

FIRE BURNING BRIGHTLY: U2 MAKES A STAND

# RECORD



PAGE 23

MARCH 1985  
VOL.4 NO.5  
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# RECORD

MARCH 1985 VOL. 4 NO. 5

## ROCK ON . . . . . 8-10

Uh-oh, Dale Bozzio's at it again; Berlin loses David Diamond; Def Leppard's drummer loses arm in auto accident; the Beatles go for the gusto vs. Capitol-EMI; David Bowie in long form; Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil runs for Australian Senate; Philip Bailey keeps it under control; ZZ Top's Dusty Hill finds a surprise in his boot; Night Ranger cutting new LP.

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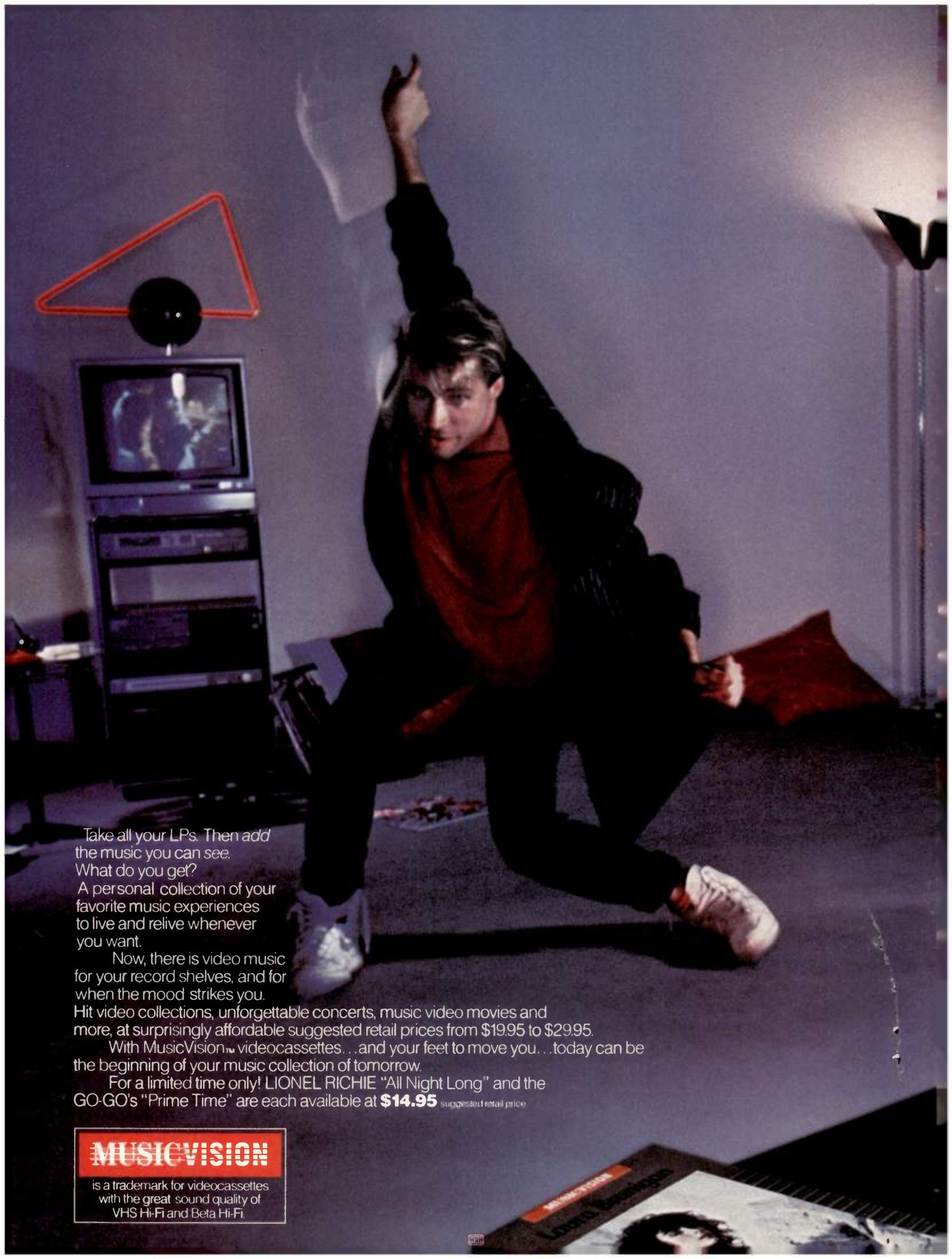
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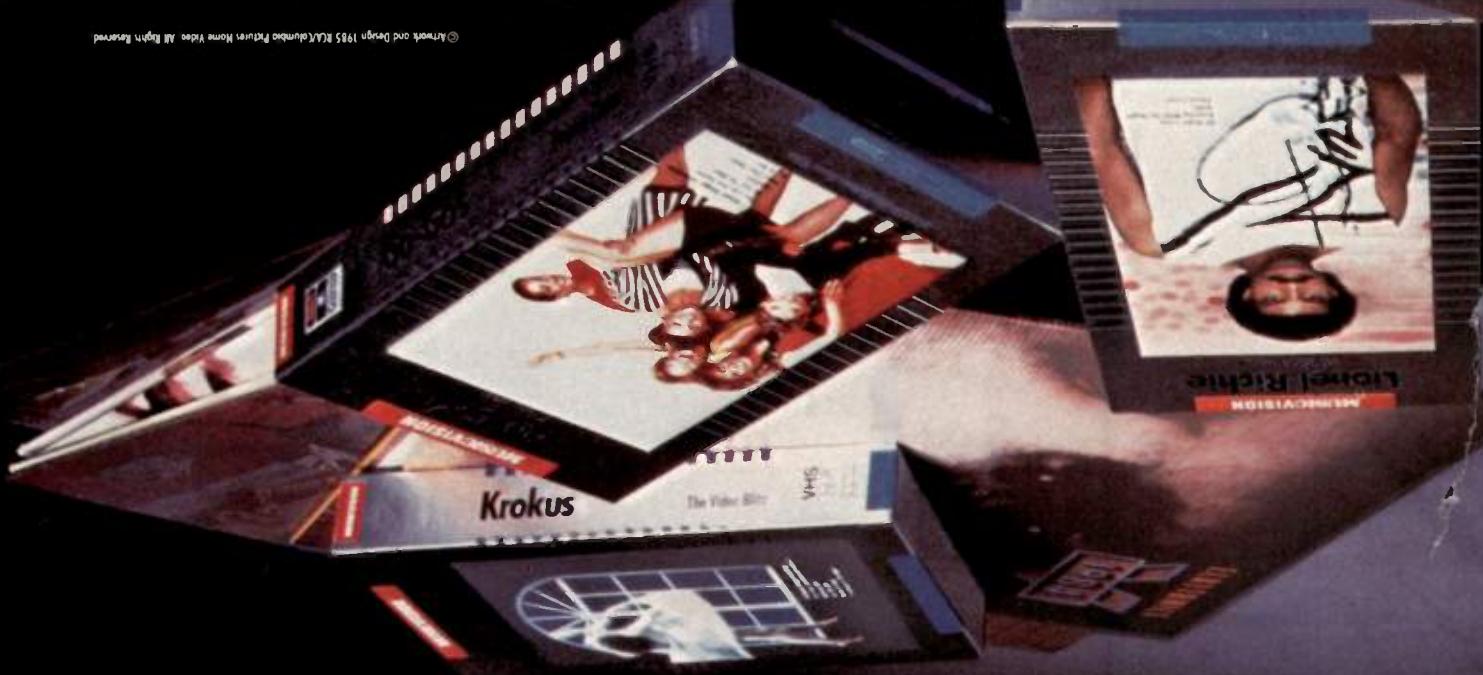
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## TOP 100 ALBUMS

- 1 **LIKE A VIRGIN**  
Madonna Sire
- 2 **PURPLE RAIN**  
Prince and the Revolution Warner Bros
- 3 **BORN IN THE U.S.A.**  
Bruce Springsteen Columbia
- 4 **THE HONEYDIPPERS**  
Volume One Es Paranza Atlantic
- 5 **LUSH LIFE**  
Linda Ronstadt Asylum
- 6 **ARENA**  
Duran Duran Capitol
- 7 **CHICAGO 17**  
Chicago Full Moon Warner Bros
- 8 **PRIVATE DANCER**  
Tina Turner Capitol
- 9 **BIG BAM BOOM**  
Daryl Hall & John Oates RCA
- 10 **CAN'T SLOW DOWN**  
Lionel Richie Motown
- 11 **SPORTS**  
Huey Lewis and The News Chrysalis
- 12 **RECKLESS**  
Bryan Adams A&M
- 13 **VALOTTE**  
Julian Lennon Atlantic
- 14 **I FEEL FOR YOU**  
Chaka Khan Warner Bros
- 15 **MAKE IT BIG**  
Wham! Columbia
- 16 **TROPICO**  
Pat Benatar Chrysalis
- 17 **UNFORGETTABLE FIRE**  
U2 Island
- 18 **PERFECT STRANGERS**  
Deep Purple Mercury
- 19 **WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME**  
Frankie Goes To Hollywood ZTT Island
- 20 **HEARTBEAT CITY**  
The Cars EMI America Asylum

- 21 **SOUNDTRACK**  
"The Woman In Red" Motown
- 22 **AGENT PROVOCATEUR**  
Foreigner Atlantic
- 23 **STAY HUNGRY**  
Twisted Sister Atlantic
- 24 **STOP MAKING SENSE**  
Talking Heads Sire
- 25 **1100 BEL AIR PLACE**  
Julio Iglesias Columbia
- 26 **BUILDING THE PERFECT BEAST**  
Don Henley Geffen
- 27 **ANIMALIZE**  
Kiss Mercury
- 28 **2:00 A.M. PARADISE CAFE**  
Barry Manilow Arista
- 29 **BREAK OUT**  
The Pointer Sisters Planet RCA
- 30 **MADONNA**  
Madonna Sire
- 31 **WAKING UP WITH THE HOUSE ON FIRE**  
Culture Club Virgin Epic
- 32 **NEW EDITION**  
New Edition MCA
- 33 **ICE CREAM CASTLE**  
The Time Warner Bros
- 34 **GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET**  
Paul McCartney Columbia
- 35 **VOA**  
Sammy Hagar Geffen
- 36 **SOUNDTRACK**  
"Eddie and the Cruisers" Scott Bros Epic
- 37 **... ALL THE RAGE**  
General Public IRS
- 38 **REAL LIVE**  
Bob Dylan Columbia
- 39 **EMOTION**  
Barbra Streisand Columbia
- 40 **SUDDENLY**  
Billy Ocean Jive Arista
- 41 **TONIGHT**  
David Bowie EMI America
- 42 **PLANETARY INVASION**  
Midnight Star Solar Electra
- 43 **1984**  
Van Halen Warner Bros
- 44 **WORD OF MOUTH**  
The Kinks Arista
- 45 **THUNDER SEVEN**  
Triumph MCA
- 46 **HIGH CRIME**  
Al Jarreau Warner Bros
- 47 **A PRIVATE HEAVEN**  
Sheena Easton EMI America
- 48 **WHEELS ARE TURNIN'**  
REO Speedwagon Epic
- 49 **DECEMBER**  
George Winston Windham Hill
- 50 **REBEL YELL**  
Billy Idol Chrysalis
- 51 **ISOLATION**  
Toto Columbia
- 52 **1984**  
Eurythmics RCA
- 53 **VITAL SIGNS**  
Survivor Scott Bros Epic
- 54 **IN THE EYE OF THE STORM**  
Roger Hodgson A&M
- 55 **NO BRAKES**  
John Waite EMI America
- 56 **DON'T STOP**  
Jeffrey Osborne A&M
- 57 **OUT OF THE CELLAR**  
Ratt Atlantic
- 58 **CHINESE WALL**  
Philip Bailey Columbia
- 59 **STEELTOWN**  
Big Country Mercury
- 60 **ESCAPE**  
Whodini Arista
- 61 **WHO'S LAST**  
The Who MCA
- 62 **THE MAGAZINE**  
Rickie Lee Jones Warner Bros
- 63 **GAP BAND IV**  
The Gap Band Total Experience RCA
- 64 **HOT HOUSE FLOWERS**  
Wynton Marsalis Columbia
- 65 **STEALING FIRE**  
Bruce Cockburn Gold Mountain



- 66 **SOLID**  
Ashford and Simpson Capitol
- 67 **FAT BOYS**  
Fat Boys Sutra
- 68 **SOUNDTRACK**  
"Teachers" Capitol
- 69 **SO GOOD**  
The Whispers Solar Elektra
- 70 **ELIMINATOR**  
ZZ Top Warner Bros
- 71 **ALL I NEED**  
Jack Wagner Q West/Warner Bros
- 72 **WHAT ABOUT ME**  
Kenny Rogers RCA
- 73 **THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN**  
Shadowfax Windham Hill
- 74 **AN INNOCENT MAN**  
Billy Joel Columbia
- 75 **SOUNDTRACK**  
"Country" Windham Hill
- 76 **FIRST CIRCLE**  
Pat Metheny ECM/Warner Bros
- 77 **BOP-DO-WOPP**  
Manhattan Transfer Atlantic
- 78 **UNITED STATES LIVE**  
Laure Anderson Warner Bros
- 79 **GODDESS IN PROGRESS**  
Julie Brown Rhino
- 80 **LEGEND**  
Bob Marley and The Wailers Island
- 81 **ALL OVER THE PLACE**  
The Bangles Columbia
- 82 **THRILLER**  
Michael Jackson Epic
- 83 **1999**  
Prince Warner Bros
- 84 **BREAKING HEARTS**  
Elton John Geffen
- 85 **POWER SLAVE**  
Iron Maiden Capitol
- 86 **CHARTBUSTERS**  
Ray Parker, Jr. Arista
- 87 **RUN D.M.C.**  
Run D.M.C. Profile
- 88 **SLIDE IT IN**  
Whitesnake Geffen
- 89 **WILD ANIMAL**  
Vanity Motown
- 90 **ITALIAN X-RAYS**  
Steve Miller Band Capitol
- 91 **TOOTH & NAIL**  
Dokken EMI
- 92 **FOOTSTEPS IN THE DARK**  
Cat Stevens A&M
- 93 **YOU, ME AND HE**  
Mtume Epic
- 94 **EGO TRIP**  
Kurtis Blow Mercury
- 95 **SHOUT**  
Devo Warner Bros
- 96 **SAM HARRIS**  
Sam Harris Motown
- 97 **UNDER A BLOOD RED SKY**  
U2 Island
- 98 **LET IT BE**  
The Replacements Twin Tone
- 99 **CYPRESS**  
Let's Active IRS
- 100 **CAMOUFLAGE**  
Rod Stewart Warner Bros

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## STEVE GOODMAN

I first heard Steve Goodman play at the Philadelphia Folk Festival in 1972. He sang "City of New Orleans," "Penny Evans" and "The Wonderful World of Sex." I started to follow his career through coffee houses and larger venues, then back down into the smaller venues until his death.

I wrote a simple obituary for my newspaper (*The Mercury*, Pottstown, PA) that was woefully inadequate. When I sat down to sum up this man's life, I just couldn't find the words. When I read David McGee's recounting of Steve Goodman's career ("The Steel Rail Still Ain't Heard the News," December RECORD) I smiled. McGee said all the things I wanted to say, but couldn't. He picked out all the songs I should have, all the influences I was too thoughtless to remember. He even remembered to mention Mike Smith and "The Dutchman."

To McGee's sterling column I can only add the fondest memory I have of Steve Goodman. It was a rainy night at the defunct Main Point club in suburban Philadelphia. Steve Goodman was playing his heart out on stage when he was joined by Andy Kulberg and Trevor Veitch, the opening act; and John Prine and Bonnie Raitt, who just happened to be in the neighborhood. They played each other's songs until the wee hours of the morning, until everyone was too hoarse to sing, including the audience. Things like that happened in Philadelphia in the early '70s.

I thought of that night when I heard about Goodman's death, and I smiled.

I read McGee's column about Goodman's career, and I smiled again. Thanks.

MIKE SANGIACOMO  
Pottstown, PA

STEVE GOODMAN WILL certainly be missed, but by whom? I have travelled all over the country, only to find that few have heard of Steve Goodman—"Who wrote 'City of New Orleans'?" has become a trivia question. Well, let the world know that Goodman's songs and dedication make me feel as though the brother was writing especially for me, and I'm sure this is how all of his fans feel, too. I hope more people check out his music.

DAVID S. WILLIAMS  
Charleston, SC

## FIXED TO BE TIED

I was really disappointed by the lack of integrity shown by John Mendelsohn in his article on the Fixx ("Can You Fixx It, Doc? No, We'll Have To Amputate," January RECORD). It was pointless and stupid to ridicule Cy Curnin for taking his music and himself seriously. And what was the purpose of telling the reader, "You figure it out!" after every Curnin quotation? Well, if you think about it, it's not too hard to figure out what Curnin is saying—and it makes sense. Mendelsohn's sarcastic disrespect is inappropriate and uninteresting.

JULIE A. HANSEN  
Providence, RI

## RICO, MY MAN!

I have to protest Rico Mitchell's review of Michael Jackson's two songs on the *Victory* album ("Brothers on the One," October RECORD). First of all, I'd like him to know that I am one of Michael's older female fans, being in the same "geriatric" age group as poor, decrepit Mick Jagger. I think "State of Shock" is one of the most exciting songs I've heard in a long time and I do not see Michael's squealing as "girlish" at all but rather sexy! But what can we expect from a man reviewing two of the sexiest men around?

On "Be Not Always," Mitchell missed the whole point of the song. This is not a personal view of a rich kid riding around in a limo, but a plea for the people of the Earth. A hope that things could change but probably never will. Michael is big enough that he can make a statement like this, and if the insensitive want to call it embarrassing, well then, all we can hope for is that it "Be Not Always."

R. FROST  
Bend, OR

RICO MITCHELL'S REVIEW of "Be Not Always" left me speechless. Where has he been for the last year anyway? On a desert island? Twice in his lifetime Michael Jackson has been honored by the President of the United States for his humanitarianism; he is sincerely moved by the plight of children in the world and not only talks about, he *does* something about it. His generosity towards

those less fortunate is no secret. On the Victory tour, thousands of tickets were distributed free to underprivileged children, and Michael's earnings were given to charities.

I believe it is the critic's job to review an artist's professional work, not to give his personal opinion regarding the artist's personality or private life. But most important, if a critic is going to make such statements as these, he should try to get his facts straight.

CAROL GERLEWYCK  
Mississippi,  
Ontario, Canada

## BOBBLED THE BANGLES

Dean Johnson's "Meet The Bangles" article (January RECORD) joins the scrap heap of "the new Beatles/not the new Beatles" stories he warned against. It's time that the hype end and the musical evaluation begin. Anyone who's seen Micky Steele sing the Yardbirds' "I'm Not Talking" live knows the Bangles' roots run deep. But there's a lot more to a band than its roots. The Bangles' songs are distinctly '80s, and their lyrics—particularly on Susanna Hoffs' masterpiece, "Dover Beach" in which she sings of running away with her love but discovering, in the end, that "the world is no one's dream and we will never ever find the time"—have emotional depth. The Bangles are a "now" band. You can dig that.

RANDY BLAZAK  
Atlanta, GA

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## DAYS OF OUR BIMBOS

The latest news from the realm of Bimbo Rock is that Berlin fans will be seeing a lot less of David Diamond (standing, second from right) and—guess what?—Missing Persons fans will be seeing a lot more of Dale Bozzio.

Diamond, the keyboardist and guitarist for Berlin, quit over what a Warner Bros. spokesman called "the usual: 'musical differences.'" Sources close to the band say Diamond felt handcuffed to inadequate musicians and left in search of a more challenging situation. A decision will be made regarding a permanent replacement for Diamond as work commences on the band's new album.

Elsewhere in Bimboville, Missing Person Dale Bozzio can be found—again—in the pages of *Hustler* magazine. As dutifully reported in the December RECORD, La Bozzio bared all for *Hustler* a few years back. Ever mindful of the value of timing, that estimable publication's February cover trumpets "Rock Star Dale Bozzio Nudel" above the logo, and a five-page layout within shows Bozzio on stage with Missing Persons, and off stage with little left to the imagination. —David Gans

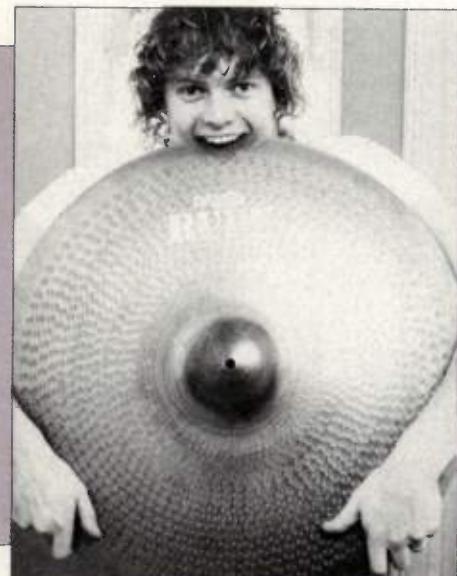
## FIVE ALIVE: NEW GO-GO ON BOARD

200 aspiring rockers responded to the Go-Go's call for a new bassist—and Paula Jean Brown is the official winner. Brown will replace guitarist Jane Wiedlin, who left the L.A. quintet to sing her own songs. Hailing from New Mexico, Brown fought off nine competitors who were granted auditions and two others who were called back a second time. Word of Brown's selection didn't exactly sur-

face through the normal channels—rather than the formal record company and or management press release announcing the selection, eagle-eyed journalists and industry friends could spot an unfamiliar face among the others on the band's Christmas card. The early money said it was in fact Linda Gray perhaps fulfilling an unstated but lifelong ambition to be a rock star; however, a quick call to A&M Records nipped that one in the bud.

The bass girl's former combos include Paradise Drive, Jackie O. and Physical Thing—and she assumed her Go-Go duties with the coming of the New Year.

—Anthony DeCurtis



## STALKING THE LEPPARD

As this issue goes to press, Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen remains on the critical list in a London hospital after having had an arm severed in a late-December auto accident. Surgeons reattached the arm, but were forced to amputate it a few days later. This tragedy further delays Def Leppard's long-awaited new album, which had already been pushed back to a late Spring release owing to a change in producers. Apparently the group and Jim Steinman, the man who gave us Meatloaf (we'll get you yet, Jim), who'd manned the board for several tracks, agreed to disagree. Exit Steinman. Def Leppard continued on without him, producing the entire disc themselves, with help from an engineer. Our sympathies to Allen, and here's hoping for a full and complete recovery.



# U C K U N

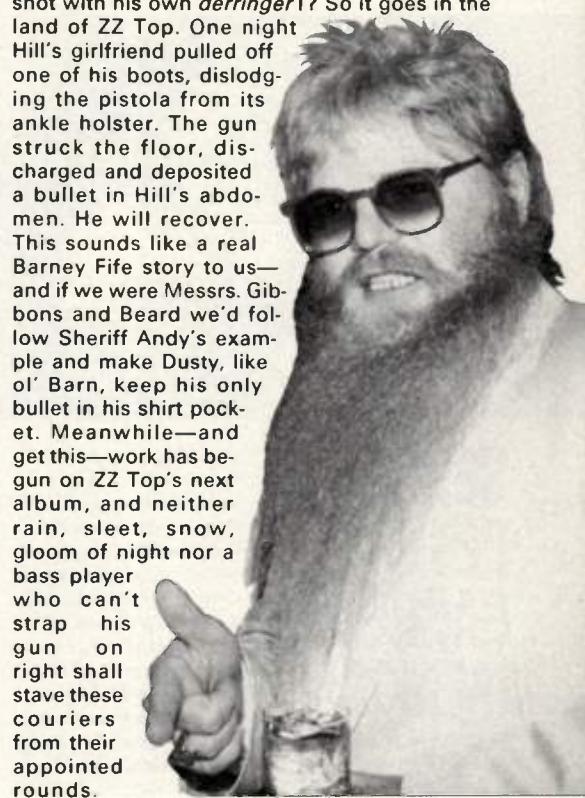


## BEATLES FIND A SEA OF GREEN

"So we sailed off to the sun, til we found a sea of green," Ringo Starr sang in "Yellow Submarine." It's not clear how much sailing the former Beatles have been doing lately, but their attorneys have been trying to locate that elusive sea of green and reclaim it for their clients. In a \$45 million lawsuit filed in 1979, Apple Records and its parent company, Apple Corps Limited, allege that Capitol/EMI (quoting from the press release on this now) "defrauded the Beatles to the tune of millions of dollars in royalty payments over a 10-year period." The Beatles are also seeking to terminate the rights of Capitol/EMI to manufacture and distribute their recordings and to regain their master recordings. In a new twist, word has been passed that, should this suit come to trial, Messrs. McCartney, Starr and Harrison, along with Yoko Ono, would personally testify against Capitol/EMI. A separate suit has been filed in the U.K. seeking an accounting of royalty payment and record sales there and in other parts of the world outside North America.

## YOU HAD TO PUT THE BULLET IN, HUH?

We'll give ol' Dusty Hill the benefit of the doubt on this one, but what Texan worth his pluperfect weight in grade A beef would admit to getting shot with his own *derringer*? So it goes in the land of ZZ Top. One night Hill's girlfriend pulled off one of his boots, dislodging the pistol from its ankle holster. The gun struck the floor, discharged and deposited a bullet in Hill's abdomen. He will recover. This sounds like a real Barney Fife story to us—and if we were Messrs. Gibbons and Beard we'd follow Sheriff Andy's example and make Dusty, like ol' Barn, keep his only bullet in his shirt pocket. Meanwhile—and get this—work has begun on ZZ Top's next album, and neither rain, sleet, snow, gloom of night nor a bass player who can't strap his gun on right shall stave these couriers from their appointed rounds.



EBET ROBERTS

## NIGHT RANGER: NEW LP, TOUR PENDING

"Success for Night Ranger means being able to choose your recording studio as to how close it is to a BMW dealership," jokes bassist/frontman Jack Blades. Yea verily, the

next Night Ranger album is being recorded at Berkeley's Fantasy Studios so the men who built their fortune on a song called "You Can Still Rock In America" can have their foreign cars serviced while they work. Hey, ain't that America?

Blades and drummer/vocalist Kelly Keagy are again writing the bulk of the material assisted by the other members of the band. Recording began a week after Night Ranger headlined at San Francisco's Cow Palace on New Year's Eve; a two-week tour of Japan in April will be followed

by an American tour, by which time the as-yet-untitled third Night Ranger album will be in the stores and selected videos in the can.

The followup to *Midnight Madness*, says Blades, "will be a little harder-edged than the last album. We came off of nine months on the road with rather aggressive feelings in our hearts." They didn't take it out on their hotel rooms, though—"that's old stuff, Deep Purple shit. We don't have to pull that anymore. We buy hotels now. No, I'm just joking."

—David Gans



PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO REVERSE

# HUCKLEBONE

## BOWIE, BRYAN AND THE LONG FORM

Saying that music videos are "coming of age" is about as far-fetched as the idea of Bruce Springsteen having a new album out next year. But a couple of artists and directors have gone beyond the clip into serious attempts at long-form projects for the home market. First among non-equals is David Bowie, whose *Jazzin' for Blue Jean* mini-movie is out now on Sony (suggested retail price: \$29.95). The 20-minute vignette finds Bowie in a dual role, with only one musical segment interrupting the narrative (we say interrupting seeing as how "Blue Jean" is one of the lesser songs in the Thin White Duke's catalogue). But our man does have some amusing comic moments, particularly as the rocker Screamin' Lord Byron, who doesn't

walk into theaters but is wheeled in on a stretcher, and who requires vigorous resuscitation measures. Directed by the estimable Julien Temple, *Jazzin' for Blue Jean* may not be a landmark, but all involved get points for trying something beyond the pale of the standard music video clip. Ditto for Bryan Adams, whose Steve "Billie Jean" Barron-directed *Reckless* video EP was released simultaneously with the album of the same name. Incorporating music, dialogue, live performance and conceptual scenes, *Reckless* includes five songs from Adams' new album and one, "This Time," from the artist's platinum-plus *Cuts Like A Knife* LP (the story line, in fact, spins off the latter song).

GREG GORMAN



ANN SUMMA/RETNA LTD

## SENATOR PETER GARRETT (ALMOST)

We don't know of any American rockers who were candidates for political office last year (perhaps we should mention, however, that Nancy Kulp, Miss Jane from *The Beverly Hillbillies*, was defeated in a race for the Pennsylvania Senate by an opponent who had the gall to have Jed Clampett [Buddy Ebsen] stump for him), but in the land Down Under, *Midnight Oil's* Peter Garrett made a run for it. A former attorney, the 6'5" Garrett was the Nuclear Disarmament Party's candidate for the Australian Senate (the NDP is a coalition established by

a group of Australia's leading writers, actors and poets).

Comments Garrett: "My basic goal is for politicians to realize that they should stop worrying about power and start worrying about people. We must get rid of this nuclear threat that we are living under. With our new party, we are redefining the nature of politics by placing the nuclear issue as the top priority of discussion above everything else." And when the people spoke on December 1 Garrett found himself somewhat vindicated. Although he lost his race, Garrett and the NDP made a much more robust showing than any pre-election poll indicated. Expect to hear more about nuclear disarmament on the Oil's next album, *Red Sails in the Sunset*. You'll recognize it by the cover rendering of the city of Sydney on the day after.

## PHILIP BAILEY: UNDER CONTROL

Philip Bailey's a good sport. Four shopping days before Christmas, he was in Macy's trying to find a child a pair of pants with a 27-inch waist. "It was fun," Bailey said, unusually placid after battling the carnivorous Christmas crowd in New York. "I

was participating in a special CBS program for kids. The company gave us \$100 and we took the kids out to shop for presents. But it wasn't easy. Maybe the store had three pairs of pants in the entire store that my kid could fit in."

Working or playing, the former Earth, Wind & Fire singer is very much on the go lately. He's represented on the charts with his second solo album for Columbia, *Chinese Wall* (produced by Phil Collins), and an all-gospel album for the Myrrh label, *The Wonders of His Love*. He's also involved with a young people's performing arts program in his hometown of Denver.

"I have a joint interest in children and in education," says Bailey. "I also have four children of my own. That's why I moved back to Denver from L.A. last March. It's a more tranquil place, better for raising kids, and good for getting away from the business."

However, Bailey need not fear professional burnout. He describes himself as "constructively energetic, not hyper(kinetic)."

"Whatever I do," he adds, "I try to stay under control." Even when shopping for a 27 in the children's department. —Mark Mehler



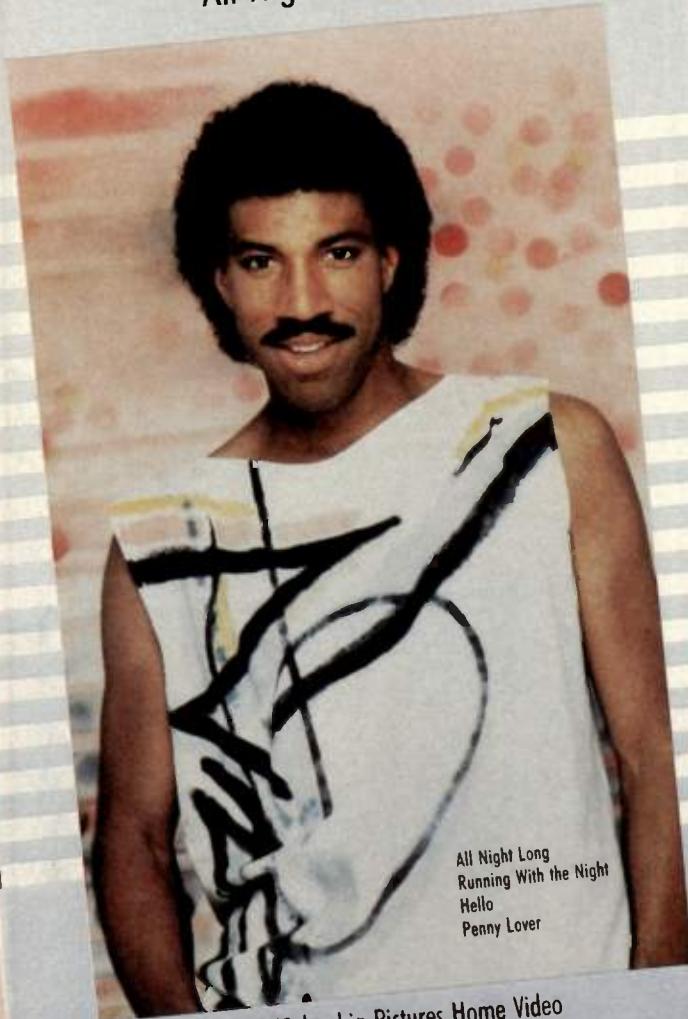
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# KEEPING THE FEELING

• *J. Geils Band  
With body and  
Soul intact*

## AND THE FAITH

• *By Mark Mehler*

*Act One • Fall 1984*

Place: EMI America conference room

SETH JUSTMAN, VOCALIST/KEYBOARDIST/chief songwriter, J. Geils Band: "We've got a whole new production. We call it the Wesson Oil Tour. The stage and anyone who comes on it are doused with pure Wesson."

Danny Klein, bassist: "You mean we've scrapped the K-Y Tour?"

Justman: "Sorry, Danny. It dried up."

J. Geils, guitarist: "We plan to lean heavily toward deep-fried fat."

Reporter: "How long will you be on the road?"

Geils: "About a week."

Justman: "We will give new meaning to the old Little Richard groove, 'Slippin' and Slidin'.'"

The J. Geils Band is a five-character comedic drama these days. Following the exit of Peter Wolf more than a year ago, there has begun to sprout within the band a once-fallow collective sense of humor.

"Peter's leaving created a serious, agonizing situation," says Seth Justman, who has emerged in the re-born Bostonian quintet as the closest thing to a frontman. "As a group, humor, particularly irony, became a lot more important overall."

Those familiar with the 18-year musical odyssey of J. Geils would be hard-pressed to unearth a wisp of solemnity in lyric or arrangement, but the laughs were strictly courtesy of Peter Wolf. Journalists, for example, may recall a bouncy boat ride around Boston Harbor to celebrate the band's signing with EMI back in '78. While a wildly-inebriated Wolf held sway (literally) across the poop deck, randomly discoursing on rock 'n' roll and the Seven Seas, his bandmates remained in the hole, getting quietly inebriated with the hoi polloi.

"We were comfortable in our roles," says J. Geils, *The Person*. "I, for one, was a lot happier in the background, and Wolf obviously craved the foreground. It worked fine back then."

Far more crucial than his role as media foil, however, were Wolf's vocal gifts. Those chores have since been divided between Justman and drummer Stephen Jo Bladd. Justman says in revamping the sound to take the focus off Wolf's electrifying blues-inflected voice, "We've come together more as a band than ever before. It's created new wellsprings within the group, and brought us a greater sense of freedom."

Sonically, the immediate post-Wolf period is one of stunning, occasionally bi-

**Justman, Geils, Bladd, Klein, Magic Dick: Integrity intact,  
accepting the challenge of the unknown**



GREG CORMAN

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# THE WORKS PARTY GUIDE

## Uno - INVITE

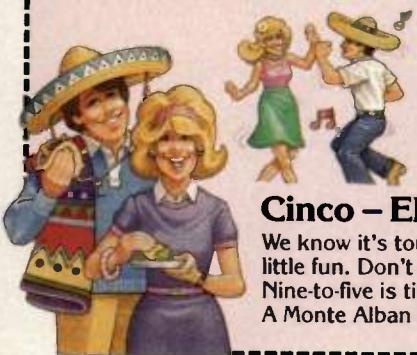


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out of the bottle). *Macho Monday*  
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zarre, experimentation. Synthesizers, dense, multi-tracked harmonica parts, and new sound effects (Justman striking the inside of a piano with a hammer, for instance) are now permanent parts of the total sound. "We've come to see that what makes a good pop song is so fragile, like a spider web. It needs more attention. There's more of a balance in the band now," Justman contends.

The Split, which was a long time coming, nevertheless struck a wicked psychic blow to the group and its fans. And to a segment of the Big Chill generation that saw J. Geils as an enduring social symbol. A minor one, to be sure, but then, what else is still intact from 1968?

"Ultimately, we've all got to deal with getting older, with things changing, with Ronald Reagan in office," offers Justman, by way of cold comfort. "All I know is, we are still here, making music and trying to entertain. Trying to keep the feeling. It's not dead yet. But in the end, this too shall pass. Like those red peppers I ate this morning."

**SO WHAT FINALLY OCCURRED TO** rend the J. Geils Band asunder? Herewith, the group's version of events (keep in mind there are others—check the Peter Wolf interview in RECORD's January issue).

In January of 1983, the quintet came off a grinding tour in support of *Freeze Frame*, their breakthrough megabucks hit. "There was tension in the band for some time," explains Justman. "In early February, Pete informed the group he didn't want to work with us anymore. It was the tension of the way we were working, the content, the personalities. What happened was Pete was going through a real block in terms of his writing (he contributed lyrics). For several albums, from *Sanctuary* to *Love Stinks*, right through *Freeze Frame*, Peter's role in the writing had been diminishing, and it was a great source of frustration to him. We were trying to write together but he just wasn't coming up with anything. I told him we didn't have to write together. He was encouraged to work with anybody who could help free him up."

According to the five Geils members and co-founders, Wolf offered to come in and do vocals for the next studio LP—which Geils was very anxious to get started on—provided the singer not be required to attend rehearsals or have any part in the business of running the band.

"Pete told us, 'All I'm ready to commit to is singing,'" notes Justman. "That wasn't markedly different than the way we'd worked in the past. Basically, it was the five of us getting all the musical elements down first. But there had been some collaboration in the sense that Pete was around, and he'd occasionally say, 'Hey, that sounds good, leave it in.' He had input. We all wanted the six of us to remain together, so we agreed (to Wolf's terms)."

In July of 1983, according to Geils, the

band had completed seven tracks of what was to become its new album, *You're Gettin' Even While I'm Gettin' Odd*, all of them cut in the keys in which Wolf would be singing. But upon being presented the new material, Wolf whipped out his own tape containing six completely new songs. The tunes had been cut with full instrumental backup.

"I told Pete, 'Hey, what you're playing for me sounds like a lot has gone into it,'" Justman recalls. "He'd never mentioned anything about a (solo) project. It was ap-

gut-wrenching decision."

They agreed to draft a routine, no-fault statement for the press. Perhaps the biggest shock came subsequently when the band began reading in news accounts that it had tossed Peter Wolf into the street.

"There were only six of us in that little room, and five of us weren't saying anything," observes Bladd. "It had to be coming from somewhere. It defied logic. Our lead singer was gone, our financial potential was on the ropes. Why would we want to throw Pete out?"

"It made us seem like five guys on a giant power trip. We looked like assholes," adds Geils. As the band's namesake, he feels the loss most acutely. "Perhaps in the final analysis," he notes with a shrug of resignation, "there really wasn't much we could have done to keep it together. Maybe the whole thing was just Pete's way of saying goodbye. But to see 15 years dissolve and not be able to stop it, that really hurt."

Justman says nobody so much as mentioned the possibility of not pressing on. After tossing around a few options—most notably the idea of bringing in a female lead vocalist—the five reached a quick decision to keep it all in the family. "The one thing that was clear was that no matter what, we had to go ahead and make the album we started in February, 1983. It turned out to be no real problem to re-arrange the material around my voice and Stephen Jo's. Certainly, the whole thing was scary, but once that decision was made, fear was replaced by a great sense of adventure. That's where the artistic growth comes into it. Now we were faced with other key questions. What talents do we possess among ourselves, what kind of new things do we try, who can we work with, what can we draw upon, what can I bring out in the playing of my fellow musicians, how can we begin to astound ourselves again?

"We've got to maintain the high energy and urgency (Wolf) brought to the band without doing his act. The challenge for us is to go as far as possible in another direction. On *Even . . . Odd* the aliveness came with accepting that challenge and exploring completely unknown areas of artistic expression."

As families do in a time of crisis, this one pulled together, gathering strength from numbers. "We're so damn tight," Geils emphasizes. "We've always done such a good job of communicating. If the Rolling Stones wanted Magic Dick to play a harp solo, for example, we'd always sit down and talk before anybody did anything. Everything we did had a connection to the band. That's the way we plan to keep it."

"We've protected our integrity," concludes Justman. "I don't know if we'll pick up where we left off in terms of popularity, but we're starting to get offers for film scripts and soundtracks now, which is nice. Musically, though, we're doing more than surviving. We're thriving." ○

## SETH JUSTMAN:

*'We've protected our integrity... we're doing more than surviving— we're thriving.'*

parent he'd gone ahead in the interim and put together a new band of his own. We didn't even know any of the players."

According to Geils, Wolf next demanded that five or six of his songs be included on the new album or he would walk. Bladd says negotiations over Wolf's latest ultimatum dragged on for two more months. "None of this was amicable. There was an edge to it. It was definitely *not* okay."

In the end, of course, the five remaining band members simply decided Wolf's price was too high. Says J. Geils: "The way the thing was presented to us was very weird. It was hearing Pete, who I stood next to for 15 years, playing while he sang, suddenly singing with a whole 'nother band that obviously had enormous input into the music. None of it reflected anything about our years together."

"It would have been impossible to do Pete's stuff and maintain any integrity," adds Justman. "Each Geils LP, for better or worse, was a progression, an outgrowth of what came before. It was always self-contained. Now we've got six songs out of left field. An album isn't a pizza—five slices for you, five for me . . . It was all of us saying, 'Please, Pete, don't be crazy. Let's work something out.' I suggested we put all my songs and Peter's songs before everybody and judge each on its merits. And if none of mine make the LP, fine. Pete wouldn't guarantee that he wouldn't quit if his songs didn't make it."

In September, the six sat down for a final reckoning.

"There wasn't a dry eye in the house," recalls Geils. "It was an anguished, sad,

# CRITICS



# POLL

## Heroes

Bruce Springsteen  
Tina Turner  
Band Aid

## Chumps

VICTORY: The Jacksons/Chuck  
Sullivan/Don King/Michael Jackson  
Reagan/Bush  
MTV

## Group Of The Year

U2

## Artists Of The Year

Prince  
Bruce Springsteen  
Tina Turner

## Best Albums

1. PURPLE RAIN  
**Prince** Warner Bros.
2. BORN IN THE U.S.A.  
**Bruce Springsteen** Columbia
3. LEARNING TO CRAWL  
**The Pretenders** Sire  
RECKONING  
**R.E.M.** I.R.S.
4. PRIVATE DANCER  
**Tina Turner** Capitol
5. NEW SENSATIONS  
**Lou Reed** RCA
6. ALL OVER THE PLACE  
**The Bangles** Columbia  
HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE?  
**Los Lobos** Slash-Warner Bros.
7. RUN-DMC  
**Run-DMC** Profile
8. LIGHTS OUT  
**Peter Wolf** EMI America
9. EB '84  
**The Everly Brothers** Mercury
10. BUSCANDO AMERICA  
**Ruben Blades** Elektra  
ZEN ARCADE  
**Husker Du** SST
11. VOICE OF AMERICA  
**Little Steven** EMI America
12. TOO TOUGH TO DIE  
**The Ramones** Sire
13. SHE'S SO UNUSUAL  
**Cyndi Lauper** Portrait  
LET IT BE  
**The Replacements** Twintone
14. THE UNFORGETTABLE FIRE  
**U2** Island
15. AURA  
**King Sunny Ade** Island  
MISTER HEARTBREAK  
**Laurie Anderson** Warner Bros.
16. LIKE THIS  
**The dBs** Bearsville
17. GLORIOUS RESULTS OF A  
MISSPENT YOUTH  
**Joan Jett** Blackheart MCA
18. MAKING HISTORY  
**Linton Kwesi Johnson** Mango—Island
19. CYPRESS  
**Let's Active** I.R.S.
20. NEVILLE-IZATION  
**The Neville Brothers** Black Top-Rounder

## Top Debuts

1. THE GLAMOROUS LIFE  
**Sheila E.** Warner Bros.
2. RUN-DMC  
**Run-DMC** Profile
3. SHE'S SO UNUSUAL  
**Cyndi Lauper** Portrait  
MIDNIGHT MISSION  
**The Textones** Gold Mountain-A&M
4. LIGHTS OUT  
**Peter Wolf** EMI America
5. FRONTIER DAYS  
**The Del-Lords** Enigma-EMI America
6. VALOTTE  
**Julian Lennon** Atlantic
7. ALL OVER THE PLACE  
**The Bangles** Columbia
8. THE FORCE M.D.'S  
**The Force M.D.'s** Tommy Boy
9. MIDNIGHT MISSION  
**The Textones** Gold Mountain-A&M
10. COLOUR ME GONE  
**Colour Me Gone** A&M
11. FRONTIER DAYS  
**The Del-Lords** Enigma-EMI America
12. STEALING FIRE  
**Bruce Cockburn** Gold Mountain-A&M

## Best Songs

1. WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?  
**Tina Turner** Capitol
2. WHEN DOVES CRY  
**Prince** Warner Bros.
3. ON THE WINGS OF A NIGHTINGALE  
**The Everly Brothers** Mercury  
LET'S GO CRAZY  
**Prince** Warner Bros.
4. DANCING IN THE DARK  
**Bruce Springsteen** Columbia
5. JUMP  
**Van Halen** Warner Bros.
6. THE GLAMOROUS LIFE  
**Sheila E.** Warner Bros.
7. 8 MILES HIGH  
**Husker Du** SST
8. I FEEL FOR YOU  
**Chaka Khan** Warner Bros.
9. BORN IN THE U.S.A.  
**Bruce Springsteen** Columbia
10. COVER ME  
**Bruce Springsteen** Columbia
11. SOMEBODY ELSE'S GUY  
**Jocelyn Brown** Profile
12. JUMP (FOR MY LOVE)  
**The Pointer Sisters** Planet-RCA
13. PRIDE (IN THE NAME OF LOVE)  
**U2** Island
14. CRUEL SUMMER  
**Bananarama** London
15. BLUE JEAN  
**David Bowie** EMI America
16. SHE-BOP  
**Cyndi Lauper** Epic
17. TIME AFTER TIME  
**Cyndi Lauper** Epic
18. DON'T WORRY BABY  
**Los Lobos** Slash-Warner Bros.
19. GHOSTBUSTERS  
**Ray Parker, Jr.** Arista
20. HOWLING AT THE MOON  
**The Ramones** Sire
21. I LOVE YOU SUZANNE  
**Lou Reed** RCA
22. PRETTY PERSUASION  
**R.E.M.** I.R.S.
23. I'M ON FIRE  
**Bruce Springsteen** Columbia

## Most OverLooked Records

1. LIKE THIS  
**THE dBs** Bearsville
2. VOICE OF AMERICA  
**Little Steven** EMI America
3. TOO TOUGH TO DIE  
**The Ramones** Sire
4. ZEN ARCADE  
**Husker Du** SST
5. NEW DIMENSION  
**Imagination** Elektra
6. NEVILLE-IZATION  
**THE Neville Brothers** Black Top-Rounder
7. LET IT BE  
**The Replacements** Twintone
8. THE SWIMMING POOL Q'S  
**The Swimming Pool Q's** A&M
9. MIDNIGHT MISSION  
**The Textones** Gold Mountain-A&M
10. COLOUR ME GONE  
**Colour Me Gone** A&M
11. FRONTIER DAYS  
**The Del-Lords** Enigma-EMI America
12. STEALING FIRE  
**Bruce Cockburn** Gold Mountain-A&M



Prince: Best Album, Artist of the Year

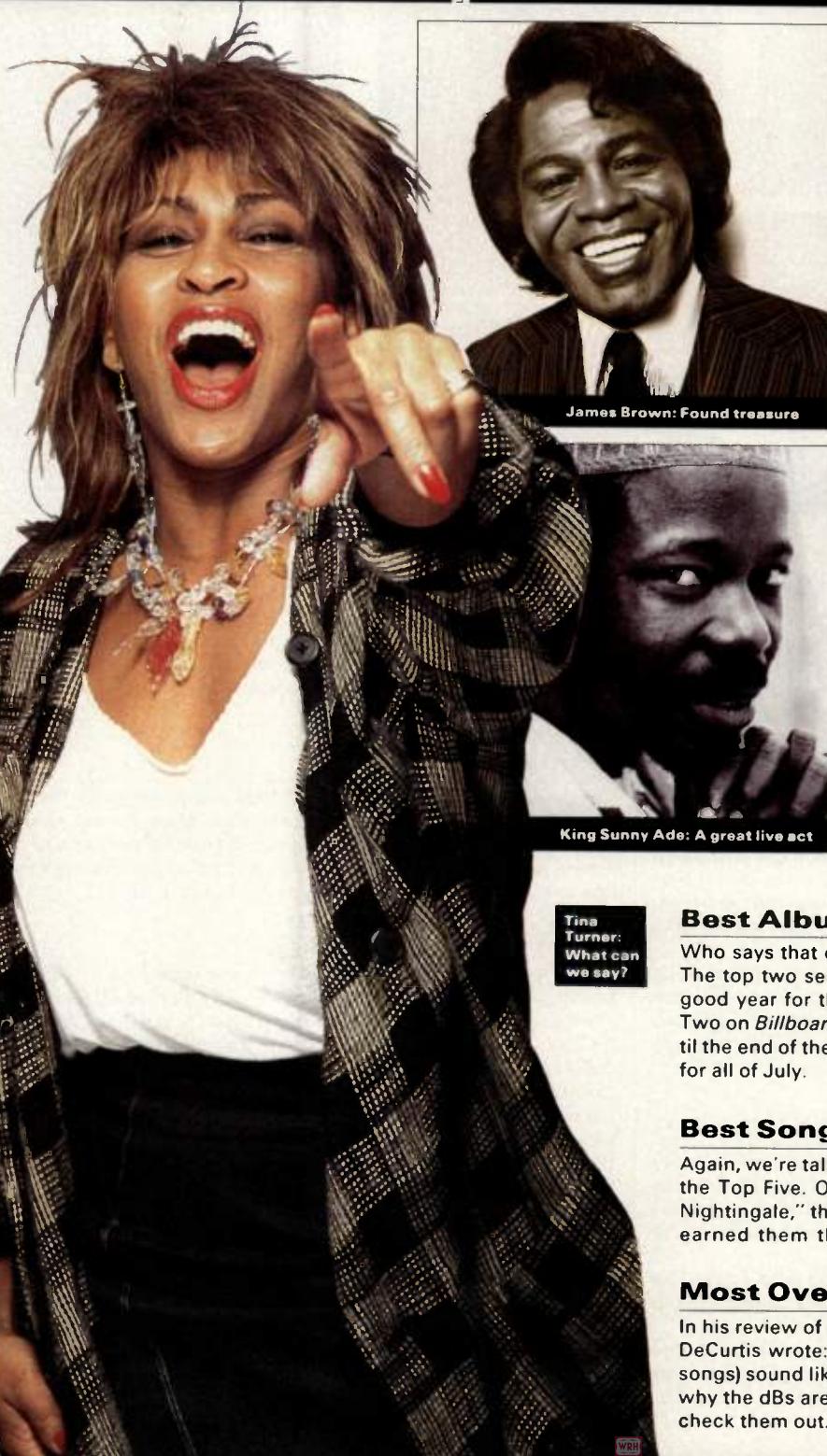


Bruce: Hero, Artist of the Year



Joey Ramone: Another critics' poll

HOWARD ROSENBERG



Tina Turner: What can we say?



The Everly Brothers: A great song and album

DAVE HOGAN/LGI



The dBs: An overlooked record

LAURA LEVINE



King Sunny Ade: A great live act

## Best Albums

Who says that critics can't (or won't) like what normal folks like? The top two selections bear out the fact that 1984 was a damn good year for the mainstream; these two records were One and Two on *Billboard's* Albums Chart from the first week in August until the end of the year, with *Born In The U.S.A.* holding the top spot for all of July.

## Best Songs

Again, we're talking Chart Heaven here, by and large, especially in the Top Five. Only exception: the Everlys' "On The Wings Of A Nightingale," the kickoff to a splendid comeback that would have earned them that honor in any other year but Tina Turner's.

## Most Overlooked Records

In his review of the dBs' *Like This* in the December issue, Anthony DeCurtis wrote: "If (the subjects of songwriter Peter Holsapple's songs) sound like heavyweight ruminations for pop tunes, it's also why the dBs are also more than a pop band—and why you should check them out." 'Nuff said.



The Replacements: Best indie

HOWARD ROSENBERG



Spinal Tap: A sleeper in the best sense

DEBRA TREITZ/GI



R.E.M.: Beating the sophomore jinx

CHRIS WALTER/RETNA LTD

## Best Reissues

1. THE JAMES BROWN STORY  
**James Brown** Polydor
2. THE FEDERAL YEARS VOL. 1 & 2  
**James Brown** Solid Smoke
3. 24 ORIGINAL CLASSICS  
**The Everly Brothers** Arista
4. ANTHOLOGY: 1962-1971  
**Dionne Warwick** Rhino

## Biggest Flops

1. VICTORY  
**The Jacksons** Epic
2. TONIGHT  
**David Bowie** EMI America
3. THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT...THIS IS WHAT YOU GET  
**Public Image Ltd.** Elektra
4. WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME  
**Frankie Goes To Hollywood** ZTT-Island
5. DIFFORD AND TILBROOK  
**Difford And Tilbrook** A&M

## Most Overrated

1. **Frankie Goes To Hollywood**
2. **Madonna**  
**Bruce Springsteen**  
**Thompson Twins**  
**U2**

## Hype Of The Year

1. **Frankie Goes To Hollywood**
2. **The Victory Tour**

## Comeback Of The Year

Tina Turner

## Best Live Acts

1. **Bruce Springsteen**
2. **Pretenders**
3. **King Sunny Ade**  
**R.E.M.**
4. **U2**

## Best Independent Act

The Replacements

## Best Film/ Videocassette

1. **PURPLE RAIN**  
**Prince**  
STOP MAKING SENSE  
**Talking Heads**
2. **THIS IS SPINAL TAP**  
**Spinal Tap**

## Heroes Of The Year

Bruce Springsteen will probably top this list any year he's active, but in 1984 it was most deserved. Coming back with perhaps his best album yet, he followed it up with a lengthy tour that proved to have all the fire and heart the Jacksons' Traveling Circus Show didn't. And much credit should be given the man for shaking off a somewhat disturbing apolitical past with some sane, if brief, public commentary. And also for coughing up some bucks to a bevy of specially selected local charities at each stop on the second leg of his tour, and encouraging his audience to get involved.

Tina Turner, who also took "Artists" and "Comeback" honors, takes the top spot among the females, beating Chrissie Kerr (formerly Hynde) by a comfortable margin. But stop your sobbing, Chrissie; based on *Learning To Crawl*, you've got plenty of time to pull this one down.

A special tip of the hat to Bob Geldof for organizing what must be the most immediately effective charitable contribution rock's ever made. Here's hoping that "Do They Know It's Christmas" never becomes a standard, but instead ends up a curiosity from a particularly unhappy time and place during man's existence.

## Chumps Of The Year

Lumping votes together made everyone connected to the Victory tour a chump by association. If it really was "the Tour of the Century," maybe we're safe for the next fifteen years. Good thing, too—anyone who attended probably can't afford to leave the house 'til then.

Looks as if RECORD's critics must be part of the 41 percent who voted with their hearts and not their pocketbooks or fears—with any luck, by '88 we'll be part of 100 percent.

Somehow we get this sneaking suspicion the cats at EmTeeVee are gonna take up permanent residence in this category; in fact, as long as they have Mark Goodman around, it's a lock.

## Top Debuts

The former Ms. Escovedo got the royal treatment from His Royal Badness and the result was a hot EP that shook up the charts and, through her videos and concert appearances, a lot of central nervous systems.

## Group Of The Year

Despite the decidedly lukewarm critical reception given *The Unforgettable Fire*, the Irish quartet (who took down the top spot as "Heroes" in last year's poll) were given the nod on the basis of not simply making *Fire* into *Son Of War*, and for an unflagging devotion to their audience and to the peaceful uses of music.

## Artists Of The Year

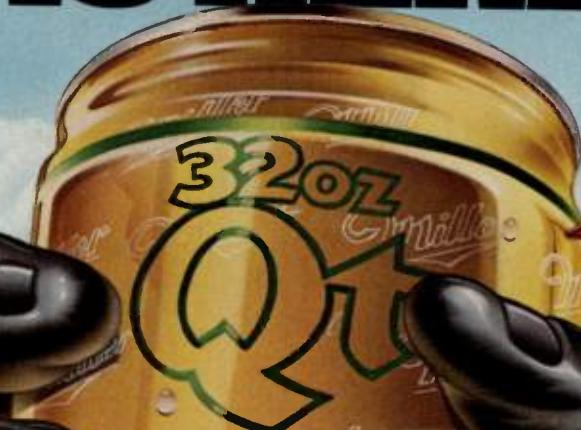
Prince and Bruce were deadlocked in the voting here, and that seems just about right, since they've already carved up just about every other category between them. For Bruce, see the description for the "Heroes" category, or better yet, just play *Born In The U.S.A.* As for His Most Royal Purpleness, his influence was felt not just with his own best-selling *Purple Rain* soundtrack LP, but with the movie as well. Not to mention his authorship of Chaka Khan's killer "I Feel For You." Or his handiwork on Sheila E.'s *Glamorous Life*. And it's probably a safe bet to look for him high atop 1985's "Best Live Acts" list.

As for Tina, not much more can be said. It's unlikely that anyone will so readily dominate as did Ms. Turner this year, but then again not everyone would want to go through what she has to gain her knowing and powerful perspective.

Participating Critics: Tom Anderson, Steve Bloom, Ken Braun, Nick Burton, Brian Chin, J.D. Considine, Anthony DeCurtis, Jody Denberg, Bill Flanagan, Deborah Frost, Debbie Geller, James Hunter, Dean Johnson, Wayne King, John Leland, David McGee, Rico Mitchell, Mark Moses, Derk Richardson, Ira Robbins, Crispin Sartwell, Duncan Strauss, Craig Zeller.

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**The view from '85: Be true to your school**

# ROCKERS' REVENGE

**By Stan Mieses**

DURING A DELIGHTFUL SEQUENCE IN A *HARD DAY'S NIGHT*, A crowded press conference is arranged for the Beatles in a London flat and the quartet is seen entertaining questions in an atmosphere not unlike a subway at rush hour. A reporter approaches Ringo Starr with a question he must have been asked a thousand times before: "Are you a mod or a rocker?" the bedraggled scribe asks. "I'm a mocker," Starr answers, without hesitation.

It wasn't Starr who originated the milieu (it probably dates back to John Lennon's counterpart, Marx—Groucho, that is), but he coined the phrase, and within the four reverberating walls of the rock 'n' roll world a new class of performer came into being: neither wholly committed to style as attitude (mod) nor attitude as style (rocker), mockers took from both camps, so to speak, and fashioned a world from the stage which (in their minds) could only be inhabited by them, tethered to rock 'n' roll but set apart by irony and self-reference.

The beat goes on, for mods, rockers and mockers alike, and with the advent of music videos and music video television, the divisions in 1985 are clear as they've ever been. Much of the distinction is owed to the advertising principle of positioning, as most of music video is really advertising masquerading as "music helper." If the song itself doesn't give you a good idea of what the artist is all about (Barrett Strong's "Money," a genuine rhythm and blues rocker, was transformed into a mod anthem by the Beatles, and a mockery by the Flying Lizards, for instance), the visual imagery ought to convey the performers' true sensibility: do they feel it, do they wear it as a sign or metaphor, or do they piss on it? As the audience is targeted by the music-and-video industry, so is the artist. Instead of experiencing a radicalization in music owing to political and social concerns, the chief influence in who-stands-where in music is marketing. It helps sort out music that is politically- and socially-conscious, fashion-conscious and self-conscious. It is hard to imagine followers of bands like U2, Bruce Springsteen, Frankie Goes To Hollywood, Special AKA or, for old time's sake, The Who, as being for Reagan; the distinction is less clear when thinking of fans of Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Laurie Anderson or Billy Idol; and followers of Boy George, like their icon, are all over the map. Sometimes advertising breaks down movements into component parts. Rap music, in the tradition of rockers, gives way to break dancing (which is then swallowed up as a mod phenomenon), which in turn is featured as a McDonald's ad, making a mockery of the whole thing. Integrity, in the architectural sense, is under fire in the music world.

Each category has its own message, its own champions, its own supporters, and in some cases, its own venues and radio stations. The "mixed bag," a philosophy of eclecticism that

evolved from the '60s "all is groovy" attitude, is viewed with greater hostility in 1985 than at any moment in recent rock history. If Bruce Springsteen put out a dance record remixed for club play, his long-time fans might be piqued or at least put into a state of confusion. (Certainly, fans of heavy metal and hard rock, the leaders of the "Death to Disco" movement, would freak out if Twisted Sister became a fave at the Crisco Disco). Mods can go any which way, making ballads and dance records, R&B, reggae and rock all representing the backbeat (backbone) and that's O.K.; but when a mocker attempts to invade the attitudinal purview of another genre like Culture Club's "War Song," the result is an untrustworthy (never mind shitty) record, and it stiffs, despite the artist's multitudinous appeal.

What all of this signals, perhaps, is a return to a certain kind of naturalism, a naturalism based on order where freedom is not synonymous with excellence through eclecticism (limitlessness) but where it is best defined as that which stays closest to home, knows and understands that territory most thoroughly, and maybe even stands for home itself. In 1985, the trends—whichever direction or category they fall into—will be clearly defined. Decentralization is the key. The new recording artists may not be inherently community-minded, but they will be community-marketed, so if there's a message for you out there, you'll get it.

My guess is, the greatest success in the coming year will fall to the group that remains truest to its school. This doesn't necessarily imply an edge for rockers, nor does it mean they will outsell the mods and mockers, but their attitude seems to be more in tune with the changing times. Socially relevant (forgive the anachronism) dance music will become more popular than the "move-it-in-move-it-out-disco-lady" mindlessness or "disco inferno" self-reference that characterized dance music in the '70s. Folk-inspired harmonies a la the Eurythmics will be applied to a wider variety of musical forms, overlaid with a Woody Guthrie-ish concern in its lyrical content. An appreciation of traditional values will eventually supplant fucking and fucking off as the soul of pop music lyrics; abstraction and stream-of-consciousness lyrics will be experiencing their swan song; and the "Purple Haze" mind-set, already pushed to its outer limits of mod into the mocker camp (on one hand by Prince's *Purple Rain* and on the other by Grandmaster Melle Mel's strong but ambiguous "White Lines"), will suffer, as growing numbers of youngfolk begin to appreciate the advantages of an endorphin high versus the chemical variety, i.e., it's a better high to dance hard all night than to get high all night in order to dance. And moreso than ever (ever being since the mid-'60s), the cost of drugs and of casual sex has become too dear, economically and spiritually, and gradually its place will be taken by hard work and courtship, on and offstage. Hedonists need not worry: it won't happen overnight.

## Camp Representatives

### Rockers

Bruce Springsteen, U2, Talking Heads (see their film), Joan Jett, Bob Seger, John Cougar Mellencamp, Lou Reed (now more than ever), Billy Joel, David Johansen, Tina Turner, UB40, Special AKA, James Brown

### Mods

Michael Jackson, Hall & Oates, Prince, Billy Idol, Police, Joe Jackson, David Bowie, Wham!

### Mockers

Boy George, Madonna, Adam Ant, Diana Ross, Bette Midler, Devo, Motley Crue, lip-synch TV shows

Obviously this is only a partial listing. Invite your friends and neighbors and create a real trivial pursuit by filling out your own lists.



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# THE FIRE WITHIN

*An Interview  
with  
U2's Bono*

BY WAYNE KING

*THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: the reputation among journalists enjoyed by Bono, the lead singer for U2 (although he doesn't mind the "Bono," the once and future Paul Hewson would like to see his "Vox" surname retired), for his "scorched ear" policy when giving interviews is well deserved. The problem with Bono is not how to get him to say something, but how to get him to stop. Mind you, this is not a complaint; rock 'n' roll stars who are more than willing to talk and who have something to say are a rare commodity. (Strangely enough for one so self-assured, Bono doesn't like "the person I end up being in interviews sometimes. I say, Who is this man? I*



*"We're more hungry and thirsty about music than we've ever been," says Bono. "In that sense we haven't been bought off. And we haven't achieved our ultimate goal."*



U2: ADAM CLAYTON, BONO, THE EDGE, LARRY MULLEN

don't know who he is—he's not the guy I go to bed with each night.")

Two interviews with Bono, first on a trip to Philadelphia in early December where the band played their first American concert in eighteen months, and later over the phone from the West Coast where the mini-tour was wrapping up, were among the most pleasant, giving and warm exchanges I've ever had—not just with rock stars, but with anybody. And there was plenty to talk about: U2's status as perhaps the most admired, respected, if not actually worshipped band for youth in the '80s; the responsibilities of such a position, and the limits of that responsibility; the fanatical response to the band in their shows in Philly and New York, and the problems that occurred at the Radio City show (see "How Long To Sing This Song?", Anthony DeCurtis' review of that show in the February RECORD); and most definitely, their intriguing if often

troubling new LP, *The Unforgettable Fire*.

I've read that *The Unforgettable Fire* is the title of a collection of poetry from the survivors of Hiroshima, and I wondered if that's where you took the album's title from.

That's right—in fact, it's more than that. I wish this was talked about a lot more. *The Unforgettable Fire* is an exhibition of paintings, drawings and writings done by survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were done by people of all age groups, from 7 to 70 years old, by amateurs and professionals, and they are an art treasure in Japan. We had come into contact with them through the Chicago Peace Museum, because we were part of an exhibit in the museum in '83, the *Give Peace A Chance* exhibit. And the images from the paintings and some of the writings stained me, I couldn't get rid of them. Their influence on

the album was a subliminal one, but I realized as the album was moving on, that this image of "the unforgettable fire" applied not only to the nuclear winterscape of "A Sort of Homecoming," but also the unforgettable fire of a man like Martin Luther King, or the consuming fire which is heroin. So it became a multi-purpose image for me, but it derived from that exhibition.

After using Steve Lillywhite on all three of your studio records, you chose this time to use Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois. Why the switch?

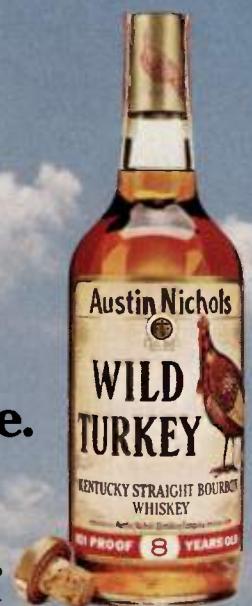
We were at some sort of crossroads; we could have turned left or right, but we wanted to go straight on, and I suppose Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois helped us make a new departure. But that new departure was a continuance—we set out to improvise in the three-piece set-up of guitar, bass and drums. We wanted to bring



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atmosphere to rock 'n' roll, to give some more than just taking what's there. There was some regression, as well as progression. We were going back, a retreat to an original aim, which was that a whisper can be louder than a scream. Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois were aids, and had been in the times of other artists' transitional periods, like the Talking Heads, or David Bowie, whom Eno helped revive when he came to Berlin defunct after his funk trip.

**And yet the critical reaction this time has been less than overwhelming.**

I personally feel, had it been our first record, and had people not had preconceived notions about the followup (to *War*) and the group, a lot of people would have had it at the top of their list, because I think its mood is a very interesting mood. I think if a new band came out with it right now, people would be talking about that group. But I think a lot of people cast their aspirations and belief in rock 'n' roll on this group—instead of holding up the white flag, they want us to carry their flag.

**Still, from what you were telling me on the tour bus, when Pete Townshend told you that he felt U2 was picking up where the Who left off, it awed you, but you didn't seem to reject it.**

But we didn't accept it—we threw that flag away!

You have to spend a lot of time with *The Unforgettable Fire*; you just can't put the needle into the grooves and expect it to jump out on the table and dance for you; it's not like that. I wish that it were, but it wouldn't be the record we made. A lot of people who believed in the group went, Let's hear it, this is the group I've been telling everybody about. Then they put it on (grunts, pretends great exertion), waited for the big bang, and really, we hadn't pressed that particular button. It's a much slower and seductive record—for people who have spent time with it, or came with no preconceptions, it is by far their favorite record.

**So it doesn't bother you that much that long-time fans of the band like Rolling Stone's Kurt Loder called the lyrics "a spew of blather"?**

How can I be one day Batman, and the next the Joker? (laughs) No, that doesn't sound right! How can I one day be someone with something to say and the next day deaf, dumb and blind? What upset me (about some of the criticism) was the cynicism—for me, cynicism is Public Enemy No. 1. Actually, the Cynics in the Greek sense were very positive people, so I shouldn't even describe (the critics) as cynics. I wasn't upset that people didn't connect with the record—of course I could understand that, although it did get some very good reviews in this country.

**Did you expect there to be such a misconception?**

I think there's a common misconception—that we're a group with a black and white picture of a boy's face on their first album (*Boy's cover was changed in the U.S.; the package appeared that way in Britain*), and the picture becomes a symbol of some sort of purity and innocence. People associate the group with that. Well, I'd like to be able to own up to that, but I can't always. Like anyone else, we've crossed or fallen over the line that you would, if you were lots smarter, draw. We've fallen over as many times as we've stood up. Elvis Costello told me recently that we walked a tightrope and fell off as many times as we

know, the 95 percent—the race is the prize, to quote. I mean, I hate when I make an off-the-cuff remark to have to live with it the rest of my life—it's like you're responsible for putting the bars in your own window, so you can't jump out. That's one reason we've avoided doing so much press—I have a gift for going over the top, it's this drug adrenalin that does it.

I say something like that to avoid responsibility to some degree—I don't want people coming to me, or the group, as some sort of God substitute or guru-like goons because I can look at myself in the mirror and just laugh, 'cause I know who I am. We've grown up in public in Dublin, and people there know us to be the jerks that we are. I think it's good when I walk down the street in Dublin and one person will say, That's Bono, and the other person will say, So what?

I was trying to explain recently to someone, one of the reasons I'm interested in the principle of surrender, one of the reasons I'm interested in a man of peace like Martin Luther King, is that I'm the opposite. One of the things I'm interested in about the concept of turn the other cheek is that I'm a person liable to give out the black eye. I am the opposite to the songs—... (grasps for words) I am in no sense a role model.

**Nevertheless you obviously are just that for a lot of people—you can tell that from the fans who were hanging around the hotel last night, by the way crowds sing along and yell at your shows.**

Let me say this—I think applause is a very good thing, I think people should clap one another more often. That's why rock 'n' roll concerts are so uplifting, because a lot of people are applauding others. That should go on a little more. When I'm on-stage, I'm also applauding the music.

I also think that some people can miss the point. In Sydney, there were people camped outside my hotel room on the fire escape, and the others were also experiencing this, and I felt these people missed the point. Because if people want to treat me with respect they should treat me as a person. All the group feels that way; Larry particularly cannot handle being a piece of something to break a bit off, and it got nearer breaking point in Australia for him. Everyone wants the uplifting thing of a concert, the connection, but if that turns into a lopsided thing then it becomes hard to deal with.

People say, What do you think of groups that are sort of copying your sound? I say, Well, if they copy the spirit of the group, there would be no U2 clone bands, because the spirit of the group is the spirit of the individual, and that's what interests me, the individual. And people must approach me as an individual so that's why I try and avoid responsibility, because if people look to you for that, then they're taking responsibility off their own lives.

*"I try and avoid responsibility, because if people look to you for that then they're taking responsibility off their own lives"*

held on. But he said he admires us for it—not many of our contemporaries would walk it.

**But with *The Unforgettable Fire* you're getting closer to where you want to go?**

Yes, we're getting closer to where we want to go. I don't know where it is (chuckles), but something tells me we're closer. We're more hungry and thirsty about music than we've ever been. In that sense we haven't been bought off. The carrot's always being waved in your face, the bribes are always there to formalize your music, to "tin" it, to freeze it. We're not at ease now—since fame and fortune were not necessarily the goal of what we were doing, we don't feel we've achieved our ultimate goal. I think We're just being born as a group. Adam said it really well: he said we've spent the last five years learning to be U2 and we'll spend the next five finding out what U2 can do.

**You told a writer for *The New York Times* that you can't be a spokesman for a generation, since you've got nothing to say but "Help!" If that's all you've got to say, how could the band be closer to its goal? Is it more frustrating the closer you get to where you want to go—having, say, 5 percent to go?**

That is precisely it, but it would take me a song to say that. It's the 5 percent. You

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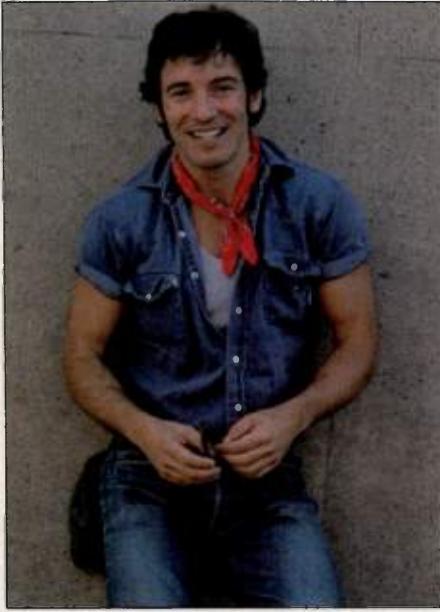
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# Salem Spirit

## ON THE BEAT



Bruce Springsteen continues to put his money where his mouth is in the service of worthy causes. During his seemingly endless road trek with the E Street Band in the wake of *Born in the USA*, the Asbury Park Angel has aided—through benefit gigs and the like—a long list of projects directed at helping veterans, the poor, and the elderly. Among them: the Pittsburgh Food Bank run by Local 1397 of the United Steel Workers, Tacoma's Northwest Harvest, the Washington Fair Share, the Berkeley Emergency Food Project in Oakland, the Steel Workers' Old Timers Food Bank in L.A., and World Hunger Year in New York. Taking a well-earned breather from his labors, Springsteen turned up at a recent Red Rockers gig in Denver. Seems he rates one of the band's tunes, "China," a personal fave.

### MISCELLANIA

Former Byrd Gene Clark was sighted when the Red Rockers played the Palace in L.A. The backstage word is that Clark and the Rockers (the latter recently raised \$7,000 with a benefit concert on behalf of the San Diego Child Abuse Prevention Foundation) discussed a possible collaboration—inspired, no doubt, by the Byrds-influenced textures of the rockers' *Schizophrenic Circus* album. For those interested in such things, the band members were all barely seven years old when "Eight Miles High" was banned from the nation's airwaves... Quite a few eyebrows were raised over the Supremes' "reunion" performance on last year's Motown TV special. Now, St. Martin's Press has announced that it has acquired the rights to Mary Wilson's autobiography, *Dream Girl: My Life as a Supreme*. Described as "explosive," the book (on which Wilson is teaming with L.A. Times contributor Mau-

reen J. O'Brien) isn't expected to turn up on the shelves for a while... It's only rock 'n' roll, but two ladies in Columbus, Ohio took things to extremes recently when they went on a hunger strike for **Billy Squier**. Apparently, the Massachusetts-born musician had made the error of omitting the town from his *Signs of Life* tour itinerary. The ladies gathered 8,000 signatures on a petition and appeared on several local TV and radio shows to advertise their plight, then went backstage after a Squier gig in Cincinnati. A man who knows dedication when he sees it, Squier relented and asked his management to book him into Columbus... Never thought we'd see the day when rock stars would be trying to juggle career and parenthood, but **Martha Davis** has managed to handle both with a great deal of success. After recording and touring incessantly through 1984, she and the rest of the **Motels** have their newest album in the can, ready to go. The powers-that-be at Capitol Records hope to have it on the racks by March... With savvy movie directors slapping rock soundtracks onto their projects in hopes of luring America's teens into movie theaters, **Kansas**' drummer **Phil Ehart** has opted to fill a gap in the market. He has formed a company called The Inside Track, an Atlanta-based consulting service which helps movie people sidestep management and record companies in their quest for songwriters and musicians. Among the artists-for-hire are former **Doobie Brother Pat Simmons**, **Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen** and **Robin Zander**, **Stephen Bishop**, **Supertramp's Rick Davies**, **Kerry Livgren** of **Kansas**, former **Genesis** guitarist **Steve Hackett**, **William King** of the **Commodores**, **Wayne Nelson** of the **Little River Band**, and **Survivor's Jim Petrik** (whose *Rocky III* theme, "Eye of the Tiger," was nominated for an Oscar and a Grammy)... Despite changing musical fashion, **Bob Seger's** stripped-down, blue-collar rock has never gone out of style. He and the **Silver Bullet Band** broadened their appeal with *The Distance*, and now they're poised to do it again. Seger's newest album, on Capitol, is on the company's release sheet this month... In case you missed it, the **dB's** and former *Saturday Night Live* personality **Mr. Bill** recently put their heads together for a rock/public service video aimed at helping curb the alarming increase in teenage suicides. Set to the tune of "Amplifier" from the band's recent album, *Like This*, the mini-epic charts the final hours of a guy named Danny, who comes home to find his girl has moved out (leaving only his amplifier), and winds up so distraught that he Checks Out on a Permanent Basis. Mr. Bill introduces the story, narrates footage of some of his past problems, and concludes by urging kids to try and ride out their disappointments. The video was produced by Mr. Bill's creator, **Walter "Mr. Hand" Williams**. ■



With **David Lee Roth** going it alone (at least on the EP front), **Eddie Van Halen** has been checking out different stages as well—most recently, the one belonging to **Patty Smyth** and **Scandal**. With wife **Valerie Bertinelli** watching from the wings, the guitarist cruised out, ax in hand, during a recent Smyth and Co. gig at the Palladium in Los Angeles. Five nights later, Mr. & Mrs. Van Halen caught a flight to Austin, Texas, where he again infused some high octane into **Scandal's** set. Obviously pleased, the couple flew to Dallas with the band. At the Convention Center there, Val waved from the sidelines as her husband staked out **Scandal's** stage for three tunes: "River Deep, Mountain High," "Goodbye to You," and "Maybe We Went Too Far." Said one delighted (if mystified) **Scandal** member, "I guess they're fans."

### BOOKS

**Ray and Dave Davies** may have had their differences over the years, but you can't accuse Muswell Hill's most famous sons of being quitters. Strange as it seems, there's never been a really in-depth book devoted to **the Kinks**. Writer John Mendelsohn has now filled the gap with *The Kinks Kronikles*. Billed as an authorized bio on the world's second oldest band, the book leaves few stones unturned. It's all here: the music, the madness, the fights, the brotherly love. Available from Quill at \$6.95... For those who can't get enough of **Genesis**, yet another book on the band is on the shelves. Written by Philip Kamin and Peter Goddard, this one's called *Genesis: Peter Gabriel, Phil*



*Collins, and Beyond.* The focus, past and present, is on the band's two frontmen. The photos are clear, the price is right (\$9.95), and **Phil Collins** provides the introduction. Published by Beaufort Books...As a follow-up to two previous successes, Roger Dean and David Howells have put together **Album**

**Cover Album: Volume III** which is now available from St. Martin's Press (\$15.95). This full-color, oversized book reviews a collection of LP sleeves from the ugly to the sublime...Thanks to the success of **90125**, Dan Hedges' book *Yes: the Authorized Biography* is available in bookstores in the States. It charts the band's history from their garage band origins in late-psychadelic London through their "breakup" in 1980. Published at \$14.95 by Sidgwick and Jackson, it's essential reading for those who are interested in learning the origins of the "new" **Yes**...In *Bob Marley, Reggae King of the World*, newly unveiled by Dutton, authors Malika Lee Whitney and Dermont Hussey explore Marley's legend and influence from the Jamaican point of view. The \$14.95 "authorized biography" (originally published in Jamaica) sports a foreword by Rita Marley...Arguably the world's biggest promoters of studs-and-black leather, the boys of Britain's **Judas Priest** have been cranking up the volume to maximum for more than a decade. *Heavy Duty*, Steve Gett's new book, traces the band's climb from scuffling days on the English motorways to their current status as one of the top arena attractions on the planet. At \$8.95, it's published by Cherry Lane Books...**David Bowie's** *Ziggy Stardust* may be ten years old, but some of his fans still consider it the most intriguing point in his chameleon-like career. Plainly a devotee of Ziggy and the Spiders From Mars, Mick Rock has compiled a collection of rare photos with accompanying text titled *Ziggy Stardust: Bowie 1972/1973*. At \$12.95, it's published by St. Martin's Press. ■

With just about everybody in rock going Hollywood these days, you can't blame Devo for wanting to do the same. Unlike most, however, their idea of cross-careers has resulted in a new restaurant in—believe it or not—upwardly mobile Beverly Hills. The flashy new eatery, called Bao Wow, dishes out dim sum (Chinese appetizers) to hungry masses weary from a hard day's shopping along Rodeo Drive. The musical Akronites' partners in this culinary venture are a mixed bunch: **Melissa Manchester**, **Bruce Jenner**, **Bernie Taupin**, and L.A.'s TV horror queen, **Elvira**.

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# maybe she's good

10 Theories  
On How  
Madonna  
Got 'It'

Usually it takes a while for a pop star to earn heavyweight hatred from a significant percentage of the press and public. But like everything else in her (very) young career, fear and loathing have come quickly indeed to singer/writer/dancer/hot number Madonna. Loathe her or love her, it's interesting to try and figure this one out. Theories abound, including a few from the lady herself.

By  
Laura  
Fissinger



## I. The Phyllis and Bob Theory

As Madonna puts it, "I seem to be the girl they hate to love." No kidding. Private citizens tap their feet to "Lucky Star" or "Holiday" while wondering aloud if anything short of exorcism will get her off

their radios and MTVs. The press file reads like she's a ghoulish maid-servant of notorious anti-libber Phyllis Schlafly and notorious Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione, sucking all the feminism and IQ points from the fragile neck of popular culture.

Fans and foes alike seem to agree that she's an '80s incarnation of the "It" girl—blessed/cursed with a charisma that makes

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skin goosebump as well as crawl, something beyond her prettiness or infamous tummy. It makes her videos, records and (soon) movies impossible to dismiss.

It's there in person, too. She comes down a corporate hallway in a big black jacket and modest red-knit dress, looking like the video Madonna sans the bare belly and excess Catholic iconography. There is absolutely nothing solicitous in her manner of greeting, nothing straining to charm, nothing yanking at you for approval. Her handshake (a tiny red glove conceals the hand) is firm, and brief. Even so, the force is with her; it swallows her little frame as she walks toward a vast conference room like a sixth grader going to a hard math exam.

Undoubtedly, her mind is elsewhere. Just this week, "Like A Virgin" has gone to Number One on the pop charts, and its namesake LP to Number Three, only five weeks after release. Her first LP took almost a year to happen, but once it did it sold two million-plus copies. It's not quite finished yet, either. Nor is the fallout, which so far includes the four hit singles, three videos, one starring film role and one small part in a movie for which she sang three tunes. Oh yeah, and the lousy reputation.

Part of that reputation says that Madonna is simply not a nice person, but superb at appearing so when someone's approval could be useful. On this particular day, anyway, she is kind of bristly. A little sharp-tongued and self-satisfied. But she makes no effort to hide any of the warts. More than a few rock stars are downright oily and self-protective when they need nice press. Madonna answers questions straight out, is only pretty nice most of the session, and leaves the warts right out there. If she's such a master at showbiz politics, where's the politicking? Where's the manipulation?

## II. The Wedding Dress Theory

Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone was born in Detroit on August 16, 1958. Veronica is her Catholic confirmation name, chosen because St. Veronica "wiped the face of Jesus and then carried around the cloth with his blood and sweat on it—it was so passionate and weird." The French-Italian family had five boys and three girls who lost their mother when her namesake, Madonna, was six. Madonna didn't much like the stepmother that appeared two years later; no doubt the woman felt it. Even in grade school, Madonna apparently had extraordinary intensity; it both scared and fascinated her.

"I felt overwhelmed by it at points in my life. People didn't understand me, especially when I was young; I'd realize I'd just alienated someone and scared them away, a boy or a friend or whoever. I handled it in

a number of ways—either I'd get more arrogant and say 'I don't need you, I don't care if you understand,' or I'd get upset and cry. You can get hurt by it, or you can give them the finger. But it still hurts."

She learned to be defensive then, and still practices, frequently. "It's easy for me to come out and say stuff. I think I was naturally a verbal and defensive kind of person, but I think I really developed that aspect of my personality growing up in my family, not feeling happy, feeling like I had to defend myself and make a statement, you know? It's about insecurity."

There are mementos of that time. "Just the other day I found a photograph of me dressed in my mother's wedding gown when I was five years old. It was very strange."

## III. The Barbie Doll Dishwashing Theory

"Oh yeah, I played with my Barbie dolls all the time—I definitely lived out my fantasies with them." Madonna lets loose a naughty chuckle. "I dressed them up in sarongs and mini-skirts and stuff. They were sexy, having sex all the time. I rubbed her and Ken together a lot. And they were bitchy, man, Barbie was *mean*." She hoots. "Barbie would say to Ken, 'I'm not gonna stay home and do the dishes. You stay home! I'm going out tonight, I'm going bowling, okay, so forget it!' You know? She was going to be sexy, but she was going to be *tough*."

A quote from a recent story is brought up in which Madonna had claimed sexual awakening at age five. "Made it sound like I masturbated all the time, didn't it?" she says with a raised eyebrow. "I really do remember from when I was very, very young, being really attracted to men, and being real flirtatious. The power of my

More than a pretty face? Says producer Nile Rodgers: 'Madonna's a serious artist. It would be nice if some ostensibly smart people who know about music would get past the image and get into the music.'



PHOTO: LAURA LEVINE

femininity and charm, I remember it was just something I had, that I'd been given, you know what I mean? From the age of five I remember being able to affect people that way. I felt something but I didn't know what to do with it. I was just very aware of it."

## IV. The Boyfriend Theory

In the teenage years, two things were pure pleasure—dance and music. Madonna studied ballet as much as her father and her legs would allow. As for the music, it was on her radio, and the more radio-perfect, the better. "My favorites when I was little were Stevie Wonder, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, the Jackson 5, the Motown sound. But then I really like '60s pop songs too—"The Letter" by the Box Tops, "Sugar Sugar" by the Archies, Gary Puckett, Bobby Sherman, "Happy Together" by the Turtles. I loved all those innocent little pop songs. No hard rock, no heavy metal, no jazz. Pop and soul were it."

Dance won her a four-year free ride at the University of Michigan, but the prognosis for toe-shoe stardom was lousy. As would be the case for years to come, Ma-

donna saw no reason to follow rules, and that rubbed the rulemakers the wrong way. After one school year, she moved to New York City. Hometown friend Steve Bray had started her on drums and singing and a little songwriting. It didn't take long in New York before dance stepped aside to make more room for music.

The next teacher/companion was Dan Gilroy of Queens, whose adoration of the Beatles and their melodies shaped Madonna's sense of how to construct a song; Gilroy also had the instruments and the patience to start her with the C chords. Madonna left for a frustrating European

tour singing and dancing behind a disco singer, then came back to spend a valuable year in the Gilroy brother's band and home. Eventually she wanted things in the band her own way, although that way wasn't entirely clear yet. Manhattan and new compatriots beckoned. Bray came out to work with her through two rock 'n' roll bands. They didn't turn out to be the way, either. "I didn't want to go in a rock vein, and that's what created the schism between my manager of that time period and myself. I was really being influenced by the urban radio stuff that was starting to be everywhere, on the streets and in the clubs. I love to dance in clubs, and I love all the music they play. It made me really want to dance, it was so soulful. I thought, why can't I do that? I wanted to make music that I would want to dance to when I was out at the clubs."

Logically, New York nightclubs is where she went next. It came down to peddling R&B demo tapes done by her and Bray, at the places where the songs' magic would get their roughest test. If the songs made people dance in New York's hipness hothouses, that would be the sign that her

way, finally, was the right way. DJ boyfriend Mark Kamins remixed one tape and then took it to Sire, where a deal was made. But neither Bray nor Kamins got to produce the first album, a job they each felt had been promised, and earned. Instead, *Madonna* was done by veteran R&B producer Reggie Lucas (Stephanie Mills, Phyllis Hyman). Madonna knows it didn't seem right. She also knows what else it seemed like. She looks the reporter straight in the eye: "If anybody wants to know, I never fucked anyone to get anywhere. Never."

## V. The Trickle-Down Theory

Stories about Madonna's method of career advancement started to circulate shortly after the debut LP came to life on the pop charts. How did this woman with no band or playing credits on her record and no known credibility connections score such a surprise hit? Awfully, uh, *juicy* looking, isn't she? "Some of the things people say are so ridiculous, it's not even worth de-

From blue jeans to Boy Toy: 'People want to see me as a little tart bimbo who sells records because I'm cute. My work is the only thing that's going to change any minds.'



PHOTO ANDRE GROSSMAN

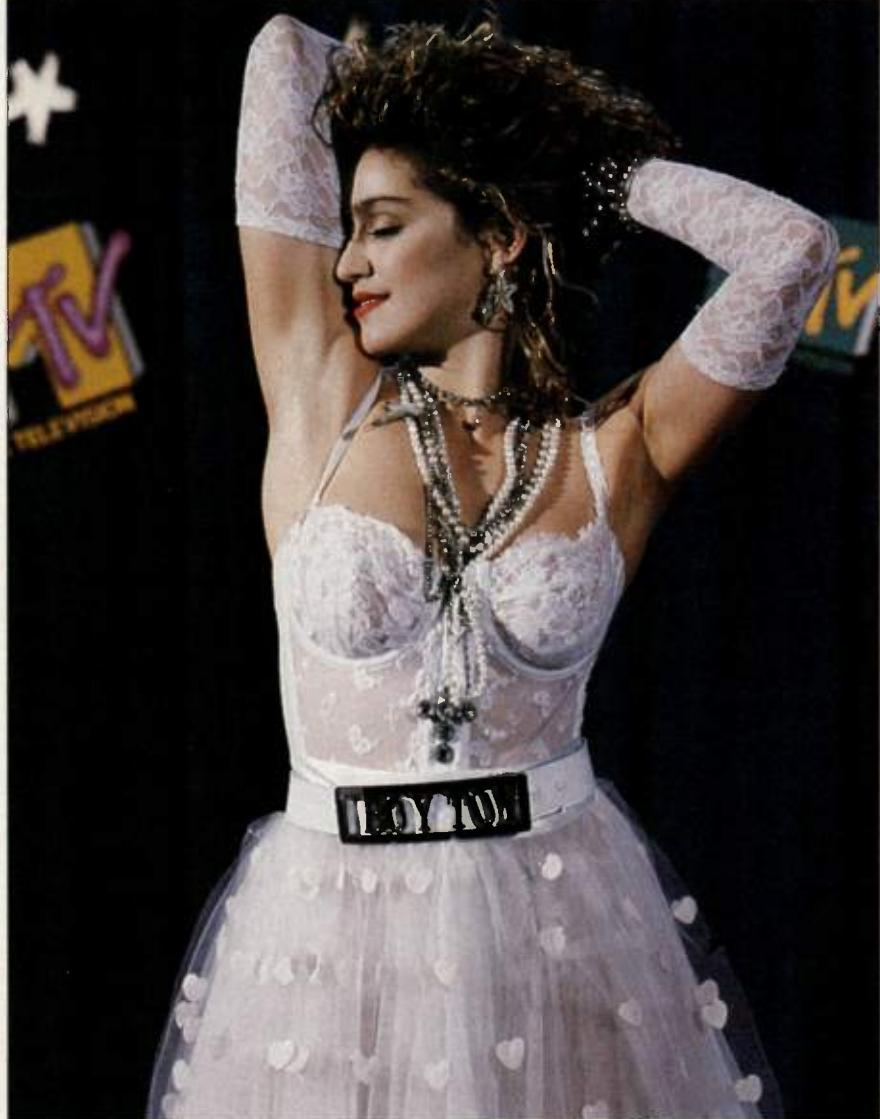


PHOTO MARK WEISS

fending yourself. The guy who wrote one recent long story, he got his facts right, all my boyfriends' names right and how they helped my career, but he wrote the article from just one corner of the room. He just talked about what he saw from that one corner." She speaks with a tiny shade of sadness, but no rancor. "Yes, all my boyfriends turned out to be very helpful to my career, but that's not the only reason I stayed with them. I loved them very much." A pause, then a smile and a shrug. "I'm not Alexis from *Dynasty*. And going around in corsets is not all I am either. People home in on what they want to home in on. They rarely go for the sum total of someone's personality."

Madonna is not the only one who got helped. Gilroy's debut with his band, Breakfast Club, is due soon. Kamins is collecting royalties from *Madonna* and working on new projects. Bray is working with the Breakfast Club; he also had four co-writing credits on *Like A Virgin*. And Lucas, who lost his slot to Nile Rodgers on LP #2, is reportedly busier than ever.

## VI. The Bathroom Theory

"Reggie was about one thing," explains Madonna. "He did R&B. He's a good producer, very open and sensitive. But Nile has worked with so many kinds of musicians, and every record he's made is a great one as far as I'm concerned. He has the pop thing in him really strong, and he's done great dance stuff with Chic and Sister Sledge and all those others, and he's worked with a lot of female vocalists like Diana Ross. I identified with him, too. He's a real street person, and we hung out at the same clubs. Even before I started to interview producers I thought he was the one I wanted for the second record."

Rodgers is getting to be a popular interview these days for people writing about Madonna. The implication is, of course, that Rodgers is legit, see, and if he likes Madonna *without* being her boyfriend, then maybe she's not a total bimbo. Rodgers is affable and willing to talk, even with a mean head cold and a long airplane trip only a few hours away. "Someone like Iggy Pop can get out there and be super-sexual and wild and that's great. But Madonna is a woman, so they say she's sleazy? Madonna is blatantly sexual and sensual, but not sleazy, not even a little bit. In my opinion, she's an excellent natural singer, a natural musician, a serious artist. It would be real nice if some ostensibly smart people who know about music would get past the image and get into the music. I'm hoping she can just ride out all the crap people are saying about her. I think a lot of the real nasty stuff is coming from men. And all that arrogance bit—she sticks to her guns, that's all. It's that attitude that comes from growing up in a huge family, you know, al-

ways having to fight and yell for things like time in the bathroom."

## VII. The Chauffeur's Friend's Theory

"I was making this movie, *Desperately Seeking Susan*. One of the drivers that took me to the set every day was this kid, and one day he said to me, 'I have this bet going with my friend, he told me that all the music you do was done by someone else and they picked the songs and did it all, and all they needed was a girl singer and you auditioned and they picked you. And Madonna isn't your real name and all of it is fabricated.' And I said, 'WHAAAAAATT?? Are you out of your mind??' But that's what his friend told him, and it suddenly hit me that that's probably what a lot of people think. It hit me."

## VIII. The Phyllis and Bob Theory, Part II

Here's the catch for the modern girl: you can be self-determining. You now have the right. You should be self-determining, you *must*. But. If your self determines that it wants to be smart and sexpot at the same time? You got the power to choose, honey, but you chose *wrong*. "I thought the Gina Schock quote was pretty funny," grins Madonna, referring to Schock recent statement to the effect that Madonna makes it hard for people to take women seriously but that Schock loved the record in spite of it. "I think people want to see me as a little tart bimbo who sells records because I'm cute and record companies push 'em because they know they can make a quick buck on my image." Madonna gives another eyeball to eyeball look. "People don't want to like me. And that's because you're not supposed to be flirty unless you're an airhead. And they say I do all this stuff to my appearance and look the way I do because I want to please men." The blue eyes roll toward the ceiling. "I'm doing it because I like it. If I don't like it, no one's going to. I do it because it turns *me* on."

Any female role models or heroes? She sighs. "Carole Lombard. She's my all-time idol. I love her so much. She's real sentimental and vulnerable, and funny, and sometimes she's real bitchy and tough, too. She's it."

## IX. The Sheet Theory

You gotta pay if you wanna play, says the firm set of her mouth. "I try to have a thick skin, but every once in a while I read some-

thing that someone says about me and it's so slanderous and moralistic, and it has nothing to do with my music. There was this one review that said things about me that boys said to me in the seventh grade." For instance?

"For instance—'slut.' Yep, they called me that in this review. And 'cheap coquette,' a girl who made her way into lots of back seat in the drive-in theater, the kind of girl that made your father slip you a Trojan and pat you on the back and say, 'Have a good time, don't stay out too late.' " Her eyes focus across the room as if she's watching a movie. "I remember guys saying that sort of stuff to me when I was really young. I thought suddenly that the whole experience was repeating itself all over again. Those boys didn't understand me, and they didn't like me because I wasn't stupid, and I was blunt and opinionated, but I was a flirt at the same time. They took my aggressiveness as a come-on. They didn't get it. And they didn't *get it*, if you know what I mean, so I guess they had to say things because they knew that was the only way they could hurt me. That review felt like junior high all over again. And check this out! This reviewer also said that every guy across the country is stroking himself under his sheets thinking about me." Madonna's face creases in mischief. "Maybe he's doing it himself and he feels guilty. Or maybe he asked me out on a date five years ago and I snubbed him." It's not out of the question.

## X. The Time Theory

Madonna has to vamoose in 15 minutes, cover story and unanswered questions notwithstanding. This week preceding a needed vacation is crammed with band auditions for the boys who will go on the "Virgin Tour." The trek will start around March and cover the States as well as Europe. Before and after and probably even during the tour there are TV tapings, fashion layouts, photo sessions, videos, commercials, movie scripts to consider and on and on. And then, "I'll check into Bellevue, or maybe the Betty Ford Clinic, huh?" Any positive press along the way will be nice, of course, but serious reputation repair can only come if she keeps going, going, going. And she knows it.

"The fact of the matter is that you can use your beauty and use your charm and be flirtatious, and you can get people interested in you. Maybe at the start they're only interested in your beauty. But you cannot maintain that. In the end, talent is the only thing. My work is the only thing that's going to change any minds. The videos, the records, the movies are the things that will eventually make them think that I'm more than just a girl with a pretty face who's had some pop hits. It's just going to take some time."

# Diet Quiz #1

Which has less calories and alcohol:

1.  5 oz. white wine?
2.  5 oz. Bacardi rum and diet Coke?  
(1 oz. Bacardi, 4 oz. diet Coke)



According to U.S. Dept. of Agriculture data, a 5-oz. serving of white wine contains 121 calories. It has an alcohol content of about 12½%.

Based on data from the same source, a drink made of 1 oz. 80-proof Bacardi rum and 4 oz. diet Coke has only 66 calories. And its alcohol content is just 8%. So if you chose Bacardi and diet Coke, you're a winner.

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ANTHONY DECURTIS

# THE NEW EDITION OF WHAT?



PHOTO: EBET ROBERTS

Too hot to cool it now: (from left) Multi-talented entertainers De Voe, Bivins, Brown, Bell, Tresvant

**T**hat's Ronny's job, the money aspect. I'm Michael, I take care of the promotions and see what's happenin'."

"I'm Ricky. I take care of the band, make sure they stay right, that they playin' what they're supposed to be playin'."

"I'm Ralph, I make sure we have all our things set up right and that the person who designs our uniforms knows exactly what the fellas and I want. And I make sure everybody has their shoes and stuff on time."

"I'm Bobby. I make sure all the routines are down before we go on stage."

Half an hour deep into this talk with New Edition, things started getting ragged. I mean, I'd been introduced to each of these guys when the interview started. I knew who they were. And this wasn't radio or TV, so no one but me would know or care that Ronny De Voe watches the cash or that Ralph Tresvant is the Fab Fivester who makes sure everybody has their shoes.

But the rule is writ that all questions ad-

dressed to the band get answered individually, in turn, and be sure to let the folks in electronic medialand know who's talking, even if you're not on the electronic media. The promo push is on and New Edition is primed . . . sorta.

Asked to name their heroes, musical or non, three Editions cite the Jacksons, a ratio that cynics would say leaves the band a trim 40 percent short of total honesty. When the combo's debut single, "Candy Girl," hit the air waves in 1983, only the deaf couldn't detect which monumentally talented young black pop quintet these five barely pubescent Bostonians were claiming to be the New Edition of.

It all seemed part of a plan concocted by Boston studio main man Maurice Starr. Starr spotted New Edition at the 1981 "Hollywood Talent Night" contest at Boston's Strand Theater. Even though the band didn't cop top prize (they placed), Starr decided to work with them. His hot-handed brother, Michael Jonzun of the Jonzun Crew, and board-man extraordi-

Boston's fab five is here to stay, so just cool it now

naire Arthur Baker joined the project. The product was *Candy Girl*, the first New Edition album, released on the independent Streetwise label—with all 10 tunes written or co-written by variations on Baker/Starr/Jonzun. The goal seemed to be molding, or maybe inventing, the Jackson 5 of the '80s, a cute, non-threatening kid band that would fill the teen void left by Michael J. and his brothers when they turned voting age.

What did New Edition think of this plan? Well, lead vocalist Ralph Tresvant and his cohorts Ricky Bell, Bobby Brown, Ronny De Voe and Michael Bivins were all 15 or younger, and they claim they were too psyched at the time about making a record to be thinking about much of anything else, including what or whom they sounded like.

"Most of the material on our first album was given to us. The things that were happening in the studio were controlled; we just took it off the paper," Bivins states. "He [Starr] wanted us to sing it so we could deal with it, so that it was us, but we didn't know too much about it, you know, how we could put our input into it."

Adds Tresvant: "On our first album, everybody said how much we sounded like the Jacksons, which we really had no input into. We went to Maurice Starr and he gave us the lyrics and the keys, and we'd just sing the songs. To us, it was just, wow, we're gonna make a song, we're gonna have a record, everybody's gonna hear us on the radio, we're gonna go on TV, girls are gonna chase us. So we didn't really pay no attention to what it sounded like, as being a copy of the Jacksons. We just wanted to sound good and make sure everybody would notice it."

Everybody started to notice when catchy tracks like "Candy Girl," "Is This the End" and "Popcorn Love" shot off the LP. MCA Records liked what they heard, and made New Edition an offer, which the group wanted to accept. At this point, Maurice Starr and Streetwise Records stepped in and asserted their ownership of the name "New Edition," claiming that Starr's music, style and marketing concept were what the name denoted, not the group that sang the music or embodied the concept. A Boston judge decided in the band's favor, but not before the youngsters got their feelings stung.

"We were kinda hurt, because we didn't look at it that way," Bivins explains. "At

first, when we were invited to his studio, we just wanted to make a record so that it would get regional play. We didn't know that we were being . . . we can't say *used*, but it was something that he had already thought of, and we were glad that he'd chosen us to be a part of his concept. But then when the mix-up came and the differences between us and our former producer, Maurice [this being a peculiar verbal tic of the Edition's, that Starr is usually referred to as "our former producer, Maurice"], we didn't expect him to say the type of things that he said. But we're still glad, and we like him a lot for what he did, because he did give us our break."

Once they got their break, New Edition didn't look back. Their second album, *New Edition*, has already unleashed two chart hits, the infectious "Cool It Now," and the followup single, "Mr. Telephone Man" (produced and written by Ray Parker, Jr.). The group's live appearances incite girl fans to riot.

Best of all, however, from the standpoint of long-term survival, the band has made some progress both in shedding the rep of Jacksons clones and in taking on greater responsibility for their records. "We wanted to be a part of this album as much as we could," says Bivins. "We were writing songs, preparing ourselves before we went into the studio. We wanted to be part of all the mixing. We wanted input into all the songs. We co-produced on two songs, plus we helped out on some arrangements. Now that we see what it's like to be in the studio, we hope one day in the near future that we'll be able to take over that job ourselves and produce our own albums."

"This time we started a few months before we went into the studio looking at the songs we wanted to put on the album and looking for everything that sounded different, a new sound that we could call our own," states Tresvant. "There were a few songs that are still related to the Jacksons, but we sung them our own way. We can call them our own."

Like almost all novice songwriters, New Edition didn't write their first tunes ("I'm Leaving You Again" and "Kinda Girls We Like") by divine inspiration. They initially had to be pushed into coming up with their own material. De Voe reports that "Our manager said, you guys'll just go into a room, with a pad and paper, and try to write your own songs. Let's see if we can put some of your songs on the album."

Once the creative ice was cracked, songwriting became a more natural, less contrived process, according to Tresvant. "Now songs come up in strange places," the singer describes. "We'll be on the plane and we'll be watchin' a movie, and we'll hear the theme song of the movie and we'll get an idea from that. Or we'll be sittin' down and we'll have some kind of mood in our mind and we'll just build a certain song. We'll pick up on that mood and start writin' down lyrics."

With everyone in the group still on the shy side of 17, New Edition live in the weird two-way world of all young stars. Their songs are played all over the world and their faces plaster the covers of teen mags, but they still take classes in the morning from a tutor who travels with them and they must complete homework every day. Most of their fans are even younger than they are, and that involves responsibilities that, in Tresvant's view, the band both has to acknowledge and keep in perspective.

"The only thing we really owe (our fans) is comin' up with good music, and givin' 'em what they want," he explains. "They wanna see a nice concert, they wanna see their group real clean. They don't wanna see 'em turn in any bad directions. All of this comes naturally for us. All we do is be

ourselves. It doesn't change us in any way. We came into the business with that attitude, so it doesn't really bother us at all."

As for the future, Bobby Brown doesn't see many barriers: "We all wanna become mul-ti-ta-lent-ed en-ter-tain-ers and have a lot of money."

"We wanna become movie stars, actors," adds Ricky.

"Mul-ti-ta-lent-ed en-ter-tain-ers," Bobby emphasizes, his head moving side to side with the syllables, the words clearly working a magic of their own on him. His hipster posturing has pricked the nice-kids image New Edition affects in public. But with the irresistible prospect of mul-ti-ta-lent-ed careers dangling before them at this moment, no one in this hot band tells the 15-year-old dude who evoked that picture to cool it now.

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# WHAT'S NEW

## STRANGERS ON THE SHORE

**The Church, Eurogliders, Hoodoo Gurus come Stateside**

**NEW YORK** — There may be an Australian invasion under way, but not all the soldiers reached the beach.

"It's a gloomy bloody world," says Steve Kilbey, lead vocalist/bassist of *The Church*, pacing these shores in support of the group's new album, *Remote Luxury*, on Warner Bros. The LP itself is some-

what melancholic, but not half so much as the U.S. reaction to *The Church*. Kilbey says the fall tour lost \$11,000 a week. "I'm afraid in this country it's just not happening," he laments. "I don't know why. Right now I'm thinking about my girlfriend in Sweden."

On a cheerier note, Mark Kingsmill, the new drummer for Sydney, Australia's *Hoodoo Gurus* reports the band has settled into a touring groove. The Gurus, here to promote their U.S. debut, *Stoneage Romeoos* (A&M), enjoy the basic routine—"play all night, drive all day, day off now and then." The previous drummer, James Baker, left because he didn't like tour-

ing, says Kingsmill, who adds that the band feels particularly comfortable here because of the preponderance of trash culture, a staple of their music. "If you love trash," insists Kingsmill, "this is the place to be." No argument there.

Bernie Lynch, lead singer for the Eurogliders, who are products of Perth, Australia, says just about anyplace is better than Manila, where the band recorded an album a few years ago.

"A horrific experi-

ence," Lynch recalls, speaking long-distance from Down Under. "Manila's a violent, ugly place. We were lucky to get out alive. People were being gunned down within kilometers of the studio. The engineer, meanwhile, spoke no English. There was no equipment, no repair people, not one Marshall amp in the whole country!"

Look for the Eurogliders on the road this winter in support of their U.S. debut. *This Island*. —Mark Mehler

(left) Here's the Church, but where's the steeple?; (below) the Hoodoo Gurus just flew in and, boy, are their arms tired



ANN SUMMA/RETNA LTD

## FAMILY TIES? SILVER SPOONS?

**Rebbie Jackson gets a break, but no handouts**

**NEW YORK** — Politics is out. Religion is very out. Family ties? You must be kidding.

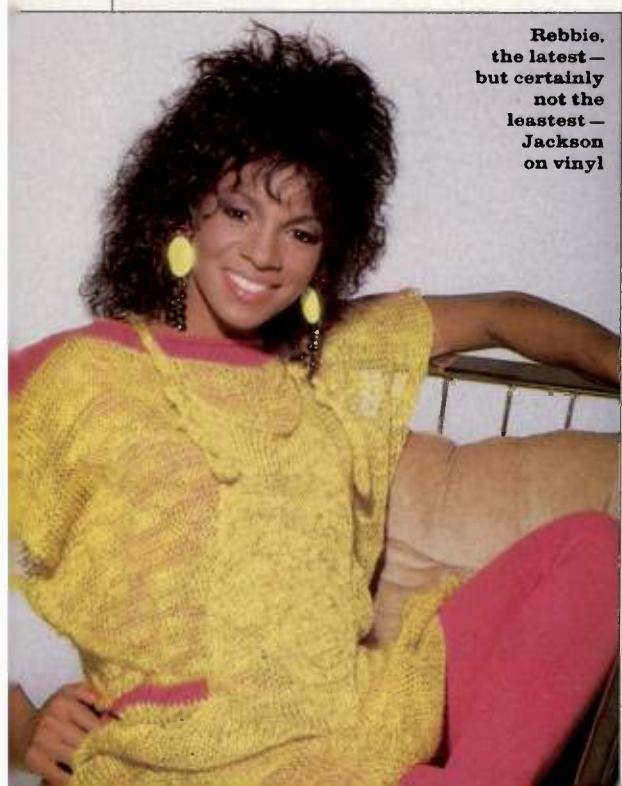
"I'm staying away from anything controversial," explains *Rebbie Jackson*, whose debut album, *Centipede*, features various production and writing contributions from brothers Tito, Randy and Michael. "As a Jackson I suppose controversy is inevitable," she adds. "I can't help what people think. But the only career connection (with the family) I

want is in a creative situation. I want Michael and the others involved, but I won't have everything that comes with it. The potential for harm is too great."

Now 34 and the eldest of the nine Jackson children, *Rebbie* married at 18, moved from Gary, Indiana to Kentucky, and missed the first heady years of the *Jackson 5*. She joined the brothers in the mid-'70s for the touring show and subsequent TV summer replacement series. Then

she had a second child, in 1977, and retired. Her children (13-year-old Stacee and seven-year-old Yashi) are now in school in Encino, California, and their mother is ready to pursue a solo career in earnest—and to work for her success. "Nothing is being handed to me on a silver platter," she states. "People can think, 'Oh, it's another Jackson on the bandwagon,' but you and I know the proof's in the pudding."

—Mark Mehler



Rebbie, the latest—but certainly not the leastest—Jackson on vinyl

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# CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

Ian Lloyd wants you to embrace Fast Forward

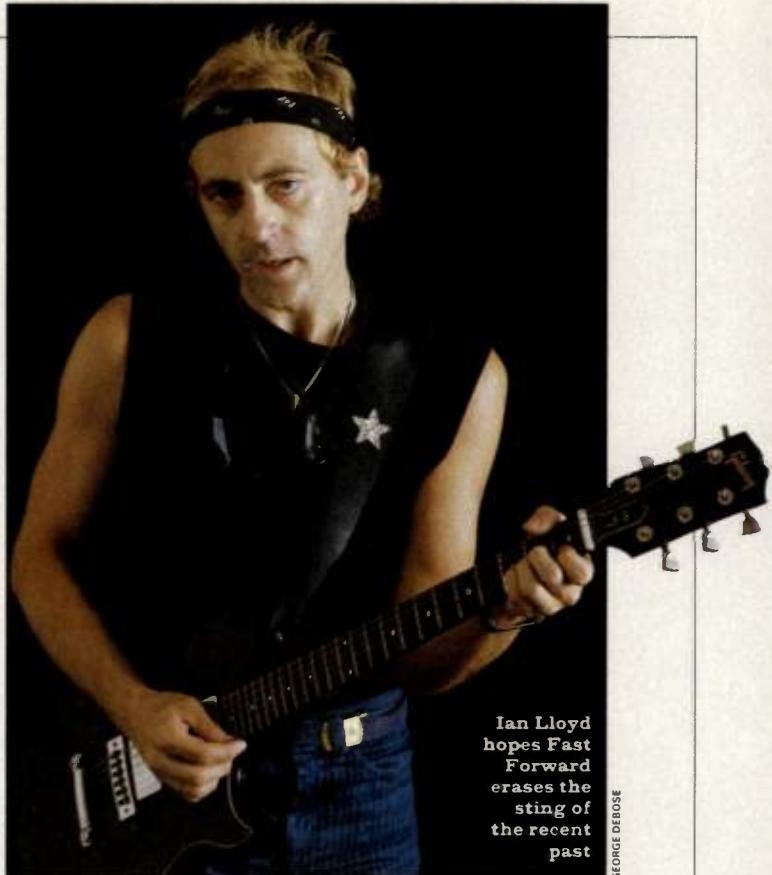
BOSTON—Fast Forward is the name of Ian Lloyd's new band, and it's also an apt description of what he would like the group to do for his career. Lloyd has been on the scene since 1972 when he formed Stories with the Left Bank's resident genius Michael Browne and had a hit single with a cover of Hot Chocolate's British hit, "Brother Louie." Stories tapped out shortly thereafter, and Lloyd went on to record three solo albums for Atlantic, none of them chart busters.

Lloyd expects Fast Forward to change his track record. "We are definitely hoping this band will be the vehicle," he says. "Whether it's this album or the next. I don't know. I wanna be accepted and I wanna be liked."

The nucleus of Fast Forward is Lloyd and Vancouver native Bruce Fairbairn, a producer whose credits include Krokus, Loverboy and Blue Oyster Cult. Lead guitarist Patrick Mahasen was formerly with Krokus; drummer Ken Chalmers is from Vancouver; keyboardist Andrew Kirin and bassist Jimmy Lowell are, like Lloyd, native New Yorkers. Its debut LP on Island, *Living in Fiction*, is full of glossy arena rock that, true to Lloyd's '60s roots, has more hooks than a drapery shop. The approach, the singer says, is simple: He wanted to be in a group again for "the tightness and camaraderie," and "we wanted to get as much attention as we could."

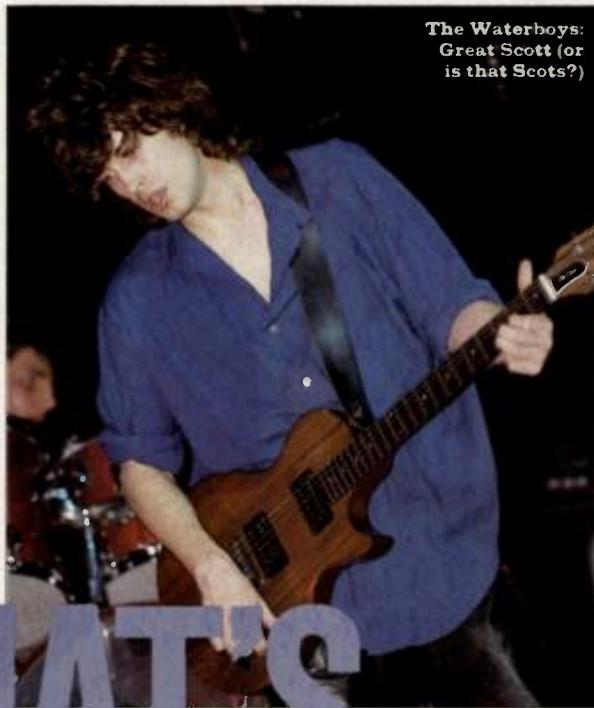
"Music is a business," he observes, "and things have to be somewhat calculated. The bottom line is strong songs."

—Dean Johnson



Ian Lloyd  
hopes Fast  
Forward  
erases the  
sting of  
the recent  
past

GEORGE DEBOSE



The Waterboys:  
Great Scott (or  
is that Scots?)

EBET ROBERTS

## HONESTY AS THE BEST POLICY

Scotland's  
Waterboys tell it  
as they see it

BOSTON—Although Scotland's Waterboys have been favorably compared to both U2 and Big Country, Mike Scott, the band's singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist, insists the three groups' music is "completely different." He does, however, acknowledge a couple of similarities: "We're all nominally rock groups and we're all quite honest, quite real."

But like U2, with whom they toured Britain and America last fall, the Waterboys' music has an anthemic, sweeping quality that's

imbued with a certain spirituality. Their first U.S. album, *A Pagan Place* (Island), is an ambitious project: a wall-of-sound production that carries a moral, but not self-righteous, tone. Scott, raised Protestant, has obviously done some thinking about religion and considers a church service to be "a lot of miserable people sitting and singing sad songs about God. That doesn't have much to do with life."

Scott's songs are full of life and written with a sharp eye for nuance, both musical and lyrical. Yet he seems somewhat uncomfortable discussing his work ("It's about things that are difficult to put into words"); he'd rather talk about his main influence, Bob Dylan, and his chief aspiration: "He wrote the best songs I've ever heard, 'Blowin' In The Wind,' 'Forever Young,' 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall.' I haven't, but I'd like to."

—Jim Sullivan

# WHAT'S NEW

M A R C H

1 9 7 5

## TOP 10 BLACK SINGLES

- 1 LADY MARMALADE Labelle
- 2 PICK UP THE PIECES Average White Band
- 3 SUPERNATURAL THING, PART 1 Ben E. King
- 4 I BELONG TO YOU Love Unlimited
- 5 SHAME, SHAME, SHAME Shirley & Company
- 6 SUPER DUPER LOVE, PART 1 Sugar Billy
- 7 HAPPY PEOPLE Temptations
- 8 I AM LOVE The Jackson 5
- 9 EXPRESS B.T. Express
- 10 LOVIN' YOU Minnie Riperton

## TOP 10 POP SINGLES

- 1 BLACK WATER Doobie Brothers
- 2 HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN MELLOW Olivia Newton-John
- 3 MY EYES ADORED YOU Frankie Valli
- 4 PICK UP THE PIECES Average White Band
- 5 LADY MARMALADE Labelle
- 6 BEST OF MY LOVE Eagles
- 7 LADY Styx
- 8 LOVIN' YOU Minnie Riperton
- 9 YOU'RE NO GOOD Linda Ronstadt
- 10 POETRY MAN Phoebe Snow



## REMEMBERING MINNIE

March of '75 saw Minnie Riperton's Stevie Wonder-penned single "Lovin' You" ascend to the Top 10 of the pop charts, on its way to Number One. The track was from Riperton's first major label solo album, *Perfect Angel*, produced by Stevie Wonder for Epic. Blessed with a stunning five-octave vocal range, the Chicago-born Riperton's first recordings were with a girl group called the Gems, whose claim to fame was "That's What They Put Erasers On Pencils For" on the Chess label. After a stint with the Rotary Connection, an underground favorite in the late '60s, Riperton went solo. Unfortunately, the same year she won her much-deserved success, Riperton learned she had a malignant breast tumor. While continuing her career, she became active in several cancer organizations, and in 1978 was named Chairman of the American Cancer Society. On July 12, 1979, Minnie Riperton died at Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles.

## U K T O P L P S

- 1 THE HITS ALBUM Various Artists (WEA/CBS)
- 2 NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC IV Various Artists (EMI-Virgin)
- 3 ALF Alison Moyet (CBS)
- 4 MAKE IT BIG Wham! (CBS)
- 5 THE COLLECTION Ultravox (Chrysalis)
- 6 WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME Frankie Goes To Hollywood (ZTT)
- 7 ELIMINATOR ZZ Top (WB)
- 8 DIAMOND LIFE Sade (CBS)
- 9 THE RIDDLE Nik Kershaw (MCA)
- 10 GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET Paul McCartney (EMI)
- 11 ARENA Duran Duran (EMI)
- 12 12 GOLD BARS, VOL. I & II Status Quo (Vertigo)

- 13 PARTY, PARTY Black Lace (Flair)
- 14 GREATEST HITS Shakin' Stevens (Epic)
- 15 YESTERDAY ONCE MORE Carpenters (EMI)
- 16 GREATEST HITS Chas & Dave (Rockney)
- 17 THE ART GARFUNKEL Art Garfunkel (CBS)
- 18 THE VERY BEST OF Foster & Allen (Ritz)
- 19 THE LOVE SONGS Stevie Wonder (Telstar)
- 20 THE 12-INCH ALBUM Howard Jones (WEA)
- 21 PRIVATE DANCER Tina Turner (Capitol)
- 22 CINEMA Elaine Paige (K-Tel)
- 23 GOLDEN DAYS The Fureys with Davey Arthur (K-Tel)
- 24 1984 Eurythmics (Virgin)
- 25 REAL LIVE Bob Dylan (CBS)



## BIG BROTHER WOULD LOVE IT

The troubled tale that is the history of the Eurythmics' contribution of a soundtrack for the movie version of *1984* took a new turn in December when Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox responded to charges by director Michael Radford that their score had been "foisted" on him, despite his feelings that the music was "inappropriate." In London, Stewart and Lennox told an *NME* reporter that they were indeed hired with Radford's knowledge and that they maintained contact with the director "throughout the work period." This came after Radford had unveiled three versions of the movie: one with the Eurythmics soundtrack, one with a score by composer Dominic Muldowney (who was apparently hired by Virgin Films after David Bowie declined to write the soundtrack), and one with a little bit of both. And the Eurythmics' *1984* LP sits at #24 on the chart. More to come, we're sure.

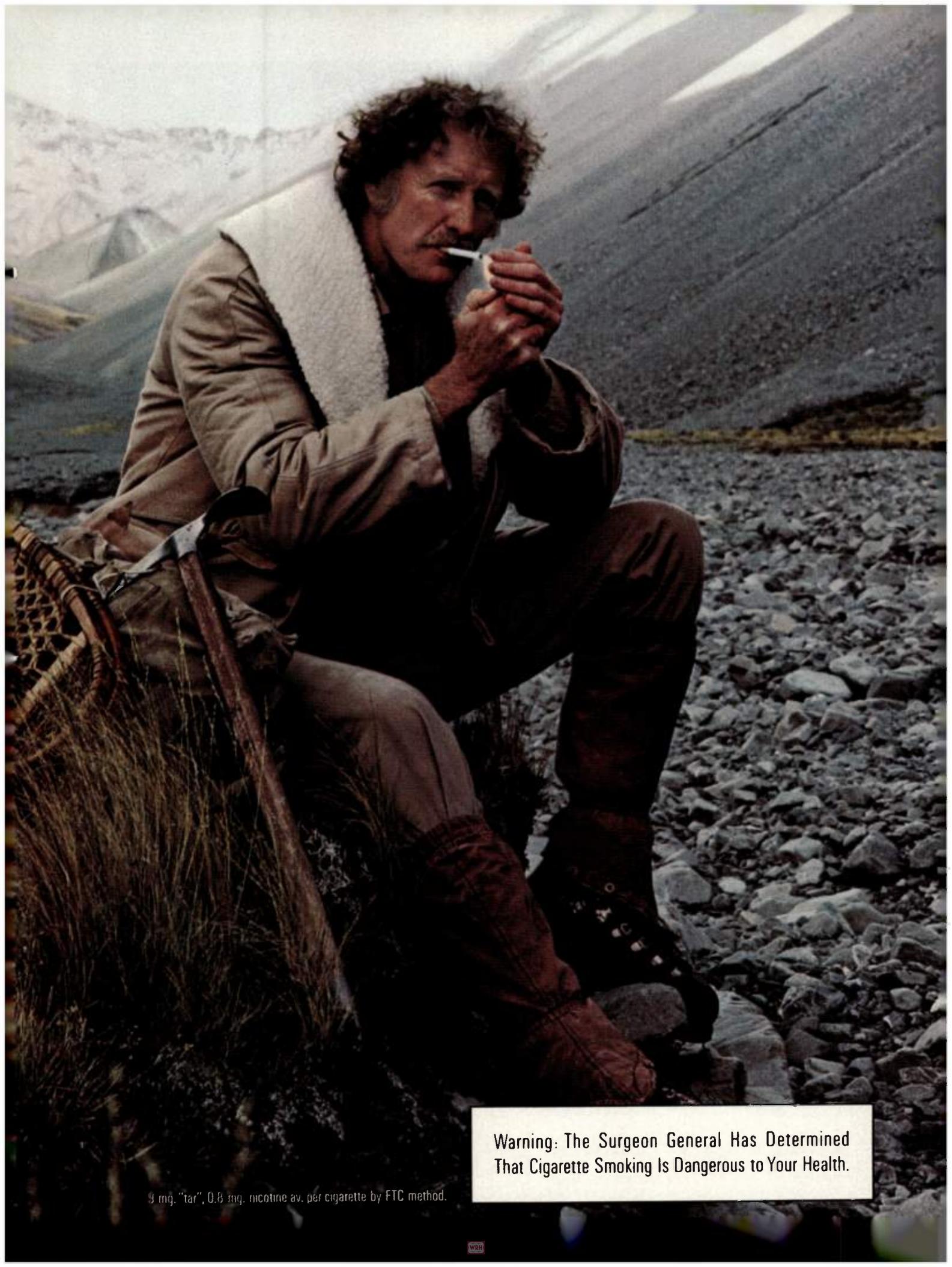
UK LP chart reprinted from *New Musical Express*, December 22/29

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# D A N C E L P S

1	WOMAN IN RED Stevie Wonder (Motown)	14	LIKE A VIRGIN Madonna (Sire)
2	PURPLE RAIN Prince (WB)	15	LOVE LETTERS Force M.D.'s (Tommy Boy)
3	NEW EDITION New Edition (MCA)	16	WILD ANIMAL Vanity (Motown)
4	SOLID Ashford & Simpson (Capitol)	17	STARCHILD Teena Marie (Epic)
5	ESCAPE Whodini (Jive/Arista)	18	DON'T STOP Jeffrey Osborne (A&M)
6	CHINESE WALL Philip Bailey (Columbia)	19	HEART BREAK Shalamar (Elektra)
7	PLANETARY INVASION Midnight Star (Solar)	20	TOMMY GUN Tom Browne (Arista)
8	HIGH CRIME Al Jarreau (WB)	21	EUGENE WILDE Eugene Wilde (Philly World/Atlantic)
9	TRULY FOR YOU The Temptations (Gordy)	22	SNEAKIN' OUT Linda Clifford (Red Label)
10	FAT BOYS Fat Boys (Sutra)	23	CHARTBUSTERS Roy Parker, Jr. (Arista)
11	EMERGENCY Kool & the Gang (De-Lite)	24	BROADWAY'S CLOSER TO SUNSET BLVD. Isley-Jasper-Isley (Magic Sound/CBS)
12	FINESSE Glenn Jones (RCA)	25	SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE Stylistics (Streetwise)
13	SO GOOD Whispers (Solar)		



STEPHEN CRICHLAW

## COOL IT NOW

With their colorful letter sweaters and bright, baggy pants, Force M.D.'s may not look like the future of black pop, but they just may sound like it. Hailing from Staten Island, New York, this quintet couples the sweet strains of street corner harmony to the rap and scratch sounds of the hip hop scene, and it comes out *fresh*. Their debut LP for Tommy Boy Records, *Love Letters*, is moving up the charts on the strength of what a Tommy Boy press release terms "a four-hankie triumph" of a single, "Tears." And we quote: "This ballad rips you apart with its melancholy melody and Smokey-esque vocals. . . . By the way, *real* tears were shed during the climactic release of the song when group member T.C.D. sobs, 'I cry . . .' This was achieved by recording the vocals in a candlelit studio with a bouquet of roses in front of the mike." More to this we cannot add.

# H E A V Y M E T A L L P S

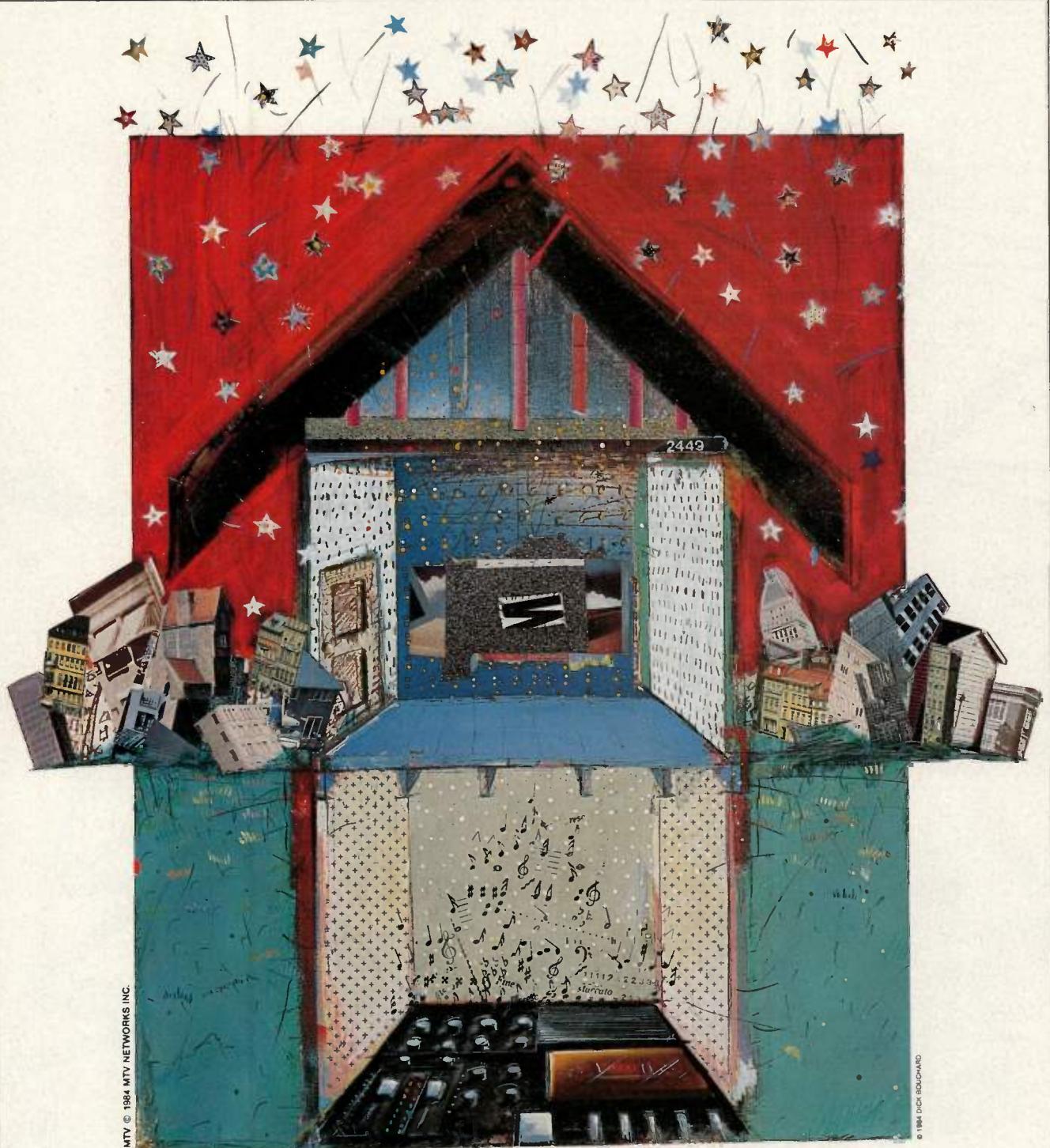
1	PERFECT STRANGER Deep Purple (Mercury)	14	CONDITION CRITICAL Quiet Riot (Epic)
2	STAY HUNGRY Twisted Sister (Atlantic)	15	MARCH OF THE SAINT Armored Saint (Columbia)
3	ANIMALIZE Kiss (Mercury)	16	'74 JAILBREAK AC/DC (Atlantic)
4	OUT OF THE CELLAR Ratt (Atlantic)	17	RIDE THE LIGHTNING Metallica (Megaforce)
5	THUNDER SEVEN Triumph (MCA)	18	BURNS LIKE A STAR Stone Fury (MCA)
6	1984 Van Halen (WB)	19	THE WARNING Queensryche (EMI-America)
7	REBEL YELL Billy Idol (Chrysalis)	20	THE LAST IN LINE Dio (WB)
8	POWER SLAVE Iron Maiden (Capitol)	21	GLORIOUS RESULTS OF A MISSPENT YOUTH Joan Jett (MCA)
9	GIUFFRIA Giuffria (MCA)	22	WHITE WOLF White Wolf
10	SHOUT AT THE DEVIL Motley Crue (Elektra)	23	HANOI ROCKS Hanoi Rocks (Epic)
11	LOVE AT FIRST STING Scorpions (Mercury)	24	SLIDE IT IN Whitesnake (WB)
12	TOOTH & NAIL Dokken (Elektra)	25	SEE YOU IN HELL Grim Reaper (RCA)
13	THE BLITZ Krokus (Arista)		



## PRONOUNCED 'JE-FREE-AH'

After Angel disbanded, keyboardist Greg Giuffria spent three years cutting demos and getting the cold shoulder from various labels. Taking the hint, he put together a new band with singer-songwriter David Glen Eisley (a former minor league baseball player in the San Francisco Giants organization), drummer Alan Kriger, guitarist Craig Goldy and bassist Chuck Wright. All of a sudden there's a label deal with MCA, and a self-titled debut album climbing quickly up the charts, as well as a single, "Call to the Heart," that's becoming an airplay favorite. "Giuffria is a rock and roll band," says Mr. G. "Our music is like going to the movies without the screen being there. It's a progressive rock and roll soundtrack, but above all, it's a group of melodic songs that have real style. And," he promises, "we're going to get out there and rock."

Dance and Heavy Metal LP charts researched and compiled by Street Pulse Group



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# MUSIC VIDEO

ANTHONY DECURTIS

## NAPOLEON WEPT

**R**ay Davies' best songs, such as "Waterloo Sunset" or "Sunny Afternoon," have the cinematic concision and literary texture of great short stories. Certain lyrical or musical details in them effortlessly evoke a whole life or social world. Davies has been less successful when he's shifted his artistic focus from personal to public issues, and from individual songs to dramatic works.

The chief Kink's latest foray into drama is an hour-long video film called *Return to Waterloo*, written and directed by Davies himself. It's pretty much a disaster.

*Return to Waterloo* carries Davies back to a theme he explored as early as "Well Respected Man": the emotional malaise and entrapment of conventional suburban life. While twenty years have made Davies less smug about the plight of his unhappy but socially regarded man, they've apparently brought him little in the way of insight.

English actor Ken Colley plays The Traveller (hereafter referred to as Mr. T.), the commuter whose tube trip to and from work constitutes the heart of *Return to Waterloo*'s day-in-the-life "plot." The film's opening scene shows Mr. T.'s train entering a tunnel—a sign, kids, that we soon will be penetrating beneath the comfortable surface of our hero's life and

PHOTO: PAUL NATRIN/PHOTO RESERVE



Davies (left), punks on the mystery train: Formulas, cliches and a shot of sympathy

glimpsing the underside of his bland, conformist exterior. Meanwhile, in the station, Mr. T. walks glumly past a street singer (big Ray), eyes a fetching young blonde, loses coins in a vending machine. His symbolic desire for freedom (big Ray) and sensuality (the blonde) and his frustration at being short-changed (the machine) can, of course, be traced not only to his willing capitulation to the system through his job, but to his unsatisfying home life.

In the first of *Return to Waterloo*'s one billion fantasy sequences, Mr. T.'s thoughts drift homeward, where we see

him and his wife (Valerie Holliman) mired in the usual spirit-killing suburban rut. He's mortgaged his soul to his lucrative, but unfulfilling executive slot; the old girl's a bored housewife who can summon no means of stimulating hubby in her limited sphere; their teen-age daughter (Dominique Barnes), a jailbait-supreme darling who represents life's infinite promise, has run away from home to meet a man from the motor trade.

Anyway, I think this is what's going on. The fantasy stuff makes it hard to tell and, as the movie's press release slyly notes, "Actual dialogue is minimal." Big Ray knows that narrative is dead, so we must glean what we can from our tipsy float along Mr. T.'s stream of consciousness and the information we can scavenge from the ten or so pretty good Kinks songs on the soundtrack (all new, save three from *Word of Mouth*).

Muddled as it is, *Return to Waterloo*'s main problem is that big Ray still hasn't figured out where all the good times have gone, another riddle that's plagued him since the mid-'60s. There are actual reasons why middle-class British life is so bereft of promise—and also why upper-class British pop stars' lives are often so self-destructive and indulgent, a subject about which a British pop star who's fought his way past forty might actually have something to say. But *Return to Waterloo* contents itself with formulas, cliches and a shot of sympathy, which ain't enough to make a movie.

### VIDEO NOTES

**MTV CONTINUES TO UPHOLD STANDARDS THAT WOULD MAKE JERRY FALWELL PROUD** to be a guest VJ. As this is written in mid-December it's unlikely any readers have seen on the 24-hour all-music channel a video for the song "Monster" by Fred Schneider of the B-52's and his new band **The Shake Society**. According to Warner Bros. Records' in-house publication *Word of Mouth*, the "Monster" video has been rejected as "too suggestive" by MTV standards. The song's key lyric, you see, is "There's a monster in my pants/And it does a nasty dance." In the video this monster turns out to be an animated pickle, or as WOM put it, "a harmless, friendly, little green pickle." WOM further suggests a call-in campaign in which fans demand "I want my little green pickle!" or "I want to see Fred's monster!" In the meantime, viewers will have to be content with more women in chains and such odes to responsible motoring as Sammy Hagar's "I Won't Drive 55." Upholds the moral fiber of our youth, you understand; and if your diet's high in fiber, you'll be able to drop a hot steamer on a regular basis, if you get our drift . . . The **Elvis Presley** celebration goes on. In addition to a slew of new records and two new concert video releases (the '68 comeback special and the Hawaii concert), four new Presley movies have been put on the home market. The latter come from MGM/UA, which had previously released *Jailhouse Rock*, *Viva Las Vegas* and *Elvis on Tour*, and now adds to those titles *Double Trouble*, *Harum Scarum*, *It Happened at the World's Fair* and *Speedway*. All seven are selling for \$39.95 until March 1, when the carriage turns into a pumpkin and the price goes up to \$59.95. \$59.95 for *Harum Scarum*? This smacks of loss leader stuff . . . After winning raves for his role in *Purple Rain*, The Time's **Morris Day** has gone whole hog in Hollywood, signing a three-picture deal with Twentieth Century Fox. No word as to what his first project will be.

—Ed Norton

# MUSIC VIDEO

## David Bowie

Jazzin' For Blue Jean  
D: Julien Temple  
20 min./Sony Video/\$19.95

In which the Thin White Duke takes on a dual role. In one, he's a superstar rock artist named Screamin' Lord Byron, in the other he's a fan trying to impress his date for the evening. Byron, of course, is consumptive; the fan is a lovable nerd and in the center of this mini-movie, as it's being touted, is the "Blue Jean" cut from Bowie's latest LP. Bowie is fine in both parts (particularly ingratiating as the clumsy but well-meaning Vic), and Temple's style is easy on the eye. As a music video it's something different, if only because there's so little emphasis on music and much on character development (well, as much as you can do in 20 minutes). What this portends for the future of the long form is hard to call (I mean, are all these long clips being made for valid artistic reasons, or just to hog time on MTV?), but you can bet Bowie's going to give it a boost by putting his imprimatur on it. *Jazzin'*, though, is no introduction to the man's work, and can be recommended only to Bowie devotees. The definitive David Bowie video has yet to be made.

—David McGee

## MUSICVIDEO TOP TEN

- 1 PURPLE RAIN  
PRINCE  
Warner Home Video
- 2 VIDEO REWIND  
ROLLING STONES  
Vestron Video
- 3 POLICE  
SYNCHRONICITY CONCERT  
THE POLICE  
I.R.S./A&M Home Video
- 4 DANCING  
ON THE VALENTINE \*  
DURAN DURAN  
Sony Video 45
- 5 HEARTBEAT CITY  
THE CARS  
Warner Home Video
- 6 THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME  
LED ZEPPELIN  
Warner Home Video
- 7 RECKLESS \*  
BRYAN ADAMS  
A&M Home Video
- 8 THE BAND AID VIDEO \*  
VARIOUS ARTISTS  
Vestron Video
- 9 MADONNA \*  
MADONNA  
Warner Home Video
- 10 7 BIG ONES \*  
HALL AND OATES  
RCA/Columbia Pictures 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.

## Duran Duran

Dancing On The Valentine  
D: Russell Mulcahy ("The Reflex"), Simon Milne ("Union of the Snake"), Brian Grant ("New Moon On Monday") 15 mins./Sony Video 45/\$16.95

The masters of the mini-movie are at it again, but the well's run dry this time around. "Union of the Snake" is an imitation of "Hungry Like The Wolf," sans energy or provocative imagery. The Brian Grant-directed "New Moon On Monday," is hardly more satisfying. The plot—pitting a French freedom fighter against a Nazi-type enemy—lacks even the subtlety of *Mad* magazine's "Spy vs. Spy," and the big climax is only a fireworks display.

The real gem is "The Reflex," a clip that indicates how far along the concert clip has come in relation to concept pieces. Russell Mulcahy propels Duran through a hot live shot that integrates startling images from a video screen mounted above the stage. With a catchy graphic design, Mulcahy's sweeping cutting rhythm builds excitement until the climactic special effect: ocean waves pour out of the video screen and onto the dancing audience. If you can't wait for the next Duran video LP, grab this 45 for the showstopping "Reflex." —Alan Hecht

## VIDEO CLIP TOP TEN

- 1 LIKE A VIRGIN  
MADONNA  
(Sire) D: Mary Lambert
- 2 FEEL FOR YOU  
CHAKA KHAN  
(WB) D: Jane Simpson
- 3 JUNGLE LOVE  
MORRIS DAY & THE TIME  
(WB) D: Kaleidoscope
- 4 WAKE ME UP BEFORE YOU GO-GO  
WHAM!  
(Col) D: Duncan Gibbons
- 5 STRUT  
SHEENA EASTON  
(EMI) D: David Lewis
- 6 RELAX  
FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD  
(Island) D: Brian DePalma
- 7 OUT OF TOUCH  
HALL & OATES  
(RCA) D: Jeff Stein
- 8 SEX SHOOTER  
APOLLONIA 6  
(WB) D: Kenny Ortega
- 9 WILD BOYS  
DURAN DURAN  
(Capitol) D: Russell Mulcahy
- 10 SWEEP AWAY  
DIANA ROSS  
(RCA) D: Dominic Orlando

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 February.

## Hall and Oates

The Daryl Hall and John Oates Video Collection: 7 Big Ones D: Mick Haggerty and C.D. Taylor ("Say It Isn't So," "Family Man," "Maneater," "One On One"), Jay Dubin ("I Can't Go For That," "Private Eyes"), Tim Pope ("Adult Education) 30 min./RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video/\$19.95

If simple performance videos and big hit songs are your pleasure, *7 Big Ones* is a must. Minus elaborate conceptual shenanigans, H&O create charming, appealing clips simply on the strength of personality, poses and good looks.

Most of these clips feature the blonde, angelic Hall and the dark, demonic Oates in a variety of mock concert performances that might be called "beat bop" video style. "Say It Isn't So" finds them "beat bopping" around New York's West Side; "Private Eyes" is set in black limbo with the boys decked out as Sam Spade; "Maneater" relies on a straightforward performance while a black panther sneaks around the stage; "I Can't Go For That," a soft-gauze performance in traditional rock 'n' roll smoke; "One On One," a walkabout on New York City streets intercut with a night club performance. The clips are loaded with close-ups of Hall as he sings directly to the camera/viewer, a recurring conceit that delivers a fresh, upfront tone to each video.

The duo deviates from the performance approach with mixed results. In the Tim Pope-directed "Adult Education," Hall and Oates perform on a striking altar set as male and female human sacrifices are brought before an old codger in a New York Yankee baseball cap. A supposedly bizarre ritual is played out and the clip quickly disintegrates into irrelevance. But the other concept piece, "Family Man," is a delightful scenario set in a deco living room. H&O deliver a vibrant reading of the trials and temptations of those who choose hearth and home over more worldly pursuits, while animated boy and girl characters frolic and kibitz in front of them. A beautifully-realized concept piece.

—A.H.

## Gladys Knight and the Pips with Ray Charles

78 min./Vestron Musicvideo/\$29.95

Though this concert was filmed in 1977 (for Home Box Office), time's passing makes it no less valuable or entertaining. Gladys Knight has been up and down, but that redoubtable voice has never deserted her. And on the basis of this performance, it's obvious that good taste is indeed timeless: the repertoire may be predictable, but it has its allure; and Knight's sultry, gospel-inflected vocals, buttressed by the Pips' knowing background work, uncovers surprises even in material as well-travelled as "Every Beat of My Heart." And any singer who can make "The Way We Were" genuinely affecting has my deepest respect. (As for Gladys Knight today, suffice it to say the lady throws down with the best of them. Her version of "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going," from *Dreamgirls*, is an absolutely devastating concert experience. Treat yourself.)

Ray Charles is a bit player here, if ever such a role could be assigned the Genius. Though his performance is somewhat perfunctory, Charles' voice has an edge to it that wasn't always evident at this juncture of his career. His singular take on "America the Beautiful" will have you approaching that old chestnut from a different point of view hereafter; and his duets with Knight—especially on "Georgia On My Mind"—are some of the most sanctified soul searchings yet put to video. Long may they wave, these national treasures.

—D.M.

MIKE SHEA

## EAR, EAR!

Instrument  
tuning  
made simple

Seiko's ST-366 Tune Master: Play it in tune

**A** few very fortunate people were born with perfect pitch, but for most mortals good relative pitch must suffice. Luckily, this happens to be more than adequate for playing or tuning most musical instruments (except grand pianos and the like). For beginning musicians, being in tune often doesn't seem to be too important. Add a lot of distortion, reverb and other effects and the chords you play will sound fine, even if you're a bit off the tone. Listen to the same chord without the embellishments, however, and it will drive you up a wall. This goes double for solo playing where, even if fingering and timing are perfect, the slightest out of tune note stands out like the proverbial sore thumb. Although such gaffes may be unavoidable at first, they're obviously a source of great embarrassment for new players, and should be minimized for the sake of the aspiring musician's emotional security.

Having good relative pitch means being able to distinguish not only differences in pitch between sounds but also the correct interval or distance between them (a half-step, a third, a fourth, etc.). Tell a professional studio musician to play his harmony a third above the lead and it's done. Granted, this state of proficiency is arrived at only after years of training and practice. At the very least, though, players—even in rock 'n' roll garage bands—ought to be able to tune their instruments.

The best tools in the world for developing good relative pitch are an instrument and a tuner. Tuners can cost hundreds of dollars and

have all kinds of LED lights, extra inputs and outputs and other features; most important, though, is the tuner's accuracy. I tested the Seiko ST-366, a tuner with a list price of only \$34.50, against a \$300 high-tech tuner and found the Seiko's readout to be as precise as that of its higher-priced competitor. This isn't surprising: the ST-366 is a quartz tuner, meaning its internal reference is not only accurate, it also doesn't vary. That the Seiko comes with a built-in microphone—essential for tuning acoustic instruments—is a pleasant surprise, however.

**Using Seiko's "Tune Master,"** as it's called, is very simple. Either plug in an electric instrument or position an acoustic instrument close to

**Signal-Flex's SF-9 Portable Amp: Play it in private**



it, select one of the six notes on the slide switch, play the note and tune until the meter reads at dead center. Start by tuning just one string or note and then try to tune the other strings or notes by ear. The first few times you do this you'll probably be way out when you check against the tuner, but with a little practice your relative pitch will develop to the point where all you'll need to hear is one note to completely tune your instrument. At \$34.50 the ST-366 is about the best deal around.

For the novice player, privacy and some help in terms of sound embellishment are of utmost importance. For a mere \$50, the SF-9 Signal-Flex Portable Amp will satisfy both of these needs. While the SF-9 doesn't have any compression, reverb or digital delay chorusing like the ESP or the Rockman, it does have distortion—and in abundance! Aspiring heavy metal players shouldn't be without an SF-9.

Plug in the instrument, hook up the headphones (which are included) and commence playing in complete privacy. Faders adjust the volume as well as bass and treble equalization for the preferred sound and a distortion button kicks in the raunch. A second output can be used to patch the SF-9 to a normal amplifier; in this case the degree of clean versus distorted sound becomes almost endless.

As stated earlier, it's important to be in tune, but embellishments such as distortion help beginners get the sound they're after right off the bat. Nevertheless, it's tough learning all the fingerings and, at the same time, dealing with the very real physical pain of learning to play an instrument. Facts are facts: beginners need privacy; they must develop their ears along with their playing skills, yet they could also use a little help from effects. The combination of the SF-9 and the ST-366 accomplishes all of the above at an extremely reasonable price. For more information about these products or the address of the dealer nearest you, contact Alex Frazier, Kaman Music, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT, 06002. ○

MARTIN PORTER + STEVE SCHWARTZ

# ● CHROME WARS: TALE OF THE TAPES

A hands-on  
evaluation of  
'high bias' blanks

**A**udio cassettes are usually compared using music that the average rock 'n' roll tape buyer never feeds through his stereo. The silent passages of classical melodies are ideal for really hearing how a tape formulation handles silence and various noise reduction schemes.

But rock 'n' rollers like their tapes hiss-free as well; Dolby B noise reduction, at least, is standard on even low-cost cassette decks and portables. So which cassette is best for those who like to feel the bass drum pounding against their chest, and the lead guitar solos tingling in their ears?

Even in terms of tape selection for heavy metal, the one to watch these days is high bias/chrome. Bias is an electrical current that arranges the particles on the tape for recording. High-bias tapes are known for their low hiss levels and excellent high frequency response—features that recently convinced several record companies to exclusively use high bias formulations for their lines of prerecorded cassettes.

In truth, most "chrome" tapes today are not made of chromium dioxide, as their name would suggest; rather, they utilize particles of ferric oxide that have been treated with cobalt to enhance their magnetic properties. Either formulation is fine, but for best results both require a higher recording bias current than Type I tapes. Thus, your machine should have a Type II/Chrome/CrO/High Bias setting to get the most from these tapes.

We've been hearing so much about high bias tapes recently that we decided to put some of the leading brands to an audible "taste test" and see how well they perform (and how well they stack up next to each other) with rock 'n' roll. Of course, testing by ear may not be the most scientific method of tape evaluation, but it's the only one available to most music lovers.

What follows is an account of our own "Battle of the Bias." We've tried to be as objective as possible—using a set peak recording level, every available noise reduction system and repeated listenings for each tape. We also "visually blindfolded" ourselves for objectivity by covering cassette labels with masking tape.

## THE WEIGH-IN

FOR THE SAKE OF EXPEDIENCY, we selected seven high bias tapes from manufacturers that have proven track re-

cords for producing quality cassettes. Some of the cassettes we tested have been around for a while; others are new arrivals, reviewed here for the first time. In alphabetical order:

- **BASF Pro II Chrome:** One of the few real chromium dioxide cassettes still in the ring, this is the same tape used by A&M Records for its entire line of prerecorded cassettes. It also lays claim to being "the world's quietest tape," a boast substantiated by the findings of a test conducted by *Audio* magazine in 1980.

- **Denon DX7:** This entry from a manufacturer of high-end audio hardware quickly established itself as a champion among many discerning consumers. It employs a double-coated formulation of "cobalt-doped" ferric oxide particles for superior performance at high saturation levels—a point of weakness with most high bias tapes.

- **Fuji FR-II:** An improved version of an old favorite, boasting a denser coating of smaller, cobalt-treated iron oxide particles

for a wider dynamic range and enhanced high-frequency response.

- **Maxell XLII-S:** A newcomer with a lot of promise. When compared to Maxell's ever-popular UD-XLII, it is reported to offer an 0.5 dB reduction in bias noise and a 1 dB improvement over the entire frequency range.

- **Scotch XS II:** Good muscle potential is supplied here by a dual layering of cobalt-modified ferric oxide for a greater signal-to-noise ratio and sensitivity in the high frequency range.

- **TDK HX-S:** Another fresh face in the ring with a metal (rather than ferric or iron) particle makeup designed for maximum performance with high frequencies. Dubbed "Digital Dynamite" by its trainers for its handling of Compact Discs.

## THE TALE OF THE TAPE

THREE MINUTES OF RECORDING time (according to the real time counter) was agreed upon as adequate length for



The envelope, please: The six chrome contestants in the order (top to bottom) of finish

MARILYN SCHWARTZ

each test segment. There were six segments for each tape: Dolby B, Dolby C, Dolby C with HX Pro, HX Pro alone, dbx and flat (without noise reduction). All levels (except when dbx was used) were set for an approximate +1 peak on the TA-2090's LED meter—which proved to be just “hot enough” for all the contestants.

As mentioned earlier, this test involved subjective reasoning, which, while far from perfect, is the way most people judge audio quality. In any case, we ranked each tape individually in each category. Our qualitative ratings were: great, very good, good, fair, and poor. After the test was completed, we assigned numerical values for each rating, starting with 10 (for “great”) and ending with 5 (for “poor”)—there was no number 6 rating in order to accurately differentiate between “fair” and “poor.” The numbers for each test were then added up and averaged to obtain each tape's overall rating.

First, some observations about the contestants.

According to our results, the various noise reduction systems used worked better with some tapes than with others. Overall, all tapes achieved the best noise reduction with dbx, although this seemed to be accomplished with an audible compression of the signal, which at least one of the judges found annoying.

Interestingly, all the tapes tested rated “good” with Dolby B. Dolby C either rated “good” or “very good.” HX Pro, on the other hand, did actually improve the sound quality of nearly all the contenders (with the exception of BASF). However, the combination of HX Pro with Dolby C only truly enhanced the Fuji FR-II.

BASF Pro Chrome sounded best without any noise reduction at all, while TDK HX-S was sonically enhanced by all noise reduction systems—particularly dbx. It, meanwhile, tied with the Scotch XS II for first place for consistency with all types of noise reduction, as well as with no noise reduction.

And now, the envelope, please. Our champion, with an overall rating of 9.1, is Maxell's XLII-S, which excelled with everything but (oddly enough) Dolby B. BASF proved to be a formidable opponent with a very close 9.0. TDK's adaptability pulled it an 8.8 rating, followed by Fuji with 8.6. This was closely followed by a tie between Scotch XS II and Denon's DX7, which both commanded an 8.3 rating; incidentally, both these contestants actually sounded better than our third and fourth place winners when no noise reduction was used.

One final word: As you can see, this was not a winner-take-all contest. Each tape had its own particular strong areas and weak areas. Maybe this will help you determine the tape best suited to your needs, but the real message here is: Don't be afraid to experiment. You may find something you like a little better. And remember to trust your own ears.

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CRAIG ANDERTON

# MIDI GOES MODULAR

**M**IDI, the Musical Instrument Digital Interface, continues to evolve at a dizzying rate. Only a few months ago (see Musical Electronics, October '84 RECORD) some musicians were saying MIDI had no future; now it's a fact of life. What's more, MIDI is precipitating new, unanticipated trends that are re-shaping the nature of musical instruments. One of the most important of these is the breaking down of instruments into modular components.

Actually, the modular instrument idea isn't new; early Moog synthesizers separated the keyboard from the synthesizer electronics, and back in 1981 Octave-Plateau Electronics packaged their synth electronics in a tidy, rack-mount box and connected it to a remote keyboard via an umbilical cable. But the present trend towards modular instruments really accelerated when keyboard players started connecting multiple keyboards together through MIDI, thus allowing a single keyboard (the controller) to control banks of synthesizers (the actual sound generators). Unfortunately, this created a lot of redundancy; after all, if you're controlling several synthesizers from one keyboard, all the other synth keyboards are unnecessary.

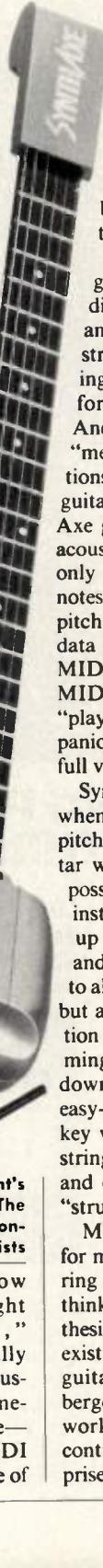
Enter the Oberheim Electronics Xpander, a sophisticated synthesizer with no keyboard and a MIDI input. The Xpander is one of the few synthesizers around these days that truly merits the word "innovative"—it has remarkable sound generating capabilities, and a flexibility that in many ways exceeds even that of the first generation of large, expensive modular synthesizers.

Around the same time Korg came up with a keyboardless version of their popular Poly-800; this expander module is also designed to be driven by a MIDI controller. The Poly-800 has served as a low-cost introduction to polyphonic synthesis for many musicians, but one of its limitations is a relatively thin sound. However, by simply adding an expander module, the Poly-800 takes on new life at less cost than an entirely new synthesizer.

Now Roland has taken the modular

MIDI concept even further, producing a couple of "mother" keyboards and several "daughter" synthesizer modules. The MKB-1000 keyboard has 88 wooden keys with full touch sensitivity; while not inexpensive, one of the big selling points is that once you have a single, high-quality, responsive MIDI keyboard, you don't need to buy another—simply purchase the expander modules you like. (Roland also makes a lower-cost 76 key model, the MKB-300.) Expander modules include several rack-mount units, including sound generators, programmers and the like.

What may be most significant, however, is that no law says that these expander modules must be driven by keyboards. For example, the Roland GR-700 is a guitar controller with a MIDI output, and driving a synth like the Oberheim Xpander offers far greater sonic possibilities than the relatively limited synthesizer electronics presently built into the GR-700



Fairlight's  
SynthAxe: The  
ultimate con-  
troller for guitarists

package. Or how about the Fairlight "Voicetracker," which takes virtually any monophonic acoustic output—even someone humming a tune—and turns it into a MIDI compatible signal capable of

Reshaping the nature of musical instruments

driving MIDI synthesizers?

I'm also eagerly awaiting Ned Steinberger's new MIDI controller. Although naturally reluctant to discuss details of his new project until it reaches completion, he does say that it is an entirely new type of controller, neither guitar nor keyboard, which interfaces to MIDI synthesizers.

Perhaps the ultimate controller for guitarist right now is the SynthAxe, distributed in this country by Fairlight and retailing for \$9500. Although it has strings like a standard guitar, their tuning is irrelevant since they are used only for triggering synthesizer electronics. Another set of strings, separate from the "melody" strings, senses strumming motions. What's more, unlike conventional guitar synthesizer controllers, the SynthAxe generates no sound of its own, either acoustic or electronic; instead, it produces only computer-style data describing what notes are being hit, their dynamics, whether pitch-bending is occurring, and so on. This data gets sent through the MIDI port to MIDI-controlled instruments. Like other MIDI controllers, if the SynthAxe says "play A# at full volume," then the companion MIDI device will also play A# at full volume.

SynthAxe took their particular approach when they realized that trying to derive pitch information from a conventional guitar was inherently slow and fraught with possibilities for errors. So, a new type of instrument was designed from the ground up to function specifically as a controller and nothing else. The SynthAxe responds to all of a guitar player's usual vocabulary, but also adds some unique twists. In addition to the set of strings that senses strumming, notes can also be played by pressing down on various combinations of large, easy-to-hit keys. There's even a "master" key which, when pressed, activates all six strings. This is ideal for playing brass parts and other effects which are not normally "strummed."

MIDI was intended to make life easier for musicians, but it also seems to be spurring a degree of much-welcomed creative thinking in the industry. So far, most synthesizer controllers have been variations on existing instruments—such as the piano or guitar. But with people like Ned Steinberger and companies such as SynthAxe working on new breeds of all-electronic controllers, we may be in for some real surprises in the years ahead.

# Scorchers



PHOTO: MARK TUCIFER

## GOING FOR THE THROAT

LOST AND FOUND  
Jason and the  
Scorchers  
EMI America

By  
Anthony  
DeCurtis



**N**ashville's Jason and the Scorchers come at the sources of American rock 'n' roll with all the bravado and vigilance of a slightly crazed bomb squad. They know their job is to defuse danger by determining how all the explosive materials fit together, but they're always half-tempted to trip the charge for the pure rush of it.

On *Lost And Found* the Scorchers trip the charge and stagger out of the blast

wiser country-soul survivors. Not that this disk—the band's first full-length LP—merely revives the slap-happy hillbilly/punk fervor of 1982's *Reckless Country Soul*, or *Fervor*'s goodhearted, high energy effort to validate the Scorchers as more than a drunken, smart ass joke like, say, the Replacements.

No, *Lost And Found* whets its edge on a harder stone. The Scorchers initially harnessed punk's crash-and-burn power to restore recklessness to the country tradition they inherited and to shake up the home-town studio-wimps. Now gripping the twin torches of country authenticity and new wave insurgency, how could these Nashville rude boys meet the masses and honor their legacies?

Well, first you go for the throat. Rock 'n' roll itself is the mass culture merger of folk idioms like country music

and the blues—and the Scorchers rock with deadly conviction on *Lost And Found*. Less than a minute into this LP's first cut—a Stones-fired guitar storm courtesy of manic ax-man Warner Hodges—vocalist Jason Ringenberg rails, "It's the last time around/I'm the final survivor in your heart's ghost town," an intimation that more than a feeling's at stake in this record's tales of hard times and loves long gone dead.

The apocalyptic "Last Time Around" finds its historical roots in the Hank Williams homage that ignites side two—a defiant, downward-to-darkness tear along Leon Payne's "sorrow bound" "Lost Highway." "Broken Whiskey Glass" nods to the Scorchers' raucous past by resurrecting and sprucing up a raver from *Reckless Country Soul*, while the standard "I

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"Really Don't Want To Know" undergoes a crunching boogie guitar and yelping treatment that struts the line between update and sly desecration. As for potential singles, the album's catchiest tracks are "White Lies," with its Who-styled harmonies and power chords, and "Shop It Around," a loping rocker sweetened by the strain of Jason's vocals, a melodic hook you could hang your torn-and-frayed coat on, and an irresistible singalong chorus.

But for all its achievement, this is not a flawless record. Clichéd guitar flourishes crop up too often; drummer Perry Baggs could stand to develop greater finesse to counterbalance his force; and, though he's a lyricist of impressive talent, Jason needs to overcome some clunker metaphors ("blanket of sorrow," "your soul is an icebox"), awkward "literary" effects ("It wouldn't mean not half as much"), or illogical aphorisms ("You never think there's a bridge/Until it starts to burn").

*Lost And Found's* redeeming moment of pure grade transcendence, however, comes with "Far Behind," a mournful ballad penned by Baggs and bassist Jeff Johnson that mines the lode of rustic world-weariness the Stones struck on "No Expectations." This number unites the Scorchers with Earle Poole Ball (Johnny Cash's keyboardist and a Gram Parsons session veteran), Kenny Lovelace (a Jerry Lee Lewis side man) on fiddle, and Louisiana's Donald Spicer on acoustic slide guitar.

The chemistry of past-meets-present in this mixture is stunning. The trio of guest players weave a drowsy, seductive setting that Jason enters with the decaying will of a man who's come to realize that his deepest emotional burden, in its familiarity, has become a source of almost narcotic pleasure to him. "I've seen a million dreams in your eyes/I've searched for love and found goodbyes/Still, here I am, the day's going blind/Will I ever find a way, find a way to leave you far behind?" The pained, Keith-like background wail and lyrical "Moonlight Mile" fiddle fadeout suggest the singer will eventually find the escape he desires, though not in this world.

If you're searching for a hell-bent take on what's been lost and what's been found on the road to rock 'n' roll 1985, *Lost And Found* is the place to start looking.

### RECKLESS

Bryan Adams

A&M

By  
Wayne  
King

I  
t sure  
would be  
nice to like  
Bryan Ad-



ams. He's just about the only rocker for the eardrum-damaged post-metal generation who can write songs that don't need amps up full to come across, even if most of his hooks fell right off the truck. Only problem is, those songs of his keep getting in the way. Take the first single from *Reckless*, the ultra-catchy "Run To You." It's all about how his first love just ain't enough, he's gotta run to this other woman. That's cool, right? I mean, the first girl, she only says her love for him would never die, she's got a heart of gold, but her love is...cold. So what the hell, let's just keep her in the dark: "It wouldn't hurt her if she didn't know." Then there's the female in "Ain't Gonna Cry," who came on to him, but now apparently has flown the coop. Old Bryan don't seem to like that, though, so "Next time (I'll) maybe re-arrange your face."

But, hey, this kind of double standard ain't just the usual guys can/girls can't—no, old Bryan's downright conceptual with this stuff. On "Kids Wanna Rock," he bemoans the "computerized crap" he hears on the radio, meaning disco, that old bugaboo in "She's Only Happy When She's Dancin'" he writes about a woman who only has her weekends spent dancing at "the Ball and Chain" lounge to look forward to. Well, just what does he think they play in the Ball and Chain—Armored Saint? No, probably lots of that computerized crap, which apparently doesn't bother the songwriter when he's writing 'em in a more compassionate mode.

Still, who'd expect consistency or honesty from a guy who writes what must be the ultimate song about adolescent fixation with the "magic" that was the Woodstock era (at least, as it was brainwashed into every kid who wasn't there by AOR radio for ten years after) in "Summer of '69"? "Those were the best days of my life/The summer of '69," the singer tells us, recalling his first six-string and the band he had 'til one guy quit and another got married. Well, if his bio is correct, Bryan Adams was all of nine in the summer of '69, which makes it a little unlikely that fellow band members were getting hitched.

Funny, but now that I think about it, I can't even remember why it would've been nice to like Bryan Adams.

### DOWN TO EARTH

Jonzun Crew

Tommy Boy

By  
Anthony  
Decurtis

H  
ot off  
a virtual  
collaboration  
with Peter



Wolf on the ex-Geils-man's solo debut, *Lights Out*, funk-master Michael Jonzun has reconvened his hardy Crew and served up a stylish sampler of funk and r&b selections. *Down to Earth*, the Jonzun Crew's follow-up to *Lost in Space*, romps the range from the electro-rockit riff blasts of "Mechanism," to the graceful soul stirrings of the gorgeous "We're Going All the Way." What the LP's eight tracks share is their polish, craft and accomplishment.

*Down to Earth* is essentially a catchy amalgamation of cheery synthesizer and percussion effects, with Michael Jonzun, brother Sonni Jonzun, Stevo Thorpe and Gordo Worthy laying down the lion's share of the tracks, bolstered by spot contributions from a battalion of kindred supporters. Such an arrangement puts the load on the technical side, and here Michael Jonzun's production—with a deft hand from Wolf session veteran Ed Stasium, who mixed five cuts—provides the human touch that makes this album more than a spunky seminar in space-funk methodology.

The sunniness of Jonzun's sweet falsetto, the eager pop-laced bop of cuts like "You Got the Lovin'" and "Time Is Running Out," and the zany tom-tom-clubbing of "The Wizard of Space" also keep *Down to Earth* planted in the people's groove. Balancing their street chops with the steamy sophistication on the *Thriller*-flavored "Tonight's the Night" and the jazzy soul-dreams of "Lovin'," the Jonzun Crew present a package that's tough to fault. If you haven't gotten down with the Crew yet, *Down to Earth* brings them to your planet and makes it hard for you to justify passing them by.

### THE LONGEST DAY

The Del Fuegos

Slash/Warner Bros.

By  
John  
Leland

### THE DEL FUEGOS



P  
op open a beer, and let's get on with this review. The Del Fuegos are, if nothing else, a good drinking band.

The Fuegos hail from Boston, where they've been the town's liveliest buzz for the past two years. This fiery debut album shows what all the fuss was about. The Del Fuegos can stake a legitimate claim to the title of America's best bar band (they face their stiffest competition for that crown from their labelmates, the Grammy-winning Los Lobos). Sequestered behind endless swinging doors and cases of suds, they enjoy the bar band's unique immunity to the passage of time. *The Longest Day* would

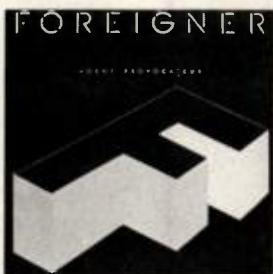
have sounded both as familiar and as contemporary twenty years ago as it does today. And the same, no doubt, will be true in another twenty years.

The songs on *The Longest Day* divide fairly neatly into rockabilly-influenced high octane rockers and plaintive, cornpone ballads; the songwriting at any speed is uniformly excellent. Singer/guitarist Dan Zanes growls and moans, as the quartet sounds like a slimmed-down Blasters on "Nervous And Shakey" and the title track, and a revved-up Rank and File on "When The News Is On." They hit Everly-esque harmonies on "Missing You," and drop into schmaltzy 12/8 for "Have You Forgotten." The playing is loose but the arrangements are tight—as casual as this seems, this is well-crafted stuff.

The Del Fuegos indicate that they know more than they're letting on, and may, like Rank and File, make a run as a major league pop band. Until then, they've certainly got the stuff to keep the bars hopping. Drink up.

AGENT PROVOCATEUR  
*Foreigner*  
Atlantic

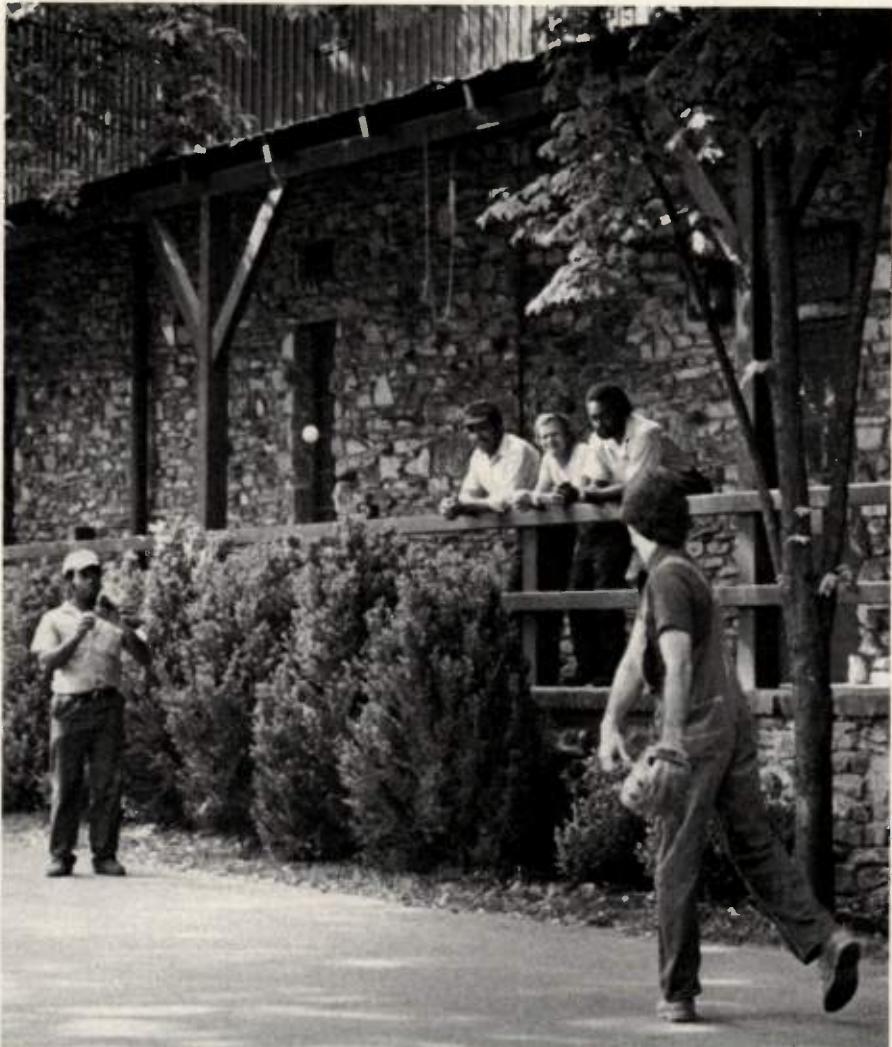
By  
James  
Hunter



**F**oreigner hires great help. On 1981's 4, they employed Motown's Jr. Walker, who blew some of the most scorching sax of his long hot career on "Urgent." They also paid Thomas Dolby to handle the synths, and on "Waiting For A Girl Like You," a beauty of a song to start with, Dolby played them with an eerie anxiousness. Now, on "I Want To Know What Love Is," the first single from *Agent Provocateur*, Foreigner has augmented Lou Gramm's vocals with the voices of Aretha-like pop/soul singer Jennifer Holliday, Thompson Twin Tom Bailey, plus the New Jersey Mass Choir with Donny Harper.

Lightly attacking the unpretentious words with his sometimes strained but usually ardent tenor, Gramm tries so hard to sound sincere with the careful melodies of guitarist Mick Jones' songs that his determination signifies as faith. With the resounding choir weaving in and out of Gramm's plea, backing him up and essentially setting the track free as Holliday bursts out and takes flight, the single is a bracing request from corporate rock to gospel music for enrichment.

The rest of *Agent Provocateur*, co-produced by Alex Sadkin, with participation from Trevor Horn, is Foreigner's 90145. Like the Yes record, the drums on the met-



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NOW THIS HERE IS WHAT WE call a slight change in format, folks—meaning here's where *Side Tracks* evolves into more like a real column than a casual consumer guide. Not that our focus has changed; we're still very much a singles-oriented concern. The difference now, however, will be in an integration of my perspectives of the music and the music industry. The primary concern, though, remains to

hours. Having tossed the notion about, I just may do it soon, maybe in time for February's releases and a column with a Black History Month slant. What say?

Another intention of this column, of course, is to see if through covering the singles action we can gauge what's keeping pop afloat. Now you and I both know that outside of Prince ain't much new shaking on the airwaves these days.

marital romance, fidelity and fun. One great thing about the record besides its anthemic verses is the staggered way it begins, slowly working its way into some peak moments as if paralleling a great love relationship. Another hit out now with music in tune with its subject is sister **Rebbie Jackson's** "Centipede" (Columbia). Penned by brother Michael, it rattles in with some high-tech shenanigans that

crooning B-side, "17 Days" (just flip over your copy of "When Doves Cry") as my current faves in the mid-tempo black pop department. Switching up the pace to check in with the hip hoppers, though, finds that the hot number over in that zone is **UTFO's** "Roxanne, Roxane" (Full Force/Select). Now to be honest, this riff on a stuck-up uptown gal hasn't quite nailed me like some of my b-boy manque acquaintances, but I'm gonna keep listening until I get it, if only because time has proven again and again, you keep your ear to the street, you will keep up with the beat. My personal rap jam of the hour, however, is **The Cold Crush Brothers'** "Fresh, Fly, Wild and Bold" (Profile), which sports as virtuoso a scratch break as has been heard since Herbie Hancock's "Rockit" (speaking of which, check the **Dazz Band's** "Let It All Blow" [Motown] if you'd like to catch a scratch-free reprise of that groove thang) and the exuberant tag-team bravado of the brothers.

The other tough rap tip happening currently is **Whodini's** "Friends" (Jive/Arista), which casts such a downer vibe on that loosely used term you won't much want to try and make new ones after giving it a whirl on your system—though you will wanna jump to the floor and throwdown on the sucker. Despite its depressing message, "Friends'" bass part alone makes you wanna rock all night long. As does that of the second cut on this 12-inch, "Five Minutes of Funk," which could easily be the score for the next breakexploitation epic coming soon to a theater near you.

I like Phil Collins and I like Earth, Wind & Fire's former lead singer **Philip Bailey** too, but the troubling thing about "Easy Lover" (Columbia), their duet from Bailey's Collins-produced *Chinese Walls* is how AOR-sounding it is (i.e., "white"). I say this is troubling because it points up how black artists are compromising the funk to crossover to wider pop airplay. And then again there's Prince, whose alternate route to success on all the charts is to manage a mutant black-rock hybrid. Which has in turn opened up the doors for other black rockers who can conceive of rocking hard without giving up their nappy black roots (forgetting for the moment that some of 'em wear unnatural jheri-curl looks). And as I sit here awaiting new releases from Nona Hendryx, George Clinton and The Time's Jesse Johnson, I wonder just whether my prediction that black rock will rule the nation in 1985 is about to come true. Keep your eyes glued to this spot for further developments.



Whodini (Jalil and Ecstacy in foreground) and friends: Jump up and throwdown if you dare

use this space to cover the pulse of the pop music industry—12-inches and 45s—in as many genres as contain good grooves, which means everything from hardcore funk to hardcore thrash. Which is why once again I'll make the pitch for those of you with independently-produced vinyl to ship it this way c/o RECORD. A few things have dribbled in from hither and yon, but not so many as I feel swamped by 'em yet. Leaving me at the mercy of the major and my own predilections towards indie hip hop material. Mainstream black pop being cool by me, I don't mind giving up the play to the latest party grooves because that music does after all represent my cultural roots. But I would definitely like to give some up to more reggae—though to really find out what's hip in reggae I know I'm probably gonna have to truck out to a good reggae record store and just hang out for a few

In times like these, however, I figure rather than lament the stagnation it's best just to retreat to your favorite cave with some old standbys and contemplate the meaning of existence through the medium of pure pop. Bringing us to the featured artists of this month's column, chosen for their proven ability to grab an ear by dint of good old-fashioned songcraft alone.

Case in point: **Ashford and Simpson**, whose "Solid" (Capitol) marks yet the latest entry in a 20-year history of hits from a duo seemingly dedicated to propagating

bring to mind Chinese folk music surrendered to the beatbox aesthetic. Perhaps only as obsessive an animal lover as Michael could pen an ode to desire that compares it to a creepy crawler, but there's no denying that bizarre as the mug is, the song's equally gutsy (thankz to Debbie's vocals from the viscera) and hypnotic. Right now Debbie and Mike's intrafamily collaboration is running neck and neck around my house with **Billy Ocean's** cheery ode to island womanhood, "Caribbean Queen" (Jive/Arista) and Prince's pneumatic-but-

BY GREG TATE  
SIDE TRACKS

al-like fast material ("Tooth and Nail," "Reaction to Action") are airy but thunderous; the guitars and keyboards on the tuneful slower cuts ("That Was Yesterday," "Down on Love") crunch and bite. Foreigner often cuts loose, although rarely with the dangerous verve of good rock 'n' roll. Their fans will probably find this very solid and buyable.

**SOLID**  
**Ashford and Simpson**  
Capitol

By  
Crispin  
Sartwell



**O**f this much we can be sure: Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson are professionals. Remember, these are the folks who wrote "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," the consummate professional gesture of late '60s pop. They're still going strong, still writing, arranging, producing and performing immaculate soul. Almost every project they've tried has been successful, but "Solid" has more immediate impact than anything they've ever recorded. We all saluted when they ran that title single up the flag pole; it's musical professionalism at its best. The main thing is the melody—this song has a hook on which you could hang a side of beef. "Solid" is such a marvelously obvious tune that you have to wonder why nobody ever thought of it before.

Unfortunately, much of the rest of the record illustrates the problem with professionalism in pop: the ornamentation only barely conceals a lack of substantive ideas. "Honey I Love You," for example, puts Ashford's sometimes grating falsetto to the service of an arrangement so sickeningly sweet that you can't take the song's sentiments seriously. Still, as an example of painstaking pop craftsmanship, this record deserves a place in your record collection, if not in your heart.

**PINK WORLD**  
**Planet P Project**  
MCA

By  
Duncan  
Strauss



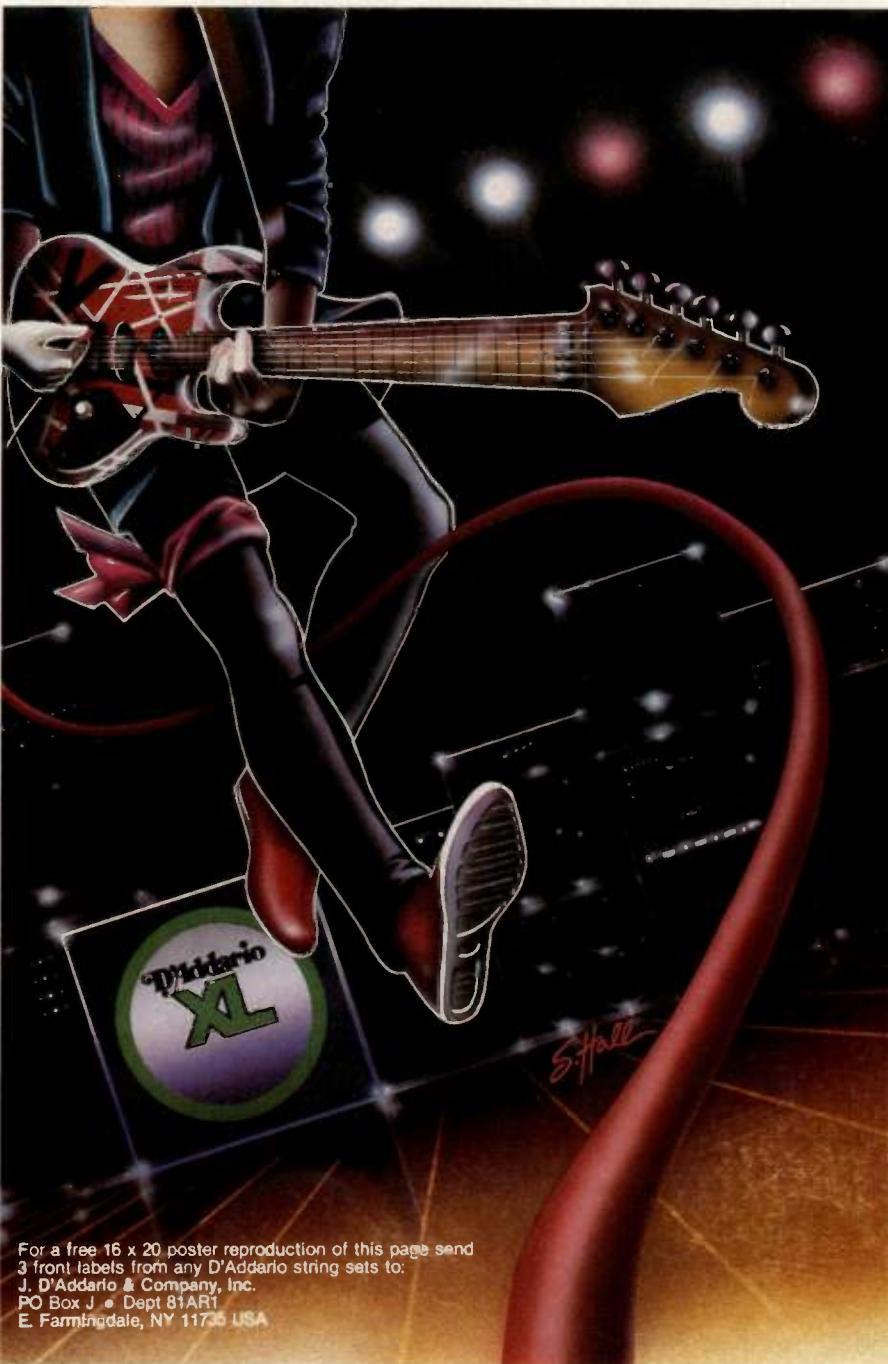
**P**lanet P Project's second outing, *Pink*

*World*, is really off-The-Wall, which is unfortunate. The Project—producer Peter Hauke and composer/singer/multi-instrumentalist Tony Carey, whose most recent solo LP yielded the successful singles "First Day of Summer" and "A Fine, Fine Day"—has crafted a progressive rock opus that is an apparent attempt to out-pink Pink Floyd.

In this cosmic scheme, no turn is left unstoned. First of all, *Pink World* is a double-LP *concept album*, where the theme of nuclear holocaust is explored with a lot of heavy implications (not to mention a lot of heavy metal), and punctuated with some pretty boss sound effects. As an added bonus, early pressings are on a vinyl that's a lovely shade of (what else?) Pepto-Bismol pink, making it look like the world's big-

gest Chu-Bops package.

But there are deep flaws, mostly rooted in deep excess, that prevent *World* from coming within miles of being compelling or poignant. The main flaw lyrically is the package's similarity to the neighbor down the block who talks incessantly, but rarely says anything. When you finally reach the end of the fourth side, the Project has said about the same thing as the bumper sticker which suggests "One Nuclear Bomb Can Ruin Your Whole Day." Musically, the biggest problem is that you can't tell whether this was an ambitious homage to Floyd that slipped away from Carey, or whether he's simply incapable of creating this much original music. Which is not to infer that *World* is a bizarro time warp tragedy. Fact is, it provides great back-



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ground music for reading the paper or doing errands around the house. Hell, a snappy instrumental like "March of The Artemites" might help you through the dinner dishes in record time.

All in all, *Pink World* simply extends the long-neglected tradition of weak, bloated double albums that would be stronger if pared down to a single disc. Indeed, it's a safe bet that on a more selective squad, like a real Floyd effort, a lot of things here would never make the final cut.

### HIGH COMPRESSION James Cotton

Alligator

### BAD AXE Son Seals

Alligator

By  
Rico  
Mitchell

**F**or the past dozen years, Chicago's Alligator label has been doing an admirable job of bringing a measure of national recognition to the most deserving of the Windy City's second generation blues players. Too good to be considered mere journeymen, James Cotton and Son Seals are well-represented by their most recent releases.

Cotton's *High Compression* features two separate groups: the first, an all-star band with Magic Slim on guitar, Pinetop Perkins on piano, Aron Burton on bass and Robert Covington on drums; the second, Cotton's regular touring unit led by guitarist Mark Coleman. The former is perhaps more "authentic" sounding, but the latter has more fun as they flash back on Steve Miller's bluesy psychedelic relic, "Ying Yang," and update Bobby Blue Bland's "Ain't Doin' Too Bad" with a funky bass line and horny horns a la Fred Wesley. Cotton's singing is clearer than usual, and his powerhouse harmonica technique remains virtually peerless after all these years. The one criticism that can be applied to this album, and to most contemporary blues products, is that the new songs lack the sense of urgency that fueled the definitive postwar urban blues writing of Wolf, Waters and Hooker. (That aspect of the blues tradition has been passed on ahead to young rappers like the Furious Five, who warned "Don't push me/Cuz I'm close to the edge." The Muddy Waters who wrote "Mannish Boy" would have understood.)

Son Seals arrived on Chicago's South Side after serving Southern roadhouse apprenticeships with Earl Hooker and Albert King. (Now widely respected as a guitarist,



Seals played drums on King's classic *Live Wire/Blues Power* album.) His 1977 Alligator LP, *Midnight Son*, was hailed by *Rolling Stone* as "one of the most significant blues albums of the decade" for its "throat-ripping drive and stiletto sharp delivery." But despite the fierce title of his newest effort, Seals may have mellowed a little since then. "I Can Count On My Blues" is a porch-settin', countryfied crooner that might have been yawned up by Tony Joe White in his post-"*Rainy Night In Georgia*" days. On the other hand, when Big Son growls ferociously at his woman on "Just About To Lose Your Clown," or stomps out the door in "Out Of My Way," I pity the fool that tries to stop him. His still-searing guitar solos often recall B.B. King, if the latter had been born more of a fighter than a lover. At 42—still young for a bluesman—Seals sounds like he may just have plenty of fight left in him.

### TRUST IN GOD Al Green

Myrrh

By  
Rico  
Mitchell

**I**n which the last of the great soul stylists continues to make mellow with the Holy Spirit. In the heat of performance, Green may still toss his shirt into the audience at the climax of "Take Me To The River," but the sly reconciliation of sexual desirability and spiritual devotion that charged his singing through the transitional LPs *The Belle Album* and *Truth 'N' Time* surfaces only once here, on "Never Met Nobody Like You." Of the four "secular" covers—the Supremes' "Up The Ladder To The Roof," Ashford and Simpson's "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," Bill Withers' "Lean On Me" and Joe South's "Don't It Make You Wanna Go Home"—only the latter holds its own beside the original.

The remainder of the album is pleasant enough low-key gospel, but hardly essential, even for believers. The most inspirational moment is delivered not by Green's falsetto, but by one of his female back-up singers, who hits a note on the title track so warm and pure it'll make your earholes glow.

It must also be mentioned that this is one minister of music who believes in keeping his sermons short, which sounds great on Sunday mornings but may leave you wondering what gives during the rest of the week. Side two of *Trust In God* clocks in at all of 12:33. In God we trust, but a little more earthly effort next time wouldn't hurt.

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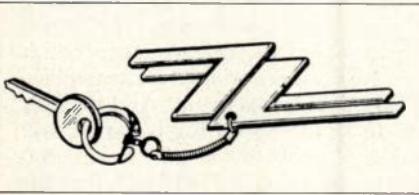
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# STILL FRESH

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO

WHITE LIGHT/WHITE HEAT

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

VU

The Velvet Underground

Polygram

By Christopher Hill

By some fluke of chance, the group of not-wholly-alienated youth that I hung out with in high school adopted *The Velvet Underground & Nico*—their first album, now re-released on Polygram along with the two subsequent albums, *White Light/White Heat* and *The Velvet Underground*, plus a compilation of vintage outtakes, *VU*—as standard listening, cruising and getting high fare along with the Doors, the Stones, Steppenwolf, the MC5, etc. Perhaps it seems a bit strange to imagine nice kids from Chicago's sleek western suburbs bombing around to the determined decadence of "I'm Waiting For The Man" (not to mention "Venus In Furs"), but there you go—we were too happily naive to recognize the difference between great rock 'n' roll and great avant garde rock 'n' roll. It all pretty much sounded of a piece to us. And still does. That's my point.

Because the most important thing the Velvet Underground ever did was to invent a way for rock 'n' roll to sound, which, like all the basic rock 'n' roll sounds, seemed at first like something you'd been hearing in the music forever, and then like something you'd never heard before in your life. In other words, totally, instinctively right.

What kind of sound was it? Listen to "I'm Waiting For The Man," one of their essential statements. The first thing that you'll notice is that once the groove (if you can call three—literally three—chords pounded out in unremitting staccato 4/4 a groove) is estab-

lished, it never changes. Nothing, apparently, happens in this song—no lead break, no melody, only the most vestigial of choruses. It's as if they were deliberately isolating and exaggerating the simplicity and repetitiveness of the most basic rock 'n' roll. They were, in fact, and in doing so, they predicted almost the entire strategy of punk.

The effect is the opposite of boredom. All potentially distracting elements are removed as you are pulled into the song's jittery assembly line momentum as few of even the most driving of rock 'n' roll songs have been able to pull. After a while, you begin to make subtle distinctions between the particular rending tone of the guitars in one verse and the next. You begin to discern strangely varied flourishes in the up and down strokes across the strings. In the sensitized state produced by this repetition, little things—like the quick, sinuous bass run that connects chorus to verse—become wildly exciting, affirming the mad perseverance of the guitars. It starts to seem as if these singularly obsessive musicians are pursuing something, trying to reach an essential simplicity, so that when Lou Reed calls, in that supremely cool throwaway command, "Oh...work it now" (or better yet, "Walk it home" at the song's fadeout), it's not

the put-on it might first appear, but a profound summation of what's actually going on: they are working it, worrying the music like a dog, making a truly fine art of the old rock 'n' roll principle of getting the most out of the least.

Of course, the whole point and purpose of this fantastic noise is to be the setting for Lou Reed's story of the collegiate junkie getting in over his head in city kicks. You can hear the poor kid anxiously drumming his fingers and tapping his toes (the guitars being the nightmare amplification of these nervous rhythms). "Say white boy," asks Lou the bad dude in his most sibilantly threatening manner, "What you doin' uptown?/Say white boy/You chasin' our women around?" "Pardon me, sir," replies Lou the lost square, with a hilarious deferential quaver in his voice, "It's furthest from my mind/I'm just looking for a tinted friend of mine." Back in '67, the decadent subject matter was all anyone noticed. It wasn't until later that it became clear that Lou Reed's songs were often a running series of deadpan gags.

But the Velvets weren't only funny. They were also sexy. In fact, in a genre largely founded upon sex, theirs is some of the dirtiest music you'll ever hear. Not so much in the lyrics; there's a vaguely uncomfor-

table horny pressure behind a lot of the music, a haven't-been-laid-for-a-month uptightness, some distillation of Cuban-heeled pachuco gangbang music. For cross-reference, see "Some Kind Of Love" from *The Velvet Underground*, the peristaltic slinkiness of which is the one great musical evocation of how it feels when you've decided to try something *really* nasty.

*VU* provides a link between the still-experimental third album, and the self-assured looseness that finally emerged on *Loaded*, their fourth and last studio effort (which has miraculously survived in print since its 1970 release). You can hear the band learning how to limber up; songs like "I Can't Stand It" and "One Of These Days" show a band that's not only achieved a mastery of concept, but of rhythm, too.

So where, finally, is the celebrated experimentalism of the Velvet Underground? Sure, there's powerful self-conscious artistry at work in their songs. But it's almost entirely directed towards the goal of presenting a uniquely pure, unflinching vision of what rock 'n' roll, in all its implications, is about. And if that's too spiky for you to think about, if you don't feel like following it all the way, then the Velvet Underground is not for you. But then, maybe rock 'n' roll isn't either. ○

The Velvet Underground: Getting the most out of the least



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE

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