

JOHN FOGERTY: RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING

RECORD

PAGE 15



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RATT
WHAM!



PAGE 8

BRYAN ADAMS

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THE RECORD
INTERVIEW



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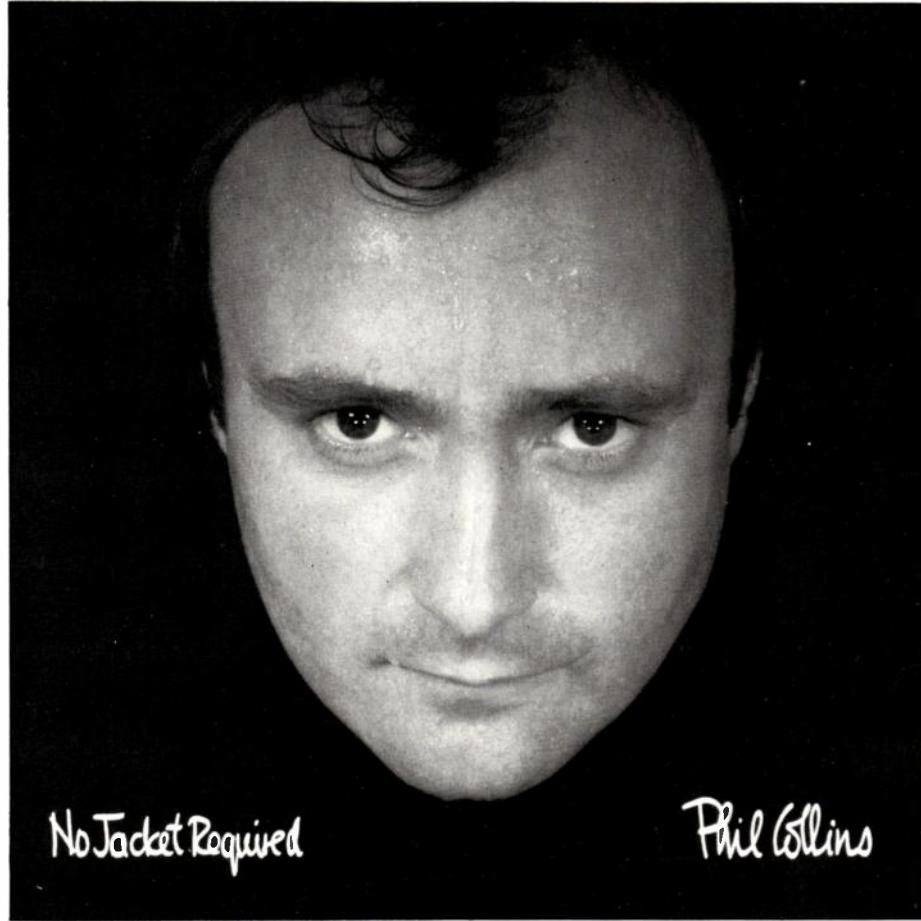
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RECORD

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ROSS HALFIN/PHOTOFEATURES

BAND AID

BAND AID IS THE MOST beautiful event in music history. It's touching to know there are so many musicians who care enough to do something terrific like this. Although the only thanks that Band Aid want is to know they've helped, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those artists. For all of us in America who listen and are touched by their music, the sincerest of thanks to each and every one who participated in this wonderful Christmas present. "Do They Know It's Christmas?" I'm sure they do, thanks to you special people. We love you, forever.

KRISTIE ZIEGLER
Newville, PA

DUKES UP

I'VE STAYED QUIET long enough! I just cannot allow the mounting criticism of Berlin to end with the insular comments of Michael Sturr (Letters, February RECORD). Having been a rock fan for nearly two decades, I consider myself extremely fastidious when it comes to music, and generally shun the commercialistic drivel of most of today's bands. Consequently, when I discover a band I truly enjoy, such as Berlin, I am quick to defend them against the kind of narrow-minded complaints with which you've assaulted John Crawford and company over the past few months. Although I share Mr. Sturr's allegiance

to "substance and quality musicianship," I must say that my appreciation for music encompasses much more than that. I had the privilege of seeing Berlin in concert nine times last year, and I can truthfully say they are the best live band I've ever seen. To anyone who has seen them live, I needn't describe the contagious enthusiasm and musical precision with which Berlin perform. But to the arm-chair critics whose perception goes no further than the lyric sheet, I can only say this: Do yourself a favor the next time Berlin's in town and buy a ticket. You'll find that this so-called "stale and predictable" band will leave your knees weak and your mind changed.

MICHAEL J. CROWN
South Amboy, NJ

10/21/84
BIG COUNTRY

SAYING STUPID THINGS to the press isn't something new to rock 'n' roll; people like Joe Strummer are taking care of that today. Stuart Adamson joined the list when he shat on America for not producing anything worth calling "art." If Adamson is as smart as he would have us believe, he would have accepted the fact that he said something stupid, acknowledged that fact and apologized. That he tried to cover up his comments in your latest Big Country article ("Stay Alive, Stuart," February RECORD) only perpetuates his unfortunate blunder.

Big Country is a pretty good band, but not good enough to

go around shooting their mouths off in a condescending manner toward America. I may not be an artist with a major record company contract, and have Steve Lillywhite producing me, but I do have respect for all those who came before me. Stuart Adamson now claims that he does too. If that's true, he should avoid the attempts at claiming his statements to be so esoteric that no one reading them understood him.

JOHN SHIPLEY
Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI

ing and refusing to take risks. He also implied that record sales are irrelevant as a measure of greatness. Bold as this assertion may be, it's not a new idea, and for the most part it's quite true. Whose music has proven the most influential and enduring—the Velvet Underground's or the Osmonds?

Having less money than mass-accepted "stars" does not automatically make one great, and no one said it did. However, the independent rock I've searched out, based on college radio and the recommendations of people whose taste I trust (yes, that does include Pete Buck), has meant much, much more to me than most of the safe, trendy, plastic pop that the majority seems to go so utterly ga-ga over. R.E.M., the dB's, Jason & the Scorchers, the Replacements, Dream Syndicate, Husker Du, X, the Violent Femmes, Black Flag and countless others, as well as earlier artists such as Television, Patti Smith, the New York Dolls and, of course, the Velvets (and former members thereof) have been the soundtrack of my life for the past year or so, and I'm only sorry I didn't see the light sooner. Maybe you should try it, Mr. Kraus. Who knows: if you let yourself, you might even like it. And as for what you call Buck's "high and mighty attitude," all I can say is, this isn't the first time, historically speaking, that those courageous enough to speak the truth have been accused of arrogance.

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ROCK ON

ROCK

ROCK

The I.R.S. Form



Wind-blown popsters fighting hunger: (from left to right) Chris Stamey, Ted Lyons, Will Rigby, Mitch Easter, Faye Hunter, Peter Holsapple, Gene Holder

Three I.R.S. bands have been keeping busy in a variety of ways lately, all of them musical, of course, all of them newsworthy. First up is Let's Active, which teamed with the dB's and Chris Stamey on home turf in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for a benefit to aid the Red Cross Famine Relief Program for Ethiopia. The concert took place on February 12 at Reynolds High School, whose distinguished alumni include Active's Mitch Easter, the dB's Peter Holsapple and Stamey . . . on February 18 R.E.M. travelled to Atlanta to perform a benefit concert to aid the Legal Environmental Assistance Fund (LEAF). LEAF is a non-profit organization working in Southern states to preserve and protect the environment and to provide legal channels for research and resolution of environmental conflicts. Having done their civic duty, our Athens friends returned to the studio to work on their third LP, now scheduled for May release . . . finally, we've learned that General Public will make its film debut this summer in *Head Office*, a comedy starring Judge Reinhold, Eddie Murphy's co-star in *Beverly Hills Cop*. The beat boys will portray a pub band—a role they're comfortable in from their days of working same in London and Birmingham, England—and perform a new, previously unreleased song titled "Don't Cry on Your Own Shoulder."

IKE AND TEENA?

Teena Marie, who composes pop songs in her sleep, thought she was still dreaming when her manager informed her of a phone call from the Twilight Zone. Seems Ike Turner, of all people, was inquiring as to the availability of Teena Marie to tour as part of—now get this—the Ike & Teena Revue.

"This has to be one for the book," cackles a wide-awake Teena, in New York to pro-

mote her latest funk 'n' roll album for Epic, *Starchild*. "My manager and I have been laughing ever since. Perhaps someday I'll have a chance to tell Tina herself."

Oh, and in case you were wondering, Teena declined Ike's offer.

Which leaves the 27-year-old Californian, a protege of Rick James and a devotee of Shirley MacLaine, Marvin Gaye and the Blessed Virgin, among others, as a solo artist, very much in charge of her own career. Currently she's on the initial leg of her first

headline tour, backed by a Detroit combo, Q.T. Hush (named after a cartoon detective of yore). As the first white artist to make a name at Motown, Marie performed as part of the Rick James show and later toured with Prince, but the singer/songwriter/producer/spiritualist

says that was all a warm-up.

"I can't help thinking, 'Why me?' Why did I get this voice, this soul, this spirit? Since I was eight years old, I dreamed of being the first big white artist at Motown, and I went on to fulfill that dream. Now I'm moving on to fulfill bigger dreams.

Such as the "unification of the races" via commercial record and concert sales. "Bringing black and white audiences together is a big reason I'm in this business," she points out. And indeed, *Starchild* appears to be having the desired impact: as of this writing, the album is Top Ten on the Black Album chart, and Top 40 on the pop charts; a single, "Lover Girl," after a long run on the Black Singles chart, is approaching the Top Ten of the pop chart.

Along similar crossover lines, Marie's next project is producing jazz/pop singer Nancy Wilson, whose popularity dates back to Perry Como's reign on network television. The danger does exist of trying to do too much too soon. But as Teena Marie's lengthy *Starchild* acknowledgements attest, the lady has plenty of help. Like Buddha, Stevie Wonder, Gandhi and all the other starchildren. Except Ike Turner, of course.

—Mark Mehler



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ON ROCK ON ROCK ON ROCK ON ROCK ON



MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

ON STAGE: ON THE GO-GO

WHAM!

Beacon Theater
New York City
February 14, 1985

Do the boys in Wham! go both ways? You bet. As video icons, George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley vacillate between suburban Yuppies and street-wise Young Guns without missing a beat. So in a market where the conventional wisdom says define your image and sell it, Wham! get to be "good boys" and "Bad Boys" ... which, by the way, suits the girls just fine.

And nowhere could you find 2600 screaming teenyboppers more willing to prove their devotion (one young girl within ear-shot sighed deeply, "I would do anything for George") than at New York's Beacon Theater on Valentine's Day. Dodging an unrelenting barrage of stuffed animals, flowers, love notes and junior underwear, Michael and Ridgeley (with 12 mu-

sicians and two dancers in tow) moved seamlessly through two seven-song sets comprised of all the material from the multi-platinum *Make It Big* LP, plus a fair sampling of their debut, *Fantastic*. A 15-minute video montage of clips, outtakes and still photos filled the breach between sets and, appropriately, elicited the evening's most piercing screams.

Musical highlights bolstered the first set, when the bright mix lent exuberance to the Latin-flavored "Club Tropicana," the Isleyes' lilting, soulful "If You Were There" and the funky, horn-riffed "Bad Boys." Pubertal hysteria reigned throughout the show, recalling scenes provoked by fellow teen-dreams, Duran Duran. In fact, the concert's climactic "Careless Whisper," Wham!'s robust Number One ballad, was rendered virtually inaudible by the tumult.

Of the boys in the band, Michael has proven himself a versatile pop stylist (although his funk and rap chops on *Fantastic* were a lot more startling than *Make It Big*'s pop whitewash) and now, a natural performer. In fine voice and projecting effortlessly while go-going about, he seduced his young admirers with charm and effervescence. Ridgeley, on the other hand, worked so strenuously and self-consciously to affect pop star buoyancy that he seemed in constant danger of crashing into the drum kit. Nevertheless, Wham! proved, as did the Frankies preceding them to these shores, that there is "live" after video. And like their compatriots, they seem to enjoy having it both ways.

—John McAlley

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ON ON ROCK ON ROCK ON ROCK ON ROCK ON

Ratt's second Atlantic LP, *Invasion of Your Privacy*, scheduled for a June release, is strictly a hit-and-run operation. "It'll be pretty much in the vein of *Cellar (Out of the Cellar*, 1984's debut)," says lead singer Stephen Pearcy. "But this time we won't be months in a studio. We're doing bass, drums and guitars live, all together, going for more intensity. These are new songs, we don't want them to get stale." Among the key album cuts are "You Should Know By Now," "You're in Love" and "Dangerous But Worth The Risk." Pearcy describes them all as "more truthful, less fantasy than we've done in the past. Now everybody out there will be able to understand everything we're saying. We don't want any more confusion."

Following tours of Japan and Europe, the ongoing "World Infestation Tour," which comprised about nine months of 1984, will once again begin tearing at the fabric of America this summer. "We're finally out of the cellar and into your living room," raves Pearcy, who has seen the future of rock 'n' roll. "Ratt cannot be exterminated. We will survive a nuclear war. Ratt and the cockroaches." And you thought it was Springsteen.

—Mark Mehler

Ratt finishing new LP



ROSS HALFIN/PHOTOFEATURES



EBIT ROBERTS

ELLIOT EASTON'S SMALL CHANGE

"It's like scratching a 20-year itch" is the way Cars lead guitarist Elliot Easton de-

scribes his debut solo album, *Change No Change*. "People have been exposed to just the tip of the iceberg as far as what I can do," Easton explains. "What I'm trying to do with the record is emerge as an identity, a total musical person rather than just a guy who plays guitar."

Easton's record is fairly straight ahead

pop, and that's bound to catch a few people off guard.

"Music to me is very much defined by limitations as well as freedom.

To write another three-chord song that nobody's written yet is a real challenge. I was hoping the record wouldn't sound '80-ish in a retro sort of way, but I wanted some of that sensibility."

Though Easton reckons he might do some touring as a solo artist if the album takes off, he is quick to add that his solo stint only gives him something to do between cruising with the Cars. Still, he admits to recognizing some advantages in making a solo album. "When you don't have to work with five people you have the freedom to totally express what you want to do. It's like having a huge field to play in instead of a little suburban back yard."

—Dean Johnson

JOHANSEN'S REVENGE

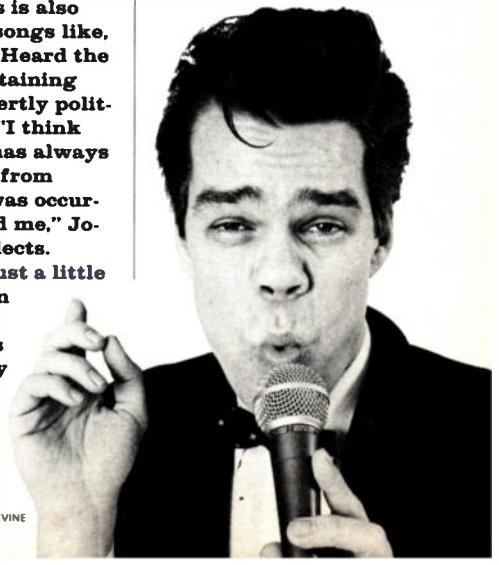
If David Johansen's music has had a consistent message, it's got to be something like, "Do something! Be somebody! Quit wasting time!" David is still the best exemplar of this attitude, pointedly ignoring the frustrations of a career that has stubbornly refused to ignite despite some of modern rock 'n' roll's most inspired work. His new album, *Sweet Revenge*, is more playful and adventurously eclectic than ever. Yet a new seriousness is also evident in songs like, "Have You Heard the News," containing his first overtly political lyrics. "I think my music has always been made from whatever was occurring around me," Johansen reflects.

"Now I'm just a little more grown up than when I was making my first albums, and I want to come out

and say things straighter—not always with my tongue in my cheek."

But performing's still David's first vocation, and he's eager to get out on the road behind the new album. "I'm out to subvert the public again," he promises. "This time I just want people to take notice of what's happening around them, to read a few headlines and maybe try to figure out what's really going on."

—Christopher Hill



Laura Levine

RECKLESS

Rock 'n' roll misfit Bryan Adams

BY MARK MEHLER

Bryan Adams is sipping tea in the parlor of New York's Berkshire Place Hotel and talking earnestly, but dispassionately, about discipline, commitment, friendship and hard work. So why am I thinking about Dennis The Menace and what he would say and do in a place like this?

These errant thoughts are prompted by the recollection of my previous encounter with our Bryan, some two years ago shortly before *Cuts Like a Knife* broke big (RECORD, June '83). Back then he didn't have an awful lot to say, but something about the way he tormented A&M Records' secretaries with a devilish, endearing simper suggested a young man not at all comfortable with the trappings of success and power. A young musician most afraid of taking himself, or being taken, too seriously; whose good manners would never catch up to his good instincts; who was destined to remain irrepressibly, gloriously obnoxious.

Shows what a couple of hit records will do for a guy.

"My personality hasn't changed," argues the 25-year-old Canadian rocker. "I think that's something you develop as a child. But I'm growing up in the sense that as an artist I'm striving for more, particularly lyrically, and I'm gaining ground as a human being, too. If you tell me I act and look older, it's a compliment. I can't afford to be a teenager forever."

What brought Bryan Adams to this

crossroads were *Cuts Like a Knife*, released in early '83 and certified platinum nine months later, and *Reckless*, released this past November as part of an album/cassette/Compact Disc/30-minute home video package. *Reckless* has already topped the sales of its predecessor, giving Adams something to protect.

"You're trying to get me to say something," he chides in response to these observations. "You know, the people who write about me don't really know me. No critic knows me, none is close enough to me to judge what I do. I have only a couple of close friends who do know. Last week we played in Los Angeles, and everybody, the band and the audience, had a wonderful time. But the (*Los Angeles*) *Times* panned the show. It makes no difference to me whatsoever. That's where I leave off, because it can't touch me. I know how great that show was."

Thus does Bryan Adams deal with the inevitable flak from a musical and marketing strategy that appears calculated in the extreme. His own people have used the phrase "attitude songs" to describe some of Adams' material and critics have noted a multitude of same in the artist's repertoire, as opposed to tunes of honest emotion or reflection.

It's one thing to wax nostalgic over the halcyon days of the "Summer of '69," for example, even though you were only nine years old at the time and didn't have a band whose members quit to get married; but what are we to make of the vengeful lyric of "Ain't Gonna Cry," when Adams responds to a woman's faithlessness with "Next time maybe (I'll) rearrange your

face"? Simple. "I'm writing in the third person there," he explains, adding, with a touch of annoyance in his voice, "why must everything be tied directly to my personal life?"

Really, he insists, I'm neither vengeful, nor bitter, nor mawkish. In fact, he describes his life as "fairly normal. I like to be with my babe, I've always had a girlfriend, I like to go out with my buddies and go wild and do all those stupid things. I would love to spend more time at home [North Vancouver] visiting my family, writing songs. But don't get me wrong. I love touring and the whole record business; I never felt real bad about missing high school graduation, prom night, hanging out with the same people at school every year, marrying the girl next door. To me, that was the fantasy."

The reality, however, can be elusive when someone is prone to remarks such as "I always give my audiences 110 percent. They paid for it and they deserve it."

But how did Bryan Adams wind up near the far wall of this austere tea room, turning every so often to watch his ass?

Born in Canada to British parents in 1959 (his father was in the Foreign Service following a military career), Bryan had lived in 10 countries (including Israel, Portugal and England) by the time he was 12. No matter the locale, the regimen was always the same: "Wherever we were, it was 'Don't step out of line, young man.' My parents were strict, extremely British." And Bryan, like the Adamses that came before him, was expected to uphold the family tradition.

"My cousin James is currently at Sand-

DISREGARD

tries hard to be a nice guy. No cigar.



ROSS MARINO

Platinum-selling Bryan Adams searches for the missing ten percent

hurst [a noted British military academy], and my grandfather still doesn't understand why I'm not there. I'm an Adams, aren't I? It really came out during the Falklands war. Fiery blood flowed through the Adams family once again."

At the British schools he attended around the world, Adams was taught to love God and Country. He said his prayers every day and memorized the Bible. Then, when he was 13, his family returned to Canada, and Bryan enrolled in a new kind of classroom. "I walked in and it was wild," he recalls. "Kids throwing paper airplanes around the room, throwing spitballs at each other, skipping classes. This was like Heaven to me."

Though he says he had come to love

rock 'n' roll before the age of 10 ("It was a street thing. The radio in those countries was regulated, but all the kids in school brought in Beatles and Stones records and we passed them around"), it was back in Canada that he made up his mind to pursue a pop music career with vigor.

"Even in Europe and the Middle East, I was always very much the individual. That didn't change back home. I was playing guitar all the time, and by the time I was 15, I had completely figured out what to do with my life. I didn't know if that vision I had was going to work, but I had to run with it."

At 16, he began playing local clubs, and a year later started collaborating with fellow fanatic Jim Vallance. For two years

they wrote material for Prism, Bachman-Turner Overdrive and Ian Lloyd. Later the ante was upped when Kiss and Loverboy, among others, recorded their songs.

In 1979, A&M Canada, attracted by a demo, released the single "Let Me Take You Dancing." In early 1980, Adams' self-titled debut album was released in the States. Neither it nor a second album (*You Want It, You Got It*), released a year-and-a-half later, received much attention. He was even mistaken for a guitar roadie by Dave Davies while on tour with the Kinks three years ago.

Then came *Cuts Like a Knife*, the album and videos, the resultant loss of anonymity, and the professed need to acquire new survival skills. "I learned to pick up quickly on people's personalities, suss them out, be a good judge of what they're after. I learned who to trust around me, who had heart and guts, who were the 'yes' people I didn't want near me."

But it's the show, the thrill of entrancing young audiences, that drives Adams. He says it begins with the "feeling that awakens in your crotch. That turns you on, then turns on your audience. I have never felt like not singing when I get before an audience. I give 100 percent, always."

(We must pause here and admit that we cannot account for Adams' 10 percent drop in commitment over the course of the last 10 paragraphs. We should also acknowledge how, a couple of years ago in a competing publication, the estimable John Mendelssohn took note of a similar *faux pas* committed in an interview situation by a Missing Person.)

"I never used to think of (singing) as a sexual thing, like in a shower," Adams continues, attempting to draw a fine distinction between crotch rock and crotch rot. "I do know this. Singing live is never the same thing twice. I could do it 1,000 times. It would arouse me in a little different way every time."

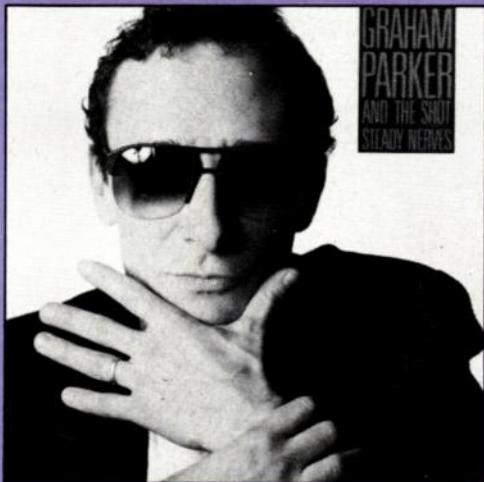
Adams says his parents remain unimpressed with his chosen career, but that success has helped narrow the credibility gap. "My father never had much compassion for incompetence, and I don't either. I think they know that the roots they laid for me are still strong. I believe my parents are simply proud to see me step out and be a strong individual, someone striving for something and achieving it on his own terms."

So Bryan Adams, who always gives somewhere between 100 to 110 percent, is ready to take up the cudgels this Spring and begin the second leg of his U.S. tour. He has visions of eventually playing all the places around the globe he has never seen.

"You don't have to believe this," he challenges, "but I'm having the greatest time of my life right now."

Of course I believe you, Bryan. Only I'd be more persuaded if you were to spill a little tea on that loveseat. Or, if only once, you gave but 99 percent.

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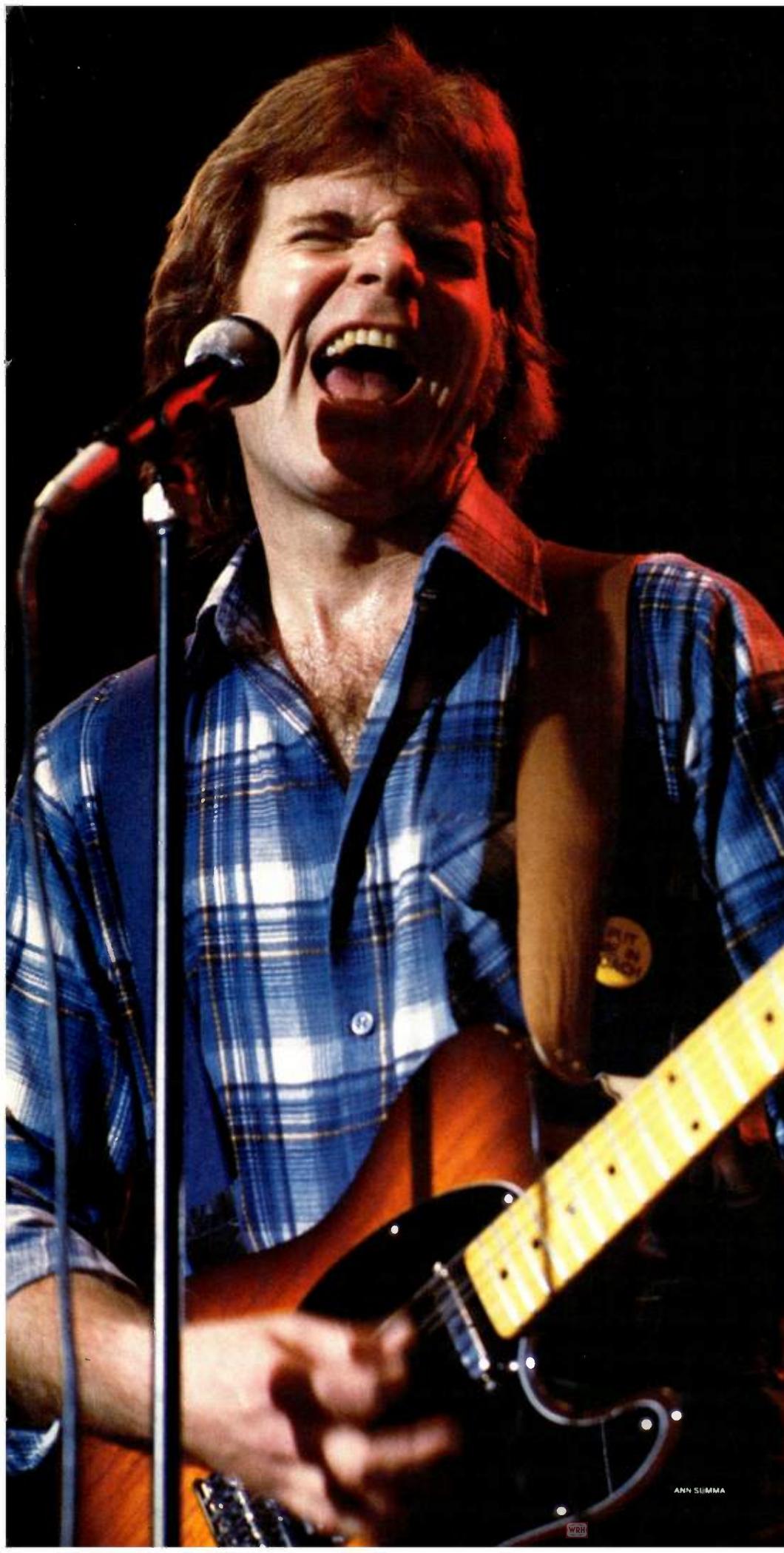
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RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING

*John Fogerty
comes back
with a
vengeance*

BY DAN FORTE

Will the real king of rock please stand up? Not so fast, Bruce.

John Fogerty would no doubt think it presumptuous to even entertain wearing such an arrogant title, but long-time supporters wouldn't hesitate to hand the veteran singer/songwriter/one-man band the mantle. John Fogerty,

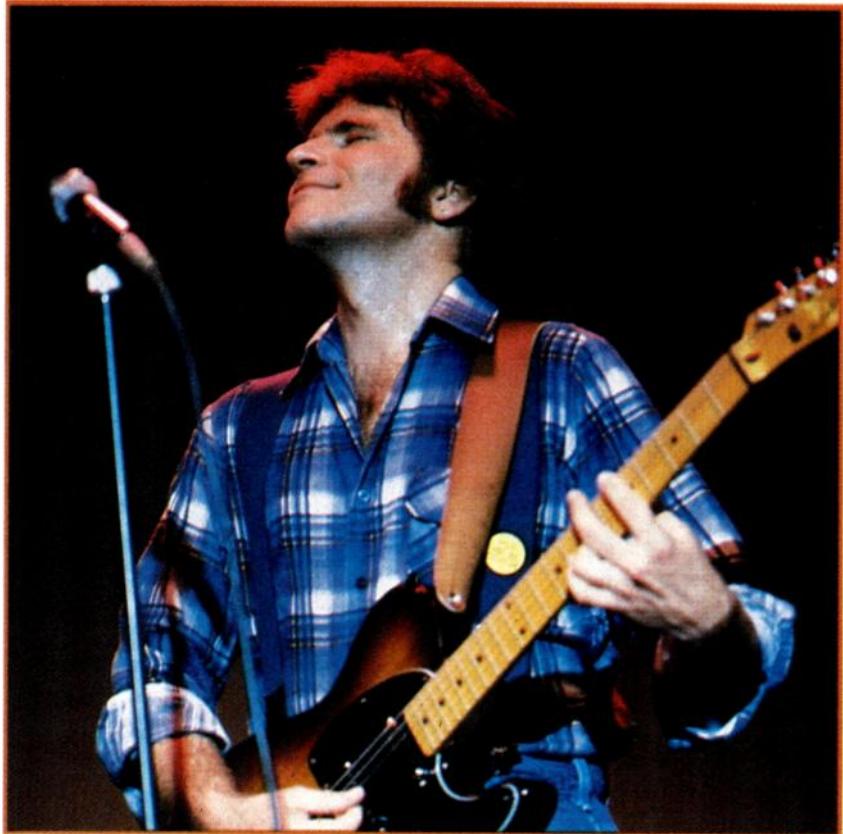
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the former hit factory of Creedence Clearwater Revival, the rock recluse of the '70s and the come-back story of the '80s, going toe-to-toe with the Boss and His Royal Badness and bumping them off the Top 10 throne? Far-fetched? Maybe, but just picture it:

The house lights dim as the din of the sold-out crowd mixes with a disembodied cheerleader clap that sounds as though it's coming from the audience itself. A twangy guitar line reminiscent of "La Bamba" enters as the curtain opens to reveal Fogerty, clad as ever in blue jeans and plaid shirt. "Centerfield" is followed by "Rock and Roll Girls" and "Big Train (From Memphis)" in rapid succession. Pausing briefly to regroup, Fogerty slows the pace down with the eerie "Vanz Kant Danz" before surprising the oldsters in the crowd with an ass-kicking medley of Creedence's "Travelin' Band" and Little Richard's "Good Golly Miss Molly." For the next hour, songs from Fogerty's platinum-selling comeback album are intermixed with R&B obscurities and occasional tunes by "contemporary roots" artists such as the Textones, Chris Isaak and Los Lobos. He closes with a rousing reading of "Mr. Greed," and for his encore sings "Rockin' All Over The World" from his 1975 solo album, and then the introspective "I Saw It on TV," which segues into Creedence's anthemic "Who'll Stop The Rain." Beaming, Fogerty returns to the stage for a second encore, and cranks up "Bad Moon Rising" and "Green River." The house lights illuminate the already-standing crowd for the end of the song, and the PA music begins as soon as Fogerty cuts off his all-star band, but no one heads for the exits. The band returns once more for a curtain call, but instead of saying good night they grab their instruments just in time for Fogerty's opening riffs of "Up Around The Bend." He next launches into "It Came Out Of The Sky" from Willy And The Poor Boys, and then pauses to once again thank the crowd "for remembering." "You can sing along with this one if you remember the words," he laughs, strumming the all-too-familiar opening chords to "Proud Mary." As the song is about to end, he gives a quick signal to the



have been duplicated with virtually *any* company. ("Creedence was self-contained," Fogerty declares. "We did all the work.") He attributes his decade-long creative block in large part to the "death grip" contract he was under with Fantasy (even though his self-titled 1975 solo album was released on Asylum in North America) and sees his past successes as the stones that built the label's empire while his own fortune was lost in a tax plan involving a Bahamian bank (something he also holds Fantasy partially responsible for). He'd just as soon not remember "Proud Mary," let alone play it in public and thereby, in his view, "deliver more gold bricks from my fortress"—referring to the renewed sales in CCR (read: Fantasy) product such a revival would obviously spur.

Fogerty's game plan is one he devised himself, and he boasts that "I'm making my record company [Warner Bros.] real nervous." When he came to the label, it was with "hat in hand," as he puts it. "[Warner president] Lenny Waronker said, 'So how about it, Fogerty, have you been writing songs?' 'No, I haven't.' 'Don't you have any songs backed up?' 'Well, no.' 'What have you been doing?' 'I've been woodshedding, trying to get my chops up.' 'No songs, huh?' He and [Warner chairman] Mo Ostin looked at each other and said, 'God, I wonder if he's ever going to make a record.'

"When I finally completed six tracks, I had a lot of self-doubt," he continues. "My energy was getting lower, and I didn't know if this was even in the ballpark, as far as what they wanted, if it would be acceptable on a commercial level. So I went to play the tapes for Lenny, and he was thinking, 'What if it's bad? How can I tell him?' About five seconds into the first song, he overreacted—he was so happy. He told me later that he was so relieved."

Now, with the single "Old Man Down The Road" in the Top 10 (as is *Centerfield*) and its flipside, "Big Train (From Memphis)," making a surprise appearance on *Billboard's* country chart, Fogerty's (and Warner's) choice for the follow-up single is "Rock And Roll Girls." On a recent *Billboard* radio chart, the song was already

'... the old values are going to prevail'

band, who collectively shift into high gear and transform the Creedence classic into Ike & Tina's hit cover arrangement.

Fogerty himself has no doubt contemplated such a scenario more than a few times in the past 10 years. Throughout those years of inactivity—watching one musical trend die while another was foisted on the public—he knew better than anyone that none were as uniquely qualified as he when it came to crafting pure rock 'n' roll hit singles. But the game plan he is currently following differs from the above script in several ways. In it, our protagonist records a triumphant comeback LP on which he plays all the instruments himself (*Centerfield* has already accomplished that), but stays off the road until a follow-up album is out. Upon its release, he puts together a crack band and hits the stage playing only his new material—no "Proud Mary," no "Down On The Corner," no Creedence songs at all. As commendable as this attitude may be from an artistic point of view, Fogerty's reasons for his Creedence moratorium are a bit more complex than a simple desire to stand or fall on the basis of his current work. In numerous interviews since the release of *Centerfield*, Fogerty has detailed the bones he has to pick with Creedence's former label, Fantasy Records. His position, basically, is that Fantasy could scarcely have stayed in business without the money generated by CCR, while Creedence's phenomenal success with a struggling label could clearly

'...to me, it comes down to that warm sound of two guitars, bass and drums. Get too carried away into electronic stuff, and you lose the heart of it'

ranked sixth in national airplay by the end of February, when it was still an album cut, while "Old Man" was perched at Number One. Score one (in advance) for Fogerty the A&R man. After a little haggling, "Centerfield" was agreed upon as the flip-side, even though Warners' initial reaction to this Fogerty suggestion was to tell the artist of a scenario in which the song would be the third (or possibly) fourth A-side released off the album. "It looks like, even in this day of Jackson and Prince, the old values are going to prevail," Fogerty says with a satisfied smile. "They're going to go along with me and just have three singles, and give 'em everything you've got right now. I want to have two-sided hits again [a Creedence trademark]. The whole point is to give people as much value for their dollar as you can. Also, I want to retain some integrity for the album itself. If you release everything as singles, it seems like you're somehow violating the album. I'm not sure why I feel that way; it just seems like that businessman's game. In the old days, Creedence was perceived as this off-the-wall maverick, because we'd take chances and pull it off. Like having 'Who'll Stop The Rain' on the flipside of 'Travelin' Band'—the songs have nothing to do with each other. But that's the way it ought to be."

Also, Fogerty obviously doesn't want to sit idle for the next year-and-a-half while a fourth single climbs the charts; he wants to get onstage, (though not until that second LP of new material is out). The guitarist was able to get his performing feet wet (and, as he says, "show the people that I'm not some kind of studio animal") when he taped a live video in Los Angeles on February 1st. But instead of all the songs on *Centerfield*, he played only "Rock And Roll Girls," several vintage R&B and gospel tunes, and a cut off the Textones' album, "No Love In You."

For his first public performance in more than a decade, Fogerty put together one of the most prestigious rock groups ever formed, which he hopes to reassemble for a tour when the timing is right. Three of his personnel choices—organist Booker T. Jones and bassist Duck Dunn of Booker T. & the MG's and saxophonist Steve Douglas, veteran of Duane Eddy, Phil Spector and innumerable other studio dates—seemed logical in light of Fogerty's R&B leanings. "Duck Dunn was the first guy I called. I'd been toying with the idea of calling Booker, but it scared me to death. How do you call a legend, you know? But he was tickled, and he played just great. Steve Douglas was clearly the top guy I could get

on sax. I had him autograph my old Duane Eddy album. I was living out a little dream. Steve came walking down the hallway at one point and said, 'I just got off the phone with Duane and he sends his best, John.' Just blew my mind! It wasn't a super-session of the fastest guns in the west; it was all guys that play with taste and quality."

The other two-sixths of the sextet—country-rock guitar ace Albert Lee and Tubes drummer Prairie Prince—were a bit more surprising. The leader explains: "Prairie Prince told a reporter, 'I doubt that John has even heard any of the Tubes' music,' and he's right—I don't think I have. But I got a new album called *Silver-tone* by a kid on Warner Bros. named Chris Isaak—I liked it a lot. And the drummer on there is Prairie Prince—his brush work impressed me especially. He can play it all. On guitar, I knew I needed a guy who understood that kind of R&B/country crossover stuff—remember the way Curtis Mayfield always played?—and who also had a good technique. I had no idea how incredible Albert was; I used about a tenth of his little finger, for what this gig required. But he was very gracious about not overplaying and figuring out who should do what fills with Booker. Yet he's very aware of his own ability. Plus, he let me autograph his guitar!"

Despite such all-star company, Fogerty's not going to change his *modus operandi* in the near future. "As I see it now," he says, "I'm going to stick with the one-man band approach for the next album. There's so much more control and immediacy. You can change things, discover new riffs, put it right in place in minutes, rather than waiting until everybody digests the idea—which sometimes can take a week."

Though his live taping was generally well-received, Fogerty was rapped by some critics for seeming a bit tentative, for lacking the reckless abandon of the material's originators. The reason, he points out, was not nerves but laryngitis. After rehearsing six hours a day, 10 days in a row, Fogerty was losing his voice. "I was freaked," he shudders. "People wrote that it was like I was unsure of performing in the first set. That wasn't it at all; you just step out and start. The concern was what was going to come out of my throat. I had to kind of play it safe."

Virtually the only criticism consistently leveled against *Centerfield* is that it breaks little new ground, that it relies almost exclusively on the old Creedence formulas. One critic termed Fogerty a "stuck-in-the-past Sixties hippie"; others pointed out

that the litany of events in "I Saw It On TV"—the album's most literal (and lyrical) protest song—addresses nothing that's happened since Watergate. Fogerty counters: "Number one, just speaking musically, I think that as long as there is rock 'n' roll, that sound is going to be acceptable, if not in the forefront of it. Because that is the thing that kicked it off in the first place. You're going to have technological polishings over the years, but, to me, it comes down to that warm sound of two guitars, bass and drums. Get too carried away into electronic stuff, and you lose the heart of it, as far as I'm concerned. I always think there's going to be room for 'Green River.' As I've gone across the dial in the past four or five years, the sound I miss the most is 'Green River'—I mean that symbolically, in all its phases, done by all the artists over the years. That wonderful acoustic guitar sound, with real drums, and that rolling rhythm, a little slapback echo—it hasn't even been on the airwaves for years and years, which is a shame."

"Speaking more lyrically, 'I Saw It On TV' is, first of all, meant to indeed be nostalgic. The other stuff isn't—I'm not into *Happy Days* or any of that, really. I wanted to address the fact that our generation has grown up in front of the tube. How has that affected us? That the song stops at Watergate is very relevant to me. Recently I saw *The Killing Fields*, which is a pretty powerful statement. My daughter is 14 now—she and her friends are rock 'n' roll girls. They got up to get a Coke about the last half-hour of the film and came back when the movie was just ending. They didn't understand; to them, this was some kind of cartoon. But we lived through that mess. Here's a country, Cambodia, that stayed neutral for thousands of years, and one guy, Nixon, drew them into the war and within three years they lost their country. We did that—to ourselves and to them. I'm not on any sort of kick about Watergate and everything, but there was no other place to go with that song. I think one of its major strengths is that it stops where it does. For people our age who lived through all that, it had to stop there; we've been left with the memory. I knew from the very start that the song had to be in that key and have that open G sound, and every time I sat down and strummed that opening, I felt that there ought to be—I hate to say it—another 'Who'll Stop The Rain.' There was room for more narrative in that vein."

There is, and always has been. Move over, Boss. John Fogerty's back. ○

Can Fogerty and Zaentz dance? See story on p.20



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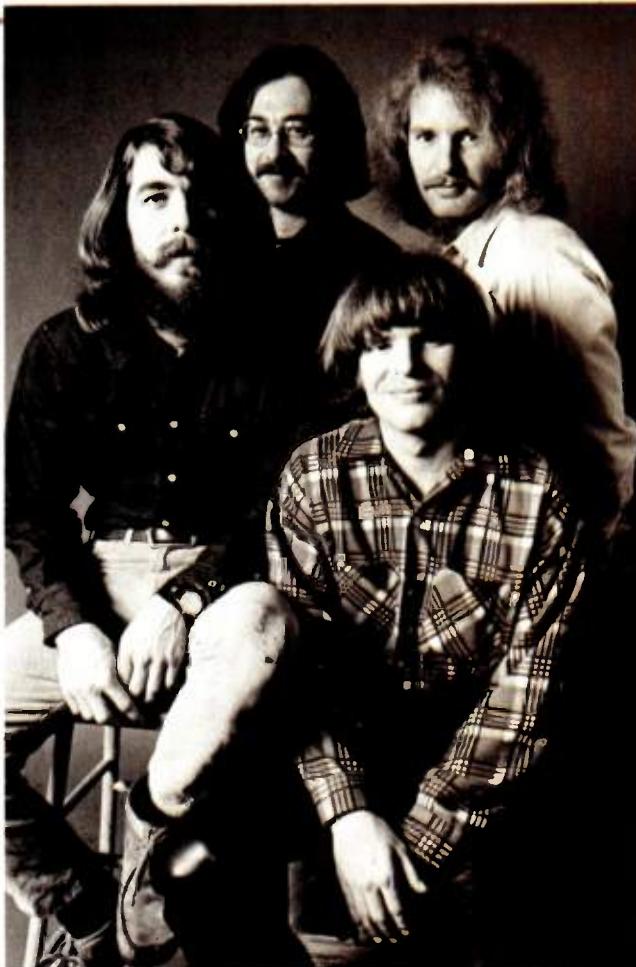
PAPER BULLETS

*Fogerty vs.
Fantasy
rages on*

WERE IT WRITTEN BY Charles Dickens and set in his times, the scene might look like this: John Fogerty shambles into the dimly lit office this morning as he does every morning, adjusts the wick of an oil lamp, opens his rolltop desk, and pulls out an aging ledger book. His beetle brow rises and falls as he runs his fingers down columns of numbers he himself has entered over the past decade. "Evil man, evil man," he mutters to himself again and again as he revisits the weighty tome wherein are logged the losses he has calculated using formulae distorted by the cobwebs of time, but still as accurate in his vivid mental picture as the day he commenced his tally. "Evil man, evil man."

The Fogerty vendetta is rich in Dickensian complexity. In a sense, John Fogerty is rock's Miss Havisham, having sealed himself in a room with the clocks stopped at the hour of his betrayal at the hands of Fantasy Records, still sporting the Pendleton shirt and jeans he wore on that fateful day.

He is also Madame Defarge, having knitted the names of his enemies into the fabric of his *Centerfield* LP—and that's where the tragic element of the story begins to unfold. *Centerfield* is a true comeback, a well-made record that cuts through the mish-mash of '80s radio with an austerely eloquent all-American sound; Fogerty didn't just sit around swilling beer and rubbing saddle soap into his glove—he trained long and hard, and he never lost track of the fundamentals. (Forgive



BARON WOLMAN

The travelin' band in a quieter moment and a happier time: (from left) Doug Clifford, Stu Cook, John Fogerty, Tom Fogerty

us our mixed metaphors.—Ed.)

Unfortunately, Fogerty's sharpness of ear and sleekness of muscle seem to have been inspired by something other than a natural's love of the game. Lurking among the bright new classics-to-be, "Rock and Roll Girls" and "Searchlight," are some songs which betray bitter, ugly sentiments. "The Old Man Down the Road" is quintessential Fogerty swamp-rock on the surface, but in the light of some of the other songs on *Centerfield* it can be seen as a shot at people Fogerty feels have mistreated him—and the clumsily couched specificity of that lyric is sheer poetry compared to "Mr. Greed" and "Zanz Kant Danz" (which has been rerecorded and retitled "Vanz Kant Danz").

In fact, after taking a long hard look at "Zanz Kant Danz" ("But he'll steal your money / Watch him or he'll rob you blind"), Fantasy's lawyers wrote to Fogerty and Warner Bros. complaining that the lyric is defamatory toward the company chairman,

Saul Zaentz. Although Fogerty responded by recutting the vocal, and Warner Bros. changed the label copy accordingly, Zaentz and company apparently decided that with a reported 700,000 copies of the original version already sold, the change was too little too late. They are proceeding with their lawsuit.

There are more lawsuits in the works and on the way; John Fogerty may even be sued for plagiarizing his own work (does "The Old Man Down the Road," controlled by Fogerty's new publisher, sound like Creedence's "Run Through the Jungle," in which Fantasy has an interest?).

The details are hard to pin down and seem destined for a long run in court, but the basic controversy centers on John Fogerty's conviction that he has been systematically and deliberately burned by Fantasy Records since Creedence's first flash of success more than fifteen years ago.

Fogerty's early interviews upon the release of *Centerfield*

dwell on his bitterness toward his former label. "This isn't a comeback," he told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "it's a triumph over evil." He went on to accuse Fantasy of a variety of crimes against his spirit and his pocketbook, and leveled serious accusations against Saul Zaentz and other Fantasy executives. Wherever Zaentz falls on the scale of morality between Santa Claus and Satan, even St. Nick himself couldn't be blamed for seeking counsel in the face of Fogerty's bitter portrayal of the story.

Former Creedence members Tom Fogerty and Doug Clifford wrote indignant letters to the *Chronicle*. Tom took issue with his brother's denunciation of Fantasy's executives ("I trust Saul Zaentz . . . to the max") and Clifford called *Centerfield* "a mediocre copy of something that was once and still is great," referring to the *Chronicle* article's suggestion that John Fogerty was Creedence Clearwater Revival and that his return to solo recording is tantamount to a CCR revival.

Interviewed in *BAM* magazine, Tom contradicted several of his brother's allegations concerning Fantasy Records and the misunderstandings between CCR and Fantasy over the years. This is more than simple sibling rivalry: Tom Fogerty is under contract to Fantasy as a solo artist; his defense of Saul Zaentz and Fantasy, however accurate it might be, smacks of self-serving motivation.

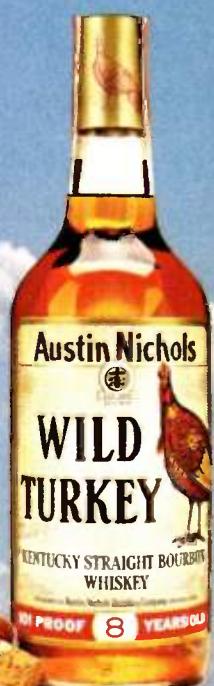
John Fogerty has claimed he had to sign away his interest in all future artist royalties from his work with Creedence in order to release himself from ten years of artistic constipation brought on by his rage against Fantasy. But in putting his demons to rest, Fogerty's inability to set aside his obsession with the past casts a pall on an otherwise stunning comeback story. And in taking more shots at his supposed tormentors, Fogerty may end up facing the bitterest of ironies by paying them a share of the proceeds from the record he wouldn't make until he was free of their financial hold on him.

—DAVID GANS



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Count Ian Blair's testimonial to this year's big thing, *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*. It's all here: the Trevor Horn connection, the 400,000 advance orders for *Welcome to the PleasureDome*, the BBC blacklisting, the clothes, the hype. The publisher is Contemporary Books and the asking price is \$4.95.

THE VINYL WORD

It's rarely admitted in mixed company, but everyone's got an album of, say, Bulgarian Folk Melodies stashed away somewhere. No need to feel ashamed; there's more to a record collection than just rock 'n' roll. The real problem lies in quenching your taste for obscurities when shopping mall chain stores usually stock only what they can sell by the truckload. To help plug the gap, a New York-based outfit called International Book and Record Distributors has an import mail-order service that's worth investigating. Although they specialize in European classical releases, they also stock an extensive array of folk and ethnic music, film soundtracks, jazz, blues, and a small selection of rock. Much of the stuff is commercial but, listed among the Beethoven collections and every record Charles Aznavour has ever made, you'll find French pressings of **James Brown's** *Sex Machine*, **Alan Stivell**, Melanesian Pan Pipes, **Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers**, Armenian Liturgical Chants, and **Malicorne**. Italian pressings of the **Rolling Stones'** 30 Greatest Hits share page space with *A Fistful of Dol-*

lars, the Goons, **the Yardbirds**, Shetland Fiddle Music, Islamic flute and trumpet music—the list goes on and on. Prices seem no higher than you'd find in urban import stores. Write: Mail Order Department, International Book and Record Distributors, 401 24th Street, Long Island City, New York 11101. When requesting catalogues, mention specific areas of interest (classical, international, jazz/blues, soundtracks, etc.)...For Australian musicians trying to get a foot in the door: the New York-based record promotion firm, Thirsty Ear, is expanding its SCREAM format. The Down-Under version works the same way as its American counterpart: For a reasonable fee, you can have a track by your un-

known and unsigned Australian band included on an LP sent to major A&R people, college and commercial radio stations, and anyone else who might be able to give you that crucial break. For more information, contact Thirsty Ear Communications, Suite 1506, 310 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017 USA (212) 697-7800...PolyGram Records recently ran a contest through Cleveland radio station WMMS to promote the *Animalize* LP and a local concert by **Kiss**. In this era of tightened corporate belts, the first prize was a considerable one: the winner would be flown to New York for a weekend, visit the Bronx Zoo, and get to rub shoulders with the gentlemen of Kiss backstage after their Gotham gig. The only problem? The winner turned out to be a 59-year-old Ohio housewife (said to be "very sweet, but not much of a Kiss fan"). With impressive sleight-of-hand, PolyGram arranged to have the woman's 30-year-old son see the band in Cleveland and flew her to New York where she was treated to tickets for the Broadway musical *Cats*...On the west coast, another contest, run with San Diego rock station KGB-FM, specified that the winner had to dress up like a member of Kiss. The 27-year-old guy who waxed victorious did so with his tongue-and-all **Gene Simmons** impersonation, thereby scoring the chance to fly to Detroit to see the band's Cobo Hall gig. When it came time to book the arrangements, however, the gent adamantly refused to share a room with the young lady escorting him to the concert. The surprised folks at PolyGram paused for half a beat, blinked, then agreed to arrange for two single rooms instead. ■

BOOKS

Since they first turned up in the record bins back in 1978, **the Cars** have pretty much created their own school of American pop—a point successfully underlined by the reception given their latest album, *Heartbeat City*. After writing about them for years, Toby Goldstein has put together a volume tracing the Boston-based band's rapid climb called *Frozen Fire: The Story of the Cars*. Heavily laced with both black & white and color photos, it's published by Contemporary Books at \$6.95

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With Madonna popping up everywhere these days, it's not surprising that someone's tackled the task of writing a book on Detroit's most lucrative export since Motown. Penned by Michael McKenzie (who apparently knew Madonna way back when), *Lucky Star* traces the chanteuse's ambitious rise from a Detroit childhood, through dance scholarships, the Manhattan struggle, and her famed "rejection of Paris society" to her current lofty status as diva supreme on the nation's dance floors and video screens. With graphics designed by Martin Burgoyne (responsible for the "Lucky Star" and "Physical Attraction" single sleeves), *Lucky Star*, from Contemporary Books, will set you back \$5.95.

...In what promises to be an annual event, *The Rolling Stone Review: 1985* has now gone public. Subtitled "The Year in Rock," the tome is just that—a review of the music, the people, and the trends that mean something as rock 'n' roll hurtles toward the final decade of the 20th Century. Edited by Ira A. Robbins, the collected reviews, regional music reports, 'think' pieces, artist and producer profiles, and accompanying photos provide an overview of what's gone down and where it might be going. You'll find Jon Young's term paper on heavy metal, David Fricke's essay on Rock Against Racism, author Harlan Ellison's lambasting of rock videos, and

more. Published by Rolling Stone Press/Scribner's, *The Rolling Stone Review: 1985* sells for \$11.95. ■

SCREENINGS

It won't be long before **John Cougar Mellencamp's** Midwestern Mug will be gracing the silver screen, albeit in a non-musical role. Focusing on the downward mobility of post-baby boomers, the preliminary script for *Riding the Cage* will be tightened up by Larry "Terms of Endearment" McMurtry and directed by Jonathan "Heart Like a Wheel" Kaplan. Working hard before the cameras roll, Mellencamp is home in Indiana putting the finishing touches on his recording studio. So far, the state-of-the-art facility has been used to lay down tracks for his new album (the follow-up to *Uh-Huh*), but the master plan is to offer studio time to local bands at rock bottom prices. ■

MISCELLANIA

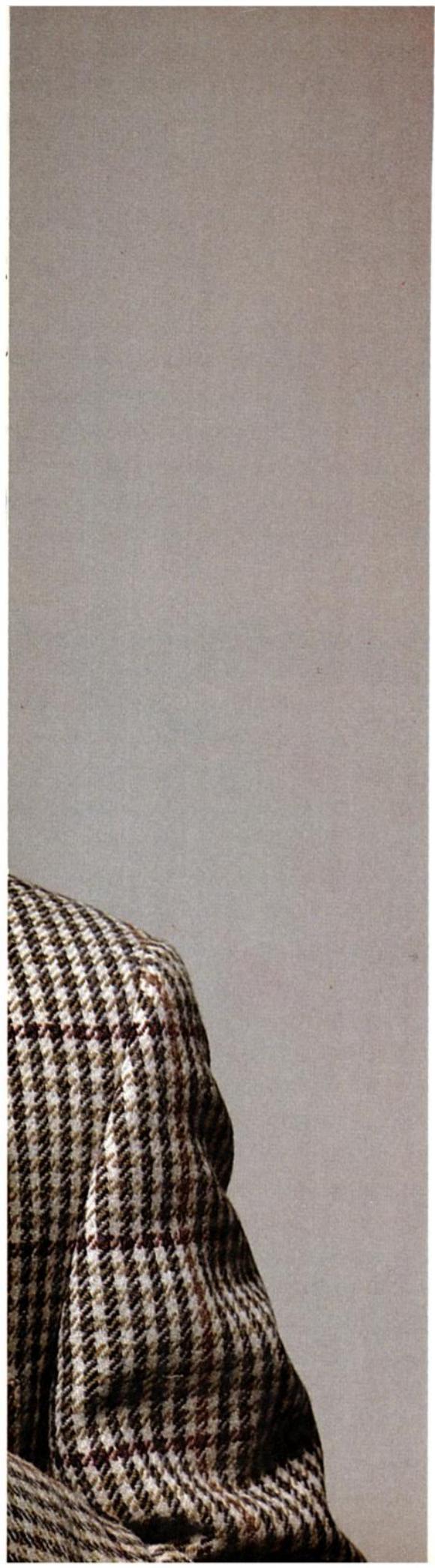
There's still time to make it down to the bank. As we go to press, **Yoko Ono** is having no luck unloading the sprawling Palm Beach mansion she and **John Lennon** bought five years ago. Originally snapped up for a paltry \$750,000, the spread has sported an asking price of \$8 million since last spring. For that, you get twenty-two millionaire-sized rooms, an ocean view, two swimming pools, and—thrown in as part of the deal—"ceilings by an artist working Michaelangelo-style." Yoko, by all reports, is standing firm on the price... Over in London, two of Britain's most respected rock musicians have joined forces in a new venture. Called GTR (short for 'guitar'), the recently-formed band pairs former Yes/Asia guitarist **Steve Howe** and ex-Genesis fretman **Steve Hackett**. Howe, disenchanted with Asia's commerciality, left that group last year following their second album. Hackett, who split from Genesis during the mid-Seventies, has devoted the ensuing years to a series of solo albums. The pair are currently finalizing the rest of GTR's lineup and their debut album should be out in the

next few months...Details are still being tightened up, but Scotland's **Cocteau Twins** (who turned down Brian Eno's recent offer to produce them) hope to be on American soil this month for a series of gigs. Their latest album for 4AD Records, *Treasure*, copped ecstatic reviews when released in Europe late last year, with critics hailing **Elizabeth Fraser's** haunting vocals and **Robin Guthrie's** swirling, dream-like, guitar-and-synth textures as harbingers of a "new Pre-Raphaelite" sound. Labels aside, the Cocteaus' merging of Arabic/Celtic/Kate Bush/Church of England influences with 80's technology is strikingly atmospheric, arguably making them the most adventurous of the small-label British bands. Their newest EP is due on these shores any moment now. ■



It was inevitable. A "serious" full-length studs 'n' brimstone screen epic is reportedly in the discussion stage. Described as "a kind of heavy metal Magnificent Seven", the project will star a host of metal titans. Among the names being courted: **Black Sabbath**, **Lita Ford**, and **Twisted Sister**.





An interview with Stone alone
Mick Jagger who struts some potent stuff
on his first solo album

BIG BOSS MAN

By Mark Hunter • Over the years Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones have been successively presented to the public as blues purists, the bad-boy alternative to the Beatles (an idea promulgated by their first manager, the flamboyant Andrew Loog Oldham), Satanic majesties, glitter kings, and "the band that can do no wrong," as *People* put it. Despite drug busts, the Altamont disaster, and the near-farce of his highly publicized marriage to and divorce from Bianca Moreno de Macias in the '70s, Jagger comes out ahead in the end, stays one step ahead of his last image.

In the Spring of 1985 we must consider Mick Jagger the solo artist, submitting for approval an album titled *She's The Boss*, the first installment of the Stones' lucrative new distribution deal with CBS. Whatever image he's constructed through his own behavior of late, *Boss* may remind rock fans that Jagger is, first of all, a talented and accomplished musician. It's the best record he's done in years. Produced by Jagger himself with Bill Laswell and Nile Rodgers, the

Photograph by Michael Halsband



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'People aren't interested in constant explosions from established stars... But you've gotta be ready to take a few chances, make some changes, or you'll become a nostalgia act



ERIK ROBERTS

LP features a sterling supporting cast: the redoubtable Jamaican rhythm gang of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, guitar hero Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock, Chicsters Bernard Edwards and Rodgers. They play hard, pushing Jagger to peak performances. At times he ventures closer to his blues roots than he's been since *Exile on Main Street*, but this time the setting is razor-sharp contemporary dance music.

The following interview took place in the Paris office of CBS International; in another part of town the Stones were busy cutting a new album. In person Jagger is extraordinarily seductive, using his wit and sensitivity to disarm; one barely notices at first how deeply competitive he really is. But losing is something he hardly takes lightly, so he's pushing to make the solo record successful, not only with some great performances on the disc itself, but by talking to the music press more than he has in recent years. Even if it's not lonely at the top (the title of a song on *She's the Boss*, which he swears is not about him), it's perhaps a bit dull. As he says, "You've gotta be ready to make some changes; otherwise life becomes *really* dull." Mick is ready, in every sense.

Were the Stones aware in advance that you were going to do a solo record?

Yeah, absolutely. They were aware when we signed the CBS contract that I was contracted to do two. That was signed in November '83, but the contract was talked about well before that.

Keith Richards told RECORD that he wouldn't consider doing his own solo album, because he didn't want to get in a position of having to choose which songs to give to the Stones and which to keep for himself.

I just think you have to write more songs. When I was doin' the video [for *She's the Boss*], I was writin' songs for the new Stones album, and also Keith is a writer, he has enough songs to write my solo album, and a Stones album, and a solo album on his own. So this is two people writing, plus Ronnie Wood puts his occasional thrupence worth in. You should really have enough material. You have to work *harder*, that's all.

When did plans for SHE'S THE BOSS come together?

I started writing the songs in March of last year. I finished working on the Stones thing [*Undercover of the Night*], and all the promotion and video, and then I went on a holiday to Barbados, and wrote all these tunes except for one. Very fast. Of course, I constantly rewrite. I get bored, I change the words all the time in the sessions. I always have a lot more lyrics than I use, of ten three or four verses more for each song. And that means if I'm working with a producer or Keith, or whoever, I'm trying to sound off them, so I'll say, "Quick, pick the ones you like." Or I can tell when I'm singin' 'em, when I hear 'em back. Some lines just have a *sound* to 'em that you rather like. It's a question to me of the rhythm of them, I mean enunciating them and how they fit into the music. The *meaning* of the lyrics is very important, but I don't think that in rock 'n' roll it's of the most paramount importance. If you like a lyric but it doesn't *scan*, or it doesn't kind of roll with the melody, you've either gotta rewrite it, or get your tongue around it so it works. Quite often people pick up on a line not for its great content, but for just the way it's delivered.

Anyway, when the songs were done, I started to do some demos with a couple of

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'The thing about being a show off is you don't care what people think, you just go out there and act the fool.'



different sets of different people. That was the only part of the record that was kind of nerve-wracking. Then I would arrange them, and that was relatively quick, I think about ten days. I changed some of the time signatures from the first demos, you know, the songs were much improved as they went along. But they weren't *that* far off in the end.

Were some of the things on *SHE'S THE BOSS* contributed by the musicians?

Sure, absolutely. Obviously I didn't call all the shots. Sometimes when we were cutting the basic tracks, I was relatively strict about what I wanted, the feel and the mood. But when it came to overdubs, some of the people who worked a lot, like Jeff or Herbie, they had ideas, once they saw how the song went. And they weren't lookin' at their watch and sayin', "Ah Mick, I've got to go back to the old lady." They were there till all hours of the morning working.

Did you think of the musicians as part of the project from the start?

That was one of the things Bill Laswell was trying to lay on me. He said it's very important that we use people who have personalities; it's no good getting people who don't, it comes across on the record. There's a lot of records around that don't have personality; it's not that they're played by machines, it's because the machines have been programmed by people who are very lazy. Anyway, Bill was keen to use Sly and Robbie; he likes their time precision. And I found it easy to work with them, because I'd worked with them on several other productions, and I've jammed with them. And then Bill said, "You've worked with such good guitar players, you should really use someone good, like Jeff." And I thought, Yeah, that'd be good.

Is it true Beck auditioned for the Stones at one point?

Yeah, I think it must've been around '73.

The story is that he didn't join the band because he didn't like the rhythm section.

I don't know, maybe it's true. I never heard that.

Aside from the precision, the sound of *SHE'S THE BOSS* doesn't roar at you the way a Stones record would.

There's no way it's going to sound like the Rolling Stones. I could have made it a bland copy, but it would have been very stupid of me. I couldn't ever imagine doing such a thing. All of these songs I could've done with the Stones, though it wouldn't have sounded like them. There's a lot of ways to skin a cat, but I didn't want to do just a loony kind of record—like, I have the David Lee Roth maxi-single, half a record, really, and the two tracks I heard, it's *nothing like* what he does with Van Halen.

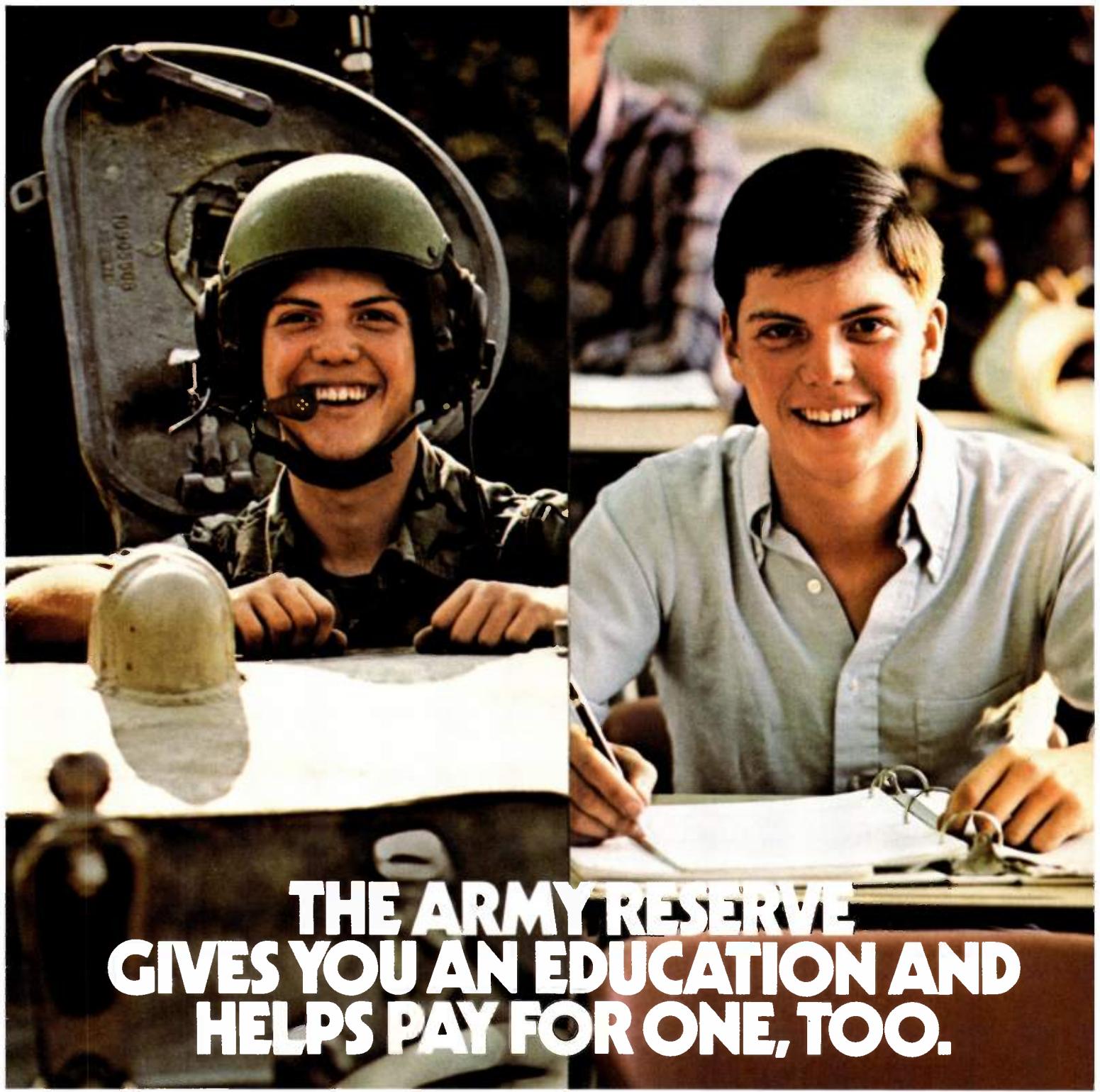
It's obvious that you wanted this to be a dance record. Do you pick up beats by going out dancing?

I don't go dancing with the intention of just taking home dance beats, but yeah, it quite often happens. Also, when you jam with people, you hear a beat you like, you can incorporate it. I love that old-fashioned rock 'n' roll, but as far as beats go, I like to hear new things. For me, there's a large section of rock 'n' roll that doesn't make me dance. When I'm doing records, when I hear them being played, I get up and play the guitar and sing. I'm playing the beat, I wanna hear it for myself, for when I dance somethin' to it.

So I don't wanna get stuck in stodgy rock beats all the time. I don't *like* them (laughs). In rock music people still play a lot of straight eighths. It doesn't have any accents, you know? When you're dancing, you need accents for your body to move to. You want movement in the rhythm, you want something real solid, but on top of that you want something, so you can do your little numbers to it. That's what makes people dance. Like on a Chaka Khan record, you've got all these underlying accents, which dancers, after they hear the record a few times, will respond to. They won't consciously respond, but they *will* respond.

When the Stones started you talked a lot about getting recognition for black artists. Do you still see yourself in that blues tradition?

I'm not black, I'm a white rock artist. Some of these tunes are in that tradition, though. I can't really get rid of all the years I was only interested in playing black music. I don't want to, really. It would be very difficult. Even on a ballad like "Hard Woman," I sang it very straight, and when I heard it back I said, "Wait a minute, you won't like this when you hear it on the ra-



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dio. You need some inflections to make the vocal more interesting." So I kind of borrowed some inflections; when I was writing it I tried one or two Sam Cooke things, which didn't end up on the record, but I kept some things from that generation of performers.

When you're making a record you have to think about it analytically. Do you try to listen to it from a naive perspective too?

Yeah. For me, naiveté in its nicest sense is in the rhythm. That's the *basic* stuff of it. Everything else, the little gimmicks, the harmonies, the strings, whatever, wouldn't be anywhere unless the rhythm was solid. A drum and a bass is a relatively naive thing. That's one of the themes of rock 'n' roll (laughs). It is a bit, isn't it? The best thing about certain rock records you might have liked, when the music was new to you, is the kind of dumbness, and not in a derogatory sense. In the early days you might have said a dumb record was something like the Shirelles might do, or the Supremes, real dumb, and it's the dumb approach that grabs you. I mean, like a Madonna record is *dumb*. The best kind of Madonna record, if there is such a thing, would have that kind of central dumbness. I don't know if this record has that or not.

Were you trying for dumbness? These lyrics sound like a reflection on a very sophisticated level of experience.

Some of them are. You have to use your own experience, because that rings true, but you don't rely on experience. You also want to draw on observations, whether it's from friends, or films, or books, or whatever. And then when you perform it, perform it in such a way that the audience is going to believe it's totally your own experience. A lot of times it is, but just to *sound* like it, you can sing it insincerely, and it won't. Or you can sing it too tongue-in-cheek, or too pretentiously, and it won't ring true either. On this record there's a lot of humor, so they're not meant to be taken completely seriously.

When you wrote these songs were you thinking in visual images, like a video?

Not like a video, but yeah, if I wrote a lyric that was a little bit vague, that didn't have a good image quality, it wouldn't translate into cinema. Even if it wasn't translated into cinema, imagery that you can reach out and easily visualize gets across better than strings of vague passages, which is not my favorite way of writing. I wanted the lyrics to be specific, and to have imagery that people can grab onto, not just, "Yeah, I'm in love with you."

That's a tired genre, isn't it?

Yeah, but most pop songs tend to be about boy-girl relationships, and I tend to write

'It's the dumb approach that grabs you. I mean, like a Madonna record is dumb. The best kind of Madonna record would have that kind of central dumbness.'

I don't know if my record has that or not'

most about those kinds of things anyway. And I think I covered some other subjects on *Undercover*, some politics, and some social comment. So I was probably unconsciously returning to writing about people's lives, which are mostly concerned with their personal relationships, whether it's fleeting ones with people they see on the subway, with people they work with in an office, or with their parents, wives or children. Even if they're watching sports, they're in a personal relationship with their favorite athlete; it's a relationship as well as a spectacle. Even if people do think about the larger issues in the world, and they've got things to say about the way the world is run, most of the things they're thinking about revolve on personal relationships.

Most women I know have a fantasy about you that goes back ten or fifteen years. That's a relationship. I wonder how it enters your work.

I try not to let it. I think that's where you can go really wrong as a musician and performer. When you're performing there's all that kind of relationship with the audience, the girl who's had ten years of looking at pictures of you. But on a record you don't have that, and that's one of the great things about making a record. I'm just trying to make a really good record. The way I sing the tunes, the way I interpret them, is very important on a solo album. People will say, "He's singing good," or "He's singing like shit." And I don't let what I call the *People* magazine part of it, or the mythology bullshit of it, enter into the performance or the making of a record.

Yet at a certain time you had to construct a mythology in order to reach the top.

Well, yeah. But I still don't think it entered into the making of a record. At *any* point. The only point it might enter is when you're doing the video part, because people are very aware of images. But I don't think about that stuff at all. If you do, it's *dangerous*. And there are musicians and singers who will really latch onto that, and make it part of themselves in the recording studio, or *act* like that in the studio, as if they were on loan from *People* magazine—you know, they come in and they're all dressed up, like they're ready for a photo session, with all their furs on. There are people who come into a session and see all

the musicians and say (very campy), "Hi-ji. Everything fine? Let me hear it back. Oh yes, you're doing really well, I'm just gonna go out and have lunch with my agent, 'cause I've got this movie part comin' up." There's rock performers who do that, but this isn't one of them.

David Bowie has been quoted as saying you're trapped by the Stones, that it would be difficult for you to do something different with your career. Is that situation part of the reason you made a solo album?

Well, David and I are very much in competition. I would say that David is now trapped into coming out with increasingly interesting personae. But that's not really true, either. I think I just wanted to break a pattern. Just going in and doing another Rolling Stones record wouldn't have been a particular challenge. I felt it was a good time to break the pattern, especially with a company that was encouraging and supporting me in doing a solo. The other company never wanted me to do a solo approach, for whatever reason.

My motivation was also to have some fun. Not that I don't have fun with the Stones, but it's much safer. Maybe it was just bein' a little too safe by stayin' with that, because they are such an institution. And so I thought, Let me see how it would turn out if I used other musicians. After I'd been on it two or three weeks I realized I was having a lot of fun. And I was also minding my own ability, and people of course were pushing me much harder. I mean, the idea of working with Nile Rodgers is that he's no bullshit, a very outgoing person who isn't gonna pull any punches with you. He's gonna tell you when you're good and when you're not. He was especially helpful with the vocals. That was something both Bill and Nile were concerned with, that I didn't sing too soft, so it becomes a whine, or too harsh, so that it becomes a grating on the ear. It would have been much tougher to do this record without the two producers I used.

A lot of people think that when you become established, that's when the easy days start. Was that the case with you?

There's a certain element of that. When you make a million dollars, you go out and buy a silly car or something. I wanted a fast car, that's the only thing I can remember.

And I bought one. I have lots of cars, but I never drive them. I just take taxis or drive a rented car; I'm not really interested in cars *per se*. I'm not really interested in clothes very much, either. If I didn't have to do pictures all the time, I wouldn't really bother, but I know it's boring to be seen in the same beat-up old jeans all the time. I don't think there's anything wrong with that, it's part of success. But quite often you don't get any time to enjoy it, it's just a mental thing. All the time you're touring, you know that little thing is there.

I've read reviews writing you off after different albums; I'm sure you've seen them too. But there's something real behind that, isn't there?

Well, it's been said that people like an explosion at first, and then a warm glow. People aren't interested in constant explosions from established stars. They don't wanna know. They say, like, "Mick, we liked the *old* things you did." They could mean "Miss You" or "Start Me Up"; for some of them it might be going back to the Ark. It depends on their age. All through the Stones' career that's been a constant. But you've gotta be ready to make some changes; otherwise life becomes really dull, and you'll become a nostalgia band. It's much better to take a few chances. Certain albums aren't as good as others, but so what? That's life.

But you've got to make hit records as

well. The Rolling Stones were brought up in a very competitive period, and it's *as* competitive now. We used to have a manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, and it was like, if you weren't in the Top 10, you were *dead*. It's still very worrying to have that attitude, because you really will go mad. As long as you make what you think is a pretty good record, and it's a reasonable success, that should be enough. I was brought up very competitively, to win; I'm not one of these English gentlemen losers. But a record isn't winning, it's not a damn football match.

It's hard being in competition sometimes in a country like the U.K., where one week you've got to go up against Marilyn, who can't sing and doesn't even *look* cute. But it's a funny business. And then you get a record coming out of nowhere, and yours is forgotten. You get to Number Fourteen, and you think, "Marilyn's Number One, what can I do?" What can you say? There's nothing much you can do about it, you just hope for the best.

I can't count how many performers I've seen imitate your moves. And they're doing it self-consciously. I don't get a feeling of self-consciousness from watching your performances. But I wonder if there was ever a point in your career when you had to deal with self-consciousness toward your own act?

I don't think so. The thing about being a show-off is you don't care what people think, you just go out there and act the fool. You don't have any shyness, or self-consciousness, about it. When you're trying out new things you might be a bit tentative at times, but that's different. The whole idea of being a good performer on stage is that you should never look self-conscious or embarrassed, because then the audience is gonna feel embarrassed. The whole thing is, you don't care.

When you use the word "fool," are you thinking of it in the classic sense, a person who gets up there and says whatever he's thinking?

Yeah, act the fool, that's what it means. You just get up there and screw around. And enjoy yourself. You do whatever comes into your head. That's the fun of performing, when you do things you've never done before.

Do you think you'll be performing for the rest of your life?

Yeah, I guess so, in one way or another. The will to perform is not that strong, or I'd be out there every night, guesting on some damn television show. But there is a strong *drive* to perform.

And will the Stones be touring this Fall, as rumored?

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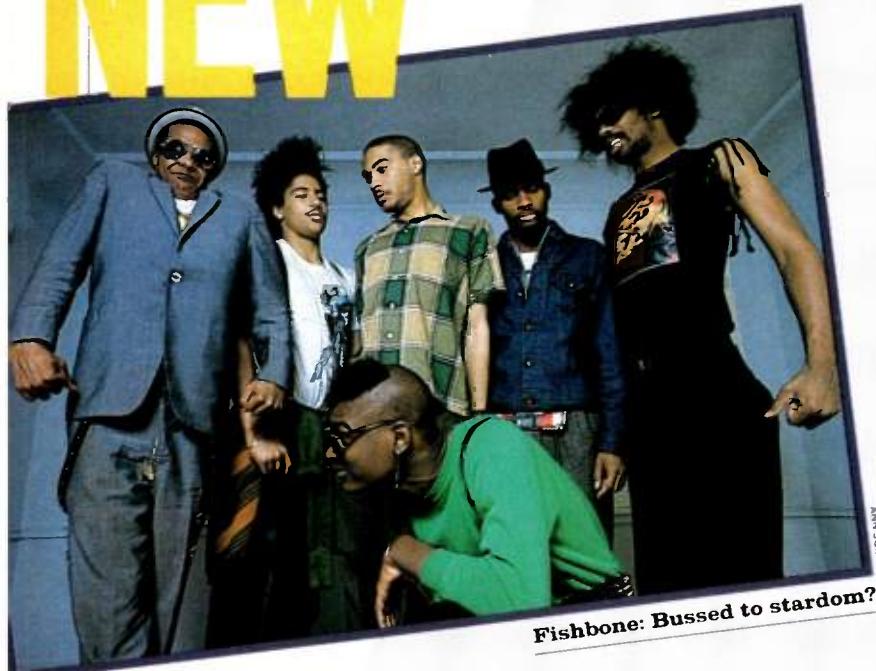
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WHAT'S NEW



Fishbone: Bussed to stardom?

THE BUS WAS NO GREYHOUND

But it dropped Fishbone in the right place

LOS ANGELES—"We call it 'organized chaos,'" says 19-year-old guitarist Special K of his band, Fishbone. "We thought about choreographing the show, but none of us can dance." Fishbone has built a sizeable following in this normally staid city through its Marx Brothers-meet-P-Funk stage behavior and a freewheeling hybrid style composed of Clinton-esque chants, screaming guitars, ska tempos and wacky horn lines. Despite its anti-mainstream stance, the quintet's onstage impact was such that several labels went after them, with Columbia staff producer Dave Kahne (Romeo Void, Bangles) hooking the fish and manning the board for their dance-oriented EP debut. Quite a coup for a bunch of black inner city teenagers. But the circumstances that brought Fishbone to life are hardly typical: the band is a direct product of the bussing experience.

"We were all in eighth grade when they started bussing us from the ghetto out to Woodland Hills [an affluent suburb nestled in the San Fernando Valley]," bassist Norwood recalls. "That was our introduction to white rock 'n' roll—everybody in the Valley was listening to Led Zeppelin then."

Though they play wise beyond their tender years, Fishbone's naivete has surfaced on occasion. Recalls Kahne: "I took the band to lunch the other day, and it was amazing to see these incredibly skinny guys wolfing down their double chili cheeseburgers, shakes and pecan pies. And K says to the others, 'What's bad is when you sell out and they don't pick you up.' He didn't get it that 'they' was sitting across the table." Give 'em time, Dave.

—Bud Scoppa

WHO GETS THE TAB?

Fat Boys don't have a problem making weight

NEW YORK—Count cash, not calories! The possibilities for slogans are endless for the Fat Boys, the undisputed heavyweight champs of the rap world at a combined weight of 800 pounds-plus, whose self-titled debut album has been certified gold, boosted by a 12-inch single, "Jailhouse Rap."

It all started in Brooklyn in '83 when neighbors Darren "Human Beat Box" Robinson, Mark "Prince Markie Dee" Morales and Damon "Kool Rock-ski" Wimbley put their backlog raps to the test in the Tin Pan Apple Rap contest at Radio City Music Hall. Then dubbed the Disco 3, the trio won a record deal with Charles Stettler's independent Sutra label—then promptly hit him with a \$300 breakfast tab. Stettler suggested they write about their eating habits. So the Disco 3 cut their second Sutra single, "Fat Boys," and it became one of the city's best-selling 12" discs; it also gave the trio a new moniker and was brought to life in a hilari-

ous comic video. The next single, "Jailhouse Rap," told the story of the group being jailed for overeating. Since then, says Markie Dee, "It's been one big hard-working party. I'd just like to get some time off." No way. They're due to take the message worldwide with tours scheduled for Canada and, possibly, the Far East. They've already perked up ears nationwide as the surprise hit of the Swatch-sponsored Freshfest, a touring rap show also featuring rap pioneer (and Fat Boys producer) Kurtis Blow. And coming soon to a theater near you: the Fat Boys in their first film, *Cry of the City*. Hey, you got appetites like these you gotta work to keep those pantries full!

—Jonathan Gross

Fat Boys Robinson, Wimbley, Morales



Guadalcanal Diary (from left):
Poe, Walls, Crowe, Attaway



MARYANN MITCHELL

BACK TO BATAAN

Guadalcanal Diary hits the beach

NEW YORK—"I had an extremely significant religious experience recently," deadpans Guadalcanal Diary vocalist/guitarist Murray Attaway, "but I don't want to talk about it."

Fortunately, he's only kidding. But spirituality is a big part of the Diary's appeal. Their startling *Walking in the Shadow of the Big Man* LP (DB Recs, 450 14th St., Atlanta, GA 30318) includes titles like "Fire from Heaven" and "Why Do the Heathen Rage?" And the Marietta, Georgia, quartet claims the highest inspiration as the source for their album's tag.

"Me and Murray were riding through Marietta Square on the Fourth of July," explains guitarist Jeff Walls, "and there was this gospel group—it sounded like they were singing, 'Walking in the shadow of the big man!'"

Produced by Don Dixon, *Big Man* also includes the underground video hit "Watusi Rodeo"—an Afro-cowboy rocker that earned Guadalcanal their rep as the next band to watch from the Athens/Atlanta new wave nexus. Of course, live sets that featured segues from the folk hymn "Kumbayah" to the glitter-boogie of T. Rex's "Bang A Gong (Get It On)" helped spread the word too. "It's a good way of finding a common ground between yourself and an alien audience," says Attaway of the band's wildly eclectic stage show. "Yeah," concludes Walls, "we just baffle the hell out of all of 'em."

—Anthony DeCurtis

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MUSICVIDEO

WIPE OUT



A Beach Boys retrospective-on-film is not fun, fun, fun



EARL LEAF

SUSANNE WHATLEY

FIRST THE GOOD NEWS. FOR those who love Beach Boys music, all those tunes—so exhilarating in harmonic structure and quintessential in California myth—can be found remixed in Dolby stereo from original eight-track masters and sounding fabulous in a new video documentary of the band's roller-coaster career.

Here's the bad news, though. For those who understand the band's contribution to rock 'n' roll and crave further insight, *The Beach Boys: An American Band* doesn't take time to get into it.

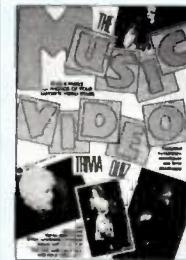
Their story, chronicled here in 103 minutes of old TV appearances, promo films, past interviews and scripted self-narration, is an inward look at six personal (but not intimate) life stories wherein the actors take on the difficult role of portraying themselves. While this approach has its interesting aspects, there's not enough meat on the bone to flesh out the documentary.

Rather, the film (currently in limited theatrical release and soon to be available on videocassette) succeeds as a respectful compilation of performances spanning the

Beach Boys' troubled 24 years.

Produced by Malcolm Leo, who has otherwise done exemplary work on *This Is Elvis* and the TV special *Heroes of Rock 'n'*

MUSICVIDEO QUIZ



THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC VIDEO INSIDE OUT? WELL, AUTHORS Matthew and Tevin Abeshouse have come up with the vidiot's delight in *The Music Video Trivia Quiz* (\$2.95, Avon Books): to wit, 107 pages of questions and answers, arranged in nine categories (Openings, Video Vehicles, Music Animals, General Video Trivia, Video Clothes, Special Effects and Animation, More General Video Trivia, Lyrics and Closings). In which video does the star ride a motorcycle through an archway with Love and God written on either side? Give up? Do you care? It's Prince, in "When Doves Cry." And that's one of the easier questions. Remember, you gotta be a vidiot to get into this. Are there any vidiotics in the audience? If so, try a sample video trivia quiz drawn from the book in question. Send your quiz in no later than May 27 (postmark) to: RECORD Video Quiz, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10151. The vidiot with the most correct answers wins a free copy of *The Music Video Trivia Quiz* plus another Avon title, Neville Stannard's *The Long and Winding Road: A History of the Beatles on Record*. Three runners-up will receive copies of *The Music Video Trivia Quiz*. Winners will be announced in our August issue, on sale July 16.

1. What video begins with a large building imploding?
2. In Billy Idol's "White Wedding," how do the bride and groom arrive?
3. What does the girl in ZZ Top's "Legs" leave behind in the burger joint?
4. In which video are hair curlers seen on the outside of Army helmets?
5. In Van Halen's "Hot for Teacher," what do the two sashes worn by the teachers say?

BONUS TIEBREAKER: A cigar being extinguished inadvertently launches nuclear missiles at the end of which video?

IF YOU CAN READ THIS AD, YOU DIDN'T GO TO JFK HIGH SCHOOL.

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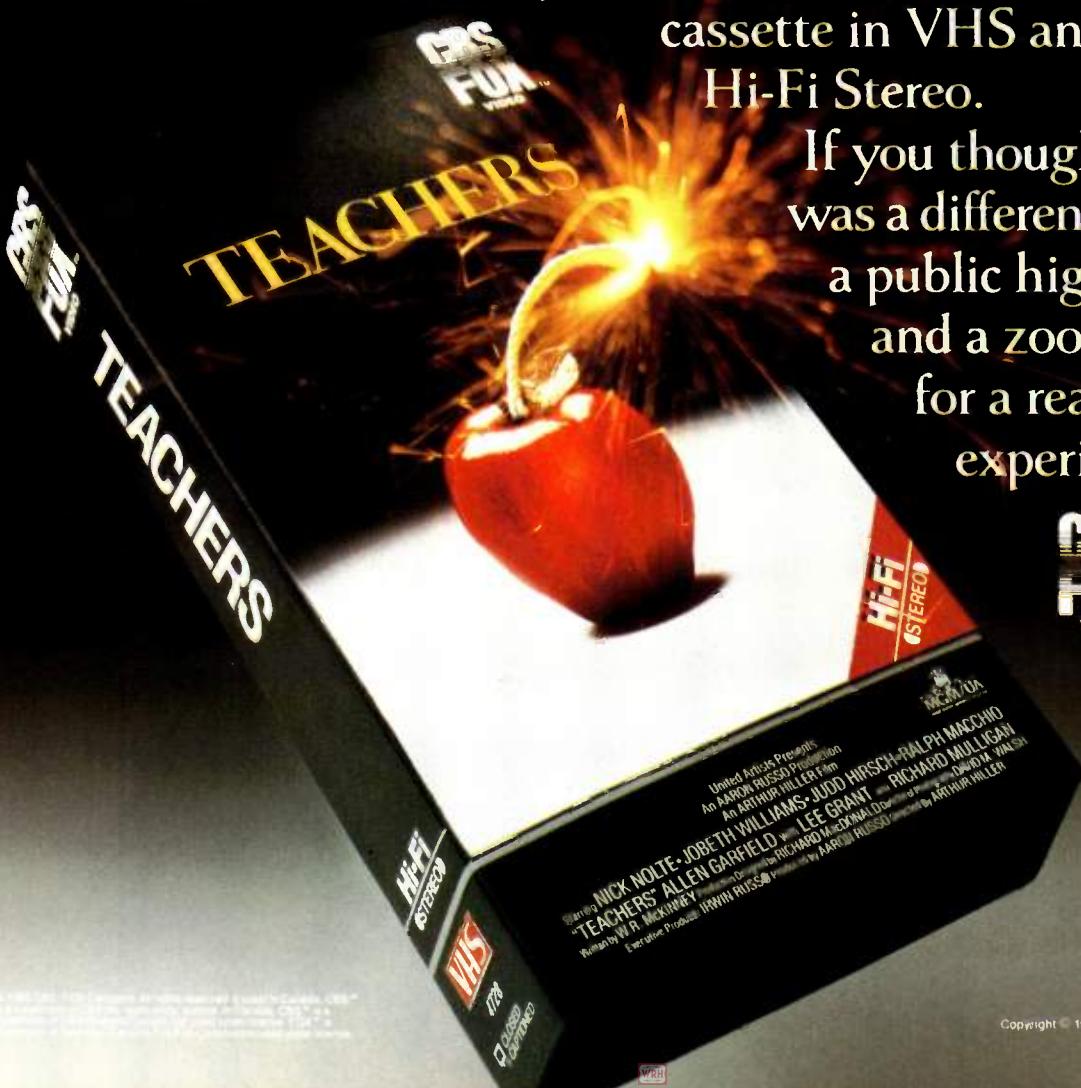
There may be a few things standing in your way.

Like the history teacher. He's the outpatient dressed up as Abraham Lincoln. And the science teacher—the one who makes his students sit with their backs to him at all times.

And then there's Nick Nolte—a kid lover, and a gifted teacher, who once knew what he was doing here.

You'll find *Teachers* at your video store now, on Video-cassette in VHS and Beta Hi-Fi Stereo.

If you thought there was a difference between a public high school and a zoo, you're in for a real learning experience.



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An ARTHUR HILLER Film
"TEACHERS" Starring NICK NOLTE, JOSEPH WILLIAMS, JUDI HIRSCH, RALPH MACCHIO, RICHARD MULLIGAN, DAVID A. WALSH

Written by R. MCKEEVER
Directed by ARTHUR HILLER
Produced by IRWIN RUSSO
Cinematography by RICHARD MCDONALD
Editor by DAVID A. WALSH
Music by DAVID A. WALSH
Costumes by ARTHUR HILLER
Production Design by IRWIN RUSSO

CRS
FOX
VIDEO

MGM/UA

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MUSICVIDEO REVIEWS

LIONEL RICHIE: ALL NIGHT LONG

D: Various
33 minutes/RCA-Columbia Pictures Home Video/\$14.95

Lush, big budget videos, interview footage and concert sequences built on Lionel Richie's well-crafted songs. The most exciting of the four clips here is the oft-programmed "All Night Long," directed by Bob (Five Easy Pieces) Rafaelson; but the other three Bob Giraldi-directed clips take more chances. "Running With The Night" paints a wonderful wedding scene that includes another classic Giraldi/Michael Peters gang dance confrontation. "Hello" casts Richie as a drama teacher in love with a blind student. Though the integration of dramatic dialogue makes for fine filmmaking, the scenario is hokey. "Penny Lover" is about lost love, but Giraldi can't seem to find the right ending.

Between clips, Richie talks about his songs and videos, but the interview lacks substance. And suddenly at the end of the tape, two of the songs ("All Night Long" and "Running with the Night") are repeated in a concert version of Richie belting his heart out to a smiling, swaying audience. Overall a shaky compilation, but the best moments are as endearing as Richie's best songs. And the price is right. —Alan Hecht

BERLIN

D: Various
"No More Words," "The Metro," "Dancing in Berlin," "SEX (I'm a . . .)," "Now It's My Turn" 21 min.
Sony Video 45/\$16.95

MISSING PERSONS

D: Various "Right Now," "Give," "Destination Unknown," "Surrender Your Heart" 15 min./Sony Video 45/\$16.95

Poor Terri; poor, poor Dale. Again teamed in these pages, again coming a-cropper. These two vid 45s from Sony find the saved preaching to the saved—meaning if either of these two bands ain't won you over yet, you'll probably want to take the big pass here, too. You've heard it all before: the musicians supporting Dale Bozzio's squeaky vocals play hard and well, but their talents are in service of distinctly second-rate songs. They tiptoe to the edge of Great Meaning, then fall headlong into Mediocrity, one mundane observation following another. These folks are waist deep in the big muddy, and no amount of colorful imagery and slick computer graphics, served up by Peter Max on "Surrender Your Heart," can hide the sheer lack of substance in this music.

Berlin's musicians can't play nearly as well as Missing Persons', but Terri Nunn beats Dale Bozzio in the vocal department seven ways to Sunday. Problem is, she's got nothing to say either, even though she says nothing far more intriguingly than Ms. Bozzio. Give Berlin the nod when it comes to at least approaching some serious and insightful commentary on love and sex, or lack thereof, or the treachery thereof, but the band's collective experience in these matters seems fundamentally lacking in the important areas of commitment and self-sacrifice. Perhaps their experience isn't lacking at all, though; maybe they simply can't observe it lyri-

cally in any more depth than they do here.

Ultimately what does it amount to? A couple of bands whose appeal seems bound to the moment and the moment only. Neither these videos, nor anything in the band's musical oeuvre, suggests a long-lasting contribution either to rock's growth as an art form or to the music as a way of life.

—David McGee

MADONNA

D: Mary Lambert ("Borderline," "Like a Virgin"); Steve Barron ("Burning Up"); Arthur Pierson ("Lucky Star")/17 min./Warner Home Video/\$18.95

What's a poor boy to do when confronted with the raging hormones of the hottest screen siren in music video? Reach for the popcorn and hold on as Madonna creates sexual mayhem. Even director Steve Barron has trouble holding the camera steady in "Burning Up" as Madonna

prances about a California street expressing her "not so hidden" desires in a series of glances and gyrations. In "Borderline," director Mary Lambert sets up a street girl turned famous model scenario and lets Madonna's teen lust loose in a rooftop love scene. The other Lambert-directed work here, "Like a Virgin," places a fantasizing Madonna in Venice where she's stalked by a lion and imagines herself in a gorgeous wedding gown (from her LP cover) sinking into a bed with her handsome lover. "Lucky Star" takes a page from Toni Basil's book and finds Madonna staging a dance number in a stark white environment. Director Pierson's wild, unconventional editing cuts together some fleshly belly button shots and steamy closeups to accentuate the artist's strange allure. There's no links between the clips: it's straight Madonna, which means the exuberance and sensuality of a budding star and her romantic fantasies.

—A.H.

MUSICVIDEO TOP TEN

- 1 DURAN DURAN
DURAN DURAN
Thorn-EMI Home Video
- 2 MADONNA
MADONNA
Warner Home Video
- 3 PRIVATE DANCER
TINA TURNER
Sony Video
- 4 SING BLUE SILVER
DURAN DURAN
Thorn-EMI Home Video
- 5 PURPLE RAIN
PRINCE
Warner Home Video
- 6 DANCING ON THE VALENTINE
DURAN DURAN
Sony Video
- 7 JAZZIN' FOR BLUE JEAN
DAVID BOWIE
Sony Video
- 8 HEARTBEAT CITY
THE CARS
Warner Home Video
- 9 THE SYNCHRONICITY CONCERT
POLICE
A&M Home Video
- 10 VIDEO REWIND
ROLLING STONES
Vestron Video

*Denotes new entry

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

VIDEO CLIP TOP TEN

- 1 JUNGLE LOVE
THE TIME
(WB) D: Kaleidoscope
- 2 RELAX
FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
(Island) D: Brian DePalma
- 3 LOVER BOY
BILLY OCEAN
(Arista) D: Morris Philips
- 4 LIKE A VIRGIN
MADONNA
(WB) D: Mary Lambert
- 5 LOVERGIRL
TEENA MARIE
(Epic) D: Tony Greco
- 6 EASY LOVER
PHILIP BAILEY & PHIL COLLINS
(Col) D: Jim Yukich
- 7 CALIFORNIA GIRLS
DAVID LEE ROTH
(WB) D: P. Angelus, David Lee Roth
- 8 MATERIAL GIRL
MADONNA
(WB) D: Mary Lambert
- 9 CARELESS WHISPER
WHAM!
(Col) D: Andy Morahan
- 10 SUGAR WALLS
SHEENA EASTON
(EMI) D: Greg Sills

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 April.

Roll, An American Band comes up short on several counts. First, apart from a clip of the Four Freshman performing (by way of illustrating where Brian Wilson's taste in group harmony lay), there's precious little about the various influences on the band's music. Other more important figures are given short shrift: further comment on Chuck Berry, Phil Spector, and especially surf guitar king Dick Dale would have provided a more rounded perspective on the bits and pieces Wilson put together to create his unique sound.

On the personnel front, three former Beach Boys are never acknowledged as having had roles in this story. When Al Jardine was away at dental school, Wilson's neighbor David Marks stepped in as a replacement (and indeed, is seen on the cover of the band's first album); South Africans Blondie Chaplin and Ricky Fataar were also members for a time in the early '70s. It is painful to watch Dennis Wilson, the only true surfer in the group, delivering a shaky, gravelly "You Are So Beautiful" at a July 4 concert in Atlantic City, though this unsettling sight is counterbalanced by a moving video montage that follows, along with some kind words from brother Carl. The darker side of his life, the problems with drugs, drink and women, is set against those brighter moments.

And Brian? He's seen as a modern day Lazarus, having been revivified by a psychiatrist who renders counsel on even the most minute aspects of Wilson's life. Still, if he's so healthy now—and considering this is an authorized work—it might have been enlightening, or at least interesting, to have a current interview with the man. The footage used here is from the late '70s, and Wilson is seen at low tide, if you will, speaking from under the covers of a bed in his Bel Air home, dispassionately recounting some of the most profound events in his life and, by extension, in popular music.

And while the film is forthright in chronicling the popular disenfranchisement of the Beach Boys as the '60s wore on, there is not mention one of the Beatles' impact on the group in general and on Brian Wilson in particular. This, in spite of critical assertions that *Rubber Soul* compelled Wilson to take on the challenge of *Pet Sounds*, and that *Sgt. Pepper* blew his mind, to put it kindly, precipitating the mid-stream burnout he experienced during an ambitious and now-mythical album project called *Smile*.

Lacking a critical perspective, *An American Band* offers overview via some entertaining archival footage. To wit: the "Fire" tape, a cacophonous composition for the *Smile* album long thought lost, accompanied by footage of the studio sessions for same and a humorous bit with the Boys cutting up at a Hollywood fire station; a Beach Boys appearance in post-invasion Prague, unearthed recently in a London cameraman's basement; John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd in CHP garb as the "Surf

Patrol," rousing a dazed Brian Wilson out of his bed haven for a full-siren ferry to the beach to do some mandatory surfing; Bob Hope and Jack Benny in calf-length swimsuits haggling with the group over "surfer's insurance"; some casual moments with the band members in home movies supplied in part by Beach Boy wives and girlfriends.

There's also some remarkable moments from television variety shows and specials, rescued from decay in forgotten vaults by intrepid archivists at Research Video. Leo's preference for original masters means that the rich ice cream pastels of a "Good Vibrations" performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* jump from the speaker. It means that Brian's solo piano and vocal performance of "Surf's Up," shot in sienna hues on a Leonard Bernstein special, can

be heard for the first time minus voice-over narration.

The film's recent clips focus on the group's commercial revitalization. Once again a bona fide concert draw, the Beach Boys crank out their hits before a nostalgia-crazed audience that demands nothing new. Although *The Beach Boys: An American Band* would have us feel otherwise, the film's most disheartening image is the sight of these men, all approaching or past middle age, doing their umpteenth version of "Fun Fun Fun" before an adoring crowd in Washington, D.C. The most appropriate image, though, is of Brian Wilson today, slim and handsome, as he was way back when—the physical manifestation of a band forever condemned to recall a past that existed mostly in myth. Again, and again, and again. ○

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Queen Imports, 3950 Griffith St., Montreal, Quebec H4T 1A7, Canada

M A Y 1 9 7 3

TOP 10 POP SINGLES

- 1 **YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE**
Stevie Wonder
- 2 **FRANKENSTEIN**
Edgar Winter
- 3 **TIE A YELLOW RIBBON 'ROUND THE OLD OAK TREE**
Tony Orlando & Dawn
- 4 **CISCO KID**
War
- 5 **LITTLE WILLY**
Sweet
- 6 **THE TWELFTH OF NEVER**
Donny Osmond
- 7 **STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU**
Stealers Wheel
- 8 **DRIFT AWAY**
Dobie Gray
- 9 **THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN GEORGIA**
Vicki Lawrence
- 10 **REELING IN THE YEARS**
Steely Dan

TOP 10 POP ALBUMS

- 1 **HOUSES OF THE HOLY**
Led Zeppelin
- 2 **THE BEST OF BREAD**
Bread
- 3 **ELVIS ALOHA FROM HAWAII (VIA SATELLITE)**
Elvis Presley
- 4 **THEY ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT**
Edgar Winter
- 5 **MASTERPIECE**
Temptations
- 6 **THE BEATLES/1967-1970**
- 7 **THE BEATLES/1962-1966**
- 8 **DARK SIDE OF THE MOON**
Pink Floyd
- 9 **MOVING WAVES**
Focus
- 10 **BILLION DOLLAR BABIES**
Alice Cooper



MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

AND FREE MY SOUL

Blessed with a powerful voice and great presence, Texas-born Dobie Gray introduced himself in a big way to American rock fans in 1965 with "The In Crowd." It was nine years later, though, that he gave his most enduring performance by blending elements of country, soul and pop in what stands as the definitive reading of the oft-covered "Drift Away." Seemingly set for a long and exemplary career, Gray proceeded to cut a string of well-made records—most notably *New Ray of Sunshine*, a 1977 LP for the Capricorn label—but none made a significant dent on the charts. Though his star burned bright for a moment in '79 with the disco hit "You Can Do It," sustained success eluded him once more. Today Gray remains an outstanding singer in search of another break.

U K T O P L P S

- 1 **BORN IN THE USA**
Bruce Springsteen (CBS)
- 2 **ALF**
Alison Moyet (CBS)
- 3 **AGENT PROVACATEUR**
Foreigner (Atlantic)
- 4 **ELIMINATOR**
ZZ Top (Warner Bros.)
- 5 **STEPS IN TIME**
King (CBS)
- 6 **HITS OUT OF HELL**
Meatloaf (Epic)
- 7 **DIAMOND LIFE**
Sade (CBS)
- 8 **20/20**
George Benson (Warner Bros.)
- 9 **SECRET SECRETS**
Joan Armatrading (A&M)
- 10 **MEAT IS MURDER**
The Smiths (Rough Trade)
- 11 **CHESS**
Various (RCA)
- 12 **THE VERY BEST OF . . .**
Chris DeBurgh (Telstar)
- 13 **MAKE IT BIG**
Wham! (CBS)
- 14 **THE SONGBOOK**
Barbara Dickson (K-Tel)
- 15 **THE COLLECTION**
Ultravox (Chrysalis)
- 16 **THE AGE OF CONSENT**
Bronski Beat (Forbidden Fruit)
- 17 **PERHAPS**
The Associates (WEA)
- 18 **WHO'S AFRAID OF**
Art of Noise (ZTT)
- 19 **A SENSE OF WONDER**
Van Morrison (Mercury)
- 20 **1999**
Prince (Warner Bros.)
- 21 **17**
Chicago (Full Moon)
- 22 **LIKE A VIRGIN**
Madonna (Sire)
- 23 **THE BAD AND LOWDOWN WORLD OF**
Kane Gang (Kitchenware)
- 24 **WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE DOME**
Frankie Goes to Hollywood
- 25 **THE 12-INCH ALBUM**
Howard Jones (WEA)



SMITHS DOMINATE READERS' POLL

Riding roughshod over the opposition in the 1984 *New Musical Express* Readers' Poll, the Smiths either won, placed or showed in several categories, including Best Group (R.E.M., at number eight, was the only U.S. band to crack the Top 10); Best Songwriters (Morrissey and Johnny Marr); Best Instrumentalist (Marr); fourth and 12th best LPs (the Cocteau Twins' *Treasure* finished first; the Boss waves the stars and stripes at Number Two); and three of the top 20 singles. Morrissey also placed just behind Paul Weller as Best Dressed Person, finished fourth in the Most Wonderful Human Being category and, just so's he don't get the bighead, placed 13th in Creep of the Year balloting. Stateside fans who want to know what all the fuss is about can check out the group's second U.S. album, *Meat is Murder*, recently released by Sire.

U.K. LP chart reprinted from *New Musical Express*, Feb. 23, 1985.

1	EMERGENCY	Kool & the Gang (De-Lite)
2	SOLID	Ashford & Simpson (Capitol)
3	TRULY FOR YOU	Temptations (Gordy)
4	NEW EDITION	New Edition (MCA)
5	PRIVATE DANCER	Tina Turner (Capitol)
6	GAP BAND IV	Gap Band (Total Experience)
7	WOMAN IN RED	Stevie Wonder (Motown)
8	ESCAPE	Whodini (Jive/Arista)
9	EUGENE WILDE	Eugene Wilde (Philly World)
10	CHINESE WALL	Philip Bailey (Col)
11	SWEPT AWAY	Diana Ross (RCA)
12	MEETING IN THE LADIES ROOM	Klymaxx (Constellation)
13	20/20	George Benson (WB)
14	STARCHILD	Teena Marie (Epic)
15	PURPLE RAIN	Prince (WB)
16	PLANETARY INVASION	Midnight Star (Solar)
17	MAKE IT BIG	Wham! (Col)
18	SO GOOD	Whispers (Solar)
19	LIKE A VIRGIN	Madonna (WB)
20	ICE CREAM CASTLES	The Time (WB)
21	EGO TRIP	Kurtis Blow (Mercury)
22	DON'T STOP	Jeffrey Osborne (A&M)
23	BREAKIN' 2	Soundtrack (Polydor)
24	CAN'T SLOW DOWN	Lionel Richie (Motown)
25	SUDDENLY	Billy Ocean (Jive/Arista)



MEN ALL PAUSE

Now making a chart run with its third LP, *Meeting In The Ladies Room*, the all-female septet known as Klymaxx serves up a fascinating brew of rock, soul and techno-pop, most of it produced and written by the group members themselves. Founded six years ago by drummer Bernadette Cooper, the usual suspects include guitarist Cheryl Cooley, lead vocalist Lorena "Lungs" Porter, bassist Fenderella, keyboardist Lynn Malsby, and synthesizer wiz Robbin Grider. Following several personnel changes the Klymaxx lineup has stabilized, a development that pleases Cooper, who says: "Everybody in this group is very, very essential, and good at what they do. Once we got an element that started working, it was evident that we were gonna be somebody someday." And so it is.

1	PERFECT STRANGER	Deep Purple (Mercury)
2	CRAZY FROM THE HEAT	David Lee Roth (WB)
3	THE FIRM	Atlantic
4	SIGN IN PLEASE	Autograph (RCA)
5	GUERRILLA	Camel/MCA
6	THUNDER SEVEN	Triumph (MCA)
7	STAY HUNGRY	Twisted Sister (Atlantic)
8	THUNDER IN THE EAST	Loudness (Atco)
9	ANIMALIZE	Kiss (Mercury)
10	THE RIGHT TO ROCK	Keel (Gold Mountain)
11	SEE YOU IN HELL	Grim Reaper (RCA)
12	LOVE AT FIRST STING	Scorpions (Mercury)
13	TOOTH AND NAIL	Dokken (Elektra)
14	THE LAST IN LINE	Dio (WB)
15	REBEL YELL	Billy Idol (Chrysalis)
16	CONDITION CRITICAL	Quiet Riot (Pasha/CBS)
17	V.O.A.	Sammy Hagar (Geffen)
18	OUT OF THE CELLAR	Ratt (Atlantic)
19	RIDE THE LIGHTNING	Metallica (Elektra)
20	MARCH OF THE SAINT	Armored Saint (Chrysalis)
21	STANDING ALONE	White Wolf (RCA)
22	DANGEROUS MUSIC	Robin George (Bronze/Island)
23	GONE TOO FAR	Widow (CBS Assoc.)
24	FRICITION	Coney Hatch (Polygram)
25	W.A.S.P.	W.A.S.P. (Capitol)



ROSS MARINO

ARE YOU SURE HANK DONE IT THIS WAY?

Music City U.S.A. happens to be the unlikely point of origin of Keel, now moving up the charts with its Gene Simmons-produced LP, *The Right to Rock*. In 1979, Keel's frontman and leather-lunged vocalist Ron Keel migrated with his family from Phoenix, Arizona, to Nashville and started playing that kind of music because no one else was. His band, Steeler, broke up after relocating to Los Angeles and cutting one album for the independent Shrapnel label, but Keel rebounded with a new lineup, gave the group his name, cut another Shrapnel album . . . and the majors came a-calling. And what of the collaboration with Simmons? "It sounds like a bunch of crazy kids in a bar making noise" assesses Ron, "but it also has some class and the attitude is right."

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

A LITTLE TRAVELLING MUSIC, PLEASE

*A buyers' guide to selecting
and caring for
an automotive sound system*
By Martin Porter



Panasonic's CQ-S934 AM/FM stereo receiver/cassette deck (approx. \$430): Pinpoint tuning locks in on clear signals

THE RULES OF THE ROAD

Rock 'n' roll was meant to be listened to on the road, whether you're cruising long distance down the highway or backed up in bumper-to-bumper traffic. It gives new meaning to the term "travelling music."

It also means paying attention to sound quality. You're going to miss the backbeat of the bass drum or the thrill of an E string lead if your dashboard unit is more suited to talk radio than stereo sound.

But buying a car stereo system today is no simple matter. Time was when you would go to your local dealer, pick out a receiver (maybe one with an 8-track player, if you really wanted to splurge) and a pair of speakers, and then head over to your friend's garage for a quick installation.

Those days, for better or worse, are gone forever. In fact, selecting car stereo equipment is as involved a process as selecting an audio system for the home. In addition to the usual hardware choices (i.e., FM stereo, AM stereo, cassette, CD), there are scores of features, speakers and peripheral add-ons to be considered.

WHERE DO YOU START? FIRST, decide how much money you want to spend. Naturally, the more you spend the more features—such as Local/DX (distant) FM tuning or "ignition off/tape eject"—you get. On the other hand, don't break the bank, either. A time-proven strategy is to get what you need for now, leaving room for future expansion. This is an especially wise course of action for owners of older model cars.

Otherwise, here are the six basic commandments for selecting a system:

- **Thou shalt choose thy system wisely.** Before you do *anything*, make a checklist of your needs. Do you need a digital display? A cassette deck? What type of noise reduction—if any—do you require? (Note: Most prerecorded cassettes use Dolby B.) Is your vehicle a van, which requires more amplification?

After you've given the matter some thought, talk to an autosound dealer and see what you can afford and which units will fit in your car. Don't overpay for service but always buy from an established autosound manufacturer and dealer.

- **Thou shalt provide the juice.** Once you've chosen the basic essentials of your system, your next concern is how much power you'll need to drive it. Obviously, the more power you have, the better the system will sound. Nevertheless, most people fail to take into account the wattage needed in a noisy car environment—particularly in the case of CDs.

In short, buy as much amplifier power as you can afford. A booster amp may be

needed if the built-in amplifier of the radio/cassette combination doesn't provide enough power to drive two sets of speakers. (If the unit has preamplifier outputs, a line-level amp will do the job.)

• **Honor thy woofer and thy tweeter.** Car speakers are separate entities unto themselves, and should be carefully matched.

In a perfect world, one would be able to get front- and back-seat speaker demonstrations, but in our world that's wishful thinking. Therefore, listen all the more closely to speakers in dealership showrooms. Test front and rear candidates separately and bring along your own cassette (one you're familiar with so you can judge the speakers' sonic qualities). After narrowing the choices, listen again for compatible pairings for each end of the car. For those who prefer a booming bass sound in the back, a subwoofer is recommended.

Should you opt for a two-speaker system, mount both speakers in the front if you prefer a forward image effect, or in the back if you want extra bass. And, of course, make sure you've got the watts-per-channel to satisfy the speaker requirements.

Finally, trust your ears—specs are important, but only you know what you like.

• **Thou shalt not destroy thy car's interior.** Don't forget to take your car's spacial demands into account when selecting in-dash equipment and speakers. Avoid major alterations unless you're prepared to use a top-notch installer (with verifiable references)—who will most likely charge a small fortune for his work.

Instead, familiarize yourself with your car's audio accommodations and plan accordingly. Generally speaking, new compact models and Japanese imports have very little room to spare, while some American sedans can offer speaker wells as deep as the Grand Canyon. Downsized cars may need a "mini-nose" unit, while cars with shallow door wells require speakers designed especially for tight fits. See "Life Under the Dash" for more installation tips.

• **Keep thy heads clean.** Car stereo maintenance is a vitally important—yet often overlooked—necessity. A car's environment is not only noisy, it's dirty to boot. And road soot and cigarette smoke are a cassette deck's worst enemies. Be sure to

clean the tape heads and pinch roller periodically. Rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab will work in a pinch, although the smart money would go for a quality cleaning kit, such as those manufactured by Allsop and Recoton. For demagnetizing, TDK's HD-01 (approx. \$25) comes highly

recommended.

• **Thou shalt keep thy auxiliary power sources away from thy radios and antenna lines.** A cardinal rule for all audio electronics—in the car as well as the home.

Amen.

LIFE UNDER THE DASHBOARD

A QUALITY INSTALLATION job is as important as selecting quality equipment. Even top-of-the-line merchandise will sound terrible if it's not installed properly. That said, here are 10 basics to keep in mind regarding autosound installations:

1. "Mini-chassis" units are simplest to install. These are the smallest cassette receivers available, and will fit in most dashboards without any difficulty. "DIN-sized" chassis have somewhat larger front panels (or "nose pieces"), but can still be widely accommodated in many American and European models.

2. Find a reputable installer. Ask a dealer or check the local Yellow Pages under "Automobile Radios and Stereo Systems." Avoid freelance installers unless you're familiar with their work.

3. If your dealer offers to do the installation, ask to see the work area. If this request is refused, you should look for another dealer.

4. Spend some time talking with the installer and work out a clear understanding of your system's layout. Don't wait and be "surprised" after it's in.

5. Don't cut corners with installation materials. The money you spend here will spare you headaches later on.

6. If you go the do-it-yourself route, follow the manufacturer's instructions to the letter. And make absolutely sure that all your measurements are correct before you drill, cut or chop.

8. Mount all speakers firmly—with back enclosures wherever possible (especially rear woofers). Door-mounted speakers should also be adequately protected from water leaks.

9. Use a common grounding point to avoid ground loops, which cause hums,

buzzes or interference.

10. Unless you plan on removing the system when you sell your car, don't be afraid to have some minor cutting done in the interior to obtain the best sound—and increase the resale value of your car.

THE AM STEREO SAGA

FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, IT appeared that AM stereo would never get off the ground. The FCC's failure to establish a standard for the system in 1982 resulted in three different formats fighting tooth and nail for supremacy in the market. While the battle raged on, consumers—and most hardware manufacturers and radio stations as well—sat on the sidelines, waiting.

Now, nearly three years later, Motorola's C-Quam AM stereo system has a clear lead over the competition. With Delco offering the C-Quam format as an option on all new GM cars and trucks and the debut of a new crop of compatible car receivers, the final battle may have already been fought.

In fact, several leading car stereo manufacturers—such as Kraco and Pioneer—have only recently unveiled their first AM stereo units, all of which utilize the Motorola system.

Kraco's sleek ETR-1090 AM and FM stereo cassette deck (approx. \$400) incorporates all the necessities: electronic tuning, full logic auto reverse, Dolby noise reduction, six AM/FM station presets, automatic music search, seek and scan tuning, and digital station display.

Sherwood's second AM/FM stereo cassette unit, the CRD-180 (approx. \$300), set a number of company firsts. It's the manufacturer's first mini-chassis, auto-reverse/electronically tuned unit, and the first to highlight an LCD display, built-in digital clock, and preset station scan. Other features include Dolby noise reduction, six AM/FM presets, locking fast forward and reverse controls, night illumination, built-in front/rear fader and 3.5 watt-per-channel (at 0.5 percent THD) with automatic seek and scan tuning, five station presets, LED digital time and frequency display, and a built-in five-band graphic equalizer. The basic Sparkomatic SR 420 system (ap-

Pioneer's CDX-P1 car stereo Compact Disc player: A universal unit with control amp (approx. \$600)



prox. \$200) has many of the same features (minus the equalizer), though appreciably less power.

CD's ON WHEELS

F YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT high quality auto sound, you'll be glad to know that full-featured Compact Disc players are expected to be The Next Big Thing in this area. In fact, new DIN front-mount CD players are already available from Sony and Pioneer.

Sony really got things moving, so to speak, with its Fall '84 introduction of the D-5 portable CD player and two in-dash units—the CDX-5 (approx. \$600) and the CDX-R7 AM/FM/CD player (approx. \$700). Both share an impressive 90 dB dynamic range and minuscule 0.007 percent total harmonic distortion. Further common ground is found in convenience features such as automatic loading, automatic music sensor and forward/reverse program scanning. The CDX-R7 also adds 18 radio station presets, automatic scan/manual tuning, and FM local/distant switching.

Pioneer quickly followed suit with two more car CD players: the CDX-1 (approx. \$550), a head unit designed for use with the company's high-end line of "Centrate" autosound components, and the CDX-P1 (approx. \$600), a universal unit with control amp.

Similarly, both CD players feature home-quality performance and are specially constructed to withstand heat, dust and tracking errors caused by road vibration.

The CDX-P1 is also equipped with such handy features as track search, track repeat, bidirectional music scan, track number search (for random access), and bass, treble, volume and balance controls.

You can also expect to see in-dash CD units from such companies as Sanyo, Yamaha and Clarion in the near future.

HOME SPEAKER SOUND HITS THE HIGHWAY

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF ACTION in car speaker systems lately. New technologies, better materials and improved craftsmanship have all contributed to "brighter" sounding car interiors. But perhaps the greatest influence in auto speaker design these days is coming straight from your living room.

Some of the best-known home speaker manufacturers have recently brought their creative talents to the road. In many cases, advanced home technologies were re-applied to meet the somewhat harsher demands of life on the road. The results go far towards closing the gap between home and car audio.

In order to deal with the automobile's inherent problems of midrange/treble response, Boston Acoustics and Infinity now offer high-performance speaker component systems. The big advantage of this format is that you can arrange each speaker component where it sounds best.

Boston Acoustics' Model 741 (approx. \$150/pair) two-way system consists of two four-inch woofers, two one-inch Omni-mount/CFT tweeters, and two crossover networks for an overall frequency response of 85-20,000 Hz.

Infinity's CS-1 Automotive Component System (approx. \$289), meanwhile, includes three pairs of drivers for increased autosound realism. An enriched bass sound is provided by a pair of 6" x 9" woofers. High frequencies are catered to by the EMIT tweeters, with mid-frequencies accurately channeled by a pair of four-inch midrange drivers.

JBL has become a prime innovative force in car speaker design—as clearly



Blaupunkt's BEQ-65 'stalk-mounted' graphic equalizer (approx. \$170)

demonstrated by its ER/G line of automotive loudspeakers. Available in three dual-element models, the line is characterized by its unique "Co-Motional" configuration in which the tweeter cone is directly attached to the woofer for flat frequency response of 80 Hz to 22 kHz and an amplifier rating of 60 watts per channel.

For one piece, two-way performance AR's AR2CS speakers (approx. \$100 each) are a good choice. This system can be easily mounted in any four-inch opening and employs a four-and-a-half inch woofer and 3/4-inch tweeter in a high temperature housing. Also recommended is AR's LFC (Low Frequency Component) 8.00 subwoofer (approx. \$50 each)—an eight-inch speaker capable of handling maximum program peaks of 250 watts with a frequency range of 28 to 2,000 Hz.

CAR SHORTS

YOU CAN GRAB A FISTFULL of car frequencies with Blaupunkt's new "stalk mounted" equalizer, the BEQ-65 (approx. \$170). The unit combines five frequency-range tone adjustment controls that let you create the right sound for your set of wheels. The BEQ-65 has been designed to allow drivers to identify and operate all controls with minimal eye contact. Besides, the unit is easily installed on a flexible gooseneck under any dash. Shift your car stereo into high gear with this clever five-band equalizer.

- In the world of car audio the old adage "put your money where your mouth is" translates to "putting the power where the speaker is."

And in terms of audio hardware, this results in a new breed of autosound speaker systems that actually packages the power amplifiers in the speaker itself, resulting in improved sound quality and allowing for more powerful systems that can compete head on with car noise.

International Jensen has taken this approach with a new line of power amplified



Boston Acoustics' 741 car speakers (approx. \$150/pair)

speakers, coming in 4½-inch and 6½-inch models (approx. \$135 and \$155 respectively). The Jensen engineers have packed 20 watts per channel of amplification in each speaker, which—combined with power handling of 100 watts and a mounting depth of only two inches—is perfect for tight spots and power-hungry car systems.

- There is one autosound component that is frequently and unfortunately ignored—the antenna. Corrosion-resistant componentry is the major feature of this device.

And it was for this reason that **Clarion Corporation** of America has introduced a line of stainless steel **Magi-Tune** antennas constructed for long life and reliability. The antennas have been designed with automatic and semi-automatic drive systems so they can be slid out of view and ejected skyward whenever the radio is switched on. The **MTS-1** (approx. \$45) is a semi-automatic unit that must be activated by throwing a separate switch, while the **MTA-2** and **MTA-2B** are fully automatic systems that go to work whenever the radio is activated; they retail respectively at \$65 and \$75; the former is stainless steel while the latter comes in black plate. Rounding out the line are the **MTR-3** and **MTR-3B**, which are fully automatic though they require a remote drive, perfect for tight installation spots. The units are priced respectively at \$80 and \$90 with the latter finished in black stainless steel.

- Does the low end of your car stereo need some get up and go? **Alpine Electronics of America** has revealed a new subwoofer de-



Harman Kardon's CH140 in-dash cassette/tuner deck (approx. \$395)

sign that helps even low powered auto sound units rumble the seat bottoms. The model **6490** (approx. \$250) features a folded horn design that gets optimum results when directed toward a corner of the car. It is especially designed for large car interiors—vans or hatchbacks—which require a low end response that only an auxiliary subwoofer can offer. It boasts a peak power rating of 150w at 1 kHz and has a bandwidth of 30Hz to 500Hz.

- **Harmon/Kardon** is an old faithful when it comes to home stereo design, particularly for its high quality amplifiers and receivers. Now HK has gone mobile with a full line of new component stereo in-dash cassette/tuner head units and car amplifiers. The **CH140** (approx. \$395) is the mid-line receiver that employs a range of advanced features including: locking fast forward and rewind, key-off eject and end of tape eject, along with a super-smooth tape loading system. Dolby B comes standard and

the tuner provides digital synthesized accuracy with an LCD display. The unit provides six AM and six FM presets, will manually seek out adjacent stations, and has been designed with special interference rejection circuitry. For powering the **CH140**, the **CA240** (approx. \$295) is a logical choice, offering ample current to drive two pairs of four ohm speakers.

- If you've got an ear for noise reduction you'll be glad to hear about **Panasonic's** new model **CQ-S934** AM/FM stereo receiver/cassette deck (approx. \$430). Besides the boosted tape signal provided by both Dolby and dbx noise reduction systems, the **CQ-S934** lets you whip around the dial with pinpoint accuracy, with either a seek button that searches out and locks in on clear signals, or a scan feature that allows you to sample every strong station on the radio band.

- If you like high-tailing it down the highway in high style, check out **Pioneer's** DIN-sized **KEH-9000** (approx. \$440). This unit features auto reverse (with a rotating head design for precise azimuth adjustment in both directions), a built-in five band equalizer and Dolby B noise reduction. It's also equipped with Pioneer's Supertuner III circuitry that provides heavy-duty FM reception even in the asphalt jungle. You can create station presets to your heart's content, with 12 FM and six AM selections, or you can sample the entire radio band with the seek function. And if you've ever had your favorite tape eaten by an ornery dashboard demon, Pioneer provides a welcome friend: a tape guard that automatically takes up slack—the main culprit of magnetic tape munchies. It also provides a two-way high power design that lets you upgrade from a two-speaker to a four-speaker configuration.



Alpine Car Audio's 6490 subwoofers (approx. \$250): A good low end response for large car interiors



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CRAIG ANDERTON

SAMPLING TAKES HOLD

Bringing a hot technique to the masses

That snare drum part you hear might not be a drum part at all, but a steam press that's been bent out of shape, slowed down, and made percussive through the process of *sampling*. Sampling—the art of taking real-world sounds, recording them into a keyboard-cum-computer, and mutating them to musical effect—is rapidly turning into one of the hottest musical techniques of the '80s. Sampled sounds show up on albums by Yes, the Residents, the Cars, Herbie Hancock, Re-Flex, DEVO, Group 87 and Peter Gabriel. Musicians such as Jerry Harrison, Todd Rundgren, Kerry Livgren and Larry Fast use these effects extensively in their work. And based on the latest trends, sampling will only become more affordable and commonplace in the future.

This column first surveyed sampling in the June 1984 issue, but much has happened since then. Several sampling programs are available for home computers, including the Apple and (primarily in Europe) the Sinclair ZX-81 and Spectrum computers. Ensoniq has announced an under-\$1700 budget sampling keyboard, and rumor has it that Roland will soon introduce a MIDI-controlled, rack mount sampling unit to complement their other MIDI modules (see last month's column).

This month, we'll focus on what a specific sampling instrument, E-mu's **Emulator II**, can do. Why the Emulator II? First, because it's currently a very hot instrument (some dealers are even selling them for *above* list price); and second, I have been writing the owner's manual and am more familiar with this instrument than any other sampling device.

What makes sampling instruments so fascinating is that they can not only reproduce reality—i.e., sample a grand piano and you can play grand piano sounds from the keyboard—but that you can also take everyday sounds and turn them into something completely different. In fact, many musicians with sampling keyboards are going around with portable tape recorders, or even portable VCRs with PCM audio recording adapters, and recording anything



E-mu's Emulator II: A universal sound processing console

from animal sounds to industrial noises.

Once these sounds are "recorded" into the instrument's memory, the fun begins. The most basic processing effects offered by the Emulator II, as well as other sampling keyboards, include *truncation*, *transposition*, and *looping*. Truncation trims off some of the beginning and/or end of a sound; for example, removing a sampled guitar note's initial pluck creates an entirely different effect. Or, you could sample a long sound, and zero in on one particular note or word by truncating everything except the desired sound (in the song "Metal Beat," Herbie Hancock sampled Michael Jackson's "Beat It," and edited out everything except the word "beat.") Transposition (the process of "speeding up" or "slowing down" a sound, as when you change speed on a tape recorder) takes a sound and transposes it to cover a wider range of the keyboard. Thus, if you sample a dog bark, you could transpose it to create an entire octave or two of dog barks.

Looping lets you mark off a portion of a sample, which can then be repeated for as long as desired. One of the first sampling experiments I did was to sample a feedback guitar, then loop the end part to create true infinite sustain. With older sampling instruments, looping was a somewhat iffy process: unless the loop points were very carefully chosen, there would often be a "pop" every time the loop repeated (due to level mismatches between the end and beginning of the loop). However, the Emulator II includes some "artificial intelligence" that optimally places the loop points, thus creating pop-free loops.

Two of the most useful Emulator II functions are *combine* and *splice*. Combine simply mixes the sounds so you can have,

say, a guitar and bass playing simultaneously. Splice actually "cuts and pastes" two sounds in order to create separate attack and decay characteristics (i.e., a voice that turns into a flute, or a car crash that turns into a cymbal).

In addition to all this high-tech digital processing, there are also provisions to alter the sounds via analog synthesizer techniques—filtering, envelope control over dynamics, and so on. Thus, long sounds can acquire quick decays, bright sounds can be muted and dull sounds can be brightened. More importantly, most of these processors can tie into the keyboard dynamics so that, for example, hitting the keys harder creates a louder sound. Other dynamics-controlled functions let you choose different samples (play the keys hard for one sound, softly for another) or cross fade between samples (as you play harder, one sound becomes louder while another becomes softer).

When you consider that the Emulator II also has an 8-track digital sequencer, you start getting the picture of an instrument which is, in reality, a kind of universal sound processing console. Essentially, the old electronic music studios of the '50s—where sounds were recorded onto tape, then laboriously spliced into compositions using techniques conceptually very similar to the ones mentioned above—has been packaged into a compact box, attached to a keyboard, and priced under \$8000. Already, many musicians have realized the staggering possibilities of using the entire world as a potential sound source. As prices come down in the years ahead, we can expect that sampling will not only become more popular, and also, used with increasing proficiency and creativity.

SUDDENLY--INCREDIBLY--A GIGANTIC KOALA PAW PLUNGES THROUGH THE CEILING AND POUNDS THE POOR JANITOR TO PUTTY.

WOW! A GIGANTIC KOALA PAW IS SUDDENLY--INCREDIBLY-- PLUNGING THROUGH THE CEILING AND POUNDING THE POOR JANITOR TO PUTTY!!!

ARGH! A GIGANTIC KOALA PAW IS PLUNGING THROUGH THE CEILING AND SUDDENLY--INCREDIBLY-- POUNDING POOR ME TO PUTTY!!!!

REMEMBER THOSE OUTRAGEOUS, bizarre, twisted comic books you used to read as a kid? The ones where giant spiders from outer space would steal all of Earth's oatmeal, and force their hostage Earth women to feed them a balanced breakfast? And remember deathless lines of dialogue like, "Ou Coaxial Mocha Chip Ray holds you in our power! It is useless to resist, puny humans!"? And the stories where omnipotent heroes would punch out a spider army with *one pinky* and send them hurtling into Halley's Comet? Remember, huh? Remember?

Well, forget 'em.

Now comes a comic so off-the-wall, so over-the-edge, so on-the-blink, it's light-years ahead of the state-of-the-art in comic book humor! It's an hysterical step sideways in comic book history! It's Ambush Bug,* the incredible new mini-series that makes *The Thorn Birds* look spectacular by comparison.

Ambush Bug! Get it—and make sure your friends are laughing at *it* and not *you*!

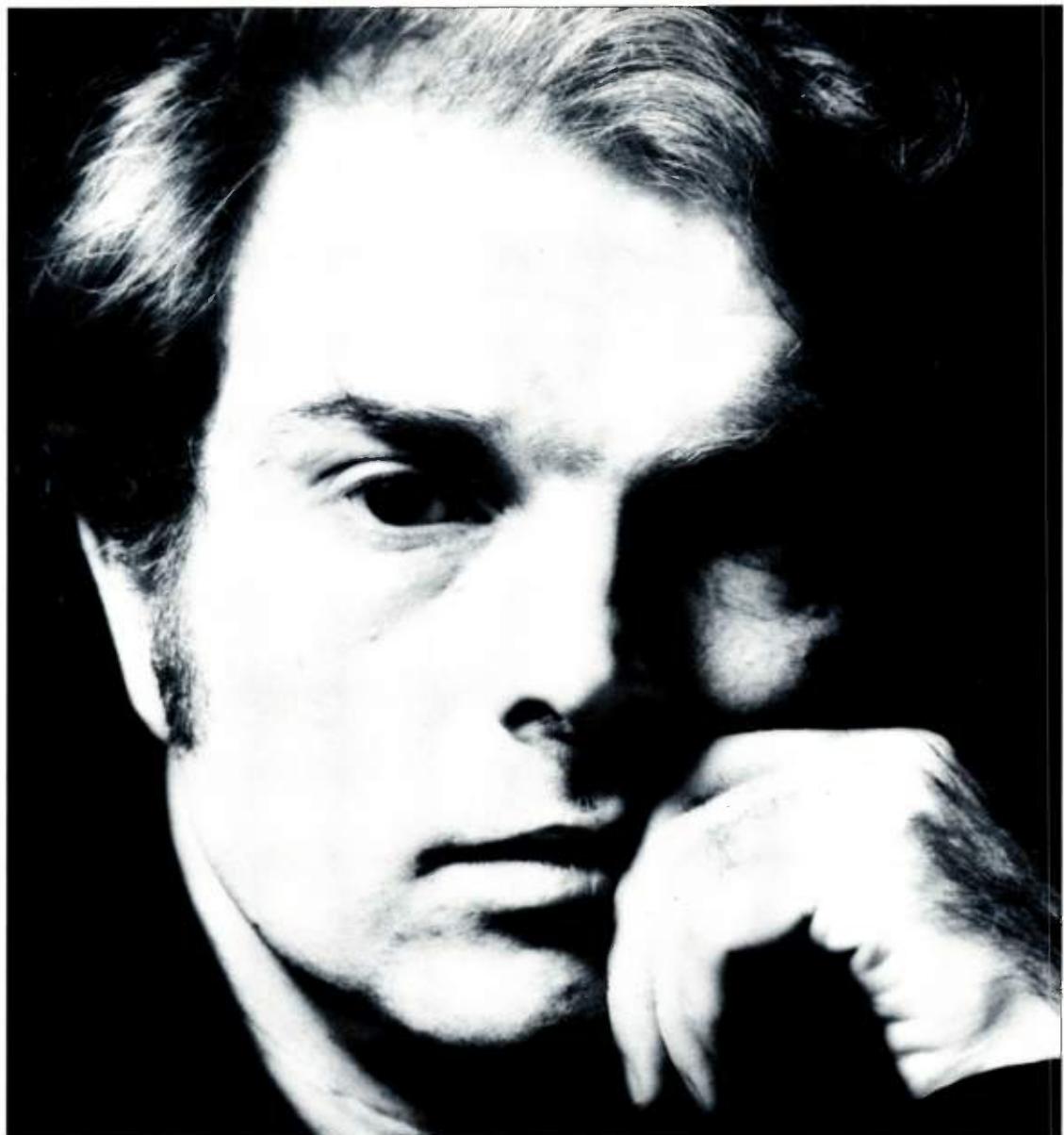
If you can't find Ambush Bug at Waldenbooks, comic book stores, or your local newsstand, or you don't want your friends to know you're buying a comic—send \$1.00 (cash, check, or money order made out to DC Comics) to: Ambush Bug, Box 5000-KC, Ridgefield, New Jersey 07657. We'll send you issue #1—in a plain brown wrapper.

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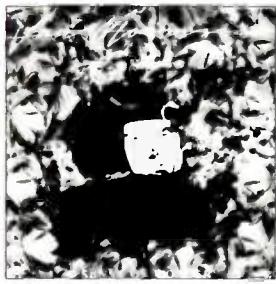
A TRIUMPH OF FAITH

A SENSE OF WONDER
Van Morrison

Mercury

By
Ric
O'Mitchell

Among the significant surviving British rockers of his generation—McCartney, Jagger, Townshend, Davies, Winwood, Clapton—none has so resolutely pursued his artistic vision oblivious to the demands of commerce as Van Morrison. From the wise-beyond-his-years "Don't Look Back"



with Them in 1964 to the humble "Dweller On The Threshold" of last year's impeccable *Live At The Grand Opera House In Belfast* (available as a Mercury import), it's been a brilliant and more than occasionally transcendent odyssey.

Placed within the context of Morrison's body of work, *A Sense Of Wonder* is more a consolidation of old and new ideas like *His Band And Streetchoir* and *Wavelength* than a cathartic breakthrough along the lines of *Astral Weeks*, *Veedon Fleece* and *Into The Music*. There is no overwhelming climactic moment to compare with the latter album's "You Know What They're Writing About," where Morrison roars "I want you to meet me!" in a voice so supernaturally charged with emotion that only the most barmy

brained of listeners could fail to be touched. Consequently, it may take a few spins for one to appreciate just how seamlessly conceived this album is as a whole. In its mature triumph of faith and optimism over despair, *A Sense Of Wonder* finds the upbeat romantic idealist of *Tupelo Honey* creatively co-existing with the mellowed spiritual supplicant of *Inarticulate Speech of the Heart*. For sheer aural splendor with its gently strummed acoustic guitar, droning uilleann pipes and breathtaking female chorus, the title track rivals anything Morrison has ever produced. It is an ecstatic song of innocence, in which the singer dreamily recounts scenes from some lost Gaelic epoch (his own childhood?) when describing the changing colors of the leaves



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av. per cigarette, FTC Report Feb. '85.

was a year-round preoccupation and the eternal flame shone on days of "blooming wonder." This leads into a traditional Irish reel, where electric guitars and saxophones do an enchanted Ceili dance with pipes and fiddle.

Early in his career, Morrison appeared tormented by the acute realization that the timbre of his voice would never approximate the black singers he idolized as a youth. In recent years, his singing has grown less affected and more relaxed. It still doesn't sound like Ray Charles, but with John Allair's graceful organ swells nudging him on, he reaches back for a few soulful rushes that should send Seger whistling back down Main Street and Bruce out for an all-night drive. This must count as a personal triumph.

Elsewhere, Chris Michie's Cropper-toned rhythm guitar and Pee Wee Ellis' punchy horn arrangements lend a familiar feel that would not sound out of place on any of Morrison's early '70s albums. Although "His Master's Eyes" is sure to incite speculation as to which master he's referring to (Jesus? Buddha? L. Ron Hubbard?), I hear it as old-fashioned gospel praise for the Man from Galilee.

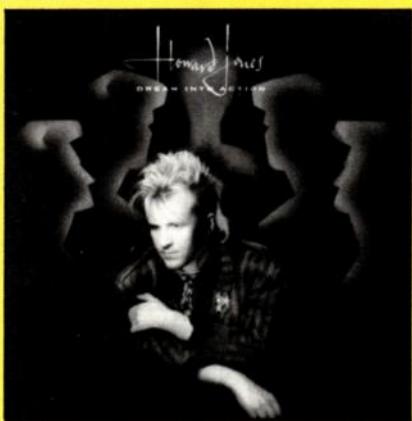
The album's weightiest philosophical rumination is a nearly 200-year-old William Blake poem, "Let The Slave," set to music by Mike Westberg and Adrian Mitchell. While the choir moans reverently, "For everything that lives is holy," Morrison recites, "it is an easy thing to rejoice in the tents of prosperity . . . but it is

not so with me." The poem is as eloquent a rebuttal to the Reagans and Thatchers of this world as anything U2 or the Clash could hope to come up with.

Understandably, many of Van's former fans will be suspicious of the more pronounced turn his mystical bent has taken. Frankly, it is a bit difficult to imagine anyone humming along contentedly to "Tore Down a la Rimbaud" as, say, "Making love in the green grass behind the stadium." But Morrison is no longer competing in that league of Temporal Pleasures, and hasn't been, really, since *Astral Weeks*. He has little left to prove to the rock audience and no one to answer to except his muse. To quote the mysterious Mr. McDole in the liner notes, "It means what it means." I'm listening still.

Howard Jones

DREAM INTO ACTION



**HOWARD JONES LIBERATED HIS ARTISTRY
WITH LAST YEAR'S HUMAN'S LIB.
NOW HE TURNS HIS DREAM INTO ACTION
WITH HIS NEW ELEKTRA LP.**

Featuring the single "Things Can Only Get Better" and
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Produced by Rupert Hine for Gestalt

On Elektra Music Cassettes and Records.
Coming soon on Compact Disc.



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THE FIRM The Firm

Atlantic

By
Jonathan
Gregg



If old dogs can't learn new tricks, they should at least remember the old ones. Luckily for the Firm, Jimmy Page and Paul Rodgers have summoned forth enough of their old savvy to make an album that, while hardly trend-setting, is at least a professional piece of work.

The most striking departure from the Zeppelin/Bad Co. formula is bass player Tony Franklin, whose Jaco Pastorius-influenced tone gives the band a more modern, less plodding sound. Otherwise, the strengths and weaknesses fall along fairly predictable lines. Rodgers is in good voice throughout the album, and Page, though mixed rather murkily, does break out with a couple of briefly inspiring solos. Side One is easily the strongest, especially the last three cuts, the Zep-like "Someone To Love," "Together," and the semi-acoustic "Radioactive."

But beyond these fairly meager treasures lies the balance of a vast, banal body of work. It is telling, and regrettable, that Bad Company is a better reference point for this music than Led Zeppelin, and the hackneyed lyrics and progressions of "Make Or Break" and "Money Can't Buy" completely undermine Paul Rodgers' technically pleasing if ultimately characterless vocals. Almost all the songs have the same sludge-rock medium-slow tempos, so dancing is out of the question. And while the semi-ballads show some hope for melodic development, there's barely enough riffs, attitude or emotion here to get a dinosaur off.

HARD LINE
The Blasters
Warner Brothers

TALES OF THE NEW WEST
Beat Farmers
Rhino Records

By
Anthony
DeCurtis

Sometimes it's tough even for otherwise



thoughtful, open-minded people to remember that California music isn't exclusively defined by singer/songwriter bloat and neo-hardcore tunelessness. In such dark moments, these two albums—each deeply planted in the hearty pluralism of America's musical tradition—will argue convincingly for left coast integrity and connectedness, and for the continued sanctity of the church of the open mind.

The Blasters' *Hard Line* rocks with a muscle, vision and range worthy of the best work this L.A. band has done to date—and the best their best has promised. The LP's hot spots are the seductive rockabilly scorch of the opening cut, "Trouble Bound," the gospel stomp, "Samson & Delilah," the ominous Creedence crunch of "Dark Night" and "Common Man," and

the edgy tenderness of "Little Honey," written by lead guitarist Dave Alvin with X's John Doe and featuring David Hidalgo of Los Lobos on mandolin.

But there's little point in speaking of highs with a record as strong, consistent and spirited as *Hard Line*. The list already cited might just as easily include the quotidian dread of "Just Another Sunday" (another Dave Alvin/John Doe composition) or the hard-nosed rollick 'n' raunch of "Rock and Roll Will Stand."

The Blasters take the hard line on this LP—idealism without illusions, uplift without easy answers, the big beat without cliché, the present without disowning the past. And if my ears hear right, these virtues could well be the characteristic values of the "New West" declared by the blazing

THE SONG IS OVER

WHO'S WHO'S LAST

WHO'S LAST
The Who
MCA
By Wayne King

I come to bury the Who, not to praise them. Such words will undoubtedly puzzle if not shock those who've known me since June 10, 1974, when the Who played the first of four nights at Madison Square Garden, absolutely filling me with the sheer power, terror and delight of rock 'n' roll as only Bruce Springsteen at his best has done since and, in the time-honored tradition of rock and adolescence, *changing my life*. But if we can actually believe the title of this stinking piece of product (should the Who stay dead, the title *Who's Last* would be the only honest thing here), then it's really all over, an amazing journey begun over 20 years ago with the release of two-and-a-half minutes of rauous powerchording and inarticulate articulation of love/lust/spiritual groping known as "I Can't Explain." And all I

can say is, Thank God (or should that be Baba?).

Such sentiment may sound like the tortured mumbling of a Former True Believer, often the worst kind of fan or critic. It will especially seem so to the newer generation of Who fans, who look upon the group and its accomplishments as representing a Golden Age of Rock that peaked at Woodstock (where, after all, the Who stole the show with what amounted to an American premiere of *Tommy*), the likes of which will never be seen again. But to those youthful fans whose instincts are surely worth acknowledging and even admiring, I regretfully say, Eat my shorts. None of you—especially those born after "Can't Explain" 's release, where such fanaticism is understandable given the repressive, regressive AOR rock machine that dominated FM dials during your formative years, but certainly bizarre when applying like devotion to someone during the days of the Who's origins, who'd have to have been into *Glenn Miller* or something like that to indulge in similarly out-of-step listening habits—can ever have to go through the agonizing experience of having the group which, for you, Explains It All, fall apart just when you get into them.

I'm more than conscious of the irony involved in telling those still head-over-heels about Shepherd Bush's favorite not-quite mod band that The Dream Is Over, since the Garden party I attended was, by the band's own admission, probably the worst show they

ever played—and thus a symbol to an earlier generation of Who fans than myself that all hope was lost. But it's one thing to argue that the Who of the '60s far outstripped the quartet, exhausted from completing *Tommy-The Film*, who strode the boards of the Garden in '74, and quite another to try and make a case for a band that no longer exists. Especially when that band would seem to have as much resounding positive impact on today's music scene as, well, Glenn Miller. (Anyone who wants to point out that almost no heavy metal band could exist without having gone through umpteen copies of *Live At Leeds* just about proves my point; all the HM geeks hear is the noise, and not, for instance, the transcendent revving up of "Magic Bus" or the brutal, anarchic and downright gorgeous instrumental interplay gracing the extended "My Generation.")

This last state of affairs is probably the most upsetting. It's not simply that the rock idealism which allowed the Who to find new life in the States in the late '60s (having been passed by in their native England as a washed-up group with no gimmicks left worth noticing) seems almost as mythical, as non-existent, to me these days as it must to the younger fan hearing his first Hendrix record. It's that this ultimately die-hard believer in just such idealism likes to think that the Who themselves could have held up the rock 'n' roll flag they singlehandedly and successfully waved for so long

just a little bit longer by doing the right thing and packing the group in after Moon's death (even Led Zep had the integrity to do that much). And by not milking the fans one last time with a Farewell Tour of dubious motivation, hopeless greed—I mean, having a beer company sponsor a tour the same year the group's most important figure publicly renounces alcohol struck me as a bit much—and rock music the equivalent of Joe Louis' efforts against Rocky Marciano (check out *Who's Last* for evidence of the latter, especially if you're the type who goes to the funerals of strangers).

I guess what really hurts the most is realizing that all the idealism you looked to in a band like the Who was sitting inside yourself all the time anyway. And that at some point, such a realization forces you to disown your heroes until they're not heroes anymore, but people. And only then can you come to grips with the all that they've done, good and bad. It is for that reason that I fervently pray that the Who stays dead and buried, and that Roger Daltrey and John Entwistle and especially Peter Townshend find the peace they never found with the band. That way I can look forward to, in a couple of years or so, rediscovering the virtually unparalleled artistry and integrity that attracted me to them in the first place. And just maybe so I can remember to keep looking for those qualities in myself.

The Who is dead. Long Live Rock. ○

band from further down the coast.

Tales of the New West by San Diego's Beat Farmers hits with the simultaneous power and intelligence that announces a major talent is at hand. Sturdily rooted in a tough and bluesy country ethos that enables them to rework tunes by Bruce Springsteen ("Reason to Believe"), the Velvet Underground ("There She Goes Again"), and the Lovin' Spoonful ("Never Goin' Back") on a debut disk without being in the least overwhelmed, the Beat Farmers take all of American rock 'n' roll as their turf, and confidently carve out a niche for themselves. With exuberant chops like these, this foursome won't stay down on the farm for long.

And who knows? Bands as wide-awake and rocking as these two could make California dreamin' a reality once more.

DIAMOND LIFE

Sade

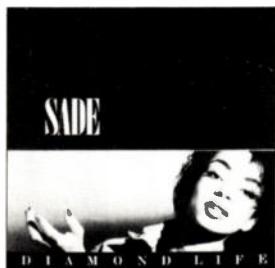
Portrait

ALF

Alison Moyet

Columbia

By
Brian
Chin



Though the fluff of Wham! and the aggravating topical fraudulence of Frankie Goes To Hollywood boded poorly for exported British pop last year, U.S. Anglophiles who may miss the British Invasion of a few years back can take heart in two of the top 1984 U.K. albums, just now being released Stateside. They are both truer representations of the horizons of British production in the mid-'80s.

The entire *Diamond Life* album is a triumph of identity-building for Sade and producer Robin Millar. Millar magnifies the personality of the band with a crystal-clear setting, creating the fantasy of a late-night jazz session starring Anglo-Nigerian singer Sade (pronounced Shar-day) Adu as the featured vocalist and center of attention.

Even without seeing how stunning Adu looks, she commands attention on vinyl. Her husky, breathy tone conveys easy intimacy and elegance on "Smooth Operator" and "Your Love Is King," two of the lyric-centered jazz cuts on which she swings with the band charmingly. But she does sound young, and her lack of vibrato can make her delivery seem indelicate, especially at the crescendos of "Sally" and Timmy Thomas' "Why Can't We Live Together." In both, she sounds weakest when she sings loudest. She's fine, though, as a

soul singer on "Cherry Pie" and "When Am I Gonna Make A Living," and her multi-tracked vocals have a sultry, seductive throb to them.

It remains for subsequent albums to indicate whether Adu's promising technique will develop further, but that's totally irrelevant to the many pleasures of *Diamond Life*. Its fusion of jazz, pop and R&B recalls the heady days of the early '70s, when Isaac Hayes and Aretha were still aiming high, a powerhouse black station like New York's WBLS was still playing album cuts, and a record like Lady Soul's *Young, Gifted And Black* could be a top AOR airplay item. Clearly, *Diamond Life* is not kid's stuff.

In the case of Alison Moyet's *Alf*, there's much more tension between producers and singer. Apparently to overturn the arty image fostered by Yazoo, her duo with keyboardist Vince Clarke, Moyet teamed with Tony Swain and Steve Jolley (Spandau Ballet, Bananarama, Imagination) for her first solo album. *Alf* is all contemporary, commercial soul, and there's the rub in an otherwise eminently enjoyable album. Swain and Jolley's seamless crafting too often works against Moyet's muscular performance as she searches for space to work in the thick overlays of electronic keyboards. On "Money Mile," even her vocal track is muted and inset amid oceanic synthesizer wash. Moyet's most accomplished vocal tracks, "Steal Me Blind," "Invisible" and "All Cried Out," all cry out for a guitar or other lead instrument to give Moyet some play, some counterpoint to the movement of her phrasing amid essentially static keyboard rhythms and textures.

Still, it's impossible to deny the hummability of these songs, the absolute rush of "Love Resurrection," and the high impact of Moyet's committed singing. If *Alf* is flawed, it's from an excess of craft, not a lack or a misdirection of it. Moyet herself may have provided a clue to her own liberation with an assured, self-produced version of Marvin Gaye's "Hitch Hike," found on the B-side of the import "Invisible." Give this woman a band, and by God, she may really start burning.

BEAT HOTEL

The Bongos

RCA

By
John
Leland

Bands like R.E.M. and Let's Active have proven that the menacing beast of art rock can be tamed and put to use within the confines of frisky pop songs—that cryptic

lyrics, portentous textures, and displaced sounds can go down smoothly with punchy beats and high-spirited hooks. And that both strains can benefit from the process. In short, that kid's stuff needn't be for kids.

What the Bongos prove is that the synthesis can also be thorny. *Beat Hotel*, strangely enough their first real album (1982's *Drums Along The Hudson* was a singles compilation, *Nuts And Bolts* an out-of-band project of singers/songwriters/guitarists Richard Barone and James Mastro, and 1983's *Numbers With Wings* an EP), finds the band laboring under the weight of artier ambitions.

Sonically, *Beat Hotel* is a heavy album. The drums thunder, and the mix is laden with electric, acoustic and synthesized guitars. But instead of building layered textures, the songs jerk around. Hooks come and go quickly, somewhat unpredictably, each bearing its own mix and its own strategy. The result is a jumpy collage that compromises both the power of its dynamics and the catchiness of its hooks. There's just too much going on for the songs to bounce around so swiftly. The key to R.E.M.'s and Let's Active's syntheses is that the hooks make the loftier ideas accessible. The Bongos confuse things from the start: the songs themselves are impenetrable. And while everything suffers as a result, the worst victim is Richard Barone's dreamily innocent voice, *Bongo Weapon Number One*, which can be among the most affecting in all of pop music.

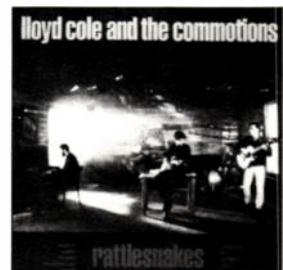
It's time for the Bongos to make some decisions and focus their energies better. *Beat Hotel* is full of bright spots, but they only last for a few moments at a time. Like fellow Hoboken denizen Chris Stamey, the band needs to sacrifice a few of its good ideas in order to develop a center.

RATTLESNAKES

Lloyd Cole and The Commotions

Geffen

By
Christopher
Hill



Smart boy we got here. Maybe too smart. I

mean, the kid's a namedropper, worthy of a place on the staff of Warhol's *Interview*. Everyone from Norman Mailer to Truman Capote to Eva Marie-Saint is here. On the other hand, anybody sharp enough to lift the orchestration from the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's transcendent 1967 hit, "Buy For Me The Rain," and remind me of *Blonde on Blonde*, the Byrds, the Modern Lovers and even Willie Nile has got be



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okay somewhere in my book, even if it's only in my back pages.

Right now, though, you like Lloyd Cole mostly for who he likes, rather than who he is. He certainly knows how things should sound. The song "Perfect Skin," for instance, sounds almost perfect. It's a speedy Dylan word shuffle, with the phrases waterfalls exultantly down a shiny stairway of descending chords. Unfortunately, he's not saying anything very interesting. At a crescendo where Dylan would have shouted, "A-a-aw, how does it feel," with a lifetime of nursed and suckled malice behind it, Cole chooses to let the

moment slip by with the mildly caustic observation, "She had perfect skin." In "Rattlesnakes," the band is sounding so good—rocking along in a neat synthesis of 1966 Buffalo Springfield chug and sleek 1985 production values—that you want to clobber him, when, at the song's dramatic peak, he declares, "Oh, it's so hard to love when . . . love was sure a great disappointment." Well, that's driving the point home alright. What you miss here is an emphatic lyric payoff to nail down the sense of the music—essential in music as lyric-intensive and cerebral as this guy's.

But the playing on this record is as

bright and hardheaded as the personal stance is indecisive. There's the aforementioned grandeur of "Perfect Skin"; the resonant cinerama hook of "Charlotte Street," straight out of a 1950s' movie theme; and the insinuating Hammond organ in "Speedboat." When Cole adds some emotional sock to these sounds—like in "2 c v" when he sings "We were just wasting precious time" and piano and voice rise upwards in a lovely, aching arc—it's rock 'n' roll poetry indeed.

Your aim isn't true yet, Lloyd. But send us one from nearer your heart next time—you could be lethal. ○

NOISE TO GO

By Anthony DeCurtis



The American beat pounds hard and true today, and these records ramble the range from roots to pop, opening themselves to a variety of sources, but maintaining a distinct identity. Knowing and fresh, here's some hope from the heartland—and from the coastal hotbeds, too—and one generous surprise.

Texas rockers Joe "King" Carrasco and the Crowns weigh in with *Border Town* (Big Beat), an LP that highlights the southern half of the Tex-Mex hyphen. The treble-crazy organ and accordian riffs and chunky guitar rhythms keep the sound happy and hopping, but trouble's a-brewin' below the border, amigos. "Who buy the guns that killed the nuns? Who gave the order for all this torture?" queries the King on this disk, and best of all, he answers the question, too. Between the beat, the brains and the bathos ("Tamales, baby, it sounds chili to me") you won't be coping any sies-tas in this border town.

True West, a five-man band from Davis, CA, may be "drifters," as the title of their LP in-

timates, but their spiritual home is the tradition of transcendentally expressive guitar improvisation they inherit from home-state progenitors like the Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service—and which they directly encountered in the sparer, just-as-mystical lines of New York new wave guitar wonders, Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd of Television. The heroes here are fret-masters Richard McGrath and Russ Tolman, though vocalist Gavin Blair, bassist Kevin Staydohar and drummer Steve Packenham more than hold their own in the head-music heights their soaring partners achieve. Ambitious, accomplished and just plain beautiful, *Drifters* (PVC/Jem, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080) should bring this band to rest with a major label soon.

Meanwhile, south of the Mason-Dixon line back east, North Carolina songwriter/guitarist Tommy Keene follows up last year's *Places That Are Gone* with the haunted Chilton-esque pop of *Back Again (Try ...)* (Dolphin, P.O. Box 8744, Durham, NC 27707). This EP features the moody title track, produced by T-Bone Burnett and Don Dixon, and a fine original flip, "Safe in the Light." For good measure, lively live covers of Roxy's "All I Want Is You" and the Stones' "When the Whip Comes Down" get thrown in. The sessions that produced *Back Again* won Keene a contract for an upcoming disk with Geffen—take a listen and find out why.

Next door in Georgia, Don Dixon (co-producer with the famed Mitch Easter of R.E.M.'s two LPs) again commanded the board for Guadal-

canal Diary's debut album, *Walking in the Shadow of the Big Man* (DB Recs, 450 14th St., Atlanta, GA 30318). Ringing guitars brighten the shadowy world of Murray Attaway and Jeff Walls' songs—an anthropological netherland where cultural oppositions meet, clash, joke around and fun-house mirror each other. The hot track here is "Watusi Rodeo"—and it's the subject of an even hotter video filmed and directed by the combo's manager, Warren Chilton.

Tea-party town is home-garage for Dumptruck, whose *D Is for Dumptruck* (Incas, P.O. Box 551, Brookline, MA 02146) takes shimmering shape in a rich dynamic between '60s retro-pop concision and murky post-modern suggestiveness, a la R.E.M. The overall lyricism, drone-guitar glory, melodic bass playing and (occasionally too earnest) literacy evident in these twelve tracks reveal a trove of subtle delights within their generally minimalist context. The more you listen, the more this Dumptruck delivers.

In a Dream, the uplifting six-song set from ex-Individual Jon Klages (Coyote, P.O. Box 112, Uptown Hoboken, NJ), combines rocking social protest ("Les Jeux Sont Faits") with Elvis Costello-styled hypocrite skewering ("Mr. Glad Hand") and poetic yearning ("In a Dream"). The sax-primed search for lost good times in "Back to the Fun" even hints of a potential common ground between Hoboken's hipsters and that other noted Jerseyite, Bruce Springsteen. Catch this act live, too—they won't disappoint.

Outta the Nest, the Vipers' debut LP (Passport, So. Plain-

field, NJ 07080), makes no mystery of where this hardy New York band got its sound—the '60s' psychedelic garage. This disk probably won't bring satori, but it'll never bring you down. And tunes like "Nothing's From Today" and "Tellin' Those Lies" will blow your mind for the prescribed three minutes. Tune in, and I'll bet you turn on.

The Offenders, from Confederate capital Richmond, VA, hone a spare, straight-ahead, guitar-centered sonic charge on their minimally titled *Record* LP (Generic, P.O. Box 7054, Richmond, VA 23221)—a tag we like a lot, incidentally. These four funsters achieve an impressive degree of stylistic range on these twelve cuts, from the frat-pop of "Genuine Kamakaze (sic) Weekend" to the nearly country of "Hearts Break Down" to the sinuous boogie of "Just for Fun."

Finally, just to prove our big country's big heart, we'll plug as distinct a mother country voice as we can find—and right now that means the constricted croak of Billy Bragg. *Brewing Up with Billy Bragg* (CD, 1230 Grant Ave., Ste. 531, San Francisco, CA 94133) chronicles the resolutely working-class songwriter's public and private joys and pains with a plain-spokenness that's both fresh and endearing. Supported almost solely by Bragg's own highly emotive electric guitar, this "puckish satire on contemporary mores" is so direct in its appeal that you'll wonder if you might not be able to do as good a job yourself. If you bother to try, Bragg will have made his truest point—and the point of all the bands in "Noise to Go." ○

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• I don't know about you, but I can stand a good, dumb and funny novelty record every now and then, and wouldn't you know it, three of my current faves for this month just happen to fall into this overly self-conscious category. At the top of the list is the **BEASTIE BOYS'** "Rock Hard" (Def Jam). These little beasties are in fact a white rap act with more than a touch of bitter sarcasm about 'em, and their parody number here is nothing less than a full-throttle swipe at heavy metal rapattacks on the order of Run-D.M.C.'s groundbreaking "Rock Box." The hip thing about the Beasties' variation on hop-metal is that it sounds like they're intentionally out to come off like a clunky bunch of AC/DC imitators trying to throwdown to the beat and making an obnoxious mess of it. The joke being, of course, what could be worse than z-grade metal and z-grade rap combined? The record also makes the point that it is somewhat ludicrous that black artists can get tagged as innovators for imitating AOR conventions, since the whole history of "rock genius" is based on the inverse (whites ripping off yesterday's black blues). Maybe turnabout is fair play.

• My other two joke jams of the month are less exceptional but good for a laugh or two: **THE PHILABUSTERS'** greasy, cheesy "I Like Ronnie's Hair" (Ransom Records) and **ROY FIRESTONE'** "Goodbye To You" (Erika), an impersonation of Howard Cosell doing the AOR *classique*: kissing off sports broadcasting in pursuit of higher office, maybe.

• On the straight-up rap side this month comes **RUN-D.M.C.'**s "King of Rock," needless to say the followup to their aforementioned "Rock Box," and maybe too much of a good thing run dead into the ground. Equally disappointing is "Sign of the Times," the first single from **GRANDMASTER FLASH'**s *They Said It Couldn't Be Done* (Elektra), primarily because it's a lame rehash of "messages" past, both thematically and rhythmically. **KURTIS BLOW'**s "Eight Million Stories" (Mercury) sports accompaniment from Flash and his other exiled Furious Five cronies, but it too re-treads overly familiar territory. And don't get me started on **THE GAP BAND'**s funk-in-retrograde "Beep-A-Freak" (Total Experience), a rather bizarre followup to last year's house-rocking masterpiece, "Party Train," that takes us back to mid-'70s funk at its most asinine and sexist.

• More successful stabs at getting a groove going come from **GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS'** "My Time" (Columbia). While nowhere near as

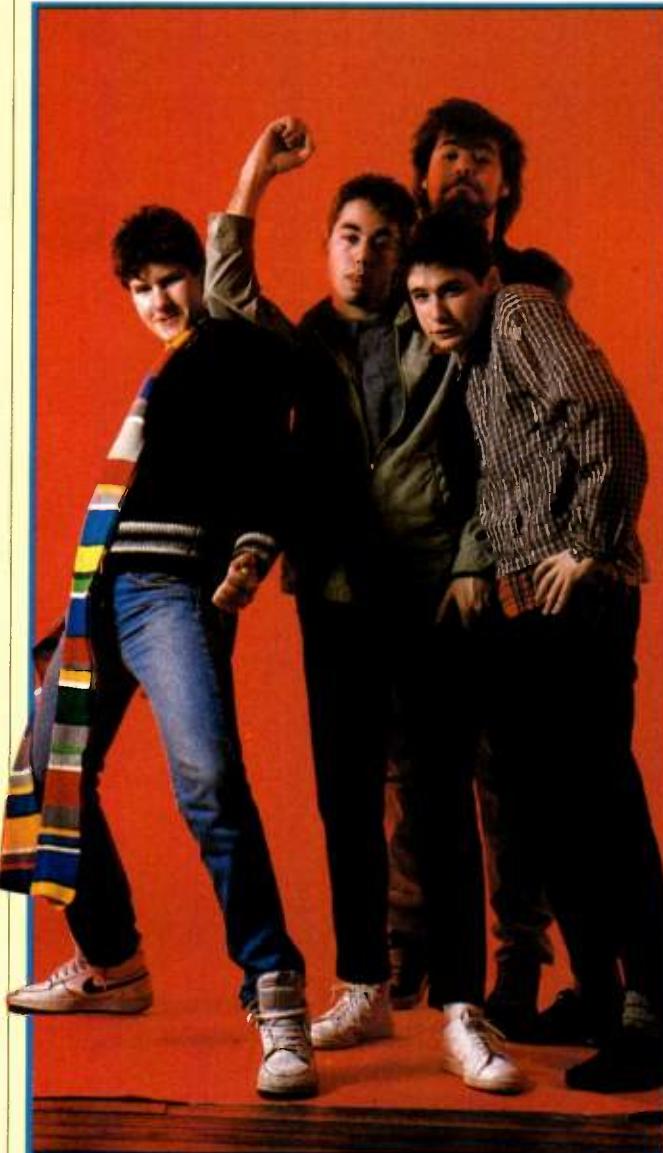
buoyant as "Save The Overtime," this one will nevertheless shake your bones and your booty more than a little bit. Also check out Rick James' tacky girlgroup marionettes, the **MARY JANE GIRLS**, as they run through their coquettish paces on "In My House" (Gordy). Liberated fe-

of us: as far as I can figure it out, "Sense of Purpose" (Columbia) is about making it without compromising your soul or maybe getting over in spite of the odds or maybe even getting over with a vengeance, given all the folk along the way who told you you'd never make it anywhere.

thus far yielded two chartplacing singles, **PATTI LABELLE'**s "New Attitude" (MCA), which is less a good song than another chance to hear Patti, with her awesome range, swoop beyond the stratosphere in the appropriate places. The B-side, "Axel F Theme," is a sprightly post-disco instrumental with charm and good cheer in its synthesizer motifs, kinda like Eddie M at his most bouncy and boyish. If you like this one you'll probably go for **DEODATO'**s "Are You For Real" (MCA), musically somewhat in the same vein but with a throaty female vocalist begging the question in the back of everybody's mind who's ever had a true love.

• Ever since Prince and Michael Jackson got over like fat rats in a cheese factory, I been saying black rock was coming back with a vengeance. Based on the evidence at hand, however, I may have been a bit hasty in my judgment, if not just out and out jumping the gun. Of course the real revolution will come when the majors begin signing up some of the more vicious black rockers on the scene today, brothers like Ronnie Drayton, Vernon Reid, Tomas Doncker and Blackbird McKnight. But like Hendrix said, only time will tell about the serpent in the wishing well. In any event, there are some encouraging signs that the trend may gain some momentum. **JESSE JOHNSON'**s "Be Your Man" (A&M), for one. Formerly the guitarist with the Time, Johnson's first single from his debut LP (*Jesse Johnson's Revue*) sounds like, well, Prince and The Time, wouldn't ya know it, in a funky-but-chic mood, with layers of crooning synthesizers complementing Johnson's pliant vocals. Another affirmative nod in the black rock direction can be heard on **ERAMUS HALL'**s "Checkin You, Checkin Yourself Out" (Capitol). Produced by George Clinton and Bootsy, this jam throws down like some late-'70s Parliament action, meaning it's kinda lightweight and lethargic. What's significant about it, though, is that the mere fact of a major label signing a raw funk band like this means things are looking up (somewhat) for the black rock revival.

• Saving the best for last, though, I have to say that my record of the month is not rock, rap or reggae even, but a ballad. **GLENN JONES'** "Show Me" introduces maybe the most soulful and convincing black male vocalist I've heard since Luther Vandross in a performance where every emotion seems wrung out of intensely- and personally-felt pain and desire. If you like your romance once more and with honest feeling, you got to cop to this. Sayonara. ☺



Beastie Boys: A full-throttle swipe at heavy metal rapattacks

males they ain't, but if you can excuse this Svengali act its dumb bunny overtones, you'll get off on your goodfoot. **THIRD WORLD** is back with something for the social climber in all

You figure it out funkin' to a reggae skank, no less, thank you.

• Besides raking in every film dollar in America, *Beverly Hills Cop* has

BY GREG TATE TRACKS



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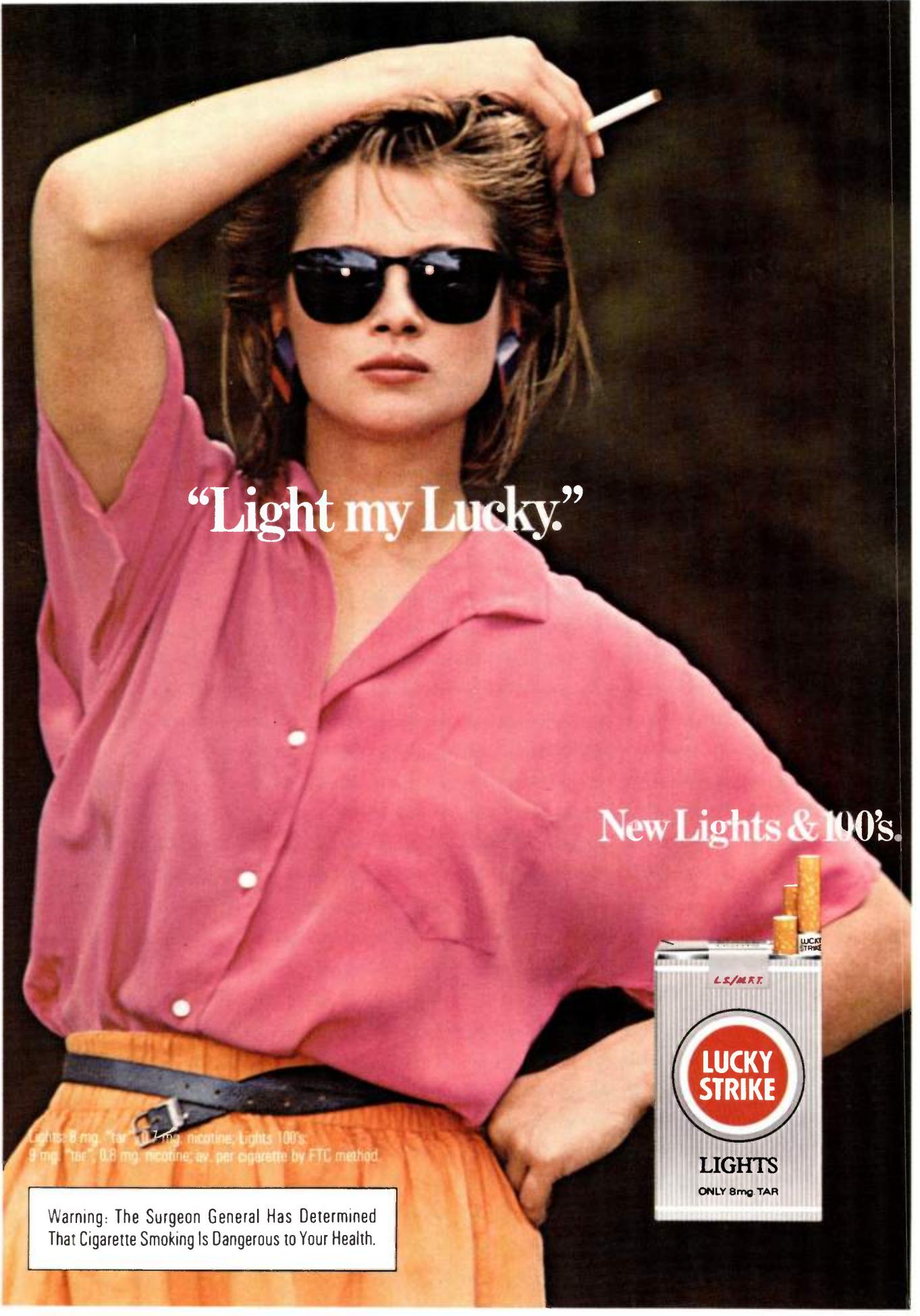
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