outside of Genesis, from Brand X to Brian Eno, but his first solo album, *Face Value*, emerged almost by accident. "I could never do justice to explain how haphazard *Face Value* was made," Collins says. "When my wife and kids weren't living with me, I had very little to

do apart from just write. And I'd never written before. 'Misunderstanding' and 'Please Don't Ask' on *Duke* were the first songs I'd ever finished. They were written at the same time as the *Face Value* songs. I had just bought this one-inch eight-track machine and a couple of synthesizers. I moved the machine into a bedroom in my house, sat down and learned to operate it and it didn't sound bad. I had been hassling with the wife and with lawyers for about a year during which time the band was sleeping because Mike and Tony were doing solo albums."

Face Value established Collins as a major solo artist, but the songwriting experience and confidence it gave him may have been even more important to Genesis. With each of the three contributors at the top of their songwriting game the band was poised for the stylistic breakthrough that would result in one of their greatest albums, *Abacab*.

Collins credits part of *Abacab*'s success to producer Hugh Padgham, who he met when he played on Peter Gabriel's third solo album. Padgham went for a huge, ambient drum sound to anchor the arrangements but completely avoided the top end. "There were no cymbals on that album," Collins explains, "and that approach has become very influential—a lot of bands record that way now. I think that was the first time a record was recorded that way."

More important, though, Padgham helped Genesis discover what the individuals in the band liked about their own sound. "When we rehearsed," Collins relates, "we made a nice noise in the rehearsal room. We used to go into the studio and our attitude was to get the best sound, and the best sound at that point was getting it clean. We ended up sounding not particularly exciting on record. The versions on *Nursery Cryme* and *Foxtrot* of stuff like 'Supper's Ready' and 'The Musical Box' aren't as good as live versions that might have been around at the same time. On *Trick of the Tail* we were going for a certain kind of sound which tarted us up and made us sound more shiny than we should have. These are only complaints in retro-



Collins: "The thing that's special about Genesis is the chemistry of the individuals"

spect—at the time we were very happy with the results. Now we're far more interested in feel, with the result that we'll keep something with a more fundamental feel to it even if it means replacing some of the parts."

Each member of Genesis is actively pursuing a number of projects outside of the group, yet at the same time they're a closer knit unit than ever. Their recognition of the value in collective writing explains why. "In the past," says Banks, "some songs were definitely group songs, like 'The Musical Box' or 'Supper's Ready,' and we thought those were the strongest songs we wrote. We felt this over the years; even in recent times 'Follow You Follow Me' or 'Turn It On Again' were also totally group songs and we felt that was the best direction to go in. On *Duke*, particularly, we felt that the group tracks had something that we couldn't get on our own. So we decided to expand on that, and did a lot more on *Abacab* with songs like 'Keep It Dark,' 'Abacab' and 'No Reply,' and on the latest album we tried to do it on every track. You can only do this if you have the outside things as well, because obviously everyone wants to form their own music. But we also like to be slightly experimental about the writing. It's the reason for trying to keep the group going."

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DOWN TO THE MUSIC

The Romantics get their bearings straight and deliver a winner

Four years is a long time to go without a hit record, but the Romantics have just emerged from a dry spell of precisely that duration. Album and single releases between 1979's "What I Like About You" (from their debut LP, *The Romantics*) and "Talking In Your Sleep," the top five first single from their fourth LP, *In Heat*, were greeted with a clangorous silence by radio programmers and the public.

The Detroit-based quartet hasn't changed its approach from album to album, according to drummer/vocalist Jimmy Marinos, so the long wait between splashes is a phenomenon he can't explain. "We got into rock 'n' roll when we were about 12 years old," he says. "All we've really done is perfect the style we picked up on when we were little kids. I don't think we really have a trendy sound: we don't have a synth sound, and we don't have that heavy-metal sound that's got a built-in audience and gets automatic sales. We're playing basically the same way we always have, only we form chords a little better and we keep a more solid beat. But we've had the same approach since the beginning: two guitars, bass and drums."

Marinos and guitarist Mike Skill were jamming with some other musicians in a Detroit studio in January of 1977, Marinos recalls, "and Wally (Palmar, the guitarist-vocalist who sings "Talking In Your Sleep") walked in with some white shoes on. He sang backups and did his little Motown steps. We were attracted to him, and we got his number and gave him a call." The trio then added Rich Cole on bass and began rehearsing in February of that year.

"The punk thing was going on, and we felt we'd be bullshitting if we went along with that whole negative thing," Marinos says. "'Romantics' was a more positive image, and it was a name we felt we could look back on later and not be ashamed of."

The state of rock 'n' roll in the mid-'70s had a lot to do with the shape the Romantics' sound and career took. "When we first started rehearsing there was no place for an original group to play," says Marinos. "It was all cover bands. We didn't want to fall into that thing, so our manager made some calls and we got booked at CBGB's in New York. While we were out, we travelled a little farther and played Boston, Toronto, Washington, Philly—little dive clubs that had some kind of scene happening. We'd go out for about two weeks, then come back to Detroit and maybe do a showcase at a bar. So we got the idea of touring at an early stage."

Before long the Romantics were touring

for a month at a time, which—because they still had day jobs—caused their employers some consternation. "Eventually we had to make music a full-time thing," says Marinos. By the time they signed with Nemperor Records the Romantics were already spending half their lives on the road, "and we've just continued doing that. We'll be on the road nine months in '84."

The first single from the first album, "What I Like About You," was both a

Hoping to change their luck, the Romantics hired producer/engineer Mike Stone to helm their third album. Commercially, *Strictly Personal* didn't fare appreciably better than *Breakout*, so—with Skill returning as bassist to replace Cole—they retired to the studio for one more shot at the big time.

"From what people tell us, the fourth album sounds more like the first album," says Marinos. "The second one sounded



PHOTO: JONATHAN BURNETTE

Marinos: A positive image, a solid beat

sales and airplay winner, and earned the label "passionate power pop" from one critic. Following singles didn't match the performance of "What I Like," and the Romantics' second album, *National Breakout*, was anything but. It was a mish-mash that juxtaposed '60s-style British pop with punkish buzzsaw guitar songs and brought in examples of other rock variations with no stylistic consistency. Mike Skill departed shortly thereafter and was replaced by Havana-born guitarist Coz Canler, who'd met the band while they were recording in south Florida.

slightly different from the first; the third sounded a lot different from the second. But the new album has an identity all its own." Gone are the trashed-out drum sounds of *Strictly Personal*, replaced by an uncluttered production that emphasizes the vocals and the songs themselves.

Like many bands that have found themselves in the upper reaches of the charts in 1983-84, the Romantics owe a great debt to the exposure they've received through video. "Talking In Your Sleep" takes advantage of the group's onstage visual appeal, devoting half its running time to live



PHOTO: JONATHAN BERNETTE

Romantics (from left: Skill, Palmar, Marinos, Canler): The music makes the band

performance footage. But while Palmar admits he can't deny that the Romantics have benefitted from video, Skill maintains, quite correctly, that "it still comes down to the song."

"There's always something you can do visually for a song," notes Marinos. "When you come up with a theme for a

song, you don't just pull words out of the air that rhyme; there's a whole story there. You could do a three-minute video for 'Mary Had A Little Lamb.'

"But the whole thing is, if you turn down the sound and watch a video, sooner or later you're going to get bored with the picture. But you can leave the room while

a video's playing and *listen* to it all day. It's the music that keeps you entertained. I've seen incredibly expensive videos that have bored me. I've seen videos with limited budgets where I've dug the song, and every time it comes on I get off on it. It comes down to the music—and it always will."



PHOTO GEORGE LANGE

**THE
RECORD
INTERVIEW**

DAVID LEE ROTH

**BY
DEBORAH
FROST**

ROCK 'N' ROLL AS A CONTACT SPORT

IF, AFTER FORMING 10 YEARS AGO in Los Angeles, the quartet known as Van Halen had one simple goal in mind—that is, to be larger and louder than life—then they picked the right man to tell the world about it. Onstage, lead singer David Lee Roth, 28, takes every classic rock shaman / stud pose over the top—literally and figuratively. When was the last time you saw Mick Jagger or Robert Plant doing triple somersaults? And unlike most of this era's careerist rockers who avoid controversy of any sort, the flamboyant Roth willingly expresses opinions on any subject, thank you, all in service of reinforcing his image as the ultimate rock 'n' roller fronting a band of marauding (albeit rich) gypsies. Yet one immediately recognizes the differences between David Lee Roth and other bare-chested, long-maned pretenders to the throne. Roth is not only very funny, he's very sharp (probably one of the few screamers who actually knows what's in the book *1984*). Rock 'n' roll may have been his greatest passion, but it wasn't his only option. He'd undoubtedly be successful at anything he chose to do, as long as it didn't entail multiplication or square roots.

During a recent visit to Manhattan to promote Van Halen's sixth LP, *1984*, Roth gave one bravura performance after another, spouting off on everything from his band's obvious superiority to all would-be competitors to his reasons for taking out paternity insurance with Lloyd's of London. Interviewing him is like watching a pilot show for the cable TV network Roth insists he's going to start, featuring Dave News, Dave Weather, Dave Sports, Dave Film and Record Reviews and Dave Gossip. Interaction is allowed but not encour-

aged; few guests have the strength, fortitude or speed to get a word in edgewise. Despite the rock 'n' roll spaceman costume—an arm's length of bracelets, below shoulder-length ponytail, two earrings in one ear, black and blue multi-zippered jumpsuit, mismatched striped socks (asked if the coin poking visibly through one of them was mugger money, Roth replied it was his "lucky penny")—Roth's one-liner delivery is pure Georgie Jessel. If Joan Rivers decides she's not interested in that *Tonight* gig, this is the guy to call—as long as he'll agree to stop laughing at his own jokes. Or wait at least a beat after the punchline . . .

I just got off the road with Quiet Riot, and it was interesting how often Van Halen came up in conversation. Not only were you rivals back in your early club days, but your success—as well as your sound and image—has become a model not only for every other struggling L.A. band but for rockers around the world.

I perceive of this entire thing as professional wrestling. You know what professional wrestling is all about—Andre the Giant vs. the Samoans, threats and grudge matches, tag teams and vengeance wreaked and wrought. It makes for entertainment. Going back to those old days, I gotta laugh. Everybody's so competitive. I'm always

hearing how they used to outdraw us or about guitarists who blew Eddie away way back when. These are bands who generally rate their success according to how much money they're making or how many albums they're selling. I don't see accomplishment in terms of dollar signs or popularity, particularly when it's based on somebody else's song that was a semi-hit ten years ago. And I can speak very authoritatively about this because we did it! As for other bands, who shall remain nameless, what's the great shakes when your first three albums die a horrifying death and all of a sudden you come in with a big winner? Okay, so you got lucky and I listen to it and I support your dreams and I hope you find your way to Oz every year. You probably won't, so enjoy it now. And don't try and shove it down my throat how all of a sudden how creative and earth-shattering you are simply because you sold a lot of records. Well, *Mousercise* went gold this past year. Let's keep that in mind—I know I keep it in mind.

Aren't you interested in the charts, how many records you're selling, how much money you're making?

When I tell folks what our actual goals and ideals were, they don't believe me, because Van Halen is an astounding success. Now we're in the *Guinness Book of World Rec-*

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ords for how much we made at the US Festival. People assume you have to dedicate your whole life to the making of the green or there's no way you could've made that much money. But if you really want to make a million—which is a relatively simple quantity, I should think—there's a way to do it. Our whole design was just to go out and travel around and yuk it up like a buncha gypsies in the Foreign Legion and not be responsible to anybody, not to wear a watch. What am I gonna do, sing a million dollars harder at the US Festival than at a Bottom Line? Honey, I sing like a million dollars regardless.

Have you ever had a regular job?

Oh yeah. My first regular job, when I turned 13, I shovelled shit in a stable in Pasadena for four, four-and-a-half years. Learned to speak fluent Spanish. From there, I was a night janitor in a doctor's building. I worked in a jeans store, and from there I was a porter in surgery at a hospital. That was my last job before the band started feeding me.

Was it a real struggle before the band started feeding you?

Well, a struggle is seen in perspective of what your goals are. And our goal wasn't to make a million. But particularly before we got signed, punk rock was the heavy thing. It totally dominated the scene. You couldn't get printed or pressed unless you had the right haircut. **We didn't make demo tapes because that would've meant we were trying to get a deal, trying to get the bank account. And we would've had to make a demo tape with funky tunes that weren't what we were really about or up to.** We said if we're gonna make a record and be popular around the world, then we're gonna be popular on this teeny club circuit. If you expect to sell out the Madison Square Gardens and Forums of this planet, then you can sure do it in 400 seat clubs all within an hour's driving distance of one another, and that's what we did. We played and played and played and played. Gene Simmons came by when we were playing the Starwood in Los Angeles. He was on top of the world at the time. He said, "I wanna try producing a band and you guys are swinging so let's go." And he took the tape—which had "Runnin' With the Devil" and "House of Pain," which is on the new album, only it's been transmogrified a lot since then—to his manager at the time, Bill Aucoin, who passed on it and said, "I don't see any potential here, guys." And we never made a tape before or after that. **But we felt that if to our own selves be true, it'll come through in the end. Having watched a lot of television and movies in my life, I felt that we would win in the end.**

1984 is a little different from previous Van Halen albums. Eddie's playing synthesizer on several cuts, there are no covers on this LP, and the songs are a little longer. Why?

We sort of pioneered the three-minute



PHOTO ERIK ROBERTS

"Rape and pillage play important roles in rock 'n' roll."

format for heavy rock tunes. When we started playing back in '78, most heavy rock bands—big rock, I like to call it—were playing extended solos, extended everything beyond the old Beatles format, wioch was verse/chorus/verse/chorus/B part solo. Somebody brought this up to me the other day—do you realize how many songs you guys play that are either cover versions or sound like the 1964 time period? Martha Reeves, the old Motown, the British Invasion, the Kinks—that's the stuff I heard when I started listening to the radio. I love Top 40. Later I picked all those covers when we were playing bars 'cause they were good dance tunes. The way I sing certainly has more to do with that old Motown or James Brown than I first got wild on than Deep Purple or Led Zeppelin. Anyway, now that we have a whole legion of people following tack, we decided to turn around. Even "Jump," the

most commercial song on the record, doesn't follow that format. And we've always messed around with different toys, new instruments. Somebody brought some.

Although you've made some great hard rock records, like "Runnin' With the Devil," one gets the feeling that for Van Halen, like many hard rock bands, the records only attempt to capture a fraction of the live show's energy. Is the live experience more important to you?

For me, it's a physical experience. Almost 100 percent. I throw myself about with as much abandon in the studio as I do onstage—that's the way I get the sounds to come out. It's the physical thing. I even have a hard time getting up and jamming with people onstage, because it always turns into The Dave Show. I sing with my hair, I sing with my elbows. They can't see



PHOTO PAUL SAMSON/PHOTO DISNEY

"Our plan was to travel around and yuk it up like a buncha gypsies in the Foreign Legion..."

your eyebrows in the 93rd row. If you want to express happiness, you have to use your elbows for eyebrows.

How did you learn the acrobatics you perform onstage?

Oh, I've taken a whole series of dance lessons. I did a whole year of ballet once upon a time. I've been doing martial arts since I was almost 14, a variety of different types.

What did you get out of ballet class?

Poise.

What did the guys in the band think of your ballet lessons?

I'm always taking lessons. I've taken millions of kinds of lessons. I took singing lessons for a couple of years. It obviously didn't help me sing any better, but I didn't lose what I had. This year I took Portugese three times a week. I finished 27 hours of helicopter ground school.

Why?

It's just something new. Fill up the bucket, y'know.

Were you a good student in school?

I was a good student in reading and writing. When it came to numbers, I was always abysmal. I can only count to four. But in my job, that's all that's required.

How did you feel about Eddie's collaboration with Michael Jackson?

I don't think he collaborated at all. I think he went out there and worked on a riff with them and gave them a swingin' heavy rock solo. He plays like a genius, he's brilliant in my book; I love him like a brother, but we all have a lick or two and that's all God gave us. Edward went out and did his lick this time with Michael Jackson. Or Brian Mercury or whatever his name is.

How did the experience with Michael Jackson affect him?

Well, he didn't get paid. I know how that experience would affect me. But you'd have to ask Edward, because we don't think alike at all. But that's probably what has made the band so popular. There are four completely different personalities who seem to appeal to completely different segments of society, judging by the mail and stuff.

You have a reputation for being as outrageous onstage as you are on. Yet there's obviously a side your audience rarely sees. You read, you go to the theater, even your musical tastes—judging from what's lying around your hotel room (an assortment of cassettes, including Clifton Chenier, Black Uhuru, Mississippi John Hurt, *An Evening with Groucho Marx*)—are wide-ranging and unpredictable.

I think that there are a lot of things I've left out of my interviews and the things I expose to the public. It's like that old magic axiom—all the people are going to ask you

about the mirrors and the wires. They want to know so badly. And the second you tell 'em, they think, What a sap. If I'm guilty of any sins, it's the sins of omission. There's a lot I don't tell people because who wants to hear how I work out in preparation for the tours? **I feel nauseated when I hear somebody come up and say, Well, I just finished working out—the dilettantes.** I would rather not speak about it than have somebody think, Oh, another 20-minute-a-day guy.

How do you work out?

It reached a point where I determined there was no way I was gonna quit smoking and drinking, so I'd have to find a way to balance the strain. For the last 14 years, I've been doing the martial arts and starting last February, I put in a little over three hours five days a week every morning with a fella named Benny Orquidez, the international kick boxing champion of the world. He has a pro gym down in Van Nuys. I decided that was the most severe form of physical conditioning that I could go through. **Every night, five days a week, I do 6.2 miles on the road.** I picked up my sword routine from another world champion named Paulie Zink, who's famous for his monkey-style kung fu. It's a Northern Chinese style of kung fu called Pek Kwar—you can read about these guys in the martial arts magazines all the time. I base my whole life around that stuff, that's the only constant ongoing thing I have. Ev-

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PHOTO: CHRIS WALTER/RETNA

Onstage with Eddie: "We all have a lick or two..."

everything else seems to change.

What do you think your strengths are?

My ability to endure anything.

What about your weaknesses?

Sometimes not employing my strengths as often as I should! And I become furious with myself if I ever make a mistake.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the other people in the band?

You know, it's very tribal. You get to know people really well. It's like living on a spaceship. Of course, there are no secrets at sea. I personally don't care what people know about me. I live my life with blinders on half the time anyway as I'm sailing along on my little path. You're invited, but I'm sailing. As far as pointing at the other cats, I don't wanna do that, 'cause there's no telling how they'll over-react.

You've been over-reacting to one another for ten years now. What do you think of a band like the Stones, who've been at it for more than two decades?

The Stones have been around for so long now you can't expect them to come up with earthshaking hit after hit all the time. Nobody is built that way, not Beethoven and not Mick. If they come up with a song this year that's just a pretty good song, that's all right, we're all gonna see them play at the stadium and then next year they'll come back with a great "Miss You"

or something. But I started acting out and playing air guitar with the Beatles.

How did you feel when Lennon was killed?

I don't want to talk about that. I'll tell you why—because I didn't really care. He obviously is one of my big heroes, almost a deity. But I felt like he'd evaporated quite a while ago. He did some kind of complete role reversal with his wife or something. And she has made me sick ever since they invented her in the press—another budgie bird that sits on the hippo's back. Just like McCartney's witch.

Do you think you'll ever get married?

Sure, why not? I don't get all the women I want, I get all the women who want me. And there's a big difference there. I certainly see a change somewhere down the line. I'm having a good time now, but should I find the one girl I'd like to settle down with permanently, I guarantee I'll be so good.

What are you looking for?

I have no particular favorite hair color, no particular ethnic background or educational facility, anything like that. I do know that the last girl I went out to dinner with told me, "I'm an actress trapped in a model's body." I will not marry that.

Do you really have paternity insurance?

That was something—if you stick your head up above the crowd, somebody's gonna throw a rock at it. I think it says that

in the Bible. Or the Constitution. Anyway, you put yourself in a public forum and immediately you start getting letters: "Dear Dave, do you remember me from Tuna-fish, Wyoming? I'm a recent graduate of Lone Ranger High School and little Ronnie will be needing a bicycle next Christmas, so please send me a check."

These are blackmail attempts from people who actually knew you, however briefly, or women you've never met?

I get so much of it I don't even read it. And I raised the question in the legal office during a big insurance meeting. I said, "If a great surgeon insures his eyes and a great piano player insures his fingers, why can't we insure my . . .," and we went on to discuss all these letters I was getting. Everyone thought it was hysterical. I was dead serious. We were all getting letters. So they sent the thing to Lloyd's of London and they sent back a telex saying, Are you just looking for publicity? As it were, the information never came out of the Van Halen offices. I suspect it came from some bulletin board in Lloyd's of London where it says such-and-so corporation wants to insure 12 million dollars worth of computers, Texaco wants to insure seven billion dollars worth of oil shipments and Dave Roth wants to insure \$10,000 worth of his dick. And it's just kind of snowballed. I believe in women's lib, ERA, own careers, fly jet planes, in the trenches together, buddies, pals, however you perceive of it beyond the normal male/female relationship. You've got all these people suing guys for everything they own, but if you're gonna come up to the hotel with 72 merry-making fools who travel the country wearing shark tooth earrings and leather jackets, don't come tell me, Hey, that's your kid. Don't talk to me about who's responsible.

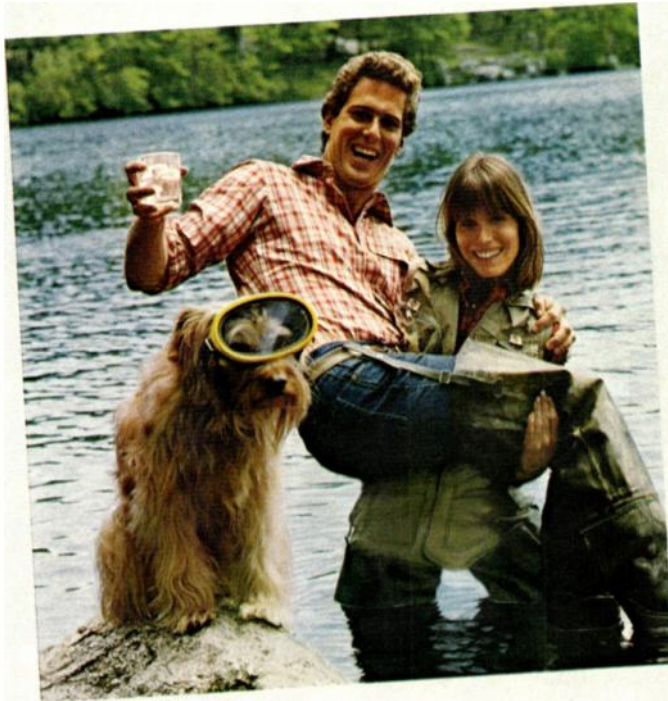
You have more groupies than ever?

Rape and pillage play important parts in rock 'n' roll. But you get tired of anything. Familiarity always breeds contempt—usually for me after about 20 minutes.

Do people throw underwear at you?

Oh, yeah. All the vestments of society are thrown up onstage 'cause it's all psychodrama up there. We're all going through this together now. It's like therapy, we're gonna see through these emotions and I'm gonna act them out for you. I'm gonna abandon my spirit to them—which is actually what I attempt to do. You work yourself up into that state and you fall in supplication of the demon Gods, roll and rail under the weight of them and you look like you're about to lose. But no, he's back. And he's okay. He's got 'em in the corner, he's winning. He's ready to . . . party! But wait, he's in trouble, he's taking a lot of body shots, he's dealt another low blow—it's definitely a full contact sport, rock 'n' roll. It's right back to wrestling. ○

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(FROM LEFT) WHITE, FRY, SINGLETON: RECONNOITERING
THE COAT CHECK ROOM RATHER THAN THE DANCE FLOOR

THE BEAT

ABC

FLIPS THE BIRD TO THE DANCE FLOOR

AND GOES FOR SUBSTANCE INSTEAD.

REAL GUITARS ANYONE? ▲ BY DAN HEDGES

AT 10:30 A.M. ON THE RAINIEST day of the year, Martin Fry of ABC is still half asleep, yet a conspicuous believer in the age-old maxim that clothes make the man. Dressed-to-maim in a quasi-zoot suit that's so painfully loud it should, by law, come equipped with a volume control, he stands out among the grey-suited businessmen in his hotel dining room like a Shriner at an IBM board meeting.

"Welcome to the breakfast show," Fry says cheerfully, forking down the World's Most Expensive Scrambled Eggs. After a marathon flight from Australia, however, the remaining two-thirds of the band are making no attempt to be festive. Guitarist Mark White looks as if he dropped twenty pounds during the night, and speaks in a near-whisper over a cup of lukewarm coffee. Sax player Stephen Singleton, still feeling the effects of cabin pressure, is muttering something about "brain damage." He wonders if he should sue.

But then, we're talking about success here, about the price tag that comes along with it. From the moment their debut album, *The Lexicon of Love*, went into the Top 25 back in '82 (helped along by a pair of Top 20 singles, "The Look of Love" and "Poisoned Arrow"), ABC went public domain. With their slicked-back sparkle of wall-to-wall gold lamé, their careful attention to beats-per-minute and choreographed mirror ball arrangements, they found a ready market with an audience adrift and forgotten in the limbo between Anglo synth-pop and arena-strength heavy metal. Slip *Lexicon* onto the deck, and a boring Tuesday night becomes Instant Weekend. And the clothes! During the band's '83 World Tour, even the roadies wore tuxedos. In England, ABC's style sense garnered as much notice as the music. Critics bent over backwards analyzing *Lexicon*'s socio-cultural impact on contemporary British Society, when the only reason most people were buying the album was because it had a good beat and you could dance to it. And because ABC dressed real swell, were very English and very white (though the music they borrowed so heavily from has long been the domain of American black artists), MTV rolled out the red carpet.

But now there's a second ABC album, *Beauty Stab*, and it's a considerable departure, in almost every respect, from its predecessor. Minimal danceability. Low gloss. Real guitars. And even topical lyrics. True, the band haven't left Saturday night completely behind, but they've definitely stepped off the dance floor and joined the line in front of the coat check room. ABC, it seems, have gotten bored with the beat.

"I've come off the dance floor, gone to the toilet, and discovered that it's a pretty shitty place," Singleton says, "I've complained to the management."

Fry nods. "We've broken into the disc jockey's room to persuade him to change his whole way of looking at things. I don't think popular music has to be bpm's and hi-hats. It doesn't have to have such a strict definition. Music should be an adventure, an opportunity to break things down and make them explode."

The idea this time out, Fry explains, was "to make something with a kick, but with less surface impact. Make an album of 12 songs that you could benefit from by listening to more than once. It's a long player. It's *not* a collection of hit singles. We wanted to make something that was slightly beautiful, slightly ugly on the surface. *Beauty Stab*. We wanted it to be abrasive and undignified, yet at the same time have potency, real impact and power."

In a sense, the band's new angle is summed up by the title of the opening track, "That Was Then But This Is Now." If the first half-dozen tunes are still lyrically plugged into the standard "love is a mine field" theme, it's their musical treatment that underlines the real change in ABC: extensive, often heavy-duty guitar work on tracks like "Love's A Dangerous Language," "The Power of Persuasion" and "By Default By Design"; growling Billy Idol-like vocals on "If I Ever Thought You'd Be Lonely." The mechanized pulse of *Lexicon* has been jettisoned in favor of tricky time changes here. There's sometimes no discernible beat at all. And by the time the band reaches side two, even romance has gone out the window. With "Hey Citizen!" and "King Money," ABC focus their sights on afflu-

ence, greed and success as a be-all and end-all. On "Bite The Hand," we're talking utopian visions, backed by headbanger guitar and arranger David Bedford's sylvan strings. In "United Kingdom," when Fry sings about this gang he's just joined, three million strong, he means the unemployed, lamenting that the English can still be, "so naive as to genuinely believe that they still have an Empire."

Keeping in mind that this is coming from a band who, only one album ago, were churning out transatlantic party music of the most profitable (if disposable) sort, you have to wonder why they'd take such a risk. At least so soon.

"Look, even when we first made 'Poisoned Arrow,' people said it was too sophisticated a sound," Fry says. "In Britain, using strings, using a pop producer at the time when we did it was a crazy move. But you *can* redefine things. Change them around. Chop them up. Every DJ might be playing electronic be-bop this month, but things have to move on. You can look to the charts and try and reflect that in your music, or you can try and reflect something else."

"The problem is that people try to put you into little boxes. Particularly in America. Isn't it true that they have something called Adult Oriented Rock over here? Youth Oriented Rock? And then there's MOR—Mortgage Oriented Rock and Extension-to-the-House Oriented Rock. What it's really about is trying to create something vibrant and new. I'm saying that this is what we've *attempted*. Whether or not we've *done* it is up to the person listening to the album."

But then, this new creative tack underlines the suspicion—buried all along—that *Lexicon* was merely a calculated commercial ploy to wedge a foot in the door of a market oversaturated with pale English synth bands with gravity-defying haircuts. ABC, naturally, continue to deny this.

"Historically speaking, we were just really influenced by the records from America that we grew up with," Mark White says. "R&B records. Black records. James Brown right through to Chic. Those were the records that excited us, in a period in England when people were more in-

terested in Joy Division and very bleak-sounding records. That's the reason why we began making records the way we did—because it went against the grain."

But there was a time, White admits, when even the embryonic ABC were lured by the Dreaded Machines. "When groups like Depeche Mode, Soft Cell, Human League and Gary Numan came along, the synthesizer, at least in England, was regarded as the Great White Hope," he says. "We were experimenting with synthesizers too, though we were trying to make them do things that people *still* haven't gotten them to do—trying to get a genuine soul into them, if you like. But we got to the point where we found that the machines just couldn't do it, so we turned more organic, picking up guitars again."

The band came together during the late '70s, out of what Fry describes as an "upper working class, lower middle class" background in Sheffield, England. During that period, Mark White and Stephen Singleton were playing together in a local band called Vice Versa. While White appears to have had his family to fall back on for financial support, Singleton had "left school at 16 on a Friday and started work the following Monday." After a series of fleeting jobs, including one as a hospital porter, "burning bodies in an incinerator," he wound up at a canning factory, picking the heads off beans.

Although frequently unemployed, Fry was, at the time, working in the same factory, publishing a fanzine called *Modern Drugs* ("pretty much three pieces of paper stapled together") in his spare time. The focus was on local bands and since Vice Versa had released two independent singles, Fry (who'd crossed paths with Singleton during shift changes at the factory) put in a request for an interview. Although he'd had no aspirations toward show business, something snapped into place.

"When we met, the accent at that time was much more on people who had ideas in common, rather than a great deal of expertise," White recalls. "Steve and myself had no idea whether Martin had a voice or whether he could play an instrument, but found we had a lot of similar ideas."

If those "similar ideas" soon added up to a sound so commercial that you could hear the ring of cash registers buried in the grooves, the band maintains that it was purely coincidental. "It wasn't a case of our struggling with some sort of artistic integrity, then ditching it in favor of commercialism," Fry says. "Far from it. We grew more interested in acoustic instruments, and how we could make dance music—take the polish of what we saw as an American tradition and fuse it with something very English. Something that would make us sound different from Rose Royce or Chic or any of the other American contemporary funk acts that were around at the time."

For a while, the lineup included drum-

mer David Palmer, who stayed long enough to make the first album and go on tour, then departed, trimming ABC to a trio. At the time of *Lexicon's* success on both sides of the Atlantic, much of the credit went to producer Trevor Horn—not surprising since Horn had been one-half of the Buggles, had briefly been a member of Yes, and had come to be known as a Man to be Reckoned With when it came to anything involving a recording studio. ABC, on the other hand, were barely out of school, unknown, and from Sheffield.

"That whole image—that all producers are Doctor Franksteins who build groups out of nothing—is wrong," says White. "I'm sure Trevor Horn is capable of doing it, but he didn't do it with us. The way we approach the idea of a producer or a video director is that you want somebody who's going to execute your ideas and make up for the technical expertise you lack. At the time of our first album, we'd

Fry: "You can re-define things, change them around, chop them up. Every disc jockey might be playing electronic be-bop this month, but things have to move on."

never been in a 48-track studio before."

For *Beauty Stab*, the band turned their hand to producing themselves, letting engineer Gary Langan fill in any technical gaps in their studio knowledge. Martin Fry says that they would have gladly worked with Horn again, but that Horn was tied up producing the new Yes album. "If Trevor had recorded us this time, it would have turned out very close to how *Beauty Stab* sounds now," he claims. "We intended to strip things down to a kind of rawer, more abrasive edge right from the beginning—using live performances, as opposed to massive overdubs."

White smiles. "If we had, some people would have said we were running the danger of having another platinum album." For a band who reportedly walked off with the largest advance any British record company has paid out in a decade, for a band rumored to be difficult to deal with on the business end, ABC seems to be taking their success with a grain of salt. Musical adventurism aside, they're treading carefully these days, particularly when it comes to the medium that was largely responsible for establishing them in America

in the first place. At the mention of *Mantrap* (their 60-minute, \$300,000 pseudo-spy thriller/musical video), Fry, White and Singleton sheepishly look down at the table cloth. Obviously, it was one career move they'd rather forget.

"*Mantrap* was really just a way of documenting the live show," Fry explains. "We wanted to make it slightly more imaginative than your straight concert footage. It was simply for people to watch—there was nothing to sell, as such. But there's only so much lip gloss you can apply. You can only do so much for groups—and now, in this past year particularly, it's geared toward big money. McCartney, Michael Jackson, the Rolling Stones—all the old pros are spending vast amounts of money making mini-feature films. Where does that leave you if you're newly established like us, never mind an unknown band of 16- and 17-year-olds?"

So no more epic videos for ABC?

"We'll leave that to people like Billy Joel."

For the time being, ABC is also leaving the road work to others. There'll be no *Beauty Stab* tour. "We spent five months touring after we did *The Lexicon of Love*," Fry says. He switches to a deep voice. "*Five long, gruelling months*. Very enjoyable process, but it's five months in cold storage. Five months in a wax museum. This time around we figured rather than go straight into the wax museum, where you're basically doing the same show every night, we'd work on the new songs we've already written."

Over the coming months, the band will be tinkering with the new material in New York (to get away from Sheffield), and won't begin to think about touring until after the next album. As was the case with *Beauty Stab* (where the credits included ace session drummer Andy Newmark), assorted sidemen will be brought in to help out on the final product. "When you don't have a permanent bassist and drummer, it gives you more freedom to experiment," says White. "You can have the best in the world."

Being the best, ABC collectively claim, is measured by more than mere shekels in a band account. Quoth Fry: "You've heard this before, but we really are in this for the music."

True, we've heard it before. But then, they're probably sincere. ABC are still in their early 20s. The rot, if it's coming, hasn't had time to set in.

"Success for us doesn't come from making a platinum album and having an award on the wall," Singleton says. "It's actually making music that excites us and inspires us to keep on making music. If we just repeated what we'd done on the first album, we'd only be treading water. We might as well have gone back to work in the bean factory, picking those heads off again."

Martin Fry shrugs. "We used to get more sleep at the bean factory." ○

By Jonathan Gross

Now commercially available, Ralph Records videos are as provocative as the label's music

BURIED TREASURE

DURING THE LATE '70s and early into this decade, the bizarre San Francisco-based label known as Ralph Records created its own visual vocabulary for rock videos, wherein stock performance shots were replaced by visionary concepts, and consequently carved out a niche at the top—er, bottom—of the music video underground.

The videos (available from Ralph Records, 109 Minna St., #391, San Francisco, CA 94105) actually languish in a burrow deeper than Ralph itself, renowned as an off-shore rig to the music business oil fields. For years Ralph, founded in 1972 by a group of high school friends who had migrated west from Shreveport, Louisiana, operated under a weird covenant called "The Theory of Obscurity." According to a company employee, Homer Flynn, this theory stated that "the artist works to please himself and not his audience, therefore avoiding manipulation by them."

Ralph's first signing, and still the label's standard bearers, was the Residents, five conceptual musical artists whose identities remain to this day a well-guarded secret (rumor has it that the band is composed largely, if not entirely, of Ralph's founders, but such wild speculation remains just that). Hiding behind a variety of disguises ranging from Ku Klux Klan-like garb on their first album to tuxedos topped by huge eyeball helmets, the Residents have turned out a dozen albums featuring everything from 60-second mutant versions of Top 40 hits to Eskimo music.

The videos arose, strangely enough, when the Ralph politburo decided it needed a better way to promote its products. Don't forget this is in the mid-'70s, way before MTV, when nobody save perhaps David Bowie was making more than a gesture to the form. And Ralph needed a shot: no Residents album had ever sold more than 40,000 copies.

According to Graeme Whifler, who was the label's in-house direc-



PHOTO: LISA LEAVITT

A scene from the Residents' *One Minute Movies*: Visionary concepts in line with the Ralph Records Theory of Obscurity

tor from 1978 to 1982, Ralph's entry into visuals "was never really a video venture back then. Film was cheaper to work with and we had distribution already set up that got us into art houses, campuses and festivals.

"We knew that our audience was small enough and dedicated enough that they'd search us out and find those theatres. And they were weird enough to enjoy it."

Budgets were small—the biggest was \$6,000 for a 1981 magnum opus titled *Renaldo and the Loaf*, after the name of one of the label's newest bands—and the facilities were low-rent.

"We shot pretty much all the indoor stuff in the Ralph warehouse," says Whifler, 32, who got into film via, in his words, "a crummy California film school." Whifler's history with the Resi-

dents goes as far back as the early '70s and he was the lighting director on Ralph's first mini-epic, *Third Reich 'n' Roll*, shot in 1976. Prior to that the Residents were working on a musical allegory, a feature shot on primitive black and white videotape called *Vileness Fats*.

Vileness was never completed, but during that time the Residents were working with the environmental art group the Ant Farm, the folks who brought you all those Cadillacs partially buried in the Texas desert (the inspiration, in turn, for Bruce Springsteen's song, "Cadillac Ranch"). *Third Reich* arose when the Ant Farm was commissioned to fill some space on progressive Australian television.

"At that time the Residents were functioning as a commune, sharing everything equally includ-

MUSIC

ing creative input," says Whifler. "Each person was totally responsible for a sequence in the short."

What resulted was a disarming but disjointed black and white film rife with fascist symbolism, owing in part to what Flynn calls "Fellini and Balinese influences." It set a pattern of unpredictability and resourcefulness in a period before every corner had a dry-ice dealership. The Residents even had plans for a videodisc back when few were familiar with the term.

Whifler was responsible for most of the clips after *Third Reich*, often building the sets himself. For casting, he usually strolled down to a local lesbian bar where there was a veritable rogues' gallery of life's extras: "People tend to really project in their natural habitat." Technically, he pioneered a commercial look that doppelganged Madison Avenue with wide-angle shots, consumer products and animated sequences that prefigured much of what is now commonplace in music video.

"I never went for a lot of post-production, low budgets notwithstanding," contends Whifler. "If it's not on the film it's not there. You should do it all with the camera."

"Good video has to have a repeat factor," notes Flynn, who joined Ralph in 1976 when the label was taken over by the mysterious Cryptic Corporation.

Adds Whifler: "Even though we were working in film, I was well aware of the dynamic of the tube, which could withstand wide angles, and I was, in several cases, intending to parody commercials while promoting the music." Whifler eventually garnered so much attention for his work that some of the Ralph people became jealous. Flynn confirms an ego clash that came to a head when Whifler was offered only \$1500 as a budget to document the Residents' live version of the *Mole Trilogy*, which cost \$100,000 to stage.

Having parted ways, Whifler has gone on to a diet of frustration save for a couple of clip assignments for Translator and Sparks; Ralph, meanwhile, has undergone a financial restructuring, allowing the company further Residents projects and some new signings, notably Rhythm & Noise and Canadian masked man Nash the Slash.

Forward-looking as they are, the Ralph videos hardly put the label on the map. Even today MTV will have very little to do with these buried treasures. Graeme Whifler's work had little if anything to do with marketing, and everything to do with advancing a fledgling art form. That his clips are not widely disseminated is unfortunate, because there are simply too many stories like his in the music business. Was he too far ahead of his time? Flynn inadvertently supplied a sort of answer when he said, "The Ralph videos were definitely in line with our aesthetic."

Exactly. Whatever that is. ○

RALPH VIDEOGRAPHY



PHOTO: LISA LEAVITT

Unpredictability and resourcefulness: A typically-bent scene from a Ralph video

THIRD REICH 'N' ROLL THE RESIDENTS, 1977

Five minutes of uncommonly deviant black and white images accompanied by strangled version of Top 40 classics like "Wipeout." Draped in newsprint, the Residents-as-Klansmen cavort about in what appears to be, through the grainy 16mm footage, weird neo-fascist rituals. The feel is very much intrusive in this Residents-directed classic which includes animation from the never-completed *Vileness Fats* musical shot in the early '70s.

THE MAN IN THE DARK SEDAN SNAKEFINGER, 1979

Most agree this Whifler-directed clip is the weakest of the bunch. The daylight shots are flat and predictable and the concept is too literal a translation—a bunch of woolly trolls hauling, yes, a man in a dark sedan. Trailing is a man besieged by rubber snakes, hardly realizing one of our worst fears.

HELLO SKINNY THE RESIDENTS, 1979

Whifler stacked black and white stills of a real-life Frisco bum to paint a stunning derelict picture. Taking advantage of the humorous possibilities in the song's title, taken from the *Duck Stab* album, Whifler grafts "Skinny"'s sunken features onto the body of a larger man for a poignant paste-up. Turns you every which way but loose.

JINX TUXEDOMOON, 1980

Whifler confines the North American public to the space between obsession and compulsion in this subversive look at the consumer world. Tuxedomoon's Winston Tong fights a never-ending battle against the plagues of Madison Avenue taking tooth gel to a toilet seat to fight germs. The situation is no-win. Jinxed indeed.

WHY ARE WE HERE? MX-80 SOUND, 1980

Fear and loathing on the road is the angst for

the only Ralph clip in which a band is seen playing instruments in synch with the audio track. But that's during the last five seconds; the rest of the action consists of a painfully slow stage setup. Intentionally boring.

ONE-MINUTE MOVIES THE RESIDENTS, 1980

Four clips taken from *The Residents' Commercial Album*. In three of the four—"Moisture," "The Act of Being Polite" and "Simple Song"—the band knocks about in their familiar guises, including the eyeball-and-tux getup. In the other, "Perfect Love," one-man Ralph ensemble Bill Owen, a sort of Larry "Bud" Melman character, plays a starstruck couch potato in a fleabag hotel. This one defies the laws of emotional physics.

BOSTICH YELLO, 1981

Actually, this one has very little to do with Ralph, as it was produced entirely by Yello for their European label. Still a great dance cut and vehicle for Dieter Meier, rock's impeccably tailored David Niven.

RENALDO AND THE LOAF RENALDO AND THE LOAF, 1981

Whifler's tour-de-force was inspired by California kidnapper Ken Parnell. In a blaze of *Close Encounters*-style white light, a superannuated hippie, played by Bill Owen, snatches an adorable child from his kitchen. But the old man wants no ransom, just the son he never had. He proceeds to mold the boy in his image, including coloring his hair with a mud formula. This clip's been accused of all sorts of sins, from glamourizing pederasts to giving tacit approval of child snatching; its defenders see it as a love story. You be the judge. Technically this is the best of the Ralph collection.

VILENESS FATS/THE MOLE SHOW THE RESIDENTS, 1984

A Ralph two-fer matching a pared-down version of the Residents' troubled epic and a studio mount of the show that toured Europe.



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ON THE BEAT

THE BUSINESS

Despite widespread reports of an economic recovery taking place in the music industry, the total of gold and platinum albums certified by the RIAA in 1983 declined for the third straight year. Platinum certifications (indicating one million sales) were down to 49 last year, as opposed to 55 in '82 and 60 in '81. Gold, too, became more precious in '83, as certification for sales of 500,000 fell to 11 from 130 in '82 and 153 in '81. It appears, then, that a few major hit records, rather than a broad-scale increase in album sales, accounted for the sales gains made during the year. Five artists logged two platinum albums each: **Air Supply**, **Pat Benatar**, **Culture Club**, **Def Leppard** and **Kenny Rogers**. Only two singles were certified platinum last year, the Kenny Rogers-Dolly Parton duet "Islands in the Stream" and **Toni Basil's** "Mickey"...a High Court in London has awarded Bee Gee **Robin Gibb** full control of his music publishing company after a judge said the business had been run in a manner "unfairly prejudicial" to Gibb. Michael Burton, attorney for Gibb, had alleged that the chairman of Robin Gibb Publishing, Bryan Morrison, had "milked" the company of some \$100,000 since 1977, while paying Gibb only \$15,000 in director's fees. The Court's ruling directs Morrison to remove himself as chairman and sell his half interest in the company to Gibb at a fair price following a valuation of the shares. For his part, Morrison claims his lawyers were not in court "due to a mistake" when the case was outlined, rendering him unable to submit a defense. He will likely seek a new hearing in order to contest Gibb's allegations...Harlem's legendary Apollo Theatre is now open both as a concert hall and a video production facility. Already the venue has been the site for a Christmas Eve amateur show, a Christmas Day gospel program, and a January 15 birthday tribute to Martin Luther King. The second floor of the building on 125th Street will house an Apollo Theatre Hall of Fame, a non-profit museum featuring memorabilia from the theatre's 50 year history. The aforementioned video production center will be located on the third floor, where 4,000 square feet of space will be available along with \$4 million worth of equipment. ■

PEOPLE

Who'd a thunk it? **Paul McCartney**, who became accustomed to number one while a member of the Beatles, has finally reached the top of the U.K. charts as solo artist with "Pipes of Peace," the title song from his most



Alan Adler/LGI © 1983

Apparently tired of the middle of the road artists who dominate the local scene, Hong Kong rock fans turned out en masse for the final shows of David Bowie's worldwide "Serious Moonlight" tour. In December Bowie played to a crowd of 20,000-plus, and then added a second show in order to meet the demand for tickets. Although bottom line considerations necessitated a lower-tech show than Bowie presented in the U.S., Europe and Japan, the concerts had enough scintillating moments to make the lack of special effects seem inconsequential. The second show, for example, found Bowie performing "Imagine" in tribute to his friend John Lennon, with whom Bowie had toured the city (as a tourist, that is) several years ago. Bowie has yet to announce any touring or recording plans for 1984, but a documentary shot while he was in Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong, and tentatively titled *People to People*, should be ready by this summer.

recent album. Prior to this, the closest Big Mac had come to the top on his own was number two, with "Another Day" (1971) and "Coming Up" (1980). The Fab Four topped the U.K. charts 17 times, McCartney's Wings made it once, with "Mull of Kintyre" in 1977, and Paul's 1982 duet with Stevie Wonder, "Ebony and Ivory" also reached the promised land...on a less-exalted plateau, **Sheena Easton** was named one of the Ten Best Coiffed Women in the World in a recent poll...first word from the **Beach Boys** post-Dennis Wilson is that the band will continue recording and performing, but will postpone a scheduled early '84 tour until later this spring.

At a Los Angeles press conference, Carl Wilson said "We've spent all of our adult life performing and hopefully projecting a good time, and that's what we're going to do in the future. We all have problems as individuals, but as a group we're blessed to be able to defy time and all kinds of reason, and go on putting out those good vibrations." As for a new drummer, Mike Love pointed out that the Boys have "been touring at times with two other drummers, so we're quite well-equipped to perform. It's just that emotionally the entire group wanted to wait just a little longer before we get up and sing 'Fun, Fun, Fun'."

CINEMA/VIDEO



Elsewhere on the concert front, *Amusement Business Magazine* reports that the top grossing rock concert in 1983 (October 30, 1982 to October 22, 1983) was the Who at Shea Stadium in New York. Messrs. Townshend, Daltrey, Entwistle and Jones, headlining a bill also featuring David Johansen and the Clash, racked up \$2,200,000 in gross ticket sales for two shows, October 12 and 13 of '82. In second place, at \$1,850,731 was Neil Diamond, who played seven shows at the Forum in Inglewood, California in June of '83.

THE VINYL WORD

R.E.M.'s second album is scheduled for an April 16 release, with a U.S. tour to follow beginning in May. Prior to that the band will journey to England and Europe for a series of concerts. FYI: on January 31, R.E.M. played a benefit show at the Moon Shadow in Atlanta for the Legal Environment Assistance Foundation (L.E.A.F.), a public service environmental law firm based in the South that was recently founded by some of the band's friends. That show also served as R.E.M.'s sole "warmup" date prior to the upcoming tour... **Frank Zappa** fans should be on the lookout for an EMI release later this year of three Zappa compositions performed by conductor Pierre Boulez' chamber orchestra The Ensemble Intercontemporain, with Boulez conducting, January 9 at Theatre De La Ville in Paris. Recorded on January 10 and 11 at the IRCAM Studios in the Pompidou Center in Paris, the LP will include "The Perfect Stranger," which Boulez commissioned to accommodate the 29-piece instrumentation used by his orchestra, plus "Naval Aviation In Art?" and "Dupree's Paradise," both Zappa compositions. This is hardly Zappa's first foray outside of rock. Last year he released an album of orchestral works recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra on his Barking Pumpkin label (distributed by CBS). Titled *The London Symphony Orchestra, Zappa, Vol. 1*, the LP features the world premieres of "Sad Jane," "Pedro's Dowry," "Envelopes" and "Mo 'N Herb's Vacation," which were performed by the LSO in an all-Zappa musical evening in January of 1983. Zappa has also been invited by composer Luciano Berio to guest conduct at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, 1984 (Florence May Festival); he has also been asked to guest conduct for the Honolulu Symphony 1984/85 season and to conduct his own music and selections from Edgar Varese at the University of Buffalo in 1985. And sometime this year he's going to release a rock album. This is a busy man. ■

1984 appears to be a boom year for music-oriented movies. On the calendar at this writing are *Streets of Fire*, advertised as a "rock 'n' roll fantasy"; Paul McCartney's *Give My Regards To Broad Street*; Francis Ford Coppola's *Cotton Club*, with **Tom Waits** in the role of stage manager (oh yes—**Richard Gere** stars); *Hard to Hold*, with **Rick Springfield** as—surprise!—a rock star; *Songwriter*, with **Kris Kristofferson** and **Willie Nelson**; the hilarious *Spinal Tap*, about the exploits of a fictitious British heavy metal band whose drummers have nasty habit of exploding onstage; and of course **Sting**, starring in *Dune*...those who didn't catch *Gospel* in the theatre ought to check it out on videocassette. Family Home Entertainment has released the film, starring the **Rev. James Cleveland**, **Walter Hawkins** and the **Hawkins Family**, the **Mighty Clouds of Joy**, **Shirley Caesar**, and the **Clark Sisters**, in VHS and Beta Hi-Fi formats...on the subject of music videos, Media Home Entertainment has released the fine reggae film, *Countryman*, featuring music by **Bob Marley and the Wailers**, **Toots and the Maytals** and **Steel Pulse**, while Embassy Home Entertainment has brought out videocassette and laser videodisc versions of **Bette Midler's** Home Box Office special, *The Bette Midler Show*...*Billboard* reports that MTV and Ohlmeyer Communications Companies will be producing a series of music and entertainment programs for distribution in all media, including broadcast television and home video. One of these projects will be the "Annual MTV Music Video Awards," tentatively scheduled for airing on MTV in June. The all-music channel is also apparently planning a weekly magazine-format show and a series of concerts featuring major artists. ■

tively scheduled for airing on MTV in June. The all-music channel is also apparently planning a weekly magazine-format show and a series of concerts featuring major artists. ■



If we can't have her in the flesh, the video will do: Kate Bush is busy back in England recording a new album, but that hasn't kept her from appearing on these shores—in a manner of speaking, that is. What happened is that the Kate Bush video, *Live at the Hammersmith Odeon*, toured 32 U.S. colleges this past November and December, drawing over 10,000 students to screenings. According to Capitol Records' in-house publication, *Fast Forward*, college radio programmers competing for a trip for two to England to meet the artist on her home turf went to some extraordinary measures to get the award for the best promotion of Bush's video. One school, for instance, rented an art gallery and held wine tastings in conjunction with the screening, another took a hotel ballroom and invited 700 guests including a State Senator and House Speaker Tip O'Neill. Meanwhile, no release date has been set for Bush's next studio album, nor any plans for a long-awaited U.S. concert tour announced.

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By Mark Mehler

IS BETA BEAT?

Format faces uncertain future

IF YOU'RE A RED-BLOODED American boy or girl, you figure the future of the Beta format rests solely on fundamental business principles—marketing, merchandising, pricing, availability and the like. If you're a red-blooded Japanese, you know better.

The business facts speak for themselves: VHS outsells Beta software two-to-one; of the eight million VCRs in U.S. homes, about six million are VHS; and in January, Zenith announced it was switching from Beta to VHS with its new line of hardware, making it the first major defection from the Beta ranks.

In addition, other Sony Beta licensees are covering themselves by offering VHS, too. NEC is said to be assembling VHS kits, while Toshiba has begun selling VHS machines in Europe, and Sanyo offers VHS equipment under the Fisher brand name here. What's more, the major European players, Philips and Grundig, have added VHS to their V-2000 standard. Even Sony, the Beta spearcarrier, is offering VHS software.

In short, it's widely believed that despite the high-quality of Sony's Beta hi-fi equipment and new portable Betamovie camera/recorder, VHS' market share advantage is secure. Observes Ira Mayer, editor of Video Marketing Newsletter, a forward-thinking industry publication, "Software availability is the key, and right now it doesn't pay for retailers to stock (Beta)."

However, all this neglects a more subtle element in the VCR equation, which Americans like to call Face.

"I don't believe Sony or its licensees will pull out of the Beta hardware market," says a knowledgeable industry watcher. "It's too much a matter of pride. You have to understand, these (licensing) deals are made on golf courses in Japan, not in an American boardroom."

For its part, Zenith says its decision to move to VHS (it will continue supporting existing Beta units with blank tape) stems from a number of negative marketing factors, including VHS' heavy installed base advantage, and the Beta software availability problem. "We feel the hardware is technically fine," says a Zenith spokesman in Chicago, "but we don't see Beta as a market to be in."

Sony officials in New Jersey, conceding problems in the consumer perception of a Beta software shortage, have begun addressing the issue through a major national merchandising program. States Jay Sato, Sony's merchandising manager for con-



Sony's Beta Hi-Fi: Savior or stopgap?

sumer products: "We see press reports of Sony 'going down the tubes,' but it's not the case. First, Zenith's move won't have much impact, since they were a tiny percentage of Beta sales (an estimated five per cent or so, compared with Sony's 50 to 65 per cent). Plus, we'll run more giveaways like the 20 free rentals with a Betamax that we ran last year and which was very successful. There is that perception of a lack of software. Most people have VHS and they tell their friends, so we have to do a good job of getting the word out."

In defending his company against the slings and arrows of U.S. competitors and business writers, Sato invariably comes back to hardware and the strong critical reception accorded the SL-2300 and 2700 lines, as well as the new camera/recorder.

"You may talk about the 11 percent of homes that have VCRs, but we're looking at the tremendous number of homes, 89 percent, that do not. The market is still small, and there's a lot of business still to be determined. We believe Beta hi-fi is the answer for us. Now dealers are able to differentiate between hardware, and we can demonstrate the differences for them."

In terms of software, Sato believes Sony will be the natural leader of the burgeoning blank tape market, composed primarily of youthful consumers at whom the Betamovie camera is targeted as well.

"We hear about so little Beta software being out there," adds Dick Quinlan, video division manager for AIWA, which manufactures a Beta hi-fi deck. "The real truth is there are 90 Beta hi-fi movies made by five large companies. And in hi-fi, the only game in town is Beta; VHS hi-fi is months away.

"For the first time," says Quinlan, with a note of pride, "VHS is catching up with us, but when they come out with hi-fi, where will the software be?"

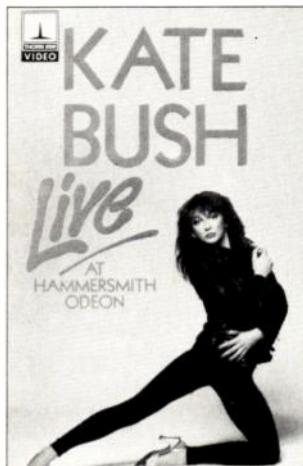
So given the competing claims of the competitors—who have been beating each others' brains in at this game for so long it's amazing they have strength to go on—where does this leave the consumer?

Well, a story in the February issue of RECORD ("The Price Is Right," a survey of low-cost videocassette recorders) advised prospective VCR buyers to go VHS, not only for software availability but for the convenience of being able to swap tapes with the VHS majority. Nothing uncovered in this spot survey of industry observers, manufacturers and retailers would tend to contradict that advice. Until Sony and its Beta compatriots prove otherwise, it's mainly a VHS world out there.

"The new hi-fi has helped," says Chris Stang, assistant manager at a Video Shack outlet in New York, "but there *are* a lot more VHS machines. We still stock Beta, and as long as there's some demand we'll continue. I don't know about the future."

And neither does anyone else, American or Japanese. The technology can, as it has done in the past, change virtually overnight, and turn Beta versus VHS into a moot issue. It could be lasers or ion beams or electron guns; more likely, according to industry sources, it will be eight-millimeter video, recently introduced at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Eight-millimeter's ultimate impact on the marketplace is years away, though, and by the time it's solidly established, Beta's fate may well have long since been decided between putts on some green in Japan. ○

MUSICVIDEO● Reviews



KATE BUSH LIVE AT HAMMERSMITH ODEON

Director: Keef.
Time: 52 min. Thorn-EMI Video. \$39.95.

Filmed in 1979, immediately following Kate Bush's first-ever appearances on-stage (to this date she has yet to play in the

U. S.), *Live At Hammersmith Odeon* is a record not of a developing artist still finding her way, but of a skilled performer who not only writes, produces and plays her own material, but choreographs her shows as well. The liner notes call this concert "a theatre of music and movement," and that's an accurate summation of what goes on here. Bush doesn't merely sing songs, she dramatizes them, employing choreographed movements, dance and mime to highlight the narrative line of her music. Director Keef, a veteran in this field, helps heighten the dramatic impact through the judicious use of special effects, e.g., waves of water superimposed on the screen during the set-opening version of "Moving"; multiple images of the artist; shots of a burning violin that segue back to the live action in "Violin," etc. The theatrics and effects are so compelling, in fact, that when Bush performs "Feel It" alone at the piano, the moment works in the same way a good ballad does in the context of a high energy rock show, giving the body a

breather at the same time it piques the senses for the next surge of music.

If there is a problem here, it's that theatrics sometimes undermine, rather than enhance, the material. This is especially true on "Wuthering Heights," where the story of Katherine speaking to Heathcliff from beyond the grave requires more than Bush's swaying, hula-like moves to launch it into the realm of the metaphysical, as the recorded version (on *The Kick Inside*) does by allowing you to free-associate with the haunting lyrics. Moreover, someone made the mistake of having the credits roll before Bush finishes the song—thud.

Nonetheless, Kate Bush is clearly one of our more gifted artists and deserves the wider exposure this video could offer. But damn the video anyway—let's get some Stateside concert action happening, powers that be.

—David McGee

MUSICVIDEO TOP TEN

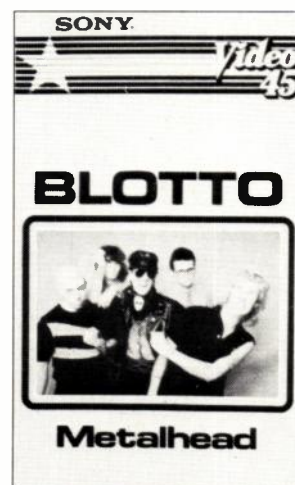
- 1 MAKING MICHAEL JACKSON'S THRILLER***
MICHAEL JACKSON
Vestron Video
- 2 POLICE AROUND THE WORLD**
POLICE
I.R.S. Video
- 3 DURAN DURAN**
DURAN DURAN
Thorn-EMI Home Video
- 4 THE WALL***
PINK FLOYD
MGM/UA Home Video
- 5 THE COMPLEAT BEATLES**
THE BEATLES
MGM/UA Home Video
- 6 A HARD DAY'S NIGHT***
THE BEATLES
MPI Video
- 7 LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER**
ROLLING STONES
Embassy Home Entertainment
- 8 GIRL GROUPS: THE STORY OF A SOUND***
MGM/UA Home Video
- 9 WHO ROCKS AMERICA: 1982 AMERICAN TOUR**
THE WHO
CBS/Fox Home Video
- 10 OLIVIA IN CONCERT**
OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN
MCA 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 SAY, SAY, SAY**
PAUL McCARTNEY/
MICHAEL JACKSON
(Columbia) D: Bob Giraldi
- 2 ALL NIGHT LONG**
LIONEL RICHIE
(Motown) D: Bob Rafelson
- 3 TALKING IN YOUR SLEEP**
THE ROMANTICS
(Nemperor) D: Bob Dyke
- 4 PARTY TRAIN**
GAP BAND
(Mercury) D: Don Letts
- 5 UNDERCOVER OF THE NIGHT**
THE ROLLING STONES
(Rolling Stones) D: Julien Temple
- 6 RAPPIN' RODNEY**
RODNEY DANGERFIELD
(RCA) D: Alan Metter
- 7 OWNER OF A LONELY HEART**
YES
(Atco) D: Storm Thorgerson
- 8 ROCKIT**
HERBIE HANCOCK
(Columbia) D: Godley-Creme
- 9 BEAT IT**
MICHAEL JACKSON
(Columbia) D: Bob Giraldi
- 10 STAY WITH ME TONIGHT**
JEFFREY OSBORNE
(A&M) D: Tracy Ward

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 the month of December.



A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS

Directors: Tony Van Den-End, Mike Brady
Time: 13 minutes

ROD STEWART: TONIGHT HE'S YOURS

Director: Bruce Gowers—Time: 16 minutes

BLOTTO: METALHEAD

Director: Blotto—Time: 12 minutes
(All Sony Video 45's are \$16.95.)

These three Sony 45s run the gamut from A (the high grade given to Blotto's parody, "Metalhead") to Zzzzzz (the entire Rod Stewart package). The approach for each is varied enough—the Seagulls, straight studio stuff; Rod the Mod, concert footage; Blotto, conceptual—to keep the collector coming back again. But when examined separately, only the Blotto vid45 satisfies.

A Flock of Seagulls, on the basis of their three clips, are better heard than seen. Not only are the Gulls the most unphotogenic Brits to have made a splash by way of "new music," but their video work is too static to offset their debits in the charisma department. "Wishing" is set on a space ship, appropriate enough for the vague sci-fi image cultivated by the Flock, but falls flat because the camera matches the slowly developing song with long pauses which stop all action. "Nightmares" is the visual equivalent of psychobabble, a literal read-

ing of a child's fears; "I Ran," their best song, finds the band in a revolving, mirrored room, leaving one completely dizzy.

Tonight He's Yours is culled from a Stewart show at the L. A. Forum, originally broadcast worldwide in December 1981. Leave it to Rod, the personification of rock gone Hollywood, to have a concert video as surreal as some strange conceptual pieces. Between his leopard skin leotards, golf cap and other bits of unfunky apparel, Rod bellows out what might be his American Trilogy: "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy," "Young Turks," and "Passion." These three songs, so central (along with "Hot Legs") to his decline as an artist, are matched step for step by his pathetic, grandiose gestures. Rod runs around the stage substituting athletic stamina for real sweat and communication. When he sings "there's no passion—I need passion," we hear the saddest self-assessment of any major artist since Paul McCartney's "Silly Love Songs." Oh well—the camerawork is superlative and the audio arena-realistic (i.e., not doctored in the studio later, a rarity). Spend half the money you'd waste here and buy Lester Bangs and Paul Nelson's biography of the man.

Blotto, an Albany, New York, group of wise guys and entrepreneurs, have staked their claim in the fallow field of rock parody, but with "Metalhead," they make their mark for good. "Metalhead" is a put-on/put-down of heavy metal posturing worth one week's HM programming on MTV. The shots cut from the band's inept rehearsing to their dreamlike onstage appearance, complete with leather, flames and guitar eating. A guaranteed howler.

The other Blotto videos don't measure up to that high standard, but do offer their share of yoks. And best of all, the band produced these three pieces themselves, the only way to go in the age of video hackdom.

—Wayne King



PICTURE MUSIC

Various Artists and Directors

Picture Music International/60 minutes/\$29.95

Long a staple of the overseas music video market, the compilation video finally hits the States, thanks to Picture Music In-

ternational, and one can only hope more will follow. In this case, *Picture Music*, a collection drawn from the roster of Capitol/EMI artists, affords the viewer an overview of music video's development and its emerging styles.

The Russell Mulcahy-directed classic, "Bette Davis Eyes," starring Kim Carnes, is the most celebrated of the clips here, but not the only interesting one. Of note are J. Geils' "Freeze Frame," which propelled underrated video director Paul Justman into the limelight; Billy Squier's "Everybody Wants You," a ragged performance clip saved by Peter Conn's brilliant collage of computer graphics; and Thomas Dolby's self-directed "She Blinded Me With Science," which features a funny, stylish shrink session scenario that should be required viewing for directors who try to be funny at the expense of the music.

Let anyone disregard the previous re-

mark, check out Strange Adventure's "She Controls Me" and Eddie Jobson's "Turn It Over," two insubstantial songs made all the more so when interpreted visually.

Picture Music also exposes little-known works by popular directors—namely Brian Grant, whose early gem, "Kids in America" (Kim Wilde), is featured—and gives greater exposure to unknown directors who deserve more work, such as Simon Milne (Naked Eyes, "Always Something There To Remind Me") and Mark Robinson (George Thorogood, "Bad to the Bone").

Picture Music has enough hits, surprises and experiments to merit a place in any rock fan's music video collection. As other compilations come to the marketplace, especially ones boasting more hits, music video's strength, both as an art form and as a commercial venture, will become more apparent.

—Alan Hecht

VIDEO RECORDS!



The Firesign Theatre presents **Nick Danger in the Case of the Missing Yolk** (1983). An all new, all original film written by and starring The Firesign Theatre; directed by award winning Elephant Parts director William Dear and produced by Kevin McCormick.

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media parodies like "Rat in the Box" and "Boobie Chew" (the new hormone gum for teens). **P AVR-527** Color 60 Minutes Now \$59.95

DOONESBURY SPECIAL



A Doonesbury Special (1978) Written, produced and directed by Doonesbury creator, Garry Trudeau. Winner of the Special Jury Award at the Cannes International Film Festival and nominated for an Academy Award. **P AVR-537**, Color 30 Minutes Now \$39.95

MICHAEL NESMITH



Elephant Parts (1981) Winner of every major video award including the Grammy Award for Video of the Year. An original comedy interspersed with lavish musical productions. "The class of the field. Outstanding." —Robert Hilburn, L.A. Times **P AVR-529**, Color 60 Minutes Now \$39.95

THE RUTLES



The Rutles (1978) "A mad, brilliant, remarkably well constructed rendition of Beatlemania as it never happened." —L.A. Times. Starring Eric Idle, Neil Innes, Rikki Fataar and John Halsey as the pre-fab four. **P AVR-540**, Color 70 Minutes Now \$59.95

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TECH THAT TAKES YOU HIGHER



Panasonic's model CTF-1913 has mid-band capability for a total of 94 channels (\$489.95)

94 CHANNELS?

PANASONIC'S MODEL CTF-1913 19-inch diagonal screen color television features mid-band capability for a total of 94 channels and all the input connections required for monitor capability (Video/Audio input and Video/Audio throughout). Other features include: programmable electronic tuning at the top of the set; a CompuFocus picture tube with extra wide lens and tinted glass; and a 14-button electronic tuning system. The set also has a ColorPilot electronic circuitry that actively adjusts color and tint. Suggested retail price is \$489.95. (Panasonic, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094)

Aiwa's CV-5M lightweight video camera interfaces with the company's new V-5 Beta hi-fi portable video system (\$950)



AIWA VIDEO

ONE OF THE FIRST ENTRIES in the new video products line from Aiwa America Inc. is a lightweight (3.5 pounds) video camera, model CV-5M, designed to interface with Aiwa's new V-5 Beta hi-fi portable video system.

The CV-5M incorporates a motor driven 8X zoom lens which operates either manually or automatically adjusting from wide angle to telephoto to close-ups as close as one-half inch from the lens when the macro selector button is depressed. The auto-iris automatically adjusts exposure under a wide range of lighting conditions (even at 60 lux), while a manual iris operation permits fade-in, fade-out, or other specialized shooting. A power-saver switch cuts power consumption for longer battery life. Although the camera contains a high quality unidirectional electric condensor boom microphone, an external microphone input permits use of Aiwa's optional CM-Z3 variable directivity and sensitivity (zoom) microphone. An auto white balance adjustment is also part of the CV-5M's built-in features. Suggested retail price is \$950. (Aiwa America Inc., 35 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, NJ 07074; tel. 201-440-5220)

HIGH-TECH TV

JVC'S NEW 13-INCH Telstar series color television, model C-1455US, incorporates high-tech performance including vivid color, improved sound and flexible control adjustments in a streamlined cabinet. A newly-developed X-chassis not only reduces the size of the C-1455US circuitry for a space-saving design, but also cuts power consumption and extends the life of the set. It has an electronic tuner that gives it an 82 VHF/UHF channel capacity, and can hold 14 preset channels in its built-in memory. With a wireless remote control, up to 14 channels can be pre-tuned directly for instant recall, or it can scan up or down the frequency band to locate a desired



JVC's 13-inch Telstar C1455US offers many high-tech features, including three-inch diam. conical speakers for better sound (\$399.95)

corder with a full-function wireless infrared remote control system is the company's lowest cost VCR with wireless



Panasonic's PV-1322 VCR has full-function wireless infrared remote control capability (\$720)

channel.

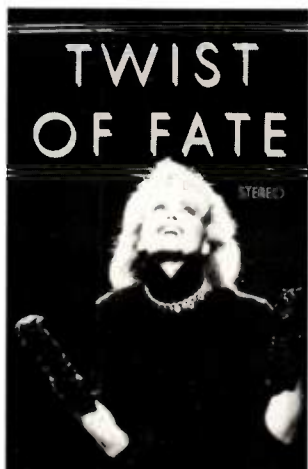
The C-1455US also has a sleep timer that will automatically turn the set off at a pre-determined time and a mute button to temporarily switch off the sound, and three-inch diameter conical speakers for better sound. Earphone inputs allow for private listening. The set comes with JVC's Super Service two-year limited warranty covering parts, workmanship and picture tube. Suggested list price is \$399.95. (JVC Company of America, 41 Slater Drive, Elmsford Park, NJ 07407; tel. 201-794-3900)

PANASONIC VCR

PANASONIC'S NEW PV-1322 front-loading VHS re-

remote control. In addition to Omnisearch, Frame Advance and Still-Frame, the PV-1322 is also equipped with a built-in digital clock/timer that allows programming through its 12-position electronic tuner for automatic recording of one program during any two-week period. At the preset time, the PV-1322 will automatically turn itself on, record the program, then turn itself off. In addition, the unit provides a built-in switchable RF modulator for channels 3 or 4, a VTR/TV antenna selector, a 44-digit electronic tape counter and standard phono jacks for video and audio. Suggested retail price is \$720. (Panasonic, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094) ○

MUSICVIDEO● Reviews



TWIST OF FATE

Olivia Newton-John
Directed by Brian Grant
(except "Take A Chance," directed by David Mallet)
MCA Home Video/25 minutes/\$19.95

Comprised of six clips, including four songs off the *Two of a Kind* soundtrack, *Twist of Fate* is not notably challenging on any level. The title track, an ambitious but unsuccessful attempt at a music video trailer, incorporates scenes from *Two of a Kind* into a surreal courtroom drama. "Take A Chance," the only clip not directed by Brian Grant, is a soft-focus fantasy dance number between Newton-John and Travolta that is all lovey-dovey smiles and no action. This one couldn't even inspire director David Mallet, who at one point reverts to the carousel shot (camera twirling 360 degrees around the couple) that he used in Bowie's "China Girl."

The Grant/Newton-John collaboration does click on a couple of occasions ("Living In Dangerous Times" and "Shaking You"), which reminds us that (a) she really doesn't need Travolta to make hit music videos, and (b) director Grant knows how to flatter women.

—Alan Hecht



THE MEN IN THE BLUE SUITS

Directed by Cory James and John Robson
Instant Replay Video/Approx. 60 minutes/\$29.95

Over five years ago, *Instant Replay* was one of the first video magazines pro-

duced for the home market. Fresh and zany, *IR* explored the world of pop culture in news reports, features and musical interludes. With *Men in the Blue Suits*, publisher Charles Azar and his production company have narrowed the focus of their efforts and attempted to create a video version of the early *Rolling Stone*.

Ultimately the question remains, how do you take current news and turn it into timeless video? Here, outdated lead stories on the Ramones and Eddy Grant don't work; neither does a news feature such as the one on the Summer '83 Consumer Electronics Show, particularly when the Winter '84 CES, featuring even newer products, has already occurred.

On the plus side, the video essays, which don't pretend to be timely, are fairly effective. A segment on the Jamaican

World Music Festival manages to convey the feeling behind reggae music instead of merely exploiting the event for its star attractions. Original music videos created from harsh and graphic footage of the Miami riots (for Charlie Pickett's "Overtown") and the war in El Salvador (for Pat Travers' "Crash and Burn") place both issues in an affecting, timeless context, indicating the format's potential when it's done right.

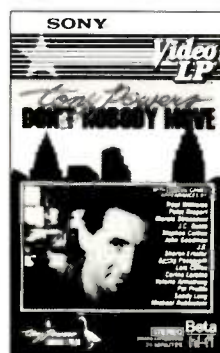
The reporting, handled via voiceover narration and off-screen interviewers, is generally personable and to-the-point. You might recognize the style because these are the same people who provide music news reports for MTV (albeit without credit). While the production values are low, there's a spirit of adventure throughout. *The Men in the Blue Suits* is not an essential buy, but it has merit as a collector's item for those interested in a new form with a promising future.

—A.H.

More music for your eyes.



DAVID BOWIE



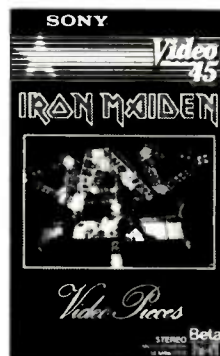
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SHEENA EASTON



PHIL COLLINS



IRON MAIDEN



DEVO



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MARTIN PORTER ●

CES ROUNDUP: AUDIO GOODS RIPE FOR SPRING PICKING

ONE FOR THE MONEY

THE AUDIO INDUSTRY HAS ITS harvest season as do the agricultural belts of the midwest. Those microchips and circuits first planted in the hardware orchards of Tokyo begin to ripen by the end of every year, in time for their U.S. introduction at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas in early January.

For an industry bent on innovation and instant obsolescence, CES offers retailers and industry observers alike a preview of those goods that will hit the consumer racks this month, at which time (one hopes) all the bugs will have been purged.

What new audio goods are ripe for spring picking? Here's a handy guide to some of the more interesting entries at this year's CES.

TWO FOR THE SHOW

FROM AKAI COMES THE integrated fusion line entry, the F3, which packs all the essential audio ingredients for just over \$1000. The various components include a front-



Sansui's midi system model M-900B features dual arm, direct-drive linear tracking turntable that plays both sides of a record without turnover, 70-watt per channel amp, a digital quartz synthesized tuner, a double cassette deck and three-way, eight-ohm speakers (complete for \$1350)

to 23 feet away. Also included are eight-ohm, three-way speakers, featuring eight-inch woofers, three-inch midrange and one-inch tweeters.

Sansui has also taken the one-brand approach with its so-called

visions for two tape decks, a digital quartz synthesized tuner and a double cassette deck, ideal for dubbing. The system is paired with three-way, eight-ohm speakers.

Now that you're ready to make the audio/video connection, consider a receiver option that can kill two sight and sound birds with one solid-state stone.

From Pioneer comes the SX-V90 receiver (approx. \$800) which combines complete video compatibility with top-of-the-line FM audio circuitry. What this mumbo-jumbo means is that the SX-V90 can handle the power needs for up to two VCR units, a videodisc player, a video monitor or TV, as well as a computer game console, all at once with full switching capability. In addition, a simulated stereo feature doubles the pleasure of a mono TV source, while noise reduction takes the tape hiss out of the programming. However, there is more here than just visuals: the unit's circuitry will reject interference from nearby FM stations and, via its quartz digital tuning, allows 10 presets for both the AM and FM bands. The unit pumps 125 watts per channel with low distortion characteristics.

Meanwhile, Akai has taken the in-



Pioneer's SX-V90 receiver combines total video compatibility with top-of-the-line audio circuitry (approx. \$800)

loading, belt-driven turntable and cassette deck with Dolby B and C noise reduction. The tuner/amplifier, meanwhile, sports computerized volume and balance controls and a quartz synthesized tuner with 10 preset stations as well as a convenient 24-hour timer. A detachable remote control lets you operate the system up

"midi" line, featuring the M-900B for a list price of \$1350. The 900B includes an automatic direct drive turntable with a motorized front-loading assembly that will allow you to play both sides of an LP without having to give the platter the traditional flip. The rest of the setup includes a 70-watt per channel amplifier with pro-

egrated A/V concept one step further by packing its new audio/video command center with a four-inch black and white TV which will let you watch a program being recorded while viewing another program on your video screen. The AV-U8 (approx. \$350) simplifies video dubbing with one control and includes a personal computer hook-up as well. Its 22-watt per channel amplifier can power up to four video and four audio sources, thereby allowing the user to listen to FM radio, tapes or discs while taping or dubbing video.

THREE TO GET READY

SO YOU'RE NOT READY TO PAY the mega-dollars for a component stereo but you need some sort of music source, preferably one of quality, both for the living room and the road? The ghetto-blaster (aka boom box) may be an audiophile's nightmare but it does serve practical and economical purposes for listeners on tight budgets.

Priced under \$200, Sanyo's MW22 offers high-speed tape dubbing capabilities and an AM/FM stereo radio with detachable speakers in a compact (two feet long) box. The unit will play back ordinary tapes or duplicate them at normal or high-speed (2 1/2 times). The playback system also stops the first tape at the end of the cassette and automatically begins the second tape for nonstop listening.

Then again, nobody ever said the boom box had to be inexpensive. Technics has introduced a super-slim component system that can either be hung on a wall, laid flat on a table or, via its handle, be taken on the road. The SA-R100 features an

Koss's Porta Pro, one of the best of the high-end portable headphones, features a 16-micron polyester film diaphragm for extended bass and dynamic range response and a collapsible frame for easy carrying (approx. \$60)



Top: Technics' SA-R100 super-slim component system features an auto-reverse cassette deck, a quartz synthesizer FM/AM digital tuner with preset auto-memory, 30-watt-per channel amp, wireless remote control and the company's new honeycomb disc speakers (complete for \$1000). Bottom: Akai's AV-U8 audio/video command center can power up to four video and four audio sources and comes equipped with a four-inch black and white TV screen for monitoring a program being recorded while viewing another program on your video screen (approx. \$350)

auto-reverse cassette deck with Dolby B and C noise reduction in addition to a quartz synthesizer FM/AM digital tuner with a preset auto-memory of eight FM and eight AM stations. The amp powers 30 watts per channel. The unit is nicely paired with the company's newly-introduced honeycomb disc speakers, a record record jacket-sized two-way system capable of handling 100 watts of music. At \$1000, though, this system is hardly a financial lightweight.

Finally, Casio has packed its KX-101 boom box with a musical twist, fitting the AM/FM radio and stereo cassette machine with a mini-keyboard synthesizer much like its popular VL-Tone line. The synthesizer has 37 keys, three octaves and is a four-note polyphonic instrument with nine preset sounds, 12 rhythms and auto-accompaniments. The portable has two-way detachable speakers, weighs 15 pounds and for under \$500 will let you get down your riffs while you get down and boogie.

FOUR TO GO

MUSIC-TO-GO IS TAKING ON A new profile as the manufacturers pack smaller units with more features and higher quality than ever before.

The new RF-H5 radio headphone from Panasonic is the smallest and lightest of its breed, weighing just over two ounces. However, the sound here is no lightweight, utilizing a new circuitry that makes the collapsible headphone frame an audio contender with the more expensive pocket ra-

dio brands. The RF-H5, including built-in FM antenna and two silver oxide batteries, retails for under \$70.

The headphone radio is the perfect partner for the new Panasonic auto-reverse personal stereo, the RX-J7, which puts this cassette convenience option in an under \$50 personal portable for the first time. As with more expensive auto-reverse models, the RQ-J7 automatically shifts the direction of the tape to play the other side while a forward/reverse switch is provided to facilitate side switching. In addition, this portable tape player weighs only eight ounces and comes with its own set of stereo headphones.

A review of the price range of the portable market shows that headphones alone can now cost more than the cassette players, with one of the high-end portable best being the newly-introduced Porta-Pro from Koss (approx. \$60). This stereophone features a multi-pivoting earcup for adjusting the amount of pressure placed on the ear. However, the real attraction is its sound since a 16-micron polyester film diaphragm (one-quarter the thickness of a human hair) offers extended bass and dynamic range response.

And while your ears are tuned to high-end portables, give the new Aiwa HS-J300 (approx. \$160) a listen. The 14-ounce AM/FM stereo auto-reverse cassette deck can record directly from a built-in tuner or from your home stereo and features a three-way auto reverse which offers one cycle/stop, continuous play and instant reverse while it can handle normal, chrome or metal tape.



CRAIG ANDERTON

INVASION OF THE LILLIPUTIANS

Best buys in compact instruments

It reads either like science fiction or a missing verse from Randy Newman's "Short People": notebook-size four-track recorders, keyboards that strap around your neck and store in an overnight bag, practice guitars you can tuck under your arm, pint-sized microcomputer-based composing machines, even drum units that fit in a car's glove compartment. No, you're not getting bigger; everything else is getting smaller. Electronic musical instruments are following the trend set by computers by becoming smaller, lighter, less power-hungry, and above all, much more cost-effective.

As with computers, this reduction in

"slaving" to a more expensive synthesizer (thus thickening the sound), or synchronizing the SH-101's internal arpeggiator to a drum machine.

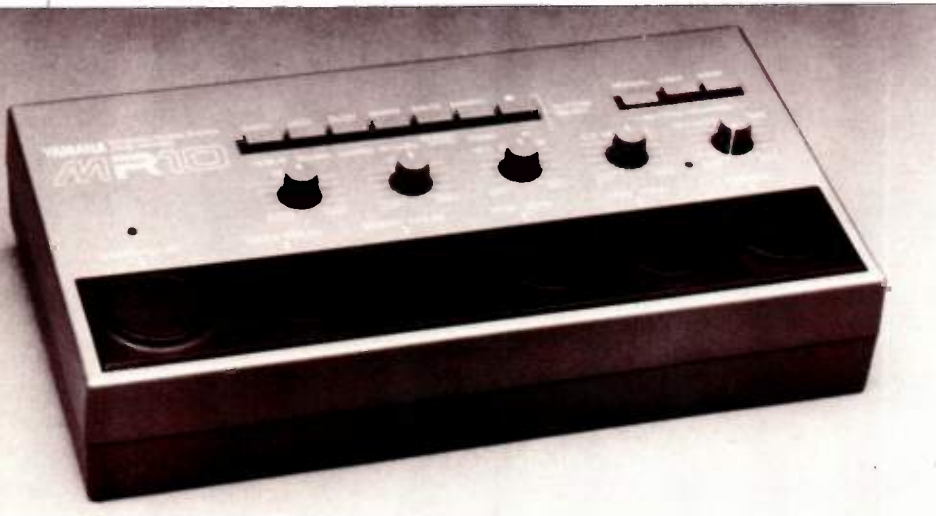
Of course, Roland probably hopes that you will use these jacks to interface with some of their other boxes, such as the MC-202 Microcomposer. This little device lets you build up a fairly complex composition (although the composing process can be rather tedious) and play it back through the MC-202's built-in synthesizer. You can also program a melody on the SH-101 using the MC-202 (thus adding another programmed sound to harmonize with the one produced by the MC-202's synthesiz-

portable music by making instruments which are easy to play with and hook up. A band, for example, could use the Producer Series devices to rehearse through headphones, and then record the results on an MT-44 recorder.

Several other companies besides Roland and Yamaha have also made a commitment to producing small, low-cost musical instruments. Korg recently introduced the Poly-800 polyphonic synthesizer, which offers a lot of features (including programmability and a standard-size four-octave keyboard) in a lightweight case that can strap around your neck like a guitar. Korg also makes a compact battery-powered rhythm machine, the KPR-77, that packs a lot of rhythmic programming options into a deceptively small box. And of course there's Casio, whose pioneering mini-keyboards added momentum to the movement towards small-scale musical equipment. While Casio's main sales target seems to be the consumer market, some of their equipment commands respect from weekend musicians and professionals alike.

Among guitarists, one of the best-received portable products has been the Scholz Rockman, designed by Boston guitarist Tom Scholz. This device is essentially a complete signal processing system and guitar amp, except that it drives headphones instead of a loudspeaker. Approximately the size of a small hardcover book, the Rockman is more than just a headphone amp—it includes fuzz, equalization (tone control), stereo reverb and chorusing, all carefully optimized to provide some of the more popular rock 'n' roll guitar timbres. In fact, since the Rockman accurately imitates the sound of going through an amp at ear-blasting levels, many guitarists simply plug the output of the Rockman directly into their tape recorders, thereby eliminating the need for playing through an amp altogether. Although there is not a great deal of room for variation in the overall sound due to the limited number of controls, the Rockman has been very popular since its introduction last year. (And it's a perfect match for one of those small-scale "mini-guitars" now being made by a number of manufacturers.)

It's hard to tell where all of this will lead, but one sure bet arises from these technological advances: as electronic music devices become more pervasive, more compact and more affordable, it seems a virtual certainty that more and more people will not only listen to music, but be enticed into creating it as well. ○



With its Producer Series Yamaha has emphasized the social aspects of portable music by making instruments which are easy to play and hook up. Shown here: The MR-10 drum machine

size and cost has caused little (if any) loss in performance or quality. For example, today's multi-track cassette decks (see February '84 RECORD) cost only one-third as much as the open reel multi-tracks of the early '70s; yet the newer models outperform their predecessors in virtually every respect, and offer more features as well (noise reduction, variable speed, memory rewind and the like). Or consider a monophonic synthesizer such as the Roland SH-101, which retails for under \$500 and is light enough to strap around your neck. This is no toy with a few reedy-sounding presets and a keyboard designed for children; the keyboard is full size, there are enough controls (including an arpeggiator and 100-note sequencer) to give you an astonishing degree of control over the sound, and there are plenty of jacks available for interfacing to other electronic equipment. The addition of these jacks also makes the SH-101 suitable for applications such as

er), and even sync up the Roland TR-606 drum machine and TB-303 bass line generator to the Microcomposer. Add these all together, and the result is a programmable back-up band consisting of drums, bass and two synthesizer lines. While this type of hardware will obviously never replace live musicians, it can be extremely helpful for practicing, recording demos, and composing (not to mention having fun).

But Roland is far from being the only company interested in this new breed of instrument—consider Yamaha's Producer Series, which includes the MA-10 Mixer, MS-10 Powered Monitor Speaker, MR-10 Drum Machine, MT-44 Four-track recorder, CS-01 Micro-Monophonic Synthesizer, and several other devices. Yamaha's approach is quite different from Roland's; while the latter stresses programmability and the ability to sync devices together, Yamaha tends to emphasize more of the social aspects of



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EASY PLAY INSTRUCTIONAL KEYBOARDS

Tinkering with Casio's PT-50

Everyone enjoys some form of music—at least everyone reading this magazine—and most people have an inner yearning to *play* music as well. In the past, accomplishing this was sometimes painful (ask any guitarist or violin player) and certainly tedious (lessons and practice). Yet even though digital electronics has greatly simplified the transition from listener/consumer to player/composer, a lot of music enthusiasts have resigned themselves to listening to and watching musicians have all the fun. Now music as a form of communication is based solely on emotion; and the instantaneous gratification that comes with the linkup of two or more musicians—be they pro or amateur—expressing the same mood musically should be accessible to everyone. The point, then, of the first installments of HANDS ON is to get anyone who wants to play started on the road to fulfilling that desire. Obviously, no one is going to pick up a digital keyboard and be performing at Carnegie Hall a month later, but several low-cost computer-based instruments enable you to start playing almost immediately.

This month HANDS ON considers Casio's PT-50 digitally-controlled keyboard, an extremely inexpensive unit that will allow you to immediately begin performing and at the same time will encourage your musical development in a way that's both

painless and, yes, fun.

The PT-50, a 2.4 pound, 31-key monophonic keyboard lists for a mere \$199.50. The term "monophonic" indicates that, unlike a real piano, only one note can be played at a time. Polyphonic instruments have multi-note capability (as when playing chords) according to the number of "voices" provided. Powered by either five AA batteries or an optional AC adaptor, this synthesizer has eight different instrument sounds: piano, harpsichord, organ, violin, flute, clarinet, trumpet and celesto. Space won't permit a detailed description of these sounds, but be advised that some are surprisingly good for a keyboard in this price range. There are also 16 built-in background rhythms, ranging from rock to disco, waltz to swing and tango to beguine.

All this is fine and dandy, but the real breakthrough is in the PT-50's ROM pack memory. ROM stands for Read Only Memory, meaning you cannot erase or re-record into it, only play it. Since this ROM contains 15 professionally-composed melodies with rhythm, tempo, drum fills and chords, it's possible to push a single button and have the PT-50 play a complete tune.

A large LCD (watch-like liquid crystal display) centered on this unit gives a pictorial layout of the keyboard and features a bouncing ball showing which note is being played either from the memory or via your

keystroke. This is helpful in learning the key-to-note relationships. The display also shows the chords and instrument sound being played; by watching the chords you'll learn to play in key with the tune. The top of this display has a staff aligned with the keyboard and shows notes written in musical form, a convenient aid for those learning to read music.

The PT-50 allows you to add in drum fills at any time by hitting one button. And there's more! Although monophonic, the instrument can play a vast array of chords, including some complex ones such as diminished and minor sixths. Accomplishing this doesn't require any knowledge of music theory, yet the ability to hear these different types of sounds promotes ear training while allowing your playing to be more musically interesting. The user sounds the chords by touching a single button, leaving one hand free to lay a melody line over them.

After a bit of playing, you're going to want to record your music. No problem. Casio provides, as an option, RAM (Random Access Memory) packs that can be recorded onto, played back and erased. Rather than actually recording the notes played, though, you're activating the digital cues or triggers that cause the instrument to make those sounds. At \$30 apiece RAMs can get to be expensive, so I recommend using the optional tape dump connections with the PT-50. These let you transfer the digital memory to any tape recorder and then back, allowing the user to build up an endless library of recordings. The unit also automatically adjusts any error in timing to the correct tempo. Finally, there's an audio output for recording music on tape or, if you don't want to use the built-in speaker, for playing through a superior sound system. For more information on the PT-50, write to Casio Incorporated, Electronic Musical Instruments Division, 15 Gardner Road, Fairfield, NJ 07006; tel. 201-575-7400. ○

Casio's PT-50: A compassionate teacher



Next month: Hands On looks at a more expensive but easily affordable instructional keyboard, the Yamaha MP-1.

Mike Shea is a freelance recording engineer and a graduate teacher at the Institute of Audio Research in New York City.

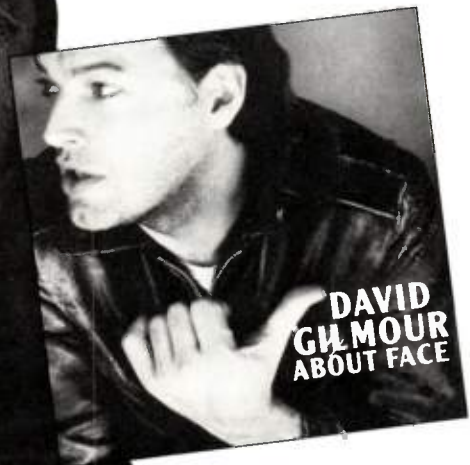
Readers are invited to submit questions concerning audio, video, music or computers to: Mike Shea/Hands On. RECORD, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10151. Include your phone number if you want a personal reply from the author.

David Gilmour of Pink Floyd does an "About Face."

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CHRISSIE WALKS THE LINE

LEARNING TO CRAWL The Pretenders

Sire

By
Wayne
King

Chrissie Hynde has always been one of the emotionally handicapped people who make up the rock 'n' roll audience. That she has become one of its greatest practitioners is no coincidence, for the rock vision she has believed in all her life demands a bond, a covenant between performer and listener, which recognizes that the needs of both are one and the same. Her vision,



right from the beginning, was pitched at a place near Pete Townshend's at the time of *The Who By Numbers*: one which saw that rock might leave no way out, no easy way to be free, but which clung desperately to the form as the only means of salvation.

The last two years have been the sternest, and perhaps the only real, test of Chrissie Hynde's resolve to save herself through the redemptive powers of rock. The soap opera goings-on of her life—the deaths of two original Pretenders; her romance with her idol, Ray Davies; being named as a co-respondent in his divorce proceedings; the birth of their daughter; the subsequent rebirth of the band—makes the mere existence of *Learning To Crawl* a triumph on one level. But existence itself cannot be confused with actual life, and

this album had much to overcome before it joined the ranks of the living. It had to go beyond the questions of creeping corporate status raised by adding two new members and calling it the same thing, and the problems associated with selling out the band's soul to MTV sponsorship. And it had to tell us that Hynde wanted to keep going in the face of all that had occurred. That *Learning To Crawl* succeeds, most of the time, in dispelling the questions of dissipation and disillusionment is where the real story of Christine Eilen Hynde lies.

On *Learning To Crawl*, she straddles—in the words of the Persuaders' tune she masterfully covers here—the "thin line between love and hate," for herself and the world, which has marked all her writing. On the opener, "Middle of

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the Road," she tries to justify playing things safe: "In the middle of the road, you see the darnedest things." But the truth will out when she tells us that "the middle of the road/Is a private cul-de-sac." The imagery there, of spinning her wheels, is reinforced by the circular nature of "I Hurt You"'s refrain: "I hurt you/Because you hurt me/I hurt you/Because you hurt me." A depressing visit to her native Ohio recounted in "My City Was Gone" only proves that she can never go home again. This feeling of being caught, with nowhere to run, is finally turned into weary resignation on last year's hit, the superb "Back on the Chain Gang." In the song's realization that the one left after a romance is already back on the treadmill of everyday life, its imagery is loose enough to be heard as both a remembrance of lost love, and as a farewell to James Honeyman-Scott.

But "Chain Gang" also leaves an opening; Hynde announces that "we're back in the fight," and, although she doesn't sing the words triumphantly, she appears ready to resume, with the Pretenders, her battles. And it's the relationship with Davies which seems to have cleared up a lot of things for her. Her beautifully rendered vocals on "Thin Line Between Love and Hate" belie a compassion not just for the song's abused female, but also for the man, whose inconsideration and possible indiscretions lead the woman to a suicide attempt; only at the end does Hynde betray any ill feelings for his behavior: "You didn't think the girl had the nerve/But here you are/I guess actions speak louder than words." But she still believes in the power of The Word, as the Beatles had it, and it bothers her in "I Hurt You" that "we can't say/I love you." Ultimately, her faith resides in the product of her and Davies' relationship, their daughter, and the new life she represents—a fresh chance for Hynde, too. She seems to be singing to her in "Show Me:" "Show me the meaning of the word/I don't want to live without...I want love." The lesson she has learned as a mother is the most important here, and the only one which allows her and the Pretenders to carry on, and to dance all over their problems: you've gotta give love to receive love. It seems unlikely, now, that Chrissie Hynde will ever forget that.

.....

TOUCH Eurythmics RCA

By
James
Hunter

Pontificating in her actressy alto about love and love's pain, holding new wave court in



some of the most sinuous synth-pop ever made by Englishmen, Annie Lennox of Eurythmics is possibly the most annoying singer in pop right now, as histrionic as Crystal Gayle. Although Lennox has, in the abstract, a pleasing—even gifted—voice, her seriousness (which knows no bounds) and her imperiously self-convinced tones (which are decidedly unshy), damn near ruin everything clever she and partner Dave Stewart come up with. Even at her most fluttery or "soulful," Lennox's singing is to vanity what Linda Ronstadt's is to coldness. At her most memorable, Lennox moans.

She moaned up a storm on last year's savvy smash, "Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)." Of course, she sounded so utterly self-involved informing listeners that "Some of them want to use you/Some of them want to abuse you," you could scarcely recognize her as a seer, but the track's architectonic synth easily conquered your ears. And when Lennox moaned—as if just under the mix someone tortured her with a joke, or a lighthearted sentiment—it was terrific. On the group's U.S. album debut, Lennox's Modern World showboating couldn't be stopped, not with as strong a followup single as the insinuatingly electronic as "Love Is A Stranger," not with as pure and accomplished a rhythm-texture exercise as "I've Got An Angel," nor even by as stirring a soul-injected depression-dance as "The Walk."

"Here comes the rain again," Lennox sadly realizes on a gorgeously synthshoo-bopping song of the same name that opens *Touch*, Eurythmics' new album, and somehow you know it's not April in Paris. Lennox requests "Baby talk to me/Like lovers do," and surprises us by wishing for a less bruised romantic experience, one which won't leave her as one of the emotional zombies she and her music tend to glorify. But on the very next song, the Bowie-ish "Regrets," she reveals she's got "a delicate mind and a dangerous nature," and goes right back to suggesting that dangerous natures, like voices stuck on themselves, are things worth savoring.

As songwriters, Lennox and Stewart's ideas are often just as received as their black-and-blue take on love, but their popcraft is more skilled, more impressive for its precision of collage, for its lively sound. The skittish guitar rhythms of "The First Cut," although more striking when first heard on a Talking Heads record years ago, get showered with darting synth snippets and produce, with a walking bass line, a competent white-funk groove, as does the disco/dub mixture in "Paint A Rumour." *Touch*'s best cut is the compulsively dramatic "No Fear, No Hate, No Pain (No Broken Hearts)," although it's a typically Eurythmics synthtrack on love and love's pain. ("Nobody told you it would be like this," Lennox quotes. Gee.) But even here, in generous lines of white emotion, Lennox moans.

• **RUNNING OUT OF SALAD PLATES** does not constitute a China Crisis, nor does a breakdown in relations with Peking. The English band China Crisis makes its U.S. debut with an album called *Working With Fire And Steel*, and the title track is already an underground hit. *Melody Maker* says the band writes "subtle, melodic, memorable songs," creating "a unique sound full of defiance and pleasure." We agree.

• **"A BUNCH OF WASTED ZOMBIES** at a Mad Max/Dawn Of The Dead get-together" is how one English journalist described the group Specimen. Never ones to quibble with the conservative British press, we prefer to think of Specimen as a meeting of intelligence, glitter and very heavy metal. Their Sire debut mini-album (it rhymes with 'catastrophe') is entitled *Batastrophe*, after one of London's trendiest night haunts, the Bat Cave. "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang," "The Beauty Of Poison," "Tell Tail" and "Returning From A Journey" are featured tracks.

• **POP QUIZ #1:** Who has worked with The Byrds, The Beach Boys, Ry Cooder, Harper's Bizarre and Randy Newman? Now, don't just race through this sentence, take a minute and think about it. That's better. None other than WB's own Van Dyke Parks, a musician who gets an "A" for ingenuity and a "B-Minus" for visibility. Fortunately, Van Dyke is back in the limelight again with *Jump!*, a very musical journey through the classic Uncle Remus children's stories. Only Van Dyke could bring Brer Rabbit into the '80s, but even he can't get it on Top 40 radio. If you want to hear cuts like the title track (not to be confused with Van Halen's "Jump") "Taps" and the long-eared "Invitation To Sin," you'll have to buy the album.



THIS IS

ADVERTISING

Vol. 84, No. 1

• **WHO GIVES A WANG?** Some say their name is the phonetic equivalent of the Chinese term for perfect pitch; others say it is the sound made by a deliberately struck guitar—"Wang" on the downstroke, "Chung" on the upstroke. Whatever its semantic origins, the band Wang Chung traces its geographic roots to England, and its musical roots to the critically-acclaimed 57 Men. Wang Chung's Geffen debut LP is titled *Points On The Curve*; the first single is "Don't Let Go." The music has been labeled "emotive, evocative and wholly original." We call it clean, classy and honest rock 'n' roll.

• **FANS OF THE CURE** (and we're not talking detox) will be pleased by the release of *Japanese Whispers*, a "Best Of" Cure LP on Sire that recounts the band's work during the past year. What with maxi singles, mini albums, singles and imports, collecting The Cure used to be a full-time job (and you can quote us). Tell Mom. Maybe she'll buy this one for you. "Let's Go To Bed," "The Walk" and "The Love Cats" are among the hot cuts.

• **"THE JIMI HENDRIX ALBUM** that Brian Eno never produced" is how the clever folks in Burbank are referring to *Eos*, the new collaboration between ECM artists Terje Rypdal and David Darling. Rypdal (on guitar) and Darling (on cello) create sounds that would have pleased the master—this stuff is high energy and ethereal.

• **THE FRIVOLOUS GOSSIP** contained in these paragraphs is made possible by the runaway success of Van Halen's *1984*, The Pretenders' *Learning To Crawl* and Christine McVie's new solo album, *Christine McVie*. We bid them a hearty "thank you."

• *"This Is Advertising?"* still resides within the stifling confines of P.O. Box 6868, Burbank, CA 91510. And we still have copies of *If The Shoe Fits...*, a 12-song LP sampler of new music for only four bucks. And we still accept donations. Go well, my child.



BELIEVER Chic

Atlantic

By
Rico
Mitchell

Believer is a strong artistic rebound for Chic after last year's disappointing *Tongue In Chic* and a round of solo records by group leaders Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards and vocalist Fonzi Thornton that failed to capture the public fancy. The production borrows the booming drum sound and rock-edged guitar textures Rodgers employed so successfully on Bowie's *Let's Dance* and his own unjustly-ignored *Adventures In The Land of the Good Groove*, while the tunes reflect a defiantly positive attitude that looks hard times in the face and refuses to sit still.

The title track, in particular, is a potential dance floor anthem in the tradition of "Le Freak" and "Good Times," with its all purpose refrain, "Stand back to back/Meet head to head/Fight toe to toe/And dance cheek to cheek." Rodgers and Edwards are masters of the rhythmic hook, which can make their melodies sound redundant on first listen, until the hooks sink in and you find yourself singing along merrily as you move to the groove (remember, these are the guys who once wrote, "My mama said my brains are in my feet").

Despite the use of electronics on almost every track, Chic's cool, mature vocals and guitar/bass/drums backbone sound relatively traditional next to the streetwise rap and electronic hip-hop they helped spawn with "Good Times" back in 1979. But while *Believer* may not be a trend-setting record, there is a rare musical chemistry at work here. As Niles declares on the final cut: "Just when I thought it about to die/Boom! Party right in you eye!"

BUSY BODY Luther Vandross

Epic

By
Rico
Mitchell

When Luther Vandross was signed to produce Aretha Franklin's *Jump To It* in 1982, he presented her with a song he said he'd written at the age of 16 for her, and had been saving since just in case the opportunity to

work with his idol ever arrived. The song, a spine-tingling ballad called "This Is For Real," was the crown jewel on an album that became the Queen's greatest hit in over a decade, and Vandross' sophisticated production, which fused the sleek propulsive sound of contemporary funk with the inspirational power of '60s soul, was rightly credited as a crucial factor in its success.

It's safe to assume that Vandross hasn't been saving any of the material on *Busy Body* for long. Since *Jump To It*, the man has indeed been a "busy body," producing Cheryl Lynn, Dionne Warwick, Aretha again, besides two albums of his own. While his feel for arranging has grown progressively more meticulous and grandiose, he's been stretching himself thin as a songwriter. At least half these tracks—the nearly-identical dance grooves "I Wanted Your Love," "I'll Let You Slide," and "For The Sweetness Of Your Love," plus the absurdly romantic ballad, "Make Me A Believer" ("Superman can fly high way up in the sky/'Cause we believe he can")—sound like they were conceived in the studio. And was the world really waiting for a nine-minute rendition of Leon Russell's "Superstar," complete with strings and harp flourishes, or was it somebody's idea of a long-winded way to fill out the side?

Of course, when you take a voice as supple and as expressive as Vandross'—he is the most immediately recognizable male R&B singer since Teddy Pendergrass—and couple it with a virtually infallible rhythm section anchored by bassist Marcus Miller, drummer Yogi Horton and keyboardist Nat Adlerley, Jr. (the same three who have been with him since his debut LP), you can drive all night without having too much in the tank. Add Vandross' genius for layering backup vocals, and even the skimpiest melodic fragments can be dressed up to look like hits (which is probably why *Busy Body* jumped 30 notches in its second week on the Black LP chart). But as a self-professed admirer of classic '60s soul songs, Vandross should be asking himself: will you still love it tomorrow?

BREAK OUT Pointer Sisters

Planet Records

By
Anthony
DeCurtis

Vocal groups that don't write songs depend on two things: good material and good production. Since teaming up with studio vet Richard Perry for their 1978 rock-disco breakthrough LP, *Energy*, the Pointer Sisters have enjoyed their share of both. Unfortunately, neither the tunes nor the takes

on *Break Out* meet the mark of the sisters' strongest outings.

The most obvious problem with *Break Out* is its lack of the sort of steamy, modestly arranged, mid-tempo numbers—like "Slow Hand," "He's So Shy," or Bruce Springsteen's "Fire"—that seem to elicit the girls' sassiest performances. The two attempts in this vein—"Easy Persuasion" and the single, "I Need You"—fail because they're too generic to pump with any life of their own.

Break Out's main failure, however, is that it doesn't rock. At their best on previous records, the Pointers and Perry exploited studio sophistication to fuse disco bottom with infectious pop-soul melodies and tough, sinuous playing, concocting a sound that was danceable, roomy and unpretentious.

Break Out's electronic bombast—each track's credits specify who programmed the drum machines, for God's sake—and synth-symphonic arrangements never really allow the heat of the girls' vocals to ignite. Only the Barry Mann/Cynthia Weil/James Ingram composition, "Baby Come and Get It," featuring David Katay's very warm and welcome guitar break, kicks in with any force, while Ruth Pointer's Stevie Wonder-ish vocal on "Automatic" provides a note of subtlety.

In general, *Break Out* is undermined by its own professionalism. Smoothly consistent to the point of having no edge at all, these ten tunes find a proper place for every element of their sound, except soul and personality.

DIFFERENT STYLE! Musical Youth

MCA

By
Ken
Braun

Musical Youth's debut album, *Youth of Today*,



made when the oldest Youth was 15 and the youngest 11, was an astonishing and delightful record not only by virtue of its makers' precocious talents, but also because, more than any other record in reggae history, it appealed equally to reggae and to mainstream pop audiences without pandering to either. The group's second album, *Different Style!*, is also astonishing, though disappointment now replaces delight, for the very qualities which made their debut so extraordinary have almost been completely subverted.

In making *Youth of Today*, the five Youth performed virtually every function themselves, writing all the albums' songs but one, singing all the vocal parts, playing



all the instrumentals, toasting as if they've been DJ's all their short lives, even handling some of the production and mixing in collaboration with producer Peter Collins. In making *Different Style!*, however, Collins moved the Youth from London to Los Angeles, where they attracted the patronage of Donna Summer, Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson. In snazzy L.A. studios, with a host of session musicians, arrangers and sound specialists, plus guest singers Summer and Wonder, they recorded songs bequeathed by their megastar mentors, a couple of reggae oldies, and a mere three songs of their own composition. The resulting record sounds as if it had been made for the Youth rather than by them.

The problem is not that Musical Youth venture into styles that take only the slightest touch of reggae or none at all; certainly, the group should be encouraged to expand its stylistic range. The problem is that most of the material on *Different Style!* is inadequate to contain the Youth's characteristic combination of schoolboy innocence and rudeboy insolence, adolescent vigor and Jamaican cool, soft voice and hard rhythms. That identity is lost in the album's straight pop material, and is spiffed up beyond recognition in the ersatz reggae and tourist resort Caribbeana being peddled here. Both ways, Musical Youth sound contrived and precious, not as they did at first: ingenuous as skylarks.

Only the three songs written by the Youth—"Yard Stylee," "Air Taxi" and "Mash It The Youth Man, Mash It"—allow them to sound like themselves. They reaffirm Musical Youth's talent and suggest that if only the youngsters were left to themselves to work with that talent without interference from stars or star-makers, it, and they, would flourish. And the result would be another album as astonishing and delightful as *Youth of Today*.

.....

BEFORE HOLLYWOOD
The Go-Betweens
Rough Trade

By
Barry
Alfonso

Released in the UK last year, the Go-Betweens' second LP didn't exactly set the British charts ablaze. With no dramatic high-points or feverish dance workouts, *Before Hollywood* is too moderate in tone to have hit potential. Nevertheless, the Go-Betweens prove themselves an intriguing, occasionally superior band on its tracks.

Hailing from Australia but first exposed via Scotland's Postcard label, the trio's approach brings to mind both R.E.M. and

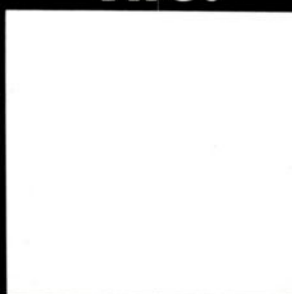


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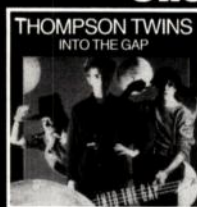


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One



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and "Demolition Man."

The Bare Necessities Of Rock, From Arista Records.

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Echo and the Bunnymen. In the manner of those two outfits, chief guitarist Robert Forster favors repetitive melodic patterns of interlaced electric and acoustic strumming. Together with Grant McLennan's supple bass work and Lindy Morrison's often intricate drumming, he creates an idiosyncratic, sparsely-defined sound. *Before Hollywood's* songs are structured with sometimes-conflicting textures and rhythms—"Two Steps Step Out," for one, jolts the listener with an unexpectedly contrasting verse and chorus. Other songs, notably "Cattle and Cane," are smoother, almost lulling. Yet even in their softer moments, the group maintains a jittery edge, as if the placid surfaces hide something ominous.

This disquietude, of course, is common to the bands roughly definable as post-punk. The lyrical concerns expressed here are predictably melancholy and alienated, though frequently a cut above the usual. At their strongest, lyricists McLennan and Forster convey their unease in sharp imagery and evocative language. "Dusty In Here" illustrates this with one of the LP's better couplets: "Sleep arrives, he's got his bags and wares/The dragon sleeps and St. George stares." Like miniaturist paintings, the scenes they render—a gloomy countryside in "Cattle and Cane," a spooky mansion in "On My Block"—are delicately

detailed.

What this album lacks first and foremost is inventive production to flesh out its ideas. If the Go-Betweens had a studio partner comparable to R.E.M. producer Mitch Easter, their recorded work could be much better realized. As it is, the band gets points for craft, clarity and real growth potential.

.....

NORTH OF A MIRACLE Nick Heyward

Arista

By
Duncan
Strauss



All the people who maintained all along that Nick Heyward was Haircut 100—including Heyward himself—need look no further than *North Of A Miracle* for conclusive evidence. Backed on this solo debut by a squad of British instrumental hotshots (including drummer Morris Pert and Attractions keyboardist Steve Nieve), Heyward continues to turn out soft, shim-

mering Club Med pop, most successfully realized on several familiar-sounding tunes, most notably "On A Sunday," "Whistle Down The Wind" and "Blue Hat For A Blue Day."

As much as these standout tracks create a *deja vu* effect, Heyward tries to demonstrate on *North* that he is capable of more than simply rewriting *Pelican West* faves "Love Plus One" and "Fantastic Day." This probably explains the orchestral flourishes, sporadic forays into jazz and stabs at higher-brow lyrics—on paper, suggesting a much more sophisticated pop approach.

Too bad that on vinyl these "advances" end up limp and unconvincing, particularly the lyrics. I mean, would you buy a used lyric from a man who writes "Watching you swing/With a classical key/Swim into coldness/It's too close to me" and tries to pass it off as saying something? This complex poetry comes on the heels of such enlightening observations as "Houses/They're lovely/Warm and expensive."

The great (or disturbing) thing is that none of this is particularly disappointing because there's no reason to expect anything more substantial from Heyward. He remains a nice, harmless, unchallenging pop craftsman whose music reflects these key traits. Give him high marks for consistency.

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The New Wave is on the record — LAST is in the groove

SPACEY LADY Maurice Starr

Arista

By
Craig
Zeller



Some of Maurice Starr's more interesting credentials include doing a Little Richard turn in *American Hot Wax*, working with both the Sugarhill Gang and Grand Master Flash & the Furious Five, and bringing New Edition to the nation's attention. (On *Candy Girl* he serves as producer, arranger, and, along with brother Michael Jonzun, co-writer of such Jackson 5-derived winners as "Popcorn Love," "Is This The End," and the delectable title cut.)

Spacey Lady isn't Starr's solo debut; that distinction goes to *Flaming Starr*, which sank without a trace a few years back. Now, fresh from his New Edition triumphs, he's making another attempt to have his name up in lights.

On the basis of *Spacey Lady* I think he'll have to wait a bit longer before he sees 200-watt bulbs spelling out his moniker. For

one thing, it's a very *uneven* affair. Starr produced, arranged, wrote and played just about any damn thing he could get his hands on. That doesn't keep the record from being aggravatingly inconsistent. From one track to the next Starr doesn't seem to know what he wants. Maybe he thinks it's diversification; to me it's lack of direction.

The title cut is a musical mixture of Prince and rap rhythms. Like a good 50 percent of what's here it's thinly disguised filler. "Electric Funky Drummer" is genuine garbage, a messy meeting between synth-funk and David Seville. "Super Rock," the album's lengthiest failure, scratches the hell out of somebody's stylus while trying to jump on the same bandwagon that rolled over Herbie Hancock. "City Girls" is just Maurice diluting the Time diluting Prince and coming up soggy. "My First True Love" is ripe for a cover battle between Lionel and Kenny.

"Be My Lady" and "Pretty Girl" are relaxed slow dancers that have elements of people like the Moments, the Manhattans, Eddie Holman and the Stylistics in them. Starr sounds a lot more comfortable exploring the boundaries of sweet soul, which doesn't require vocoder expertise or moog mastery to get its message across. "Keep On Dreamin'" incorporates both and comes off surprisingly warm.

But if only everything had the diddy-bopping drive of "Can It Be Love"! Starr masterfully trades off here with Peter Wolf in one of the sharpest soul duets in ages. Motown, Philly, and Stax are circling overhead on this one. Wolf is flying, Starr is airborne, and you'll levitate listening to them eagerly answer their own questions as they fingerpop their way to glory. A whole album with the soaring spirits of "Can It Be Love" would've been a stunner. Pray hard for this one to bust up the charts so Starr can see where he should've been heading all along and J. Geils can see what a bonehead play ousting Wolf was. It'll serve 'em right to suffer.

IT'S YOUR NIGHT James Ingram

Qwest

By
James
Hunter



Quincy Jones asks a lot of James Ingram on *It's Your Night*: asks him to alternately



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howl like a coyote and narrate like a choir-boy on a *Thriller*-quality dance track called "Party Animal"; asks him to keep up in rich moodiness with Michael McDonald, whom he sings with on "Yah Mo B There," a gorgeously textured pop hymn; asks him to sway sweetly through the delicate Caribbean groove on Ingram, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil's deft title cut. And every time, Jones gets it.

Ingram is the sensibly sonorous tenor of "Just Once" and "100 Ways" on Jones' 1981 *The Dude*, and of "Baby Come To Me" fame, the AOR ballad duet with Patti Austin that climbed to the top of the charts in 1982. Ingram's hardly a familiar superstar like Donna Summer or Michael Jackson, so you might wonder if he stands a chance at asserting himself on an album debut produced in a style as potentially engulfing as Jones' big one; on 1982's *Donna Summer*, even that droll fireball of personality was occasionally outshone by the blinding sounds of the glossmaster. Can only Michael Jackson compete?

Apparently not. The dull spots on *It's Your Night* are "Try Your Luck," a mildly dancy mid-tempo song in which Ingram plays cheerleader to a friend in a funk, and "One More Rhythm," which can't really pull its attempt at slick disco with a whiff of big band punch as it wants to (although the ambition's admirable). But these songs fail because they're either bad ideas in the first place, or because they're mistakes; either way, Ingram is never overwhelmed.

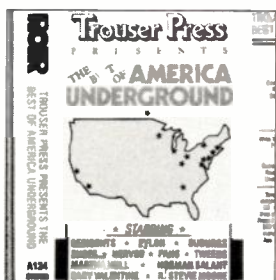
Like Luther Vandross and Jeffrey Osborne, Ingram is especially at home in expansive ballad settings. But unlike Vandross, he never surrenders himself to eyes-closed soul rhapsodizing, and unlike Osborne he's too ready to execute spy phrases to ever dwell too long or hard on the sheer power of his own voice. The finest of the four beautifully sung, intelligently conceived ballads here is his sympathetic but firm explanation of Mann's "There's No Easy Way"; by the end of it, Ingram's tone is as riddled as his heart. *It's Your Night* may be a terrific Quincy Jones album, but the record belongs to James Ingram.

THE BEST OF AMERICA UNDERGROUND

Various Artists

By Jonathan Gregg

This exciting little best-of package features 20 songs by 20 bands, spanning the last



eight years and a good portion of the U.S., as compiled by *Trousers Press* magazine. Here the legendary, the semi-famous and the utterly obscure vie for one last shot at immortality, and the result is 60 minutes of music that should convince anyone who didn't already know that the big record companies have not only missed the boat, they've missed the whole bloody fleet. Ironically, only a small percentage of this compilation is particularly avant-garde, and most of this "underground" consists of high-energy pop/rock groups whose songs would make any radio sound good. Especially memorable are Chris Moffa and the Competition, the Shoes, the Nerves, Pylon and Norman Salant. These could have been the hitmakers of the last eight years, and some of the lucky ones almost were: the Nerves consisted of Paul Collins (now of Paul Collins' Beat), Peter Case (Plimsouls) and Jack Lee, who wrote "Hanging on the Telephone" and "Will Anything Happen" for Blondie's *Parallel Lines*. The Shoes made four albums to critical acclaim but limited success, and until their recent demise, Pylon had gained notoriety as an active component of the Athens, Georgia axis. It is unfortunate for all involved that this can be the only showcase for their obvious talents.

SIXTEEN TAMBOURINES

The Three O'Clock

Frontier Records

By Christopher Hill

The thread that the Three O'Clock pull out of psychedelia is its innocence—visions of beautiful children regarding the grey world through awakened eyes. They problem they face is how to play innocence over for a second time without it being a simple exercise in abandoned styles. Surely they'd like to speak to their contemporaries, but just as surely a lot of the appeal of their clever play with eighteen-year-old pop forms would be strongest to people who are too old to have even heard of the Three O'Clock.

The Three O'Clock's answer on *Sixteen Tambourines* is to play their chosen music with such charm and spunk that they simply override most of their contradictions. "Jet Fighter" would be a natural single in any decade. Its stiff, pounding beat exemplifies the band's engagingly enthusiastic klutziness. The thick roar of guitar and the high, phrased, Little Lord Fauntleroy vocals evoke an adolescent fantasy of effortless power. The lyrics of "And So We



Run"—"We are young/We have no fear/Take the old/From in our ears/'Cause what they say/Is never what we hear today/And so we run . . ."—betray a self-congratulatory naivete, but the music is such a perfect complement to the sentiment, with drums gamboling along and the bass lurching and springing like a clumsy puppy, that the effect is finally disarming.

That the Three O'Clock can cut through all the mannerisms to make simply affecting music is proven in "Seeing Is Believing." When they ask of the colors that they see in the night sky, "Will they always be there?/Say they always will," and the jeweled synthesizer thread goes rolling out to the achingly far aurora borealis horizon, you realize that this music isn't really about mock-innocence at all. It's a once-innocent form that still serves as a vehicle for innocence where and when it occurs. If the psychedelic children in the Three O'Clock can resist the temptation to make cute jokes for grownups and simply concentrate on keeping their vision fresh, they may yet have something to say to these jaded '80s.

INDIGO BLUE

Hank Crawford

Milestone

By Rico Mitchell



As the lead alto saxophonist and arranger for Ray Charles' incomparable R&B big band of the late '50s and '60s, Hank Crawford was the major influence on today's generation of jazz/fusion stars such as David Sanborn and Grover Washington, Jr. This album, coming on the heels of last year's unpretentious *Midnight Ramble*, represents Crawford's return to his Southern-fried roots in blues and ballads after a decade of string-laden pop crossover attempts. With supremely relaxed support from a band including David "Fathead" Newman on tenor sax, Bernard Purdie on drums, Wilbur Bascomb on bass, Melvin Sparks on guitar and Dr. John (no longer voodoo tripping, but still a fine blues player in the Crescent City tradition of Professor Longhair) on piano and organ, Crawford covers a variety of timeless material from Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" to Duke Ellington's "Things Ain't What They Used To Be." None of these warm, blues-drenched alto solos is going to tear a new hole in your roof, but this heritage music will help you get your bearings straight after an agonizing afternoon of watching MTV.

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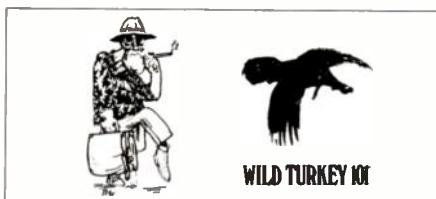
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DAVE MARSH

LONELY TEARDROPS

On the rock obit beat, the past few months have been hellish. The cycle began with the not-altogether-unexpected passing of venerable Muddy Waters, and continued (and, one hopes, concluded) with the merciful death on January 21 of the near-comatose Jackie Wilson. Death, natural or otherwise, is tragic enough; but for those who follow contemporary popular music, it merely invites more insult, because musicians as important as Muddy Waters and Jackie Wilson aren't often given their due in the mainstream media (the juxtaposition of the coverage of Waters' death with choreographer George Balanchine's was grotesque); on top of that, the rock press itself has been guilty of at least a sin of omission, if not commission, in failing to even *note* the passing of those whose contributions to rock, though less influential than Waters' or Wilson's, were still vital. Specifically, I'm thinking of three nonmusicians—Nat D. Williams, Gloria Stavers and Eddie Batista—whose deaths were either barely acknowledged (Williams and Stavers) or, in Batista's case, acknowledged for all the wrong reasons.

Nat D. Williams was the nation's first black disc jockey, on WDIA in 1948 "at a time when blacks weren't even envisioned as being worthy of sweeping the floor at radio stations," as Ron Wynn recently wrote. It was Williams' program that led WDIA to give airtime to such other disc jockeys as Rufus Thomas and Riley King, who became known as B.B. (Blues Boy) as a result of his show. But Williams was also a school teacher, a leader of Memphis' black community and an excellent columnist in the black press. Williams was outspoken not only in attacking racism but also in defending blues and rhythm and blues, despite their disreputable image in the black community. Nor was Williams a segregationist in reverse; he played an important role in acclimating the young Elvis Presley to Beale Street. Williams' remembrances of Presley in the marvelous *Beale Black and Blue* (Louisiana State University Press, 1981, \$17.95) are some of the most affectionate and intelligent remarks you'll ever read about the King's early days. Except for a brief piece by Wynn in *Rock & Roll Confidential* (Ed. note: *RRC* is a monthly newsletter edited by Marsh), Nat D. Williams received no national obituaries outside the black press.

Gloria Stavers was my friend and colleague during the last 15 years of her life, and her death was a deeply painful experi-

ence for me, because I knew she died feeling forgotten. Her contributions as editor of *16*, a teenzine that covered and encouraged rock fans and performers from the heyday of Ricky Nelson and Elvis through Bob Dylan and the Monkees up to the mid-'70s, may seem trivial in retrospect. But to many of us, who grew up away from media centers, *16*'s coverage was the most devot-

... for all the words devoted to the latest trends in music, there are few places where the people important in creating that music can be given their due at the one time when that's most essential: at the end of their days.

ed we had, and the most respectful of our urges and needs as teenagers. Stavers played an important part in many other rock and journalistic careers, but the only obituary of note she received was the one I wrote for *Rolling Stone*.

Eddie Batista, whom I knew by sight only, was a roadie for Kenny Rogers who fell from a lighting rig in Buffalo and crushed his skull on the cement floor. Batista was just 24, but he went on the road while still a teenager and was a veteran of many tours, including Bruce Springsteen's 1980-1981 shows. Minus riggers and roadies, concert tours would be fairly nightmarish; yet these men remain little respected—a state adequately summarized by the lack of attention given to Batista himself, as opposed to the circumstances of his death, in the coverage of the story.

This lengthy preface to talking about Jackie Wilson, one of the most thrilling performers in soul history, seems necessary because regular readers of this column might wonder why it dwells so often on the dead. It's simply that, for all the words de-

voted to the latest trends in music, there are few places where the people important in creating that music can be given their due at the one time when that's most essential: at the end of their days.

It's somehow more fitting to append such a discussion to Wilson's death than any other, because, frankly, it came as such a relief. He had languished in a series of nursing homes since suffering an onstage heart attack in 1975, at the age of 41. He was almost 50 when he died, which is too damn long for anyone to vegetate and suffer—especially someone who in his heyday was as completely dynamic as Jackie Wilson. The uninitiated speak of James Brown as if he had no equal, which isn't surprising, since as a dancer, James had only one: Jackie Wilson, who used his Gold Gloves training to display the slickest footwork ever, working himself into a sweating frenzy and ending by rending his garments, unless the crowd got to them first. As leeringly handsome as Elvis himself, Wilson was as great a sex symbol in the late '50s and the first half of the '60s as Marvin Gaye is today. (The most tragic confirmation of this came in 1961, when Wilson was shot by a deranged, jealous fan.)

As a vocalist Wilson was blessed with tremendous range and power. His music is best represented in a 1983 Epic anthology, *The Jackie Wilson Story*, lovingly compiled and annotated by his most perceptive critic, Joe McEwen. Though many of the selections are marred by inappropriately "swinging" orchestrations, the best of them are absolutely indispensable: "Reet Petite," "Doggin' Around," "Lonely Teardrops," "Higher and Higher," "Baby Workout" and "That's Why (I Love You So)" constitute a grand musical legacy.

Wilson was also a tremendously influential artist. All the sweet-voiced harmony singers of Motown and Chicago soul owe him something, especially Smokey Robinson (who identified Wilson as his truest influence in last year's *Record* interview). Unfortunately, Wilson's live performing style isn't yet documented at all, although there exists an *American Bandstand* clip that might be the hottest thing that show ever aired. Until Dick Clark finds a way to put it onto the home video shelves, listen to "Baby Workout" and imagine a performer who could live up to its energy. And consider also the tragedy of the man who created something so exhaustingly energetic being incapacitated for the final decade of his life. I'll mourn Jackie, but it's an easier mourning than some we've had lately. ○



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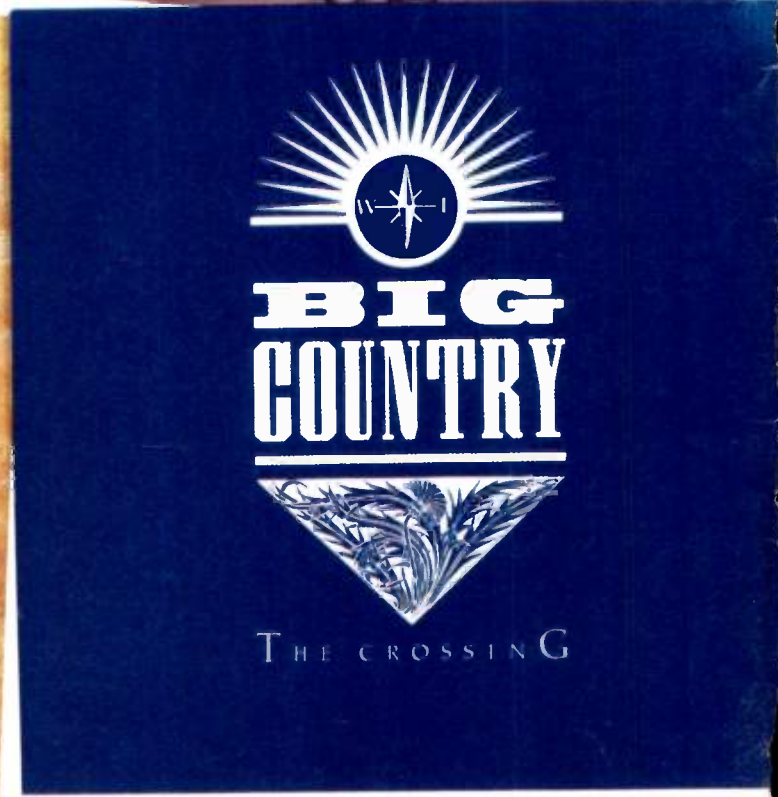
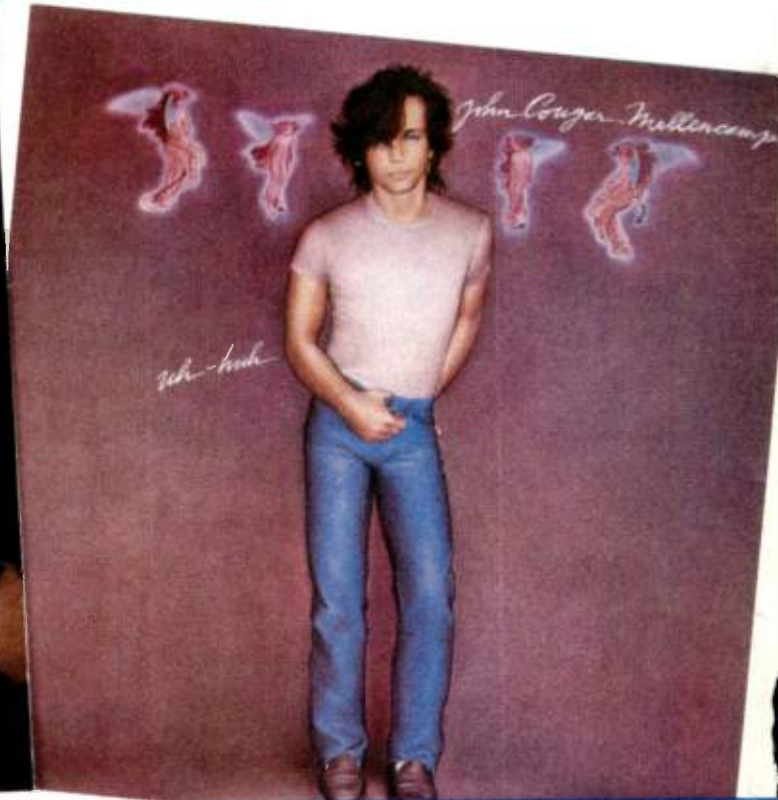
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