

SOUND

REPORTING

The National Public Radio® Guide

To Radio Journalism and Programming

Marcus D. Rosenbaum & John Dinges, Editors

Flawn Williams, Technical Editor

SOUND REPORTING

The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production

SOUND REPORTING is a window into the world of National Public Radio. These pages will guide you through the basics of broadcast journalism, introduce you to the technology and equipment, and initiate you into the art of creating exciting radio.

National Public Radio is a nonprofit producer of award-winning news, information, and cultural programming. Headquartered in Washington,

D.C., NPR[®] has news bureaus around the country and overseas.

NPR programs such as MORNING EDITION[®] and ALL THINGS CONSIDERED[®] are heard by more than 9 million people each week on NPR's almost 450 member stations.

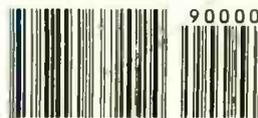


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*The National Public Radio Guide
to
Radio Journalism and Production*

Marcus D. Rosenbaum & John Dinges
Editors

Flawn Williams
Technical Editor

Karen Kearns
Consulting Editor



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Sound Reporting

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Preface

Today, it would be hard to imagine life in the United States without National Public Radio. It is not an exaggeration to say that America's understanding of itself and the world would be significantly diminished. Of course, commercial broadcasting, both television and radio, also provides information and entertainment every day. Some of it is highly laudable. But nowhere else in American broadcasting is there as much high-quality journalism provided for no other reason than the well-being and education of the intelligent listener. Instead of delivering a mass audience of consumers to advertisers, NPR's purpose is to speak to citizens of a democracy, providing information that a free society cannot live without. That is the "big idea" behind NPR. *Sound Reporting: The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production* is the map with the details we use to get there.

When Frank Mankiewicz, then president of NPR, wrote a preface for the first version of this book (called *Telling the Story*) in the early 1980s, he rejoiced in the fact that radio in America was surprisingly alive and flourishing. He gave credit to National Public Radio for this "second age" of radio and modestly predicted that quality radio journalism would continue to attract a new generation of listeners, as well as a hardy breed of radio journalists. He was right on both counts.

In 1981, National Public Radio was made up of 270 noncommercial stations and counted a weekly audience of about 7 million people. Today, there are almost 450 NPR stations around the country, and the weekly audience has grown to more than 13.7 million people. The audience tuning in just to hear NPR news programs has tripled during the past 10 years, from 3 million to more than 9 million people. And not coincidentally, the number of NPR news programs has also increased. A decade ago, there were only ALL THINGS CONSIDERED and MORNING EDITION. Today, with WEEKEND EDITION on Saturday and Sunday mornings, a national weekday call-in program called TALK OF THE NATION, and newscasts nearly 24 hours a day, there are live news programs seven days a week—mornings and evenings.

This growth has required more reporters, editors, and news bureaus. In 1981, NPR had just one foreign bureau—in London. Now there are a dozen reporters abroad, from Moscow to Hong Kong, Southern Africa to South America. Domestically, in addition to major NPR bureaus in New York, Chicago, and Los

Angeles, there are half a dozen other cities with NPR reporters. In many other locations NPR member stations have strong news operations. Altogether, a staff of more than 160 professional journalists write, edit, and produce NPR's distinctive brand of radio journalism.

Finances are always tight in public radio, but this evolution over time has meant that, in general, NPR is now likely to have its own reporters on the scene at important news events. They were present, for example, to witness the fall of the Berlin Wall, the war in the Persian Gulf, and the death of Communism in the Soviet Union. Instead of interviewing reporters from other news organizations—a staple of the early years of NPR—NPR programs now rely on our own reporters to provide stories and documentaries. Indeed, NPR reporters now regularly find themselves interviewed by other networks.

Despite such changes, what remains as true today as when the network first went on the air in May 1971, is the NPR emphasis on high-quality radio journalism. It was Bill Siemering, the first producer of *ALL THINGS CONSIDERED*, who spelled out four guiding principles more than 20 years ago. The NPR staff knows these by heart, and it is worthwhile to repeat them here. From the beginning, Siemering emphasized:

- ***Excellent writing:*** using crisp, clear, memorable language.
- ***Imaginative production:*** exploiting the advantages of sound to the fullest extent possible.
- ***Authentic approach:*** getting out of the studio as much as possible to hear real people speaking, while respectfully celebrating the human experience in all its diversity.
- ***Conversational style:*** making programs accessible through normal voices, comfortably earnest and honest.

Today's audience still hears news and features in which accuracy and in-depth analysis are constants, but also where natural sound ambience brings stories alive in carefully produced reports that combine fine writing with imaginative tape editing. Such sound portraits and fully mixed, or produced, pieces have always been NPR's hallmark, providing reports of a style and content heard nowhere else.

That NPR sets a high standard for quality journalism was confirmed in a survey by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press. In a nationwide poll of business leaders, educators, government officials, and journalists, the Times Mirror Center found that of all media, National Public Radio has had the single most positive influence on American journalism. That survey was published in November 1989, but there is every indication that NPR's stature has only grown since then. Increasingly, NPR is becoming the broadcast of record—the

place where people turn for accurate, understandable information vital to a democratic society.

So, welcome to the world of radio journalism where the mission is to inform the audience at the highest level of understanding—and where not everyone wants to be on television. *Sound Reporting: The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production* contains practical tips, personal insights, and fundamental policies that underpin this unique brand of American broadcasting. Its authors are the best in our business; all are current or former NPR staff members, and their advice comes from their own hard-won experience. In my own case, working as a reporter for NPR was the single most difficult, demanding, and enjoyable job I ever had—and that has never changed. As Robert Krulwich said during my first week on the job in 1978, “The work doesn’t get any easier over time, but it does get better.”

This book is dedicated to that idea. Nothing worthwhile comes easily, but hard work and steady improvement go hand in hand. Few other news organizations do what NPR does. To do our job, we need more skilled and dedicated journalists willing to engage in the fine art of radio journalism. I hope *Sound Reporting* will guide you in that direction.

William E. Buzenberg
Vice President, News and Information
Washington, D.C.
April, 1992

Introduction

by Marcus D. Rosenbaum and John Dinges

How does an upstart radio network on a shoestring budget metamorphose into a respected, mainstream news organization? Simple. It produces programs like ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, MORNING EDITION, WEEKEND EDITION, and TALK OF THE NATION. Everyone who listens to National Public Radio knows it is unique. This book will tell you what makes it so—its sound on the air, its approach to the news, its rapport with its listeners. And it will teach you how NPR does it—how we define journalism, and how we practice it. In the process we hope to encourage you toward a career in radio journalism.

To be sure, radio journalism is a lot of work. It is more difficult than print to produce, and it offers a lot less glamour than television. But it also can make for the best, most compelling journalism there is.

If you decide that radio journalism is for you, there are certain skills you must have to succeed:

- *You must be an excellent journalist.* This is not a medium of pretty faces—or just of pretty voices. Nor is it only a medium of high-tech equipment and fancy production. Radio journalism is first and foremost *journalism*: explaining the world in a way that expands people's knowledge and helps them understand their surroundings. That means you need an inquisitive mind and the ability to ferret out the truth. You need to develop good news judgment—to decide what is important and what is not—and you need to understand what is fair and what is balanced.
- *You must be an excellent writer.* Once you've learned the facts, you need to be able to tell them to others. And radio requires the most precise, most mellifluous writing of any medium.
- *You must be an excellent producer.* Reporting the story and writing the story are only one part of the process. You also need to produce your story—recording it on broadcast-quality equipment, mixing the sound at the appropriate levels,

and cutting the piece together with seamless edits. In many instances, in addition to being an excellent journalist, you also must be a skilled recording engineer.

- *You must be an excellent listener.* This is sometimes called having a “good ear.” Radio is, after all, an aural medium in which you must be able to listen to something and understand it the first time through and to distinguish one sound from another.

This book is designed to help you learn about all of this. It is divided into four parts.

- **Part I, Defining the News**, is a basic introduction to journalism in general and reporting in particular. It opens with a chapter on ethics and then explains story selection, reporting skills, and interviewing techniques.
- **Part II, Telling the Story**, begins with a discussion of the role of the editor, who is involved in every stage of the process. It then offers a guide to writing news for radio and concludes with a chapter on how to use your voice to tell a story.
- **Part III, Features**, offers two approaches to reporting and writing features, as opposed to news stories, and also contains a chapter on how to produce a feature.
- **Part IV, Recording, Tape Editing, and Production**, is full of advice about the technical side of radio journalism. There are chapters on field recording, tape editing, and studio production.

After Part IV is the first edition of *The NPR Stylebook*, which will be published separately for internal NPR and member station use. The complete *Stylebook* consists of the three chapters presented here—on usage, grammar, and pronunciation; editorial and production guidelines; and the law—plus an additional chapter on standards and ethics.

We believe this book will be helpful to anyone interested in the field of radio journalism—students who are just entering the profession, experienced journalists who want to try out a new medium, and practicing radio journalists at NPR and at NPR member stations who want to improve their skills. Indeed, the NPR Training Department will use the book in its workshops and other programs. For more information about NPR Training, write the department at National Public Radio, 2025 M Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

A note on using this book: Certain words used in this book are presented in **boldface**. Definitions of these words are included in the glossary.

Acknowledgements: We want to thank the authors of all the chapters of this book, who took time from their busy schedules to share their knowledge. Special thanks goes to Flawn Williams, whose assistance ensured the technical accuracy of this book; Mary Morgan, whose careful copy editing omitted many needless

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Part I

DEFINING THE NEWS

The Rules of the Game

John Dinges

The news programs produced by National Public Radio have a short history—the first one went on the air in 1971. From the beginning, NPR reporting and production were intended to be carried out within the finest tradition of American journalism, both print and broadcast. That tradition prescribes a free press that aspires first and unconditionally to independence, nonpartisanship, and the pursuit of truth. NPR also embraces the idea that the news media have an explicit mission of public service and play a vital and constructive role in democratic society.

NPR's view of itself, and its aspirations, were described in a mission statement written in 1979:

Through its programming services, NPR will respect differences among people and will celebrate the human experience as being infinitely varied by speaking with many voices and dialects; it will reflect the joy and satisfaction of life as well as its problems and frustrations; it will encourage individual growth and active, constructive participation in society. National Public Radio programs will explore, investigate, analyze, and interpret issues and ideas that help listeners better understand themselves, their government, their institutions, and their natural and social environments. As public trustee of resources and expertise for the production, stimulation, and distribution of noncommercial radio programming, NPR and its members will take advantage of the inherent values of the aural medium—immediacy, actuality, ubiquity, economy, and the ability to capture and stimulate the imagination.

In attempting to live up to these objectives, NPR strives to produce a mix of domestic and international coverage that uses intelligent writing, a variety of voices and opinions, and a relaxed, accessible style. And whatever else might be said about NPR journalism, NPR does it with an amazingly small budget.

Journalism at NPR

Coverage. The old joke in NPR's earlier, even leaner years was that NPR did the news a day late and called it analysis. No longer. With a staff of reporters in all parts of the United States and foreign correspondents stationed around the world, NPR can cover most major stories on location.

Nevertheless, NPR editors constantly try to avoid mistaking staged "events" for real news. The orchestrated White House "press opportunity" may be on all the daybooks, but it should get minimal mention from NPR if it doesn't advance the story. We try to resist the temptation to give such events more coverage than they deserve simply because they provide a fresh sound bite.

Analysis. In addition to providing up-to-the-minute coverage, NPR uses interviews and long-form features to examine the most important questions raised by the news. On the eve of the president's State of the Union message in an election year, for example, reporters in four regions of the country explored people's questions and expectations for the country's leadership. To track the momentous changes in Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED sent a reporter to visit and revisit the same small city to get to know the people there and track how their lives were changing.

NPR analysis also includes reports that examine historical causes and background, personalities and ideologies. It is a conscious attempt to counteract the often-heard charge that Americans forget their own past and ignore that of others, and it is the kind of journalism that imputes a high degree of intelligence, interest, and social awareness to its listeners.

Voices. One of the most important characteristics of NPR journalism is that it lets people speak for themselves. Newsmakers, opinion-makers, experts, average citizens, the weak, and the powerful are the voices of NPR interviews. In conversation with an NPR host, each is given a full opportunity to explain, argue, cajole—even to bluster or whine. The style is direct but friendly. There is time for the interviewer to probe for contradictions, for a guest to outline an elegant philosophical insight, and for the listener to sense a moment of genuine emotion. Some interviews run more than 10 minutes on the air. Most are four or five minutes

long. But that is still many times the length of the typical television interview.* And in newspapers the interview format is becoming a rarity.

The extensive air time devoted to interviews is both an opportunity and a responsibility. It provides a forum for a vastly broader spectrum of voices than is available in any other medium. There is time and interest for the traditional and the avant garde, the mainstream and the marginal, the comforting center and the disquieting voices on the edge. But in stepping beyond the ordinary, NPR must make sure that the choice of interview subjects is carefully balanced and fair.

Style. There is clearly an NPR style, recognizable to listeners and highly valued by most of them. It distinguishes NPR from commercial radio and from television news. Adjectives sometimes used to describe this style include unpretentious, self-effacing, irreverent, iconoclastic, compassionate, culturally diverse, relaxed, outgoing. On the same program, NPR News can alternate between earnest discourse and April Fool's jokes.

Editing. Everything that goes on the air is subject to NPR's rigorous editorial process. In most cases, at least two editors must hear and approve a piece before it is broadcast—the reporter's supervising desk editor and the show editor or producer. The desk editor shares the reporter's responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and fairness of a report, and therefore must pay attention to all the details of a script as well as its overall structure. The show editor or producer provides a more detached ear—and a final check before broadcast. Show interviews are conducted in the presence of an editor or producer who shares with the host the responsibility of avoiding omissions or misrepresentations. These editing procedures apply as well to the highly produced, long-form features that are a staple of NPR news programs. These features offer an opportunity for experimentation in writing and production techniques. They follow looser structural forms and often employ less formal language. They are vehicles with which producers and editors may strive for originality, to push the limits of radio. No matter how original, however, features are held to the same strict standards of journalism as other NPR stories—standards that guarantee what goes on the air is fair, balanced, thoroughly researched, and includes all elements the listener needs to form an independent judgment about the story. In other words, advocacy reporting, point-of-view writing, and the use of production devices or "hot tape" to slant a piece toward a position not warranted by the facts is no more permissible in feature production than in news writing. (Other elements of the craft of editing for radio are discussed in Chapter 5, "The Editor.")

*Even in interviews used as "actuality" within a reporter's piece, the NPR rule is to allow enough time for the expression of a concise but fully coherent thought. That usually means that an actuality on NPR runs longer than the eight or nine seconds typical of television or commercial radio.

Ethics and Standards

Journalism in the United States has evolved over the course of many generations. A press once unabashedly at the service of particular business and political interests has been replaced by media avowing strict standards of independence. Still, each organization's claim that it cannot be bought is a claim that must be defended constantly and openly in day-to-day practice. Guidelines vary from organization to organization; knowledge of what is appropriate may vary even more widely from one journalist to another, particularly when an individual has had little formal training in a newsroom environment.

There are many books that discuss general ethical principles and their application. The aspects included here are some of the questions that arise most often at NPR.

Conflict of Interest

For individual reporters, the rules are straightforward: They receive nothing of value from those about whom they report or who are sources of information for their reporting. Likewise, NPR does not pay for information or for access to sources of information. There are common-sense exceptions: Sharing a meal and picking up a check, or accepting a dinner invitation at a source's home, are often essential elements of the reporting environment; the amounts involved are not significant enough to allow even the impression of a bribe or influence peddling. Free transportation may be acceptable if it involves only a ride in an automobile, but inappropriate if the ride is in a Lear jet. Likewise, although a reporter should not accept free lodging from someone promoting the story being covered, few would question the ethics of a reporter who stayed overnight in a priest's home in a remote village where human rights violations had occurred, even though the priest was passionately interested in the story's getting out.

Free tickets to a movie or play, when such tickets generally are made available to the press, are acceptable if intended for use in on-air coverage and as long as the decision to cover or not to cover such an event is not made on the basis of the availability of free tickets. Likewise, NPR accepts promotional copies of books whose authors may be interviewed. Unsolicited books and tickets are the property of NPR—the news organization to which they were sent—not the staff members who happen to receive them, and it is up to news managers to determine their disposal.

Free-lance reporters and producers are required to tell their NPR assignment editor if they have received funding or payments of any kind in relation to their assignment; it is also the responsibility of assignment editors to ask about outside funding, especially when the story involves travel or other expenses not paid by NPR.

Institutional funding. It is a truism that all money comes with interests. In the commercial media, the acceptance of advertising, even when editorial decision-making is rigorously shielded from contact with those who sell ads, is enough to raise charges that news content is muted to avoid offending advertisers. And there are enough examples of commercial advertisers threatening to pull lucrative ads in protest over treatment of their product to make this more than a theoretical concern.

Although NPR does not accept advertising, conflict-of-interest questions arise because NPR solicits and accepts money earmarked or "restricted" for covering specific subjects. Because of NPR's noncommercial status, such grants are often a vital supplementary source of revenue without which NPR's news coverage would be significantly diminished. NPR President Douglas Bennet has issued the following guidelines governing the acceptance of such funds:

Policy for Accepting Project Grants

To avoid conflict of interest or the appearance thereof, when National Public Radio's News Division accepts project grants through the Development Office,* the policies below should be followed:

- I. Associations, corporations, foundations, and other interest groups, including governments both domestic and foreign, can contribute to the News Fund* for general support.
- II. Restricted grants must not be so narrow in concept as to coincide with the donor's area of economic or advocacy interest—e.g., an automobile corporation supporting coverage of the car industry.
- III. When deciding whether to accept restricted grants from domestic or foreign government sources, NPR will take account not only of the considerations in II, but also of whether the structure of the donor agency provides adequate safeguards against interference or the appearance thereof.
- IV. In a case that seems unclear, a final determination will be made by the vice presidents of News and Development. No contacts with funders shall be made by anyone in the News Division other than news managers and then only in conjunction with a member of the Development Office.

Needless to say, these guidelines require interpretation using good common sense on a case-by-case basis. Their purpose is to ensure that NPR makes editorial

*NPR's Development Office raises funds from foundations and corporations to support NPR operations. Funds for general support of NPR News go into the News Fund.

decisions based solely on sound news judgment, and that it does not leave the perception that those decisions are affected by the wishes of its funders. This principle is key: The idea for coverage must originate from NPR, not from the funder. Funders may not be directly involved in story assignments or any other part of the editorial process.

Two examples illustrate the guidelines. The Ford Foundation has a distinguished record in funding projects that promote the study of foreign affairs. This broad interest, because it does not extend to lobbying or other forms of advocacy of specific policies, is not a barrier to NPR's receiving money from the foundation for the coverage of Eastern Europe. Applying the same standards, clearly a conflict would exist—and be perceived as such—if General Motors funded NPR's coverage of the auto industry or international trade issues. In that case, even if GM had nothing to do with the choice of stories, or their content, there would still be the inevitable impression that NPR was tailoring its stories on those subjects to please the automaker.

Between these two obvious cases are many others that are less clear and must be decided by applying the guidelines, good common sense, and the "Caesar's wife" maxim—that NPR as a journalistic institution must not only be virtuous, but appear to be virtuous.

Funding is a difficult subject in public radio, no less so at the station level than at the network level. These practical rules can help guide day-to-day decision-making:

- News staff should have as little contact with funders as possible. Under no circumstances should news staff contact funders directly to propose grants for projects in which they would personally benefit through assignments or travel. Reporters and editors working on grant-funded projects should not speculate about whether what they are doing will please or displease the funder, nor should they attempt to limit or expand coverage according to what they believe the grant requires.
- The separation of funding from editorial content should be evident on the air. News personnel should not read funding credits.
- A news organization should pay its own way when gathering news. NPR and many other news organizations acknowledge exceptions to this rule when the story is of paramount interest and access is difficult without special assistance. The most obvious example is accepting military transportation to a battle zone. In such cases, special care must be taken in writing and editing to ensure that the special treatment does not slant the stories in favor of the organization providing assistance.

Ethical Decision-Making

Ethics, by definition, involves the collective wisdom about what is right and wrong within the context of a group with shared values. Do not try to make decisions in a vacuum, or simply by reading a chapter on journalistic ethics. Make every effort to avoid confronting ethical decisions on deadline. Anticipate them at the assignment level and during the reporting process, and give yourself and your colleagues reasonable time to talk the problem over and air all opinions.

Usually, the process will have several stages: an initial gut reaction about what is right or wrong; a second stage exploring rules or guidelines that might apply; and a final period of reason and reflection in which a decision is made. The gut reaction often is right, particularly among veteran journalists, but it is risky to trust that first reaction until it has been measured against the conclusions of the second and, if necessary, the third stages.

This chapter contains few rules and no dogmas. It is not a substitute for good judgment and common sense; the best guidance comes not in statements of policy but in a strong sense of mission as journalist, citizen, and human being.

Politics and causes. People do not leave behind their opinions, experiences, specialized knowledge, and pet peeves when they become journalists. They are not and never have been automatons devoid of emotion and critical intellect. Many come into the profession and leave it with their sense of outrage intact, with a deep and probing concern for what is wrong with society, and with a living compassion for their fellow human beings. These qualities are considered assets for NPR reporters, editors, and producers. Callousness and cynicism are recognized liabilities.

Some of the thorniest decisions we face concern whether and to what degree a journalist may be personally involved in advocacy organizations and politics. Most news organizations restrict news staff from personal involvement in activity, especially political activity, that reasonably could be perceived as compromising their journalistic independence in reporting on such activity. Clearly this does not apply to the exercise of a reporter's right and duty as a citizen to vote. It may apply to electoral campaign activity, speech writing, lobbying, and public endorsement of candidates. Other public and leadership roles in advocacy activities also may be a conflict.

In general, however, there are only a few activities that would be out of bounds for all news staff, say, running for Congress. In almost all cases, our judgment depends on several factors: First of all, does the reporter, producer or editor make editorial decisions about stories affecting the interest of the cause he wants to promote. Does he have a major role in those decisions, i.e. is his role more than peripheral? If the answer is yes, there may be a conflict, and the journalist should discuss the situation with colleagues and editors. It is a good idea

to ask oneself whether those on the other side in a controversy involving the cause would consider a reporter fair if his advocacy role were known.

As journalists, we are free to be active in our professional organizations, religions, communities, schools, philanthropic and service organizations. The presumption is on the side of freedom of action. We should be concerned only if a reasonable and substantive argument is likely to be made that the activity calls our impartiality into question.

These ethical considerations, of course, do not apply to relatives of news staff. But in cases in which a direct family member (spouse, companion, parent, sibling) is involved in activities about which the news staffer may make editorial decisions, common-sense ethics requires that the staffer disclose the relative's activities to an editorial supervisor.

Speeches. Journalists are often asked to make speeches in the area of their expertise, and few news organizations discourage this activity. A potential conflict of interest can arise, however, when substantial payments are involved. A reporter who covers an interest organization or trade association would have difficulty justifying the acceptance of payments from those groups, whatever the reason.

Fairness and Objectivity

NPR is committed to the strictest principles of fairness in reporting. Some people have a problem with the term "objectivity." I have always understood it in the very simple sense of **fact-based reporting**. Everything that goes on the air, from the most straightforward news voicer to the most elaborate news analysis, is anchored in the pursuit and description of facts—those verifiable bits of information that are the raw material of accurate communication.

The reporter's first duty is to get the facts—all the facts that are relevant—to be honest with the listener about the facts that could not be found or verified, and to put the information in intelligible context. Fairness is a natural byproduct of fact-based reporting.

Reporting the facts from all relevant points of view is the first tenet of fairness. "I just reported what I was told" is the dodge of a lazy reporter. It is the reporter's most basic obligation to seek out the other side, the third side and the fourth side, and not to rely on the one-dimensional, possibly biased version provided by those who may have promoted the story.

To report and write a story without attempting to contact those who are involved and are likely to disagree is unprofessional and unethical conduct. Likewise, honesty in reporting dictates that a reporter not mislead listeners by failing to disclose relevant information, such as the possible political motives and partisan interests of a person accusing another of wrongdoing.

In describing people and their points of view, be sure to use terms that the person you are describing would consider accurate. Avoid loaded terms that betray your personal bias—terms such as “claim” when “said” would do; “refused” to comment when “declined” is accurate; “admit” when “said” or “acknowledge” would suffice. Similarly, take care with descriptions. Describing a female political leader’s hair, giving an Italian politician’s nickname, and commenting on physical traits are not necessarily inappropriate, but may inadvertently feed into possible stereotypes. Was it fair, for example, for news reports to dwell on General Manuel Noriega’s facial scars and to repeat the term “pineapple face”?

Fairness is particularly important in stories involving people who are not public figures. People asked to appear on the air or involved by no design of their own in a prominent story are entitled to protection of their privacy and dignity in every way possible. They should never be exposed to ridicule or derogatory description of any kind. Nor should anyone else with access to the air be allowed to make derogatory or belittling remarks about people not otherwise in the public eye.

Keeping an open mind is indispensable to fair reporting and must be practiced at every stage of the editorial process, from assignment to final edit. It is good mental discipline—and a hallmark of sound journalism—to assume during editorial discussions that you do not know the personal views of your colleagues. This is especially important when discussing coverage of controversial issues like abortion.

Sources, Credit, and Plagiarism

It is the reporter’s responsibility to attribute all facts to a reliable source and to identify that source as accurately and completely as possible. The only exception is background information so widely known that it constitutes general knowledge. The more important and controversial the information, the stronger the sourcing must be. In general, a reporter must have at least two sources, both of whom have independent ways of knowing the information. For facts of great importance, such as the winner of an election, the beginning of the ground offensive against Iraq in the Gulf War, an indictment of a public figure, the two-source rule is absolute unless there has been an official, public announcement. The rule is not based on arithmetic and should not be applied mechanically. In some cases even two sources are not enough if the sources’ access to the information is at all questionable. If the source of information is providing an eyewitness account, a single source, properly described, may be enough.

A source who declines to be identified greatly diminishes the value of the information. Reporters should make every effort to persuade sources to speak on the record. When you promise a source confidentiality, be sure the source understands that an editor may decide not to allow the anonymous information on the

air. The source also should understand that confidentiality is the joint responsibility of the reporter and the editor; an editor may require the reporter to tell him the name of the source if it is necessary to judge the source's credibility.

It is not uncommon for journalists to be manipulated by unnamed sources, particularly government officials who use anonymity to avoid accountability for unsubstantiated political rhetoric. Whenever possible, a reporter should identify the political interest the source may have in revealing the information. When an opposing political camp leaks anonymous information, that information must be independently verified. If verification depends solely on anonymous sources, the political interest of those sources must be revealed in the report.

Plagiarism is the misappropriation of another writer's work, either writing or reporting, and passing it off as one's own work. The *Washington Post's* former executive editor, Ben Bradlee, called it "one of journalism's unforgivable sins."

Clearly, you should not copy someone else's work. But even when you write something based on information contained in wire service reports, for instance, avoid lifting phrases and verbatim descriptions. This is not a legal issue; you simply should not convey a wire service's descriptions and analytical points as if they were your own, because they are not. Write it in your own words. And when information is based on the exclusive report of another news organization, always give full credit. Likewise, identify the source of tape obtained from another organization's broadcast.

Correcting Errors

Mistakes are an unavoidable part of daily journalism. When they happen, and are more than trivial, the errors should be acknowledged and corrected on the air (and in the transcript of the program). Often the letters segment of a program provides an appropriate format for corrections. But serious errors should not wait for the arrival of a complaining letter to be corrected.

Ego and Personal Style

The broadcast media, even more than the print media, have fomented an era of "ego journalism." Highly paid, often glamorous reporters and anchors are foisted on viewers in much the same way advertisers sell products. Although some are indeed top-notch professionals, they are marketed not for their journalistic skills but for their ability to drive up ratings.

At the other extreme, mostly in the past, were the virtually anonymous reporters who turned out stories like so many cookies, with little or no personal identification with the product. Virtue, said the wise man, usually stands in the middle. A reporter's earned reputation and public image are invaluable assets

and should be cultivated. Not only does a good reputation help get your calls returned, it instills pride and responsibility.

In radio, a reporter's voice and identity are part of the story's presentation. That is as far as it should go. A reporter should not get directly involved in the story by frequently using the first person in writing or using tape that calls attention to the reporter rather than the story's subject. Personal experience, when editorially relevant to the story, should be described in as straightforward a manner as possible, using the first person.

A reporter is one of a news organization's most public representatives. His public demeanor should be in keeping with that role. Reporters do not resort to subterfuges, such as assuming false identities, in order to get a story. Nor do they tape record another person without that person's express permission.

Going after the Tough Stories

High standards and strict ethics are not self-censorship. They more often dictate what should be *added* to a story than what should be left out. Ethical violations frequently involve faintheartedness in confronting a source and the omission of hard-edged material out of fear of offending a valued news contact.

The best journalism is **green-light journalism**—a professional newsroom atmosphere imbued with solid traditions of fairness, sensitivity, and the confident exercise of news judgment. In such a newsroom, reporters and editors are not looking over their shoulders to avoid criticism that their stories have offended some special interest group or failed to measure up to someone's idea of political correctness. Rather, they are going for the jugular, seeking out the toughest, not the easiest, stories to cover.

It was that attitude that led NPR into some of its biggest stories—for example, its ground-breaking coverage of the AIDS epidemic, its controversial reports on the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas sexual harassment charges, and its investigation of the *Challenger* disaster.

Some of us were brought up with the social rule that in polite company you don't bring up religion and politics. Being polite has never been the top priority for the best journalists. They find and write about human problems that have the fewest pat answers, stories without good guys and bad guys, rife with moral ambiguity and social polarization—stories about abortion, religious experience, race, guns—yes, even sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

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Getting Started

Christopher Koch

Every journalist, whether broadcast or print, must answer one crucial question: What is news? There are probably as many definitions of news as there are journalists, but all definitions seem to have common threads. News generally involves an event that is observed either by the journalist or another individual, and this observation is then reported to an audience. It is helpful to remember that news isn't news until someone decides that it is: News is the report of an event, not the event itself.

You can waste time trying to do news stories on vague ideas. Broadcast journalists, in particular, get into trouble when they try to do pieces about poverty, poor education, crime in the streets, corruption, inflation, freedom of speech, and other abstractions. These may be good topics for columnists and professors, but abstractions alone are not news stories. If journalists are interested in these things and want to do stories about them, they will look for events.

A march by poor people or the formation of a welfare rights organization are legitimate stories about poverty. A patrol of a big city park by a local vigilante group or the police routine at precinct headquarters are ways of doing news stories about crime in the streets. Unemployment lines, pandemonium on Wall Street, or the release of the latest economic indicators may be legitimate ways to cover inflation. Look for events.

In general, the more powerful the event, the easier it will be to do a story, because strong stories tell themselves. If you are working on a story about prison conditions and a riot breaks out, your only problems are getting to the riot, recording the right sounds, asking the right questions of the right people, and getting out in one piece. But if the prison is quiet, you will have to look for the

events that evoke prison life—perhaps the slow movement of a new prisoner through a tough entry procedure, or the sounds of the night lock-up, or the Sunday sermon at the chapel, or the conversations of guards and prisoners about past events.

There are different kinds of events and correspondingly different kinds of news stories about them. These stories are given different names, and, even though the names are by no means precise (popular jargon varies from place to place), it is helpful to keep some distinctions in mind before you go to work.

Hard news generally refers to the breaking, daily stories that make up the front page of the newspapers, the bulk of the TV news shows, and the leading articles in the newsweeklies. Hard news stories are about those political, military, economic, and social events that appear to have a shaping influence on our lives.

The basic hard news story will convey the sense of such events—the taking of American hostages, the concession speech of an incumbent president, the agony of people's uncertainty after a volcanic eruption.

On extended news programs—those that go beyond the capsule summary of the day's main events—these major stories will be accompanied by **sidebars**, reports that spin off from the main event and help explain it.

Types of Sidebars

If the major story is new or complicated, then it may be important to explain the events that led up to it. In these **backgrounders**, reporters are interested in events that took place in the past. In radio, they will need archival tape and interviews with people who can describe earlier events.

Interviews with newsmakers also provide a useful type of sidebar. So do **news analyses** drawn from several participants or knowledgeable observers of the events.

The **sound portrait** is another typical sidebar. Here a reporter gathers sound from a series of small events and weaves it with interviews, creating a sound impression of persons, places, or things.

"Vox pop"—from the Latin *vox populi* (voice of the people)—provides comments of ordinary people, collected at random, usually in public places. Sometimes the vox pop is strung together in a montage of different voices (one following the other) with no narration or linking comments by the reporter. Other times the reporter is heard asking questions.

Other types of sidebars may include stories on related topics and commentaries.

Know the Show

You can learn several different things by listening carefully to the news programs you hope to work for—and to other news programs as well. For one thing, you can begin to develop critical standards that you can apply to your own work.

Listen carefully and consistently with a notebook in hand, asking yourself questions like these: Which reporters appear most frequently? Does anything distinguish their work from the work of reporters who file less frequently? What pieces compel your attention and why?

Record the show and select several particularly interesting stories for closer study. How long are they? What is the ratio between the narration (the things that reporters say) and **actualities** (the voices and sounds that they record)? How many different interviews have been used? What other kinds of sounds have been incorporated into the report?

Transcribe the narration and analyze stories that seem particularly well-written. How long are the sentences? Are they full of vivid images, packed with information, or are they sparse links between actualities? No one way is necessarily any better than any other. Nor should you try to imitate anyone. You are only figuring out what works and why. Everyone has a different style, and you shouldn't be afraid to develop your own. Good journalism can happen even when rules are broken.

Each news program has its own style, and that is another thing to listen for. Some programs give straight interviews to reporters, and others insist that hosts do all one-on-one interviews. Some news shows are designed for a national audience, and others are regional or local. If it's a national show, your stories will have to be interesting to a national audience. This does not necessarily mean you should look for national personalities who are visiting your local area. Usually, the news staff of a national news organization will have access to these public figures and will prefer to do their own interviews.

Look, instead, for the local stories that address issues shared by people nationwide. And remember: If you listen carefully to the news programs, you'll get a much better idea about what might interest their editors and producers, the range of styles they will accept, the gaps in their coverage you could fill, and other things that will help you file effectively and frequently.

Selecting a Story

An infinite number of things happen every day, but not many of them are news. What makes something news? Primarily, enough interest in the event. In

order to make people interested, the story needs to have an **angle**. This is not an opinion or a point of view, but the approach to a story that gets the audience to pay attention. It's part of your job as a reporter to find the angle and work it clearly into the story. Without it, you'll waste time pursuing ideas that never quite work out.

What follows are some truisms that should be chanted regularly or otherwise impressed on the mind of every beginning journalist.

- ***Never do a story because people ought to know about it for their own good or the good of the republic.*** Journalists are not professional moralists, and they have no special insight into what people ought to know. Leave moralizing to preachers and politicians.
- ***People care about things that affect them.*** A famine in North Africa is less interesting to most Americans than an earthquake in California, even though the famine may kill thousands more people.
- ***Bad news, like gossip, travels more quickly and farther than good news.*** Let's face it, you may hear about Uncle Harry's divorce faster than you hear about his marriage. Grandma calls when Junior breaks his leg, but you may never hear about Junior winning a school trophy. The completion of a new wing at a local prison may get brief mention on local programs, but a riot at the same prison could be national news.
- ***Unusual events are more interesting to people than ordinary ones.*** Thirty-five successful landings at a local airport are not newsworthy (unless the airport is under siege or the controllers are on strike), but the crash of the 36th plane is news.

These are general principles that will help you recognize good stories. They may also help you structure a questionable assignment by reminding you to look for an angle that will get people to listen to the story.

Where do the story ideas themselves come from?

- ***Read the wires.*** The international, national, and local services of the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), and Reuters carry the major stories on their **wire services**. If you have access to the wires, check them regularly. (If you don't, you should look into joining one of the many computer databases that will give you access.) When you get an assignment, pull the wire copy. It will give you a head start on your research. But don't trust the wire services (or anyone else, for that matter) to be accurate or thorough. Do your own checking.
- ***Keep in touch with the local papers.*** Read them carefully, and don't ignore the small stories on page 10. Many news stories work their way to the front page

over a period of time. Pay particular attention to specialty newspapers and magazines. They will announce events and cover stories that could be interesting to a national audience before the major news organizations discover them.

- ***Cultivate your sources.*** The best ideas frequently come from sources. These are people who, for one reason or another, know about events before you do. Sources may work inside organizations and recognize good stories when they see them. They may be other reporters who can't use a particular good idea. They are frequently people on whom you have reported in the past, people who respect your journalism and trust you.
- ***Keep your story ideas and your sources in a notebook.*** Don't expect them all to be useful to you when you first hear about them. In many cases local stories can wait for a national news peg—a major news story to which you can tie a minor one. For example, if a national news program decided to do a piece on the worker-ownership of failing companies, it could give you a peg for a local story on a specific experiment in your community. If Congress were to withdraw funding from the food stamp program, you could do a story on the effect of that legislation in your area if you talked to the local grocers, government officials, welfare rights leaders, and poor people who might be affected.
- ***Keep your eyes and ears open for events that nobody else has noticed.*** Be curious about the world around you. When you see something unusual, find out about it. Often the best stories are the ones that have *not* been in the newspaper yet.

Understand the Assignment

Sometimes you will be assigned a story. Sometimes you will think up the idea yourself and get it accepted by the program for which you are filing. Occasionally, you will be working entirely on your own. In any case, someone is going to have to act as your editor and give you an outside, independent critique of your story idea. If this editing can be done by the people for whom you are filing, so much the better. They can help you tailor your story to their needs. If not, find a friend who can function as your editor.

Although editors are sometimes the final arbiters of what gets on the air, when they are working with reporters they should not act as judge, censor, or professor deciding on a grade. Editors do not usually know more about the story than reporters. In their editing capacity, they are essentially surrogates for the audience. They listen to the reporter's story idea with the ears of an intelligent listener, raising all the questions that any listener might raise. What do we need

to know to understand this story? What story elements are redundant or obvious or too specialized? When does the story need more information to make sense?

If, in addition to being an intelligent, inquisitive listener, the editor knows something about the possibilities of broadcasting, he can be helpful in making the piece more "effective radio," but that isn't essential. It is essential to have some outsider listen to your work before it goes on the air.

Before you begin to work, you and your editor should have a common understanding of the idea, the reason the story is of interest, the length to file, the number of different components to include, the amount of research expected, and the conditions and amount of your payment, if any. Decide on a deadline for filing and make sure that the time available is realistic for your story.

These early decisions should not lock you into any final conclusions. The story may change as a result of your research and field interviews. But your original conception will serve as a road map, and your subsequent conversations with your editor will help you discuss the story from common premises.

The key here is outside input. You need to talk your pieces through with other people, getting as much advice and input as you can. Of course, the advice sometimes will be conflicting, and in the end you will have to rely on your own news instincts. The quality of your judgment in these instances will measure your skill as a journalist.

Getting Started

If the story is dramatic enough, getting started is easy. If a ghetto is burning, or a plane has crashed, or prisoners are rioting, grab your tape recorder and head for the action. But sooner or later you are probably going to have to do your homework and go back to the place most stories begin: in research.

You can start your research with a press release, a wire story, a newspaper clipping, or a tip from a source, but you will soon be on the phone. Because news is timely, there is rarely an extensive written record to look at. Because you are working under a deadline, there is seldom time to spend hours in the library or the county clerk's office.

Talk to the people involved in the story. What do they have to gain or lose? The losers are usually more valuable than the winners, by the way. Having already lost, they tend to be more reckless and more honest.

As people present their cases to you, they will buttress their arguments with information. Check the key points with the primary source of the fact if you can. Remember, people frequently disagree on the facts. If it's a quote, the primary source is the person who said it. If it's a statistic, the primary source is the person who compiled it.

When you are talking to people in sensitive positions or about sensitive issues, make sure that you distinguish between information given on **the record** and **off the record**. If it's on the record, you can attribute the information to your source, and you will probably want to record it on tape. If it's off the record, you must protect the confidentiality of your source—despite pressure from some prosecutors and courts to reveal the name—or your credibility as a journalist will be ruined.

The amount of research you do will depend on the story and the time available. You could prepare a story on a prison riot from notes gathered during an afternoon at the scene, or you could research the causes of the riot for six months.

When you have finished your research, you should know the key people, the major issues and conflicts, and the upcoming events. You should be in a position to rework your original idea, to structure your story, and to make some preliminary decisions about what to record and what to look for in the field.

Before you set out, have a second conversation with your editor. Decide how you want to tell the story. You can simply write and read a script, or you can produce a mini-documentary with all the sounds and devices of a full-scale documentary—interviews, recordings of events, and different kinds of ambience (the sound environment of the story). You need to know what kind of story you plan to do so you can collect the right kind of tape in the field.

Keep in mind that you are telling a story. It should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. At the *beginning* the audience must be involved: Something dramatic is going to happen; some goal important to us all is going to be contested; the situation of people we care about is going to change. In the *middle* we may meet other characters and listen to pros and cons about the issues. We may get additional information and be exposed to other situations that bear on the main event. The *end* should tie the various threads together and take the listener to a stopping place. The expectations set out in the beginning should be fulfilled.

Objectivity and Fairness

Objectivity is always hotly debated in journalism. Today there is a school of journalists who argue that objectivity is impossible to achieve, so reporters might as well abandon the attempt and put all their own values and biases directly into their reporting where the audience can see them clearly and take them into account.

Some compelling journalism has been done this way, such as Hunter Thompson's account of his time with the Hell's Angels and Michael Herr's extraordinary look at the Vietnam War, *Dispatches*. But a lot of drivel has been written in the name of "new journalism," too. Unless the reporter's perceptions are

particularly revealing, unless his experiences are as powerful as the story that's being told, the reporter's biases just get in the way of the main event—and they are usually boring to boot.

Of course, objectivity and fairness *are* impossible goals in an absolute sense. Any story is infinitely complex and any telling of it is a massive simplification. The reporter talks to some people but not others, uses some remarks and not others, records certain sounds and ignores others.

At every point in the reporting process, the journalist is making decisions about what to look for, what to ask, where to go, and what words to use to describe the things he has heard and seen. All these decisions are made on the basis of each reporter's unique instincts, biases, and preconceptions. Different journalists tell the same story differently.

However, even though there may be no such thing as complete objectivity, you can strive for it by keeping your own opinions out of the story and making sure you are absolutely fair.

- ***Be self-critical.*** Bend over backward to hear all sides and make a particular point of trying to understand the arguments of all sides.
- ***Be skeptical.*** Pay the most attention to people closest to the event—their biases will be most obvious, their recollections more vivid, and their explanations less filtered through value systems. Distrust secondary sources.
- ***Be specific.*** Stay with things that are actually happening and avoid speculation about motives, causes, feelings, meanings, and all such imponderables. Trust what you observe. Distrust the theories that people use to explain things.

If the people who appear in your piece feel comfortable with the way you have portrayed them—including those on opposite sides of some controversial issue—then you probably have been objective and fair. Honest journalism inevitably will anger some people. Be prepared for that and make sure your facts support your portrayal.

Final Planning

Do one more thing before you go out to record. Sit down with your notebook and plan your field recordings and your production schedule. If you haven't already talked to the people you want to interview, do so before you arrive ready to record. Keep the conversation general. Find out what is on their minds. Be a good listener. You will find out more if you are sympathetic and genuinely want to get their story. Save your key questions for the taping. Most

people say it best the first time. After that, they are more cautious and rehearsed. Make appointments and keep them.

If your story includes events, you will want to plan your interviews around them. For example, if you want to talk to people about why they are going to do something, it's best to interview them before they do it. If you want a vivid reaction to an event, talk to them as the event is going on or immediately afterward. Obviously, if you want to know what effect the event has had on them, you will have to wait until it's over.

Make some preliminary decisions about how you will record the event. What elements are important to your story? Where do you have to be, and when should you be there? What other sounds do you need to enrich your report? These may be background sounds that help place the story in a concrete location: the sounds of a receptionist answering a busy phone, the sounds of a car leaving a paved highway and turning onto a gravel road, the din of a factory in full production, or the hollow emptiness of a factory shut down during a strike.

Music can add realism and convey feeling, particularly if it's part of the location or the event, such as the Muzak of a hospital waiting room conveying the long and restless waiting in a public place, or a radio or television clip that relates to the story, or the songs of demonstrators. According to FCC regulations, you must get written permission to rebroadcast another (American) TV or radio station. (See Part III of the NPR Stylebook, "A Legal Guide for the Radio Journalist," for details.)

Make a list of the information you need to collect to complete the story and ask people in the field for it. The more you get down as you go along, the less likely you are to get stuck later trying to collect it over the phone.

Make some preliminary judgments about your **recording ratio**—the relationship between the raw tape you bring back and the length of the final story. New reporters tend to record too much. If you keep some ratio in mind—say 20 to one (that's one hour's tape for a three-minute piece) you will remind yourself to stay focused on the story and avoid an editing nightmare when you start putting the piece together later.

Finally, remember that when you are in the field, the best laid plans may become irrelevant. Problems can occur that you didn't foresee, or the story may go in a direction that you couldn't anticipate. Despite the pre-interview, the person to whom you are talking may have a whole new story to tell. Go with the story in the field even when it takes off in a different direction. Your advance planning may help you get back on course. At the very least, it will provide a yardstick against which you can measure your new story idea. But don't let yourself be locked into a weaker idea when a stronger one emerges.

Journalism is fascinating because the world is unpredictable and irreconcilable. Every situation has a craps-game quality that eludes the moralists and ideologues. People are far more complicated, and good and bad are distributed far

more randomly, than the true believers and social planners want to accept. The moral and social ambiguity of real events is apparent to all good journalists. True believers frequently call that recognition cynicism, but it can just as easily be called compassion. If you infuse your reporting with a search for the truth and a respect for different points of view, you won't go far wrong.

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The Reporter

Ted Clark

There are two ways to approach journalism. You can simply report the story, or you can advance it. You can simply report the information at hand, or you can push beyond it. You can wait for developments to move the story forward, or you can move it forward yourself by reaching for new information and new insights.

The purpose of real journalism is to add to the body of information. That's why people listen. If your story adds nothing to what your listeners already know, it is simply a recounting of events—well written perhaps, professionally delivered, but just a recounting.

It's especially important for broadcast journalists to bear this in mind. It's tempting to think you have performed a service by taking a print story and rendering it for broadcast. Getting politicians to say the same thing on tape that they said in the morning paper may seem like a useful endeavor, but it's a recipe for mediocre journalism. Newspapers generally have more reporters than radio stations, and it's tempting to let newspapers do the real reporting while you simply transform it into radio. But don't yield to that temptation. *Advance the story.*

Try to find questions that haven't been answered. Eavesdrop on conversations in the bus, on the street. Find out what people are asking each other about the issue. Chances are they're asking some questions that haven't yet occurred to the reporters. Find answers.

Some reporters keep a "call list" of community leaders, interest groups, or just thoughtful people—people to be telephoned on a regular basis. Their insights help to advance stories, and often they can provide tips about stories that are not yet in the news.

Reporters always call "the other side" in a story, but not just because it helps assure a fair story. It also helps advance the story, because the other side will have researched the issue in a different way to find new information in its own defense.

Think the story "forward." Imagine it's a game of chess and you have to think three or four moves ahead. For example, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 raised vital questions about the future. Would Iraq continue its advance and take over Saudi Arabia's oil fields? What would that mean for U.S. energy supplies, and those of U.S. allies? Would the United States go to war to protect those energy supplies? Would the United States be able to act unilaterally? Would Arab states in the region ask for U.S. help? Did the United States have the military strength to repel the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait? How would the Iraqi invasion affect the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? These were questions asked within hours of the Iraqi invasion by reporters who tried to think the story forward.

You should think the story "outward." What were the secondary effects of the Iraqi invasion on the rest of the Arab world? On the Muslim world? On oil prices? On Israel—already worried about Iraqi military strength? On Jordan—economically intertwined with Iraq? On the United Nations? On U.S.-Soviet relations?

Think the story "backward." What were the origins of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border dispute? How had Iraq behaved in earlier confrontations? Why had the Arab world become so mistrustful of Europe and the United States? Why did the world fail to see the Iraqi invasion coming?

Another way to advance the story is to profile the key players. What kind of men are Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, the Emir of Kuwait? In profiling the newsmakers, you provide insights into the news. The point is to make the listener think new thoughts.

With that in mind, there are times you should try to abandon the popular assumptions about a story. For example, consider the Panama Canal story. The popular assumption in the United States was that this country had won friends in Latin America in the late 1970s by agreeing to return the waterway. But the story is very different if you begin with the assumption, common in Central and South America, that the United States had no right to the canal in the first place. Pursue that assumption, and you'll gather very different information. You'll advance the story. Then try out a very different assumption about the Panama Canal—that the United States should never have returned the canal because it is vital to our national security. If you had done that in 1978, you might have met many of the people who later were swept into power with the Reagan Administration.

By trying out different assumptions, you'll be exploring the meaning of the story. Almost any story can be made more interesting this way. So push beyond the obvious. Transcend boring assignments; advance the story.

Some of the Perils

As a journalist, you deal in an elusive commodity: truth. Truth changes with every new piece of information. *And perhaps the greatest peril of reporting is thinking that you know the truth about the story before you begin*—that you know the truth and all you have to do is to gather the evidence. Reporters with that attitude are often blind to facts before their very eyes. They talk when they should be listening. They miss opportunities to advance the story.

In 1948, with all the experts predicting that Thomas Dewey would easily defeat President Harry Truman, one newspaper boldly went to press announcing that Dewey had won before all the votes had been tallied. Harry Truman, of course, served another four years, much to the newspaper's chagrin.

While journalists shouldn't be too sure about the truth, they can, and should, be sure about their values. Journalists must never lose the capacity to be angered, when the facts justify their anger.

One thing that is sure to raise journalists' ire is when they face another peril: lies. Not just outright lies, but incorrect or misleading information from the best-intentioned people—inadvertent distortions, lies of omission, lies of dissimulation. There are many kinds.

There are artful denials. Political candidates sometimes allow their campaign workers to launch smear campaigns against opponents. The candidates say they did not approve the smear campaigns—and can even disavow them. Candidates who do this are being truthful only in the narrowest sense of the word.

There are diversionary techniques. After the 1989 massacre of pro-democracy students in Tiananmen Square, an American reporter asked a Chinese official about the incident. The official's response: "I understand you Americans also shot your students at Kent State University."

There are attempts to belittle the truth. Watergate was a "third-rate burglary," according to White House Press Secretary Ron Ziegler in 1972. There is disinformation, stories planted in the press by governments eager to discredit their enemies. There are flat-out lies when the stakes are high enough. And there are innocent untruths, told not out of malice, but out of simple ignorance. If reporters pass along any of these lies unchallenged in their stories, they become accomplices to some degree. Their reports circulate the lies more widely.

There are other hazards. You will be flattered by people you are covering. Press secretaries will tell you they admire your work. Watch out. It will be a little harder to be critical the next time. Richard Dudman, who wrote for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, once told this story: "[Former Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger asked my opinion on what he should say, in some great matter, and for a second I felt the headiness of being an important guy. But the truth is, Kissinger couldn't have cared less what I thought—it was a form of flattery. Reporters have to remember they are not sought out in Washington for their charm."

You will hear things out of context. A White House reporter had just heard President Ronald Reagan talk about the decline of Communism. Later, the reporter overheard a couple of the president's advisers chatting. One said, "The president told me, 'It's the end of one era, but the beginning of another.'" The reporter thought Mr. Reagan had been elaborating on his earlier remarks about Communism and said so in the report he filed. But it later turned out the president had been talking to his aides about the sale of a major league baseball team in Chicago.

You will encounter the trappings of power, and you will be awed. Huge front offices, receptionists with frosty voices, countless reminders that you are about to talk to a very busy person. You might want to rush through your questions, and you will not think to follow up on them. Or perhaps you will find that the official is charming, witty—like the "good cop" after the "bad cop." And your skepticism might fail. Just remember that powerful people are well schooled in these techniques.

And finally, you will occasionally cover people or causes you deeply admire. The perils here are obvious. It helps to bear in mind that honest and even harsh criticism is constructive and should be welcomed by people or causes that are honest.

General Assignment Reporting

The appeal of general assignment reporting is its variety. There are a million stories to choose from. While the diet of a general assignment reporter is varied, there are a few staples.

One of these is the press conference. It's not the place to go for scoops, but a press conference is often where news is announced. Press conferences are most useful to reporters who prepare before they go, who read the clip file, who "call the other side," who have questions ready.

At a press conference, you'll be sharing the newsmaker with many other reporters, and it can be difficult to get your question in. You should learn to seize the pauses. The first pause comes after the initial introduction and presentation: a brief instant of awkwardness when no one knows who should talk first. Ask your question then, before the others do. Not only have you managed to get your first question in, you've made an impression on the person holding the news conference. You have become more visible, and it's easier to ask the next question.

Once the question and answer session (the "Q and A") is underway, if you're in a particularly competitive crowd of reporters, you may have to get the jump on them by asking your question before there's a pause, just as the speaker is concluding a sentence or a thought. This technique borders on the obnoxious, and if you don't want to risk seeming obnoxious you can often go up at the end of a press conference and pose a few questions quietly.

But while it's important to get your questions in, it's also very important to let the collective intelligence of the press conference work. Each reporter brings a different perspective and different information to the press conference, and the overall questioning can be much more provocative as a result. If a successful line of questioning is going on, join in if you like, but try not to interrupt it.

The press conference is an occasional event, but press offices are forever. Every general assignment reporter encounters them in corporations, in government, and in sports. Often they arrange daily briefings. The people who work in these offices are called "public information officers" or "press officers." Remember: *Press offices are there to make their bosses look as good as possible.*

Providing useful information is not always the primary goal of press offices. But if you want on-the-record reactions, if you want someone to describe the mayor's position on rodenticides, if you want to get an interview with just the right official on a non-controversial subject, if you want information on schedules and itineraries—press offices can help.

Be prepared to go around them at times. A press officer may not want reporters to talk to controversial figures, and they may warn the officials not to talk if it's known you're trying to contact them. Similarly, if you're onto a story that's damaging to the institution in question, the press office will probably steer you away from the people who know what you need to know.

The Defense Department press office did not help Seymour Hersh break the Mylai Massacre story. He walked quietly into Lt. Calley's barracks one day, before anyone understood the enormity of what had happened at Mylai, and had a long talk with Calley about that day in March when U.S. troops opened fire on Vietnamese civilians.

The White House press office did not help Woodward and Bernstein with the Watergate story.

You may not always be able to talk to officials about controversial stories in their offices. Call them at home if necessary.

If you want to tape telephone interviews, remember that the people on the other end of the line have no way of knowing that they're being recorded unless you tell them. Make it clear that you want to tape and then make it clear when you've started the tape. In some cases the law requires it; in all cases fairness does. A young reporter once lost his job because the congressman he interviewed on the phone didn't know his comments were being recorded. The reporter claimed he had abided by the letter, if not the spirit, of the rules. He began the interview by saying: "Hello, this is Jack taping." The congressman thought the "taping" was the reporter's last name.

As with press conferences, it's good to have a list of questions ready when you interview someone. The list can be liberating, allowing you to explore tangents without worrying that you'll forget to ask an important question.

Before the interview, many reporters think about when to ask the controversial questions. If they're likely to anger the interviewee, reporters will hold these questions until after they have the non-controversial answers they need. If reporters already have those answers and are looking for an unrehearsed reaction, they will often ask the provocative questions right away.

When you talk to people in their official capacity—as representatives of the local steel mill, for example, or the school board—you should operate on the assumption that you have every right to ask them questions. Their actions affect the public, and the public has the right to know about them.

For private individuals, or the private lives of public individuals, the ethical considerations are different, and so is the law. (See Part III of the NPR Stylebook, "A Legal Guide for Radio Journalists.") You don't automatically have the right to know what they are thinking or doing. If you want their stories, you may have to use gentle persuasion.

On a Beat

The time may come when general assignment reporting loses its allure. The excitement of covering a different story every day may give way to frustration. You can rarely do that follow-up story. You can't develop any real expertise.

That's the time to try a beat. It could be city hall, it could be crime, it could be Japan, it could be the arts. But whatever your beat, the first thing to do is read all about it; read everything you can get your hands on, even articles that are marginally related. Become voracious for information about your beat.

Next, you must develop sources. Official spokespersons are not usually considered sources. Sources are people who do policy work within the organization you're covering. Many beat reporters try to meet mid-level sources to begin with: not the mayor, but the mayor's assistants; not the company president, but the vice-president in charge of operations. The big names make pronouncements, but the mid-level sources often develop policy and can help a reporter to understand it. In addition, they can describe their bosses' motives, fears, regrets, and follow-up moves.

Some reporters meet sources by simply inviting them to lunch. They say, "I'm covering city hall and believe that you can help me understand what goes on here. Your insights would make my reporting more fair. Let's have lunch."

Some reporters simply walk into the office of a potential source and introduce themselves. And some reporters make a point of going up to the dais after a press conference and introducing themselves to the newsmaker there. In every case, the idea is to get acquainted, get familiar with each other, so the reporter doesn't have to call out of the blue on the day of the really big story.

Sources usually have pet products or projects, and reporters will sometimes admit to having filed stories on these primarily to cultivate the sources. Another

way to get acquainted is to do a series of portraits of people behind the scenes. Try not to pass up opportunities to meet sources.

Sources won't always want to be named. The confidentiality of sources must be protected when they ask for it and the reporter agrees to accept the information on that condition.

What motivates sources? Often it's a sincere desire to inform the public. Sometimes sources want to get air time for their point of view when a policy decision is pending. Sometimes they want to sabotage an opponent. And sometimes the object is to lull a reporter into complacency, to lure a reporter into the family, or worse—to sandbag a reporter by giving false information at a critical moment. As you cultivate your sources, be aware of their motives and motivations.

Pack Journalism

If you are covering a beat, you're likely to be with the same group of reporters for long periods of time, and it's easy to start writing for them rather than for your real audience. The "pack" can end up deciding what is or isn't the news. *The New Republic* once compared the Washington press corps to the pigeons in Lafayette Park, which tend to take off all at once, race madly around in a flock, and then settle together in another corner of the park, all without apparent reason.

But there are also benefits of being part of the group. Reporters on a beat often "pool" resources. ("You stake out the back door, I'll stake out the front, and we'll share whatever we get.") They can share insights and even sources on rare occasions.

To be or not to be part of that group is a dilemma with no easy answer. The late I.F. Stone, for many years one of the best-informed reporters in Washington, opted out of the "family." He once said, "You pay something for everything you got. The establishment reporters, without a doubt, know a lot of things I don't know. But a lot of what they know isn't true. And a lot of what they know that is true, they can't print."

Putting the Story Together

Some reporters have daily deadlines; some have weekly deadlines; many have monthly deadlines. You can't avoid them. Sooner or later you have to take all that information and extract the news. You have to write it down clearly and engagingly.

Paradoxically, the more you know about a story, the easier it is to write, once you have a basic outline in mind. If you know more than you need, you'll write with greater confidence. You'll know which word is exactly right. You won't have to be equivocal. Your syntax will not be tortured by your doubt.

Reporters who learn more than they file find the information valuable later. When you're gathering information, put out lots of calls. Really work the phone. Reporters can't afford to be idle while they're waiting for people to return their calls. There's almost always someone in another agency, in another office, or in a nearby town who has some useful information. Nearby colleges are often overlooked as sources of valuable information. Political science, history, and fine arts departments are full of experts and activists.

If there is just one person who knows what you need to know, be persistent. Don't be shy about calling back before that person has returned your call. Explain that you're on a tight deadline.

Wire services can provide useful information, but they should be used judiciously. They are especially useful close to deadline when they can bring news of late-breaking developments across town. But the wires should be a supplement, not a substitute for your own reporting. The more you use wire service information, the more your report will sound like dozens of others. And, of course, it's important to confirm information taken from the wires before you put it into your story.

Contact your editor. (You should already have talked to the editor at the beginning of the assignment. See Chapter 5, "The Editor.") Most reporters find that once they've managed to explain the story to the editor, it's easier to explain it on the radio.

As you talk to your editor, decide on your lead. A lead is the opening shot in a news story. In newspapers, the lead is one or two sentences long, contains the most important information, and conveys a sense of where the story is going. In radio, there's another factor. You must think about ways to divide the lead with the person anchoring your newscast. If you don't give the anchor something provocative or newsworthy to say about your story, the anchor will seem vacuous. Your report will not be an integral part of the news program, but only attached by the most tenuous of phrases: "And now for the latest on the economy we turn to . . ." And no one will listen.

Many reporters find it useful to write the intros to their own stories, in consultation with the program editor. That way, there's the smoothest possible flow from anchor to reporter.

If it's a hard news story, you might give the anchor the latest development to report, or perhaps the most important development. Your report should then begin in the most vivid way possible. It's a kind of partnership: the anchor gets listeners interested, and then you take them to the scene of the action.

So while a newspaper story could begin this way: "Today the Senate Ethics Committee recommended unanimously to expel Senator X, amid growing evidence that the full Senate will concur," a radio program would have the anchor saying something like: "The vote was unanimous. The Senate Ethics Committee has recommended expelling Senator X. If the full Senate goes along, and that

seems more and more likely, it will be the first time since the Civil War that Senators have thrown out one of their own. More from"

And your radio report could then begin: "It was painful for Senator X and his colleagues. The committee chairman announced the decision in a subdued voice, as the committee members looked on silently."

When you've settled on a lead, you have the heart of the story, and you should take a moment to sketch a rough outline. It will set your mind free. You can concentrate on writing, and not worry about forgetting an important element of the story.

As you write, remember that editors are there to be careful, reporters are there to be clear. Write as simply and forcefully as possible. Your editor should keep you from painting with too broad a brush.

Write conversationally. Many broadcast reporters read their stories out loud as they write them. They say each sentence, each paragraph. It's the best way to guarantee a comfortable, conversational style.

In radio, the active voice almost always sounds better than the passive voice. People usually talk in the active voice. They don't say, "*It was announced by the mayor today*" They say, "*Today the mayor said*" But sometimes the passive voice is unavoidable. Sometimes you won't know who did something, and you'll have to write, "*A young man was killed in his apartment last night*" And sometimes reporters use the passive voice to help the pacing of their stories. (See Chapter 6, "Writing News for Radio," for more detailed information on writing.)

When the story is completely written, go back to your editor for the final edit.

Delivery

Before they go on the air, most reporters read their scripts as many times as possible. Then, when they're on the air, or when they're recording, the words sound spontaneous and the script is almost secondary. Delivery is a very personal matter, but there are some general guidelines, which add up to: Be natural. Pause when you need to, breathe normally, swallow if you have to. Let your voice respond to what you're reading just as it would in normal conversation.

A frequent problem for beginning reporters is speaking too quickly. Reading tends to make people talk faster, and you may have to make a deliberate effort to read more slowly than you think you should. Also, there's the danger of sounding "singsong." When you read out loud, your voice often rises and falls arbitrarily, and you may find your voice placing the same emphasis at the end of every sentence. You may find your pitch rising in the middle of every sentence, then falling at the end. In both cases, it's not natural—it's your voice doing arbitrary things. If you are really familiar with what you're reading, you can concentrate on the substance of it, and you'll find that your voice falls into more natural patterns. Sometimes, reporters will underline words that should be emphasized until reading

comes to them naturally. Sometimes, they write cues to themselves (or use symbols) in the margins of their scripts to denote "pause here," or "read deliberately here."

Use the voice you were born with, not the one you think a broadcaster should have. The latter rarely fits.

To enliven your delivery, if that's a problem, you might try smiling while you read. It's something you can get away with in radio because no one can see you.

The point is to feel what you are reading. If you do that, your voice will assume the proper tone. It's almost like acting. In fact, hosting a newsmagazine or delivering a news report is a kind of performance. But in radio journalism, acting skills are used for the effective presentation of fact, not fantasy. (See Chapter 7, "Delivery: Using Your Voice," for more details.)

Being an Editor

The division of responsibility between reporters and editors can be seen this way: A reporter should know everything about something, and an editor should know something about everything.

A good editor has the same sensibilities as a good reporter, and the ethics are pretty much the same. But an editor's concerns are "macro." An editor provides the context into which reporters place their pieces. So, as you move from the role of reporter to that of editor and back to reporter again, you'll have to adjust your world view.

As editors make assignments, they try to create a good "mix" of stories: not just hard news; not just features. This mix helps to assure a lively and well-paced news program. And, of course, the assignment process is a consultative one.

Reporters and editors will have arguments, but their conflicts should be constructive. A better story often will emerge from that inevitable tension. Good editors respect reporters who are prepared to fight to keep an important point of information or style in their reports but will listen and make changes where necessary, too. It's a sign of intellectual rigor. And good reporters welcome tough editors who pay close attention. For when editors care about stories, they really care about the reporters who write those stories, and about the listeners—most important of all.

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Interviewing

Robert Siegel

An interview for radio easily can be mistaken for a spontaneous conversation. After some editing, it often resembles one. Good interviews, though, are studied, calculated events that—when they succeed—convey the impression of conversation. On ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I have found that my favorite interview situations are barely conversations by any common definition.

In fact, I prefer pre-taped interviews with a guest in a remote studio, connected by satellite or fiber optic line, to those where the guest is in the studio with me. The sound quality is about the same, and, during the guest's answers, I can write and consult notes, talk with my editor by intercom, and address the microphone without struggling to maintain eye-contact.

Some of my favorite face-to-face interviews are with foreign-language speakers and interpreters providing consecutive translation. They permit me to do the interview and think about it at the same time: While my question is being translated, and during the untranslated answers, I have time to plan my strategy for the next question.

In both these situations, the illusion of conversation is absent in the taping but may, as a result, be more evident in the finished product.

For example, during 1990 and 1991 I conducted several telephone interviews with Vytautas Landsbergis, the president of Lithuania. The audience heard it this way: I would ask a question in English. Then Landsbergis would begin to answer in Lithuanian. His voice would then fade under an interpreter, speaking in English. At the end of the answer, I would return with a second question in English.

At times these interviews, during the days when Moscow was trying to prevent Lithuanian independence, were dramatic exchanges that led ALL THINGS

CONSIDERED. They usually ran about four minutes on the air. In the taping, however, they were typically 15 minutes of consecutive translation. Landsbergis was in Vilnius, the interpreter was on a conference call from Arlington, Va., I was in the studio, and my editor was in the control room. We could virtually edit the interview in progress.

Situations like this happened often:

Interpreter (completing Landsbergis' previous answer): We are the rightful government of a rightful independent nation.

Siegel: Mr. Landsbergis, the United States does not recognize your republic's independence. The State Department says you don't control the territory of Lithuania. Moscow has ordered Soviet troops into the streets of Vilnius. What hope do you have of achieving real independence at this rate?

Landsbergis might speak for, say, 20 seconds. The interpretation would tell us it was rhetoric repeating what he had said earlier. The question was misfiring. The previous answer was definitely good, but not this one. The editor might suggest in my earphone, "Ask if the U.S. has indicated it might change its standard for recognition." I would then strategize. With my previous question destined for the trash, we would lose the facts of U.S. non-recognition and Moscow's dispatch of troops to Vilnius. So I would pose the next question this way:

Siegel (recalling end of earlier question): President Landsbergis, you speak of a rightfully independent nation, but Moscow has ordered Soviet troops into the streets of your capital, the U.S. says you don't control the territory of your nation, and, without that control, it won't recognize you. Do have any indication the United States might change its standard for recognition?

In this hypothetical (but entirely plausible) exchange, we made a mental "cut" while the interview was under way and adjusted the questioning accordingly. Don't try this in a social conversation.

Obviously, my guidance for interviews reflects my own experiences, preferences, and the job I perform at NPR. Interviews vary in purpose, place and quality. But there is one thing they all have in common. They all require preparation: editorial, technical and psychological.

Before You Start, Know What You're After

Bone up on the story. Before the interview, check recent newspaper and wire service reports; if your radio station did a story on the same subject, get the tape and listen to it. If there are aspects to the story you don't understand (what is a debenture? a carotid endarterectomy? a Yazidi?), consult a reference book or

call an authority on the subject. (Local college faculties are full of people in possession of esoteric knowledge that has not aroused the genuine curiosity of a student in years. They would be flattered by a call from the press.)

Find out all that you can about the person you're about to interview. What is his organization? Or her most important achievement? What do his detractors think of him? What facts might he know that aren't widely known to the public? What would her harshest critics want to ask her?

Above all, decide what it is you want to get out of the interview. What is the question you want to make sure gets answered on tape? Then, make a list of the things you want to ask about in a reporter's notebook, think of some questions you intend to ask, and rehearse a couple of them to yourself—out loud, if possible.

I find scripted questions or an entire menu of questions can get in the way of hearing the answers and following up on them. I like to write down subjects in my notebook, rather than the questions themselves, because the questions can become too narrowly crafted.

That once led to the most stunning, nearly catastrophic event of my reporting career. I was in London, based at NPR's office at the BBC on the day Pope John Paul II was shot. I had heard that a suspect, not Italian, had been apprehended. I had taken a year of college Italian to satisfy the requirements of a French literature major and so devised the following plan: I told a BBC secretary that the instant the suspect was identified she should telephone the Rome embassy of the suspect's country of origin. I recalled barely enough Italian to rehearse the line: "Is there someone there who speaks English? If not, French?" The plan worked. It turned out that the suspect, Mehmet Ali Agca, was a Turk, and I was almost instantly questioning a Turkish diplomat in French.

Siegel (in nearly grammatical French): Do you know any details about this man, Mehmet Ali Agca—where he lived in Italy, what he did there, what kind of visa the Italians gave him?

Diplomat: I don't have any details.

Siegel (nearly grammatical and disheartened that this wasn't going to yield any news): Do you know when he entered the country? How long his visa was for?

Diplomat: No. I don't know any of that.

Siegel (dejected): No details.

Diplomat: None.

With no other questions on my list, I resolved to end the interview, until the diplomat piped up . . .

Diplomat: . . . except that he is the most famous convicted murderer in Turkey, who escaped from prison after assassinating the editor of one of our major newspapers.

Going after a Quotation

When searching for actuality, you are trying to elicit statements that run 15–25 seconds. Your questions are probably going to end up on the floor, although one may survive as linkage between two brief answers. In general, don't worry about illogic or repetition in your questions if they're not going on the air anyway. They are the stimuli; you want responses only.

Ask the same question over and over. If you are interviewing people who escaped a burning building, the only important questions may be: "What did you do then?" "What did you see then?" "What happened next?" Don't worry about asking these same questions repeatedly. Even if you utter the words: "What happened then?" 50 times in four different interviews, they may only appear on the air once, if ever. The audience will not suffer from your lack of originality in questioning.

Also: Don't be afraid to ask for cooperation in getting a short, pointed answer. People nowadays know that interviews are edited for brevity. After someone gives you a two-minute answer describing what being inside a burning house felt like, you might ask: "If you had to explain to someone in just one sentence what it was like in there, what would you say?" Your question might not work, but it's always worth a try.

The Interview To Air as an Interview

Here your questions count for as much as the answers. They provide the thread of logic that runs through the interview. I assume that the first question I ask will be replaced by an introduction that I, or a tape editor, will write after the taping. But the other questions may go on the air. One of the most frustrating problems in an interview is making a factual error in a question. That may require editing out the question and, consequently, the answer it provoked.

Make sure the assertions in your questions are accurate. Master the vocabulary of the story so that when you are called upon to utter a strange word (debenture, carotid endarterectomy, Yazidi), you pronounce it with confidence. Speak grammatically and at a pace resembling the one you use when reading a story. If the interview is being prerecorded (as are nearly all interviews on ALL THINGS CONSIDERED), take advantage of the tape editing that will follow. For example, if the guest is slow to answer, don't feel obliged to stretch out your questions to fill dead air until he leaps in with a response. Let him pause. You can always cut the pause out later.

Some Questions for All Occasions

'The High Hard One'

Never forget to ask *the* one question that you want to hear the person answer on tape. Scott Simon, of NPR's WEEKEND EDITION, says this is the kind of question he *starts* his interviews with. Let's say the real purpose of your interview is to find out how Mayor Jones defends herself against the perception that she is no less corrupt than any of her predecessors. Ask her bluntly: "Are you any less corrupt than your predecessors?"

You can then follow with more detailed questions ("Your water commissioner is awaiting trial. The building commissioner is in jail. How do you explain that?")

By asking *the* underlying question of the interview, you avoid a common pitfall: spending 20 minutes with someone and never getting him on tape responding to what may be the lead of your story.

But you should be aware of the potential downsides to asking "the high, hard one." Many people you interview may be willing to open up to you and respond to your toughest questions. But others may respond differently: If you completely antagonize them, the interview may effectively end right at the beginning. At worst you might be asked to leave. And if the interview proceeds frostily, you may get no useful answers in response to softer, but nevertheless important and useful, questions. To guard against that possibility, many interviewers try to get the soft questions out of the way first and save the potential door-slamers for later.

You may also find that the rapport you establish in the less confrontational questions will pay dividends when you pose the tough ones. You are not out to make a friend in an interview, but you are a potentially sympathetic, or unsympathetic ear to that person. If you are perceived as sympathetic, "the high, hard one" may receive a more candid response.

Be careful, though. If the interview is for actuality in a story you're reporting, your posturing will end up on the floor, lost to posterity. If the interview is to be broadcast intact as an interview, it will be heard. While I believe in reporters asking bad questions so long as they get good answers, the questions hosts ask are partially posed on behalf of the audience. Fawning on others' behalf, without their consent, is presumptuous.

Getting Someone Else To Ask the Tough Ones

If it sticks in the craw to ask Mayor Jones "the high, hard one," you can always invent straw men.

For example, there is the *highly placed straw man*: "I've heard some of your critics say you're no less corrupt than your predecessors. What do you say to them?"

There is the *common man as straw man*: "A couple of days ago, I told a cab driver I would be interviewing you. And here's what he said: 'I used to think Lolita Jones was different from all those other guys, but now I can't see the difference. She's as crooked as the rest.' What do you have to say that man?" I suppose the best cut of tape you could get in response to that would be this response from the mayor: "I want to say to him, 'When is your hack license up for renewal?' " This might not be equally good news for any cab drivers you have recently patronized, but, then, whoever said the comments of cab drivers are off the record?

There is even the *most odious straw man of all*: "My news director told me I had to ask you this one . . . "

But best of all, you can try the *straw man as another person you have interviewed for this story*: "Here's what Sam Green wrote in his column in Tuesday's Bugle: 'Lolita Jones used to be . . . but now . . . ' etc."

The invocation of straw men or real players in the dispute you're covering can add a lot of heat to an interview, but it may keep the heat away from you. You are converting the conversation between yourself and the mayor into a conversation between the mayor and her nastiest critics on the City Council, or on the local op-ed pages. You remain a neutral in the dispute, but you present questions in the personae of other people who are not.

Definitions

Many of the best stories I have heard on NPR are simply definitions. "What does overheating the economy mean?" "What is a pardon?" "A smart bomb?" "What is AIDS?" This is a useful way to think of questioning, too. One of the main purposes of good journalism is to translate from narrow jargons of professionals, experts, and those bent on obfuscation into a common spoken English. Very often the people you interview will use words in a self-serving fashion. It's often fruitful to ask them to define their terms. "Mayor Jones, how do you define corruption?"

The Dozing Psychiatrist's Question

This is a question of last resort to pose when you haven't the slightest idea what to say, you've asked everything about every subject you listed in your reporter's notebook, yet the interview just doesn't feel complete. Repeat the last phrase of the person you're interviewing.

Reporter (asking your last question): Will you fire Commissioner Smith if he pleads guilty to a misdemeanor?

Mayor: I will do what I will do, in keeping with my responsibilities.

Reporter (caught without a clue): In keeping with your responsibilities?

This may or may not yield a more elaborate answer. At least it will give you some time to figure out what to do next. It is a close cousin to:

The Blank Silent Stare

At the end of an answer, no question at all is a statement on your part. It says: "Surely you don't think I think that's the end of your answer to my question." This tactic may get you more of an answer. It also may get a blank silent stare in return.

Parting Words

One last word of advice: You are not a collaborator with the people you interview, but you are not their enemy, either. You may ask a tough question right after a frivolous voice-level exchange. And you may let a person who has become tongue-tied restart his answer to a crucial question. Being polite is not the equivalent of being a patsy.

Robert Siegel is a host of NPR's ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. He has served as NPR's director of news and information programming, and, prior to that, opened NPR's London Bureau as senior editor.

PART II

**TELLING
THE
STORY**

The Editor

Marcus D. Rosenbaum

Everyone needs an editor. Good reporters *want* good editors; they know good editors are reporters' allies, not their enemies. Good editors will help them focus their stories, protect them against making stupid mistakes, save them from bad grammar, and help them tell their stories most effectively.

This chapter will explain what editors do and will give you some tips on how to be a good editor. Of course, this will be most useful to those of you who are or want to be an editor full time. But if you are a reporter, this chapter also will help you understand what your editors do and how they can best help you.

The Role of the Editor

Editors have the ultimate responsibility for the *content* of everything that goes on the air. Their job is to ensure that the right stories are covered, that those stories are covered properly, and that they are broadcast in a way that is responsible and accurate. In other words, they make the assignments, supervise the coverage, and guide the stories through production.

Some organizations split editors' assignment functions from their production functions. They have **assignment editors**, who dispatch reporters to cover the day's news and make sure that all the reporters don't show up in the same place at the same time. And they have **copy editors** or **production editors**, who

shepherd the reporters' stories onto the air. Other organizations lump these functions together.*

Whatever their specific job, editors always play two very different roles simultaneously: As a surrogate for the listeners, they ask the "dumb questions" and ensure that stories are understandable on first hearing; as the reporters' supervisor, they ask the "smart questions," ensuring that stories are complete and accurate and fair.

Editors and reporters are in the same profession, but they have different instincts. Reporters thrive on the actual pursuit of the story—the developing of sources, the phone calls, the difficult interviews, the long stakeouts. Editors, on the other hand, are more interested in the big-picture questions about the story *idea* and in the details of how the finished story will sound on the air. This does not mean that editors and reporters never talk with each other during the course of an assignment; indeed, editors and reporters often work closely all the way through a story. But for the most part, editors focus on the beginning and the end—the assignment and the production.

The Assignment

In their assignment role, editors are likely to receive dozens of press releases each day. They also are likely to know of many other important events taking place. And they are not going to have enough staff available to cover everything—or enough air time to broadcast it even if they did. So an editor's first responsibility is to utilize scarce resources effectively.

News Judgment

Editors do this by exercising what is called **news judgment**—deciding which stories need to be covered and which ones can be skipped; which ones must get on the air now and which ones can be delayed; whether to cover an event or to devote the resources to an in-depth investigation.

Good news judgment is difficult to teach. Much of it comes from experience—learning what works and what doesn't from the good and bad decisions

*At NPR the assignment and production functions are combined, but there are still two different kinds of editors—**desk editors** and **show editors**. Desk editors function much like desk editors on newspapers; they deal most closely with reporters, supervising them directly, making the assignments, and usually editing the reports. There are four main desks at NPR—Foreign, National, Washington, and Science. Show editors have overall responsibility for the content of their programs. They coordinate with the desk editors to make sure that reporters are assigned in accordance with their shows' needs; and they work closely with the program hosts, prepping them for interviews, suggesting questions before and during the interviews, and editing host-produced reports.

you make yourself, and listening to other, more experienced editors justify their decisions. Good news judgment requires you to answer key questions like these: What is new about the story? What makes it interesting? Will I learn something? How can the news be advanced? What are the unanswered questions? Is there a way to cover the story that will go beyond the obvious?

To be able to answer those kinds of questions, you need to be knowledgeable about the world around you, abreast of the news, and ahead of upcoming events. There is no single way to do all of that. But there are some tricks of the trade:

- **Read as much as you can.** Good story ideas usually do not arrive over the transom, and when they do, you need to be able to recognize them for what they are. Daybooks, news releases, and public-relations hacks may let you know about events, but it is up to you to turn those events into news stories or features. To do that, you need to develop enough background and knowledge to get beyond the event itself to its meaning—so that you will know the “dumb” and “smart” questions you should ask. You develop that knowledge, in great part, by reading. Read all of your local paper every day, of course. But also read the suburban weeklies, the neighborhood shoppers, the city magazines. And then read at least one national or regional newspaper every day, too—the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Tribune*—and as many magazines as you have time for. These national journals will give you a broad perspective on the news that will bring depth to local stories and help you recognize when a local story has national implications.
- **Listen to your reporters.** Because they spend more time in direct contact with the public, reporters are likely to come up with many good story ideas on their own. They also are likely to be good sources to help you focus your own ideas. Run even partially formed story ideas past them. Listen to what the reporters say, and use the information wisely.
- **Watch the wires and the daybooks.** Follow the wires closely. Not only will they give you quick reads on events that can help you develop broader stories, but they also are an excellent short- and long-range planning tool. The short-range information often comes in the form of advisories or daybooks. The wires will send an advisory when they get word of an important news conference, for instance. Their daybooks will list events for the upcoming day (or week or month). You also should get as many other calendar services as you can. Often local organizations publish their own events calendars and will be happy to put you on their mailing lists. Other calendars you may have to buy.
- **Set up a futures file.** Long-range information from the wires and from newspapers and magazines usually comes buried somewhere in a story. A piece about a local banker’s arrest, for instance, may include a line that says his trial

has been scheduled for March 23. Clip the story and put it in your **futures file**. There are many different ways to keep a futures file. You can do it electronically on your computer, or you can have a set of file folders, one for each day or each week, which you rotate so the most recent ones are in the front. Devise your own system, but be sure it's easy to use.

- **Trust your instincts.** You are, after all, a citizen as well as a journalist. If you are really puzzled about why the mayor said what she did, there's a good chance a lot of other people are puzzled, too. Maybe an explanation is in order. If you see inconsistencies in U.S. relations with Country A and its relations with Country B, maybe you should have a reporter ask the State Department for an explanation.

Whom To Assign

After you decide that a story should be covered, the next step is to decide *what is the best way to cover it*: Should it be a reporter piece, a host interview, host copy, or even a commentary? There are logistical issues to consider; they have to do with juggling scarce resources and time. But there are editorial issues to consider as well: Some stories are too complex to be done as a host interview; others will be more telling as an interview than as a report. As the editor, you have to decide.

The reporter piece. A reporter is usually your most flexible choice. Reporters can cover events *on the scene*, thus giving the listeners the best sense of being there. Reporters can handle complex and contentious ideas, giving all sides the opportunity to be heard and explaining what they say "between the lines." And reporters can analyze stories from a detached perspective that your listeners have come to trust. But be careful in your assignments. Reporters' time is scarce, and when they are covering one story, they are not covering another. You may miss important events if you make the wrong assignments. Some stories can be handled just as well—if not better—in another way.

If you decide the story should be covered by a reporter, you then have to decide which reporter. In many news organizations, some of the reporters have **beats**—that is, specialized areas of interest like education, the White House, city hall, Congress, police, etc. If the story falls within a beat, you probably will assign it to the beat reporter. But there are always other considerations, regardless of whether a beat reporter is involved: How complex is the story? How quickly does it need to be done? Does one reporter have a particular interest in the subject? Does it tie in with another story? Reporters have different strengths and weaknesses. Obviously, in making assignments you want to play to their strengths and not to their weaknesses.

The host report. At NPR, program hosts often do reporter pieces. The same considerations go into assigning a host report as go into assigning reporter pieces. But to do major stories the hosts must be away from their programs, which may cause scheduling problems.

The host interview. The host interview (or “two-way,” as it has come to be known at NPR, to suggest that the host and the interviewee both have something to contribute) comes in many different flavors.

There is, first, the **newsmaker** or **participant interview**. An interview with Lech Walesa by a well-briefed host may be a much better way to cover the Polish president’s visit to your city than assigning a reporter to cover his speech. Newsmaker interviews also work very well as sidebars to reporters’ news stories. A program may lead with a report from Moscow on Boris Yeltsin’s latest actions on the economy. Following that with a host interview with Yeltsin, or his spokesman, would be an excellent way to get some of the toughest questions asked—if not answered. However, remember that you’re only getting one side of a story.

Participant interviews can be dangerous when the story is contentious or has more than one perspective. In some cases the interviews will work anyway, if the host is completely up-to-speed and asks tough questions.* Just be sure you are clear about what you are doing, because many participant interviews are inherently unbalanced. It would be fine to interview someone on a political campaign staff to get reaction to a just-revealed scandal about the candidate, for instance. But it wouldn’t make sense to interview one of the candidate’s committed supporters—or opponents—to find out how voters in general were reacting.

One of the best kinds of participant interviews is the **eyewitness interview**. If there’s been a bank robbery, for instance, a fascinating and perceptive description might come from someone who actually saw it happen.

Closely related is the **light phoner**. Someone has invented a way to clean her entire house automatically. Talk to her and let her describe it herself. Doesn’t everything get wet?

On a more serious note, the **expert interview** is often the best way to get background and an overview of a subject, particularly when it is used as a sidebar to a news story. Be careful; sometimes experts have axes to grind, and if they do, you need to make your listeners aware of them. Many local universities have faculty members who are qualified to talk about their areas of expertise—and usually will be happy to do so.

Another possibility is to do a **three-way**—that is, the host plus *two* participants, one from each side. Three-ways can become unwieldy, however, so be careful. And think closely about how it will *sound*: If both participants are men, will the listener be able to tell them apart without the host’s having to identify them every time they speak? Should one of them be on a phone line so his voice will be easily distinguishable from the other’s?

Finally, there is the **reporter two-way**. Sometimes, this format comes from necessity: The president makes a major announcement at 4:45, and there is not enough time for your White House reporter to write a story before going on the air at 5. At other times, however, the reporter two-way is the best choice. For one thing, the story may be one for which there is no tape—a federal trial, for instance, when the participants won't speak outside the courtroom—and the material cannot be crammed into the maximum-length voicer (usually three minutes or so). Breaking up the reporter's voice with the host's allows the story to run longer. In addition, two-ways are less formal than reporter pieces, and it is often easier to analyze events in a discussion than in a formal report.

Host copy. There are times when 30 seconds of host copy can be just what is needed. Add a choice cut of tape and you can cover important aspects of a story in just a minute or so. Maybe it is enough to tell the whole story. Maybe it's just added information to fill out another story. Either way, hosts can be excellent ways to plug up holes.

Commentary. Sometimes, you can even tell a story best with a commentary. Say it's Valentine's Day. You surely don't want to assign a reporter to do a story on it. Last year you did the Valentine's-ads-in-the-newspaper interview. What do you do this year? Suddenly, one of your commentators hands you a Valentine's love-letter to her husband. It's the perfect way to commemorate the day.

Making the Assignment

The first and most important rule in making an assignment is to *be as explicit as possible*. An event or an idea may be the basis for a story, but it is not the story itself.

Assigning reporters. "Bill, cover the school board meeting tonight" is not a good assignment. Instead, you should say: "Bill, I need you to cover the school board meeting tonight. They're going to be discussing how to cut the budget. We've already reported on why they need the cuts. But we haven't done enough on the competing interests—the janitors vs. the teachers vs. the administrators, and so on. There are going to be a lot of teachers demonstrating tonight, and I hear that the janitors' union will be out in force, too, so you ought to be able to get some good sound. Ask them why they think their budgets shouldn't be cut, of course. But ask them whose budget *should* be cut. And then bounce their responses off the people who would be affected. Try to talk to some people in central administration to find out why *their* jobs aren't on the line. If you can't get anyone there to talk, let's question the school board members themselves about this. Does this sound like a good way to go to you? What do you think? Let's shoot for four or so minutes on this. OK?"

Note in this example that the editor (a) gave details about what was going to happen, (b) explained in some detail the approach the reporter should take to the story, (c) gave some initial ideas about how the reporter should go about it, and (d) opened up the door to dialogue with the reporter to further refine and focus the story idea.

Now this example is the kind of discussion you might have with a beginning reporter. With more experienced reporters, of course, the dialogue would be much less one-sided. In fact, you probably would be coming to them for advice and ideas about how to cover an event—or even whether the event should be covered at all. Or they would come to you with many ideas of their own. Listen to them. Don't be afraid to take their advice. Many times I have called reporters in the field about stories that cross the wire—or with questions that cross my mind—to find out whether they should do a story. Sometimes the reporters say yes, sometimes no, and sometimes my initial idea sparks their interest in an angle that neither of us had considered before.

Whatever the reporter's level of experience, however, at the end of the discussion you both must be clear about what the assignment is—what the reporter is going to look for, what questions will be asked, and what questions will be answered.

Assigning hosts. For a host interview, a good approach to the assignment is to think through what specific questions you want answered, discuss with the host what questions the host wants answered, and then come up with a general outline of the flow of the interview. It also can be helpful to conduct a pre-interview to get the interviewee's ideas about what should be included. This isn't always possible with newsmakers, but it often can be very useful with experts. Once, when I was editing WEEKEND EDITION, we had set up an expert on negotiations to talk about how well the Mideast peace talks in Madrid were going. Because he was going to have to react to the news as it was breaking, we scheduled the interview for right before air. There would be little time to cut the tape, so we wanted to keep the interview as close to its scheduled length as possible. By calling him ahead, I learned that he wanted to talk about how he thought the negotiators should approach the issues that faced them. Initially, we had thought we would talk only about the negotiating process itself—deciding on the shape of the table, the rotation of the meetings, and so on. But by constructing the interview so that he could discuss his ideas about the real issues, he was able to broaden a simple process story into one of complexity and substance. It made for an excellent and interesting interview—and it was right to time.

Unlike the example in the preceding paragraph, most interviews are not recorded to time. Often, there will be four or five times as much tape as will end up on the air. In those cases, editors who are not cutting the tape themselves will need to explain to the **tape editor** what should remain and what should be cut out. (See Chapter 13, "Tape Editing.") Again, *be explicit*. While the interview is

under way, listen carefully. Take notes if you want. You should be thinking about how it will hold together on the air. Make sure the host asks all of your questions: At times you will want to feed the host questions during the interview; at other times you will want to wait until the end. After the interview, discuss your ideas for how to structure it with the tape editor. Don't walk out of the studio and hand the tape to someone with the words, "Here, get this down to four minutes." At the very least say what the point of the interview is and what parts of the interview explain that point the best.

Before the Edit

There are some reporters who thrive on regular, sustained contact with their editors. One reporter comes immediately to mind. He was an investigative reporter, and during his investigations he would develop his questions and his analysis by talking the story over with me—daily and in as much depth as we had time to spare. In fact, we talked so often and so thoroughly as the story developed that the actual edit was virtually *pro forma*. All the issues had been ironed out ahead of time, an outline had been thoroughly vetted, and the analysis had been closely examined for flaws.

In most cases, however, time does not permit such an approach—and many reporters don't need or want it. They appreciate the focus at the assignment stage, but they pretty much want to be left alone. There will be times, of course, when the story changes, or when the reporter learns something that makes the initial approach unworkable. Then an editor-reporter discussion can keep the assignment on track.

As long as you trust the reporter's judgment (and if you don't, one of you is probably in the wrong job), there is nothing wrong with a hands-off approach. However, a certain minimal amount of contact is necessary after reporters have returned from the field and before they start to write or produce their stories. This is the time you *refine the assignment*. The reporters will tell you whether the original assignment panned out, and if the story changed, how it changed. Ask them to give you a line—a one- or two-sentence synopsis. It will help both of you to focus the story idea into something that is manageable. Watch out for reporters who can't distill their story into one or two sentences; they're probably so mired in the details that they have lost sight of the big picture and will have difficulty writing.

Use this opportunity to make sure reporters are on the right track and to ask any lingering questions you have after hearing their description of their stories. (You don't want to wait until the edit to resolve those issues.) You also can tell them about related stories that will run with theirs, so they can structure their

pieces accordingly. As you talk through their stories, you will gather enough information to give to the shows so they can plan properly.

These discussions have a practical, logistical purpose, too. *They are when you schedule the edits.* They are also when you find out whether the reporters are in trouble: Will they meet their deadlines? If not, you can alert the show. Do they need any help? If so, you can work on the intros; someone else can cut tape; etc. If you're going to have to shift into crisis-management mode, be sure you know about it as early as possible.

If you're on a tight deadline, you will want the reporter to give you the host introduction to the piece as early as possible. Especially in news stories, it is essential that reporters write their intros first. This will allow you to ensure that they really say something and that they fit in with the preceding pieces. It also will help the reporters focus their stories.

The Edit

After reporters finish writing and before they record their voice tracks, you will give them an edit. If this were print journalism, the reporters would turn their stories in, and you would edit their copy—either by hand or, more likely, on your computer screen. But because this is radio, the edit works differently: Here, the reporters will read their scripts and play their tape while you run a stopwatch. (If possible, they will do this in person; if they are at a remote site, they will do it by telephone.) What matters, of course, is not what the scripts look like in print, but what they sound like; not how many pages they are, but how many minutes they are.

It is here that the editor's skills are put to the biggest test. As the last person to hear the report before it goes on the air, the editor must make sure that it makes sense, is complete, is to time, and contains no mistakes. But a good editor will do more: A good editor also will collaborate with the reporter so that the story is told in the best way possible.

Different editors take different approaches, but good editors need to operate on several different levels simultaneously during the edit. They need to pay attention to the big matters like content and accuracy, but at the same time they have to deal with prickly little things like grammar and production. As the listeners' surrogates, they need to be sure that ordinary people will understand the piece the first time they hear it and that there aren't any questions left unanswered. As the representative of their radio station or network, they need to be sure the piece meets the highest journalistic standards. It's a tricky balancing act: Editors need to know enough about the subject of the reports they edit to be able to catch errors, but not so much that they fail to notice when an ordinary listener

would not understand its complexities. The trick is to know which questions to ask—and not to be afraid to ask them for fear of sounding “dumb.”

- **Listen for content.** Does the story make sense? Is anything important left out? Is it interesting? Do any facts need to be checked? Do you understand the point? Was the lead right, or was it overstated? Was the analytical ending backed up by the facts in the story? Did the ending fall flat? Was the reporter too hesitant in the conclusion? Did the facts seem to substantiate more than the reporter actually said?
- **Listen for balance and objectivity.** Was the story weighted one way or the other? Did all sides get their say? Were loaded words (“claimed” or “maintained,” for example, instead of “said”) used without justification? Here is where you need to ask the “smartest” question of all: *How do you know that?* Make sure that the reporter’s knowledge is based on reliable information—from reliable sources (note the plural), reliable texts, and so on. When reporters say they know something because someone told them, don’t hesitate to ask how the other person knew it.
- **Listen for structure.** Did the story flow logically? Did you understand it the first time through, or did it bounce around? Is there a better way to tell the story? Did the intro work? Are there parts of the piece that duplicate what’s in the intro? If so, you may be able to make them “second reference,” so they don’t sound like duplication.
- **Listen for pacing.** Did the piece keep moving, or did it bog down? Where did it bog down, and what can be done to perk it up? Was it all interesting, or did your mind drift during parts of it? Maybe those parts need trimming. Was the tape used well? Did it help move the piece along, or did it duplicate the script? On complex long-form pieces, pay particular attention to the scenes. How did they flow from one to another? Could you follow the shifts, or did you end up places without knowing how you got there or why you were there?
- **Listen for grammar and usage.** Make sure that bad grammar or usage does not get on the air. Little mistakes can ruin a story, because listeners who hear these little mistakes are likely to distrust the reporter on the big issues. If you don’t know something for sure, look it up.
- **Listen for time.** Too long? Where do you trim? Too short? Should something be added? How?

It is not easy to do all of this at the same time. But it is necessary. It requires that you train your ear to listen very, very carefully. In fact, the first three rules of editing are *concentrate, concentrate, and concentrate*. It is absolutely essential that you do this. You will not be able to improve the story—or even catch the mistakes—if

you're thinking about tonight's dinner or last night's date. Give the reporter your undivided attention. Shield yourself from telephone calls and other interruptions. And *concentrate*.

Before you start the edit, make sure you are prepared. Do you know what is on the wires? Do you know what was in the morning paper (so you can be sure the report *advances* the story and doesn't just repeat it)? Some editors like to review all of this just prior to the edit. Personally, I prefer a little more distance unless it's a breaking story; I feel it helps me in my role as the listener's surrogate. Either way, it's important that you *have a clear idea of what the story is about* before you begin to edit the report.

Different editors have different techniques for conducting an edit, but here is mine:

1. **Get out your stopwatch.** Tell the reporter when you're ready to begin. Should you read along with a script? Some editors do this, but I advise against it. The listener at home, after all, is not going to have a script. If I can't understand it the first time through, how can I expect the listener to? And there may be times when there is no script to look at, because the reporter is in a faraway place and on a tight deadline. So I recommend that you not read along, but just listen carefully. (A script *is* helpful to have after you've been through the piece the first time; it's an easy way to isolate your questions and your problems.)
2. **Take notes.** Don't interrupt the reporter, but when you have questions, jot down something so you can return to the problem areas after the reporter has finished. Some editors take a lot of notes; others take only a few. Develop your own style. But don't think about your questions too much or you will miss part of the report.
3. **Give initial feedback.** When the reporter has finished, it's your turn to talk. I find that it's helpful to begin this phase of each edit with a comment about my overall impression: "It was really good and I have just a few minor problems." Or, "I think there's something that doesn't work about the structure in the bottom third of the piece, but let's go through it top to bottom." Or, "It's really good, but we need to cut 30 seconds." Or sometimes, unfortunately, "It doesn't work. I think we need to rework it."
4. **Give detailed feedback.** I try to be honest without being harsh, but whatever the initial comment, good or bad, I always stress that it's a collaborative venture, a partnership, and that we both have something at stake. If I have problems with the report, it's not because I want to lord over the reporter. It's *our* report that *we* need to fix. Keep in mind, however, that it is the *reporter's* story. Try to keep as much of the reporter's style and wording as possible. Don't change something just because you would have done it differently. But *do* change it if it's confusing, and *do* offer suggestions for making it better.

Unless the report is a total disaster, I find it's easiest to go back through it from the top—in what I call chronological order—after my initial comments. Asking my questions from top to bottom (rather than, say, most important to least important) has two advantages: (1) It maintains the report's linear nature and thus makes it easier to think through the whole idea. And (2) it mixes up the important and the less important and thus discourages the reporter from second-guessing what your problem is. In effect, it helps the reporter to listen to what you are saying.

When you criticize, *be specific*. And always offer a suggestion for how to do it better. The worse the piece, the more important this becomes. Never say to a reporter, "Take it back and rewrite it." Always give direction. Even if the report needs a complete rewrite, give the reporter some ideas about how to do it; explain why the first version did not work, and collaborate with the reporter to devise a better way. In extreme instances—such as a fast-approaching deadline—you may need to do the rewrite yourself, with the reporter helping you. But even here it's a collaboration and must be treated as such.

5. ***Listen as you revise.*** Some problems, such as incorrect grammar or usage, can be fixed without further discussion. On the other extreme, there may be problems that will take additional reporting. And in the middle, some problems will require you to listen carefully to the reporter's explanations. The reporter may have had a specific reason for saying something in a certain way. This does not mean that the copy should not be changed. Trust your initial reaction. You are the listener's surrogate, and if you had a problem with that part of the story, it is a problem. If *you* didn't understand the sentence without the additional explanation from the reporter, the listener won't understand it, either. So explain to the reporter why you didn't understand the sentence, and then collaborate to revise it in such a way that the additional explanation is included or becomes unnecessary.
 - 6a. ***If you have time, go over the entire story again,*** top to bottom, running a stopwatch and listening carefully as if from scratch. If you have made a lot of changes, you may find that when you hear the whole piece again, it doesn't hold together and needs further changes.
 - 6b. ***If time is short, prioritize what you're going to fix.*** You may not be able to fix everything, but some things you cannot let on the air: factual errors, bad grammar, confusing syntax, unattributed information. You'll have to compromise in

*It's important when you're pushing through a piece on a tight deadline to keep an accurate account of the piece's length, so if it's long you can trim or beg for more time from the show. If you don't have time to hear the entire piece again, you'll need to time only those sections you've changed, and then add or subtract the time from the sections' original lengths.

other areas:* the sentence that could have been a little stronger, the cut that was a little long, etc. Set your priorities *as you edit*, so you won't have to think about it later. But no matter how little time you have, remember that *nothing can go on the air without first being checked by an editor*. Two brains have twice the chance of catching errors as one.

Who's the Boss?

An editor must approve the content of everything that goes on the air, so in a very real sense, when disputes arise, the editor's word is final. But as an editor, you should do your best to avoid situations in which you need to impose your will. Usually by explaining your objections carefully and listening closely to what the reporter says, you can work collaboratively toward a solution acceptable to both of you.

There are occasions—usually brought on by tight deadlines—when there simply isn't time for a long discussion, or even a short one. In those cases, of course, you don't discuss; you act. But if your general approach to editing is a collaborative, thoughtful, discussion-oriented one, you will develop the respect of the reporters you edit. They will understand the circumstances, and they will trust you without question.

Should You Be an Editor?

Here are some of the qualities of a successful editor. How many of them fit you?

- ***Do you have broad knowledge and interests?*** Do all those little factoids tend to stick with you? Can you shift easily from one subject to another? Are you naturally curious about many different things?
- ***Do you instinctively ask the "big picture" questions?*** Can you explore beyond the obvious and focus on what's behind the event rather than just the event itself? Are you willing to ask "dumb questions" because you don't think they've been answered adequately? Of *who, what, when, where, and why*, do you find yourself pondering over the *why* more than the other questions?
- ***Are you a stickler for details?*** Do you flinch at bad grammar? Do bad tape edits make you cringe? Do you want everything to be perfect?
- ***Do you have an analytical mind?*** When events occur, do you always try to find out why? When you read the morning paper, do you usually have unanswered

questions about what you've read? When you are faced with a problem, do you easily come up with ways to solve it? When you hear a mistake, can you quickly figure out how to correct it?

- ***Do you understand the principles of journalism?*** Do you have an unwavering sense of fairness? Do you know when a premise has been proved and when it is speculation? Do you know the difference between fact and opinion, between analysis and bias? Do you know what it takes to get a story? Have you ever been a reporter? (You will be a better editor if you have experienced the difficulties reporters have in pursuing stories.)
- ***Do you have an excellent knowledge of the English language?*** Do you know how to use words correctly? Do you use good grammar?
- ***Are you a good writer?*** It's the editor's job to push writers beyond serviceable prose. News writing can be lackluster. It doesn't need to be.
- ***Are you a teacher?*** Although being an editor is a good way to learn about the world around you, editors often need to be teachers, too. When you correct reporters' errors, if you see your role as a teacher, you can help them avoid making the same mistakes again.
- ***Are you articulate?*** Can you explain why you like or don't like something in a clear and concise way? Can you quickly summarize the most important elements of a story?
- ***Do you have a good attention span?*** Can you concentrate and listen closely during an edit?
- ***Can you work under pressure?*** The producers, not the reporters, will be screaming at you as deadlines approach. Can you handle it?
- ***Do you have confidence in your abilities?*** An editor is in a leadership position. People will not follow you if you aren't self-confident.
- ***Are you willing to let someone else take the credit?*** You're unlikely to become famous being an editor. It's the reporter who goes on the air, not you. Does this bother you?

An editor's job is not an easy one. Editors must be able to use many different skills simultaneously. And they do not always get an adequate evaluation of their work. Although editors usually know when they have committed a major error—they're always the first ones to hear when there's a fact wrong or bad grammar or some other flaw in a story—they rarely get substantial feedback on how good they really are. Reporters don't criticize directly; after all, you're their boss. And your boss, particularly in radio, seldom hears the original version of a

story and therefore has no way of knowing how much of the finished product comes from you.

Yet there can be great satisfaction in being an editor. The reporters know how good you are; even if they don't tell you directly, you'll find them maneuvering to avoid going to another editor, or you'll notice them queuing up outside your door while you're editing someone else.

And being an editor is a marvelous way to satisfy your intellectual curiosity without having to do all the legwork. You get to ask all those dumb questions you've always wanted to ask—and have someone else find out the answers.

Marcus D. Rosenbaum has served in many editing capacities at NPR. He was NPR's first foreign editor, the senior national editor, and editor of ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, weekend ALL THINGS CONSIDERED and newscasts. Rosenbaum came to NPR in 1978 after a decade in print journalism. In 1988 he went to Congressional Quarterly Inc. as editor of Editorial Research Reports. In 1991 he returned to NPR to fill various editing positions. He is now senior producer of TALK OF THE NATION.

Writing News for Radio

Carl Kasell & Marcus D. Rosenbaum

"The writer of news for radio must write the purest, most readily understood prose of any medium," veteran broadcaster and journalism professor Edward Bliss Jr. once wrote. "The reason is no secret. The writer for radio, unlike the writer for magazines or newspapers, must write so as to be understood the first time. The words are spoken and, once spoken, are irretrievable. There is no calling them back for review."

Mr. Bliss's words may be even more important today than they were when he wrote them a decade ago, because today's listeners get such a large part of their news from broadcast media. But the principle of writing for broadcast remains unchanged: Write for the ear. A radio report is written to be *heard*, not seen. Thus, it must be *linear* in structure—stories need a beginning, a middle, and an end. And it must be *conversational* in presentation—sentences must be short, direct, and simple; words must be readily understood or explained.

Now "short" does not mean that all sentences need to be just four or five words long. Too many short sentences will make your writing sound choppy. That's not the way you talk, so that's not the way you should write. A good story will have sentences of varying lengths.

But a good sentence for radio generally will contain only one idea. It will not be cluttered with useless words. It will be simple, the language uncomplicated.

Pity the listener who has to endure this:

Stocks closed sharply higher in active trading yesterday, after a blue-chip rally helped the broad market shake off an initial weakness, which

The Middle: Using Tape

Now you have thought through the point of your story, isolated your tape, figured out the report's structure, and written the host introduction. The rest is easy. You just need to link it all together in your script. Tell the story in a logical way that progresses from beginning to end. Each element—each sentence of your script, each actuality—should carry the story forward. The end of Point A should lead logically to the beginning of Point B, the end of Point B should lead logically to the beginning of Point C, and so on.

Listen to this example from MORNING EDITION in early March 1992—a report by Mike Shuster from Moscow. Note how the elements hold together, how the script flows into the tape, which flows into the script. Note how the intro sets the piece up. And note the linear nature of the piece, how it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Host: In Russia, Boris Yeltsin's government has now made public the elements of the next stage of its economic reform plan. Yeltsin's advisers believe the first shock of price rises, which began in early January, is over, and that the country must move on to face additional price hikes and austerity measures designed to hasten the transition to a market economy.

The new reforms are also meant to conform to the wishes of the International Monetary Fund, which stands ready to provide additional loans to Russia if the reforms are implemented. NPR's Mike Shuster reports from Moscow.

Shuster: There is little doubt that economic conditions in Russia are changing. Prices on most goods are sharply higher than they were at the end of last year, but more goods are available in many stores—especially grocery stores. And what was most unexpected, the attitude of the majority of Russians to the price reform has been grudging acceptance, not rebellion. This led Finance Minister Yegor Gaidar to declare cautiously on national television two days ago that the first phase of the reform has been a success.

Gaidar: [Voice in Russian established, then under for voiceover] Now to the surprise of many, you can see that the reforms are working. Maybe slowly, maybe badly. We better than others know how weak these first signs of stabilization are, how easy it is by some clumsy actions to throw our economy back into sharp decline, into the catastrophe of hyperinflation.

Shuster: Nevertheless, the government has now made public its plans for further economic reforms, which are bound to shock the Russian public . . . perhaps even more deeply than the price rises. Not all prices were freed in January. Some basic food items, such as bread and milk, although now more expensive, are still regulated. That, according to Konstantin Kagalovsky, a member of Yeltsin's economic team, will end in March.

Kagalovsky: [Voice in Russian established, then under for voiceover] Firstly, what we all expect in the nearest future is the further freeing of prices. We are going to free all prices for consumer goods, with the exception of baby foods and medicine.

Shuster: Although Russian consumers might be alarmed to see the price of milk and bread climb higher, the Russian government is ready to take a step, according to Kagalovsky, that will certainly spark another round of sharp inflation throughout the economy.

Kagalovsky: [Voice in Russian established, then under for voiceover] After the end of the heating season in our cold country, about the middle of April, we are going to free prices on fuels, including oil and oil products.

Shuster: The price of electricity and natural gas will remain under state control. Fuel rises will hit the Russians most at the gas pump. A liter of gasoline now costs just over 1 ruble—three times its price in December. Crude oil could rise an additional seven times when its price is decontrolled in April, bringing sharp hikes at the fuel pump. Russian government officials estimate that such price increases will lead to a 10 to 15 percent drop in domestic fuel consumption. Finance Minister Gaidar says this will certainly worsen the overall performance of the Russian economy.

Gaidar: [Voice in Russian established, then under for voiceover] The increase of fuel prices will inevitably cause a decline in production. There has been no example of a post-Communist country in the world that has made the transition to the market with an industrial decline of less than 20 percent.

Shuster: Such a slump would come on top of production declines of some 30 percent over the past two years—in effect, a continuing depression of the Russian economy of at least three years' duration. Among other reforms the Russian government is planning is a tax on oil and oil products of 50 percent. It is with this tax that the Russian government plans to cover the better part of its budget deficit. The goal of the Russian government is to eliminate its enormous deficit by the end of the year, and in the process stabilize the shaky Russian currency. Other elements of the reform package include the rapid privatization of land and state business, which should begin immediately.

These reforms are meant to lead to Russian membership in the International Monetary Fund . . . probably in late April . . . and the establishment after that of a multi-billion dollar fund to stabilize the ruble. It is a plan of economic austerity that is bound to throw millions of Russians in heavily subsidized state enterprises out of work. Many here worry that the reality of unemployment in the coming months will be much harder for the Russian public to take than price rises to which they have already become accustomed.

This is Mike Shuster in Moscow.

Remember that you are writing for the ear. Your script is *not* the finished product; the finished product is your delivery on the air. So write the way you talk. Think of your script not as words to be read, but as a guide to help you tell a story. This does not mean that your script should not be carefully honed and polished.

As mentioned above, a lot of your script will consist of writing in and out of actualities, so that the actualities carry the story along. One good way to do that is to start out with actualities that are too long and cut them down as you write—putting one thought in your script and leaving the other for the actuality. For instance, you may have a rough-cut of tape that goes something like this:

There are three reasons people should vote yes on the bond issue. First, the schools are overcrowded. They were built for, uh, 4,000 students, and there are now more than 6,000. And next year we're expecting to have even . . . uh . . . One survey shows, uh, 700 new students next year alone. Second, uh, the, uh, teachers are underpaid. I mean, they're starting as low as \$19,000 a year. Who can afford to live on that in this day and age? And then, you know, the biggest thing is that this community can afford it. We have one of the highest income levels in the state, but our schools are ranked near the bottom. This is a rich county. Our children are our future. We should do better by them.

With that much tape, you can script the top and let the actuality run at the bottom:

Reporter: Jones said the schools are overcrowded. They were built for 4,000 students but now have more than 6,000 . . . with more expected next year. And he said the teachers are underpaid . . . starting at only 19-thousand dollars a year. But in Jones' opinion, the most important reason the bond issue should be passed is that the community can afford it.

Jones: We have one of the highest income levels in the state, but our schools are ranked near the bottom. This is a rich county. Our children are our future. We should do better by them.

This is not to say that you should pare your tape down to a distorted minimum. To the contrary, it is very important that you not cut speakers off in mid-thought. Your actualities should express complete ideas, not truncated fragments of ideas. For that reason, actualities at NPR often run much longer than they would in commercial broadcasting. But length is not so important as content. Some will be long, some short. Just be sure that the actualities fit with your script, so that together they tell a compelling and thorough story.

Print vs. broadcast. As noted earlier, using actualities in radio journalism is not the same as using quotations in print. Here's an example from a *Boston Globe* story about literacy:

While many of the adults on literacy waiting lists do indeed hold jobs, business leaders say productivity is lost both because of errors made on the job and the exorbitant cost of training workers who cannot read.

"Billions of dollars are being spent each year retraining workers with poor skills," noted Paul O'Brien, chief executive officer of New England Telephone Co. and co-founder of the Boston Adult Literacy Fund.

"The quality and capability of the work force upon which we draw is a direct reflection of how productive we will be in the future. If we do not invest in public and private education and our people are ill prepared, we will have to provide remedial training at costs that will increase services or products or force us to import talent. Either way, that puts us at a disadvantage."

For print, that section works fine. Note how the reporter made a statement and then backed it up with a quotation. In radio, the quotation is a much more integral part of the story; it carries it forward. The same information in a radio script would be something like this:

Reporter: Paul O'Brien . . . the chief executive officer of New England Telephone Company . . . says the future of American productivity is at stake. Many adults on the literacy waiting lists do have jobs . . . but they can be very expensive employees. He says businesses are caught in a dilemma.

O'Brien: If we do not invest in public and private education and our people are ill prepared, we will have to provide remedial training at costs that will increase services or products or force us to import talent. Either way, that puts us at a disadvantage.

Reporter: O'Brien, a co-founder of the Boston Adult Literacy Fund, says it's costing American businesses *billions* of dollars each year to retrain workers with poor skills.

Bad places for tape. One other point about tape: Don't start or end your report with an actuality. Starting your report with an actuality is usually just a cheap shortcut. There's almost always a better way. Besides, if you start with tape, it's extremely difficult to write a host introduction. So start your report with your own voice and move that great cut of tape a little lower in the piece—or, if it really needs to go first, put it *in* the host intro.

Ending a report with tape is also a weak approach. In print writing, particularly for magazines, a quotation at the end is often the perfect conclusion. It can sum up the whole idea of the story in a very succinct way. But it doesn't work so well in radio. The reason is that in print the quotations carry more credibility than the reporter; the reporter is virtually invisible. In radio, however, it's the other way around; the reporter has the most credible voice in the story. So even if the actuality is the perfect summation for your report, you should say something after it. Or, in some rare cases, you can use the perfect quotation—but in your own voice. "As Jones put it, this city has one of the highest income levels in

the state, but its schools are ranked near the bottom" may be a stronger end to a story than an actuality of Jones saying the same thing.

And So . . . the Conclusion

Take special care with your conclusion, also known as the *and so*. In broadcast writing, it often is the most important part of your report. It is when you sum up your report and prepare the listener for the next possible development in the story.

There's an old saying that if a story doesn't have an "and so," it isn't worth doing. That's not always true, of course, but listeners best remember the last words you say, so stories that say something important in their conclusions are most likely to stick with listeners.

Avoid being trite:

And so, this much is clear: Only time will tell whether it's just the tip of the iceberg.

If you have thought through the point of your story and organized it correctly, everything should lead up to the end, and you should not have trouble writing your conclusion.

Listen to this news spot by Anne Garrels from March 1992. It's instructive not only for the "and so," but for the way she explained a very complicated subject in a very short amount of time.

Newscaster: The Bush administration and Congress have been trying to find a way around their disagreement over 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees to Israel. But NPR's Anne Garrels reports they are still at an impasse.

Garrels: The administration has linked the loan guarantees to a freeze on settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's supporters on Capitol Hill oppose linkage. So Senator Patrick Leahy, a Democrat from Vermont, suggested a compromise—appropriate the money now, so it's at least available, and leave it to the administration to negotiate the terms later. But pro-Israel senators continue to balk at the tough terms . . . insisting Israel be granted at least two billion dollars in loan guarantees with no conditions to help resettle émigrés. But the administration is likely to veto this formula . . . so there's a good chance there will be no loans and no bill this year. I'm Anne Garrels in Washington.

Newscasts

A reporter generally covers a single story at a time. A newscaster's job is to cover many stories. On any one subject, newscasters may not have the same expertise

as a reporter, but they need to have a good working knowledge of most stories that cross the desk. This is why good newscasters do a lot of homework. They read as much as possible to learn about as many different subjects as they can.

Using the Wires

Wire copy is the source of newscast stories at all levels of broadcasting—local and national. The wires are good sources and should be regarded as just that: sources. Remember, they can be wrong, so you shouldn't hesitate to question anything that appears mistaken. One way to question a fact is to check another wire. (This is just one reason to have more than one wire service; another is that one wire is likely to have details about a story that another wire does not.) If the wires are inconsistent, or if a fact on a single wire doesn't seem right, call the wire service or try to check the facts with a phone call to the source of the report.

As you use the wires, be aware of the fact that stories written on the news services' "A" wires are written in newspaper style. They have to be translated into language for the ear. Stories on the "broadcast" wire are written for radio, but they tend to be superficial. Good newscasters always rewrite the wires.

In fact, the best newscasters don't even look at the wires while they're writing, except to check an occasional fact. They'll read the wires, digest what is in them, and then write their story. It's the best way to make sense of an event; it ensures that you understand it before you say it on the air.

Fully understanding a story also makes it much easier to update, and if you're on the air at regular intervals during the day, you'll constantly be updating and rewriting to make the story fresh. Sometimes there's a development in the story that makes the updating easy. But face it: There are only so many ways to say, "A gunman is holding 10 hostages in the State Capitol. The siege has been underway for 48 hours." That's when you look at the bottom of the wire copy or question reporters covering the scene to find some element you may have missed in your earlier newscasts. Your listeners are tuning in to hear something new. You should try to give it to them.

Putting the Newscast Together

As a newscaster, you (and your editor) will decide which stories to use, how much time to spend on each one of them, and in what order to present them. The key criteria are how newsworthy and how new each item is. The less newsworthy and the older the story, the less likely it is to be used, and, if it is used, the less time it will receive and the later in the newscast it will appear.

Generally, you will start with the most important story of the hour. Most of the time, one story will stand out and clearly be the lead item. At other times,

however, two or three items may qualify, so you may decide to rotate them from one newscast to the next.

Group stories according to subject. To bounce from Congress to China to New York to Paris to the White House to London to Cape Canaveral makes no sense if the stories are not somehow tied together. So you probably would want to have a section on Washington stories (Congress and the White House), a section on foreign stories (China, London, Paris), and a section on national stories (New York, Cape Canaveral). But if the New York story is about the economy, and the Congress and White House stories are about the same thing, you obviously would have something to link them together.

When you go from one story to another, let your audience know you are changing subjects. You can interrupt the flow with a change in pitch or inflection or reading speed. Listen to how good newscasters do this and emulate them.

The heart of any newscast is sound. Reporter news spots and actualities put the listener at the scene of the story. They break up your copy and allow you to catch your breath, and they lend credibility to your newscast. But they must be used properly. Don't bunch all the sound at the top of the newscast. Don't put it all at the end, either. Spread it out. Don't be afraid to use two bits of actuality in the lead story, but save some other sound to use later in the newscast.

The key to a good newscast is that it should hold together. It should be thorough without sounding choppy. So vary the lengths of your stories. Spread out the sound. And organize your newscast in a way that the listener will easily understand.

Hints

Most of this chapter has been devoted to conceptualizing your report or your newscast and organizing your ideas. Now here are some hints that will help you when you put fingers to keyboard. You can find additional tips in the "NPR Stylebook," which is reprinted later in this book.

Use the present tense. Newspapers and the wire services write almost everything in the past tense. Broadcasters should make more use of the present tense—even if, at times, it violates that difficult grammatical rule called sequence of tenses. The reason is, that's the way we talk. It sounds stiff to say out loud, "John Doe said he thought Christmas was a good idea." More natural (although, technically speaking, grammatically incorrect) is, "John Doe said he thinks Christmas is a good idea." Or better yet (and grammatically correct), "John Doe says he thinks Christmas is a good idea."

Use the active voice. It brings life to your copy. The passive voice usually is deadly.

No: Combat troops were sent by the president to . . .

Yes: The president sent combat troops to . . .

Advance the story. Listeners assume you are reporting what is happening now or something that happened in the immediate past. So even if the main part of the story occurred yesterday, use the element that carries it forward to today. Such as,

The White House says President Bush will veto the jobs bill that Congress passed yesterday.

Use contractions. Contractions are part of our everyday speech, so to keep your copy conversational, use them. Be careful, however, that you are not misunderstood. "Joe Newsmaker says he can't take it" sounds a lot like "Joe Newsmaker says he can take it."

Put attributions high in the sentence. When writing for print, it is customary to put attributions at the end of sentences. Not so when writing for broadcast.

No: The nation's economy will show great improvement in the third quarter, according to a report from the Federal Reserve Board.

Yes: The Federal Reserve Board says the nation's economy will improve greatly in the third quarter.

Also, be specific in your attributions. Attributing information to unnamed "experts," "analysts," or "sources" really adds nothing to a story—except to demonstrate that you are unsure about your information.

Titles. Don't put too many titles and names close together in a sentence. Consider this:

Secretary of Commerce Joe Scrivnek announced that James Scribner, chairman of General Motors Corporation, has succeeded Ralph Blumer, chairman of General Electric, as chairman of the Business Advisory Committee.

Not only is such a sentence awkward to read, but it's confusing to hear, too. Many titles can and should be reduced to their bare essentials. Thus, "chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence" becomes "Senate Intelligence Committee chairman" and, on second reference, "chairman."

Avoid clichés. In fact, as the Stylebook says, "Avoid them like the plague." The familiar ones are easy to identify and eliminate. But try as you might, when you least expect it, a less common one sneaks into your copy. Often it's one of those new words or phrases. "At this point in time" became a cliché during the Watergate era—and it still grates on the ear today.

Labels can become hackneyed. "Conservative" Senator Jesse Helms, "controversial" football player Duane Thomas. These labels were used so often with these people they became almost a part of their names. Don't follow the pack.

Use proper grammar and good English. Good grammar and usage are the way we understand each other, and they are your road map to good journalism. They give you credibility. Don't believe it? Try using bad grammar deliberately on the air sometime. Then count the phone calls and letters. The "NPR Stylebook" (see page 229) will help point you in the right direction in this regard.

Nouns and verbs. Don't turn nouns into verbs. *Impact* is a noun. Use a word like *affect* for the verb.

Verbal booby traps. To repeat some advice from the beginning of this chapter: Read your copy aloud. It is an excellent way of self-editing, and it helps you avoid words and phrases you have trouble reading and should not use. Some people can't say "statistics." Others have problems with combinations of words, like "three tree twigs" or "the Joint Chiefs' chairman" or "the Earth's first space" or "in an uninhabited," and so on. Be aware of phrases that cause you trouble, and write around them. If you read your copy aloud before you go on the air, you'll never be caught before a microphone trying to say "six sick Sikhs."

Watch for homophones—words that sound alike but have different meanings—or near-homophones. They are understandable for the eye but can cause problems for the ear. Some examples:

aides	AIDS
brake	break
cache	cash
deceased	diseased
formally	formerly
miner	minor

Take care with the order of your words, especially modifiers. Take, for example, "the handsome airline pilot." Is it the airline that's handsome or the pilot? Or "the black doctor's bag."

Don't waste words. We hesitate to end this chapter with a quotation from a print essayist, but, in this case, the words fit—for content and for style. They are from E.B. White's *The Elements of Style*. (If you haven't read it lately, by the way, do so; it's a wonderful little book and easy and fun to read.) The book is White's version of a book of the same title written by his English professor, William Strunk Jr., in 1919.

This passage, from the introduction, not only carries a worthwhile message, but it does so with a quality of imagery and style that is rarely heard these days.

"Omit needless words!" cries the author . . . , and into that imperative Will Strunk really put his heart and soul. In the days when I was sitting in his

class, he omitted so many needless words, and omitted them so forcibly and with such eagerness and obvious relish, that he often seemed in the position of having shortchanged himself—a man left with nothing more to say yet with time to fill, a radio prophet who had outdistanced the clock. Will Strunk got out of this predicament by a simple trick: he uttered every sentence three times. When he delivered his oration on brevity to the class, he leaned forward over the desk, grasped his coat lapels in his hands, and, in a husky, conspiratorial voice, said, "Rule Seventeen. Omit needless words! Omit needless words! Omit needless words!"

Now this passage may seem to violate one of the first rules of radio writing: The sentences are long. But how easy they are to read! There are places for breaths, and the pacing is comfortable. We should only hope that we all write as well as E.B. White—and follow Will Strunk's advice while we're at it.

Carl Kasell has been a morning newscaster for National Public Radio since 1977. He got his start in radio at WGBR in Goldsboro, N.C., in 1950. Marcus D. Rosenbaum, a long-time NPR editor, wrote Chapter 5 of this book.

Delivery: Using Your Voice

Karen Kearns

The last step in preparing a radio report is *telling* the story to the listener. Human beings have been sharing information through spoken words much longer than through written language, so telling your story may seem like the easy part of reporting. But reading aloud while sounding as if you are speaking spontaneously is one of the hardest radio skills to master. Radio journalism is really electronic story telling.

Radio is an intimate, person-to-person medium. It is a conversation between you and one other person even though there may be thousands in the listening audience. You are not announcing to someone, you are talking with that person. MORNING EDITION newscaster Carl Kasell says he imagines he's talking to "Aunt Martha." When the president gives a speech, he imagines calling Aunt Martha and saying, "Did you hear the president tonight?" Aunt Martha says, "No, what did he say?" Then he sums up the main points of the speech for her. The summary is the copy in Carl's newscast, and the delivery is his conversation with Aunt Martha.

The Voice

The voice is an instrument that requires training. Just as you wouldn't give a musical recital with an instrument on which you had never practiced, so you shouldn't go on the air without practicing your delivery. Remember that the radio audience hears the story *through* your delivery, and if your delivery doesn't clarify the meaning of the story, it can become a distraction.

In most public speaking, there is immediate feedback from the audience—eye contact, facial expressions, and vocalizations. If the feedback is negative—raised eyebrows or frowns, for instance—the speaker can adjust content or delivery to help the audience understand the message more clearly.

In broadcasting, it's different. There is no immediate feedback, so you don't know how the message is being received. It's just you, the microphone, and the copy. Read alone in the studio, the most polished script can become a monotonous collection of words. Having your imaginary listener give you feedback about your story can help you avoid this problem. Teddy Handfield, an associate professor of drama at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., says an effective radio communicator has three goals when voicing a story.

- **Clarity.** Your phrasing and emphasis should give listeners a clear understanding of the story. They immediately should *get it*. You should emphasize the words that illustrate the point of the story. You should pause to give the listener a chance to understand the message.
- **Change.** Your pitch, rhythm, and pauses should change with the thought pattern of the story. The delivery should be alive and melodious, but it should illustrate the meaning of the sentence. It should not be predictable.
- **Humanity.** Your voice should reflect the life of your mind. It should not be mechanical, but driven by the way you think and feel about the story. It should be spontaneous, natural, and dynamic—not computer-generated monotone.

Training the voice and practicing delivery are not intended to make everyone sound alike. Each voice is unique. Everyone has some regional accent or combination of accents. An accent is part of the uniqueness of the voice and only presents a problem if it distracts from the meaning of the story. Training your voice should allow you to find your style of delivery. Training should not force you to change your dialect or to become an "announcer." Rather, it should enable you to develop good speaking habits and techniques that will enhance your delivery.

In this, NPR differs from much commercial broadcasting. Commercial style can have a sense of artificial urgency. Some of that comes from the time constraints put on commercial news. When you have only one or two minutes to tell everything, it's hard to sound conversational. NPR allows more time for stories and details, so this allows slower, more expressive delivery. But there's more to it than that. As Carl Kasell says, "We think we don't need to shout at or preach to NPR listeners. We are *talking* to them rather than announcing the news." This is the personal contact that NPR develops with its listeners.

This does not mean that any delivery is good delivery. Far from it. Good delivery depends on voice **quality, pitch, tempo and rate, and volume**. All of these elements can be improved through practice and listening. "When you work

for NPR there's a delivery style, and the way to learn it is through keen listening," says Lynn Neary, host of weekend ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. "I just think a good ear is the bottom line of everything in radio, and that includes delivery."

You can improve your delivery by recording your voice on a tape recorder and varying these elements for a more natural sound. There are many books available that offer exercises to improve diction and voice quality. However, you may have trouble doing this alone. Most people do not recognize their own voice the first time they hear it recorded. It takes time to adjust to hearing your voice emanating from outside of your body. Working with a speech or voice teacher, who will target specific areas for practice, can help you improve more quickly.

Voice Quality

Physically, the voice is produced by pushing air through the vocal folds of the larynx. The sound resonates in the hollow spaces of the head and neck. The size of the vocal folds and the hollow spaces give each voice its own quality. It is similar to the difference between musical instruments. You can play middle C on a piano and a violin, and while the pitch is the same, the quality of the tone varies because of the difference in the size of the instruments' wooden bodies and strings.

The breath is the motor that powers the voice. You breathe more deeply for speech. The air is taken in quickly and released gradually. Sitting or standing erect with relaxed shoulders allows the diaphragm to expand and contract for proper breath control. The movement of your mouth, tongue, and neck controls the resonance of the voice. The physics of sound production directly affects the quality of the voice.

But voice quality is more than physics. It also has to do with emotions. "An expressive face," says voice coach Marilyn Pittman, "creates an expressive voice." We are drawn to people who sound "warm" and "friendly," and we avoid people who sound "strident" or "unhappy." It's the difference between an open, resonant sound or a pinched, sharp, high-pitched sound. You can alter the quality of your voice by relaxing, releasing tension in the throat, shoulders, and neck, and opening your mouth more widely when you speak. A nasal sound can result from the back of the throat being closed by tension or poor posture.

The way you interpret a sentence can reveal your emotions. To make your copy work, synchronize the emotional state of your voice with the meaning of your copy. You must first understand what you are saying to make the connection between your *mind* and your *voice*. If you are reading copy about a fatal plane crash, it is inappropriate to have a "smile" in your voice.

Blending the physical nature of sound production with the appropriate emotional state for the content will make your delivery sound more natural and pleasant.

Pitch

The highness or lowness of your voice is determined by the **pitch**. We have many vocal stereotypes about pitch. For example, we expect people with high-pitched voices to be small and those with low-pitched voices to be large. Women are expected to have higher pitched voices than men. We believe lower pitched voices belong to stronger, more decisive people, and for the most part we find them more pleasant than high-pitched voices. In the early days of radio, women were not allowed to speak as announcers because their voices were considered too high-pitched to be pleasant. Ironically, women's voices are easier to understand over short-wave broadcasts because the higher pitched frequency is transmitted more clearly.

You probably have experienced the fallacy of pitch stereotypes when you have met people with whom you only have spoken over the telephone. Most likely their actual physical appearance didn't match the image you created. To help your listeners form the best mental image of you, it is important to know how to control the pitch of *your* voice.

Each person has a pitch range of approximately two octaves. The pitch of men's voices lowers dramatically after puberty. Women, however, also add three or four lower tones after puberty. These tones add depth and maturity to the voice. To maximize the effective range of your voice it is important to determine your **optimum pitch**. Your optimum pitch is usually about one-third of the way between the lowest and the highest notes you can sing. You can find your range on a piano keyboard: First sing *down* the scale to the lowest note you can reach. Then, sing *up* the scale to the highest note you can reach. You have marked out the perimeter of your voice range. Now, travel up the scale five notes from your lowest tone. You will find yourself at or near your optimum pitch. This is the pitch you should be using most often when speaking.

Now that you have your optimum pitch, you should compare it with your **habitual pitch**. This is the pitch you normally use most often when speaking. Choose some copy and record yourself reading. Play back the recording, and find the note on the piano that is closest to the average pitch of your reading. You may find that you are speaking several notes higher than your optimum pitch. You probably also will discover that you don't use all of the notes above your optimum pitch to the top of your voice range. Your voice pitch and range give life and vitality to your voice.

Inflection is the change in pitch and stress that occurs within a word while you are producing sound. Speaking in a monotone creates audio wallpaper and bores the listener. The upward and downward inflection in delivery keeps the listener's attention. Inflection adds *melody* to the voice, but the inflection *must have meaning*. The inflection in your voice should coincide with the meaning of the words you are saying and should stress the appropriate points in the sentence.

Inflections that are not tied to the meaning of the words simply create a “roller coaster” or “singsong” effect and detract from your message.

Iverson Warriner, a drama coach from Louisville, Kentucky, illustrates the use of inflection and stress in sentences with this chart:

LEVEL 4	Special Emphasis	high in voice range
LEVEL 3	Primary Stress	up slightly in range
LEVEL 2	Home Base	optimum pitch
LEVEL 1	Finality	low pitch

Level 2, “Home Base,” is the pitch for your natural speaking voice. This is the pitch that you should use for most of your message. Level 3, “Primary Stress,” is the pitch you should use for key words or points in the sentence. Your voice will go up several notes from home base to warn the listener that this is the main point. Level 3 also should be used at the end of an interrogative sentence. Level 1, “Finality,” is the pitch to use at the end of sentences or ideas. It is down one or two pitches from home base. Level 4, “Special Emphasis,” is very high in pitch and probably won’t be used much unless you are a sportscaster. This is the level at which you indicate extreme agitation or excitement. Cheering for your favorite team or screaming “Fire!” take place at Level 4. The following examples outline a simple use of this system:

Statements of fact and command:	“Now tell him.”	2-3-1
Interrogative sentence:	“Is he ready?”	2-2-3
Questions with interrogative words:	“Where is it?”	2-3-1
Fright or excitement	“Fire!”	4

Rate and Tempo

Your message determines the rate and tempo at which you speak. Serious messages are delivered slowly, with thoughtful pauses. Complicated or technical subject material also should be delivered at a slower rate to allow the listener more time to understand the concepts. Light, humorous messages are spoken much more quickly.

You can measure the *rate of speech* by counting the number of *words spoken per minute (w.p.m.)*. There will be some variance because of the different length of words, but it will give you a rough estimate. Oral reading rates can range from 140 to 180 w.p.m. A slow reading rate, 140 to 160, can become tedious if the listener is familiar with the subject matter. There are regional differences in the rate of normal conversation. The fastest speakers—180–190 w.p.m.—are usually from the Northeast. The slowest speakers—150–160 w.p.m.—are from parts of the South. The rest of the country averages between these two.

It’s useful for anyone working in radio to be able to talk to **time**. This skill takes practice. Many people read too fast because they are nervous. Choose a

prose selection from a book or newspaper. Read it aloud for a minute. Stop and count the number of words you have read. This will give you a measure of your normal speaking rate. Now select a serious story and a humorous story. Read each story for two minutes. Stop and count the number of words you read and divide by two. This will give you the words-per-minute rate. Does your rate vary between the two stories? The content of different types of stories will affect your rate and pitch. If you start a newscast with a story about Congress but end with an obituary, you will vary the rapid pace of the hard news story to a slower, more sombre tone for the obituary. If the last story is a light, humorous story, you will read faster and play with the pitch and pacing. If you are speaking conversationally and delivering meaning, this will be natural.

Tempo in speech is related to tempo in music. In music, the beat reflects the timing of a composition, and divides the music into equal units of time. In speech, words-per-minute is similar to the beat in music. The musical tempo determines the pace of the music—how fast or slow the beat will be played. In speech, the tempo is determined by the meaning of the words. The tempo gives the emotional interpretation of the content. Tempo in speech comes from the phrasing of words, duration of the syllables, and the use of pauses. We often stretch the key words in a sentence to increase the attention drawn to them. Tempo creates the unpredictable quality of human speech that makes it interesting. A concerto could have 72 different tempos. A radio story also should have different tempos that match the interpretation of the words being spoken. Varying the tempo and "playing" the pauses is necessary for the life of both a musical and a spoken composition.

Volume

The volume or loudness of your speech depends on several things: the acoustics of your environment, the microphone, the recording equipment, the style and atmosphere of the story, and the style of your radio station. Achieving an appropriate volume level is seldom a problem in broadcasting if you have proper microphone placement. You will need to place yourself close enough to the microphone to be in its pickup pattern. Always talk across the axis of the microphone, not straight into it. Maintain the same microphone placement throughout the recording. (See Chapter 12, "Field Recording: Techniques," for more detail on microphone placement; see Chapter 14, "Studio Production," for a discussion of perceptions of loudness.)

Read the story copy aloud to preset the level for the microphone. Deliver the story in the style that you will use when you are recording. Inexperienced announcers often say "Test 1, 2, 3," to check the mike level. This gives a false volume level for the voice because it doesn't reflect the copy or style of the performance. The preset mike level is often lower than the actual level you will use

when recording and could cause distortion. If you are recording with music or natural sound in the background, you are likely to talk louder. Preset your voice level while playing the music or natural sound in your earphones to prepare for the recording. Remember, your volume level should reflect the intimacy of the conversational style of radio.

Writing is the Key

Writing is the most important component of delivery. "For me, being conversational comes from my writing," says Lynn Neary. "When I'm reading an introduction written by another person, I may change the writing to make it more natural for me. For instance, if someone gives me copy with long sentences, I usually break it down to shorter sentences. I find shorter sentences more conversational." You may even want to read your copy aloud as you write. It will show you if you are creating any delivery traps. Wendy Kaufman, an NPR correspondent in Los Angeles, says she reads her copy aloud up to five times before going in the studio. "If I stumble over a word or phrase more than once, it isn't written well for the radio. I'll rewrite the copy because the writing really dictates the delivery."

The pacing and speaking style of the tape in the story also affects delivery style, so be sure to write your copy while listening to the tape, and matching the style and even the phrasing. Listen to the tape cuts while recording your tracks whenever possible. "If you have tape cuts that are slow, expressive and emotional, you can't come out of the tape cut delivering rapid-fire facts," says Kaufman. "You need to balance your tone of voice and pacing with the person on tape."

Mark your script so you will remember where to emphasize, where to slow down, where to speed up, and so on. Underline words you want to stress; use slashes to indicate pauses; spell out difficult words phonetically so they are easier to pronounce. "It takes a lot of energy to sound natural," says Neary, "but too much energy can also sound phony. Commercial radio usually sounds too frenetic, and NPR style is often too laid back. The best delivery may be somewhere between the two styles."

The most important thing is to know your copy. If you read it with meaning, you won't sound singsong.

Warming Up

Before any recording session, it is wise to use some vocal warm-up and relaxation techniques. Begin by taking several deep breaths from your diaphragm.

Relax your shoulders and slowly roll your head in a complete circle three times to the left and three times to the right. To improve the circulation in your face, open your eyes, mouth, nose, ears, and throat as far as you possibly can. Hold that extreme position for a few seconds. Then constrict the same muscles as tightly as you can and hold for a few seconds. Exaggerating facial expressions will add energy to the voice. It doesn't matter what you look like as long as you sound animated.

If needed, drink some warm water with a slice of lemon before going into the studio. The warmth releases the tension in the muscles and restores moisture to the mouth. The lemon cleanses your mouth and dilutes the saliva. Don't drink soft drinks with sugar before recording. The sugar coats your mouth and increases mouth noise. You might also want to try some vocalizations. Inhale slowly and exhale the sound *ahhh* very slowly several times. Say the sound "eee" on a scale from the highest note you can reach to the lowest and then back up again. Next, try some tongue twisters to improve your diction. Voice-over actress Susan Blu suggests *Good blood, bad blood* and *Red leather, yellow leather* as two phrases that exercise your mouth, lips, and tongue. Repeat each phrase five or six times, increasing the speed and exaggerating the delivery.* Voice coach Marilyn Pittman suggests repeating all of the consonants, "cacaca, dadada, fafafa, gagaga, etc." to warm up the articulators. Use other phrases that exercise your diction weak spots. Any voice and diction book will have a variety of exercises from which to choose.

This warm-up will help you release the "fight or flight" symptoms that come during a performance: When the body is frightened, it sends blood to the arms and legs and stops the digestive process. That causes your mouth to dry up and your arms and legs to quiver. Deep breaths can slow down the adrenalin and refocus your energy. Breathing is a key to sounding natural and relaxed. Each exhalation will release the tension. Use yawns and sighs to help relax the body. Mouth noise comes from dry lips and tongue smacking while speaking. Drinking warm water or placing a flat cough drop between the cheek and gum can help relieve mouth noise by increasing saliva in the mouth.

Q-TIP

Teddy Handfield uses the acronym "Q-TIP" to help her students remember the elements of good delivery. *quality, timing, intensity, and pitch* are necessary to transfer the appropriate meaning to the listener. Carl Kasell says: "You want to

*Susan Blu and Molly Ann Mullen, *Word of Mouth* (Los Angeles, Calif., Pomegranate Press, Ltd., 1987), p. 23.

read and take the ink out of it and put yourself in its place so you find yourself expressing ideas simply by talking to another person.”

Practice “cold readings” to improve your spontaneous delivery. A cold reading is simply reading, without practice, copy you have never seen before. Listen for the meaning of the words. Are you tempted to slip into a melody not related to the meaning of the sentence? Is your rate appropriate for the content? Do you vary the tempo spontaneously? Is your voice concerned or connected with the listener?

Finally, there are three “P’s” that are necessary for good delivery. The first is *pronunciation*. It’s important to pronounce all words, especially proper names, correctly. Many parts of the country and the world have idiosyncrasies in the spelling and pronunciation of names. I worked as a newscaster for the Wisconsin network and learned this lesson the hard way. There are many Native American names for towns in northern Wisconsin. I encountered the town, *Shawano*, in copy one day and said *Sha-wah-no*. The phones began to ring because the correct pronunciation is *Shah-no*. Be sure to check the pronunciation of any tricky words before going on the air. The wire services usually distribute a daily pronunciation guide for difficult names in news copy.

Another “P” is *performance*. You are performing each time you record your tracks. Edward R. Murrow majored in speech and theater. Undoubtedly, this training helped his broadcast journalism career. Taking a speech class or an acting class may help improve your performance skills.

There is no substitute for the final “P,” *practice*. Reading aloud every day is the best practice. Recording your reading will give you a chance to critique your performance. Save these recordings and review them. I save samples of recordings from all points in my career. They show the way the voice matures and the changes in interpretation that come from practice. You will be encouraged by the improvement you have made when you review your work. Maintaining good vocal delivery, like staying proficient at playing a musical instrument, requires continual practice.

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Part III

FEATURES

Conceiving Features: One Reporter's Style

Robert Krulwich

Every feature begins with an idea, and developing that idea for the radio is much more than a writing job. For me, the writing part—sitting at the typewriter and knocking out a script—comes second to last. My features go through five stages:

1. Finding the Idea
2. Creating an Outline
3. Isolating the Tape
4. Writing
5. Refining

Finding an Idea for a Feature Story

There are basically two ways to do feature stories: find them yourself, or follow up someone else's story.

When editors assign features, they usually take the second approach. Often they ask reporters to get the "local angle" on a major news story, so if the United States has just landed a man on the moon, editors across the country will want to know if anyone in their towns, or any relative of someone in town, was part of the effort. These stories are called **sidebars**, **soft pieces**, or **color stories**. Seasonal

stories, "Area Jews Celebrate Passover," are in the same category. Follow-up features are generally more fun if you think them up yourself; that is why it's best to read the morning paper before you get to work and hold on to any story that makes you so curious you want to know more.

So, if you read in the paper that 17 out of the 18 lawyers the governor nominated to be judges were not approved by the state legislature, you might wonder how the 18th lawyer got through. Or, if you see a story announcing, "Paul Smith has been appointed president of the Hills School, replacing John Jones, who held the job for the last four months," you might wonder what happened to Mr. Jones, and why the school has such a high turnover. If this doesn't come naturally, pick out a few stories, and force yourself to think of some aspect that the paper overlooked.

Another tip: If you read the morning paper and discover that you know a central figure—or better, someone who is friends with, related to, works with, or bowls with that figure—you've got yourself a source. Give your source a call, if possible, before you see your editor. Then ask your source, "Your son was at the Hills School when John Jones got there. Was Jones a good principal? Why did he leave?"

The other way to get feature story ideas is hard to explain. Some people can get up in the morning and, by the time they get to work, they have seen something odd in a store window, overheard a suspicious conversation, or met a man whose wife is about to be named ambassador to Trinidad. Good reporters are always making mental notes. They never stop reporting. The littlest thing can get them going:

- A friend mentions that a friend of hers is training a) to become a pilot; b) to become a shoe salesman; c) to stop smoking. And the reporter thinks maybe there are features here. . . .
- The local movie theater has been showing the same film for nine weeks; there are only 30,000 people in town. Everyone who wants to see the movie has seen it. A reporter may wonder: Why is it still there? There must be some explanation. . . .

The key is, *anything that makes you curious could turn into a feature. Anything.* Suggest your idea to your editor or news director. If you have thought the story through and are excited about the material, you will have a good chance of selling others on your idea.

Here are a few do's and don'ts:

- **Do follow up a lead.** A friend of yours says in passing, "Strange, but that's the third boy to get leukemia in the same neighborhood. In fact, they live on the same street." If you think there may be more than coincidence involved, ask

for the boys' names, the name of the street, the hospital they went to, and write the information down. *Don't trust your memory.*

- **Do check out stories promptly.** Don't sit on a lead. Call right away. Someone else could get the story.
- **Don't quit a story because the first interview goes badly.** If the person you talked to was abrupt, insulting, confusing, or gave you too much information, that is not a reason to stop. Don't let yourself be intimidated. Try one more call. The second call is almost always easier.
- **Don't be embarrassed to ask the friend, relative, or acquaintance for an interview,** even if asking is awkward. Being a little pushy is part of being a reporter. You will constantly be amazed at how many doors can be opened just by asking forcefully (but politely). Reporters are forever imagining privacy difficulties that don't materialize. If you have ever been interviewed, then you know the experience: At the start, you are nervous and careful, but, as the conversation warms up, you find yourself saying all kinds of things you never expected to say, and only afterward do you wonder, "What came over me?" Whatever it is, it comes over almost everyone. This does not mean you should betray confidences. Some exchanges, even if they would make good stories, are really **off the record.**
- **Don't trust newspaper accounts.** They are not always accurate. Before assuming a statement to be true, check it out yourself. "Mrs. Lesko, the *Chronicle* says your collie dug up \$48 in the front yard. Is that right?"

Creating an Outline: How To Organize a Feature Story

A straight news story offers facts in order of importance; the classic structure of a hard news story will cover who, what, when, where, why, and how over the course of the piece. These questions will be answered with appropriate supporting paragraphs in the appropriate order. But features flow any way they have to to hold an audience. So I cannot tell you how to structure a feature. But you must have a structure.

Features require a peculiar way of thinking common to reporters and storytellers. Experience has to be turned instantly into narrative outline. For example, suppose my editor tells me he had heard that a famous music magazine has decided to change its name from *Crawdaddy* to *Feature*. He wants to know why. "Check it out," he says.

The beginning reporter is likely to rush over to the magazine without further thought. The reporter will arrive on the scene, find the person in charge, and say something like, "Excuse me, I hear you are switching names. Tell me about

it." This doesn't work very well. Asked a general question, a source will usually give a general answer like, "Yes, we're changing names. The new one comes out next month." This lets your source shape your story, and it may not be until you are back in the office that you will notice a small remark that could have been the focus of your story, if only you had followed up on it. A better approach is to try to imagine a possible shape for your story *before* you start interviewing.

Scene I: Publisher notices two newsstands downtown where *Crawdaddy* has been put next to the sports magazines. It sits between *Trout and Stream* and *Reel 'n Rod*. He wonders why.

Scene II: Publisher gets a marketing report that says two out of every five newsstand dealers think *Crawdaddy* is about Southern fish.

Scene III: Publisher sends colorful mailing to 10,000 news dealers saying that *Crawdaddy* is about music, and belongs next to *Rolling Stone* and *High Times*.

Scene IV: Nothing changes. Publisher decides to get a new name.

Scene V: News dealers react.

Not one word of this has been verified. It is probably entirely untrue. But, with an outline, however imaginary, I have something that gets me going and guides my way. I now have a better sense of what to do next.

First, the story line (as I imagine it, anyway) seems a little nutty, so I am excited. This is important. If the editor's suggestion had triggered a dull scenario, I would have argued that it was a dumb idea, and I should be assigned something else. But I like it. So I am motivated. Second, my five scenes suggest a definite line of questioning: What was wrong with the name *Crawdaddy*? Who discovered the problem? Why change to *Feature*? Were there competing alternatives? How will they explain the change to customers? Third, I can guess at a short list of people to talk to: a) whoever discovered the problem; b) the person(s) who decided to change the name; c) readers; d) maybe news dealers, if my hunch is correct.

Now I am on my way. I make calls, ask questions. But let's suppose that my first interview, with the publisher, goes terribly. Let's assume that he is dull, frightened, and monotone. Unfortunately, he was the one who discovered that *Crawdaddy* was, indeed, placed with the wrong magazines on the newsstands—not the fishing magazines, as it happens; it was stacked alongside *Teen Scene* and *Teen Age* and the comic books. *Crawdaddy* is intended for 16- through 35-year-old readers, not the 8-14 set, so the wrong people were seeing it. I also learned (again from my dull, monotone publisher) that he ordered an investigation and found that when news dealers looked at the cover design and the funky name *Crawdaddy*, the magazine so resembled other teen/fan magazines that the dealers just assumed they belonged together.

Yes, there was a meeting, but the publisher says everyone who was at the meeting is too busy to talk with me. Yes, they decided to make the magazine look more adult. Yes, that is why they dropped *Crawdaddy* and chose *Feature*. *Feature*, he says, has definite adult appeal. End of interview.

What to do? My original scenario assumed a colorful, bright narrator who would tell the magazine's story. Then I would talk to readers and news dealers. But my narrator is a drag, and no one else on the staff has permission to talk on tape.

I know my original outline won't work. If I let the publisher tell his story for three or four minutes and throw in the news dealers at the end, the audience will never stay with the piece—too dull—and if the dealers are any good, all my strong tape will come in a jumble at the very end. So I decide on a new outline that will introduce the dealers earlier in the story. I imagine:

- Scene I: Publisher sees magazine in the wrong place.
- Scene II: Dealers say they thought it was a teeny-bopper magazine.
- Scene III: Publisher redesigns cover; changes name.
- Scene IV: Dealers react.

That feels more lively. It depends less on the publisher, and it switches back and forth from the executive to the newsstand. It won't be dull. So with this substitute outline in my head, I go to interview the news dealers. I tell them what the publisher has said, and ask them to react, step-by-step, to his narrative.

They are marvelous. One tells me yes, he put *Crawdaddy* with the comics, but he knows they are changing the cover, and from now on *Feature* will be where it belongs—with the literary magazines. That is what he remembers being told. The other dealer says *Crawdaddy's* problem is not its name. "It stinks. It won't sell if they called it *Newsweek*," he says.

As we are talking, I can feel the story falling into place.

- Scene I: Publisher sees his magazine in the wrong place.
- Scene II: Dealers say they thought it was a teeny-bopper magazine.
- Scene III: Publisher redesigns cover; changes name.
- Scene IV: Dealer No. 2 says it won't work. The magazine stinks.
- Scene V: Publisher talks of plans to "educate" dealers.
- Scene VI: Dealer No. 1 tells me from now on it goes with the poetry journals.

Because I have a working outline in my head, I walk away from those dealers with a story that is almost finished. I don't have to dub off the full interviews, only the parts I need. Walking back to the office, I can start composing the introduction in my head. When I am up against a short deadline, having that outline constantly on tap is a terrific help.

However, I must be careful. Because I begin most interviews with a preconceived outline, it is easy to miss a better story if one should come along. Should

one of the dealers mention that *Feature* is going to cut its price in half, and so is *Rolling Stone*, bells should go off. If I am alert, I must immediately switch scenarios:

Scene I: *Feature* starts a price war among music magazines.

Scene II: *Rolling Stone* reacts and drops its price.

Scene III: So does *Record World*.

Now I have a business story. I don't completely ditch my earlier *Crawdaddy* scenario. I can go back to it if the business story proves uninteresting, or incorrect, but I decide to switch gears. Also, I have to be willing to let my outline become more complicated. My initial scenarios are often fairy-tale simple. The characters always tell the truth.

Suppose, however, that some of the dealers tell me that they hear *Feature* may never be delivered. The magazine, they understand, is too deeply in debt and is about to go under. If they are right, I am going to look very foolish talking for four minutes on the radio about a name change when the product itself is about to disappear. So, I have to check their story, and, if the publisher won't deny it, then I would ask my editor whether we want to run the story at all. We would have to restructure the outline to include the magazine's financial problems—which could get unwieldy.

But, if I had gone from person to person with no structure in my head, I could never have controlled my interviews as effectively. I would have been less certain about what to ask, what to emphasize, whom to talk to, and, most of all, when to stop. And once I stopped, with no structure in my head, I would have to re-listen to all my interviews and superimpose an outline. That takes too much time. To make deadlines, reporters have to be efficient.

Isolating the Tape

This part is easy. When I am interviewing somebody, I always know when I have just had a good moment. Sometimes it is a concise answer that fits perfectly into my outline (or creates a good alternate outline). Sometimes it is a funny exchange that will be easy to listen to. Sometimes (and these are best), it is a remark that is perfect as a cap to my story and will fit wonderfully at the very end (I can hear myself signing off immediately afterward). As soon as I have such a moment, I think, "I can use that," and it goes into the outline that is building in my mind. When I am walking back to the office, I play that moment back on my cassette recorder to hear if it was as good as I thought.

Beginning reporters too often feel compelled to use tape segments that contain official or "important" statements. For example, the mayor intoning in his official voice, "This was the worst earthquake we've had in eastern Michigan in

50 years." In fact, you can say that just as well yourself, in your script ("Mayor Jones called it the worst earthquake. . .").

You will find you can usually convey information more succinctly than the person you interview. The tape that is best is the tape that conveys mood, emotion, involvement, or context—things you can't convey as well yourself.

A word of warning, however. Since vivid tape (or good pictures) is so helpful to broadcast reporters, we often structure our stories around those moments, even if we have to take a weird detour to make them fit. This is dangerous. I have a weakness for nice tape that is as strong as the next fellow's, and I don't like to let a good moment go, but I know that I must not distort a point or break a narrative flow just to accommodate a few seconds of flashy tape. Sometimes, tape must go. I have found that if I postpone the surgery to a later stage (the "writing" stage that follows), it is much less painful.

Therefore, after I have finished my interviews, I select all the "best moments"—even the ones that don't quite fit my outline. I arrange them in order of probable appearance, as suggested by my outline, on a single reel. Each moment is separated by leader tape (colored or paper tape that cannot be recorded on, used for visual identification of parts of a reel; see Chapter 13, "Tape Editing"), so when I play the reel through I can hear my story in rough outline, minus the connecting, scripted parts. I listen through at least once, mentally "writing in" the connecting material. Then I sit down to write.

Writing

As I said earlier, for hard news, the form is all important: hard news always begins with the hard lead, followed by supporting material, spoken in the neutral, natural voice. Features, on the other hand, can have a personality. The reporter can become a character in the story by allowing his or her personality to be heard, or give a minor player a major voice, or let the scene play itself exactly as it was recorded. The choices are so varied that I cannot lay down hard rules for feature writing, but I can offer some tips.

You are allowed to use "I." When I write a story about an experience I had, I choose the first person form. I try to write my script as though I were talking to a friend across a table.

I compose out loud. I sit at a typewriter, write a paragraph, and then speak it. If it sounds like me talking, I move on. If it sounds like my written self, I try again.

I am not offended by laughs, grunts, snorts, giggles, and sighs—my own or anyone else's. It is okay to make human noises on the radio. When appropriate I will give myself a stage direction in the script, "Sigh here."

When is that appropriate? I find that when I am writing out of tape that finishes with lots of people laughing, it is sometimes correct not to break the mood. If they were laughing at a joke, I may keep the laughing going for an instant more, or at least speak my next lines smiling.

A mood or tone established on tape does not have to end just because the tape runs out. That is true before a tape cut too. If I have a bad scene on tape that begins with a woman crying, I anticipate the mood. My words may look neutral on paper ("I met Janet Jones in her apartment. The door was open and I just walked in. . ."), but I know what's coming. This is going to be sad, so I put a little sadness in my voice ahead of time. A mood is established that makes the transition smoother. That way, the audience is not distracted when I move from script to tape, and the story flows more easily. I do change moods, but only when it fits the narrative.

There is a tendency, especially among beginning reporters, to draw too clear a line between tape and script. Tape and script are not separate entities, standing side by side; they must sound like two interdependent parts of a whole.

Suppose I go out and do a feature on acute depression. It is my first feature, and I get an interview with a famous psychiatrist, who has just written a book on the subject. He says there are four types. He describes Type A beautifully; he is brief, clear, and to the point. On Type B, he has a stuttering attack, which makes him nervous and hard to follow. On Type C, he is so-so and Type D takes too long.

I come back to the office. My outline is obvious. I will report on all four categories of depression. Since the tape on Type A is good, I will use it. To avoid the stuttering episode, I throw away the tape on Type B and script that section. I have to have more of the doctor in the story, so I go back to the tape for Type C and I write up Type D.

I end up with a story that moves like a fox trot; four steps, tape-script-tape-script, each separate, each equal. Boring. When a story moves in so predictable and regular a rhythm, the audience knows what is coming, and, if listeners aren't that interested in the subject, they will nod out. Each segment is self-contained, like unfriendly neighbors in an apartment house. Each makes its point, then ends. Novice reporters often fall into this pattern.

There are other options. You could start with tape segment A, where the doctor does well, then roll into segment B, still on tape, until the doctor begins his stuttering fit, and then just pick up in script after his second or third stammer. That way, the reporter appears to be rescuing the doctor. That adds a dimension to the story (it is interesting when a psychiatrist stutters), but, more important, it is a more lively transition from tape to script.

When you finish describing Type B depression, you don't have to go back to the doctor for Type C. Begin describing the third category yourself, and pass off to the doctor only when he was at his best in that segment, even if you give him

just two or three sentences. A short tape cut is okay. There is no such thing as too long or too short for tape or script segments. I have inserted a one-word cut of tape that lasted one second. I do whatever suits me, as long as it moves the story along, keeps the audience listening, and is faithful to the material.

Remember, there are all kinds of ways to alter the rhythm of a story. Not everyone agrees about these techniques, and not everyone can make them work. The first suggestion I am offering tends to be controversial. Make sure you know the opinion of your editor before cutting too much tape. Here are some suggestions for altering the rhythm of a story:

1. *Start a sentence in the script and have someone on tape finish it.*
 Script: "Yes, doctors say they are working on a cure . . ."
 Tape: "But we won't have one for another 10 years . . ."
 Script: ". . . says Dr. T. B. Gross."

2. *Don't return to script between each cut of tape. Go from script to several consecutive tape cuts.*
 Script: "Doctors say they are working on a cure . . ."
 Tape of Dr. Jones: "Yes, but that's a long way off . . ."
 Tape of Dr. Smith: "I'd say 10, 11 years . . ."
 Tape of Dr. Gray: "At least that or maybe more. . . ."

(Notice that each tape cut is quite short. This works best if the three voices are very distinctive. So it would be nice if Dr. Smith were a man, and Drs. Jones and Gray women, so the voice changes would be obvious.)

3. *Start the story in a specific location (a hospital laboratory) and then leave the scene. The change in, or absence of, atmosphere will alter the rhythm.*
 Tape Ambience: hospital/hospital/hospital/
 hospital/studio/studio/studio/studio
 Script: "The doctors are still looking for a vaccine. But, they are out of money."

4. *Use tape to punctuate a script. Take a single word (an enthusiastic "yes!"), or a short sentence ("yes! yes!" or "Oh no!"), and drop it in to break up your script.*
 Script: "He drew the line in . . . slowly . . . and then he saw the fish. . . ."
 Tape: "YES!"
 Script: "It was a beauty!"
 Script: "She says she looked up, and that was when she saw him."
 Tape: "Oh no!"
 Script: "He was hanging off the balcony. . . ."

Refining

It is time to make my final cuts. Now that I have completed the first or rough cut, my story will get much shorter. In this last review, precious moments on tape hit the floor. Beautiful lines drop away. I am editing for a consistent, even pace.

I not only cut, I sometimes add. I might mix in some new sound recorded at one of the places I visited—background sound of people playing or street traffic—because I find that a bed of non-studio sound can pull a section together.

This can be a dangerous time, too. I sometimes get so carried away tightening and cutting that I will chop out a minor, but important, detail so that a complicated idea becomes too simple, and the story is no longer as precise, or as clear or honest as it should be. So I have devised a test. It is the last thing I do before I go into the studio to record.

The 'Squirm' Test

I ask myself, "Can I bring all the people I interviewed for this story into this studio and read this script and play this tape right in front of them without shame, and when I finish, can I look them in the eye (all of them) and defend everything I have just said?"

If I can, I go in and record.

Robert Krulwich is a business and economics correspondent for CBS Television and a regular contributor to public television. He developed his speciality—explaining complex economic, legal, and diplomatic news in a style that is clear, compelling, and entertaining—on radio. Before joining CBS in 1985, Krulwich was business and economics correspondent for National Public Radio and NPR's national editor. He still contributes to NPR's WEEKEND EDITION. Krulwich has won numerous awards for his reporting, including Gainsbrugh Awards from the Economics Broadcasting Association, a Champion Award from the Amos Tuck Business School, and PBS's special award for programming excellence. He covered the Watergate hearings for Pacifica Radio and was the Washington bureau chief of Rolling Stone magazine. Krulwich has a B.A. in history from Oberlin College and a J.D. from Columbia University School of Law.

Writing for the Ear: A Personal Approach

Scott Simon

Several years ago I was part of a documentary team a well-regarded and civilized producer took to a spot in the western part of this country. We were to produce a one-hour program that would leave the listener with an accurate and compassionate sense of the community that we'd inhabited for one week, and an appreciation for a way of living that was odd and unknown to most of our audience. We taped everything, soaking up sound with shotgun microphones, handheld microphones, wireless microphones strapped into improvident places, microphones strung out of trees and over tanned, hard and mostly soundless prairies. "What I'd like to do," said the producer, "is create a whole hour of sound that will communicate this story with no script at all. I guess that's something we always shoot for."

After several months of difficult stereophonic production, the documentary was ready. I listened to it while kneeling on the rug, my ears purposefully trained at the identical height of the woofers (or was it tweeters?). A great deal of it I liked. But sound spattered unexpectedly; squeals, jangles, chimes, and commotion bustled across the speakers and tramped over my mental interior, as if I were overhearing an intruder and trying to determine exactly where he is in the house and what he's stealing. After a while, it was only tedious.

What was missing from the mix was good writing: a voice that could have poked about, implored, queried, become friendly or abrasive, empathetic or instructive. The voice of a piece, which is what your writing becomes, is what

provides the vision to a story. It is the eyes of the audience—and the nose, the fingers, the mind. Good writing can give unexpected worth (even if it's just the shine of style) to a piece that is otherwise unremarkable. It can turn good reporting into memorable reporting. Bad writing can leave brilliant reporting in ruins.

Nothing can offer identifiable character to your work as well as your good, sensitive, imaginative writing. It is the first skill most of us are told to master in this craft, yet often the first one sacrificed—to the crunch of deadlines and the constraints of air time.

Getting Started

There is a tendency in the news business to define a story according to certain italicized designations: *hard-news*, *soft-news*, *profile*, *personality*, *investigative*, *retrospective*. The hazard in this is in believing that writing technique and writing standards change from category to category. I do not believe they do. Our minds don't have switches—on/off, humorous/serious—that we throw one way or the other, depending on the story. When you want to highlight humor, you should remember that you still want to respect the facts and use the language well. When you have to be unrelievedly serious, remember that small glints of good feeling, if not outright humor, can help the listener weigh the seriousness of the situation.

Be wary of developing one style for reporting on an audition of chickens for a role in a Broadway show (one of my first assignments, by the way) and another for an analysis of logistics during the Gulf War (a more recent one). The same voice should be recognizable in both. Soft news stories need to convey information no less than hard news; profiles should be investigative; hard news must have enough retrospective to lend context; and so on.

Defining the story. Little else is worth worrying about in writing a story until you've answered this question: What is the story?

The story may seem too obvious to worry about defining it, such as

Mayor Proposes Tax Increase.

However, the real story is found in the questions underneath the headline: Is the mayor increasing taxes because of budget deficits, or to fund an increase in certain city services? If new taxes are necessary, who will be affected most by the proposed ones? Does the increase represent a reversal of campaign promises? Is the city forced to compensate for the loss of federal or state revenues, or has it just been overspending?

For the sake of example, let's say that federal revenues have been shrinking while city crime has been growing, and the mayor has promised to hire more police. The story then gets more complicated:

Despite reductions in city revenues caused in part by a loss of federal aid, the mayor wants to hire more police, so she has proposed a tax increase.

To get from the more complex question to actually writing the story, try this: Identify three points in a story you want listeners to know if they absorb nothing else between distractions. In our example, the three points might be these:

1. The city needs more money to hire more police.
2. Sources of revenue are shrinking.
3. The mayor seemed short-tempered.

Some of these points will seem obvious; others unexceptional, but perhaps telling. Don't be reluctant to include the latter type in your short list. During the war in the Persian Gulf, I wrote an essay about waiting with the troops for ground combat to begin. The three points I wanted most to communicate were:

1. Intelligence estimates said that ground combat would be necessary to spur large Iraqi surrenders.
2. Soldiers were anxious for ground combat to begin soon, because they saw it as the quickest way to be done with the war and return home.
3. Many soldiers eat Froot Loops breakfast cereal.

Now I am confident that most listeners understood and comprehended all three of these points. But I still hear from people who remember the Froot Loops—and nothing else. It may have seemed like the least critical point, but it easily was the most memorable, because it seemed to symbolize the youth of the soldiers and the concept of their fortifying themselves to die.

Outline. After you have determined your three points, outline the way you think the piece should sound. An academically correct, categorized and subcategorized outline is not necessary, but some black-and-white scribbling of the themes and points you want to make, the scenes and details you wish to describe, will help you plot the proper approach. Too many radio reporters care for little more than those parts of a story that can be acquired through the business end of a microphone. If you rely solely on information that can be recorded or remembered, you may be cheating the audience out of the benefit of a reporter's practiced, firsthand observations.

Isolate and Characterize

Some large, endlessly unfolding stories (wars, economic crises, political campaigns) can be made fresh and worth hearing by isolating a smaller element from

them and using that to suggest the contours of the whole event. An example of this is a story I filed before the Persian Gulf ground war began in 1991. The story, which was about the U.S. logistics operation, tried to convey a sense of the overwhelming amount of materiel and personnel accumulating in the desert for lethal purpose:

Simon: Operation Desert Storm has brought American-style truck convoys to the remote northern desert on roads laid down like pipelines in the scattering sand where Saudi Arabia runs up against Kuwait and Iraq. (*Natural sound of music up full, then under.*) An American lieutenant pins the pedal of a jeep above 120 and cranks a country-music tape above the buzz of the emergency alarm for much of the 10-hour drive toward the border. There is no rush hour and no letup along this highway. Trucks, troop carriers, missile launchers, and ammo vans loaded up and lashed down with all the war commodities of today's armed forces. Quarter-of-a-ton artillery shells, some already inscribed, at the factory or dock, "Eat this Saddam." Bags of holiday candy sent with the best wishes of American and British school children, Tow Missiles, and tampons. The man who is overseeing this methodical expansion of so much American resources is Army Major General William "Gus" Pagonis.

Pagonis: Well, it's probably the largest logistical operation deployment, reception, armored movement, and sustainment ever done of a force in history. And it was done in an extremely rapid, short period of time.

Simon: General Pagonis was one of the first ranking American generals to arrive in Saudi Arabia. A notably short, silver-haired man, he plays basketball with his staff several times a week, which may seem a surprising enthusiasm for a man his size except, say his aides, the game they play consists of passing the ball to the general for him to take shot after shot. General Pagonis, however, seems more generous in passing off credit for such an apparently rapid and effective deployment. He likes to tell about the time last fall when he ordered a young lieutenant to design and install Vietnam-style latrines.

Pagonis: Well, immediately I could see by the expression on his face he had no idea what I was talking about. Then I realized: At his age, he probably didn't participate in Vietnam, which is obvious. And then he looked at me and—a very aggressive kid—he said, "Well, I saw the movie *Platoon*, and I saw the latrines. Is that what you want?" And I said, "Absolutely!" So he went out and within 24 hours designed it, had the Saudis design a prototype, and they were off the production line within three days. It's fortunate he saw the movie.

Simon: During that last major American war, the Vietcong used to ridicule American soldiers for what was taken to be their inability to make war without sit-down latrines, the latest music tapes, and familiar snack food. But General Pagonis believes that attending not only to the needs but the comforts

of American soldiers—delivering fresh fruit and hot shower tents into the field, as well as artillery shells—will make them stronger and better motivated than most of the Iraqi soldiers across the border.

Pagonis: Our medical and sick rate here is the lowest in the history of any war. It's even lower than peacetime. So according to our Article 15, which is our Uniform Code of Military Justice, it's the lowest it's ever been . . . court martials, everything. The morale of the troops is high. Well, to keep morale high you have to provide them those services that will help keep their morale high and their sanitation and everything else.

Notice the way the *details* accumulate to tell the big picture. Mentioning together items as large as Tow missiles and as small as tampons gives the listener an understanding of the scope of the American logistical effort much more vividly than raw tonnage statistics. Describing the fact that the general, who is not tall, plays basketball—and how he plays it—tells as much about the man as several paragraphs of psychological speculation, especially when it's combined with the story about the young soldier and the latrines.

Often we believe that if we simply pile on statistics—hard facts—we will convey the whole story. This is not so. The late Chicago journalist Ben Hecht used to complain that his analysis of courtroom cases was outdated and forgotten the morning after a verdict. Maybe so. But his picturesque descriptions of defendants, his rendering of the interplay of judges and defendants—all of that survives as a human story we take pleasure in reading today.

Using Tape

Of course, in most of your pieces, a substantial portion of your script is already in existence before you start writing: on tape. Your words must bounce off and between the words of those you have interviewed or taped in some proceeding. With the possible exception of traffic reports, all scripts we write must set off, expand, or integrate the words of others. Indeed, this is where *real* radio exists: conversation, verbal wordplay, the sound of people running through their thoughts or reliving moments.

Log your tape. Know what's there. Sometimes, what you *think* you heard is *not* there. Machines malfunction. The mind misremembers. More pleasantly, sometimes something you did not hear *is* there, waiting to be heard, discovered, and used.

So for feature writing I prefer the method of carefully auditing and logging each second of tape recorded for a story—taking care to star (*) those moments that stand up best, then deciding which tape to use, and in what order—rather than scripting before locating tape to fit.

Let the tape tell the story. I prefer tape that is active and expressive, something that contains the sound of thinking, musing, recollection, or events actually unfolding. In some rare instances you may interview people whose sense of self and narrative is so complete and entertaining that your log is lined with stars. In such cases let the tape play, and apply script only sparingly, as a highlight rather than a base. Here's a segment of a piece we did on a telephone answering service in New York City, featuring its founder, Clifford Harris:

Harris: (into phone) Can I help you? . . . Yes, I can, who is this? . . . What do you want, Lena? . . . Well, you can't have messages. No one calls you. You're not pop-u-lar. *(ringing phone)* Well, look, I gotta run. I'm being made famous. OK, bye-bye. *(to Simon)* Anyway, what was the question?

Simon: One thing I can't help but think about, and it does hearken back to that old Judy Holliday movie about an answering service. She became infatuated with one of the clients. . . . Does that happen?

Harris: Yes, it does. The problem is, you build up these crazy fantasies in your mind about them, over the phone. And they never quite live up to what you expect them to be, so it's not really fair to them, because I meet them, and after a half an hour I'm very disappointed with them, and I think that they can tell it. And no one wants their answering service to, like, be disappointed in them.

Simon: As you may have gathered, this small office off of Broadway, with a window that fronts on an alleyway, is actually an interesting place from which to watch New York—or a part of it. And Clifford Harris likes that about it—that, from a telephone on a scarred desk, he can clue together an idea of the kinds of people he services. But still, he speaks of leaving the business.

Harris: It's just the fact that I'm tired of taking other people's messages. I want to go out and make my own. The first thing I'll do is go and get my own answering service, and I will drive them insane. You kind of, like, find out what other people are doing in the city while you're sitting here doing nothing. You realize that there are a lot of things that go on in this city—a lot of people who are just, like, out on the fringe.

Simon: And everywhere around the room, cellophane-taped from the ceiling to the baseboard, there are thousands of pictures of his clients, 8-by-10 posed publicity glossies that are sent to agents and directors by those looking for work. Their names and telephone numbers run beneath their set smiles. And Clifford Harris can find this sad.

Harris: Because this is just, like, a small part of it. There are many, many more actors and actresses than this. And very, very few of these people will be even able to make a living at it, much less obtain any kind of status. *(ringing*

phone) It is kind of, well, it's real sad. I'm depressed already. Excuse me. . . .
(to phone) Can I help you?

Simon: This is Scott Simon in New York City.

Harris: (continuing into phone) Oh, we are always sharp this early in the morning. You sound like you're better than you were . . . *(fades out)*

This piece rendered into script underscores the point that's too easily forgotten: *The tape of a piece and your script are equal partners in the ultimate product.* Dull, witless actuality debases, rather than enhances, good writing. Dull, witless, thoughtless, or uninspired writing only frustrates good tape.

The benefits of careful and imaginative writing are most apparent, I think, in those stories in which good writing illuminates good tape and makes it whole; words, sounds, phrases that might be puzzling and incomplete if left to themselves can be lifted up by good writing. Here's an example: a summer evening in 1979 I spent in the emergency room of an animal hospital in New York City.

(Traffic sounds)

Simon: The New York City Animal Medical Center sits just below the bridge at 59th Street looking over the East River into the borough of Queens. And at night you cannot see the traffic, really, but you hear it . . . iron sounds rattling out from under the girders . . . *(sounds up full, then under)* An emergency room facility at a veterinary hospital is unusual, . . . and here, the waiting room winding off of the second-floor ramp looks like something between a *New Yorker* cartoon and a more ordinary trauma center, with some dogs sitting primly in plaster splints or gauze muzzles . . . families struggling to leash in their St. Bernard from lunging at a cocker spaniel . . . and a pair of women grinding tears from their eyes, the lid of an empty cat-carrier thumping onto their chairs. The chief of staff in the emergency room is Dr. John Cave.

Doctor: So what's up?

Woman: She's growing weak, and for about the past three days, she hasn't hardly eaten a thing.

Doctor: She's about 15 now?

Woman: Yeah, well, she's in her 16th year.

Doctor: OK, what about vomiting?

Woman: Well, no, not that I know of . . . *(fading under)*

Simon: The cat is named Cassandra. Her fur is ticked brown, black, and white, and she seems quite slender, peering around the doctor's fingers as he presses the palms of his hands in carefully below her ribs. *(tape up full)*

Woman: She's very weak. She couldn't jump up on the table today by herself. *(tape under)*

Simon: Dr. Cave seems quietly, clearly concerned over the condition of his patient, who slumps without complaint as he takes her temperature, but squirms her face away from the cradle of his elbow as he tries to feed her beef liver baby food from the tip of his finger. Most alarmingly of all, Cassandra has not groomed herself in several days, whether from weakness, the summer heat, or advancing disinterest. The human equivalent of that might be a man so dispirited he refuses to rub the sleep from his eyes each morning. (*tape up full*)

Doctor: (*fading in mid-sentence*) . . . I can't foreclose anything. I'm reluctant to give her a clean bill of health. That's not really legitimate in a cat her age . . . (*fading under*)

Simon: And as Dr. Cave leaves the room for the paperwork to admit Cassandra, the woman who's lived with her for 16 years holds the cat's ear against her cheek.

Woman: (*consoling Cassandra*) I love ya . . . even if you do smell bad.

This example suggests how your writing can be used to expand the scope of a scene. The conversation between the doctor and the pet owner may be compelling on its own. But it is the writing that conveys the greater feeling—the look of the waiting room, the beef-liver baby food and the fingertip of a gentle doctor, the cat running short of interest in life, the woman whispering into the ear of a loved one. These details increase our understanding of that single line at the end: “I love ya . . . even if you do smell bad.”

Balance between tape and script. Some people recommend an arbitrary ratio of tape to script. I can't. Some pieces—news spots, obviously, but also many essays—will be entirely script. Others, like brief sound portraits, may be entirely tape. The point is: Engage, inform, and even entertain listeners with whatever ratio is required.

Nevertheless, there are some general guidelines from which you can deviate when the story dictates. Straight news pieces commonly run about 65 percent script, 35 percent tape. Features commonly run closer to 50/50, or even the reverse of straight news—that is, 65 percent *tape*, 35 percent script. If it works, fine. Reporters who are more comfortable with tape-editing than with writing usually will use a higher proportion of tape; reporters who are more confident in their writing are likely to apply more prose. Either approach can accomplish the task.

But do not assume—as many radio professionals do—that the audience somehow listens to tape more intently than to script. My own experience over the years has been that the audience hears what is most listenable. An Andrei Codrescu commentary can draw a deeper response than a sound-portrait. Radio, remember, uses the sounding board of our minds for resonance. The first great radio pieces—by Edward R. Murrow, Eric Sevareid—are *still* enthralling to listen

to, although they do not begin to meet our contemporary expectations for tape. The elements of drama and rhythm are there—in the writing.

Elements of Writing

Strive for rhythm in your words. There may not be a more difficult concept to convey about writing than this one. It has to do with bringing a balance, harmony, even a certain melody to your scripts. It is not “moon, June, spoon” writing. It *is*, I have become convinced, the way the human mind most abundantly absorbs words.

Thomas Paine’s, “These are the times that try men’s souls,” sticks with us because of the alliteration of the *t*’s. Would it have been correct to write, “These are difficult times”? Well, a good many people have. But we *remember* Paine.

Winston Churchill could have said something like, “I’m not saying it’s over, but the first phase might be drawing to a close,” rather than, “It is not the beginning of the end; but it may be the end of the beginning.” I like to think of some bright counselor telling him, “Oh, no, minister, too obscure,” but Churchill himself knowing that the alternative also would have been more ordinary and forgettable.

Of course, we cannot—and should not—write news spots with a rhyming dictionary nearby. And even if such constructions occur to us naturally, too much use becomes abhorrent—as in Spiro Agnew’s (actually, William Safire’s) “nattering nabobs of negativism.” But vivid, harmonious language succeeds best in the spoken word.

Describe. Probably the most surprising, best-observed virtue of radio is what it provides to the eye. The mind’s eye can be stimulated by vigorous writing, directed and filled with selected detail, which might not be noticed on film or video. It can offer the powerful sensation of “being there,” by offering, in close-up phrasing, the small glints of detail that can reflect the feel and texture of an event. Describe. Here’s an example from an early 1980s piece about the offices of the City News Bureau of Chicago. I think you might almost be able to re-create sections of an artist’s drawing from the opening description of the inner-city wire service:

(Newsroom noises)

Simon: The City News Bureau occupies the corner office on a floor 15 stories up from the street. It hangs like an opera box over the tracks of the West Loop elevated train. . . . And in this confusing period of Chicago spring, as the afternoon warms, windows are wrenched open to the clatter of trains, sprinting past. There are no video displays in this newsroom; the desks are glazed in grime. And reporters type, sometimes listing to the side, so as not to sit on the bared inner coil of a desk chair.

(Sound of Teletype)

Simon: There are actual iron Teletype machines in here that slug, swipe, and slam out words, not squirt them quietly in inky whispers as on more contemporary units. The sound, the swelter, the crunch of soot, cigar ash, and coffee grounds aren't intended to make employees of this organization entertain the idea of spending a comfortable career here.

Royko: Most people who worked at the City News Bureau, at least in the years I was there, recall it the way Marines recall boot camp.

Simon: Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Mike Royko, who began as an editor at City News. . . .

Again, look for the details that tell the larger story. If you're profiling an individual, it's often good to begin by scrutinizing the distinct traits of physical appearance, especially as they seem to bear on character or career. Here's the way I began an election-year profile of Timothy Hagen, the former "boss" of the Cuyahoga County (Cleveland, Ohio) Democratic organization:

Music: ("Happy Days Are Here Again")

Hagen: *(into phone)* Hello, is Ethel Kennedy in? Tim Hagen from Ohio.

Simon: Something used-up and unpleasant can come into the face of someone at the close of a long political campaign. It's a skin-bleaching, really . . . a bloating of the cheeks, neck, and eye sockets . . . a swelling collar of pastry, glazed doughnuts, acid-sour coffee, room service hamburgers, and dulling, late-night drinking all swallowed in full stride between engagements. Tim Hagen has been campaigning, more or less full time, for 12 years.

Hagen: Ethel? . . . How are you? . . . I don't know, did the senator call you last night or yesterday at all? You're scheduled to come into Toledo on Sunday. . . . Do you know that yet?

The odd point about that passage is that you would still find it difficult, despite the metaphors and similes, to recognize Tim Hagen on the street. My description nowhere mentions the color of his hair, his eyes, his height. But this is one of those times that radio pictures can tell more than real pictures; in the real pictures, the visual details can get in the way. For the mind's eye, I hope, my description of Tim Hagen told the listeners more than they ever could see in an 8-by-10 color glossy.

Particularize. If something is large, how large? If small, is it small as a Pekingese dog? Small as a child's tricycle? Small as a baby elephant, which, in turn, is much larger than a baby ferret? The point is to detail descriptions and actions not only for their narrative worth, but in the interest of precision and accuracy in telling a story.

In all your writing, however, be careful: It is possible to be excessive. Here's what I wrote for a piece on Quebec's then-Premier René Lévesque:

Simon: Amiable, animated, Napoleon-small, an incessant smoker, the ash from a cigarette sprinkling onto his shoulders often, as he pulls back twines of his concrete-gray hair horizontally across the half-crescent of his head before public appearances . . . René Lévesque's last major rally of the referendum campaign was held this weekend in a hockey stadium in Verdun West on Montreal Island. He was introduced thunderously, looking fuzzy and indistinct through the veil of flame-blue cigarette smoke, like an ill-tuned television picture. The premier seemed exhausted, wan, his skin a mottled nicotine orange under stage light.

"By the time you were done with him," said my editor, "I didn't know if he was blue or orange or what-the-hell color he was." He preferred a phrase I had used in describing a rancher from western Canada who had urged Premier Lévesque to stay within the Canadian confederation. I said the rancher had come to Quebec with "his newly learnt French pinching like a pair of tight boots." "It's the difference," said my editor, "between the rich tapestry of an Elizabethan work, and the isolated beauty of an uncluttered Japanese flower arrangement."

Use a thesaurus, and don't feel you need to keep it hidden. Using it should be no more a cause for embarrassment than a physician's occasionally referring to *Gray's Anatomy*. The English language, as we have noticed, is rich and subtle and varied; you cannot be expected to remember all of it. But having all of it available for your discriminating selection can make your writing stronger.

Write the way you talk. A radio script is spoken language. This is not an excuse for ill-considered, sloppy language, but a conversational tone often helps to communicate. Therefore, use "don't" instead of "do not" except where the latter is needed for emphasis.

Avoid the overly complex sentences and hyphenated phrasing that sometimes finds its way into newspaper writing: "Mikhail Gorbachev, the precedent-setting Communist apparatchik-turned-reformer, today conceded his obvious slippage of public support in the rapidly dissolving former Soviet Union and resigned the presidency of a nation that no longer legally exists since the formal establishment of the new Confederation of Independent States by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and 12 other leaders of former Soviet republics."

That summarizes the story (although I know many print editors who would rework that kind of newspaper prose, too). But if ears could gag, they would do so on such clotted phrasing. Talk that way *aloud* (go ahead—try it), and people will likely say, "Good grief, get with it!"

Read while you write. As you write, read your words aloud to test the rhythm, the sense, and the ease with which you can read your words in a studio. I once worked at a desk just 15 feet behind a local sports reporter who bellowed

as he did this, chanting and barking out scores and predictions. Unfortunately, he had three sportscasts scheduled each day, and it was a bit like trying to write while seated beneath the amplifier-speaker at a commuter railroad station. A soft, just scarcely audible reading to yourself should suffice—and help maintain friendly relations with those around you.

Get bogged down. If we tell ourselves, "I'll go back and get it right later," too often we never will. That's too much like leaving certain struts and braces out of a building until it's topped off, then trying to return and install them in a completed structure. To build rhythmic sentences that flow from one to the other, get your first draft as right as you can. Then you can return to your script to revise for clarity and conciseness and to smooth out rhythms.

This was the opening of a piece we did on the 50th anniversary of Twinkies snack cakes:

(Sounds of unwrapping, munching, and chewing, down for voice-over-sound.)

Simon: There may not be a more familiar, friendlier-looking insignia of American life than these tiny, twin, almost-orange confections sealed into cellophane wrap . . .

Voice: *(chewing)* I dunno . . . Twinkies . . .

Simon: They're sold over the counter in snack-shops, supermarkets, gas stations . . . in the vending machines of car washes, at cigar stands along Park Avenue . . . where they teeter over copies of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Paris-Match*. . . . They're with us always, Twinkies . . . like elevator music . . . sold, we're told, in the PX of Army camps in Thule, Greenland . . . plastic-wrapped ambassadors . . . in their way . . . from the abundance of American life. . . .

The words are meant to strike off one another in a certain order. It is necessary to have "familiar" before the phrase "friendlier-looking insignia of American life" to balance the sentence. "Tiny, twin, almost-orange confections sealed into cellophane wrap" builds from the alliteration of the two *t* sounds, into the assonance of "almost-orange," into the play of *s* sounds in "sealed into cellophane wrap." It would have been perfectly accurate, of course, to write something like "small, paired, reddish-brown baked goods wrapped in cellophane"—but not, I think, as interesting.

A Final Caution

If you begin to develop a distinctive style—a separate and identifiable voice in your work, which is your own—you may also begin to invite imitation, or, somewhat less welcome, parody. Or, worse, self-parody. This is the opening passage of a

piece we did purporting to report on the success of a scientific program researching communication between homo sapiens and coho salmon:

Simon: As the spring drifts to Warnock, Wisconsin, the winter's overlay of ice, like a great white goose-down quilt spread out like the robe of a thoroughbred horse over the shoulders of Lake Michigan, begins to recede . . . and deep beneath the moss-colored cover of the lake, coho salmon begin to swirl, as the lake, slapping sloop and shore, begins again to take on life.

That is, of course, pure crap. But to those not listening with great attention, it *sounded* plausible; it sounded, unfortunately, like *me*. That, of course, is distressing. It is, however, a risk worth taking. It is the easiest price to suffer for trying to be original.

Scott Simon is host of NPR's WEEKEND EDITION on Saturdays. During the first two months of 1991, he covered the Persian Gulf War for NPR. Simon joined NPR in 1977 as chief of its Chicago Bureau. Since then, he has reported from 49 states, covered presidential campaigns and three wars, and reported from Central American, Africa, India, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Simon has received numerous honors for his NPR reporting including a George Foster Peabody Award for his 1989 radio essays, a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, a CINDY Award, and a Major Armstrong Award. Simon also hosts public television series, including the quarterly newsmagazine American Pie. He holds a B.A. from the University of Chicago.

Producing Features

Deborah Amos

A radio story is a shared experience between you and the listener. Preliminary research is as important as taking notes in the field, but your tape and your script tell the story and give this shared experience a beginning, a middle, and an end. The tape and the script allow the listener to share not only *your* experience but also the experience of the people involved in the story.

How do you turn hours and hours of tape into a finished radio story? This chapter will explore some of the ways to do that. There are plenty of approaches to producing a radio piece, almost as many ways as there are producers, but some techniques are common to all productions. Take what you can use, and invent new techniques as you go along.

It all begins with the tape—what you record in the field or the studio. You can engage listeners in the story only if they can identify with the people involved. Even if the story is about *something*, rather than someone, you must find a way to put a person in the story. It is that simple. Every something affects someone, and people must be heard talking about your subject. The more complicated the story is, the more this holds true. The writer John McPhee, in his book *The Curve of Binding Energy*, made nuclear engineering understandable and interesting simply by telling the story of one nuclear engineer. In one scene, McPhee had his subject explain atom-splitting as he and McPhee were playing billiards. It was a concrete metaphor that worked wonderfully. Of course, the same scene would work in a radio story, too.

A Thanksgiving Goose Story

There are many different ways to prepare a story, but there are some general approaches that are common to all of them. To illustrate them we'll use a good radio technique: We'll focus on one specific assignment—a story about goose hunting at Thanksgiving—as a way of explaining the broader principles.

Let's go back to the beginning of the assignment. For a Thanksgiving Day ALL THINGS CONSIDERED we were assigned to produce a documentary on goose hunting on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Every winter nearly a million geese fly south to nest in the corn fields and ponds of Maryland. Thousands of hunters come to the area during hunting season; many take home a bird for Thanksgiving dinner. The story was to be about hunting.

Story preparation begins on the phone. We called the local newspapers to find out when the season opened. One newspaper had run articles about goose hunting in Maryland with the names of hunters, so most of the research was already done for us—including leads to sources (hunters, guides, etc.). Some books about hunting pointed out that: 1) hunting dogs were important; 2) hunting guides were a skilled part of the hunt; and 3) a duck/goose blind would probably be a pretty noisy place. From this research we compiled a list of all the types of interviews and sounds we would like to gather for the piece.

Before You Leave

Before leaving on an assignment, have a few interviews set up. Work the phone hard before you leave, and even harder after you get to your destination. Ask all the people you interview for names of others you should talk to. If the story is controversial, ask them who their most worthy opponents are, and then interview the opponents. Talk to officials and professionals and shop clerks and parking lot attendants. Know what you must cover, and cover those subjects with a number of interviews. It is better to have too many than too few choices back at your editing station—better to be in a position to use only your best interviews in the finished piece and to discard the others. Remember, if you just go out to fill in the blanks of a story you have already done in your mind, you won't have the story—*not the real story*.

When you are in the field and sense the story starting to evolve, that's the time to trust your judgment and to follow the flow of the story. When we asked a couple of hunters to name their most worthy opponent, they directed us to the "meanest" and strictest federal game warden in all of Maryland. We called him for an interview. We had expected a dry discussion about the law and law enforcement. Instead, he talked about the personality quirks of hunters, and he

filled our tape with stories of agents hiding in a corn field all night to document hunters breaking the law. His stories were as passionate as the hunters' stories. We knew we would use this interview in the final production.

We interviewed many hunters for our goose hunting story, but one man seemed different from most of the others. He had spent most of his life training hunting dogs. He talked about his animals with a warmth and sincerity that could be heard in his voice. When he called to his dog during the interview, the dog walked over to the microphone and whimpered just loud enough to be recorded. It was a lovely moment, and it captured the contradictions of the hunter—a person who loves the outdoors, nature, and animals, but who shoots beautiful birds out of the sky.

We had recorded many hunters but used only this interview in the final story. It was a great find. The other interviews didn't go to waste, however, because each interview gave us a few more details about hunting, which we used as research. You can never do too many interviews, but don't be afraid to leave the bad ones on the editing room floor.

Location Recording

The principle of sound recording on location is simple: *Get it all, get everything*, keeping in mind that you only use 10 or even 5 percent in your completed production. Remember that each interview has a distinct environment, and the listener should be able to hear that place. The sound you record on location will set the stage. When you are in a quiet room interviewing the mayor, record the sound of the room. Use that sound under your narration. When interviewing the local elementary school principal near a playground, record some extra sound on that playground. Record the playground without the principal speaking. These pieces of sound are called **ambience beds** or **ambience tracks**. Because no foreground voices are recorded, these pieces of sound are like pictures, and they can be used as a source of sound mixed under your script. It places you and the interview in a place—the school yard, a quiet office—and it gives the listener a picture of where you are.

Record long ambience tracks. Look at your watch as you record an ambience track: Whether 30 seconds or five minutes, record as much as you may need for a long script **passage**, and then record some more. It is often the sound you didn't bother to record that turns out to be the sound you really need.

For the opening of the story about goose hunting, we needed to use a lot of descriptive copy to set up the premise of the story, and we wanted to bring the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the hunters, and the geese to the listener. Here's what we did:

The day before the hunting season opened, we set up our microphones in a cemetery. This cemetery serves as a bird sanctuary, and 10,000 geese were spending a quiet Sunday feeding, chattering, and flying about. We recorded more than two hours of "ambience." During those two hours of taping the wind blew, a car drove by, an airplane flew overhead, and all the geese decided to fly up in the air in an enormous swell of sound.

In the editing room we located about two minutes of useable goose squawking without wind noise or cars or airplanes. We also had the lovely piece of tape with the sounds of birds flying up in the air. We mixed the birds with sounds of shotguns being loaded and of shotguns being fired. Two pictures, the hunters and the birds, made a third picture when mixed together—a picture of the Eastern Shore of Maryland during goose hunting season. We had the opening of our story.

During our trip to the Eastern Shore, we discovered a goose-calling contest at the local high school. We recorded hours of tape at the contest. We recorded from the stage, with the microphones close to the contestants and the announcer on stage. We recorded the audience applauding a winner. We recorded the auditorium from the back of the hall and the hubbub of a crowd of people waiting for the event to begin. When we got the tape back home, there were plenty of possibilities. After the production was finished, there was also plenty of tape on the editing room floor. *The more angles you try in the field, the more choices you will have when it's time to edit the tape.*

Listening in the Field

Listening sessions in the field are also essential. It's the only way to be really sure you got what you came for. Listen to all of the material on good earphones while you're on site. If something isn't working, record it again. Better yet, to cut down on technical mistakes in the field, always wear headphones when you are recording. Most interviewees won't feel uncomfortable when you slip on the headphones if you explain they are necessary to make everything sound right. In fact, most of the people you interview want to be as helpful as they can and want to sound as good as they can—they'll do it again for you if they have to.

Finally, if you have time to listen, log the tape while you're in the field. Mark the good parts, and build on them for your next interview. A gap in the story may occur to you in the afternoon as you're listening to an early-morning interview. You will still have time to fill in the gap.

Early one morning, in a duck blind with two hunters, a dog, and a hunting guide, we recorded a flock of geese coming toward the blind. The guide was calling the geese closer to the hunters, and the hunters stood and shot at the birds. They missed, and the birds flew away. Tension subsided in the blind.

Much later, in the afternoon, we were to interview the hunting guide, so we had time to listen to the sequence recorded that morning in the duck blind. We decided it was probably going to go into the final piece and fashioned our afternoon interview to tie in with our morning sound recordings.

When we finished all the interviews, it was time to head home with the tape. Some words of caution here. *There can be no excuse for not getting the tape back safely.* A lot of time, effort, money, and emotional strain is on those tape reels or cassettes, so label them clearly, number them in the order they were recorded, put all of them into one bag, and *never let go of that bag*, except to have it *hand-inspected* by airport security. There is some disagreement over the relative safety of X-rays and audio tape, but I believe it is always best to play it safe.

Cataloging Your Material

Some producers like to start right in working on the story they've just recorded in the field. Others want time for the experience to settle. This should be a personal choice, but deadlines usually dictate the decision. You should try for at least enough time away from the tape so that the material is fresh again.

All the material should be logged. Use a stopwatch, or the tape counter in your recorder, to keep running times or location references for material on the tape. Make detailed notes on the content and quality of each segment of tape. Put some kind of mark next to the notes on the tape you may want to use. Some producers transcribe verbatim everything that was recorded. Some producers write little at all. Whatever you do, in the end you will need to know what you have and where it is so you can retrieve it. When it comes time to listen, you'll find you have three distinct types of tape: 1) **hot tape**, 2) **explanatory tape**, and 3) **sound tape**.

Hot Tape

Remember our hunter? All of his interview was **hot tape**. He told hunting stories, old hunter stories, and good dog stories, and it was hard choosing the best of the best tape for the finished story. But the best tape came by accident: our hunter, sitting in his chair, calling his dog. It was a moment most listeners can share because they can hear how it feels.

Hot tape makes the story interesting. Hot tape grabs your ear. It can be emotional—a strong statement spoken with energy and feeling—or, like the hunter and his dog, sensitive. Hot tape sounds like people are involved with the story.

When looking for hot tape, forget editorial aspects for a moment. What you're listening for are statements made interestingly, with humor, with passion, with pathos. This is not to say that every good radio piece has to contain tape of people crying. Emotion is easy to use and can be just a quick and cheap way to tell a story. Hot tape answers the question, "How did it feel?"—without asking the question itself, which often can be demeaning.

There are many ways to get the answer. You will hear it *after* the premise, especially if you have asked people to tell you stories that *explain* the premise. You will hear it if you have asked them to tell you the best story they've ever heard that explains why such and such is so. Always keep in mind that the premise can usually be *written* better and more concisely than it can be done extemporaneously on tape.

Explanatory Tape

Explanatory tape is a close cousin of, but not the same as, hot tape. It is tape on which a person explains the premise of the story, what the situation is, what the situation means, or gives an opinion about the issue. Explanatory tape is needed to present the premise in someone else's voice. For explanatory tape to work, the premises must be stated in complete thoughts—sentences that are complete and do not need lots of script to explain or string together. Sometimes, entire features can be put together with just the people involved in the story, and without use of a reporter/narrator. (It's much easier to do this with features than with news reports, and, as Scott Simon points out in Chapter 9, it carries some risks.)

The explanatory tape in the goose hunting piece came from the federal game warden. He told us the laws a hunter must obey, the number of geese a hunter may legally kill, and the kind of work a game warden does.

Sound Tape

Sound tape is the ambience bed. When listening to this kind of tape, it's important to have a stopwatch and to make careful notes about what sort of sound you have. You must know what ambience beds you need and how long they must run. If they are too short, you'll have to budget production time to double, triple, or infinitely loop the sound. (See Chapter 14, "Studio Production.")

Listen for the quality of the ambience material. Sometimes authentic ambience will not work behind your interview because it is acoustically too dense or

too thin. For example, you wouldn't use an alarm bell under a narrator. Some sounds are just too heavy to use as voice-over ambience. A woman's voice will not sound right if placed over ambience of other women talking in the background; the frequencies will compete, and the ear will become confused.

We recorded many hours of ambience tape for our goose hunting production: geese at a sanctuary; the street ambience of downtown Easton, Maryland, during the annual Water Fowl Festival; a goose-calling contest; a hotel lobby with hunters milling around at 4 a.m.; a small ferry carrying cars full of hunters; a restaurant kitchen where wild goose was being prepared; the CB radio in the game warden's office. We gathered a lot and used very little, choosing only the very best sound tape and matching it with the best interviews.

It may help to think in cinematic terms. Take notes of your **full-up** (or foreground) sounds: A train whistle, a loud dog bark, a car door slam, a gun shot are like close-ups in film. They convey single images, and the listener must be able to recognize them without being able to see the image and without narration to describe it. You can use these sounds to make transitions or to end scenes. You should also note full-up sounds that can possibly be used as ambience beds.

Don't forget that once you have recorded something in a **long shot**, from a distance, you can't expect to be able to use it up front in the mix. It just won't be strong enough. But if you record as close as you can, it's then easy to place the sound in front. Occasionally, close-up sound can be mixed up in the background, using echo, equalization, and level reduction to simulate a background.

Our full-up sound in the goose piece included a goose-calling contestant practicing in a hallway, a telephone conversation between a hunter and a guide, a clock in a hotel lobby striking 4 a.m., a hotel clerk making wake-up calls to sleepy hunters, a crackling fire, a series of shotgun shots, a gun reloading, a conversation among hunters, a truck door slamming followed by the hunters driving away on their way to the blind, and a hunting dog sniffing at our microphone.

You should devise your own system for keeping records of what tapes you've brought back. The system should be keyed to plans for including the tape in the production. Repeated listening and note-taking will make you familiar with the material so that ideas for structure, and especially for links and transitions, will start to come into your mind—even in your sleep. Let it work for you: Find a quiet moment, and juggle the material around in your head. A natural starting point will become clear. Eventually, the ending will become obvious as well. When stuck for a beginning, ask yourself, What is the best piece of tape I have from the field? Put it first. Try to grab the listener right at the beginning, and structure the piece from there. (This doesn't always work, of course. News pieces, for example, are structured by the logical pattern of information.)

During this process of reviewing your raw tape, you should check your notes and research material because you are into the difficult phase of deciding how much weight to give a piece of tape, a sound, a fact you've learned. This is

the time to put a lot of tape on the editing room floor. If it doesn't fit, if it's not important, if it takes away from the main points of the story, don't use it.

There is always the danger of emotional involvement in the story, of liking a piece of tape too much. You may really think it is super material, needing just some editing and an introduction and a little script at the end to sum it all up. But you may really need to let go of it for the sake of the overall story.

Outline Structure

One of those people who weighs such things once said, "There are no good stories, just good ways to tell stories." But how are you going to do it? You have now separated your tape into three categories, picked the best interviews, and stored everything else on an outtake reel. You now face a radio jigsaw puzzle.

One way to start is at the end. Find, in your tape or notes or research, an ending. In radio, the last thing is often the most important, because it sticks with the listener. It's the stopping point, the "and so," the summation, the element that pulls everything together. But make your ending a good one, not one that starts "*And so, as the sun sinks slowly in the west, the issue is still undecided, and only time will tell. . .*" And if you have to restate what has been told in the rest of the report, then something is drastically wrong. At the end of our goose hunting piece, we used the sound of the killing of a goose.

Now back to the start. A simple way to structure production was developed at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as a means of training print journalists to be radio producers in a hurry: *Structure a piece in three-element sections—sound, script, interview*. The first element, the sound, is always a full-up sound—a school bell, for example. The second element, the script, read over the ambience (such as the fading school bell or a schoolyard), is the issue of controversy. And the third element, the interview, would be the teacher, explaining why it's necessary to hit the kids when they won't pay attention.

It is possible to put together long news features using no other structure than this simple, three-element device. And, if you have to work very fast, not having to think about the structure can help a lot. Just do those three elements at a parent's home, and then do another three outside on the playground talking to the kids. It's a formula, but one that works if it's not overused.

Perhaps the CBC style is not your style, but do you have a style? Just when you figure out how to do a piece one way, you should be trying to figure out another way and then another. Keep on trying until you have a repertoire, a trick bag you can choose from to fit the material. Remember: *Content always determines structure and style*.

The best way, I think, to study structure for radio is to study other media. The opening and closing scenes of movies translate wonderfully into audio devices.

Short story scene-setting tricks can come from television commercials. These are often made by good people working in other media who are doing (every day and very well) exactly what you're trying to do in your radio story. *Tell the story; tell it right. But make it interesting, moving, and memorable.*

When the story's done, edited, written, and almost finished, put it away for a while if you can. Go read a book or see a movie, or work on another project. And then, without listening to the tape again or reading the script over, go over it with your editor.

This is your first chance to test the material on a listener. Read the script and play the tape cuts in your final production. You know the story well, but your editor, like a radio listener, is hearing the story for the first time. Talk about the piece. Does it explain the story? Is the tape interesting? What is missing? Is anything unclear? Is the presentation too long or without details? Your editor's first impressions are important. Use those first reactions to clarify the story.

Putting It All Together

The goose hunting story was assembled as a series of scenes. We began by stating the premise of the story: Every year thousands of geese come to the Eastern Shore of Maryland from Canada. Thousands of hunters come to the Eastern Shore every hunting season to walk in the woods, sit in a cold, dank duck blind all day, and test their skill in bringing home a goose. Next we presented the high school goose-calling contest. It explained that goose calling is an art in that part of the country.

We then used the interview with the hunter to explain why dogs are important to the process. Our hunter also gave a little insight into the character of the hunters, the locals, and the outsiders. Then it was on to the lobby of a local hotel as the hunter and his buddies gathered at 4 a.m., talking about the geese and the day's hunt. Next, the game warden revealed more about the character of the hunters and the conflict with managing natural resources.

The last scene took place in the duck blind with the hunters, a hunting guide, a dog, a couple of dead geese, and a beautiful morning sky. We used the sound of shooting and an interview with the guide.

The production was a team effort. Noah Adams prepared the script and narrated the piece, Flawn Williams recorded the sound in the field and mixed the tape in the final production, and I cut and structured the piece.

You are at the end of the process. You have structured your piece, cut it, mixed it, written and recorded a script, and had the piece edited. You're ready to put it on the air.

Listen to the way it sounds on the radio. It's always different from the way it sounds in the studio. If someone liked it, ask what was wrong, what could

have been done better. There are usually methods for improving even a very good story.

The final test should only come two or three months later. Get the tape out and listen—you'll probably like what you hear.

Deborah Amos is based at NPR's London Bureau. She covered the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War and often works as NPR's Middle East correspondent. Since joining NPR in 1977, Amos has reported from Poland, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Israel, China, and many other countries. She also has worked as a documentary producer and as director and producer of weekend ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the International Prix Italia, the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, and the Women, Men, and Media "Breakthrough Award" for her coverage of the Gulf War. In 1991-1992, she was a Neiman Fellow at Harvard University. Her book on the Gulf War, Lines in the Sand: Desert Storm and the Remaking of the Arab World, was published by Simon & Shuster in May 1992.

PART IV

**RECORDING,
TAPE EDITING,
AND PRODUCTION**

Field Recording: Equipment

Flawn Williams

Technical advances in portable tape recorders over the past decade have made it much easier to get good field recordings. But field recording is still inherently less predictable than studio recording. It requires that you pay attention to *where* you're recording, *how* you're recording, and *what* your listeners will hear from the tapes you make.

This chapter and the next one will describe a kit of basic equipment for field recording, how to operate it to your best advantage, how to analyze the acoustical environment you're recording in, and how to spot problems and know how to deal with them. The kit consists of a portable tape recorder, one or more microphones, and some helpful accessories and supplies. The kit should be small enough to fit into a briefcase or shoulder bag, to keep you truly portable.

Because most news reporting is monaural, we will concentrate on basic mono tape recording techniques for the reporter or producer. Stereo recording adds complexities best saved for another day.

Portable Tape Recorders

What's a portable tape recorder? For the purpose of your work, it is one that weighs less than five pounds, can operate on battery power, and can record and play back sound on tape with good fidelity.

Some portable tape recorders use **open-reel (reel-to-reel) tape**, while others use **cassettes**. Recording on open-reel tape has some advantages: its wider tape and faster recording speeds offer better fidelity, and you can edit the original tapes on studio machines. In contrast, field recordings made on cassettes must be **dubbed**—that is, transferred in the studio to open-reel tape before editing.

Digital audio tape (DAT) cassette recorders can make even better field recordings, although with these machines, as with standard audio cassette recorders, you'll still need to transfer material to open-reel before splice-editing is possible.

But for the radio producer on a budget, standard **analog cassettes** are probably the way to go. They make satisfactory recordings. Analog cassette recorders are lighter than open-reel recorders. And they are easier to operate, cheaper, and use less power than open-reel and DAT. So we will concentrate on helping you get good field recordings with a portable cassette recorder. Most of what is said here, however, should still be applicable if you use a portable open-reel or DAT recorder.

Basic Features of Portable Cassette Recorders

Although the exact operating details will vary from machine to machine, almost all portable cassette recorders share some basic features:

- A *PLAY* button, a mechanically interlocking button for playing the cassette (you can't press *PLAY* and *STOP* or a fast-motion button at the same time).
- Another mechanically interlocked button marked *RECORD* for recording on the cassette (often you have to engage both the *RECORD* and *PLAY* buttons).
- Buttons for fast-winding the tape back toward the beginning (*REWIND*, sometimes marked *REVIEW*) or toward the end (*FAST FORWARD*, sometimes marked *CUE*).
- A *PAUSE* button or switch for interrupting the tape motion momentarily while recording or playing.
- A *digital counter* or aid in locating particular sections of the tape (not a minutes-seconds readout, just a relative numerical reference).
- The ability to use *disposable batteries*, and also (often with optional accessories) house power, rechargeable Nicad (nickel-cadmium) batteries, or the electrical system in a car or a boat.
- A *jack* to plug in an earphone to monitor what's going on during recording or playback.

- *Volume and tone* controls to adjust the loudness and crispness of the sound during playback.
- A *small loudspeaker* for field playback (not found on most smaller cassette recorders).

Not all portable cassette machines offer adequate recording quality or the necessary features to make tapes for broadcast work. You can expect to pay \$200 or more for a decent broadcast-quality portable cassette recorder. And what will you get that's different from an inadequate machine? Here are some features to look for.

There should be a jack (typically marked *MIC* or *MIKE IN*) for connecting a separate microphone to the cassette recorder. Some recorders only permit recording with a built-in microphone. This might be acceptable for transcribing meetings, but it is not good enough for broadcast. We'll describe later what types of microphones you should use, but make sure at this point that your recorder has a jack for a microphone.

There must be some means of controlling the volume level of what is being recorded. If the recording is made at too low a volume level, the noise of the tape (hiss) will be objectionably loud compared with the recorded sound. If the recording is made at too high a level, the louder sounds will be distorted and unusable for broadcast. In portable cassette recorders, there are three methods for controlling recording level:

- ***Automatic Level Control (ALC)*** monitors what's coming in from the microphone or other sound sources and automatically adjusts itself up or down to ensure a safe average recording level. This is a good system for avoiding distortion and noise when you can't pay much attention to the recorder during recording. But there's a drawback: The resulting sound isn't as "natural" as with other techniques. The background sounds are constantly getting louder or softer in response to the nearer, louder sound. This constant variation also makes tapes recorded with ALC harder to edit unobtrusively. (On some machines this function is called automatic gain control, AGC.)
- ***Manual Level Control***, found on better portable cassette recorders, leaves the control of recording level up to you. The recorder provides a meter to show how loud the sound being recorded on the tape is. Your job is to set the record level knob at the proper position so that the loudest sounds you're recording move the needle on the meter to its highest recommended position, and no farther. Some adjustment of the record level knob during recording may be necessary, but if you can find a good setting and leave it set for the duration of the recording, the resulting tape should sound more "natural" than one recorded with ALC.

- **Manual Level Control with Limiter** is available on some of the better recorders. This offers sonic advantages of manual control, with an added protective feature. The limiter senses any sounds that would be loud enough to distort the recording at the record level you've set, and it lowers the recording level very briefly, just long enough to prevent distortion.

The most useful recorders for broadcast field recording offer a selection of level control options. You can choose ALC for situations in which you have to be away from the recorder and can't monitor what's being recorded, but when you're able to monitor, you can make better recordings using the manual or manual-plus-limiter feature.

Other Convenient Features of Portable Cassette Recorders

Some portable cassette recorders offer other features, like these, that are useful for making field recordings:

- **Automatic Shutoff or End-of-Tape Alarm.** This lets you know when you've run out of recording tape. Some recorders even warn you a few minutes before you run out of tape.
- **Variable Playback Speed (Varispeed)** can save some crucial recordings. If you record something when your recorder's batteries are weak, the tape may run at slower-than-usual speed during the recording. Played back later with normal power or good batteries, the tape will run at normal speed, and the recording will sound faster and higher-pitched than it should. With Varispeed, you can slow down the playback speed to match the errant recording speed and transfer the recording to another tape at proper speed. Varispeed is also invaluable for saving time by speeding up tapes while playing them back.
- **Cue and Review** are features that let you listen to what's on the tape during fast-forward and rewind, respectively; this helps locate a particular section of tape quickly.
- **Off-Tape Monitoring** lets you listen to the sound you're recording a fraction of a second after it gets recorded on tape. With an ordinary cassette recorder, the sound may seem fine during recording, but if there's some problem with the recording process or with the tape itself, you may not know it until you replay the tape. If your cassette recorder has off-tape monitoring, you can listen to what's actually recorded on the tape, while the recording is going on. "Three head" machines have this feature.
- **Noise Reduction**, such as Dolby or dbx, is helpful in making recordings with less of that objectionable tape hiss. Typically, noise reduction is available only on stereo cassette recorders. These machines can, however, be used for monaural

recording too. Some are equipped with a stereo/mono switch that places one microphone input on both channels. Remember that to get good natural sound and less noise, the noise reduction must be turned on during both recording and playback.

- **Ability to Use Higher Quality Cassette Tapes.** If you've been shopping for cassettes, you've already run into a wide range of different types of tape. Greatly improved recordings can be made on premium tapes, but only if your cassette recorder is capable of recording properly on them. Check your recorder to see whether it has selector switches for different tape bias or EQ settings. (These are explained in greater detail in the next section.)

Decent quality portable mono cassette recorders with most or all of the above features are available for \$200 to \$300. And for those seeking excellent performance from cassettes, higher quality stereo units are available for \$300 to \$800. By comparison, a portable open-reel tape recorder might cost from \$2,000 to more than \$8,000, and portable DAT decks run from \$700 to \$10,000.*

Once you have acquired a portable cassette recorder, read the instruction manual carefully. Follow the step-by-step directions for inserting a cassette, for playback and recording of tapes, and for checking battery strength. You should be familiar enough with the "feel" of the recorder to operate its mechanical controls without looking at them.

Cassette Tapes

The "Compact Cassette" was developed by Philips Electronics in the 1960s. Its case measures 2.5 inches by 4.0 inches and is 0.5 inches thick; it uses tape that is .150 inches wide, commonly referred to as 150 mil tape. (More recently, an even smaller analog cassette, called a "micro-cassette," has been introduced for dictation and note-taking use. Generally, recorders using these smaller cassettes do not make broadcast-quality recordings and should be avoided.)

The plastic housing encloses two spools. The one on the left is the **feed spool**, and the one on the right is the **take-up spool**. When you begin recording on a cassette, the tape should be on the feed spool. As recording progresses, the tape unwinds from the feed spool and passes by a series of open slots in one of the long sides of the cassette (see Figure 11.1). First, the tape passes over the **erase head** of the cassette recorder (where any previously recorded information on the tape is obliterated), then over the **record** and **playback heads** (which are

*These are 1992 prices. The price of DAT machines will probably go down as their numbers increase.

often a single head). The tape then passes between a metal rotating drive-shaft of the cassette recorder called the **capstan** and a rubber roller called the **pinch roller**. When the tape is pressed against the capstan by the pinch roller, it is propelled at a constant speed. The tape then winds onto the take-up spool.

When all the tape has been shuttled from the feed spool to the take-up spool, the cassette can be ejected from the recorder, flipped over, and reinserted with the other side of the cassette facing up. Now the tape is once again on the left-hand spool, and recordings can be made on the other half of the tape (referred to as a "side" of the tape, even though sides are recorded on the upper and lower halves of the same surface).

If you've made a recording on Side A of the cassette that you want to protect against accidental erasure, find the small plastic tab on the back edge of the cassette, on the feed-reel, or left side (as viewed from Side A). Breaking out this tab will prevent the cassette recorder from being put into record mode when that side of the cassette is loaded into the recorder. If, later, you want to record new material on Side A of that cassette, place a piece of adhesive tape over the open slot where the tab was; the cassette should now record properly. The same procedure applies to the B side.

There is, on most cassettes, a small scale of dots or lines marked 0-100 just beneath the clear plastic central window. This is a rough scale for locating positions on the cassette, and is not a reference to minutes or any other accurate estimate of time or tape length remaining.

Cassettes vary in the type and quality of tape they use, duration of recording time, type of housing, and quality of construction. What's best for your purposes? Here's a guide to some of the variables.

Tape Types

There are three different types of tape currently being manufactured: Naturally, they are called *Types I, II, and IV*. (*Type III*, ferrichrome, didn't have enough advantages of its own and eventually was dropped by the tape manufacturers.)

To achieve good recording results, each type of tape must be used with a recorder that is capable of handling it properly. Most portable cassette recorders are only capable of handling *Type I* tapes, but many of the better recorders have switches or automatic sensors to select the proper recording characteristics for *Type I, Type II, or Type IV* tapes.

Type I: Referred to as *normal* or *standard*, also as *low noise* or *high output* tape. Requires normal bias (*see below*) and normal (120-microsecond) equalization (EQ) (*see below*). Uses ferric oxide particles.

Type II: Often referred to as *chrome type*, since most tapes in this category are made with chromium dioxide (CrO₂) particles. Requires high bias and 70-microsecond equalization.

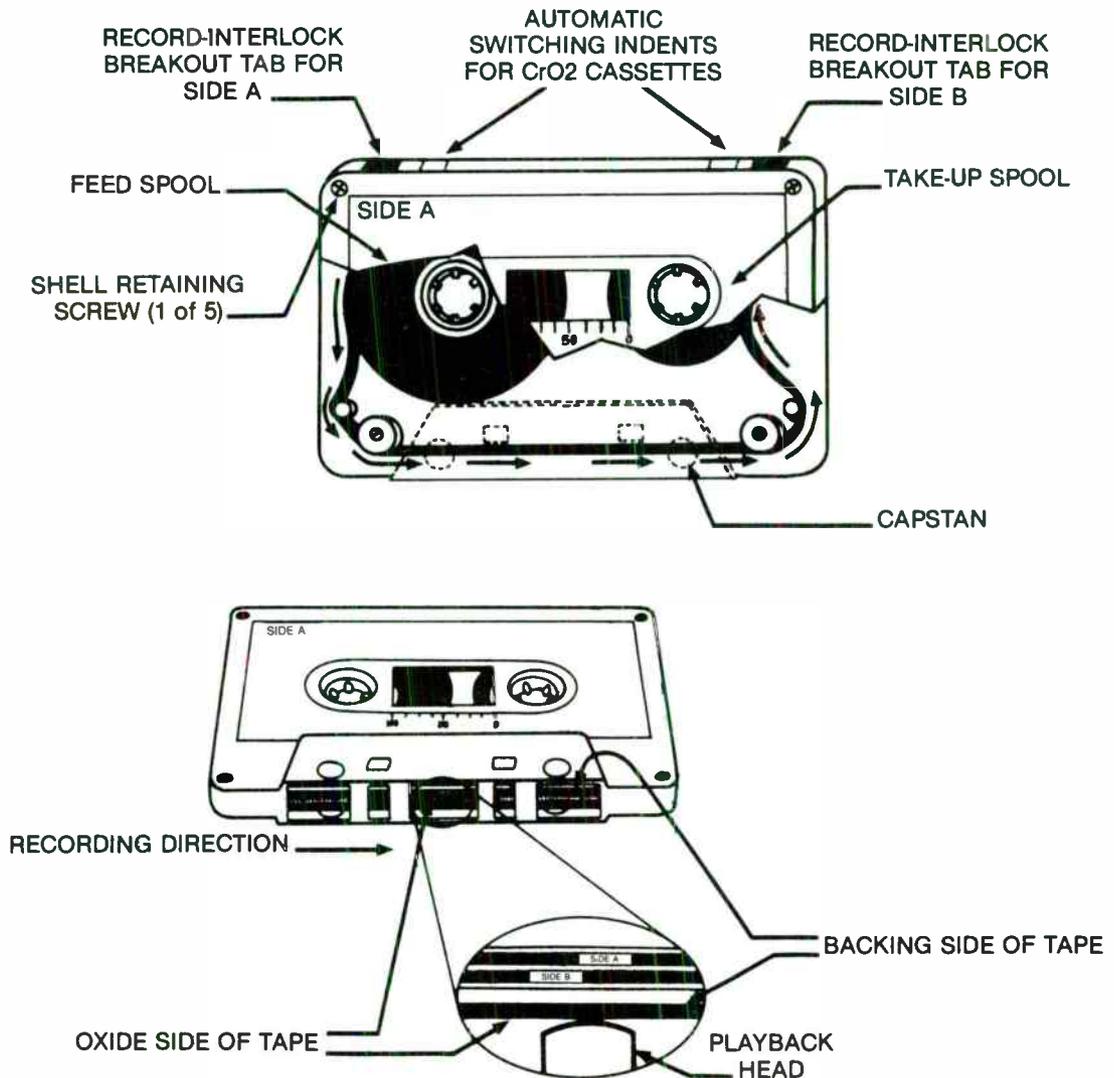


Figure 11.1. The Anatomy of a Standard Phillips-Type Compact Cassette.

Type IV: The newest, called *metal*, requires yet another combination of bias and EQ, and higher-than-normal recording power, which only the most expensive machines can provide. Uses particles of pure metal instead of oxides. The higher recording power also consumes batteries faster than recording on Type I or II tape.

Bias refers to a high-frequency signal added to the sound during recording to make the magnetic patterns flow more smoothly onto the tape. **Equalization**,

or EQ, refers to an electronic manipulation of the sound, which must be done in both recording and playback functions. Each of the three types of tape requires different bias and equalization settings.

If your cassette recorder does not have a switch for using different types of tape, you will have to use Type I tapes. But if it does have a switch, you can substantially improve the quality of your recordings by using one of the Type II or Type IV tapes. Although Type II tapes cost more than Type I tapes, the difference in quality is worth it. Remember, too, that you can reuse cassettes many times, so the cost-per-use of good tape isn't much more than that of mediocre tape.

Tape Lengths

Cassettes have a standard labeling system for length. The number is twice the recording time available on one side of the cassette. The most common are C-60 (30 minutes per side) and C-90 (45 minutes per side); other common lengths are C-30, C-46, C-100, and C-120.

It's hard to pack so much recording time into such a small package. To get their extra recording time, the C-90, C-100, and C-120 cassettes use thinner tape than the other cassettes. While results are usually good with cassettes up through C-90, cassettes as long as the C-120 are more prone to jamming, tape tangling, dropouts, and other mechanical problems. Avoid them.

Cassette Shell Construction

Some cassettes are held together with five small screws, while others are welded together. This isn't all that important—until your tape breaks or tangles and you need to get inside the cassette to repair or retrieve the tape. You'll find the job to be much easier with the screw-type shells. Screw shells are also an indication of better overall construction quality.

Cassette Quality

For use with most portable recorders, the best type of tape may not be necessary, but you should still stick with the better name-brands. Each makes tape of all types. The local drug store ads are always offering cassettes at ridiculously low prices, but you can be sure that the quality is just as ridiculously low. High-quality, name-brand cassettes don't cost much more, when you weigh the increase in sound fidelity and the decrease in heartache.

Tips on Using and Storing Cassettes

- *Avoid recording on the first 30 seconds or the last 30 seconds of each side of a cassette.* These areas are the most likely to have wrinkles or other problems in the tape surface, which cause momentary dropouts in the sound.
- *Erase old recordings that are no longer needed before reusing the cassette.* You can do this with an accessory called a **bulk eraser** (also known as a **de-gausser**), or by running the cassette through the recorder set in the "record" mode, but with no sound being fed in. Either way, erasing tapes helps avoid a lot of confusion when you begin a new recording.
- *Store cassettes in a cool, dry location when possible.* Cars are not a good place to keep cassettes because of heat, vibration, and dirt.
- *Don't try to splice cassette tapes, except in a dire emergency to repair a broken tape.* When you need to edit the material you recorded on a cassette, transfer it to an open-reel tape. (See Chapter 14, "Studio Production.")

Microphones

The microphone is one of the most critical components of your portable recording system. You may have to go to a bit of trouble to get a good professional-quality microphone to use with a cassette recorder, but the better recordings you get will justify the trouble.

What's a microphone? It's a **transducer**, a device that changes mechanical vibrations (sound) into electrical signals (or vice-versa, as with loudspeakers). In this sense, the microphone acts just like your ear, which translates the mechanical energy in sound waves into electrical impulses that your brain can understand. Like your ear, the microphone can pick up nearby sounds and more distant ones as well.

Many different microphones are available. Some are useful in a variety of situations; others have specialized uses. They can be divided several different ways: by *pickup pattern*, by *transducer type*, by *impedance*, and by *special features*.

Microphone Pickup Patterns

The **pickup pattern** of a microphone describes the direction in which the microphone is most sensitive to sound. Some microphones are equally sensitive to sounds from all directions; these are referred to as **omnidirectional microphones**. If you drew a picture of an omnidirectional microphone's sensitivity, you'd see something like Figure 11.2A, roughly spherical.

Another popular microphone pickup pattern is **unidirectional**. Mikes with this characteristic are most sensitive to sounds coming from the front and sides,

obscures the sound you're trying to record. Dynamic mikes are better than condenser mikes for outdoor recordings where wind is likely to be encountered. Omnidirectional mikes are less sensitive to wind and blast than cardioid mikes. In addition, some mikes are built with metal mesh or plastic foam screens to help break up wind. For extreme situations, you can get an extra foam wind screen to slip over the mike.

- **Handling and contact noise.** Moving your hand around on a microphone, or placing the mike on a surface where it can pick up vibrations or concussive sounds, will cause noise. Both dynamic and condenser mikes share this problem; it is a little less severe with an omnidirectional mike than with a cardioid. Some microphones are built specially to minimize this problem. Their pickup elements are shock-mounted within the microphone casing.
- **Recording in a noisy environment.** In this situation, the cardioid mike can give you much better results than the omnidirectional. By pointing a cardioid microphone at someone who is speaking in a noisy room and getting to within a foot or so of the speaker's mouth, you can get more direct sound from the speaker and less of the general room noise. To get the same ratio of direct-to-background sound with an omni mike, your mike would have to be within a few inches of the speaker's mouth, which might be close enough to make the speaker uncomfortable. It is the cardioid microphone pattern, not its type (dynamic or condenser), that makes it more suitable in noisy environments.

So far, we've presented a mixed case for choosing an omnidirectional or cardioid mike for your field recording kit, and a fairly strong case for choosing a dynamic mike over a condenser mike. Condenser mikes, in general, have greater sound fidelity than dynamic mikes, and better high-frequency response, but they are more difficult to use in the field. If you are limited to acquiring one or two mikes for field recording, get dynamics. As to the choice of omni or cardioid, both are useful. If your budget can handle it, you should get one of each. But if you're restricted to one microphone, the omni is the safer, more versatile choice.

Other Characteristics of Microphones

There are still some details to know about your prospective microphone. One is its **impedance**, a measure of its electrical "resistance" that must roughly match that of the tape recorder input. Most microphones you'll come in contact with are **low impedance** or LO-Z mikes; typical values you'll see range from 50 to 500 ohms. But there are some mikes that are **high impedance**, or HI-Z, which have values from 10,000 to 50,000 ohms. These will not function properly with most cassette recorders, so you should avoid them.

Another factor is whether a microphone's output (the signal it is producing) is **balanced** or **unbalanced**. Most professional microphones are capable of operating in either a balanced or unbalanced mode; this has to do with how the mike is internally wired and externally connected to the tape recorder, not with how the mike responds to gravity. Most portable cassette recorders' microphone input jacks require unbalanced signals. Figure 11.4 shows how to connect a balanced-output mike to the unbalanced-mike input jack of a cassette recorder.

The last characteristic we'll examine is the type of support a microphone requires. The most versatile mikes are designed to be hand-held, or attached to a stand or other support with an accessory clamp. Some mikes are so large and awkward, or susceptible to handling noise, that they should be used only when attached to a stand. And some specialized mikes are designed to be attached to the person whose voice you're recording: 1) **lavalier** mikes hang by a strap around the speaker's neck, dangling at chest level; 2) **tie-tack** mikes can be clamped onto a tie or other clothing. These mikes are usually omnidirectional and can give quite good results when used as designed, but they are not versatile enough for other field recording needs. Lavalier mikes are familiar to viewers of TV newscasts, where they are valued for their unobtrusive visual characteristics. However, to get a good intimate recording for radio, you'll do better with a hand-held mike.

It's possible to make almost any of the microphone types discussed in this chapter into a "wireless mike" or "radio mike." In essence, the mike is attached to a small, battery-operated radio transmitter; then a special radio receiver can pick up that signal, and you can feed the received audio into your recorder.

This equipment is very popular in TV and film work, where it's helpful not to have a cable tether connecting the mike to the camera/recorder, or where keeping the mike invisible is a high priority. But even the best quality wireless mikes add noise and distortion to the sound, and if they are not carefully used and monitored, they can cause complete loss of sound. For most radio reporting needs, avoid wireless mikes.

The Importance of Using Quality Microphones

When you get a cassette recorder, it often comes equipped with a small, built-in condenser mike, for which the manufacturer often makes great claims. Or a separate condenser mike may be offered as an optional accessory, for which even greater claims are made. But for the exacting requirements of broadcast recording, most of these microphones are inadequate. Your field recording system requires a rugged, versatile, dependable microphone, and those qualities don't come cheap. Professional microphones offer:

- ***Good sound quality***, with sensitivity to a wide range of sounds from low bass to high treble. This is called "good frequency response." Response should be

both wide (covering almost the entire audio range, 50–15,000 Hz) and flat (without much variation through the range of frequencies).

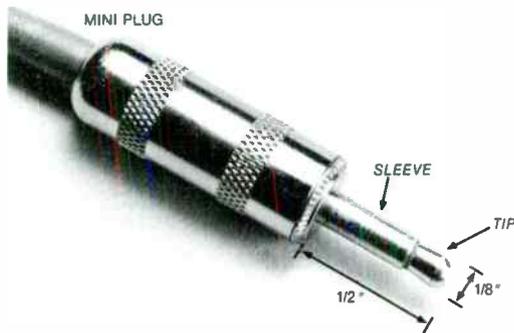
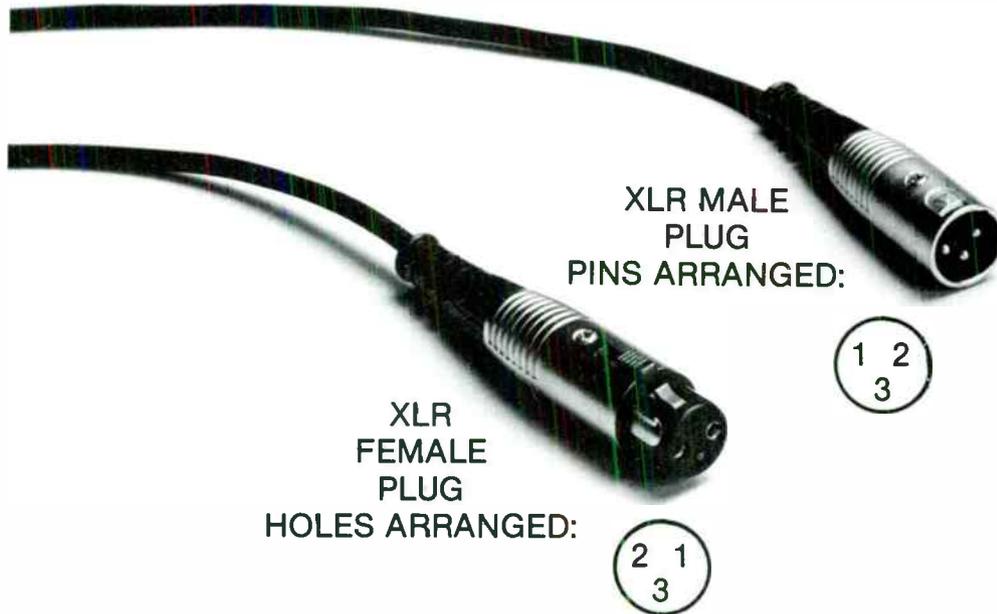
- **Ruggedness**, in order to take the punishment of field work. Most professional mikes are made from die-cast aluminum or other metals, not from plastic.
- **Protection** from some of the problems of wind, blast, concussive noises, and distortion. Most good mikes will have enough protective screening built in to protect against plosives, although they probably will need an additional foam wind screen for outdoor work.
- **Versatility**, the ability to put them where you need them and to record what you want your listeners to hear. A versatile mike can be hand-held, placed on a table stand or floor stand, attached with a clamp to other objects, hung in midair—wherever you judge to be a good listening perspective. This also may involve the use of long extension cables so the mike can be placed at a distance from the cassette recorder. A professional low impedance mike is best for this purpose.

Connecting the Microphone to the Cassette Recorder

Most professional microphones sold in the United States do not have a permanently attached cable to connect the mike to the equipment with which it is being used—a tape recorder, a mixer, or an amplifier. Instead, the mikes use a particular type of built-in jack, which has three pins arranged in a triangular pattern and surrounded by a metal collar. The corresponding plug on the cable, which “mates” with this jack, has three holes in the same triangular pattern. The plugs and jacks are called **XLR connectors**. They’re also sometimes referred to as **Cannon connectors**, referring to the original manufacturer, but many companies currently produce plugs and jacks that are compatible with the Cannon XLR series (see Figure 11.3A). Plugs or jacks that have protruding pins are called *XLR male*; plugs or jacks with holes are called *XLR female*. XLR plugs and jacks are sturdy and safe. When connected together, they lock with a spring latch, so that it takes positive action to disconnect them. They are also suited for carrying balanced connections (which require three wires, including a ground/shield wire), or unbalanced connections (which require only two wires).

Unfortunately, no cassette recorder under \$300 has a corresponding mike-input jack of the XLR type. Most cassette recorders’ mike-input jacks are of the type that accept only “mini” or quarter-inch phone plugs (see Figure 11.3B and 11.3C).

To compound the problem, few stores carry the adapter cables you’ll need. The manufacturer of the microphone will generally include a cable with the proper XLR plug on one end and bare wires on the other. Once you know what type of mike-input jack your cassette recorder has, you’ll need to purchase an appropriate plug to attach to the bare-wire end of the cable. This requires soldering the bare wires onto the terminals inside the plug. If you don’t have the



(b)



(c)

Figure 11.3. Plugs Commonly Used in Connecting the Microphone to the Cassette Recorder. (a) XLR or "Canon" Connection. (b) Mini Plug. (c) Quarter-inch Mono Phone Plug.

proper tools for this job, or don't want to attempt it, you can ask an audio repair shop, broadcast maintenance engineer, or radio hobbyist to make one—plus a spare—for you. (See Figure 11.4 for the details of wiring the cable.) Often the adapter cable is made from scratch using a retractable "coily cord" with the appropriate connectors attached to each end. Once you have this adapter cable, your life will be much easier. If you need to move the microphone farther away from the cassette recorder than the adapter cable can reach, you can use additional cables with XLR plugs on both ends between the microphone and your adapter cable to extend the cable run as needed. These cables *are* readily available.

Using More Than One Microphone

You can record some events better if you use more than one microphone. But the typical monaural portable cassette recorder has only one microphone input jack. It is physically possible to construct a cable that can connect two microphones to one input jack; it looks like a "Y" and is called a Y-adapter. This technique has many disadvantages. It alters the sound quality of both microphones. It doesn't give you a separate record level for each microphone. And it's prone to pick up buzzes and other spurious noises.

A better idea, if you need to use two microphones, is to get a **mixer**. There are a wide variety of mixers available, from the small, simple kind, which can mix two to four mikes, to the semi-portable ones, which can mix 20 or 30 mikes. Basically, they all perform the same function. You connect the mikes you want to use to the mixer and adjust a separate level control on the mixer for each mike. The mixer then combines all the mikes into one signal that you can connect to the **auxiliary** or **line** input of your cassette recorder.

Another way to record two mikes on one cassette recorder is to use a stereo cassette recorder. The stereo recorder will have a separate mike input jack for each of the two channels. You can connect one mike to each jack and record them on separate channels. Later, when you get back to the studio, you can mix the two channels of the stereo cassette down to one monaural sound. This gives

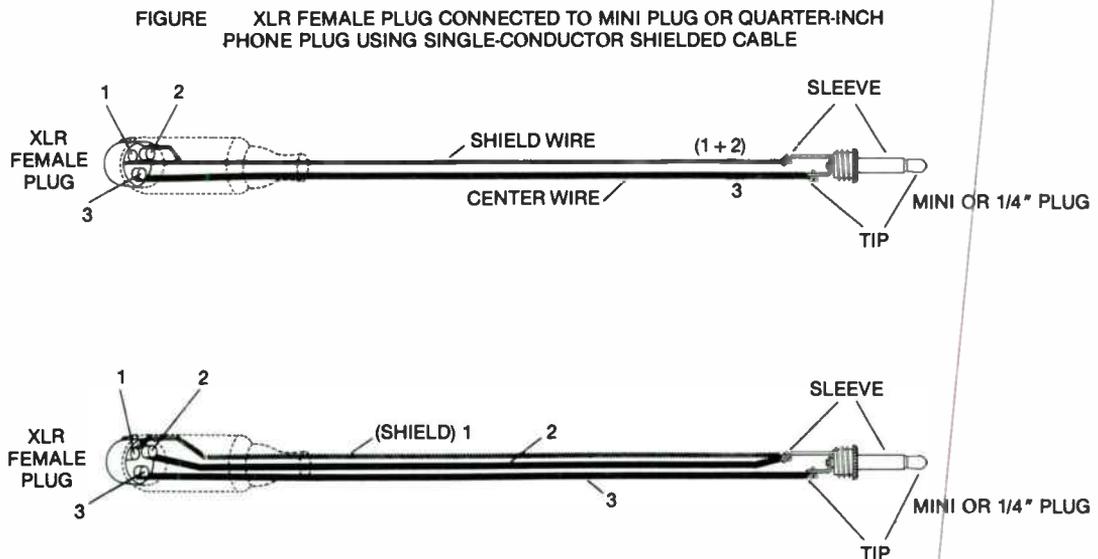


Figure 11.4. Wiring for Cable Connecting Mike and Cassette Recorder. (a) XLR female plug connected to mini plug or quarter-inch plug using single-conductor shielded cable. (b) Same plugs connected using two-conductor shielded cable.

you the additional flexibility of being able to vary the relative levels of the two mikes in the studio after the event, instead of worrying about getting an exact sound balance between the mikes while recording. There is one drawback to this method. The tape noise on the two channels of the recorded cassette will add together when the two channels are combined to make the monaural mix.

Storing and Transporting Microphones

Even rugged professional microphones will last longer and make better recordings if you take proper care of them. Keep mikes away from extreme heat, humidity, smoke, dust, and especially iron filings (remember, there's a magnet in every dynamic mike). Whenever you don't need to have the mike handy and connected, put it away—in the box supplied by the manufacturer, in an old sock, a pouch, or some other protected place. If you're carrying a briefcase or shoulder bag for accessories and supplies, set aside a protected corner for your microphone.

Accessories for the Recording System

The following items will help you make better use of your cassette recorder and microphone(s) when you're in the field:

Accessories for the Microphone

- The all-important *adapter cable* to connect the mike to the recorder. Don't forget to make and carry a spare adapter cable.
- A *desk stand*, which is a small support for the microphone. It's good for recording someone sitting at a table. Some look like small tripods, while others have a wide base and small pole.
- The *stand adapter clip* supplied with the mike by the manufacturer lets you attach a mike to a desk stand or other support.
- A *clamp* is used to attach the microphone to a podium or other upright support. Some excellent clamps are made for supporting cameras (one is marketed by Rowi), and can be adapted to support a microphone.
- A *gooseneck* can be used to extend the height of the desk stand or clamp. It's a flexible metal tube, generally six to 18 inches long.
- Extra plastic foam *windscreens* will protect against wind noise or vocal blast.
- A *floor stand* and *boom arm* won't fit into the standard briefcase kit, but they can come in handy for recording situations where you don't want to have to

hold a microphone for a long time. Also, a mike on a stand placed close to someone is not as disturbing as a mike held close by someone. The inanimate stand doesn't violate personal space the way an arm does.

- A *microphone mixer* is useful for situations where two or more mikes are needed to get a better recording of an event.

Accessories for the Cassette Recorder

- *Extra batteries.* You should know how many and what size your recorder uses, and how long one set of batteries will last in the machine (in the record mode).
- A *rechargeable battery pack* is needed for longer trips when there's time to recharge between recording sessions.
- An *AC power cable* or *external power supply* for the cassette recorder, plus an AC extension cord, will help preserve batteries.
- A *car/boat power adapter* is useful if your work includes driving or boating.
- *Earphones* are used for monitoring during recording and later private listening.
- A *shoulder strap* and *carrying case* will protect and support the recorder if you're not carrying it inside a briefcase or shoulder bag.
- *Accessory cables* for special needs include a mini-plug-to-mini-plug cable or an RCA-stereo-to-RCA-stereo for connecting your cassette recorder to another cassette recorder for copying cassettes, and a mini-plug-to-alligator clips cable for connecting your cassette recorder to a telephone. (See Chapter 12, "Field Recording: Techniques.")
- *Extra cassettes.* Pack up to twice as many as you think you'll need. Make sure they're the proper type for your machine.

General Accessories

- *Pad* and *pencil.*
- *Adhesive tape*, such as the metallic-gray *gaffer's* or *duct tape*, for securing microphone cables, and such.
- *Blank cassette labels* are helpful when you're reusing old cassettes.
- A *briefcase* or *shoulder bag* large enough to carry the cassette recorder, microphone(s), accessories, and supplies. Make sure you leave room for printed matter and other materials you'll pick up in the course of making field recordings.

Maintenance of Your Cassette Recorder

The only item in your field recording kit that needs frequent routine maintenance is the cassette recorder. Check the recorder's instruction manual for exact maintenance details. However, here's a set of general guidelines and procedures applicable to most recorders:

Cleaning the Tape Path (after every 10 hours of use)

This small bit of maintenance can make the difference between noisy, distorted recordings and good ones.

- Use cotton swabs and denatured alcohol, which are available at drugstores. Ordinary rubbing alcohol contains water, which could cause heads to rust.
- Remove the cassette from the recorder, then lock the recorder in the *PLAY* mode for better access to the heads and other components.
- Clean everything with which the tape comes in contact—heads, guides, pinch roller, capstan.
- Don't use the so-called "head cleaner cassettes," which claim to clean the heads and tape path while running in the machine. They don't live up to their advertising.

Demagnetizing Cassette Recorder (after every 25 hours of use)

Heads and other metal parts that come in contact with the tape can become gradually magnetized. This can lead to loss of high-frequency sounds and eventually to gradual erasure of tapes that are played many times.

- Obtain a small hand-held demagnetizer.
- Disconnect the cassette recorder from the power source, and remove the batteries; then lock the recorder in the *PLAY* mode for better access to heads and other components.
- Following the instructions supplied with the demagnetizer, plug it into power while still a few feet away from the cassette recorder. Slowly bring it as close as possible (without touching) to each metal part in the tape path (heads, guides, capstan). Pass over each part and withdraw the demagnetizer. Disconnect from power again when you are a few feet from the cassette recorder.
- Take care that you do this procedure properly. Otherwise, you may wind up with heads more magnetized than before you started!

Maintenance to Refer to a Technician

Your recorder should be checked at least twice a year (sooner if audible problems develop) by a qualified service technician. If you work at a radio station, the engineering staff there may be able to handle these needs. Otherwise, cultivate the friendship of a repair person at your local stereo store. Things that should be checked include:

- **Record bias and equalization.** Give the technician a sample of the particular type and brand of cassette you've decided to use. Have the technician optimize the recorder's performance for that tape, then continue to use that type and brand of tape for the best results.
- **Head alignment.** Often severe loss of recording quality can be traced to misaligned heads.

It's a good idea to buy a repair manual for your recorder to help you or the person handling your maintenance know what's going on (or what's gone wrong) inside the recorder. They're available from the manufacturer for a few dollars.

Other Suggested Maintenance

- Clean the metal contacts of your connecting cables periodically with denatured alcohol.
- Tighten set screws on XLR connectors on mike cables.
- Check adapter cables for loose connections.
- Check cable insulation for damage, and replace damaged cables.
- Tighten external screws on the outside of the cassette recorder.
- Remove batteries before storing cassette recorder or microphone.

Flawn Williams has been a technical producer and instructor for NPR since 1978. His field recordings and studio production have enhanced many award-winning documentary features. He was technical director of ALL THINGS CONSIDERED from 1983 to 1985. He is now the bureau engineer in NPR's Chicago Bureau. He has also produced more than 70 folk and traditional music albums for various labels from his live concert and studio recordings. He's written for TV Guide, Radio World, Broadcast Engineering, and NPR's Engineering Update magazines, and taught workshops at public radio stations across the country.

Field Recording: Techniques

Flawn Williams

If there is one word that can guarantee you a better chance of success in field recordings, the word is *practice*. This involves not only the rudimentary practice of familiarizing yourself with how your tape recorder and microphone work, but also simulating interviews and other recording assignments. Draft a co-worker or friend to serve as a guinea pig, and stage a mock interview. This will give you a better sense of what it takes to pay attention to both the interview and the recording process. And, if you listen carefully to your recordings of these mock interviews and pay attention to the sound, you will learn to improve your technique.

Recording Checklist

Here's a list of reminders and helpful hints to prepare you for recording in the field.

Before you leave for the recording assignment:

- Load tape into the tape recorder.
- Attach the microphone to the recorder.

- Put the recorder in *PLAY* mode, and check the battery strength.
- Put the recorder in the *RECORD* mode, and check the record meter or other visual indicator. Also, listen to the recording with earphones.
- Play back the test recording, and listen to it through the built-in loudspeaker or earphones.
- Rewind the tape to the beginning; then move the tape past the leader, zero the index counter, and turn off the recorder. You should now be ready to record.

When you're ready to start recording a real interview:

- Set up the recorder as before, plugging into AC power if it is available.
- Start recording about 10 seconds before you're ready to start asking questions. This gives you a bit of the "ambience" of the recording location. And if you're recording with Automatic Level Control (ALC), it gives the ALC sensor time to sense what the average loudness of the recording will be. (Never hide the fact that you're recording. Tell the person you're interviewing when you're about to "roll tape.")
- During the recording, if you're not recording with ALC, check the record level meter or other visual indicator, and adjust the record knob to make sure the highest meter readings fall within the range advised by your recorder's instruction manual.
- Monitor the recording with a good pair of earphones, listening for cable-banging, mike-handling, or other concussive noises—wind blast, popping P's, etc. If necessary, adjust the mike position to eliminate the problem.
- Look at the tape occasionally to confirm that it is still moving.
- If your recorder has a separate playback head that allows "off-tape monitoring," occasionally throw the switch and monitor the tape to confirm that something is actually being recorded.
- At the end of your interview or the event you're recording, let the tape run on for an additional 30 seconds or so with the mike held in the same place, but with no conversation. This gives you "clean ambience" or "room tone," which will help you when assembling the final produced tape in the studio.

After you complete the recording:

- Rewind the tape a bit, and listen to the last part to confirm that the recording was satisfactory.

- If you're recording on cassette and wish to protect the new recording from accidental erasure, break out the protection tab on the rear edge of the cassette. (See Figure 10.1.) DATs also have a protection tab on their rear spine. It slides, so it can be reset more easily.
- Load fresh tape into the recorder before putting it away, so you can be ready to record again quickly if the need arises.

Recording Ambience in the Field

When you're making field recordings, "ambience" is the "sound" of the space where you're making the recording. Often, it's an important part of the story itself, a way of telling your listeners something about a place or an event without using words.

When you're in the field, listen for characteristic sounds of the environment—airplanes, machine noises, birds, children playing, church bells, barking dogs, etc. Record these sounds with no conversation or interview going on nearby, and do it from various distances and perspectives. Think in the jargon of film or television; get **close-ups**, **medium shots**, and **long shots**. You can use the close-up recordings of a sound to focus the listener's attention on a location, environment, or mood. You can mix in medium- and long-distance perspectives of the same sound behind the narration or interviews. But you can't do any of this if you don't record different perspectives of the ambient sound in the first place.

When recording voices in their natural ambience—that is, someone speaking with audible background environment sound—it's difficult to get a good balance between the voice and the ambience. If your mike is too far away from the speaker's mouth, the background sound may obscure what the speaker is saying. Also, editing the speaker's words may be more difficult, because the listener will hear abrupt jumps and changes in the background ambience at the points where edits are made. One solution to this problem is to record your interviews, monologues, and narration in a quiet location, and mix them later with the sounds for the story. (You should never make people appear to be someplace they are not or otherwise mislead the listener, but careful use of sound can bring the listener closer to the story.)

Always record more ambience than you think you ever could use. Look at your watch when you record, or you may not record enough. It's better to have too much when you're ready to assemble the piece than to have too little. Be sure to bring enough recording tape and batteries, and allow yourself enough time to make recordings of ambience as well as voices.

Controlling the Environment

In many instances, you won't have any control over where something you want to record takes place. News events happen where they happen, or where the newsmaker wants them to happen. But you can have some influence on where you conduct an interview. Paying attention to the acoustic environment can result in tapes that sound much better and are easier to edit. In general, conduct the interview in the quietest, "deadest" place you can find. If the local sound is important to telling the story, record that separately and mix it in later. Here are some acoustic traps:

- **Fluorescent lights** emit a buzzing or humming sound that may not be distracting when you're in the room. But you'll hear it when you play the tape back in the studio. Buzz or hum makes sound harder to edit unobtrusively, and the constant noise is tiring to your listeners' ears.
- **Air conditioning** (or forced-air heating) makes a great deal of background noise, which again is fatiguing to your listeners' ears. Is it possible to turn off the blowers for the duration of the interview? Similar problems occur with office machines, refrigerators, space heaters, computer hard disks, and other appliances that use motors or blowers.
- **Wind noise** can be a problem if you're recording outdoors. Try to find someplace that is sheltered from the wind, such as the leeward side of a building.
- **Traffic** is a bigger problem if you're recording outdoors. Cars, trucks, trains, and airplanes may all be a part of your story, but they can be disruptive in an interview. Recording inside a moving car also creates problems, because the pitch and volume of the engine will change noticeably during the recording.

Be cautious also about recording indoors in rooms with lots of hard surfaces: uncarpeted linoleum or wood floors, stone, cinderblock or plaster walls, drapeless windows, etc. The sound will reverberate, and one spoken word will carry over into the next. This makes for noticeable jumps in sound if you attempt to edit out words or phrases. Music from a radio or stereo in the background also makes jumps noticeable when you edit.

Paying attention to the recording environment and seeking out a quieter place to record an interview has another benefit: It can give your guests the impression that their particular interview is important to you. This can make them feel more important, and you may get a better interview as a result.

Microphone Placement and Handling

Much of your recording work will consist of holding the microphone in one hand to record your own voice, someone else's voice, or appropriate sounds. When "miking" your own voice, try to find a place to hold the mike that is close enough to make you sound "on-mike" but not close enough to cause "popping" when plosive consonants like P, B, or T are pronounced. If you're using an omnidirectional mike, you may be able to bring the mike as close as two or three inches from your mouth. In any case, don't hold the mike directly out in front of you; instead, hold it below your mouth and a bit to one side. Keep it close to your chest, pointed at your mouth (see Figure 12.1 A). This will help minimize breath noise.

When miking someone else in a situation where you and the other person are standing or seated together, many of the same rules apply. You'll be searching to find a happy middle ground between getting too close (where you'll get popping P's, breath noise, etc.) and too far away (where the voice will sound distant, less distinct, "off-mike").

Social distance problems also affect mike placement. (See Chapter 4, "Interviewing," for more detail on social distance.)

The only remedy is not to be afraid to place the mike in the best place for good sound. Push the limits of social distance a bit if you need to. If you keep the mike low and pointed up, rather than straight at the speaker, it will be less intrusive.

Don't hand the microphone over to the interviewee to hold. You will relinquish control over the interview. Interrupting to ask questions or changing the direction of the discussion is more difficult if you don't have control over the microphone.

One decision you should make before starting any particular interview is whether you need your questions on tape. If you don't, you can concentrate on keeping the microphone aimed properly at the person you're interviewing, thus producing a stable aural perspective that is easy on the listener.

Unless you're really certain that you won't need your questions in the final version, though, it's much safer to record both your questions and the interviewee's answers with equal quality. You'll have to move the mike back and forth. When doing this, you need to be even more conscious of social distance. You'll have a strong tendency to hold the microphone closer to you than to your interviewee. Try to err a bit in the opposite direction by overcompensating to make the interviewee sound a little bit closer than you. With practice, you will find the right balance.

When recording with a hand-held mike, watch out for noises caused by moving your hand on the mike or bumping the mike cable. They often can occur when you move the mike back and forth between you and other speakers. But by listening with good earphones while recording, and by checking your tapes afterward, you



(a)



(b)

Figure 12.1. Miking Techniques. (A) Try miking from this angle, close to the mouth with the microphone off-axis relative to the mouth. (B) But *not* this angle—this position is the most likely to accentuate plosive pops and other breath noises. (Photos by Anthony Buttitta.)

can train yourself to hold your microphone without making these distracting noises.

Recording with Stationary Mikes

When you can choose a quiet place to do a “sit-down interview,” you can avoid most of the noise associated with hand-held mikes by mounting the microphone on some stationary object before starting the interview. When recording with just one mike, this technique is useful for getting a good recording of just the interviewee. If the interviewee is seated at a table or desk, use a desk stand for your mike; have the person talk while you test a few positions to find the best-sounding spot for the mike. If the person is seated in a chair or couch, you may be able to use a clamp and gooseneck extension bar to position the mike where you need it. In this situation, a floor stand with boom arm can also be helpful. Keeping the mike in one position will avoid any jarring shifts of acoustical perspective on the tape. But be careful that the person you’re interviewing doesn’t move away from his original position or “talk around” the mike instead of into it.

If it’s necessary to have both you and the interviewee on tape, and you have only one mike, this stationary miking technique will not work. But if you can set up two separate mikes—one for yourself, another for the interviewee—you can record both of them and get good results. Two mikes can be combined with a mixer and then recorded on a monaural recorder. Or two mikes can be recorded on a stereo tape recorder, and the resulting two-channel tape mixed together to mono later in the studio. (See “Using More Than One Microphone” in Chapter 11 for details.)

When two mikes are used, try to position yourself and the interviewee farther apart than you would if you were conducting an interview with a single hand-held mike. As a rule of thumb, *the distance from your mouth to the interviewee’s mike should be at least three times the distance from your mouth to your mike, and vice versa* (see Figure 12.2). Even more distance would be helpful, so that not too much of each voice is picked up in the other person’s mike.

When recording two speakers with two separate microphones, the distance of the far microphone should be at least three times the distance of the close microphone. From the interviewer’s perspective, “B” should be at least three times “A”; from the interviewee’s perspective, “D” should be at least three times “C.”

Lavalier or tie-tack microphones can also be useful in this kind of two-mike sit-down interview. If you use this kind of mike, you still need to separate yourself from the interviewee by at least that three-to-one ratio of distances. Also, listen for noise from the microphone or cable rubbing against clothing and for the sounds of the interviewee fiddling with the mike cable. Lavalier mikes are notorious for these problems.

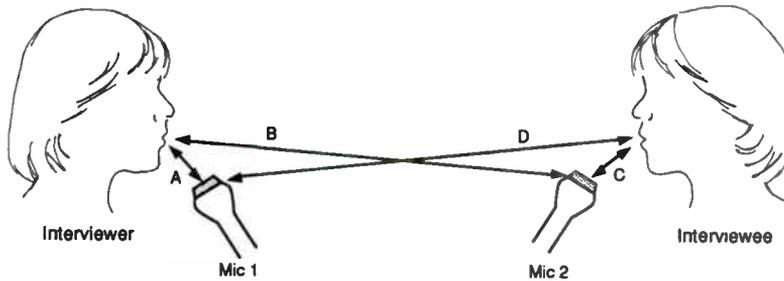


Figure 12.2. Distance Ratios for Recording with Two Mikes.

Recording a Speech or News Conference

Generally, in this situation, one or more people will be seated at a table or standing at a podium. If this is true, you should be able to get your mike relatively close to the person speaking by using a desk stand or mounting clamp. Often you will need a gooseneck extension to get the mike into the best location.

Add microphone extension cables to your mike if necessary, so that you can keep your tape recorder with you where you are sitting. It's awkward to have to get up and run to the podium to change tapes, and if you have to leave the recorder at the podium or press conference table, it's impossible to monitor the recording and make notes of index counter readings.

Occasionally you'll need to record someone giving a speech who is not standing at a podium or seated at a table. The only way to get a good recording of this event is to get the mike close to the speaker. Try to convince the speaker to wear a lavalier or tie-tack microphone, which you supply, or, if you must, have the speaker hold your microphone. If there is little need for movement, the speaker might be willing to talk into a stationary, floor-stand mike, but if the speaker is going to move around, the lavalier or tie-tack (with enough extension cable) will give better results. In any case, make sure the speaker is aware that the microphone is for recording purposes, and not for the **public address (PA)** system. Otherwise, your tape of the event will begin with those immortal three little words, "Is this on?" If there is a PA system, locating your recording mike near the PA mike (by clamping or taping) is essential (see "Recording From a Public Address System," below).

If none of these options is practical, you may be able to get a usable recording using a highly directional microphone such as a hypercardioid or shotgun microphone from a relatively long distance. You would probably need to hand-hold the microphone and track the speaker's movements with the mike.

Recording from a Public Address System

Recording a speech, press conference, or other event can be helped or hindered by the presence of a public address system (also called a "sound reinforcement system"). A PA system usually consists of a microphone, amplifier, and loudspeaker designed to reinforce a voice or other sounds so that large numbers of people can hear what's going on.

In many cases, the presence of a PA system will mean that the people who are speaking will tend to stay close to the mike for the PA system, so if you can position your mike next to the mike that is connected to the PA system, you stand a good chance of getting a usable recording. But a PA system may also cause the same kind of problem as a reverberant room: The sound bounces around the room and takes a long time to die away, and some sound from one word will be lingering when the next word is spoken. This makes the recording difficult to listen to and to edit. *The closer YOUR mike is to the speaker, the less of this unwanted background sound you'll get.*

In some cases, if you can locate the person operating the PA system, you may be able to attach your tape recorder directly to the PA amplifier. The mike for the PA system thus becomes the mike for your recording as well. You'll need an adapter cable with one end having the proper plug for your recorder's *AUX* or *LINE IN* jack (*do not plug this feed into your recorder's mike jack*) and the other end having the proper (and probably different) connection for the PA system's record output jack. Most PA systems use a **quarter-inch phone connector** or **RCA phono connector**. The person operating the PA system may be able to help you make the connection.

If you're using a direct connection from the PA system to make your recording, be sure to make a test recording to check the sound quality you'll be getting. Watch out for electrical buzz or hum, often a problem with direct connection to a PA system.

If you can't attach a mike near the PA system's mike, or make a direct connection to the PA system's amplifier, try putting your mike close to one of the PA system's loudspeakers. If necessary, you can use a clamp, stand, or adhesive tape to attach the mike to the loudspeaker. You won't get a perfect voice quality with this method, but you'll often get a more intelligible sound than with certain other techniques, such as holding a mike somewhere in the audience.

Recording from a Mult Box

When an event is being covered by many reporters, a **mult box** (sometimes called a **splitter box**) often will be set up by one of the media organizations or by the organizers of the event. This allows the newsmaker to speak into one microphone that is connected to a large box with many jacks on it. Each reporter can then connect a tape recorder to one of the jacks on the box and receive a signal

from the microphone. This saves the reporters the trouble of having to set up their own mikes and reduces the visual clutter of a forest of mikes in front of the newsmaker.

When mult boxes are designed to provide your recorder the same kind of connection and the same kind of electrical signal as a normal professional quality microphone, the boxes are referred to as "operating at mike level." So you should be able to plug into the mult box with the same cable you'd use for your mike (the mult box replaces the mike). Sometimes mult boxes will have different connecting arrangements, so it's a good idea to bring along a variety of adapter cables, such as those you'd use for hooking up to PA systems. You may want to check with the event's organizers in advance to find out what type of equipment, if any, will be available.

Mult boxes can be a source of added noise, hum, or buzz in your recording. So check the audio quality of the feed you're getting from the mult box as soon as you arrive at the event. If there's a problem, let the mult operator know about it. And if the problem persists, be ready to be assertive about putting your own mike on the podium to circumvent a bad-sounding mult box.

Recording the Output of Another Tape Recorder

If you have the proper connecting cables, you can transfer sound directly from one tape recorder to another. This provides much better quality than, for instance, playing a tape on one machine and aiming a mike from another recorder at the loudspeaker of the first machine—a practice definitely *not* recommended.

The direct connection is accomplished by plugging a cable into the *EARPHONE* or *LINE OUT* jack of the machine playing the tape, then plugging the other end of the cable into the *AUX* or *LINE INPUT* jack of the machine on which you want to make the copy. Adjust the playback level and tone controls on the first machine to somewhere in the middle of their range; then adjust the record level control (if any) on the second machine to get proper peak readings.

Note that, in this arrangement as well as when recording from a PA system, you must connect to the *AUX* or *LINE IN* jack on your recorder, not to the *MIKE* jack. This is because output signals from amplifiers and tape recorders are much stronger than the signal from a microphone. If you plug an amplifier or tape machine's output into a tape recorder's *MIKE* input jack, the resulting recording will be grossly distorted.

You should, of course, listen to a sample recording—making whatever adjustments are necessary—before proceeding to record an entire event from a line-level source.

If your tape recorder doesn't have an *AUX* or *LINE IN* jack—if it has only a *MIKE*-level input jack—then in order to be able to connect your recorder to

line-level sources such as the ones described above, you'll need a special cable called a **level-dropping** or "**attenuating**" cable, which is available from electronics specialty stores. The cable will allow you to plug line-level sources into the **MIKE** input jack of your tape recorder.

You can also use the technique of connecting the input of your recorder to the output of another recorder to help get good recordings of events in an emergency. Let's say you arrive at an event and discover that you don't have enough microphone extension cable to reach all the way from the podium, where the newsmaker is speaking, to the area where you need to sit. But another reporter has already set up a mike on the podium, run her cable over to where you both will be sitting, and connected the cable to her tape recorder. If she's willing, and if you have the proper adapter cable, you probably can get a satisfactory recording by connecting from the **EARPHONE** output jack of her recorder to the **AUX** or **LINE IN** jack of your recorder. *It is always best, however, to have your own microphone up on the podium as close to the speaker as possible.* Your colleague may stop recording or have technical problems or otherwise be unable to provide you with satisfactory sound.

Transmitting Tape and Voice over the Telephone

For breaking news stories—where it's important to get what you've taped on the air as quickly as possible—it may be worth trading a loss of some sound quality for speed of transmission back to the studio by using the telephone. Telephones have a restricted frequency response (about 300 Hertz to 3,000 Hertz)—hardly high fidelity. Much bass, treble, and intelligibility are lost. There is also a lot of background noise and substantially more distortion than you'd get if you took the tape back to the station. But, in many cases, time is of the essence, so your station should have some way of taping what comes in on its telephone lines.

Head for the nearest telephone. Don't attempt, except in the direst of emergencies, to send sound over the telephone by holding its mouthpiece close to the tape recorder's loudspeaker. The inferior-quality carbon microphone in the telephone adds distortion; background noise from the room where you're using the telephone will leak in; and the resulting sound that reaches the radio station over the telephone will be virtually unintelligible.

Instead, you should play your tape directly into the phone. Here's how to do it:

- Have a cable that can connect your recorder's **EARPHONE** output to a pair of **alligator clips** (spring-loaded clips) (see Figure 12.3).

- Unscrew the mouthpiece of the telephone. (Note: You can't do this with many styles of telephone, including pay phones whose mouthpieces are sealed. Go find another phone if you can't remove the mouthpiece.)
- Remove the loose disc inside the mouthpiece. This is the carbon microphone. Underneath it should be two exposed metal posts.
- Connect the proper end of the cable to the tape recorder, and connect the alligator clips on the other end of the cable to the posts. It does not matter which clip goes to which post.
- Play the tape in your recorder. Listen through the telephone earpiece and adjust playback volume and tone controls for the loudest, clearest sound without undue distortion.

You may also be able to read live narrations through this setup with better quality than by using the carbon mike in the telephone. With the tape recorder connected as described above, put blank tape in the recorder. Plug your mike into the recorder, set the recorder to *RECORD* mode, and activate the *PAUSE* control. If your recorder has "feed-through" capability, your voice should be heard down the telephone line.

Modern technology is blessing (or cursing) us with a wider variety of new telephones. With most of these, it's harder to use the alligator-clips feeding method described above. But other options *are* becoming available:

- **Modular connections.** It's now possible to buy adapter boxes that will plug into the small modular port that normally connects a telephone's handset, letting you send and/or receive sound through a direct cable hookup. Or you can use a modular adapter to hook up one of these boxes in parallel with the phone set, similar to connecting an answering machine.
- **Cellular phones.** If you or your station are investing in cellular phones, make sure you get the type that have a modular connector built in. This will allow you to hook up your tape recorder's output directly to feed tape and voice to the station. Many broadcast-supply houses sell a variety of accessories for hooking up ancillary gear to cellular phones.
- **New dial-up services.** For those situations where you file frequently from a particular location, such as city hall or the county courthouse, phone companies now offer dial-up digital circuits, which carry much more information than a standard phone line. By installing one of these "switched 56" circuits and some digital audio encoding equipment, you can file reports back to the station with sound approaching full FM-radio quality, for a dial-up charge only about twice the cost of a normal phone call.

Conclusion

There isn't enough space in this book to describe all the different recording and feeding situations you'll run into as a radio journalist. But if you've prepared your equipment and practiced with it, you should be ready to solve problems as they come your way. And if you pay attention to the recording environment, and keep your ears open for the sounds that tell the story, you'll communicate your story in an effective and listenable way—and avoid many problems during the production process.



Unscrewing the receiver mouthpiece by twisting it counterclockwise. (Note: Many pay-phones are permanently sealed, and will not permit this.)



Removing the mouthpiece cover, revealing the carbon microphone.



Removing the microphone by lifting it out of the receiver.



Attaching the first alligator clip to one of the receiver's "tongues."



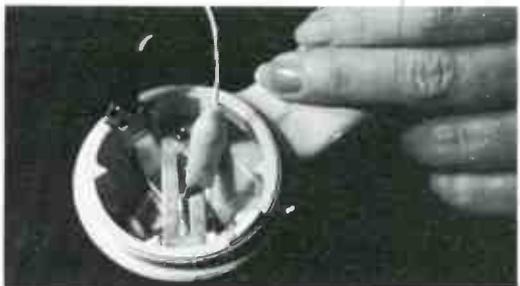
The alligator clip is attached in this fashion to provide the firmest connection. Its teeth grip tightly *across* the edges of the "tongue," rather than gripping the flat, smooth surface, from which the clip could slide off.



The second clip is attached in a similar manner. It doesn't matter which clip goes to which tongue, as long as the clips don't touch each other.



To prevent the clips from touching each other, rubber or plastic sheaths are recommended. This receiver is now ready for "phone-feeding."



In some parts of the country, GTE style ("Automatic Electric") phones are found. They use two bars instead of "tongues."

Figure 12.3. Playing tape through the telephone.

Tape Editing

Jonathan "Smokey" Baer

Broadcast journalism is not a process of transmission as much as one of synthesis. You may spend three days on a story, record more than an hour of tape, and have to distill the entire experience into a five-minute report. Real time is different from *radio time*. And in radio, there is no more useful tool in packaging information than skillful tape editing.

When Scott Simon produced his award-winning report for ALL THINGS CONSIDERED on an American Nazis' rally in Chicago, he condensed a six-hour event into 17 minutes. He selected the telling details—not necessarily the obvious ones. And by using short snippets of tape gathered in the crowd, interspersed with well-written, highly detailed narrative, Scott gave the listener a sense of what it was like to be at the rally. Just as a painter or photographer carefully selects what to include inside a frame, he constructed a picture of that event.

But people don't have entire days to immerse themselves in all the stories and issues pertinent to them. They must rely on media to transmit information to them in short, digestible bits.

Radio time is compressed time. Translating real time to radio time necessarily compresses information. When I worked on a program about the Americans held hostage in Iran, I selected a passage of tape acquired from an American who'd been living in Tehran at the time of the Iranian revolution. He'd recorded his thoughts as he stood on the roof of his apartment building surveying the revolution in progress. The sound of people shouting in the streets could be heard underneath his voice. This segment of tape provided little practical information,

such as economic or religious explanations for the Iranian revolution. What it *did* provide was *an environment for the listeners*, a context for understanding what was to follow in the program and an emotional experience to which they could relate. It ushered the listeners into radio time; it engaged their intelligence and imagination and prepared them for the "harder" segments that followed.

Imagination is the key to radio time. Radio takes place in the mind of the listener. Humorist Stan Freberg once developed a promotion for a national radio-sales convention that answered the question, "What can radio do that television can't?" He created an audio gag about how Lake Michigan had been drained and filled with hot chocolate. Then he brought in a 500-foot mountain of whipped cream and had the Royal Canadian Air Force drop a 10-ton maraschino cherry on top, all to the cheers of 25,000 screaming extras. "Try that on television!" was the tag line.

While *editing tape* is a physical task (cut the tape, join it together again), *tape editing* is a creative process that is as demanding and rewarding as fine writing. Like a writer attending to grammar, a tape editor must be careful to make clean splices that leave the listener unable to distinguish edited material from unedited material. An editor must also take professional (i.e., ethical) responsibility for content. The power to change someone's comments and leave listeners with the impression that what they heard is what the speaker said is awesome and easily abused. A good editor can listen to a passage, understand what is being said, and then present the passage in an easy-to-understand manner with the least possible distortion of the sense of the original material.

Introduction to Tape Editing

Just as you can cut and paste and rearrange written words on a page, you can also manipulate audio information with tape editing. Words, sounds—even breaths and pauses—all have locations on magnetic tape. A trained editor can mark the location of a sentence, word, or syllable and remove it.

Tape is not as easy to edit as the printed word. That's because tape editors must preserve the qualities of speech that linguists call *suprasegmentals*, the cadence and inflection of the voice. This is audible information that you can't see in a transcript but that is picked up and processed by the ear and the brain. Just listen to a bad edit. The text makes perfect sense, but your ear knows something is amiss. There may be no breath where the speaker should have taken one, or there may be changes in background sounds, or the speaker may have abruptly moved far away from the microphone.

Unfortunately, no written guide to tape editing can show you how to make an edit. But this chapter will introduce you to the process. And if someone with

knowledge of editing can give you a 10-minute demonstration, you can sit down and practice on your own to become an adept tape editor.

The Tape

Audio recording tape is made of plastic. It is $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide, and usually 1.5 mil (.0015 inch) thick (see Figure 13.1). Each side of the tape—the **backing** and the **oxide**—has its own distinct function and appearance. The backing provides structure for the tape. It holds the oxide and carries the material that actually stores the audio information. The oxide side faces the playback head, which senses the magnetic flux contained in the material on the tape.* Though the two sides have different appearances, the variety of tapes on the market makes it difficult to give an absolute rule for determining which side is which. For Scotch 176, the backing side is shiny brown, and the oxide side is dull brown. For Ampex 406, the backing is a dull flat black, but the oxide side is a shiny brown.

The tape winds onto reels of 5, 7, or $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. The largest reels are the best to use for editing because their **hubs** (centers) have the largest diameter. This makes them easy to rock back and forth. When all the tape is on one reel, you say it is either **heads out** (that is, the beginning of the tape is on the outside of the spool) or **tails out** (the end of the tape comes first, so the tape must be rewound before it can be played back). Blank tape is assumed to be heads out because it is placed on the **feed** or **supply** (left) hub of the tape recorder.

The Machine

The first step in making the tape machine work is to thread the tape (see Figure 13.2). Put the reel of tape (if it is heads out) on the left-hand, or feed or supply hub. Put an **empty take-up reel** on the right-hand **hub**. Thread the tape around the **idler arm** and **idler wheel**, past the **tape heads**, between the **capstan** and **pinch roller**, and finally around the take-up reel.

When the tape is secured in this fashion, the buttons will operate the machine if the **tension arm** (which activates an interlock) is in the "up" position. Sometimes when you press *PLAY*, this arm will drop too low and the machine will automatically stop. Be sure that the tape is threaded tautly and that the tape tension switches are correctly set. Professional machines have controls for adjusting the tension on the threaded tape. These controls select tensions for small reels (5 or 7 inches), large reels ($10\frac{1}{2}$ inches), or a combination of the two. It is always

*Sometimes, tape gets twisted and the backing side faces the playback head. You recognize this because the sound of the tape is "bassy"; there are no higher frequencies. You can correct this by simply untwisting the tape. In the unlikely event that the entire tape is wound on the reel incorrectly, just put a twist in the tape and wind it onto another reel, so the tape rolls up with the backing side facing the outside of the reel.

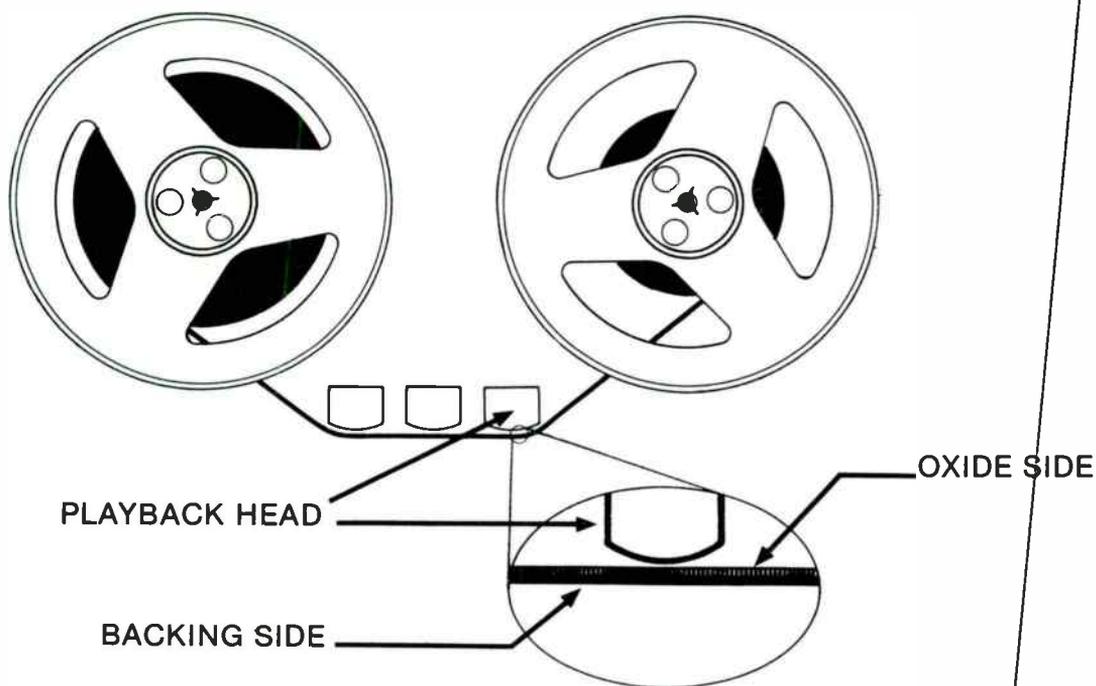


Figure 13.1. Tape Structure.

best to use the same size reels on both the supply and take-up reels. Proper tension settings will prevent stretched or broken tape.

Besides the tension-select switches, modern professional tape machines have buttons that make the machine play, stop, run at fast-forward, rewind, and operate in the **edit mode**. The functions of the first four buttons are obvious. The edit button puts the machine in the play mode, but instead of the tape winding onto the take-up reel, it spills onto the floor. Essentially, this button disables the take-up reel motor, engages the capstan and pinch roller, and overrides the tension arm switch. This function is convenient when you are deleting long portions of tape.

Reproduction of Sound

Reproducing sound from tape is made possible by the motion of the tape past the playback head. The playback head senses the magnetic information stored on the tape. Professional machines have three heads (see Figure 13.3). From left to right, they are the **erase head**, the **record head**, and the **playback head**. When you are editing, you will be dealing with the playback head.

Again, moving tape past the playback head is essential to the reproduction of sound, and the speed at which the tape passes the head is critical. Seven-and-

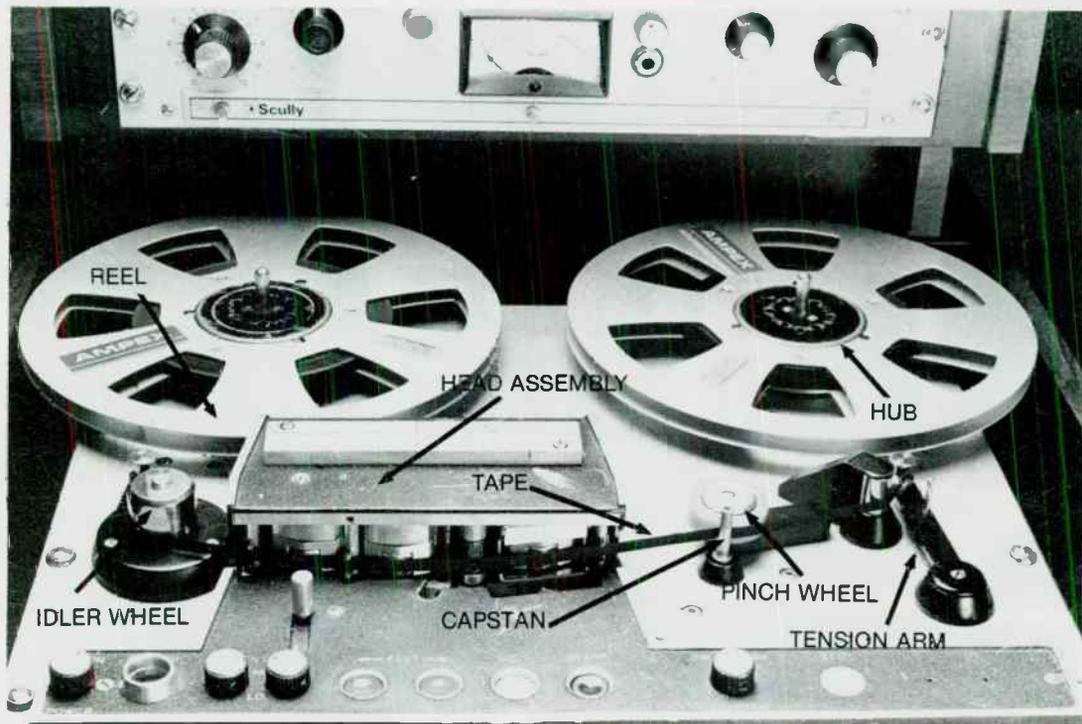


Figure 13.2. Tape Path. (Photo by Pheobe Chase Ferguson.)

a-half inches per second (ips) is the broadcast standard speed of ¼-inch, reel-to-reel tape machines. Other speeds occasionally used are 3¾ ips and 15 ips. The slowest speed is not normally used because it produces sound that is too poor in quality. The highest speed is easier to edit because there is twice as much space between words, but you use twice as much tape. At 15 ips, an hour-long program would require two 10½ inch reels—and a reel change during broadcast. For speech, 7½ ips is an economical and convenient speed for recordings. When working with music, where fidelity tolerances are more exacting, 15 ips is highly desirable.

Finding the Edit Point

Let's say you have these three sentences on tape, and you want to remove the middle one:

President Bush spoke about the energy situation. His manner was grim but optimistic. He indicated there would be no gasoline shortage once the price per gallon reached two dollars.

2 TRACK STEREO TAPE CONFIGURATION

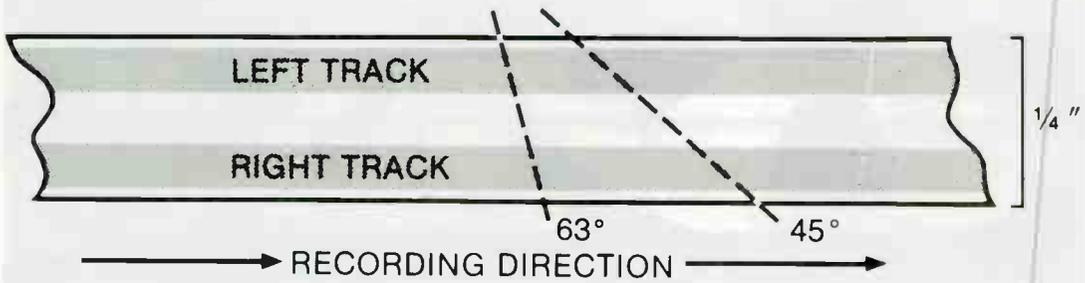


Figure 13.8. Two-Track Stereo Tape Configuration

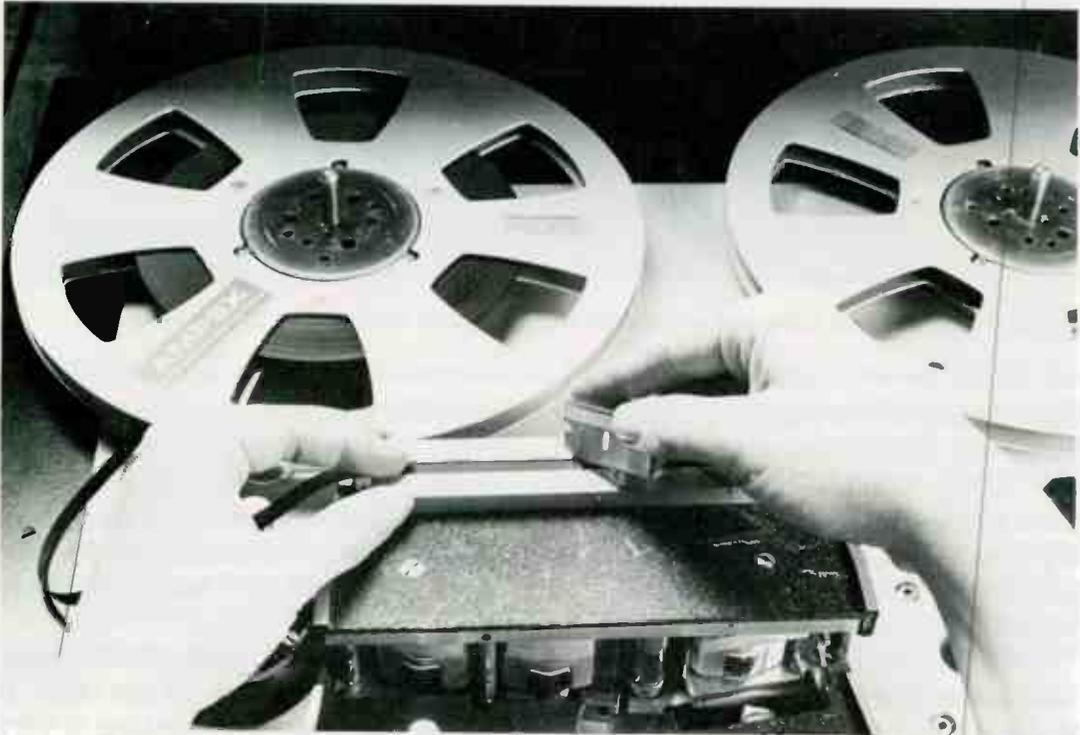


Figure 13.9. Cutting Tape. (Photo by Pheobe Chase Ferguson.)

recording tape together with no space in between them. Apply the splicing tape centered left-to-right over the splice. Some people stick the splicing tape on their razor blade and use the blade as a lever for proper positioning (see Figure 13.10).

You can check the splice by inspecting the oxide side of the tape to make sure the pieces of tape are touching. Then, to be certain the splice is strong, rub your fingernail over the splicing tape until all the air is forced out of the space between the adhesive and the tape backing. You'll know this has happened when the color of the splicing tape resembles the color of the tape itself (see Figure 13.11). If, for any reason, the splicing tape is not aligned with the recording tape and parts of the sticky side spill out over the sides, start again. To pry apart the splice, hold the tape, oxide side up, forming an upside-down "U" with the tape, then rock the tape with your fingers so the apex of the "U" rides back and forth across the cut. This should force loose one of the edges of the cut and give you enough tape to hold to pull the splice apart.

Never reuse splicing tape. It's not worth the risk of a splice breaking. If, when new splicing tape is reapplied, some adhesive from the first splice remains on the tape, be sure to remove it by rubbing it off with your finger. (Or press some masking tape on the back of the magnetic tape, and remove it quickly.) When wrapped on a reel, the adhesive could wind up on the front side of the tape and gum up your machine.

Organizing Tape

A far more important question than *how* to edit is *what* to edit. The standard joke is, *Take out the bad and leave in the good*. By definition, it is a subjective process. But here are some hints that can help you decide:

The Outtake Reel

Some people make initial decisions the first time they hear the tape—and start cutting right away. Others listen first and take notes. Logging tape is more time-consuming, but for some people it may shorten the effort in the long run. It helps if your tape machine has an electronic counter; otherwise, you always will have to stop and start the tape and your stopwatch simultaneously. Jot down particular phrases, questions, or ideas along with the time into the tape at which they occur. When you're done, you have a rough outline of the tape. Using the log of your tape, it should be easy to pick out, locate, and order the segments of tape you want.

Whether you log the tape depends on the amount of time and patience you have, and is ultimately a matter of personal style. But whatever you do, don't be afraid to cut the tape for fear of locking yourself into an idea you may want to

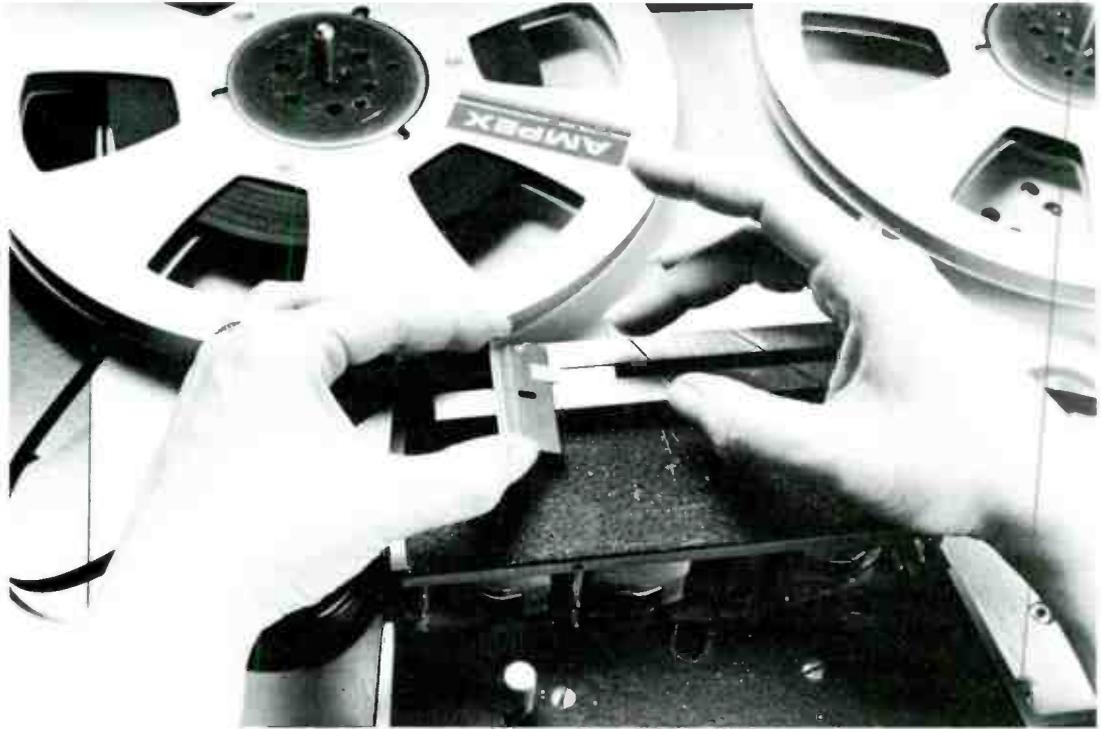


Figure 13.10. Applying Splicing Tape with a Razor. (Photo by Pheobe Chase Ferguson.)

change. One of the wonderful things about tape editing is that you can always change your mind. The key to avoiding problems is *don't throw away those sections of tape you think you don't want*. Put all these **outtakes** on a separate reel. This way, when you're done with the first listen, you can edit the **keeper** reel to tighten, rearrange, and simplify the content. But if you find you've edited yourself into a corner or left something important out, you still can reclaim material from your outtake reel.

The outtake reel can also be a great aid during the final editing process. Sometimes you need a pause, breath, or even a sound (like an off-mike telephone ringing) to throw into your tape to make an edit sound right. Consider your outtakes a reservoir of room ambience and speech effects (coughs, *uhms*, *ahhs*, etc.) that you can use to maintain the natural cadence of a person's voice. You can't necessarily mix outtakes, though. The ambient sound of a certain place is closely related to microphone placement. A person's voice recorded, say, during a tour of a very large room, might change timbre as he or she moves through the room. Taking a breath or a phrase recorded in one part of the room and editing it into a portion of tape recorded in a different location may or may not work. Let your

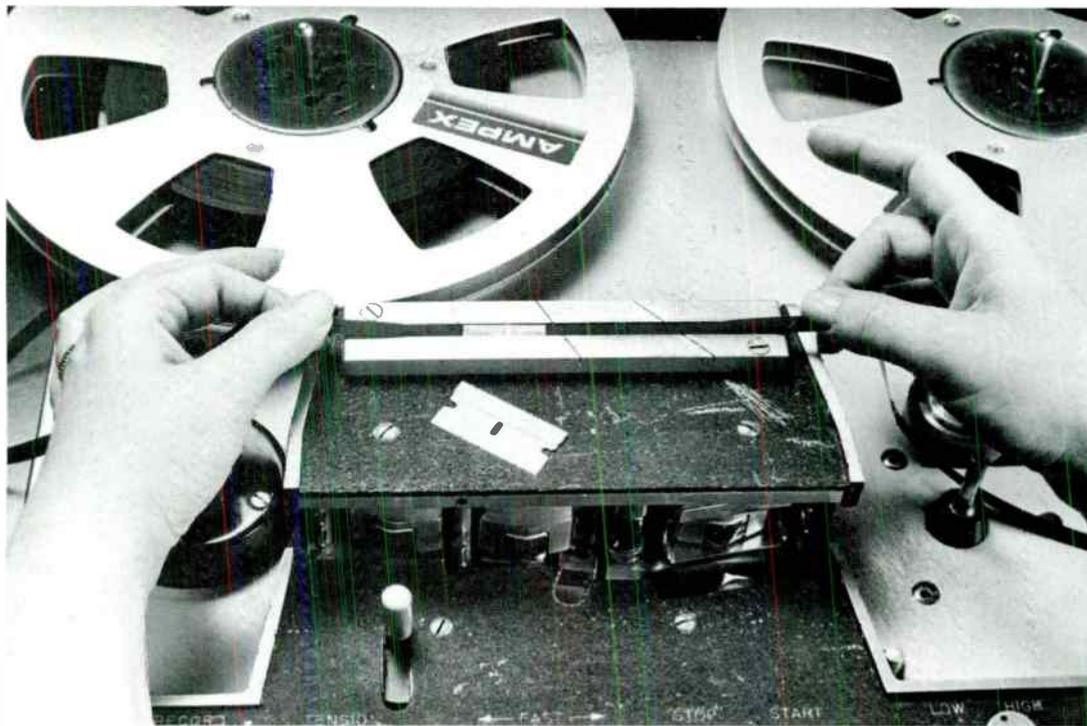


Figure 13.11. A Complete Splice..

ears be the final judge. If it sounds natural, leave it in. If it doesn't work, take it out and look for another section of tape to help you solve your problem.

An outtake reel is also a defense against the most common error in editing—**upcutting**. An upcut results when you've cut off a bit of the sound or word you intended to keep. "He," for instance, might sound like "e" if you upcut the *h*. This is easy to repair, as long as you've kept what you cut out. Simply resplice the *h* you saved from the original material to the *e* on the keeper reel.

Of course, you don't need to keep every last bit of tape you remove from your keeper reel. Outtake reels are probably only used if you're working on something quite long and you'll be removing sections of tape that are 30 seconds or longer. Once you have your tape pared down, and the bits you're taking out are short sentences and phrases that you're certain you don't want, just toss the material in the garbage. But make sure every cut works before you throw away any tape.

Frequently, you'll be undecided about a clip of tape. If it's long, put it on the outtake reel. If it's short, you can use masking tape to stick it to the wall or some other convenient place, such as the tape recorder top. Be sure to stick the

masking tape at the "heads out end" and on the backing side of the tape so no adhesive gets on the oxide side. You can label the clip on the masking tape.

Pacing and Cadence

Not enough can be said about the value of maintaining the pace and cadence of a speaker. This does not mean that everybody on the radio should speak flawlessly. On the contrary, they should speak *characteristically*. The editor should be sensitive to a speaker's speech pattern and work to preserve it, despite editing. Listen to where speakers pause, how often they say "ahh." Do their sentences run on? Are they given to multiple metaphors? Taking advantage of a speaker's traits can help you hide an edit. A well placed "uhm" can make a shift in conversation seem absolutely normal. If the interviewee tends to jump around conceptually in real time, you can use that to your advantage when editing real time to radio time. If the speaker builds arguments with tight logic, then the editing must reflect that. You can't leap to a conclusion after cutting out the keystone of a person's argument. The most important thing to remember is *let your ears be the judge*. Experiment until the tape sounds right. Your worst enemy is boredom. Tape is a lot of fun to work with, so don't let yourself become bored. Use your imagination to find the answers to editing problems.

Special Effects

Tape editing does not end with interviews and reports. You can edit music, sound effects, and background sounds. Creative editing can produce an abstract whole from diverse sounds and words. Once you become comfortable with editing, you'll probably start to play games with it. For a lark, splice together coughs, uhms, and ahhs. Cut together in rapid succession people's responses to a single stimulus—like an audio pie-in-the-face. Create a narrative by cutting together a series of sounds. When you can edit tape well, you can arrange time in ways to suit your fancy—within the constraints of journalistic ethics.

Music editing is probably the most exacting kind of editing. Shortening a song or lengthening it to fit your production needs is difficult to do without leaving an audible sign that you've been there. The key is staying with the beat. Like speech, every song has a rhythm. This rhythm cannot be violated. The best way to follow the beat is to concentrate on the drum track of a song (for pop music). You can usually hear the downbeat and drums provide sharp, clear edit points. The problem, of course, is that other instruments are playing at the same time, often overlapping the beat you can cut. Sometimes you can just concentrate and hear the drum. Other times you may have to follow a different instrument. The

piano is a good one. Editing music is so complex that my best advice is to record some music onto tape and practice. Your ears are the best guide.

Tape loops are endless circles of tape. You can take a sound, music, or even a sentence, splice the ends of the passage together so you have a loop, and play it, round and round, continuously. The section of tape must be long enough to fit around the head assembly, but once threaded around the heads and between the capstan and pinch wheel, all you have to do is keep tension on it so it is tight and flat against the playback head. Hold the tape outstretched, but in the same plane as the tape deck, with a pencil.

Loops are particularly useful in lengthening background sounds for mixing under interviews. Just be sure the sound is nondescript or your listeners will notice that it is being repeated. Music can be looped, too. You can transform a particularly catchy four-measure phrase into a rhythm bed for something you want to lay on top of it. (See Chapter 14, "Studio Production," for more on tape loops.)

Housekeeping

Leader Tape

Leader tape is used for visual identification of sections of a reel of tape, such as the head, tail, or internal sections. Leader tape has no oxide, and thus cannot be recorded on. It is manufactured in several colors (e.g., white, yellow, and red), or in white and colored stripes. Each production facility has its own convention for the meaning, if any, of the different colors. One common convention:

<i>Color of Leader</i>	<i>Denotes</i>
White	head end of reel; or internal tape segment
Red	tail end of reel
White with red stripes	head end of stereo reel

NPR stores tape tails out (even temporarily), uses white head leader, no tail leader, and narrow red adhesive tape to attach the tail end of a reel to one outside face of the reel. The possibilities are endless. Establish whatever conventions you need and stick to them.

Reusing Tape and Reels

It is best to use only virgin tape and new reels when recording. Obviously, many stations and independent producers cannot afford to do this and must reuse tape from outtakes or recorded programs. There are several pitfalls to this practice:

- **Improper splices.** They will cause dropouts (lost instants of sound) when recorded over.
- **Sticky splices.** With time, the “stickum” from most splicing tape will bleed onto one layer above, causing the tape to stick to a capstan or guide, or to the next layer of tape on the reel. The listener will hear an objectionable low “wow” in the speech or music.
- **Hidden internal leader.** Although you’re likely to spot long lengths of leader tape on a reel, you may miss short ones buried within a reel of used tape. If you do, nothing will be recorded on them as they pass the record head, and you may lose crucial information.
- **Bent or cracked reels.** Metal reels can be bent out of “true”; plastic reels often crack. Don’t use an imperfect reel—you may lose an entire reel of tape in rewind or fast-forward mode. Tape may also get momentarily stuck in a crack in a reel and distort during playback.

Storage of Tape

Completed programs designated for medium- to long-term retention should always be stored “tails out,” uniformly wound onto reels or hubs (see below), and stored under controlled conditions of temperature and humidity. Most machines cannot produce uniform winds at fast-wind speeds. See tape manufacturers’ literature for further information.

Hubs

Some facilities handle tape without a feed or take-up reel, or both. Rather, they wind the tape tightly onto a small piece of plastic that goes around the hub, usually with one side of a metal reel (called a platen) underneath to guide the wind. Tapes wound onto hubs are sometimes called **pancakes**. *Never* rewind or fast-forward *onto* a hub—your tape will likely end up all over the room.

Added Considerations of Editing Tape

Once the mechanical skills of editing tape become second nature to you, editorial concerns will blend in with the technical process. Some people assume a preference for smooth editing is a preference for style, or form, over content. It is not. At the editing level, the two are the same. When making editing decisions, you are the sole arbiter of how someone’s comments are going to be presented. Editing balances style and content. It is not an either/or question.

By editing tape, you can control a person's ability to express himself to others. This is a heavy responsibility. Within the constraints of working with what's given to you, there is still a lot of leeway for determining what somebody means to say, what needs to be said, and what remains to be said. I believe editors must be certain that their work does not distort the intended thought of a speaker. *Don't* edit a tape to turn it into something you think the speaker *should* have said. You should aim to make it into something he or she *would* have said. The highest compliment a tape editor can receive is to have someone hear himself on a highly edited tape, and turn to the editor and say, "I thought you were going to edit this."

Jonathan "Smokey" Baer first learned to edit tape in 1968. He was working at WBFO in Buffalo, N.Y., when someone came up to him, pointed at a tape on a machine, handed him a razor blade, and said, "Here, kid, put leader on that." He's been editing tape ever since, primarily for ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. Smokey also served as NPR's associate producer in Chicago from 1979 to 1983. He describes his work by borrowing from A.J. Liebling: "I edit tape better than anyone who can edit tape faster, and edit faster than anyone who can edit better."

Studio Production

Skip Pizzi

A good radio producer must be a good radio listener. The primary purpose of producing for the radio is communicating with listeners, and the production techniques we will talk about here are merely tools to that end. In many ways, radio production is an art, and although we can discuss artistic techniques here, this book cannot teach you “radiophonic art.” That must come from within you, the producer, as you develop and hone the techniques of making good radio.

As you do so, you should remember that journalistic responsibility must always take precedence over imaginative production when you’re doing radio news and features. That thunderstorm sound effect on your CD may be the perfect thing for a drama or music production, but sounds in a journalistic piece must be recorded on location for that piece.

Most importantly, always remember that radio production is a means to an end. Even the most experienced radio producer can fall prey to the temptation to let production form overwhelm content. This only defeats the purpose of production: enhancing the presentation of information and entertainment to listeners.

The Elements of Radio Production

There are four basic elements of radio production—the tools that will help your radio production affect listeners the way you want.

1. Level (or “Loudness”) Control
2. Mixing

3. Transition
4. Timing

Level (or “Loudness”) Control

Perceptions of loudness. The ear is a complicated and amazing instrument. It senses sound in a way that is far more advanced than our best sound recording and reproduction equipment. As radio journalists, we are constantly challenged to fulfill this hungry sense with interesting sounds.

Handicapping us right from the start is the fact that although we may begin with real, live sounds, the listener finally hears approximations of those sounds. Most sounds go through a number of replications before they finally reach the listener's ear, and each replication degrades the sound. The process includes recording, playback, re-recording (sometimes several times), broadcast, and reception by the listener (see Figure 14.1). The highest quality equipment will minimize sound degradation (we will discuss ways to reduce the number of steps later in the chapter), but with any equipment, the better the sound going in, the better the sound coming out. With this in mind, let's go back to the ear, and the way it determines loudness.

There are several factors involved. First, look at an oscillograph (see Figure 14.2 A). This is a graphic representation of the electrical impulses produced by a microphone responding to sound waves. Note in this example that the peaks, or highest electrical values, occur at the oscillograph line marked +10. Figure 14.2B is an oscillograph of another sound; the maximum values also reach +10, but note that more of the other (non-maximum) electrical impulses' peaks come closer to +10 than those in Figure A. This means the *average* level of Figure B is higher than Figure A, because higher valued peaks occur *more often* in B. To the ear, the sound in Figure B sounds louder than the sound in Figure A, even though their maximum electrical values are equal. This is the heart of the concept of “*subjective loudness*,” or the ear's qualitative judgment of sound intensity.

Spectral density. Another important factor in loudness is the **spectral density** of sound. Sounds as they occur in nature are combinations of **fundamentals** and **harmonics**. In other words, most sounds are a composite of several different frequencies. The fundamental is the lowest and loudest frequency component of a sound; it determines a sound's **pitch**. Harmonics are multiples of the fundamental frequency and occur at lower amplitude levels than the fundamental. For example, a given piano note has a fundamental frequency of 440 Hertz (Hz), or cycles per second, meaning that the piano strings for that note vibrate 440 times each second. Secondary vibrations—harmonics—occur on those strings at 880 Hz (440 x 2), 1320 Hz (440 x 3), 1760 Hz (440 x 4), 2200 Hz (440 x 5), and so on. The number of harmonics that occur, and their respective intensities, determine the **timbre** or tonality of the sound.

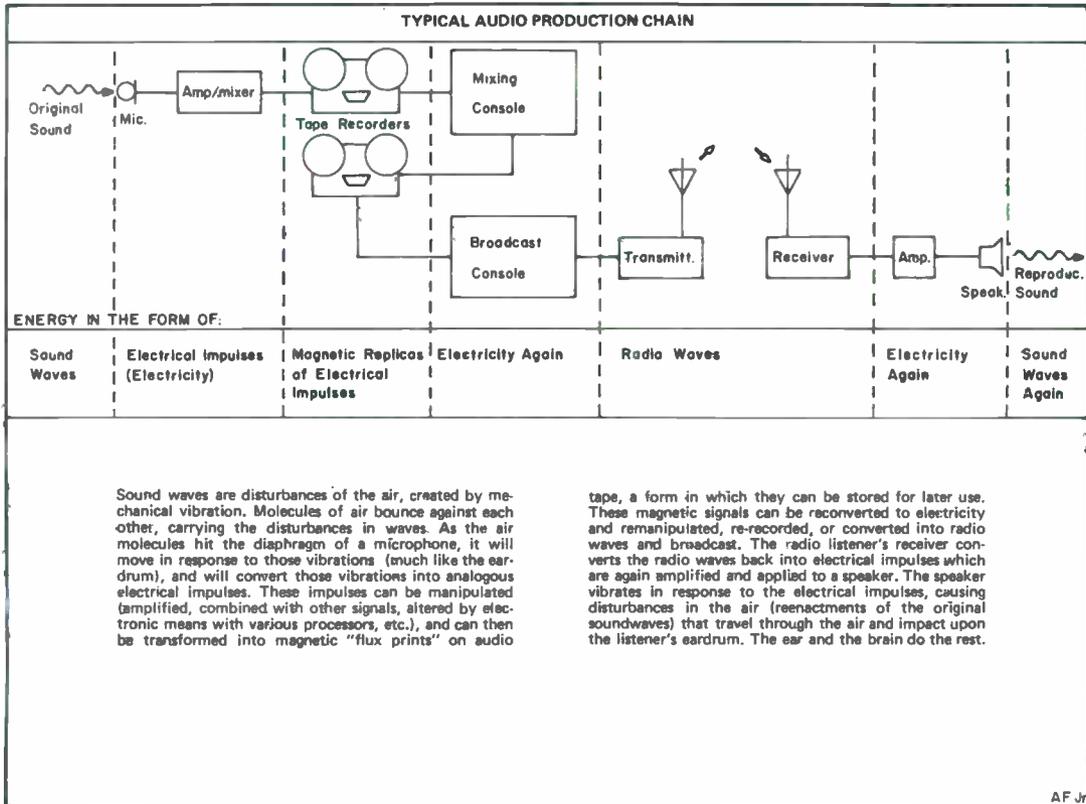


Figure 14.1. Audio Path.

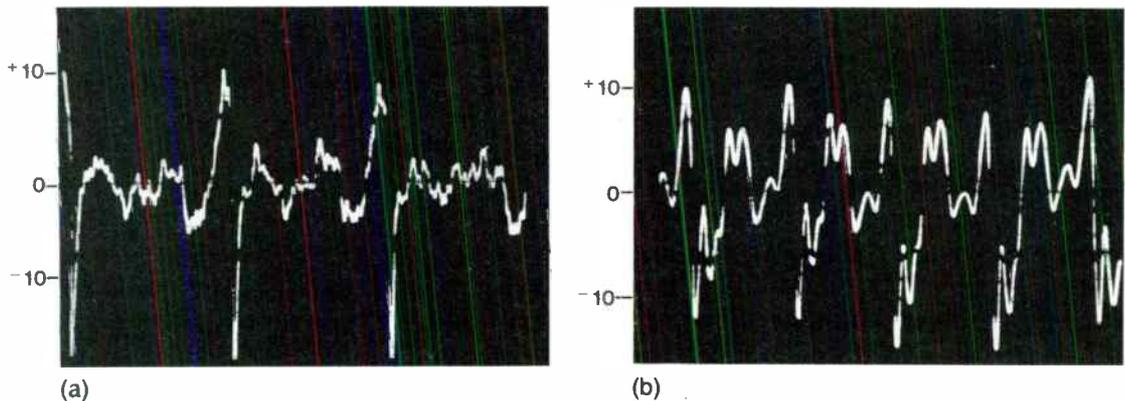


Figure 14.2. Oscillographs. (A) Oscillograph of a sound whose maximum peak energy reaches the value arbitrarily called +10. (B) Oscillograph of another sound whose maximum peak energy also reaches +10, but whose average intensity is higher than that of the sound represented in A. To most people, the sound depicted by oscillograph B will seem louder. (Photos by Skip Pizzi.)

The spectral density of the sound is the amount of harmonic energy it contains. Loudness is also affected by spectral density. *The higher the spectral density (i.e., the more harmonics in the sound), the louder the sound will seem to the ear.* Meters or other level-sensing devices are not sensitive to this effect. A flute (which has relatively few harmonics) and a violin (which has many) recorded at the same "level" on a tape recorder's meters will have different loudnesses. The violin will sound significantly louder, due to its higher spectral density.

The only way to determine how loud the listener will think a sound is, is to listen to the sound yourself. We will encounter various meters and other level-sensing devices, but none of them can judge subjective loudness as accurately or as simply as the ear. One of the cardinal rules of radio production, then, is *to accustom your ear to a particular volume in your monitor speakers or headphones, and leave the volume there for the duration of your production session.* The listener will not want to make frequent adjustments to the radio volume, so the producer should listen at one constant and comfortable level and adjust the production's contents to that level. This will ensure that the program has a consistent overall listening level. When a voice is followed by music, or even by another voice, be careful to match the subjective loudness of the two elements, avoiding a sudden jump or drop in the apparent level. Abrupt changes in loudness can cause the listener's attention to wander. If sound level variations require listeners to adjust their volume controls, they may adjust their tuning knobs to other stations instead.

Volume. Not only is it important to keep the monitoring level constant, but the absolute volume at which the producer listens is critical. Another phenomenon of human hearing is at work here. Studies have shown that the ear's sensitivity to sound varies with the sound's frequency. In other words, at a comfortable volume for "mid-range" (voice range) sounds, the ear usually cannot hear bass or high treble sounds as well. In addition, frequency sensitivity changes with the volume of the sound; the louder a sound is, the better the ear hears the low (or bass) frequencies of that sound, and vice versa. For example, if you are listening at a very loud level when producing a radio piece, you may think it has too much bass, but, to the audience, listening at a moderate level, the bass content will be normal.

The loudness button on some stereo equipment is designed to compensate for this effect. When it is turned on, more bass is automatically applied as the volume knob is turned down.

Loudness as a production tool. There are situations where you may want a change of loudness to achieve a certain effect. For example, we have all heard the musical portion of a radio, TV, or film soundtrack swell suddenly to heighten the emotional impact of a scene. The same scene might fall flat without it. Creating an element of surprise is another example. Here, an abrupt loudness change can provide an attention-riveting shock. But these are special cases; unless you are

trying to achieve such an effect, keep the program's loudness comfortable and consistent.

Mixing

Radio production is a *dynamic art form*, meaning that it exists not as an object in space (like sculpture), but as an event in time. In this respect it is akin to music, and mixing radio elements, like creating a musical composition, involves controlling and blending volumes and placement of several different audio sources.

Mixing as a production tool. The power of sound mixing in radio production is enormous. It can present listeners with two or more events recorded at separate times and/or separate places as if they had been simultaneous. Things that happened independently can be tied together; ideas can be emphasized or paraphrased; vast distances or time gaps between two events can magically disappear. The possibilities for manipulating and juxtaposing time are endless.*

In addition, you can vary the relative loudness or levels of the sounds being mixed so that one is louder than the others. This emphasizes the louder sound, of course, but you can continually adjust sound levels to shift the listener's primary focus from one element to another, while keeping the other sounds in close aural proximity. Moreover, you can do this discreetly so the listener is not distracted by the mixing effect, but is engaged by the content.

Mixing is also used to add music and sound effects to the spoken word for dramatic or comedic effect. These effects, usually mixed below the voice level, can enhance otherwise dry readings. The so-called "Golden Age of Radio" owes much of its success to the early mastery of this technique, and to the stimulation of listeners' imaginations. Even a minimal use of these effects can evoke suspense, humor, pathos, and other emotions, along with a great deal of believability. In some sophisticated productions, dozens of *effects tracks* will be mixed in at different levels in a layering technique to create surreal or convincing radio tableaux. And in nondramatic productions, effects can add to the listener's understanding or involvement.

Transition

The popularity of amusement parks and their thrill rides attests to the fact that people enjoy being transported in exciting and surprising ways. Successful

*A producer of radio journalism can put all these techniques to good use, but must strive to make sure that the manipulations and juxtapositions don't result in misrepresentation of the ideas and opinions gathered in the reporting phase of the project. Mixing, like editing, requires that content of the story be the determining factor in style.

radio production takes this into account when it moves the listener from place to place or idea to idea with transitions in sound.

On a more basic level, transitions are instrumental in presenting complex ideas on the radio. An orderly sequence of voices can improve the listener's comprehension and increase his attention span. A transition from one sound to a reinforcing sound, avoiding repetition, can stress the importance of an idea. News reporters often will follow a description of an event with an eyewitness account—a simple and quick transition that works. In a more involved production, transitions may be slower or more complex.

Timing

Timing is closely related to transition. Timing is to radio production what tempo is to music. The overall length of a radio production should be appropriate to the subject. A good rule of thumb: *When in doubt, make it shorter or faster.*

Usually, listeners are only subconsciously aware that timing is influencing their interest in a program. This is as it should be; if the listener notices technique, form has overtaken content. In longer or highly produced programs, an effect can be introduced gently, then subtly intensified or enhanced as the program continues. The first use of the effect should not shock, but entice, the listener. Subsequent occurrences can employ more radical treatments and build a climax, as a good work of fiction does.

Finally, the overall pacing of a radio production must be consistent with, as well as appropriate to, the subject matter. Strike a balance between boredom and sensory overload. Let ideas flow at a rate the listener finds comfortable; don't disturb the rate once you establish it.

Preparing for Production

The real workplace for radio production is the production studio. The specific equipment and functions of a studio are not standardized. In fact, there are probably no two production studios exactly alike. But to a good producer, changing from one properly equipped studio to another is no more difficult than changing from one car to another.

One significant variable is who actually operates the equipment. In many studios, the producer does everything—both the mental and the manual work. This is usually referred to as a combo operation. In some studios, an engineer operates the equipment according to the producer's instructions. In either case, the producer must understand the basic workings of the studio so he can perform or explain the procedures necessary to accomplish the production.

The first step in radio production is preparing to use the studio. Studio time is extremely valuable; preparation can save more studio time than any other production technique or shortcut. Before entering the studio, you should know the exact nature and order of the work to be done and, especially in the combo situation, exactly *how* to do it. You should have a prepared script, and your tape should be edited (and leadered, if on open-reel tape), put in the proper order, and, if necessary, timed. Plan the production in the simplest possible way, not just for efficiency in the studio, but because planning usually results in the most effective production. Some production sessions are complicated, so it's often worthwhile to work out a plan on paper. Take the final work plan or **production script** with you into the studio. (See Appendix G, "Sample Production Plan.")

One decision you need to make before entering the studio is whether the piece will be *mixed* or *cut-together*. Cutting-together requires less time and equipment than mixing. It is a quick and simple method of putting uncomplicated radio pieces together by splicing. If you use this technique, the subjective loudness of all the elements must be nearly equal to avoid objectionable level jumps. If you are going to *mix* the piece, all the elements will go through the console and be re-recorded, so matching their *original* levels is not as critical.

The decision to mix or cut-together is usually determined by the complexity of the production and the time available to do it. If you are doing a simple news spot, you probably will read your script, play a recording (an **actuality**), and then read a conclusion. This piece could be cut together if the actuality has been properly recorded. If, however, you want a **sound bed** underneath the entire spot, using sound recorded at the scene, you will need to mix the spot.

It is important to assess the capabilities of your particular studio and what is feasible in it before planning a production. The number of sound sources (playback machines) available at any one time is one important consideration. (See Appendix B, "Assessing the Studio.")

Setting Up the Studio

Assuming you have made proper preparations, the first step upon entering the studio is to set up the equipment. First, clean all tape recorder heads, capstans, pinch rollers, tape guides, and other parts of the tape path (see Figure 13.2). Next, **line up** all the tape machines to the console. This means adjusting all the tape machines' meters so that a "0 VU" (volume unit, pronounced "zero V-U") reading shows up on them whenever that same reading appears on the console meter (see Figure 14.3). Adjust digital recorders' inputs so their input meters read "-15." On digital machines "0" is the maximum recordable level, so a meter setting of "-15" gives plenty of headroom. On analog recorders, "0 VU" is a nominal recording level allowing about 10 dB (decibels) headroom above "0 VU" for occasional louder sounds (see Figure 14.6).

Lining up tape machines requires an oscillator. The oscillator produces an electrical signal at a steady frequency (or pitch) and at a constant level. It creates a pure *sine wave* with no overtones at a given frequency. The studio operator can control both of these parameters. Select a frequency somewhere in the center of the audio range, usually 1 kilohertz (1 kHz, also known as 1000 Hertz), although you can use anywhere from 400 to 2000 Hz. Send the output of the oscillator into the console (on some consoles it is a built-in feature), and adjust it to make the console meter(s) read "0 VU." Then, set each tape machine's monitor switch (see Fig. 14.4) to *SOURCE*, *INPUT* or *RECORD* (the name used for this setting varies from one brand of tape recorder to another). Adjust the *input level*, or *record level*, or *gain* (all names for the same thing) so the tape machine's meter reads "0 VU." (If the tape machine is two-track or multi-track, follow these procedures for each channel.) The tape machine is now lined up to the console.

Perform this process on all tape machines that are hooked up to record from the console. Now, as you observe good levels on the console VU meter, you can be sure the tape machines recording audio from the console have the same level.

Achieving Unity Gain

Next, set the output of each open reel tape machine in the calibrate position (*CAL* or *SRL*). (For machines without a calibrate function, see the set-up procedures

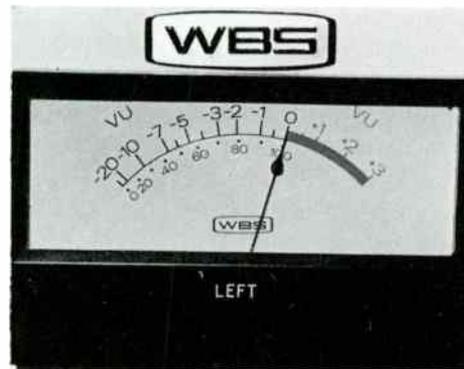


Figure 14.3. 0 VU Meter Reading. A "0 VU" reading on the standard VU (volume unit) meter. Note that the scale above the line is calibrated in dB (decibels) relative to "0" or "reference level," and the scale below the line is calibrated in percentage of modulation for broadcast transmitters. "0 VU" equals 100% modulation. (Photo by Skip Pizzi.)

at the end of this section.) With the oscillator still sending a "0 VU" level, record a minute or so of the 0 VU tone from the oscillator onto a blank tape of the type for which the machine is set.* Record the tone at the tape speed that will be used in the production. Professional broadcasters in the United States use 7½ inches per second (ips) or 19 centimeters per second (cm/s) for most voice recording and 15 ips (38 cm/s) for music. As the tone is being recorded, change the monitor switch to signals coming from the tape (TAPE, REPRO or PB). This does not affect the recording; it only changes the point to which the meter and output are connected. When the switch is made, the meter should remain at "0 VU," or at least stay between -1 VU and +1 VU. If the meter moves by more than this when you switch from SOURCE to TAPE, or INPUT to PB, etc., and the output is in the calibrate position while recording a mid-frequency (1 kHz) tone, then the tape machine is improperly set up or malfunctioning. If the meter stays at approximately 0 VU after switching to PB or TAPE, adjust the RECORD GAIN or INPUT LEVEL as needed to return the meter to exactly "0 VU." An adjustment of the knob will take a half-second or so to show up on the meter, because the knob you are adjusting is changing the level going onto the tape via the record head, but what you are watching on the meter is coming off the tape from the playback head (see Figure 14.4). The delayed reaction results from the time it takes for any point on the tape to travel from the record head to the playback head. (This phenomenon also provides for some interesting special effects—see Appendix E.)

Now you have recorded a bit of 0 level tone on the recording machine. You will use this tape to align the output of all playback machines. Rewind the tone tape and turn off the oscillator. Next, play back the tone tape on the machine it was recorded on. Adjust the tape machine's OUTPUT, if necessary, so the meters read "0 VU." Adjust the console fader (also known as a pot, short for potentiometer) that the tape machine is playing back through until the console meter reads "0 VU." Mark the position of the fader at this point.

Then, rewind the tone tape, and use it to repeat this process on each playback machine. Don't forget to check the OUTPUT of each playback machine before moving to the console. Again, mark each console fader at the point at which "0 VU" tone on tape makes the console meter also read "0 VU." Marking the console (using a wax pencil, magic marker on masking tape, colored adhesive tape or any other non-defacing technique) allows you to reset the fader to the same point at any time. When the fader is set to this mark, unity gain is

*To "set up" a tape machine, a technician adjusts its playback electronics to an industry-standardized test tape. Once adjusted, any tape will play back properly on this machine. The technician also records tones from an oscillator onto blank tape, and adjusts the recording functions of the machine to adhere to the same standard. These adjustments will differ from one type of tape stock to another. Therefore, the type of tape used to adjust the machine is the only kind of tape that should be used for recording on that machine, but any kind of tape can be played back with proper fidelity.

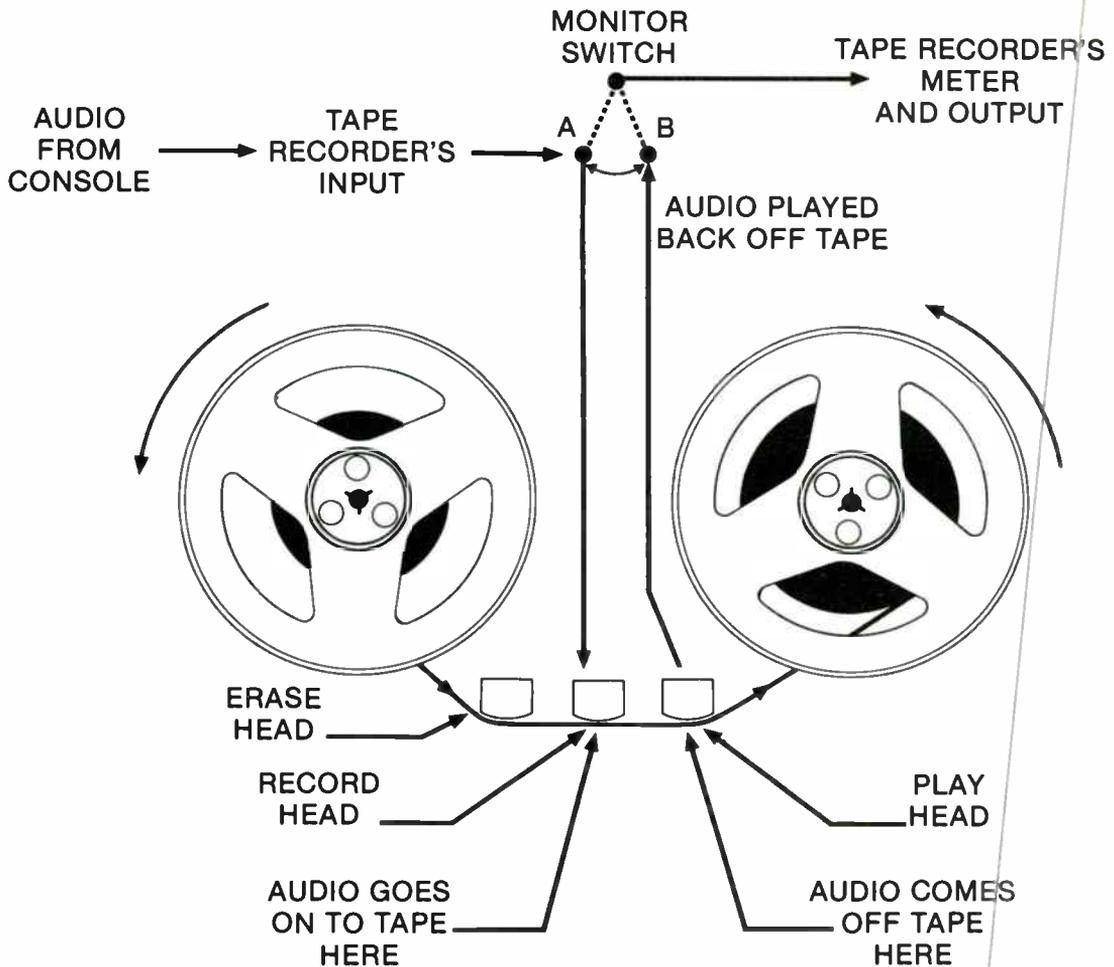


Figure 14.4. Tape Monitor Switch Position. The monitor switch selects the point at which audio is sampled and sent to the meter. In position A, the meter and output get audio as it comes into the recorder from a mixer or microphone. In position B, meter and output get audio as it comes off the tape. For playing back a tape, the monitor must be in position B. For recording, the switch can be in either position. Position A is called *SOURCE*, *INPUT*, or *RECORD* depending on your tape machine; Position B is called *TAPE*, *REPRO* or *PB*.

achieved. (It is called "unity" because nothing is added or subtracted from the level of the signal as it travels from one tape machine to another through the console; in mathematical terminology, unity means multiplied by a factor of one, i.e., equivalence.) By the way, the unity gain point should fall between 12 o'clock and three o'clock on rotary faders, and around the -10 to -15 mark on linear faders

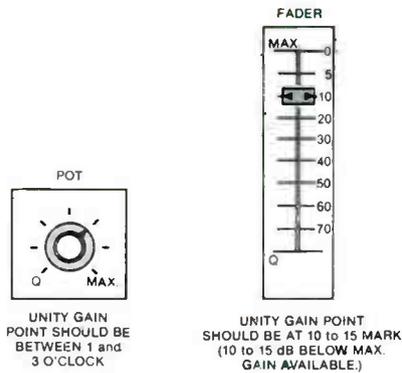


Figure 14.5. Unity Gain Point on Pots or Faders. The unity gain points are shown in their appropriate positions for rotary pots or linear faders.

(see Figure 14.5). If this is not the case, the console is not set up properly and needs adjustment by electronics maintenance personnel.

The preceding set-up procedures may seem rather complex, but after you perform them a few times, they will become routine. Until they do, you may want to refer to this abbreviated review of set-up procedures:

1. Use an oscillator to set console meter to "0 VU" with approximately 1 kHz tone.
2. Set tape monitor switches to *SOURCE* or *INPUT*, and adjust record levels (inputs) to "0 VU" on tape machines' meters.
3. Place tape machines' outputs in *CAL* or *SRL* position.
4. Change monitor switches to *TAPE* or *PB*, and readjust record gain to "0 VU" on meters if necessary.
5. Record about 60 seconds of tone onto blank tape of proper type.
6. Turn off oscillator, and rewind tapes.
7. Play back tone tape on each tape machine, setting each console fader for "0 VU" on console meter.
8. Mark console at each fader where "0 VU" point occurs.

Preparing To Mix

Once the set-up is complete, the next step is to dub any music or other material on vinyl records onto tape. This not only saves time during retakes but saves records as well. Repeatedly playing the same section of a record in a short

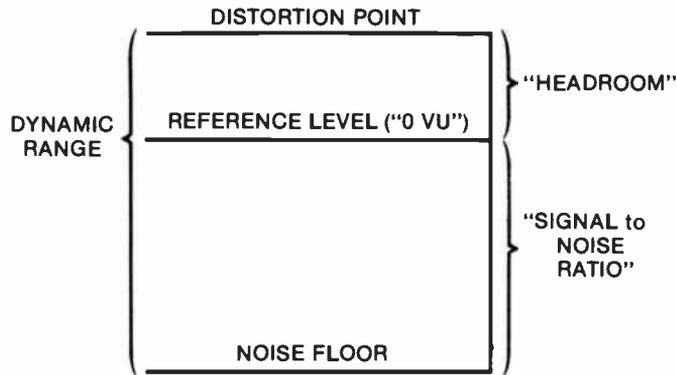


Figure 14.6. Dynamic Range Chart. This is a conceptual diagram of the limitations in volume extremes inherent in all audio systems. Too high a level causes distortion; too low a level causes the audio to be masked by system noise. A happy medium, or "reference level," has both sufficient headroom (15 to 20 dB) between reference level and distortion and sufficient signal-to-noise ratio (60 dB or more) between reference level and the system noise level, or "noise floor."

period of time causes serious, irreparable damage to the record surface. This is especially disturbing when the dramatic impact of a sound effect is accompanied by the easily recognizable clicks and pops of record-surface noise. Clean records thoroughly before dubbing them. (Repeated playings of compact discs will not damage them, but you may obtain more precise control over any music and effects by transferring them to tape first.)

When dubbing the LP or CD, make sure the level going to the tape is optimum, peaking the VU meters between -3 and 0 VU. (If your console is equipped with peak reading or other meters instead of or in addition to VU meters, see Appendix C.)

Now place the various elements on the tape machines or cart machines in accordance with your production plan. A cart, or cartridge machine, is a tape deck that uses tape contained in a plastic cartridge. The tape is wound in a continuous loop inside the cartridge. The major advantage of the cart is its ability to "re-cue" itself, by means of an inaudible tone put on the cart when it is recorded. If any carts need to be recorded, they should be done at this time. Carts are especially useful for inserting sound effects. A wide assortment of them can be kept on hand and dropped into a mix quickly and conveniently, because they don't require cueing or threading and have a fast start-up.

There are disadvantages to carts, however. Their wow and flutter (speed variations) can be audible, especially in music. Their noise and distortion performance is

usually inferior to reel-to-reel recording, and their high-frequency response is often deficient as well. (In stereo work, tape skewing, an up-and-down motion of the tape as it passes the heads, can cause an even greater problem—**phase cancellation** of the high frequencies for the mono listener. Phase cancellation occurs when the time relationship between two signals is not synchronous. When the two signals are combined [summed], some frequencies are lost.)

Recording Voices

For complex productions, make sure the voice tracks are precisely recorded, edited, and leadered. For simple sessions, you may be able to record voice tracks live as you produce your piece. If you have an engineer in the control room, give him the tape elements with a script, then go into the studio to read the voice tracks.*

When **tracking** (recording voice), the voice level and loudness must match the level and loudness of other principal elements. If the piece you're producing is going to be cut together (as opposed to mixed), play the actuality cut(s) at unity gain (adjust the tape playback fader on the console to the mark you made during set-up), and match your voice level (by ear) to the tape level by adjusting the microphone fader.

Watch the meter to ensure you are not exceeding any electronic parameters, but perform the level matching process by listening. This may be difficult in a combo studio, when you have to listen live to your own voice on headphones. Do a little trial and error. Play the first sentence of a sample voice track recording back at unity gain and check its loudness against the first actuality at unity gain. Once the levels are balanced, record your voice tracks onto blank tape, and assemble the piece by intercutting them with your previously recorded actuality. (There is no need to rerecord the actuality, unless it is a complicated production or the tape is not in suitable condition and needs fixing.) For mixing, especially if the work is to be done combo, it is usually best to prerecord your voice tracks.

Beware of **plosives**, also known as P-pops. You can avoid these by positioning the microphone off to one side of your mouth rather than dead center in front of you. You can feel the "plosive region" by placing your open palm two or three inches in front of your mouth as you say the letter *p*. You will feel the sudden burst of air hitting your palm, but if you continue to make that sound and move your hand gradually to one side, you will find that the width of the wind-burst is limited and is barely noticeable at the corners of your mouth. This

*The term "studio" is often used here to denote both the control room and the studio per se. The control room is where the console and tape machines are located; the studio is the adjacent room used only for microphone pickup of acoustically produced sound—voices, instruments, etc. In the combo situation, the control room also serves as a studio.

is where you should place the microphone.** (See Chapter 12, "Field Recording: Techniques," for illustrations of mike placement techniques.)

Sibilance is a related problem. It is the excessively sharp whistling sound associated with the letters *c*, *f*, and *s*. When you say words containing these sounds, you force air through very narrow mouth spaces. Close miking accentuates this sound, but to eliminate it you would have to move too far away from the microphone for acceptable voice tracking. However, an electronic device called a **dynamic sibilance controller**, more commonly known as a **de-esser**, can help. (See Appendix E.)

Mixing Techniques

Once you are ready to mix, just follow your plan, remembering to set a comfortable monitoring level and leave it there for the entire session. When fading sounds down, take them down smoothly and decisively, and leave them at a level that doesn't fight with the new sound introduced over them, but not so low that they are indistinguishable.

Get into the habit of using the *RECORD SAFETY* or *SAFE* switches when loading tapes onto decks for playback. These switches ensure that the record functions, which would erase the tape, cannot be accidentally engaged. In fact, it's best to keep your tape decks in the *SAFE* mode, and only place a machine into the *READY* mode when you are preparing to record.

A/B Reels

If you have five elements to be placed consecutively with a bit of overlapping of each, they can be set up on **A/B reels**, where elements #1, #3, and #5 are on one reel (the A reel), and elements #2 and #4 are on a second reel (the B reel). Separate all elements by two or three seconds of leader tape. Put each reel onto a different tape machine, and alternate the cuts. As cut #1 ends on the A reel, start cut #2 (the first cut on the B reel) on the other machine. Meanwhile, stop the first machine and cue up cut #3 in the cue or audition channel of the console. As cut #2 runs out, start the first machine again with cut #3. Now cue cut #4 on machine two, and so on (see Figure 14.7).

**Other consonants are plosives as well. The letter *b* makes a plosive burst in the same area as the *p*, but it is usually much less severe. The *t* and the *k* can be a problem, but their plosive region is located below that of the *p*. Using the open palm again, the rush of air from *t* or *k* can be felt out in front of the chin, as it proceeds at a downward angle from the mouth. This is another reason to select the corner of the mouth as the "plosive-free" area for mike placement.

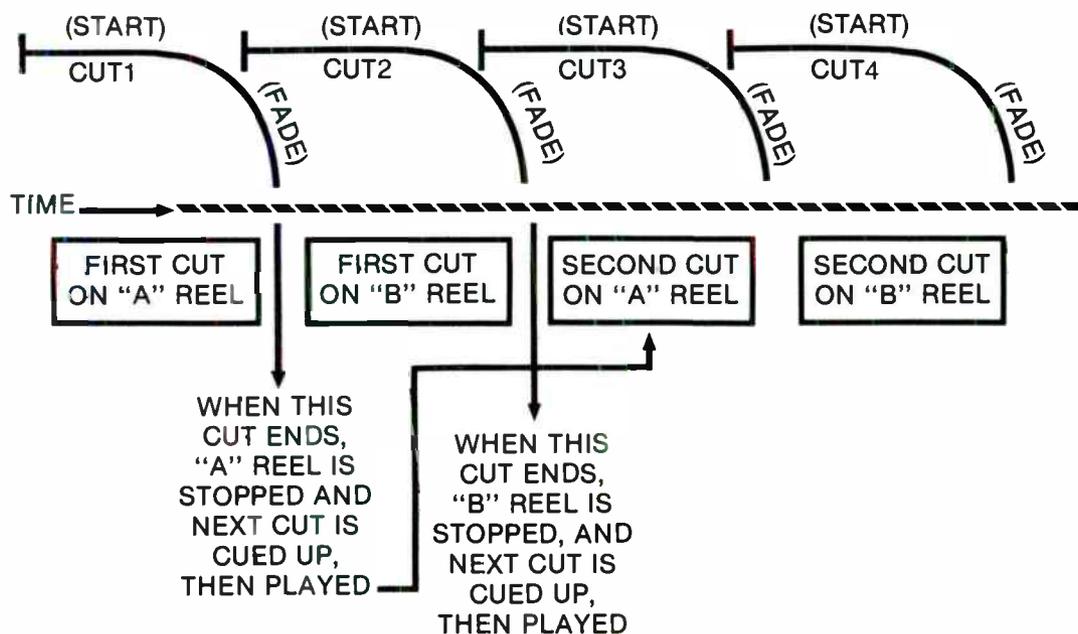


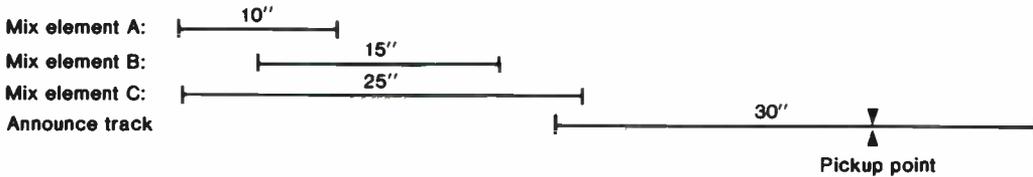
Figure 14.7. A/B Reels. As shown, odd-numbered cuts are assembled onto the A reel, and even-numbered cuts go onto the B reel. When played back from two tape decks through a mixing console, the cuts alternate between reels for the proper sequencing, with short mixes between them.

Pickup Edits

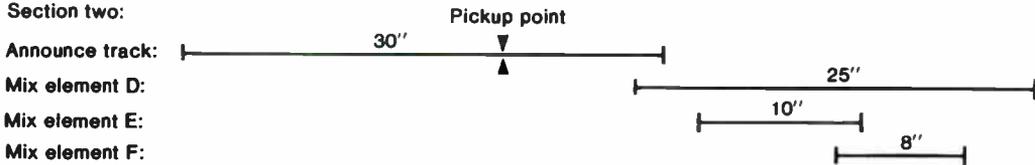
In long or complex mixes, it is often impossible to perform all the required operations in one take. At these times, the **pickup edit** becomes invaluable. Instead of attempting to mix a long section in one take, do it in several shorter sections, which you can edit together later. To do this, you must select **pickup points** in the mix—the places where the short sections can be edited together.

For example, if a piece begins with a mix of several elements, followed by a voice track (on tape), followed by more mixed elements, the voice track can serve as your pickup point. This means that you can record the first mix through the voice track and stop. Then note the position of the fader on which the voice track was just played, and prepare for the second section. Now begin to record the second section, rerecording the *same* voice track that ended the first section, played at the same level as the first section. After the second mix, rewind the recording just made and find a suitable edit point, like a hard consonant, in the voice track section of both mixes. Then just splice the two mixes together at the edit point (see Figure 14.8).

Section one:



Section two:



Completed mix:

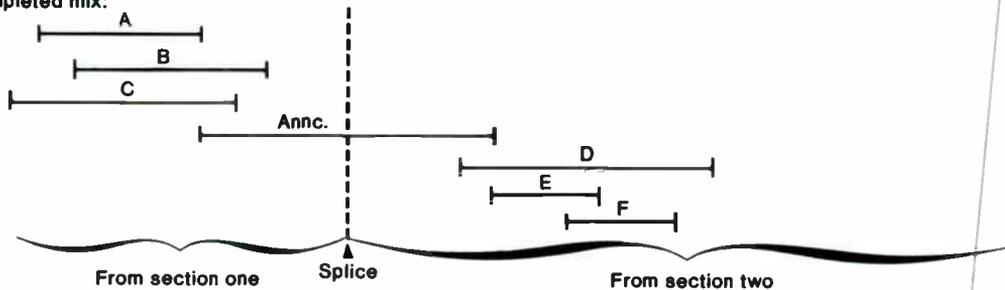


Figure 14.8. Pickup Edits. This is the timing plan of a two-section mix with a pickup edit in the announcer bridge between them. Mix elements C and D are ambience tracks or sound beds for each section. C fades out under the beginning of the announcer bridge, and D fades up under the end of the announcer bridge. The pickup point is any loud consonant in the announcer track where the announcer's voice is "in the clear," i.e., without any other elements mixed under it. The producer/engineer was careful to have the announcer's voice level exactly the same during the recording of both mix sections to avoid any level jump at the pickup edit.

Overlapping

A related technique is called overlapping. Consider a situation where you must repair or replace a 30-second section in the middle of a long program. You can't just cut out the old section and replace it because of an extended mixed passage surrounding it.

Begin the overlapping procedure by playing the master tape and rerecording it onto blank tape about 15 seconds ahead of the problem area, with the playback machine's console fader at the unity gain mark. At this point, you are really just dubbing. When you reach the problem, roll in whatever changes or additions are required to improve the problematic section. For example, you might mix in another sound effect as the master rolls by, or you might stop the master, roll in another element, and then restart the master. You also could fade down the master

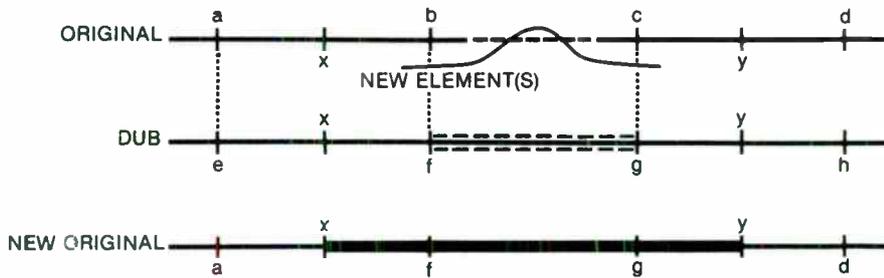


Figure 14.9. Overlapping. Original has problem between points B and C. Dub is made at unity gain starting at point a and running through point D on original, but with original levels changed and/or new elements mixed in between points B and C on original. Dub is virtually identical to original between points E and F and between points G and H. Between F and G is a new, fixed section. Points X and Y are found (easy edit points in the unchanged section) on both the original and the dub, and the section between X and Y on the original is removed and replaced by the same section from the dub. New original is one generation down between X and Y but is also repaired between F and G.

momentarily under an added new element. Or you might just make a simple level correction to the original mix.

In any case, after you pass the problem area and are back into the good territory of the original mix, bring the master tape's playback fader *back* to unity gain (if it was moved during the fix), and roll for about 15 more seconds, making sure that all other input channels are closed. Then stop both the record and the playback machines. Those last 15 seconds were also just dubbing. Now find an easy edit point on the original master and the same point in the new recording, during those 15-second-long sections before and after the "fix." Cut out the flawed original section and cut in the new, fixed recording. There should be no noticeable change at the splices, because both versions are essentially identical at the splice points (see Figure 14.9).

When picking edit points for overlaps, select a good, loud, transient or percussive sound. The change of tape generation at the splices will change the hiss level, making the splice noticeable or even objectionable if it occurred during a soft passage. If a splice takes place at a loud event or word, the sound will mask any hiss change.

The Art of Mixing

Mixing makes it possible for radio production to ascend to true art: You can discreetly introduce and remove subtle effects, add layers of ambience for realism, and inject music for emotional impact. Enter and exit elements slowly and carefully, without abruptness. An operator must become familiar with the *taper* of

With multitrack, just as with multimachine mixing, you can use the technique of pickup editing to break the mixing process into manageable sections. In fact, with multitrack you don't have to find places in the piece where there's only one sound source to do a pickup. All you have to do is remember the relative volume settings of all tracks that are in the mix at your pickup point, and set the mixing console appropriately.

Multitrack recorders come in 4, 8, 16, 24, 32, and even 48 tracks, in analog or digital recording formats. Some use open-reel tape; some are cassette-based; some use a variety of proprietary tape formats. There are even "virtual multitracks" where the audio is stored on hard disk or other computer storage format, but treated like a multitrack tape recorder. Some of these "virtual multitracks" allow you to adjust the relative timing of individual elements after you've assembled the backbone. This can give you the assembling ease of a multitrack coupled with the timing flexibility of multimachine production.

Sound Effects

When using sound effects in a production, you often will get significantly better results if you record the sound effects yourself on location (although many are available commercially on CD, LP, or tape). "Rolling your own" is almost always worth the extra effort required, and in journalistic pieces the sound *must* be real, not generic.

In dramatic productions, sound effects are crucial to the credibility of the program. Some studios specializing in sound effects use something known as "Foley-work" equipment. Named after a well-known sound-effects man from the "Golden Age" of radio, it usually is set up in the form of a multiple-sectioned sandbox on the studio floor. Each section contains a different walking surface (flagstone, dried leaves, grass, twigs and branches, gravel, sand, etc.). Someone walks in place in the appropriate box to create the effect of movement of the characters within their aural environment.* Another typical accoutrement of such a studio is a small portable door and frame (about 2' x 4'), which is used to denote the entrances and exits of characters. Portability is important, because placement in the studio and proximity to the microphone(s) affect the aural *perspective* of the sound effects.

It is critical that effects appear to be in the same "space" as the characters, and in the correct proximity. "Off-stage" sounds should not be miked as closely as the "on-stage" actors' voices, for example. This is another problem with prerecorded sound effects, since their acoustical space is predetermined. If you must use "canned" effects, however, you can sometimes place them in the

*In addition to footsteps, today the term "Foley" generally is applied to any live sound effect performed in studio by a "Foley actor."

proper perspective. If, as is often the case, the sound effect on the record is close-miked and "dry" sounding, and you need a more distant sound, you can rerecord the effect by playing it through a speaker in the studio and picking it up through a mike (or mikes) arranged to place the sound in the proper space. The acoustics of the studio are thus added to the sound. Artificial reverberation can occasionally help, too. (See Appendix E.)

Using Music

Music plays an important role in radio production, of course. As with any effect, it should always be appropriately styled and not used gratuitously or just for the sake of the effect. A proper level ratio between the music and other elements is critical. A speaking voice over a singing voice (voice-over-vocal) should usually be avoided, because the two voices will compete for the listener's attention.

Backtiming. Voice-over-music often works well when the voice is placed over an instrumental section and ends just before the vocals in the music start. This is a traditional and effective timing technique, and can easily be achieved by a process called **backtiming**. This is the basic technique behind most timing effects in radio production, and it is simpler to perform than to read about.

Essentially, backtiming is deciding at which point in time two events must occur simultaneously, and then measuring back in time so you know when each element must start to reach that magic point. If you are using tape machines with built-in time counters, backtiming is a pretty straightforward calculation. But, if your tape machine doesn't have this feature, you may be able to use a mechanical technique called **reverse threading**. You can do this on most tape machines, as long as the capstan and pinch roller are exposed and not enclosed within the head assembly housing (see Figure 14.11).

Instead of threading the tape to pass straight through the capstan and pinch roller in the normal way, you reroute it as shown in Figure 14.11. When you press *PLAY*, the tape is pulled in the opposite direction from its normal, forward movement, but at the same approximate speed. Tape-to-head contact is often radically impaired in this mode, so don't attempt critical playback or dubbing in this mode; it is purely a timing technique.

Only use this process with professional standard thickness (1.5 mil) tape. The extremely sharp turns of reverse threading place unusual stress on the tape, and can stretch thinner tapes. However, if you must perform backtiming on 1.0 mil or thinner tape, or if your tape machine does not have an exposed capstan and pinch roller, you can exchange the supply and take-up reels and use the normal play function to roll the tape. The machine will be rolling forward, but the recorded sound will be moving in reverse. After the *backroll*, exchange the reels again, resetting the tape in the forward direction.



Figure 14.11. Reverse Threading. This shows one method of reverse threading a tape for backwards playback, used in the backtiming process. Arrows show the direction of motion when the *PLAY* function is engaged if the tape is threaded around the capstan and pinch roller in the fashion shown. To accomplish this alternate threading, pull a little tape slack off the take-up reel, make an S-loop out of the slack, and slip it around in front of the capstan and behind the pinch roller, instead of the usual threading straight through between the capstan and roller.

For example, assume you have a piece of music with a 15-second instrumental introduction followed by vocals. You also have a voice track (more than 15 seconds long) that you want to mix over that introduction, and have the music's vocals start just after the voice track ends. Cue the voice track tape up on the end of the last word, set up the tape for reverse threading, push *PLAY*, let it roll 15 seconds, and stop it. The point on the tape at the play head of the machine is now 15 seconds *before* the end of the voice tape. Mark the voice tape carefully with a wax pencil against the playback head. Undo the reverse threading, and add a horizontal wax stripe mark just ahead of this point on the voice track tape (see Figure 14.12). Recue both elements to their beginnings. Start the music when you see the wax stripe pass the play head of the voice tape's machine, and the music's vocals will begin at the end of the voice track.

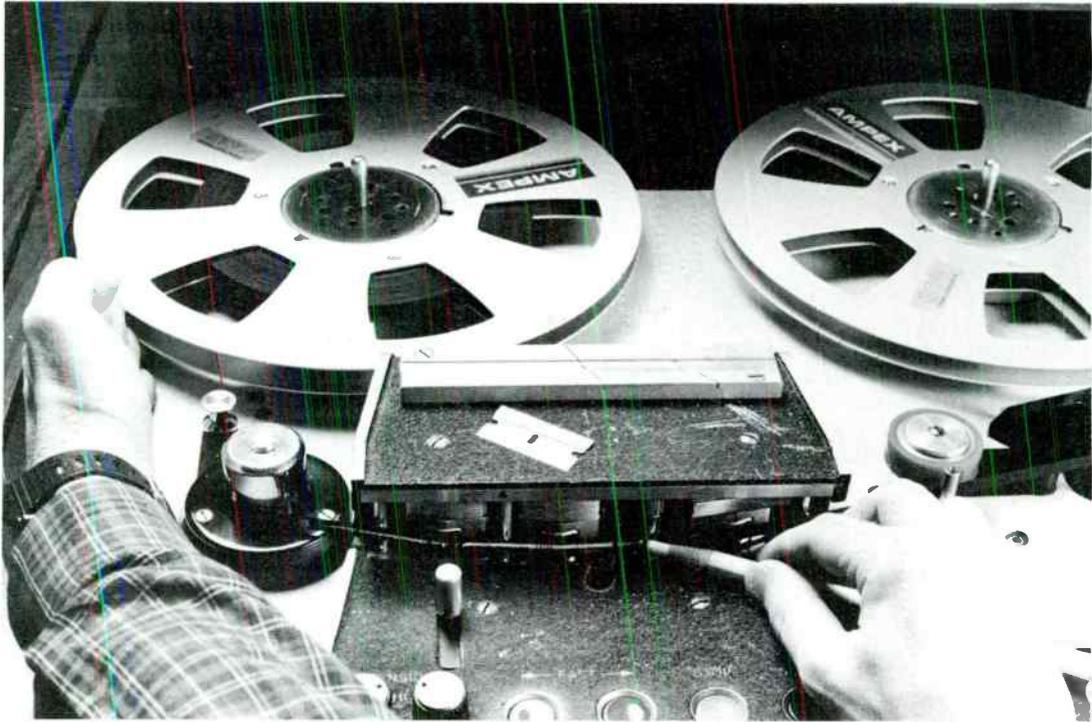


Figure 14.12. Wax-Stripping a Tape. To draw a wax stripe on a tape, line the wax-marked cue point up to a tape guide, head-lifter, or roller (*not* a tape head), then press the wax pencil, holding it as shown in a sort of sideways method, onto the mark. With the other hand, slowly turn the feed reel clockwise, while pressing the pencil against the tape. (It is advisable to scrape any excess wax off the tape with the thumbnail after drawing the line.) When playing this tape back, the line serves as a visual warning to prepare for the passing of the cue point, which follows at the end of the line. A six-inch line usually is adequate for 7½ ips; double this for 15 ips. (Photo by Phoebe Chase Ferguson.)

Better still, instead of timing the intro of the music with a stopwatch, then backrolling the voice track by so many seconds, combine the processes into a quick and easy single step. Perform the cueing and reverse threading process described, but, instead of backrolling and watching 15-seconds tick off, *play* the music (forward on another tape machine or turntable) simultaneously. As the music starts, hit *PLAY* on the reverse-threaded voice track machine; when the *vocals* start, stop the voice track. Now, carefully mark the voice tape with a wax pencil at the playback head, and undo the reverse threading around the capstan and roller. Add a wax stripe on the tape, just ahead of the wax mark. Recue and set up both machines for mixing, and proceed as above.

Sometimes the pacing isn't quite right, and a bit more or a bit less space is required between the end of the voice track and the beginning of the vocal. You

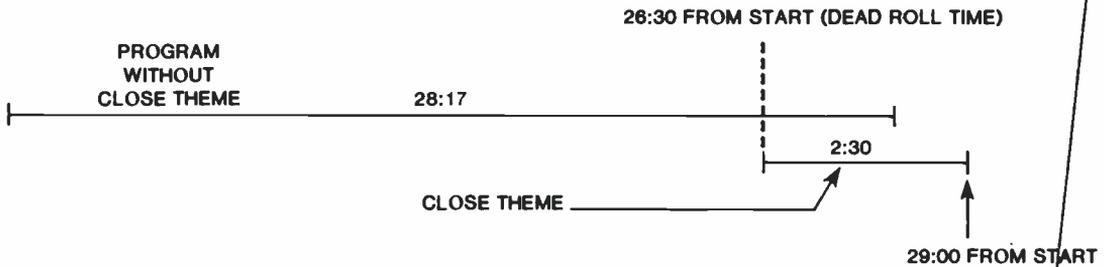


Figure 14.13. Deadrolling. Assume that a program must be produced to a 29:00 length. The program without closing music is 28:17. The theme is 2:30 long. Start a clock when the program begins (or the tape timer available on some machines can be used), and, when that clock reads 26:30, start the closing theme, but keep the fader down. As the program body ends, fade in the already rolling music. Since it is 2:30 long, and was started at 26:30, it will end at 29:00 on the clock.

can redo the mix, this time starting the music tape a bit *after* the end of the stripe passes the play head (if more space or a looser cue is desired), or starting the music tape while the stripe is still passing over the head (for a "tighter cue" or less space). After a few attempts, you'll become comfortable with it, and develop variations as necessary. (Don't forget to clean the playback head of accidentally applied wax—*before* you begin your mix.)

Deadrolling. Let's say you are producing a 29-minute program, and you want it to end with a piece of theme music or sound. You have 28 minutes, 17 seconds of program material, plus a 2½-minute closing theme. As the clock you are running on the body of the program (or timer for a prerecorded program) reaches 26:30 (29:30 minus 2:30), you deadroll the closing theme—that is, you start it but do not open its fader, so it is not heard at first. Then, about 15 or 20 seconds later, as the program begins to wrap up, you fade up the closing theme and bring it up full as the program ends. As the clock reaches the required 29:00 endpoint, the music will end exactly on time (see Figure 14.13). **Deadpot** is a synonym for deadroll.

Tape Loops

The **loop** is used to extend the useful length of a short bit of ambience, or to repeat a sound effect or section of music to create a rhythmic, repetitive, or hypnotic effect.

An electronic device called a **sampler** is the best way to loop a short section of audio. The audio is recorded from whatever source is available into the digital memory of the sampler and stored. The start and end points of the sampled audio can be edited, and the sampler can be set to play that segment over and over again.

Most samplers have only enough memory to record a maximum of a few seconds of audio. For longer looping needs, splice an actual loop of tape and play it back over and over for the desired running time.

It is not difficult to make a loop, but select the sound carefully. For an ambience loop, it must be free from noticeable sounds, such as coughs, shouts, clatters, etc. And the level or tonal quality of the ambience must not change from the beginning to the end of the section. For music loops, observe proper timing so the beat or *meter* of the music is not disturbed. When playing back a loop, since the tape is not on a reel, you must provide tape tension creatively, depending on how long the loop is, and how much slack needs to be taken up. You can double (or halve) the tape length of a given loop by dubbing to the next higher (or lower) tape speed.

The loop has to be at least long enough to make it around the head assembly. You can take up slack with a pencil held vertically or with a soda can (see Figures 14.14 A and B). If the loop is long enough, you can place it around a reel hub on the take-up spindle. It is usually advisable to keep the take-up reel stationary either by holding it or by using the *EDIT* function of the tape machine (if the machine has one) instead of the *PLAY* function. For longer loops, you can use a plastic five or seven inch reel to take up slack, and hang it over the edge of the tape deck (see Figure 14.14 C). Or, you can use a stationary reel on another adjacent machine or a reel on a pencil in mid-air. You must supply enough tension to provide good tape-to-head contact, but not too much, or the tape speed will slow, and the tape may stretch. Music loops are particularly sensitive to speed changes because they affect the pitch of the sound, and pitch changes are quite noticeable to the ear. It is best to set up a music loop without any sharp turns (soda can or reel hub rather than a pencil), with a very short piece of splicing tape on the splice, and with fixed tension corners (i.e., don't use hand-held devices to provide tension). If you use a reel hung over the side of the tape machine, it is best to attach the reel to the side of the machine with a piece of adhesive tape to keep the reel from turning or bouncing.

Working with an Engineer

If you're working with an engineer rather than in a combo situation, the key to success is teamwork. A lot depends on the people involved and their attitudes; without a good working relationship, the production session can be inefficient and frustrating.

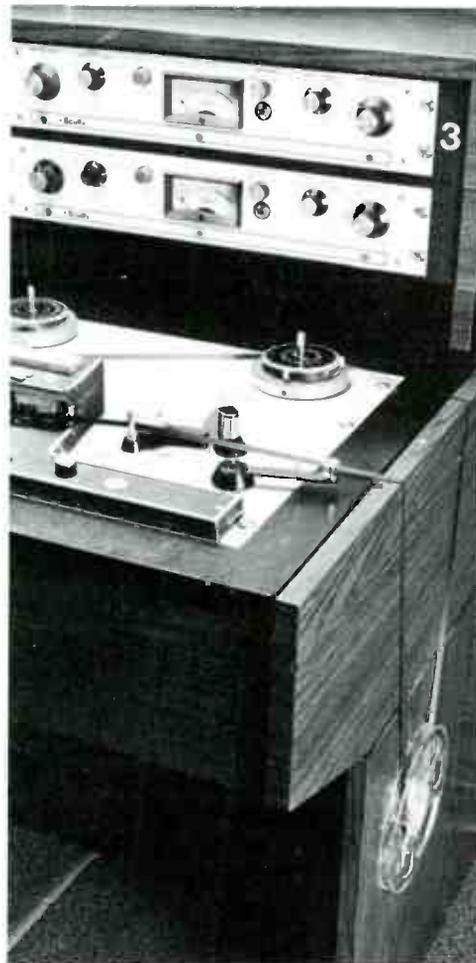
The producer can help things get off to a good start by being completely prepared with materials, a production plan, and all tapes properly leaded, labeled, and heads out. Clearly establish the sequence of work. Don't confuse the engineer by overwhelming him with excessive detail all at once, or with unnecessary



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 14.14. Tape Loops. (A) Tape loop held with pencil. (B) Tape loop held with a soda can and reel. (C) Longer tape loops can be handled by using a five or seven inch reel hung over the edge of the tape deck. (Photos by Phoebe Chase Ferguson.)

information. Show engineers that you are conversant with the production process, but don't try to impress them with your knowledge of the studio. Maintain a professional attitude at all times, even if things aren't going well.

If you're stuck, ask the engineer for a suggestion or feedback on the content, not just on technical matters. The engineer may hear something that you don't, or he may have the objectivity you lack after spending three weeks in an edit booth with your material. But the responsibility to make the final decisions is the producer's. The pacing and flow of a production is an important aspect of the art of radio production. Getting the right "feel" is essential. But remember that the most important criterion for including any production idea or sound element is its *meaning*. Do not include anything that doesn't have a purpose or doesn't fit.

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Emerging Technologies and Techniques

Flawn Williams

Advances in the field of computers have brought the dream of combined audio, video, and text information closer to reality. Faster operating speeds, cheaper memory, and increased data storage capacity mean that computers are now more ready to handle the mountains of data that it takes to store and manipulate sound and pictures.

In fact, both audio and video production are benefiting from the computer industry's research and development work. Computers are a far larger industry, and more research and development dollars are being invested there. Development of audio and video tools is becoming a story of building peripherals for computers, and finding better ways to turn sound and pictures into the digital data that computers love to crunch.

More and more audio equipment is being designed to work alongside video gear. Witness the emergence of audio recorders and MIDI (**musical instrument digital interface**) control devices designed to synchronize sound with film or video images via "time code." And some audio products engage in wholesale borrowing of video technology. A case in point is **digital audio tape (DAT)**, an audio recorder whose rotary-head helical-scan recording system comes right out of home camcorders.

This headlong rush into development of "multimedia producing platforms" is fraught with headaches, though. Innovation is placed ahead of standardization, and the result can be a Tower of Babel. We're faced with clusters of miracle

boxes, each of which can work wonders with audio within its own "environment." But try to get information out of one box and into the next, or get one box to talk to another, and the headaches begin!

Amid all the hoopla about multimedia and hypermedia, there is a place for radio. Listening to something *without* a visual accompaniment can still stimulate the imagination best. And our listeners tell us they can absorb information by ear while doing other things like driving, throwing clay pots, jogging, or washing the dog. In fact, they say, the combination of listening and doing is more satisfying than either activity alone.

Still, as you continue to produce audio programs for radio or other distribution in the future, you may find that you'll be doing it on equipment that is built for video and text as well.

The Switch to Digital

What has made all this integration possible is a stream of advances in transforming sound and pictures into digital data. This isn't easy. After all, sound exists as a continuous series of pressure ridges and troughs in the molecules of air between the sound's source and your ears. How can you turn that into packets of ones and zeros, and then be able to change it back into sound for your listeners?

The first order of business is to change the sound to **analog audio**. This is done with a microphone, which responds to the continuous stream of pressure ridges in the air by producing a continuous electrical signal that varies in the same way the sound waves did. The microphone, if you will, is making an electrical *analogy* of the sound.

Next we can take this analog audio signal and make periodic electrical measurements of it. In practice, to get high-quality audio through this process, this measuring needs to take place more than 40,000 times per second!

The value we've measured at each point in time could still fall on an infinite number of positions between the upper and lower limits. Each value needs to be quantified as a discrete number, which requires rounding off. This rounding off process is called **quantizing**. That is, we can set up a stepladder of discrete positions, and then round off each measured value to the nearest step. (For "CD-quality" digital sound, there are 65,536 steps— 2 to the 16th power—on the stepladder from the minimum to the maximum limit. This is what is called "16-bit resolution.")

At this point, we've succeeded in converting our continuous audio signal into numerical data: a string of discrete values. If we identify each of the steps on the stepladder of values with a binary number—a string of ones and zeros—then all of our data will be in **digital** form.

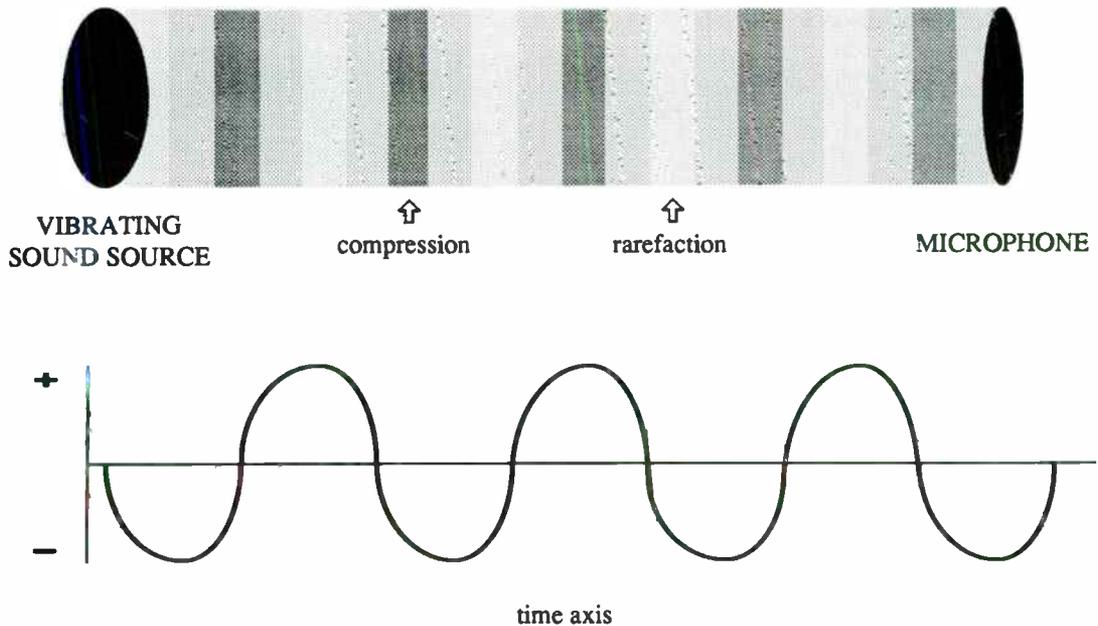


Figure 15.1. Sound Pressure Waves. In the top illustration, sound travels away from a vibrating surface as pressure ridges (alternating areas of compression and rarefaction). A microphone senses these changes in air pressure and produces an electrical signal that fluctuates in a similar fashion.

Once the information has been translated into these binary numbers, the awesome power of modern computers can be tapped to store or manipulate the data. To change the data back into sound, the computer chip in your CD player or other digital source plays a very fast game of connect-the-dots, and reconstructs an analog audio signal. From there, the audio can be amplified and sent to loudspeakers, where it is changed back into sound pressure waves by the pushing and pulling of the cones (woofers and tweeters) in the speakers. Computers need to do all this data manipulation very quickly, of course: The digital audio from a stereo 16-bit compact disc spits out data at a rate of about one and a half *million* bits per second!

Why Bother With Digital Audio?

At first glance, digitizing sound may seem like more trouble than it's worth. It requires huge quantities of memory to store, large chunks of radio spectrum to broadcast, and lots of computer power to accomplish such a seemingly simple task as changing the volume setting. Also, while analog audio quality deterio-

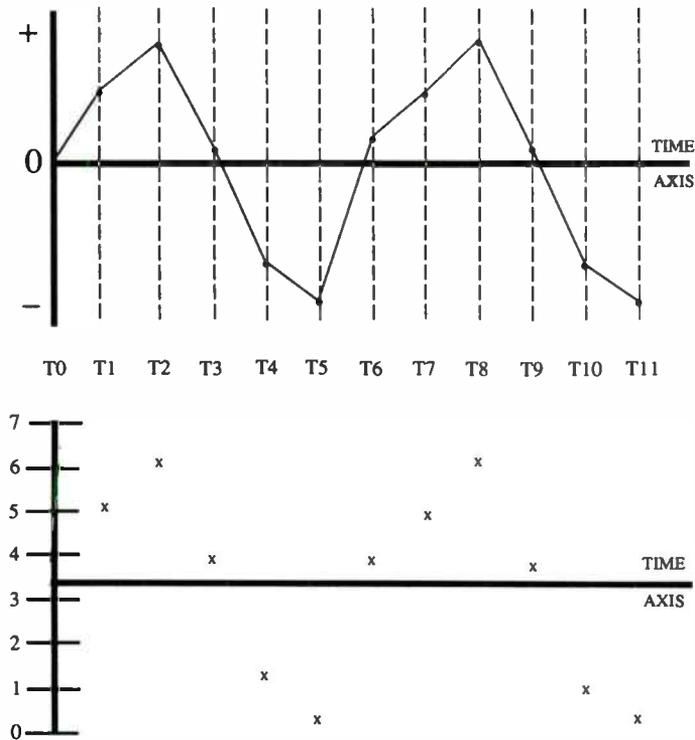


Figure 15.2. Sampling an Audio Signal. The top graph shows an audio signal being sampled at intervals of time. The bottom graph shows the results of that sampling plotted along the same axis, where the actual samples can be compared to a stepladder of discrete values (in this case, between 0 and 7). For each point in time, the position of the "x" can be rounded off to the nearest step on the ladder. Doing this produces a string of numbers: 5,6,4,1,0,4,5,6,4,1,0. There are eight steps on this stepladder. Eight is the same as 2 to the third power, so this graph shows "three-bit resolution" encoding. Using binary numbers instead of base-10, the string of numbers is 101,110,100,001,000,100,101,110,100,001,000. That's digital!

rates gradually as you raise the recording level beyond the capabilities of the system, digital audio quality stays pristine right up to its ceiling, and then suddenly degenerates into noise and static when its limits are exceeded. Digital audio is like the nursery-rhyme girl: "When she was good, she was very, very good, and when she was bad, she was *horrid!*"

BASE TEN NUMBERS	DIGITAL NUMBERS (16 BIT RESOLUTION)
0	0000000000000000
1	0000000000000001
2	0000000000000010
3	0000000000000011
4	0000000000000100
5	0000000000000101
6	0000000000000110
7	0000000000000111
8	0000000000001000
9	0000000000001001
10	0000000000001010
65,536	1111111111111111

Figure 15.3. Digital Numbers and Their Base-10 Equivalents. The numbers we use in everyday life are base-10. That is, we start with zero, count up through nine, then add a place and start over. In digital (binary) counting, only ones and zeros are used, so places are added much more often. For 16-bit resolution, binary numbers are carried out 16 places.

But in the long run, digital's advantages probably outweigh its disadvantages. First, digital gets away from analog audio's shortcomings. From the point where sound is changed to audio by the microphone, until it's changed back to sound for your listeners, it may go through dozens of conversions: through amplifiers and equalizers, changes from electronic signal to magnetic pattern (on tape) or mechanical pattern (the surface of a vinyl LP), back to electronic, then into a radio wave, then back to an electronic signal. In each of those conversions, tape hiss, LP surface noise, speed variations, and other distortions are unavoidable, and they add up through each generation of change the audio goes through. Digital storage media—digital audio tape (DAT), compact discs (CDs), computer hard discs, and the various newer formats of recordable disc and tape—avoid this degeneration. Variations in speed, momentary losses of data, and other potential corruptions of the audio can be corrected electronically, so the data coming out can be identical to the data going in.

Once sound is converted into digital data, it's also possible to perform various transformations, some of which are difficult or impossible to do using analog equipment. Using **digital signal processing (DSP)**, you can adjust volume levels; change the tonal character of the sound, using equalization; add reverberation, echo, or other sense of acoustic space to the sound; shift pitch without changing timing; remove most pre-existing noise and hum from audio; and more. DSP

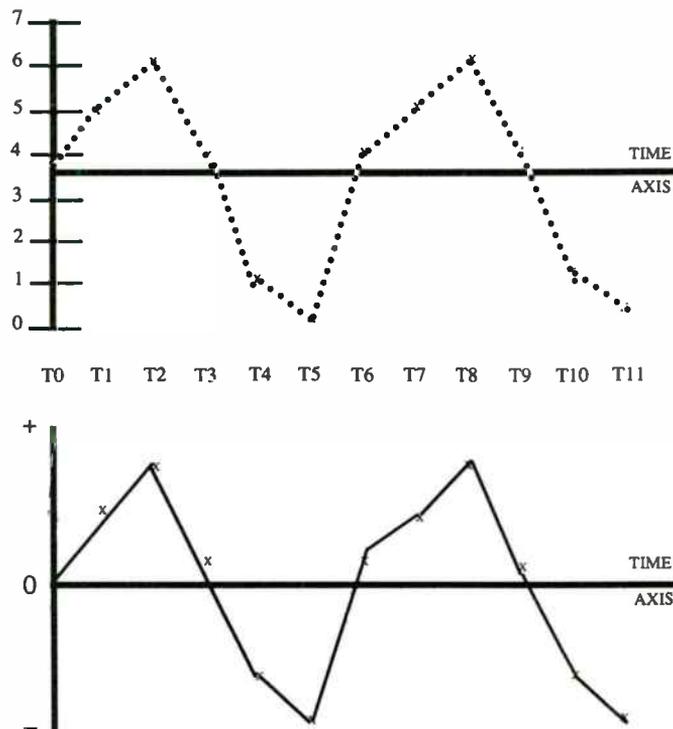


Figure 15.4. Digital to Analog Conversion. The digital-to-analog converter takes the sampled values from the digital information and uses it to create a new analog audio signal. In order to avoid audible errors in the decoding process, the data must be encoded with high resolution and sampled at a very fast rate.

even allows you to compress or expand the running time of audio without changing its pitch, making it possible to shorten or lengthen a segment slightly without editing out or adding material.

Data Compression and Psychoacoustic Coding

Digital audio, however, can strain the ability of computers and digital recorders to store and transmit all the data it generates. It is possible to reduce the amount of room this digital audio takes up, either by lowering the **sampling rate** (the number of times each second that the analog-to-digital converter takes a measurement), or by reducing the **resolution** of the encoding (fewer steps on the



Figure 15.5. Compact Disc Player. (Photo by Anthony Buttitta.)

stepladder of values, see Figure 15.2). But each of those changes carries a stiff penalty of reduced quality. Lowering the sampling rate cuts down on the frequency response of the sound, removing its crispness and clarity; lowering the resolution makes the digitized version of the sound less smooth to the ear.

But using DSP, there are other ways to cut back on the data without as much audible penalty. These are a variety of techniques under the heading of **psychoacoustic coding**. These methods grow out of research on the nature of human hearing.* The research shows that humans don't hear all pitches equally well. According to the "Equal Loudness Principle," in the low bass range or in the high treble area, we hear only very strong sounds, but in the midrange our hearing is more acute (see Figure 15.6).

The same research indicated that our ears' ability to hear a particular sound may be **masked** by a louder sound close to the same pitch at the same time, or by an even louder sound of different pitch happening shortly before or after that particular sound. These phenomena are known as **frequency masking** and **temporal masking**.

*Harvey Fletcher, *Speech and Hearing*, (Van Nostrand Co., 1929). This includes published results of psychoacoustic studies done at Bell Labs.

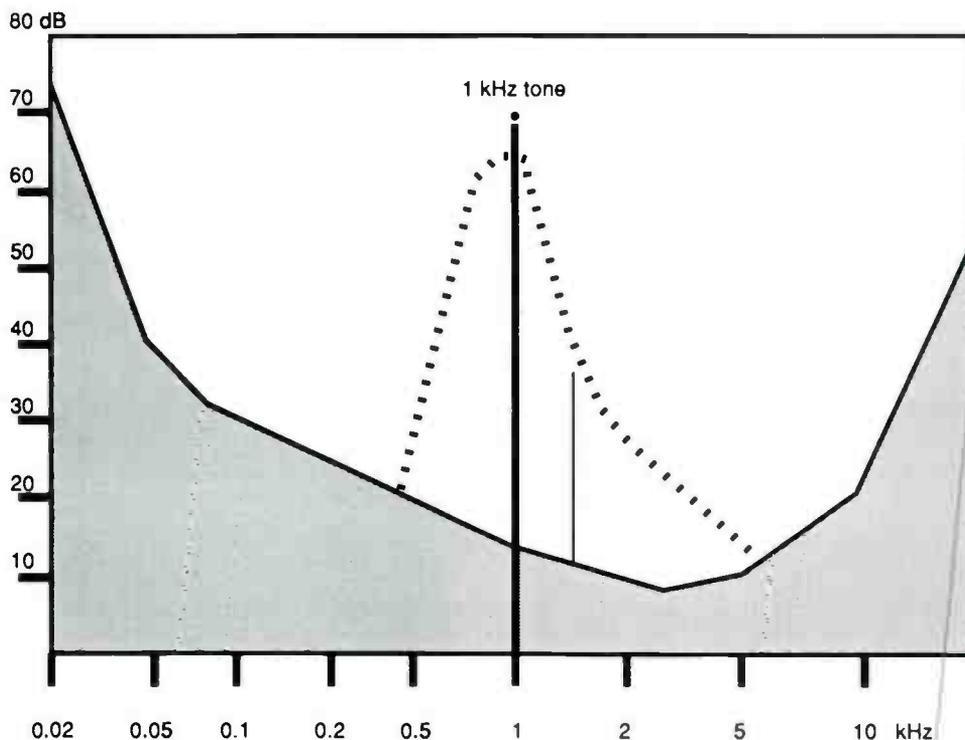


Figure 15.6. Frequency Masking. Human hearing responds differently to sounds depending on the frequency (heard as pitch) of the sound. Sounds in the low bass range must be 60 dB more powerful than sounds around the midrange (2–5 kHz) to be heard with equal loudness. A similar fall-off in sensitivity occurs as the pitch rises above 10 kHz. The solid dark line denotes the threshold of audibility; sounds that fall in the shaded area are inaudible.

Psychoacoustic coders, using DSP, can take a full 16-bit, 44.1 kHz sampling-rate digital signal (like that used for CDs) and examine the data in little packets (1000 or so per second). The coder applies psychoacoustic rules to analyze which sounds in each packet will be audible and which will not. It then removes the inaudible sounds from the data. This coding can reduce the amount of data by a factor of five or six, with little audible impact on the quality of the sound.

Data compression using applied psychoacoustics is enabling the development of several new technologies, including Philips' Digital Compact Cassette (DCC), Sony's Mini Disc recordable magnetic-optical disc, and various proposals for over-the-air digital audio broadcasting. In all these cases, the smaller quantities of data made possible by psychoacoustic coding make it feasible to deliver high-quality stereo sound using constricted storage space or broadcast spectrum.

But coding is not without its problems. As a final delivery mechanism for broadcast, tape, or disc, it accomplishes its purpose handily. But audible noise

may show up in the sound if it is run through several cycles of encoding and decoding, or if equalization and other processing is applied to the sound after psychoacoustic coding. This may limit its usefulness in field recording or studio production.

Also, the number-crunching required to do the coding takes a small fraction of a second to accomplish. It's amazing how much is being done in that short interval. But if you're a radio announcer, speaking into a mike that's being broadcast "live" through a coder and a digital radio system, what would that small delay mean to you? If you're monitoring the off-air signal of your station with headphones, you'll hear your own voice delayed by that fraction of a second. Just try talking normally while hearing a delayed version of yourself!

Changing Techniques of Radio Journalism

These changes in technology aren't altering many of the fundamental processes involved in making good information radio. But over the next few years you'll probably need some new skills to do your work.

Just as the computer has virtually replaced the typewriter for text work, audio and video editing and production capabilities will shift to the computer, too. There will still be production studios for more complex work, but much of the editing and simpler production that's been done in studios and edit booths will move to the desk top.

As field recorders using discs become available, it may become practical to do all your production without transferring audio from one medium to another. Currently, reporters gather material in the field on analog cassettes, then transfer actualities to open-reel tape for editing or to carts for convenient playback. But by making original recordings on a random-access disc—or transferring them to such a disc—you could turn the editing process into just the preparation of an *edit list* of playback instructions for the disc player. There would never be any destructive cutting of the original material. Digital editing machines that do this already are being manufactured. The best of them sound and feel like tape editing machines: They have a wheel of some sort that allows you to "rock" the "tape," "mark" it, and "cut" it—all actions that are really taking place only in a computer's memory.

Even the filing of news reports from the field to the station is changing. The quality of phone-fed material has been improving as phone systems are upgraded with digital switches and transmission systems. Now people in Tokyo can sound to your listeners as if they're on a phone in the next room, if they can place a call "on the fiber" (digital transmission over fiber optic cable).

And thanks to all those other computer users out there who are demanding telephone links that carry more data than their current modems, telephone

companies around the world are installing dial-up lines that can carry data at 56,000, or even more, bits per second. Using psychoacoustic coding equipment with these *Switched 56k* or *Integrated Service Digital Network (ISDN)* lines, it's already possible to send a mono signal that is almost equal to FM sound quality over one of these dial-up data lines. Gradually, live reports from the field will lose the stigma of "phoner quality"!

Field Recording: Digital Options

Most sound and radio interviews recorded outside the studio are recorded on analog cassettes or open-reel tape. But that's changing, due to the availability of several formats for making portable digital recordings. In general, these offer better sound quality than analog cassettes, and the new machines rival analog cassettes in size and weight.

One major drawback of these digital formats, at least in their infancy, is that they need more power to operate than their analog counterparts. For long recording stints using batteries, you may find that you must change a battery each time you change a tape or disc.

Among the digital formats vying for favor are:

- **Digital Audio Tape (DAT).** This tape format uses a rotary-head recording system, similar to that found in video recorders, to record up to two hours of CD-quality stereo sound on a DAT cassette, *without* using data-compression techniques. It also offers four hours of recording at FM-radio sound quality, using a lower sampling rate to cut down on data.

DAT is a proverbial ugly duckling: Planned and introduced as a consumer format, it was stymied by the threat of litigation from music copyright holders concerned about DAT's ability to make "digital clone" copies with no loss of quality. An agreement with the music industry concerning copyright infringement in home DAT recordings was reached in 1991. Its mechanical complexity also has kept its price on the high end of the consumer market's audio products. But radio professionals and recording studios have embraced it as a less-expensive alternative to other professional digital formats, and the computer industry has adapted DAT for use as a data-storage tape.

- **Digital Compact Cassette (DCC).** Developed by Philips, the same European company that brought out the analog cassette in the 1960s, DCC is a stationary-head digital recorder. It uses psychoacoustic coding to reduce data to fit 90 minutes on a tape. DCC machines can play regular analog cassettes, as well as record and play digital tapes, giving some added playback life to old analog

cassettes. The digital cassette is auto-reverse, but there is a break in the sound while the tape is reversing.

- **Mini Disc.** Developed by Sony, it, too, uses psychoacoustic coding to help fit up to 74 minutes of stereo sound on a 2½-inch disc. The disc format can actually transfer data to and from the disc much more quickly than the data-compressed audio signal requires. This leaves time to check each burst of data, and rerecord it if necessary, if jostling caused the first recording attempt to go awry. During playback, data are read from the disc into a small memory buffer at high speed, then drawn out of memory at the steady rate needed to recreate the audio. If the disc player is bumped during playback, the sound will continue uninterrupted as long as the laser inside can find its way back to the right spot on the disc within three seconds. These error-correction techniques make this a much more dependable disc format than the early portable CD players.
- **Other Optical Disc Formats.** At this writing, recordable CD technology is being slowly introduced into the high-priced studio equipment market, but no battery-operated portable recorders other than Sony's Mini Disc have been shown. The advantages of getting the original recording onto a random-access disc, though, will make development in this area inevitable.

Editing and Mixing

The ability to edit quickly and simply with a razor blade is one of the strengths that will keep open-reel analog tape a major player in broadcast production for some time to come. Electronic editing is on the rise, though, and many of the recording and production formats being introduced will handle *only* electronic editing.

It is possible to do some kinds of editing electronically on an open-reel recorder. You do this by transferring the desired bits of audio one after another onto the open-reel tape in sequence, in what is called **assembly editing**. Or some new audio can be rerecorded over an existing section using **insert editing** (sometimes called a **punch-in**).

Most video editing also uses these techniques. For assembling programs where all the elements are already known, this is a very efficient system. But what happens when you find, at the last minute, that you need to *remove* a second or two of material from the middle of a tape, to shorten its running time? With electronic editing, you would have to redub all the material after the edit onto the produced tape; with razor editing, you just cue up to the desired cut points, make two cuts and a splice, and you're done!

- **Accuracy:** Computer editors can zoom in to choose an edit point to the nearest 44,000th of a second. To get that accuracy with a razor blade, on tape recorded at 15 inches per second, your mark would have to be within 1/6000th of an inch! And video editors are typically able to edit with only video-frame accuracy, about 1/30th of a second.
- **Crossfade Edits.** When a video-style editor or electronically edited open-reel recorder makes an edit, generally there's an abrupt transition from the old material to the new. A razor-blade splice is a little easier on the ears: it's actually a quick mechanical 20-millisecond crossfade from the old material to the new, as the diagonal cut gradually reduces the tape ahead of the splice and widens the tape after the cut. But a computer editor allows you to choose either an immediate cut or a variety of styles of crossfades, and choose how long you'd like the crossfade to last. This can make edits far smoother to the ears, and more difficult for a listener to spot in your final program.
- **Easy Repetition of Material.** The laborious process of making tape loops to lengthen sound or music beds (detailed in Chapter 14, "Studio Production") can be replaced with easy computer commands. You can mark a section of audio data and have the computer repeat it as many times as you need, with a seamless crossfade from repeat to repeat.

Mixing

Digital technology's first inroads into the broadcast audio production room have come in those areas where it offered the most improvement: in *recording* and *storage*, and in *signal processing functions*, such as adding reverberation and echo. But there are still some areas where analog offers better quality and/or cheaper, easier design. The most noticeable instance is in basic volume control and mixing of audio signals. So, for some time to come, you'll be dealing with "islands" of digital audio in an analog "sea."

Another factor slowing the arrival of the all-digital production system is the difficulty of connecting several pieces of digital audio equipment with direct digital links. In an era of rapid technological development, manufacturers place more importance on new features than on standards. So the optical disk you've recorded on one brand of digital recorder probably won't play back properly on another brand of machine. And the computer editor on which you've assembled your report may not be able to feed its data directly into a DAT recorder, even though both pieces of gear may profess to implement the same digital interconnection "standard."

The interim solution, until these headaches are resolved, is to keep doing the mixing and interconnecting in analog audio form, letting each piece of digital

gear encode the analog audio into its own particular digital code and then decode back to analog on the way back out of that digital box.

As the number-crunching power of computers gets faster and cheaper, though, it will gradually become practical to create a computer "workstation" that will perform the duties of *all* the equipment in a traditional radio studio: recorders, mixing console, editing station, carts, and all. This kind of integrated mixing and production environment will be best suited to high-quality production of complex programs, but with some design ingenuity it will be possible to make these things as simple to operate as the analog gear they replace.

The "mixing," or relative volume control of several audio sources, can be automated in various ways within these workstations. The simplest control selects a fade-in ramp for each element, then a steady volume setting for the duration of that segment, then a fade-out ramp. This rudimentary level control is not nearly as precise or intuitive as what can be done by hand with an analog mixer.

A better form of level control is accomplished through **snapshot automation**. Once you have all the audio elements in the computer and arrange them in a time line, you choose a series of points in time. For each point, you specify a volume control setting for each audio element in the mix. Then, as the computer "mixes" the final version, it gradually adjusts the level of each audio source from its setting at one "snapshot" to its setting at the next.

The most elegant form of automated mixing is **dynamic automation**. This mimics the functions of a mixing board, and lets you make continuously varying adjustments of the volume of one or more elements in a mix. The computer then remembers what your hands did on the volume controls, and plays it back for you. You can update settings for one source or for various sources to fine-tune the mix without having to perform the whole mix from scratch each time.

An important part of this work is the *interface* provided by the computer. Simple, snapshot automation is often done using a computer *mouse* or *keyboard commands* to mark the desired fade points and levels, or to control the faders on a *virtual mixer* displayed on the computer screen. A mouse may be a wonderful controller for some kinds of computer work, but sound mixing can be done much more intuitively with faders you can actually put your hands on. The best digital workstations will provide a control surface that looks a lot like a traditional audio mixing console.

Multisource Production

A computer workstation has the potential to give you the advantages of a multitrack recorder (see Chapter 14) and eliminate the biggest disadvantages. Some workstations let you bring in many elements and arrange them in time relative to the other elements, just as you would do in the process of laying up

elements onto a multitrack tape. This saves the quality that would be lost by going down another generation of analog tape.

Another disadvantage of multitrack tape production, as opposed to multi-source techniques, is that once the various elements are laid up on the multitrack tape, it's very hard to move one element earlier or later in the piece without affecting the timing of other elements. Some computer workstations mimic multitrack tape techniques so closely that they share this limitation. But the better ones let you change elements and give you the choice of keeping all the following elements in their original places or adjusting them to follow the changed element. This makes for a flexible production environment, and, when combined with dynamic automation of volume settings, makes for the best of both worlds.

Getting It To Your Audience: Digital Audio Broadcasting

When the day arrives that all of your field recording, editing, and mixing of sound is being done with digital equipment, and even the link from your studio up to the station's transmitter is digital, the audio still must be changed back to analog in order to be broadcast. FM and AM radio are analog transmission systems, and all the AM/FM radios your listeners use are essentially analog receivers, even if they sport "digital tuning" or other control features.

There are already audio distribution channels on many cable-TV systems, though, that can deliver digital audio directly to the home. The next challenge is to find ways to let AM and FM broadcasters send digital signals directly to their listeners. This has many potential benefits. First, the sound will have "CD quality," with its wider frequency response and dynamic range. All schemes for digital broadcasting proposed as of this writing use some sort of psychoacoustic coding and data compression, so they're not precisely CD quality, but they definitely offer better sound than analog FM or AM.

Also, digital error-correction techniques can eliminate most of the reception problems encountered in FM or AM radios. When you pull up to a stoplight in a crowded city, your FM radio may fade into static, but clear up when you move the car a few inches. This is caused by multipath interference: Your antenna picks up the direct signal from the radio station, and also the same signal reflected off nearby buildings or hills. These delayed reflections interfere with the main signal. But digital receivers can actually put these delayed reflections to use to make reception better, not worse. Digital broadcast coding techniques also can reduce the lightning-induced crackles, fade-outs under bridges, and generally noisy sound common to AM radio.

Even in data-compressed form, though, digital radio takes a large chunk of valuable space in the electromagnetic spectrum. It has to compete with other new demands, everything from garage-door openers to high-definition TV, for a new

band in the broadcast spectrum. Or methods must be developed to allow the broadcast of digital signals alongside the analog signals on the same frequencies currently used by FM and AM stations.

Most other countries that have started or are considering digital broadcasting are using satellites to broadcast directly to homes and cars, using small terrestrial transmitters to fill in where the satellite's signal is blocked by buildings or terrain. But in the United States, both economic pressures and the tradition of broadcasting strongly favor having digital radio be a locally broadcast service, rather than a national satellite service. Perhaps some hybrid system will emerge that will allow both techniques to be used. This should also make it easier to build radios that will work in many different countries, which in turn will make manufacture of those radios cheaper.

The More Things Change . . .

All these new technologies have altered broadcast production, and the pace of change is likely to accelerate. But the basic techniques of producing radio journalism will remain the same, even as some new techniques and work patterns emerge:

- **Interviewing.** Newer recorders will make it easier to get clear recordings, and there will be fewer interruptions to change tapes, or discs, or memory chips, or whatever recording medium wins out. But the speaking, research, and listening skills that make you a good interviewer will continue to be your strongest allies. The best interview on radio will continue to be a person speaking to a person.
- **Editing.** The computer workstation will make the technical process of condensing and rearranging sounds and words far less difficult. But in doing that, it will increase your ethical responsibility to your "editees" and your listeners. You'll need to be more careful to ensure that your edits don't cause a misrepresentation of opinions, syntax, or speech patterns.
- **Being a Sound Reporter.** The ability to listen for good environments to record interviews will still make for compelling radio reports free from acoustic distractions. Better microphones and recorders will let you record interesting sounds, even those that are so quiet that they'd be buried in tape hiss if recorded on a typical cassette recorder. But you'll still need the "awareness of ears," an ability to listen and *find* those sounds, and the know-how to use them to enhance the production of engaging radio reports.

THE NPR STYLEBOOK

Part I

Usage, Grammar, Pronunciation

*compiled by
Marcus D. Rosenbaum and John Dinges*

"What's the big deal with grammar?" we often hear. "I mean, like, people know what I'm saying anyway!"

Maybe yes, maybe no. The simple fact is that people *don't* always know what you are saying. Proper English is the way we communicate clearly, avoid ambiguity, and know that others will understand us.

At NPR, our desire to use proper English goes even deeper than that. For one thing, bad English cheapens our work. When we use bad grammar or use words incorrectly, our listeners hear our mistakes—and, often, *only* our mistakes. They may miss altogether the important things we are saying. And even if they do understand what we are trying to say, they are likely to think, "If they're wrong about the little things, how can I trust them on the big stuff?"

There's also another reason to use proper English at NPR: Radio, where the spoken word is the only word, is the single best medium to preserve the language and to guide its growth. At NPR, all of us should see ourselves as guardians of the language, keeping it alive and vibrant. After all, if *we* don't protect it, who will?

A stylebook must do more than merely point out the incorrect. It also must set standards for consistency's sake. It is sloppy, for instance, for one person on a radio program to pronounce a word one way, and for another to pronounce it another way—even though both usages technically may be correct. When a host

introduces a piece from Port-oh-PRINS, and the reporter calls his location Port-oh-PRANZ, it sounds as if the reporter hadn't heard the host, or vice versa.

Thus, in addition to listing items that are commonly misused or misunderstood, this stylebook serves to arbitrate competing "correct" usages. To be consistent, once NPR style is determined, we all should follow it.

Although we recognize there are acceptable regional variations in American English, it is important to be consistent. For further details, see the "American English" and "foreign words, foreign pronunciations" entries below.

Certain reference books are considered standard for NPR usage. They are the *Associated Press Stylebook*, the *NBC Handbook of Pronunciation* (Fourth Edition), Theodore M. Bernstein's *The Careful Writer: A Modern Guide to English Usage*, or a good dictionary, such as *Webster's New World* (Third College Edition).

-A-

a, an—Use *a* as the indefinite article before consonants, including aspirated *h*'s (*house, historic, etc.*) and before *u*'s pronounced *yew*. Use *an* before vowels (except *u*'s pronounced *yew*) and before consonants that are not aspirated (*hour, honor, etc.*). Examples: *In an hour, we will hear about a historic event from a U.S. senator with an unusual perspective.* See *historic, historical.*

abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms—Except for a few very well-known examples (e.g., CIA), make sure you give the entire name of an organization before you use its initials or acronym. And don't use too many initialisms or acronyms in any one story; it too easily can end up sounding like gobbledygook.

ABC—Acceptable in all references for the television network that is part of Capital Cities/ABC Inc.

abortion—No one set of terms is acceptable to all sides of this controversy, so avoid labeling as much as possible. When you must, use the term *anti-abortion* to refer to people who are opposed to abortion, and use *abortion-rights* for people who are in favor of legalized abortion. *Pro-life* and *pro-choice* may be used as part of an organization's proper name.

accused—Someone is *accused* of a crime, not *accused with* a crime.

active voice, passive voice—Generally, use the active voice rather than the passive voice. Preferred (active

voice): *The dog bit the man.* Not preferred (passive voice): *The man was bitten by the dog.* Too often, sloppy writing leads to writing in the passive voice because it seems to be more formal or more official. Avoid these tendencies. As Bernstein puts it: "[T]he active voice . . . conveys greater force, greater speed, greater vigor. . . . The passive voice, used without cause, tends to weaken writing. It also usually requires the use of more words. Which may be another way of saying the same thing. Compare . . . *Our seas have been plundered by him* with *He has plundered our seas.*" Nevertheless, Bernstein offers four situations in which he says the passive voice is desirable: "(1) When the agent performing the action is thought of as too unimportant or too obvious to mention and is less significant than the object of the action. *The mail was delivered at 11 o'clock this morning. Jones was indicted for the kidnapping.* (2) When the agent performing the action is indefinite or unknown. *Silk hats are not worn these days.* (3) When the intention is to emphasize the doer or the thing done by placing that element at the end of the sentence, which is an emphatic position. *The play was written by Eugene O'Neill. We can't drive because our car is being repaired.* (4) When the intention is deliberately to avoid strong language, to play it pianissimo. Science and diplomacy, two fields in which equanimity is the advisable attitude, particularly favor the restrained statement. *It has been sug-*

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gested that 0.06 gr. of mercury salicylate can be given three days before each dose of the Tryparsamide. The Russian delegation is of the opinion that certain positive work has been done."

adverse, averse—*Adverse* means unfavorable: *There were adverse weather conditions.* *Averse* means opposed to something or reluctant. *He was averse to speaking frankly.*

African-American—Interchangeable with *black* when referring to Americans of African descent.

ages—Avoid using before a person's last name, although it is acceptable to use an age before a person's full name or occupation. Wrong: *The 42-year-old Smith is a good ballplayer.* Right: *Smith, who is 42 years old, is a good ballplayer.* Right: *Forty-two-year-old Bill Smith is a good ballplayer.* Right: *The 42-year-old ballplayer has a good throwing arm.*

AIDS—Acceptable in all references for acquired immune deficiency syndrome. AIDS is a disease that weakens the body's immune system. The disease is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. Do not say *HIV virus*, because this is redundant; say *HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.* Most "AIDS tests" are really tests for antibodies that the body has developed to fight HIV; a positive test does not mean that the person has AIDS, but is only evidence of infection with the AIDS virus.

alcoholic—Alcoholics who have stopped drinking are *recovering*, not *reformed*, alcoholics.

allege—Use the word carefully. You must not indicate that you are making the allegation, but you should be sure to say who is. You *should* use the word to indicate that something is not a proven fact (*the alleged theft took place on Wednesday*). But beware of redundancies. You can say: *The prosecutor charged him with murder.* Or: *The prosecutor alleged that he committed the murder.* But not: *The prosecutor charged him with allegedly committing the murder.* Also, don't overuse *allege*; use synonyms.

alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae—*Alumnus* (uh-LUM-nuhs): A man who has attended a school. *Alumni* (uh-LUM-niy): Men, or a group of men and women, who have attended a school. *Alumna* (uh-LUM-nuh): A woman who has attended a school. *Alumnae* (uh-LUM-nee): Women who have attended a school.

American English—Because NPR is an American radio network, we use standard, American (i.e., U.S.) English. This does not mean that all voices on NPR should sound the same. Far from it. We've always had regional accents on the air, and such diversity is one of the many things that distinguishes NPR from the rest of the electronic media.

NEE-th/er and *NIY-th/er*, *AWNT* and *ANT*, *ROOF* and *RUUF* are regional pronunciation differences that

a bat, ah farm, ahr bard, air fair, aw saw, ay ray, ch birch, e net, ee beet, eer near, g good, hw when, ih is, iy fry, j job, o on

are a matter of reporter preference. Likewise, a reporter from New York might prefer to say *standing on line*, where other reporters would say *standing in line*. The principle is that regional language variations are acceptable as long as they do not make the piece unintelligible to listeners elsewhere in the country.

Non-American reporters and commentators are not expected to lose their accents, but their editors should take care that departures from basic American pronunciation and usage are minimal. Examples: It's *SKEJ-ool*, not *SHEJ-ool*. It's *They were taken to the hospital*, not *They were taken to hospital*. Collective nouns take singular, not plural verbs.

amicable—AM-ih-kuh-buhl, not uh-MIK-uh-buhl.

among, between—Generally, use *between* for two items. *Among* is used for more than two.

anxious, eager—Both terms mean desirous, but *anxious* connotes a sense of apprehension or anxiety. Right: *I am anxious to get the exam behind me*. Wrong: *I am anxious to go swimming*. Right: *I am eager to go swimming*.

apartheid—uh-PAHR-tayt.

arbitrate, mediate—The terms are not interchangeable. An *arbitrator* hears both sides and hands down a decision. A *mediator* hears both sides and tries to bring them to an agreement acceptable to both.

Arctic, Antarctic—AHRK-tihk, ant-AHRK-tihk. Pronounce the *k*.

Argentine—AHR-juhn-teen. A native of Argentina, or an adjective referring to Argentina.

as . . . as—This is correct. *As . . . than* is incorrect. Wrong: *Four times as much is spent on Florida than on Texas*. Right: *Four times as much is spent on Florida as on Texas*.

astonished, surprised—This story tells the difference: A man comes home to find his wife with another man. "Matilda," he says, "I'm surprised!" "No, dear," she replies, "I'm surprised. You're astonished."

attorney general, attorneys general

-B-

backward—Not *backwards*.

bad, badly—*Bad* is an adjective; *badly* an adverb. However, it is *He feels bad* (not *badly*) because it is idiomatic usage for *He is in bad health*. *He feels badly* would mean that he has a bad sense of touch.

because, since—When there is a cause-effect relationship, use *because*. *Because he stepped off the curb into traffic, he was run over by the oncoming car*. *Since* is acceptable when one event led to another but was not its direct cause: *Since he was going to the store anyway, he bought a watermelon*.

Beijing—bay-JEENG, not bay-ZHEENG.

bemuse—Do not confuse with *amuse*. *Bemused* means muddled, plunged in thought, bewildered.

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between—See *among*, *between*.

biweekly—Every other week. Twice a week is *semiweekly*.

British Broadcasting Corp.—BBC is acceptable in all references.

brutalize—It means to make brute-like, as in *Alcohol brutalizes families*. It is wrong to say, *Saddam brutalizes his people*, if you mean that he is brutal to his people.

burglary, larceny, robbery, theft—Legal definitions vary, but generally *burglary* means entering a building (not necessarily breaking in) with the intention of committing a crime. *Larceny* means unlawfully taking property; the non-legal terms are *stealing* and *theft*. *Robbery* is larceny with violence; *theft* is larceny without violence or threat. USAGE NOTE: You *rob* a person, bank, house, etc., but you *steal* the money or jewels.

but despite—Don't use *but* before the word *despite*. It is superfluous.

-C-

Canadian Broadcasting Corp.—CBC is acceptable on second reference.

CBS—Acceptable in all references for CBS, Inc., the broadcasting network.

Ceausescu—chow-SHES-koo.

celebrant, celebrator—A *celebrant* is someone who conducts a religious rite. A *celebrator* is someone having a good time.

Centers for Disease Control—With headquarters in Atlanta, the centers (note plural) are run by the U.S. Public Health Service. They take a plural verb. But its abbreviation, CDC, can be followed by a singular verb.

character, reputation—People's *character* refers to their moral qualities. Their *reputation* is how they are regarded by others.

chauvinism, chauvinist—The words refer to having an unreasonable devotion to one's race, sex, country, etc., with contempt for others'. When referring to men who have an unreasonable devotion to their sex and contempt for women, the words must be preceded by *male*. The words, by the way, are a reference to Nicholas Chauvin, a soldier of Napoleon I who became famous for his devotion to lost causes.

chief justice—William H. Rehnquist's title is *chief justice of the United States*, not *chief justice of the Supreme Court*.

clichés—It is a truism to say that a cliché is a usage that should be avoided. But watch out. Clichés can creep up on you unexpectedly, especially in two-ways and other conversations. *It brought tears to my eyes. It blew my mind*. The list, unfortunately, seems endless. Avoid them like the plague.

climax—The word comes from the Greek word for ladder, so, strictly speaking, it means a series of words or phrases arranged in order of ascending forcefulness. Of course, in modern usage, the word also has come

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to mean the highest point. However, it should never be used to mean the lowest point. Wrong: *The decline in the president's popularity climaxed when he announced yet another trip abroad.*

CNN—Acceptable in all references for Cable News Network.

collective nouns—In American English, collective nouns—*class, company, family, group*, etc.—take a singular verb.

collide, collision—A *collision* takes place only when both objects are moving. *The car collided with the truck.* A car cannot *collide* with a telephone pole.

colloquialisms—Generally, colloquialisms—words like *yeah, gads, done in*, and *gab*—are best avoided. Do not use them merely as shortcuts for proper usage, but they can be used deliberately in certain circumstances. Just be sure their use fits their context.

colored—In some societies, including the United States, the word is considered derogatory and should not be used. In some places, particularly in South Africa, the term denotes someone of mixed racial ancestry. When used in this context, be sure to define it.

Common Market—Use *European Community* instead. (Second reference: *E.C.*, not *E.E.C.*)

compared to, compared with—This is a complicated concept, but generally, use *compared with*, not *compared to*. *Compared to* illustrates only similarities

(not differences), and is always used without elaboration: *Mr. Bush compared himself to George Washington.* *Compared with* can illustrate similarities or differences. *Compared with the stairs, the elevator was much faster.* *The Kenyan's time in the marathon compared favorably with the Swede's.*

compose, comprise—*Compose* means to put together or to create, and it may be used in the active or the passive voices. *He composed the tune.* *Iowa is composed of 99 counties.* *Comprise* means to embrace, to contain. It takes a direct object; it is not followed by *of*. Use it only in the active voice: *Iowa comprises 99 counties.* Tip: This sentence provides an easy way to remember the difference: *The whole comprises the parts.*

contagious, infectious—A *contagious* disease is communicated by touching; an *infectious* disease is communicated by air or water, and it may or may not be *contagious*.

contrasted to, contrasted with—The use is similar to *compared to* and *compared with*. Use *contrasted to* only for items that have opposite characteristics; there should be no elaboration. *He contrasted her appearance this year to her disheveled look last year.* Use *contrasted with* for similarities or differences. As with *compared*, *contrasted with* is usually the better choice of words.

Copenhagen—KOH-puhn-hay-guhn.

copyright—(n., v., and adj.) *Copyrighted* is the past tense of the verb; it is not

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the adjective. *It was a copyright story.*
He copyrighted the story.

court-martial, court-martialed, courts-martial

courtesy titles—Generally, courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) are not used in news stories, and the last name only is used in second references. However, in features—as well as some softer news stories—courtesy titles may be appropriate. But be sure to be consistent: Don't call one person *Mr. Jones* and the next person *Smith*. (Exception: For the president of the United States, first reference is *President Bush*; subsequent references are *the president* or *Mr. Bush*. Be careful in stories involving politics or other heads of state that the use of a courtesy title for the president does not denigrate the status of others in the story. For instance, if the story is about a debate between President Bush and Senator X, do not say *Mr. Bush and X answered questions*. Rather, say *Mr. Bush and Mr. X answered questions*. Likewise, do not say *Mr. Bush and Yeltsin spoke for four hours*. Say *Mr. Bush and Mr. Yeltsin spoke for four hours*. Remember: Courtesy titles always can be used.)

credit, responsibility—Terrorists are said to *take responsibility*, not *credit*, for dastardly acts.

criterion, criteria—*Criterion* is singular and takes the singular verb; *criteria* is plural and takes the plural verb.

Croat, Croatian—Croatian is preferred, but Croat is acceptable. It is pronounced KROH-ah-t, not KROHT or KROH-at.

-D-

damage, damages—*Damage* is destruction: *The damage from the earthquake was enormous and could total billions of dollars.* *Damages* are awarded by a court: *The jury awarded her one million dollars in damages.*

data—A plural noun, *data* normally takes the plural verb. DAYT-uh is the preferred pronunciation.

datelines—Generally, say where you are in your outcue. For more details, see the **datelines** and **identification** sections in Part II of this Stylebook.

daylight-saving time—Not *savings*.

decimate—Literally, it means to take one-tenth of. It can be extended to mean to do away with a large part of. It does not mean to destroy, or to do away with completely.

demolish, destroy—The words mean to do away with something completely. Something cannot be *partially demolished* or *partially destroyed*. And it is redundant to say *totally demolished* or *totally destroyed*.

demonstration, protest—A *demonstration* is a public display of feeling or opinion, so *public demonstration* is redundant. A *protest*, however, may be either public or private.

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different—It never takes the preposition *than*. The proper preposition to follow *different* is *from*.

discomfit, discomfort—*Discomfit* and *discomfort* have nothing in common, except a similarity in spelling. *Discomfit* means to rout or to overwhelm; it also means to thwart or frustrate the plans of. *Discomfort* means to make someone uncomfortable, or uneasy; in its noun form, it means being in an uncomfortable state. To quote Bernstein, "If you suffer *discomfiture*, you suffer *discomfort*, too, but the reverse is not necessarily (or even usually) true."

disinterested, uninterested—Use *disinterested* to mean impartial; *uninterested* lacking interest.

disassociate—Not *disassociate*.

dive, dived, diving—The past tense is not *dove*.

drunk, drunken—Use *drunk* after the verb to be, when it's not followed by a noun. Use *drunken* before a noun. *He was drunk. He was a drunken driver.*

-E-

eager—See *anxious, eager*.

either—It means one or the other, not both. Right: *She said either road would get us there.* Wrong: *There were trees on either side of the yard.* Right: *There were trees on each side of the lawn. There were trees on both sides of the lawn.*

either . . . or, neither . . . nor—The verb must agree with the noun that is nearer the verb. *Either the girls or Bob*

is going. Neither Bob nor the girls are going.

elderly—Listen to the AP's advice: "Use this word carefully and sparingly. It is appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: *concern for the elderly, a home for the elderly, etc.* If the intent is to show that an individual's physical or mental capabilities have deteriorated as a direct result of age, cite a graphic example and give attribution for it. Apply the same principle to terms such as *senior citizen*."

entitled—Books are *titled*, not *entitled*. Right: *The book was titled War and Peace. She was entitled to a promotion.*

essential clauses, non-essential clauses—These terms are used instead of *restrictive clause* and *non-restrictive clause* to convey the distinction between the two in a more easily remembered manner. Both types of clauses provide additional information about a word or phrase in the sentence. But an *essential clause* cannot be eliminated without substantially changing the meaning of the sentence. The *non-essential clause*, however, can be eliminated without altering the basic meaning of the sentence.

PUNCTUATION, VOICING: In the written language, an essential clause must not be set off from the rest of a sentence by commas; a non-essential clause must be set off by commas. The commas that set off a non-essential clause in a radio story should be *heard* to avoid the kind of confusion that is described in these examples:

oh boat, oi boy, oo noon, oor poor, or for, ow now, sh sheep, th thank, th/that, u under, uh ago, ur burr, uu hook, zh azure

—*Reporters who have not read the stylebook should not criticize their editors.* (The writer is saying that only one class of reporters, those who do not read the stylebook, should not criticize their editors. If the *who . . . stylebook* phrase were deleted, the meaning of the sentence would be changed substantially.)

—*Reporters, who have not read the stylebook, should not criticize their editors.* (The writer is saying that all reporters should not criticize their editors. If the *who . . . stylebook* phrase were deleted, this meaning would not be changed.)

USE OF THAT, WHICH: In general, for inanimate objects, use *that* to introduce essential clauses. Use *which* to introduce non-essential clauses, separating the clause from the rest of the sentence with commas/pauses.

USE OF WHO, WHOM: Use *who* or *whom* for people; do not use *that*. Wrong: *He's the kind of guy that likes to hang out in bars.* Right: *He's the kind of guy who likes to hang out in bars.*

experts, sources—See *sources, experts*.

-F-

fallout—If you insist on using this as a daily metaphor for consequences, then what do you do when Chernobyl comes along? Use *fallout* as a nuclear term. Substitute *aftermath* or similar word in other uses.

farther, further—*Farther* refers to physical distance; *further* refers to time or degree. *He ran farther than his opponent. She took the idea one step further.*

fewer, less—Use *fewer* for individual items, *less* for bulk or quantity. *The farmer harvested fewer bushels this year than last year.* The farmer harvested less corn this year than last year.

filibuster—*To filibuster* is to make long speeches in an attempt to block legislation. A legislator who *filibusters* also is a *filibuster*, not a *filibusterer*.

first, firstly—In a list or series, use *first, second, third*, etc., not *firstly, secondly, thirdly*.

flaunt, flout—*To flaunt* is to make an ostentatious or defiant display. *To flout* is to show contempt for. *He flaunted his knowledge of the language. She flouted the law.*

flounder, founder—A *flounder* is a fish; *to flounder* is to flop around like a fish. *To founder* is to sink or to become disabled. *For hours the ship floundered in rough seas before it foundered.*

flush—To become red in the face. See *livid*.

flutist—Not *flautist*.

following—The word usually is a noun (*he has a large following*), verb (*the water skier was following the boat*), or adjective (*the following ideas are good ones*). To avoid potential confusion for the listener, it is best to use *after* for the preposition. *After the dinner he went to sleep.* Not: *Following the dinner he went to sleep.*

forbid—Past tense is *forbade* (pronounced fuhr-BAD).

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foreign words, foreign pronunciations—

The general principle is to sound as much like American English as possible without compromising too much. Therefore: Use Anglicized pronunciation for well-known places and those that have an established English pronunciation: *PAR-uhs*, not *pah-REE*; *nik-uh-RAH-gwuh*, not *nee-ka-RAAH-wah*. Do not attempt sounds that do not exist in English: umlaut-O's, trilled r's, etc. But do determine the accurate pronunciation of names that may not be pronounced the way they are spelled: *va-WEN-sah* for Walesa. However, without neglecting these principles, pronounce peoples' names as nearly as possible to the way they do themselves: *DAN-yel* Zwerdling, but *dan-YEL* Ortega. It is important for the network to be consistent. When in doubt, ask for guidance.

formidable—FOR-muh-duh-buhl.

formula, formulas

forte—As a noun, meaning something that someone does well, it is pronounced FORT. As an adjective or adverb, it is a musical term for loud and is pronounced FOR-tay.

fortuitous—Strictly speaking, it only means that something happened by chance. It is not a synonym for lucky or fortunate.

forward—Not *forwards*.

founder—See *flounder*, *founder*.

fulsome—It means excessive to a disgusting degree. It does not mean lavish or profuse.

-G-

gender—*Gender* is a grammatical term, denoting whether a word is classified as masculine, feminine, or neuter. This is only occasionally important in English. *Gender* is not a substitute for *sex*—but, as Bernstein says, "What is?"

gibe, jibe, jive—*Gibe* means taunt, sneer, or scoff at: *They gibed her about her grades*. *Jibe* means to shift direction; colloquially, it means to agree: *His story didn't jibe with hers*. *Jive* means hip language: *He told her he couldn't understand her jive*.

good, well—Use in accordance with *bad*, *badly* entry.

gourmand, gourmet—A *gourmand* likes food and eats too much; a *glutton*. A *gourmet* likes fine food and is an excellent judge of culinary matters.

government, junta, regime—These words may not be synonymous. Here is AP's explanation: "A *government* is an established system of political administration: *The U.S. government*. A *junta* (HUUN-tuh) is a group or council that often rules after a coup: *A military junta controls the nation*. A *junta* becomes a government after it establishes a system of political administration. The word *regime* is a synonym for *political system*: *a democratic regime, an authoritarian regime*. Do not use *regime* to mean government or *junta*. For example, use *the Franco government* in referring to the government of Spain under Francisco Franco, not *Franco regime*. But: *The Franco government was an authoritarian*

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regime. An *administration* consists of officials who make up the executive branch of a government: *the Reagan administration.*"

governor general, governors general

-H-

half-mast, half-staff—Ashore, except at naval installations, flags are flown at *half-staff* for mourning. On ships and at naval stations ashore, flags are flown at *half-mast*.

handicapped, disabled, impaired—Describe someone as *disabled* or *handicapped* only if it clearly is relevant to the story; and be sure to state clearly what the handicap is and how much it affects the person's physical or mental performance. Some terms are offensive per se to some people with disabilities. Here are the AP's suggestions for usage: "*Disabled* (a general term used for a condition that interferes with an individual's ability to do something independently). *Handicap* (a term that should be avoided in describing a disability). *Blind* (describes a person with complete loss of sight; for others use terms such as *partially blind*). *Deaf* (describes a person with total hearing loss; for others use *partial hearing loss* or *partially deaf*). *Mute* (describes a person who physically cannot speak; others with speaking difficulty are *speech impaired*). *Wheelchair-bound* (do not use this or variations; a person may use a wheelchair occasionally or may have to use it for mobility; if it is needed, say why)."

hang, hanged, hung—Whether talking about a picture, a criminal, or oneself, the present tense is *hang*. The past tense and passive is *hanged* for executions or suicides, *hung* for everything else.

harass, harassment—huh-RASS, huh-RASS-muhnt. The controversy surrounds not only the act, but the word itself. Here's how William Safire explains it: HAR-ass-ment "is no longer in the mainstream of pronunciation preference. The increased preference for ha-RASS-ment is unmistakable, and has been reflected in the change in most leading dictionaries. . . . Today, the original HAR-ass remains British English; the newer ha-RASS is preferred in American English."

his, her—Don't presume maleness in a sentence, but don't use constructions like *his or her*, either. Try, first, to revise the sentence; if you cannot, use the pronoun *his* when it refers to an antecedent that may be male or female. Wrong: *An editor must be kind to his or her reporters.* Right (but use this construction only when necessary): *An editor must be kind to his reporters.* Preferred: *Editors must be kind to their reporters.*

historic, historical—A *historic* event is an important one that stands out in history. Anything that occurs in the past is a *historical* event. Note that the indefinite article preceding either word is *a*, not *an*. Just as you would not say *an history book*, don't say *an historic document*.

a bat, ah farm, ahr bard, air fair, aw saw, ay ray, ch birch, e net, ee beet, eer near, g good, hw when, ih is, iy fry, j job, o on

hone, home—*Hone* means sharpen, as in *to hone one's skills*. *Home*, usually followed by *in*, means zero in, as in *to home in on the target*.

hopefully—It means in a hopeful manner, not it is hoped or we hope. Right: *We hope it won't rain*. Wrong: *Hopefully, it won't rain*. Right: *He spoke hopefully about his pay raise*.

hurricane—Use the pronoun *it*, not *he* or *she* for hurricanes. *Hurricane Bob is 50 miles from shore. It is expected to reach land tonight*.

-I-

impact—Do not use as a verb (intransitive or transitive), except when referring to teeth. Wrong: *Let's see how the bad decision impacts on him*. Wrong: *Let's see how the bad decision impacts him*. Right: *He has an impacted wisdom tooth*. Right: *Let's see whether the bad decision has an impact on him*. Right: *Let's see how the bad decision affects him*.

impeachment—The constitutional process by which an elected official is accused of a crime as part of an attempt to remove the official from office. It is not a synonym for convicted or removed from office. In the federal government, the House of Representatives impeaches an official, and the Senate tries the official. When the president is impeached, the chief justice presides in the Senate trial, and conviction requires a two-thirds vote.

imply, infer—Speakers *imply* something by what they say; listeners *infer* it from what is said.

index, indexes—The plural *indexes* is preferred to *indices*.

innocent victim—Be careful of the term when it could imply that other victims somehow can be blamed for their calamity, as in distinguishing among AIDS victims.

interpreter, translator. See **translator, interpreter**.

in the wake of—This has become a cliché, so use it only in its literal sense. *The water skier followed in the wake of the speedboat*.

ironically—This is a word that seldom should find its way onto the air. Irony should be perceived on its own, without a signboard.

irregardless—A double negative. *Regardless* is correct.

it—Use *it*, rather than *she*, in references to nations, ships, and hurricanes.

-J-

jail—Not the same as *prison*. See the **prison, jail** entry.

jibe—See **gibe, jibe, jive**.

junta—(HUUN-tuh) See **government, junta, regime**.

-K-

kilometer—kuh-LOM-uh-tuhr.

kudos—(KYOO-dahs, not KOO-doz) The word is singular. It takes a singular verb. It means praise.

oh boat, oi boy, oo noon, oor poor, or for, ow now, sh sheep, th thank, th/that, u under, uh ago, ur burr, uu hook, zh azure

Ku Klux Klan—KOO-KLUX-KLAN, not KLOO-KLUX-KLAN.

-L-

lady—Do not use as a synonym for *woman*.

last—Be careful if you use it as a synonym for latest, because it might imply finality. It's probably okay to say, *It rained the last time I went to the store*. But *The last show was a good one* could leave the listener wondering whether you meant, *The final show was a good one*. As for days or months, go for clarity. In December 1991 your listeners probably would know that *last February* meant February 1991. But in March 1991, they might think that *last February* meant February 1990.

late—Do not use it to describe something someone did when he was alive. Wrong: *The late CIA director may have lied to Congress* because he was not dead when he did so.

latter—*Latter* refers to the second of two things. It does not mean the last of more than two. Right: *Both Bill and Bob are cowboys, but only the latter can rope a steer*. Wrong: *Bill, Ted, and Bob are all cowboys, but only the latter can rope a steer*. Right: *Bill, Ted, and Bob are all cowboys, but only Bob can rope a steer*.

lay, lie—Here's how AP sorts this out: "The action word is *lay*. It takes a direct object. *Laid* is the form for its past tense and its past participle. Its present participle is *laying*. *Lie* indicates a state of reclining along a

horizontal plane. It does not take a direct object. Its past tense is *lay*. Its past participle is *lain*. Its present participle is *lying*. When *lie* means to make an untrue statement, the verb forms are *lie, lied, lying*." For good examples, see the AP Stylebook.

lend, loan—*Lend* is the preferred verb.

lie—See *lay, lie*.

lie in state—Only people entitled to a state funeral may lie in state. In this country, it occurs in the Capitol Rotunda.

like, as—*Like* is a preposition, which requires an object: *He writes like an amateur*. Use the conjunction *as* to introduce clauses: *He writes as an amateur would*.

lists, series—In a list or series, use *first, second, third, etc.*, not *firstly, secondly, thirdly*.

lingerie—LAWN-zhuh-RAY (by popular demand).

literally—An often-misused word. Listen to Bernstein: "Picture this in your mind, if you can: *The job of selecting the jury was carried out in a courtroom that literally bulged*. And this: *But yesterday the United States Court of Appeals literally put the money in his pocket*. What the writers of those sentences were afraid of was that we would take them *literally*, but instead of escaping from the danger they plunged more deeply into it. *Literally* means true to the exact meaning of the words. What most writers (and speakers) mean when

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they use *literally* is *figuratively*, which is just about its opposite. When they do not intend to warn us against taking what they say *literally*, they use the word as a mere means of underlining a thought; usually the thought needs no underlining."

livid—A person who turns *livid* with rage turns white or gray, not red or green.

long-lived—LAWNG-LIYVD, not LAWNG-LIVD.

-M-

major—The word is a *comparative* adjective that means greater in importance (or size, value, etc.) than other similar things. Because it is comparative and not superlative in degree, *major* should not be preceded by the word *the*. One may speak of a *major artistic achievement*, but not *the major artistic achievement*. In addition, the word is overused. Use *important* instead.

majority, plurality—*Majority* is more than half; *plurality* is more than the next highest number. For details on computing majority and plurality, see the AP Stylebook.

media—A plural noun that takes a plural verb.

metaphors—Be careful that a metaphor's literal meaning does not interfere with its metaphorical one. It would be inappropriate, for example, to say in a story about how Congress had appropriated money for AIDS research that *the fight against AIDS got a much needed shot in the arm*.

midnight—It stands alone; never say *12 midnight*. It is part of the day that is ending, not the day coming up.

minuscule—Often misspelled and mispronounced. It's not *miniscule*. (It's MIHN-uh-skyool, not MIHN-ih-skyool.)

modifiers—Adjectives and adverbs can bring a story alive, but make sure the words say something. Don't fudge reality with *cheap* modifiers. Examples: *Skydiving is a solo sport. Even if you leave the plane as part of a group, you're ultimately on your own as soon as you pull the rip cord. Why ultimately?* It added nothing to the sentence. Here's another: *Despite the inherent danger, he still jumped on the tracks. Why inherent?* Or: *His last film was so outrageous it forced Hollywood to create an entirely new ratings category.* Does the sentence really need *entirely*? Robert Siegel, who brought the Creeping Cheap Modifiers Syndrome (CCMS) to our attention, added the following: "This may be the general stylistic tick that I had previously noticed only in one variety. I used to tell reporters to insist on the right word, rather than split the difference between a powerful word and a weak modifier. This happens when a reporter or newscaster is about to call Adolph Hitler 'the worst mass murderer in history.' Overcome with doubt about this assertion, the writer changes it to, 'Probably the worst mass murderer in history.' Perhaps we devote so little effort to choosing the right noun or the right adjective that we

oh boat, oi boy, oo noon, oor poor, or for, ow now, sh sheep, th thank, th/that, u under, uh ago, ur burr, uu hook, zh azure

have taken to overseasoning the bad cut of meat with cheap modifiers."

more than—Preferred to "over."

Moscow—MOS-koh, not MOS-kow. (This is an exception to NBC.)

Mulroney—Brian Mulroney (Mul-ROO-nee), the prime minister of Canada.

Muslim(s)—The preferred term for adherents to Islam. Not *Moslem*. (This is an exception to AP.)

-N-

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—*NAACP* (N-double-A-C-P) is acceptable on second reference.

National Institutes of Health—This agency is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. It is the government's biomedical research agency. It consists of the National Library of Medicine and 12 separate institutes: National Cancer Institute; National Eye Institute; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism, and Digestive Diseases; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; National Institute of Dental Research; National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; National Institute of General Medical Sciences; National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke; National Institute on Aging.

National Organization for Women—Not *of. NOW* is acceptable on second reference.

NBC—Acceptable in all references for the *National Broadcasting Co., Inc.*, a subsidiary of General Electric Co. Divisions are NBC News and NBC-TV. *NBC Radio Network* is now a subsidiary of Westwood One Inc. and is not affiliated with NBC. Mutual Broadcasting System also is a subsidiary of Westwood One.

Nevada—The state is pronounced Nuh-VAD-uh, not Nuh-VAHD-uh.

no one—It is followed by the singular pronoun. If the sex of the people in question is not known, or if it refers to men and women, the proper pronoun is *his*, not *their*: *No one gets what he wants*. If this construction sounds strange because of the mixed nature of the group, change the sentence around. Try using plurals: *They cannot get what they want*.

non-controversial—All issues are controversial. There is no such thing as a *non-controversial issue*; it is redundant to talk about a *controversial issue*.

non-restrictive clauses—See **essential, non-essential clauses**.

none—It usually means no single one and takes singular verbs and pronouns.

noon—It stands alone; don't say *12 noon*.

notorious—Well-known, usually in an unfavorable sense. Do not use as a synonym for famous.

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nuclear—NOO-klee-uhr, not NOO-kyoo-luhr.

-O-

oasis, oases

obscenities, profanities, vulgarities—See the objectionable language entry in Part II of this Stylebook.

observance, observation—An *observance* is an act in accordance with a tradition, custom, or duty. An *observation* is a perceiving of something. Bernstein offers this example to make the distinction clear: *A little boy finds a vantage point for observation of a parade in observance of the Fourth of July.*

off of—The *of* is unnecessary. *He fell off the couch.* Not: *He fell off of the couch.*

often—AWF'n is preferred to AWF-ten.

on the heels of—This has become a cliché, so use it only in its literal sense. *The puppy dog left the barn on the heels of its mother.*

Oregon—OR-uh-guhn, not AHR-uh-guhn or OR-uh-gawn.

outcues—For descriptions of standardized outcues, see the identification section of Part II of this Stylebook.

-P-

panacea—The word means a cure-all, or remedy for all ills. It does not mean a remedy for specific ills, so it generally shouldn't be followed by a phrase beginning with *for*. Wrong: *This tiny pill is a panacea for headaches.*

passer-by, passers-by

PBS—Acceptable on second reference for the Public Broadcasting Service (not System).

Peking—See Beijing.

penitentiary—See prison, jail.

people, persons—Use *person* for the singular, *people* in all plural forms. (This conforms with AP, but is an exception to Bernstein.)

personal pronouns—Do not use them when discussing U.S. foreign policy. You should ask the secretary of State, *What should the United States do next?* not *What should we do next?*

phenomenon, phenomena—*Phenomenon* is singular, *phenomena* plural. Make sure verbs agree.

pianist—pee-AN-uhst is the preferred pronunciation.

picket—Verb and noun. Do not use *picketeer*.

plead, pleaded—*Pled* is colloquial for the past tense.

plurality—See majority, plurality.

politics—Usually it takes a plural verb: *His politics are liberal.* When it is used as a study or science, it takes a singular verb: *Politics is hard to teach.*

practicable, practical—*Practicable* means capable of being done; *practical* means capable of being done in a way that is useful or valuable.

predominant, predominantly—Not *predominate, predominately*. The verb, however, is *predominate*.

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grammar. *Would* expresses a customary action: *We would use good grammar at work.*

Smithsonian Institution—Not *Smithsonian Institute.*

sound-bites—We call them *cuts* or *actualities* because we want to avoid emulating the nine-second TV sound-bite. In news reporting, actualities should express full and interesting thoughts. Avoid the quick inanity—unless, of course, your purpose is to show the speaker is being inane.

sources, experts—There is a temptation to use these words to cover a reporter's own opinions or even legitimate analytical points. This is a temptation to avoid. There are two things to keep in mind if these words are used: First, the words are plural and mean that the reporter is quoting more than one expert or more than one source. Second, when reporters use these words, they should describe the experts' expertise or the sources' reliability, even if the experts and sources cannot be named.

spokesman, spokeswoman—Not *spokesperson.* Use another word (*official, representative*) if you don't know the sex of the person.

stadium, stadiums

subjunctive mood—AP has a good explanation of when to use the subjunctive: "Use the subjunctive mood of a verb for contrary-to-fact conditions, and expressions of doubts, wishes, or regrets. *If I were a rich man, I wouldn't have to work hard. I doubt*

that more money would be the answer. I wish it were possible to take back my words. Sentences that express a contingency or hypothesis may use either the subjunctive or the indicative mood depending on the context. In general, use the subjunctive if there is little likelihood that a contingency might come true: *If I were to marry a millionaire, I wouldn't have to worry about money.* But: *If the bill passes as expected, it will provide an immediate tax cut."*

Supreme Court of the United States—It is *chief justice of the United States*, not *chief justice of the Supreme Court.* Other justices are *associate justices.* Before the name: *Chief Justice* and *Justice.*

surprised, astonished—See *astonished, surprised.*

-T-

tablespoonful, tablespoonfuls, teaspoonful, teaspoonfuls—not *-spoonsful* for the plurals.

Taiwan—Use *Taiwan*, not *Formosa.*

temblor—Not *tremblor* for earthquake.

terrorism, terrorist—*Terrorism* is the act of causing terror, usually for political purposes, and it connotes that the terror is perpetrated on innocents. Thus, the bombing of a civilian airliner clearly is a terrorist act, but an attack on an army convoy, even if away from the battlefield, is not. Do not ape government usage. The Israeli government, for instance, routinely refers to PLO actions as

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terrorist. A journalist should use independent criteria to judge whether the term is accurate.

that—Use it to introduce a dependent clause if the sentence sounds clumsy without it. When in doubt, use it.

that, which—See essential clauses, non-essential clauses.

theft—See burglary, larceny, robbery, theft.

think—Reporters are paid to think, but hearing them speculate and express opinions on the air not tied to the facts they are conveying is a dangerous departure from the journalist's role. In interviews with reporters avoid the "What do you think?" questions when they elicit opinion going beyond journalistic analysis. Leave the opinion-making to the pundits and the newsmakers.

Third World—Refers to the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and South America. Don't substitute *non-aligned*, which is a political term.

tonight—You can say *8 o'clock tonight* or *8 p.m. today*, but *8 p.m. tonight* is redundant.

toward—Not *towards*.

translator, interpreter—A *translator* renders written words into another language. An *interpreter* does the same for spoken words. Thus, in explaining actualities, it is almost always *He spoke through an interpreter*. Note: Remember that our listeners may understand the foreign language that is being heard in an actu-

ality before the English voiceover. Make sure what is heard in the foreign language is heard in English.

trustee, trusty—A trustee (trus-TEE) is a member of a board of trustees. A trusty (TRUS-tee) is a person who can be relied upon, especially in a prison.

-U-

Ukraine—yoo-KRAYN, not YOO-krayn. It is not preceded by *the*.

United Nations—Generally, use the full name as a noun, *U.N.* as an adjective only.

United States—Generally, use the full name as a noun, *U.S.* as an adjective only.

-V-

volatile—It refers to something that evaporates rapidly; it is not necessarily explosive.

vulgarity—See the objectionable language entry in Part II of this Stylebook.

-W-

weapons—See the AP Stylebook for good descriptions of different kinds of weapons.

weather terms—See the AP Stylebook for detailed descriptions of various weather terms.

whence—It's an old-fashioned word that should be avoided, except for effect. If you do use it, remember that it means from which place or from

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which position. Thus, *from whence* is redundant.

whether or not—Usually, the *or not* is superfluous.

which—See **essential clauses, non-essential clauses**.

who, whom—*Whom* is the word for someone who is the object of a verb or preposition: *Whom do you want to go?* Be careful with *whomever*: *Give it to whomever.* (*Whomever* is the object of the preposition *to*.) But: *Give it to whoever wants it.* (*Whoever* is the subject of the clause *whoever wants it*.)

-X-Y-Z-

zoom Here's one you probably didn't know, courtesy of Bernstein: "Aside from its meanings connected with sound and camera, *zoom*, originally an aviation term, denotes rapid upward motion. Both the following sentences are therefore incorrect: *Melville zoomed down the incline in 2:15.2, a full second ahead of Tommy Burns of Middlebury. At least 12 large hawks are making their homes atop city skyscrapers and zooming down to snatch pigeons.* Both writers may have had in mind the word *swoop*. *Swoop* is usually down; *zoom* is always up."

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Part II

NPR Editorial and Production Guidelines

*compiled by Marcus D. Rosenbaum
and John Dinges*

Datelines Do not say you are somewhere you are not, but use a location in your outcue unless you have a good reason not to do so. The most common good reason not to use a location is that you have gone to City A to report a story, but returned to City B to produce it. If you are close enough to report on a story in a nearby city, use the location where you are. When in doubt, use a location in your outcue. Examples: Natalie Nipper, a staff reporter who is based in Washington, goes to Kalamazoo to report on an exciting city council race. She returns to Washington to produce the story. Her outcue is, *I'm Natalie Nipper*, or, *I'm Natalie Nipper, reporting*. Joe Nipper (no relation) is a staff reporter based in Denver. He reports on a plane crash in Aspen by contacting his sources by telephone. His outcue is, *I'm Joe Nipper in Denver*. Joe Nipper does a national survey story about horse racing from his home base in Denver. He collects some tape on his own, does some telephone interviews, and has some station reporters send him tape they have gathered. His outcue? *I'm Joe Nipper in Denver*.

Election coverage It goes without saying that NPR's coverage of politics should always be balanced and fair. Nothing should give even the impression of bias, and reporters and editors must take great care that they do not unwittingly give one candidate—or one side on an issue—an unfair advantage.

The trickiest time is Election Day and the day before Election Day, when extra-special care must be taken. There are two principles at play: (1) Balanced coverage requires that potential voters have the opportunity to hear all the coverage, and (2) Candidates (and advocates of issues) must always have the opportunity to answer all charges. For these reasons, most substantive election reports should not be carried on Election Day. News spots or short reports about turnout, for instance, would be acceptable. But on Election Day, an eleventh-hour charge by one candidate against another would not (the other candidate would not have the opportunity to respond). Nor would the last in a series of in-depth reports on the race be suitable; the series might be balanced overall, but many voters might not hear the last report before they voted, so they would not be able to hear the full balanced coverage.

Election-eve coverage that goes beyond a horse-race status report carries similar dangers and should be approached with extreme caution.

Identification The designation *NPR's* is reserved for on-air identification of NPR staff reporters and, in some cases, for reporters working on a contract (rather than free-lance) basis with NPR. Examples: (1) Joe Nipper is the NPR defense correspondent. He should be identified as *NPR's Joe Nipper*. When it is relevant, he also can be identified as *NPR Defense Correspondent Joe Nipper*; this would be particularly appropriate if his report is analyzing defense topics. (2) Karen Contract is working in a foreign country on an NPR contract. She should be identified as *NPR's Karen Contract*. (3) Randy Retainer is based in the United States and working for NPR on a retainer contract. He should be identified as *Randy Retainer*. (4) Susie Stringer is a free-lance reporter. Wherever she is based, foreign or domestic, she should be identified only as *Susie Stringer*. Free-lance reporters should not be identified according to other news organizations they string for, unless there is a special reason; for instance, if Susie Stringer wrote an exclusive report for the *Washington Post* and we did a two-way with her, we would mention the *Post*. (5) Sam Station is a reporter for KQED in San Francisco. He should be identified as *Sam Station of Member Station KQED*.

In **outcues**, the rule is: A reporter not identified as *NPR's* in the intro should SOC* out, *For National Public Radio, I'm (or this is) Susie Stringer, Randy Retainer, or Sam Station [in Somewheresville]*. Reporters who are identified as *NPR's* should *not* say *for National Public Radio* in their SOC's. See **datelines** for a discussion of when a reporter's location should be included in the SOC.

BBC's: Only BBC staff reporters receive the designation *BBC's* on our air. Do not assume that a report taken off the BBC feed is by a BBC staffer. The reporter may be a stringer who also strings for NPR. If he is a stringer—or if you're in doubt—say *So-and-So filed this report for the BBC*.

*SOC is an abbreviation for standard outcue.

When interviewing staff reporters from other news organizations, identify them with the name of that organization.

Internal editing of tape At NPR we take care that whenever we cut a piece of tape, we maintain the integrity of its meaning. There are times, however, when we should not make internal edits at all. Generally, these occur when our listeners are likely to hear the same actuality from other sources—television, newspapers, etc. If they hear the actuality one way on NPR and a different way elsewhere, they will realize that NPR has cut it. And even though we know we have not changed the speaker's meaning, our listeners may suspect otherwise, and we may lose their trust. This is particularly true in dealing with tape of the president of the United States. The NPR rule, therefore, is that there should be no internal editing of the president.

Objectionable language NPR's policy is to avoid offending our listeners. We are, in a genuine sense, a family network. Under normal circumstances, we do not allow offensive language to be broadcast without a specific and strong justification. Our policy is to avoid any gratuitous or unnecessary use of such language. In cases when offensive language is contained in actualities, and cannot be edited out, it should be electronically blocked ("bleeped"). In the rare instances in which the reporter, the editor, and the producer all agree that certain offensive language is vital to the meaning and journalistic integrity of a report, NPR mandates certain procedures, including advance notice to stations, before the language may be broadcast (see below). Again, the use of such language on the air will be approved in only the rarest of cases.

Definition: It is difficult to provide a precise definition of obscene or offensive language and impossible to provide one agreeable to everyone. Language that is objectionable to some people is considered by others to be within acceptable norms. Therefore, the criterion an NPR editor, producer, or reporter uses in this regard is not personal attitudes and sensibilities, but rather a considered, journalistic judgment about what may be offensive to others. *Webster's New World Dictionary*, in attempting to define "obscene," calls it something that is "offensive to one's feelings, or to prevailing notions, of modesty or decency." (For a discussion of the legal aspects of this issue, see p. 271.)

In general, what is offensive under "prevailing notions" includes graphic language about sexual activity and excretory functions; curses and expletives; epithets derogatory to racial, ethnic, or religious groups, or to women or men; and vivid descriptions of violence and gore. In many cases it is not the words themselves that are offensive but their use in a way that is sensational or appeals to prurient interest—i.e., intended to be sexually provocative or exciting.

The so-called "seven dirty words" listed by the FCC are always considered offensive in the context of broadcasting. For your information, if not enlightenment, they are *shit*, *piss*, *fuck*, *cunt*, *cocksucker*, *motherfucker*, and *tits*. Their use is always subject to NPR approval and notification procedures. Other words are

also obviously in the category of offensive language, slurs like *nigger*, *kike*, *bitch*, and *faggot*.

On the other hand, most Americans would not be offended by hearing relatively mild expletives like *hell* or *damn*. Of course, a reporter or commentator should not use these words in a script without a special reason, but when they occur in an actuality, they would not need to be bleeped. Nor would they trigger NPR approval and notification procedures.

For the myriad of words and expressions in between, it is a matter of taste and judgment. You may wish to ask yourself whether your parents or your grandparents would object, and, if they would, think twice about how vital the words are to the story. Can another word be substituted without loss of meaning—for example, using a Latin derivative instead of its Anglo-Saxon equivalent? Remember, though, that while clinical descriptions generally are less offensive than graphic ones, even clinical descriptions may offend some.

We can be careful without being prudish. For a description of a sex act, you may wish to ask yourself what you would do if your 10-year-old child heard it. Would you be embarrassed? Would you have to explain it to the child? Would that be easy or difficult? For descriptions of gore and bodily functions, you may want to ask whether it would affect your digestion if you heard it during a meal.

A general rule: Err on the side of caution. Taste and sound judgment are a better guide than rigid application of a set of rules. When in doubt, don't trust the decision to yourself alone. Ask your colleagues for their comments.

Procedures: When the reporter, the editor, and the producer all agree that offensive (or potentially offensive) language cannot be edited out or electronically blocked and that its inclusion in a report is vital to the meaning and integrity of that report, the following procedures *must* be followed, even though these steps require extra time and work:

1. The vice president of news or, in his absence, the managing editor must give prior approval. Each request should include a considered explanation of why the offensive language must be used and a copy of the tape. No report containing offensive language may be broadcast without this approval.
2. If the vice president or managing editor gives approval, the stations must be notified via DACS message.

How to DACS the stations: A separate early DACS (12–24 hours before broadcast, not just part of a show rundown) must be sent to stations explaining what the offensive language is, and how it appears in context. The DACS should say precisely where the wording is in the report (how many minutes and seconds from the start) and give the complete paragraph, with sentences before and after, as it is actually used. This extra wording is essential to allow stations to cut away from the program if they so choose.

In addition to the early DACS, the show rundown should provide a warning about the offensive language. It may also be appropriate in many cases to advise listeners on the air (in the introduction to the piece, for example) that the upcoming report contains potentially offensive language or descriptions parents may not deem appropriate for their children.

“. . . prepared this report” Avoid starting a report with tape. For the most part, such construction is only a poor substitute for good writing. You also will have to make sure that the listener does not think that the first voice after the intro is the reporter’s. The intro cannot say *NPR’s Joe Nipper reports* if the first voice the listener hears is Senator George Mitchell. The easiest way around this problem has been to write, *NPR’s Joe Nipper prepared this report*. But over the years that construction has become hackneyed. Use your imagination. Often a way can be found to take into account the beginning of the report: *NPR’s Natalie Nipper reports on an unusual Sunday session of the Senate, which opened with a statement from Senator George Mitchell*. Corollary: If a piece opens with natural sound, it is not necessary to use the words *prepared this report*.

Tape use in newscasts and shows The relationship between newscasts and the shows in which they appear is a tricky one, especially when it involves the use of tape (actualities and reports). The principle to follow is this: Listeners should not hear the same material repeated within only a few moments of the first time they hear it. You don’t want an ALL THINGS CONSIDERED half-hour to start with a billboard containing a tease cut of tape, followed by a newscast with the same actuality, followed by the lead story with the same tape. For the same reason, a reporter’s news spot should not appear within close range of the reporter’s piece in a show. But just as reporters’ spots and pieces can appear in the same program if they are separated by enough air time, so, too, can those good cuts of tape.

“. . . told NPR” This construction should not be used to enhance otherwise routine reporting, as in *The ambassador told NPR that 4,000 people had died*. Its purpose is to point out not just that someone talked with us, but that the discussion was exclusive and that NPR is breaking the news and advancing the story.

Part III

A Legal Guide for the Radio Journalist

William E. Kennard and Jacqueline R. Kinney

National Public Radio is committed to providing comprehensive, accurate, and thoughtful news coverage. Fulfilling this commitment requires that NPR reporters and editors—as well as radio station managers—fully exercise the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment. NPR not only uses free press and free speech guarantees to defend its news coverage and practices when problems arise, but also considers the active assertion of those rights a part of every reporter's and editor's daily job. The surest way to lose one's freedom is to take it for granted.

Journalists must recognize, however, that the First Amendment does not sanction all behavior merely because it occurs while you are covering the news. Certain fundamental rights of individuals are balanced against the right to freedom of the press. These include individuals' rights to privacy, not to have false statements made about them, not to have their reputations unjustly destroyed, and not to have their solitude disturbed on their private property. Generally, you will avoid infringing these rights simply by practicing good journalism—by checking all facts carefully, writing fair and balanced stories, and using good judgment. But familiarity with basic legal principles will go a long way toward minimizing the chance of being sued. You should be able to recognize potential legal problems. The ultimate goal, of course, is to ensure that you spend your time on the news, rather than in court.

A general knowledge of the law also is necessary to produce the kind of stories that meet NPR's standards. You must be able to use state and federal laws granting access to government information, records and meetings. You must know how the law protects you against being forced to identify your sources and other news-gathering information. You should know how far the First Amendment lets you go in seeking to give listeners the best and most accurate information.

Finally, you must be sensitive to the fact that aggressive exercise of the First Amendment can be an expensive proposition. Given the high cost of defending against legal claims, even a victory can take a huge financial toll. Plaintiffs sue news organizations for a variety of reasons, often the least of which is a meritorious claim. They sue to intimidate, to create the appearance that they have been wronged, or to generate publicity for themselves or for a cause. For anyone covering the news, there is no foolproof method to avoid being sued. But there are steps you can and should take to lessen the likelihood of a lawsuit, and to minimize the inconvenience and expense of one should it arise.

Defamation: Libel and Slander

Inaccurate, sloppy reporting accounts for a high percentage of libel suits against media organizations. The pressure to be first on the air with a breaking story can result in broadcasting statements before they can be verified. And if false statements also defame and harm someone, a libel suit is likely to follow.*

The rules governing libel claims—what a libel plaintiff must prove and what defenses are available to the accused—are generally a matter of state law, although because of the First Amendment, all libel plaintiffs must provide fault in order to collect damages. Thus, while basic principles are generally uniform throughout the states, the case law and libel statutes of the relevant state should be consulted when problems arise.

Elements of Libel

To collect damages, a libel plaintiff must prove that the defendant broadcast a *false* statement that defamed the plaintiff's reputation or good name, causing injury. The defamatory statement need not have been made by an employee of the defendant. A free-lance reporter, a commentator—even a call-in listener—can libel someone. And every time a libelous statement is rebroadcast, a new claim

*Technically, "libel" refers to a written defamation and "slander" refers to an oral defamation, but the legal standards governing both are similar.

may arise. So check and doublecheck your facts, particularly if your story could cast someone in a negative light.

Some statements are defamatory *per se*—those, for instance, that accuse someone of criminal action, morally reprehensible behavior, business impropriety, bad business practice, mental illness, or a disreputable disease. A plaintiff who can prove that such a statement is *false* can collect damages without having to prove any actual injury to reputation.

Other false statements can be libelous even though their defamatory nature is not readily apparent. Extrinsic facts about someone or the context of a particular statement in a story can make it defamatory. For instance, a false statement that a businessman had flown to Paris on a certain weekend would not be libelous in and of itself. But it might be if the statement were part of a story about a bank fraud in which a key meeting was held in Paris on that same weekend.

Because a libel plaintiff must be identified by name or by reference, the manner in which a person or group is accused of wrongdoing is also significant. When a statement refers to a group, no single member of the group is libeled unless there is enough detail to identify the individuals in the group. For example, if a story about a big city police force falsely stated that "some members of the police department are crooks," it would be difficult for any one officer to sue. Of course, if the details of the story more clearly indicated specific individuals, the identifiable persons would have a better case.

Public figures vs. private individual. The required proof of fault for broadcasting a libelous statement depends on whether the plaintiff is a public official/public figure or a private person. A public official/public figure must show that the defendant acted with "actual malice." "Actual malice" is a legal term that has little to do with the common usage of the word "malice." Instead, it means that the reporter or the news organization had actual knowledge that the published statement was false, or had a reckless disregard for the truth or falsity of the statement. A private person need only show that the reporter was negligent in publishing a false statement.

To illustrate the difference, assume a reporter's story falsely states that a local politician and a school bus driver were both leaders of an organized crime ring. The politician would have a more difficult time collecting damages in a libel action. As a public official, he would have to show that the reporter either knew or should have known that the statement was false or that the reporter did not really care whether it was true and broadcast it anyway. The school bus driver, on the other hand, is not a public figure or public official, and therefore merely has to show that the reporter failed to take reasonable steps to determine the truth of the statement—such as asking the bus driver whether the statement was true to attempting to verify the statement independently.

Sometimes an otherwise private person may be deemed a "limited purpose" public figure if he voluntarily involved himself in the controversy that gave rise

to the libel claim. In such cases, the plaintiff must meet the actual malice, not the negligence, standard.

Defenses Against Libel Claims

A general awareness of the defenses available to a libel claim can help you minimize the basis for a libel suit. Keep in mind, however, that these defenses, particularly the scope of the testimonial and public-record defenses, vary from state to state.

Truth. Truth is an absolute defense to claims of libel. But truth is rarely a simple matter. Thus, reporters should keep notes of all information that will help demonstrate the steps taken to verify the facts in a story.

Testimony taken during court and legislative hearings. Statements made in official judicial and legislative proceeding are immune from libel claims. Be sure to attribute those statements to the official proceeding; if you were not there to hear them yourself, be sure the transcript is official or from a reputable source.

Fair and accurate reports of public records. Reports based on the contents of public records typically are immune from libel claims as long as the reports are fair and accurate. Carefully attribute all such statements to the precise public record in which they appear, describing the nature of the document if necessary. Check state open-records laws to determine which records are public.

Consent. If the plaintiff made statements to you knowing that you are a reporter and that the statements would be broadcast, you may reasonably infer consent. If in doubt, ask for written consent, because consent is a defense to a libel claim. Be aware, however, that the defense is limited by the scope of the consent. If consent is conditioned upon review of the story by the subject, then only those statements that have been reviewed by the speaker or his agent may be broadcast. *NPR policy is not to allow such conditional consent agreements.* Do not agree to let anyone you interview hear your report before it is broadcast.

Opinion. Stations that editorialize or air editorials or commentaries should be aware that a statement of opinion is not necessarily immune from a libel claim. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that opinion can be libelous if assertions of facts underlying the opinion are defamatory. Thus, like any other broadcast, an editorial or commentary can be libelous if it contains false assertions of fact.

Corrections and retractions. NPR policy is to correct errors. More to the point of this chapter, a carefully worded correction or retraction may let you avoid a suit, or at least mitigate damages. Retraction statutes vary from state to state, and you should be extremely careful not to admit fault or otherwise

preclude defenses in case a claim is filed later. Always have legal counsel review any such correction or retraction before it is broadcast.

Invasion of Privacy

Claims of invasion of privacy can arise not only from stories broadcast but from reporting practices as well. NPR reporters must be sensitive to the fact that the immediacy of radio and the necessity to record sound make them especially vulnerable to violating someone's personal privacy. Like libel, privacy is a matter of state law.

Invasion of privacy is divided into the following principal areas:

Intrusions. This branch of privacy is aimed at protecting a person's private space or solitude. Regardless of the story that is broadcast, the act of reporting may be an invasion of privacy if it involves trespassing or otherwise intruding into a plaintiff's reasonable realm of privacy. To avoid an intrusion claim, always try to obtain consent before entering private property for news-gathering purposes.

Public disclosure of private facts. A story that reports private, intimate, embarrassing facts about a person—such as details about personal hygiene or sexual conduct—is likely to cause legal problems if those facts are highly offensive to a reasonable person. Truth is *not* a defense, but "newsworthiness" is. Thus, as long as the information is lawfully obtained, stories may lawfully disclose such facts if they are of legitimate public concern. The public has a legitimate interest in information about the public lives of public figures and even some aspects of public figures' private lives, for instance. But the newsworthiness defense is generally much more difficult to use successfully in claims brought by private individuals. Private individuals must be directly involved in a *newsworthy event* before such a defense is available.

False light invasion of privacy. Stories involving a plaintiff's private life that cast the plaintiff in a false light also may cause legal problems. Although the false light cause of action technically is an invasion of privacy, it includes elements of defamation (libel). If the story involves a public figure, for instance, the plaintiff must show that the statement was broadcast with knowledge of, or in reckless disregard for, its false nature. And the statement's truth is a defense in this area of privacy law.

Misappropriation. The tort of misappropriation is rare, and it does not apply to satire or political commentary. But it is an area of concern. Misappropriation typically occurs when a well-known person's name is used to endorse a product without obtaining the person's permission. Avoid including segments in stories that may create a seeming endorsement of a product or service.

Impersonations of famous persons are also troublesome and may give rise for misappropriation in some states if the impersonations are used to promote products or services.

Consent as a Defense

Consent is always a defense to a claim of invasion of privacy. You cannot invade someone's privacy if he or she allows you access knowing that you will broadcast the information. If questionable statements concern a minor or incompetent person, however, be sure to get the consent of a parent or guardian.

Use of Recording Devices

In addition to providing a basis for a claim for invasion of privacy, certain uses of recording equipment may also violate federal or state wiretap statutes. The key to avoiding legal problems when taping a conversation is *consent*—knowing when it is needed and being sure to get it. Again, the law varies from state to state.

Generally, you can record speeches and conversations where the recording would be reasonably expected under the circumstances. Recording a face-to-face interview when the subject can see the recorder is permissible because consent can be presumed. If a recorder is not visible, or the conversation takes place over the telephone, consent of the other party may be required, depending on the state where the call or interview takes place and how the material will be used. When a conversation is being recorded for the purpose of a live or later broadcast, the FCC requires you to state your intent to broadcast the conversation, unless the other party is already aware the conversation will be broadcast.

Both federal and state laws apply to interstate telephone conversations. You must be familiar with the law of the state in which the call originates and the law of the state in which it is received. The federal government and most states allow the taping of a call when one party (i.e., the caller) consents. Eleven states, however, require the consent of *both* parties.* Even in the states where one-party consent generally is allowed, the laws vary greatly, so do not presume it is legal to use material from a call to which only one party has consented. When in doubt, consult an attorney.

Whatever the legal requirement, NPR policy is clear: The person being recorded is always told. There is no surreptitious recording.

*The 11 states that require both parties to consent before a telephone call can be taped legally are California, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

The Reporter's Privilege

On the eve of the U.S. Senate's vote on the confirmation of Judge Clarence Thomas as a Supreme Court Justice in October 1991, NPR reporter Nina Totenberg and *Newsday* reporter Timothy M. Phelps reported allegations by Anita Hill that Thomas had sexually harassed her while she worked for him at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. As a result of the reports, the Senate Judiciary Committee delayed the confirmation vote and held many hours of additional hearings to investigate the allegations. Although Thomas ultimately was confirmed, the dramatic hearings riveted the nation and sparked national debate over sexual harassment and the process of selecting Supreme Court justices.

Totenberg and Phelps learned about Hill's allegations from a confidential source or sources. The committee, which was poised to vote on Thomas before the NPR and *Newsday* stories, apparently had planned *not* to disclose the allegations. Some senators, believing that the information had been "leaked" to the press to prevent Thomas' confirmation, called for an investigation and appointed a special independent counsel to investigate. The independent counsel issued subpoenas and demanded that the reporters identify who told them about Hill's allegations. Totenberg and Phelps refused to comply, claiming that the First Amendment protects against compelled disclosure of news-gathering information, particularly when the information is not essential to prosecution of criminal charges.

Ultimately, the Senate did not require the reporters to comply. But the story focused attention on a classic conflict between journalists and the legal process.

Promising a source confidentiality often is the only way to obtain information about such matters as government wrongdoing. If reporters are not able to keep names secret, some of their most valuable sources will dry up, and the public will be deprived of vital information about government and other institutions.

Because of high-profile cases like the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas controversy, most reporters recognize the reporter's privilege issue in connection with a government demand to identify a confidential source. But reporters and news organizations frequently are served with subpoenas or other informal demands for a whole range of news-gathering information, including requests to turn over notes, tapes and outtakes, to testify at trials or depositions, and to reveal confidential background information not included in a story. Government prosecutors and law enforcement officers are a common source of such demands, but criminal defendants, civil litigants, and other private persons often ask reporters for information as well. Indeed, many view subpoenaing an enterprising investigative journalist as a quick and inexpensive alternative to a private investigation.

The U.S. Supreme Court has determined that the First Amendment does not afford journalists an absolute privilege against compelled disclosure in all circumstances. Countervailing interests, such as guaranteeing a criminal defendant access to all evidence that might exonerate him, may require you to identify a

confidential source or turn over tapes from the scene of a crime—or face the possibility of being in contempt of court.

Whether you must endure the expense and hassle of compliance (or fighting compliance) with such requests depends on the jurisdiction. Many state courts have recognized a qualified privilege to refuse to disclose the sources for a story. Twenty-eight states have shield laws affording varying degrees of protection against subpoenas.* To overcome the privilege, the person seeking disclosure typically must show that the information sought is material and relevant to a probable violation of law, that the information is not available from alternative sources, and that there is a compelling, overriding interest in the information.

The privilege protecting news gathering is weakest when a criminal defendant seeks information that might prove his innocence, especially when that information is not available from any other source. In such cases, the defendant's constitutional right to a fair trial may outweigh the First Amendment right to protect news sources. You are less likely to have to comply when requests from civil litigants seeking information for private claims when alternative sources of the information have not been exhausted. No countervailing constitutional considerations are present in such cases.

It is essential that you consult your editors and your news organization's attorney before complying with any subpoena or demand for news-gathering information. Never simply ignore a subpoena, and never destroy tapes or other materials after they have been requested. Ultimately, the decision to comply or to suffer the consequences of protecting the source is yours. But your editors and attorneys can help you decide how and whether to comply with an official demand. If a subpoena requests only tapes of materials that already have been broadcast, there may be little reason not to turn them over. When unpublished or confidential information is sought, however, an attorney can determine whether it is appropriate to refuse to comply based on a state's shield law or common-law privilege. Note that partial compliance is problematic because it may be deemed a waiver and deny you the privilege against future disclosure of related material.

Access to Information and Places

All good journalists know the information that comes easily usually is not the basis of ground-breaking stories. Good stories, which provide listeners with

*The states are Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

significant information, come from relentlessly pursuing leads, staying at “routine” government meetings until final adjournment, and pouring over government documents. But even the best, most hardworking reporters have trouble securing information from government officials or access to official proceedings. When polite requests are refused, you need to know how to use the law to gain access to information.

Become familiar with the federal and state statutes that guarantee public access to records, meetings, and judicial proceedings. Often government officials themselves will not know that they are compelled by law to provide access. In such cases, merely explaining the law may be all that is necessary. But when access is refused, you should know how to compel officials to let you in.

Access to Public Records

State public records laws and the federal Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) guarantee public access to government records and are an indispensable tool of journalism. The public records laws vary from state to state, but, like FOIA, they generally make all government documents public unless they fall under specified exemptions. Documents typically exempt from access are those pertaining to national security, personal privacy, and law enforcement investigation. A government agency or office that refuses to release a document usually must specify the reason for the denial, so be persistent in making a request unless the information sought is clearly exempt from disclosure. If the reasons given to deny access to a significant document seem unjustified, appeal the decision to withhold the information.

Access to Meetings and Official Proceedings

Open meetings laws, or “sunshine” laws, guarantee the public—and, thus, journalists—the right to attend meetings of government officials. State law generally specifies which governmental bodies must comply and what procedures must be followed, such as giving advance notice, publishing agendas and maintaining transcripts.

Knowledge of the relevant open meetings law usually is most useful when a governmental body holds a closed meeting. Typically, the laws permit closed sessions but only to conduct certain business, such as personnel matters, and only if they comply with specified procedures for closing the meeting. Always demand an explicit reason for closing a meeting, and request a summary of action taken during the closed session.

Access to Courts

Criminal court proceedings generally are presumed to be open to the public, and reporters cannot lawfully be denied access.* Access to civil proceedings is more restricted, however, and varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In any case, always demand an explanation when any court proceeding is closed. Judges are required to hold a hearing when deciding to close a proceeding, and news organizations can challenge a decision to close the proceeding. Ask the judge for an opportunity to object as soon as you learn that a proceeding may be closed. The closure may then be temporarily delayed, giving you time to consult with an attorney about how to object to the closing.

The Federal Communications Commission

Because radio stations are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission, radio journalists must concern themselves with compliance with FCC rules and regulations. Although prohibited by statute from censoring programming directly, the FCC administers several rules and policies that affect programming content.

The Political Broadcasting Rules

You should be particularly aware of FCC regulation in the political broadcasting area. The FCC administers a rather comprehensive system of rules and regulations designed to ensure that broadcasters do not use the public airwaves to favor one candidate over another during an election. The commission also has stated that one of its objectives in administering the rules is to encourage maximum coverage of political campaigns. As a general rule, these regulations do not come into play with regard to the kinds of news programming produced by NPR.

The equal opportunities provision. The "equal opportunities" provision of Section 315 of the Communications Act is commonly (and incorrectly) referred to as the "equal time" provision. If a broadcaster allows a legally qualified candidate for public office to "use" a station's facilities, the broadcaster is required to afford equal opportunities to all other opposing, legally qualified candidates for the same office, provided that another candidate requests the opportunity within seven days.

*Special rules may apply for juvenile courts.

A "use" of a broadcast station by a candidate is now defined as an appearance of a legally qualified candidate that is controlled, approved, or sponsored by the candidate or the candidate's authorized committee. Section 315 specifically exempts the following types of broadcasts from the equal opportunities provision:

- Bona fide newscasts;
- Regularly scheduled bona fide news interview programs, such as CBS's Face the Nation;
- Bona fide documentaries, if the appearance of the political candidate is incidental to the presentation of the subject of the documentary;
- Live coverage of bona fide news events.

In addition, the FCC has said that under certain conditions candidate debates and news conferences are bona fide news events and exempt from the provision. To be exempt, the broadcast of the debate or news conference must be intended to inform the public rather than to favor or disfavor any candidate. It also must be covered live or broadcast reasonably close to the time of the debate or news conference. If these provisions are met, a news organization may decide to include only major candidates in a debate. Debates may be sponsored by the broadcaster or by a neutral third party, e.g., the League of Women Voters.

If your broadcasts don't meet these conditions, you may be required to provide air time for *all* the other legally qualified candidates. This may cause you little consternation in a general election for city council with only a Republican and a Democrat on the ballot. But what about the gubernatorial election with a Republican, a Democrat, a Libertarian, a Socialist Worker, and 15 other "legally qualified" candidates?

What's more, when you provide the air time, you cannot edit or censor the candidate except for obscenity (although you *can* restrict the length of the broadcast if it unreasonably disrupts the station's daily programming). Thus, even if the proposed broadcast contains libelous statements, you cannot reject the broadcast, although you would be exempt from liability under state libel and slander laws.

The equal opportunities rule extends beyond the candidates themselves through something called the "Zapple Doctrine." It requires a broadcast station to extend equal opportunities to the supporters of political candidates. A station that affords air time to supporters or representatives of one candidate during a campaign period must afford comparable time to the supporters or representatives of opponents. Again, bona fide news programs are exempt.

The personal attack rule. A station is subject to this rule if, during a broadcast presentation of views on a controversial issue of public importance, someone attacks the "honesty, character, integrity, or similar personal qualities of an identified person or group." Station editorials are subject to this rule, but legitimate

news broadcasts are exempt.* If an attack covered by the rule occurs, the station must take the following actions within one week:

- Notify the person or group attacked of the date, time, and title of the program on which the attack was made.
- Send the person "attacked" a script or tape of the attack, or an accurate summary if either is available.
- Offer a "reasonable opportunity" to answer the attack on the air. (The station does not have to allow the attacked individual on the air to respond as long as it reads his response.)

Station editorializing. The FCC defines an "editorial" as comments reflecting the viewpoints of the *licensee* of the station. A station editorial can be made by the station manager or any other employee permitted by the licensee to speak for the station. A statement may be an editorial even if it is not labeled as such. For example, if the station manager endorsed a referendum issue on the air, this would constitute a station editorial.

Public radio stations are prohibited by statute (47 U.S.C. 399) from supporting or opposing political candidates but are allowed to editorialize about issues. Commercial stations, which are allowed to support and oppose candidates, come under the FCC's political editorializing rule. Thus if a commercial station has endorsed a candidate in an editorial, the station is required to provide notification of date and time of the broadcast, provide a tape or transcript, and offer reply time to other legally qualified candidates.

To avoid triggering the equal opportunities rule, the commercial broadcaster may comply with the rule by offering either the candidate *or* the candidate's representative the opportunity to respond to the editorial. The station must notify the candidate within 24 hours of the editorial, unless the editorial is broadcast less than 72 hours before the election. In this case, the notification must be sent out sufficiently in advance of the broadcast of the editorial to allow the candidates or their representatives to respond before Election Day.

The Fairness Doctrine

Remember the fairness doctrine? The fairness doctrine required broadcasters to ensure the balanced presentation of opposing viewpoints on issues of public importance. In 1987, the FCC determined that the fairness doctrine could be unconstitutional and was contrary to the public interest, and abolished

*The personal attack rule also does not apply to attacks made by candidates or their campaign associates on other candidates, nor to attacks on anyone else made during a candidate's "use" of a station's facilities as part of the equal opportunities rule.

it. This controversial action was upheld in the courts, but Congress has considered legislation to resurrect the fairness doctrine each year since the FCC abolished it. None of these Congressional efforts has been successful thus far, but there is strong sentiment for the fairness doctrine from the Democratic leadership in Congress.

Obscenity and Indecency

Radio stations that broadcast obscene or indecent material are subject to fines and license revocation. In extreme cases, the FCC can refer the case to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution. Obscenity and indecency are difficult areas because the stakes are high, but the standards for determining whether a broadcast is obscene or indecent are subjective and not altogether clear.

Material is obscene if a reasonable person applying contemporary community standards would find that the material appeals to "prurient interests" by describing sexual conduct in a "patently offensive manner," and if the material lacks any serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. At the risk of oversimplifying, obscenity is truly hardcore pornographic material without any redeeming social or scientific value. Material held to be obscene is prohibited from the airwaves altogether.

By contrast, it is legal to broadcast indecent material—but only during certain hours. The FCC defines indecency material as "language or material that describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the medium, sexual or excretory functions." The determination of whether material is indecent depends upon the circumstances of each case. The FCC considers not only the material itself, but the context in which it is broadcast. The FCC would be unlikely to deem indecent a reading of some of James Joyce's more ribald passages during a radio program devoted to literary discussion. But it would be more likely to rule the other way about a morning talk show routine in which the announcers repeatedly use double entendre and innuendo to refer to various types of oral sex.

Most radio journalists have few occasions to be concerned about obscenity and indecency. News or documentary programming typically provides a sufficient context to eliminate concerns about running afoul of prohibitions against obscenity and indecency. But if you are in doubt, be sure to consult your editors, attorneys, and station manager. Obscenity and indecency are determined by reference to prevailing community standards, so it never hurts to get a number of people to assist you in dealing with a questionable story.

Also, note that in March 1992 the U.S. Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling that the FCC's 24-hour ban on indecent programming was unconstitutional. As a result, the FCC plans to develop new standards for determining

when children are not likely to be in the listening audience. During these “safe harbor” time periods, broadcasters will be able to air indecent programming legally. The current safe harbor period is 8 P.M. until 6 A.M., although most broadcasters delay questionable material until 10 P.M.

NPR’s policy is to avoid gratuitous use of offensive language. When such language is used, it is to preserve the meaning and journalistic integrity of the report. This policy goes beyond the question of whether language is legally obscene or indecent. Policy and procedures regarding the journalistic decision to allow such offensive material on the air are set out in the section on objectionable language in Part II of this Stylebook.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Buying Equipment

There are many different sources for the equipment described in Chapter 11, “Field Recording: Equipment.” Much of it is available through your local stereo shop or music-and-sound emporium. Prices range from list price down to 50 percent off list, depending on where you buy. Discount stores, however, are not necessarily the best places to shop. If you value good advice, the availability of a service department, or a better selection of equipment, consider spending a bit more money and getting a lot more in return.

Many mail-order establishments sell cassette and DAT recorders, microphones, accessories, and tapes at discount prices. Look for their ads in the classified sections of audio magazines.* With a bit of detective work and bargaining skill, though, you may be able to do as well in your local area.

Cassette Recorders

Top honors for portable cassette recorders go to Japanese manufacturers. Sony, Marantz, and Aiwa have the most popular models among reporters in the field. Sony’s stalwarts are the TCD5 Pro II, a deluxe, stereo machine, and the TCD5M, a less expensive model with ¼-inch mike inputs instead of XLR jacks. Sony’s WM-D6 “Pro Walkman” is a favorite of reporters who value light weight and small size.

Marantz’s PMD-222 is, at this writing, the only mass-marketed mono cassette deck with an XLR input jack. It’s more suitable for reporter uses—from phone feeding to tape logging—than the stereo Sony machines.

*It used to be that you could save the cost of sales tax when you ordered something from out of state by mail, but that’s not always the case now. Many states are enforcing what are called “use taxes” on out-of-state purchases.

Cassette recorder models used in broadcast reporting aren't updated as often as other consumer electronics, but check with your dealer for the latest information on current models.

DAT Recorders

The turnover of models has been faster for DAT, befitting the latest technology. Panasonic's SV-255 and Sony's TCD-D10 Pro were the first stalwarts, but at this writing, smaller machines are coming into the market from Aiwa, Denon, and several other manufacturers, all of them potentially useful for field recording. *None* of these DAT decks does a very good job of feeding a phone line without an accessory amplifier, so if your work involves filing by phone, consider using analog cassette decks instead of DAT.

Microphones

Broadcasters' favorites in the microphone category have not changed much over the years. Omnidirectional mikes like Electro-Voice's 635A and RE50 and Shure's SM63 get a lot of use; the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) issues its reporters AKG D130 omnis. NPR reporters use Beyer's M58 at present.

One of the few recent advances in basic microphone technology is the use of neodymium magnets, which offer stronger electrical output than iron-core magnets. Shure's VP 64 is the first hand-held omni mike to take advantage of this.

Finding a cardioid mike that works well when hand-held is a tough job. Many popular broadcast studio mikes, such as the Sennheiser MD421, the Electro-Voice RE20, and the Shure SM7, are awkward for hand-held use; check out the Electro-Voice RE15, RE16, or RE18, or the Shure SM57 or SM58 instead.

Many manufacturers, lured by the market for highly directional mikes that can be attached to video cameras, have brought out "short shotgun" mikes that can be hand-held. Low-cut filtering in the mikes reduces handling noise, and you can cut it further by using a pistol-grip isolation mount to hold the mike.

Accessories

Most of the major items listed above are widely available. But some accessories are harder to locate: the special mike cables with XLR and phone or mini plugs, telephone interface boxes, and specialized clamps for attaching mikes to podiums or stands, to name a few. If you can't find a broadcast supply dealer in your area, try Audio Services Corporation (800-228-4429) on the West Coast, Full Compass Systems (800-356-5844) in the Midwest, or Bradley Broadcast Sales (800-732-7665) on the East Coast. You also can find suppliers by checking ads in *Broadcast Engineering*, *Radio World*, or *Broadcasting Magazine*.

Appendix B

Assessing the Studio: A Checklist

1. *Number and Type of Sources Available:* Reel-to-reel tape machines, cart machines and erased carts, cassette machines, mike inputs, phone patches, turntables, compact disc players, DAT machines?
2. *Quality and Format of Mastering Recorders:* Full track, two-track, four-track, multi-track, DAT, other? Machines and heads clean and up to spec? Machines biased for your tape stock?
3. *Quality of Playback Sources:* Cart noise, turntable rumble, sampling rate match, wow and flutter, hiss, hum?
4. *Operation of Equipment:* Remote controls for tape and cart machines, turntables, CDs, DAT?
5. *Special Console Functions:* Auxiliary mix ability, mix-minus ability, equalization, "solo" function, patch points, pan pot, phantom power, metering, cue positions, talkback?
6. *Outboard Equipment Available:* Reverberation, delay units, compressors and limiters, filters, equalizers? Clocks, tape timers and counters?
7. *Unity Gain Set-Up:* Board master pot(s) and recorder input/output calibration (system design-centering)?
8. *Fader Action:* Taper-type? Smooth, noise-free operation? Track uniformity?
9. *"Hotpot" Ability on Playback Sources:* Can machines be started with the pot open without hearing "clicks" or "thumps"?
10. *Quality of Monitoring Sources:* Secondary monitors available? Mono-stereo switching?
11. *Quality of Studio and Control Room Acoustics?*

Appendix C

Meters

Audio equipment has a wide variety of meters. Some use a moving needle to show audio levels; others use light-emitting diodes (LEDs), liquid-crystal displays, or fluorescent-light segments in a bar graph. What do meters tell you? It depends on which type you're looking at, and the nature of the audio driving it.

"VU" Meters

The standard "VU" meter used by broadcasters to measure audio levels is actually a holdover from the past. In the early days of broadcasting, audio signals didn't extend into the high frequencies (not much beyond 5 kHz), and all equipment in the audio path used tubes. Today, we have wide-bandwidth audio systems (20 Hz to 20 kHz) and mostly solid-state or transistorized audio chains.

The slow "average-responding" VU meter was adequate in the past because the small audio bandwidth ignored any very fast, high-frequency "transient" sounds. Moreover, because the audio signal was passing through tubes, distortion increased gradually as the audio level increased, so the "averaging" VU meter display was accurate enough to avoid it. Transistors, on the other hand, keep distortion very low and *constant* as the level increases to a certain point. But when that level is exceeded, there is *extreme* and sudden distortion ("clipping") in most cases. So in today's wide-bandwidth, transistorized audio systems, a more accurate ("absolute" rather than "averaging") meter to display levels is better.

An additional concern is the difference between audio levels as displayed by a meter (*any* meter), and the audio's "perceived loudness"—that is, how loud it sounds to the human ear. Although the VU meter is designed to visually display audio levels in a way that is analogous to perceived loudness, it really doesn't do that; the meter shows when the operational parameters of an electrical circuit or

system are being exceeded, not how loud or soft something *sounds*. The problem with the VU meter is that it doesn't show very *exact* information about the *electrical* levels, either!

The Peak Reading Meter

Instead of measuring a short-term average of audio levels as the VU meter does, the peak reading meter reads the absolute maximum, instantaneous, peak levels of audio.

The peak meter does not really do the job as far as perceived loudness is concerned, either, but it does display with greater accuracy the *audio* levels it measures. Because high-frequency transients and wide-bandwidth signals are desirable and feasible elements of today's audio—and because fairly exact distortion tolerances must be observed—a peak meter would seem to be the obvious choice over a VU meter.

Why, then, the proliferation and longevity of the VU meter? One answer is that the VU meter has been standardized throughout the international audio world; the peak meter has not (at least not in the United States). The confusing variety of peak meter types can be disconcerting to anyone used to the good old VU.

The "PPM"

In Britain and parts of Europe, one type of peak meter has been established as the standard, and it is used by the BBC and others. It is called the Peak Programme Meter, or "PPM," and works very nicely as a peak reading meter, with some limitations. Visually, its pointer rises somewhat faster than the VU meter, and falls much more slowly, so it does take some getting used to for someone familiar with the response of VU meters to audio signals. The PPM is a much more accurate absolute audio measurement device, designed to convey maximum audio levels to the human *eye*; it does not attempt to relate them to the ear at all.

The PPM is beginning to be accepted in the United States, and it is probably the only meter other than the VU found here to any great extent, but there are still far fewer PPM than VU meters. However, the fact that the PPM is a *standard* meter is helping dissolve one reason the VU is preferred. As the PPM becomes more accepted in the United States, perhaps it will push aside the VU and provide a more accurate standard meter.

One further note on the PPM standard: Although the meter's operation is standardized, its calibration and meter face notations are not. The meter shown in figure C.1 is the EBU-A scale meter, which is perhaps the easiest to get used to for those familiar with VU meters. If you set it up according to manufacturer's

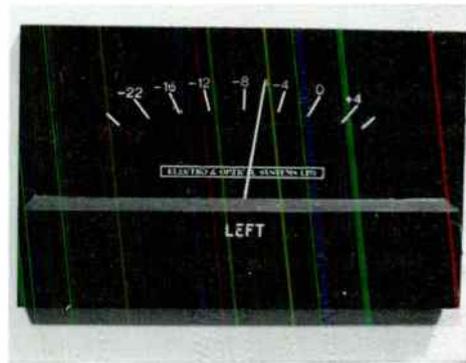


Figure C.1. The Peak Programme Meter (PPM), with EBU-A scale.

instructions, you can observe levels much as you would with a VU meter, so that the pointer does not go above "0." Once you adjust to the timing response of the meter, it's smooth sailing.

Non-Mechanical Meters

Advances in fluorescent and liquid-crystal displays and their associated circuitry have made possible meters with no moving parts, which can respond instantly to audio signals and don't suffer from mechanical inertia. But because people are used to working with mechanical-needle meters that *do* have lag time, many of the new displays are designed to offer either "VU" or "peak reading" characteristics. Some of them also offer separate "overload" indicators or peak memories with numerical readouts that retain the highest peak values.

One manufacturer, Dorrrough, markets an add-on meter that displays both peak and average levels (see Figure C.2). An arc of LEDs is arranged like the curve of a VU meter face; audio signals cause the LEDs to light up starting at the left and moving to the right for louder signals. A single LED indicates the peak audio levels, while at the same time a solid band of LED shows the average levels weighted to adjust for perceived loudness. The relatively high cost of this metering system has limited its penetration of the general meter market.

Metering for Digital Equipment

VU and peak-reading meters for analog equipment both set the "0" reference to leave a little "headroom" above "0"—that is, the needle can go a little bit above "0" before reaching the point of distortion. In part, this is because different pieces of gear offer varying amounts of headroom, and because the relationship

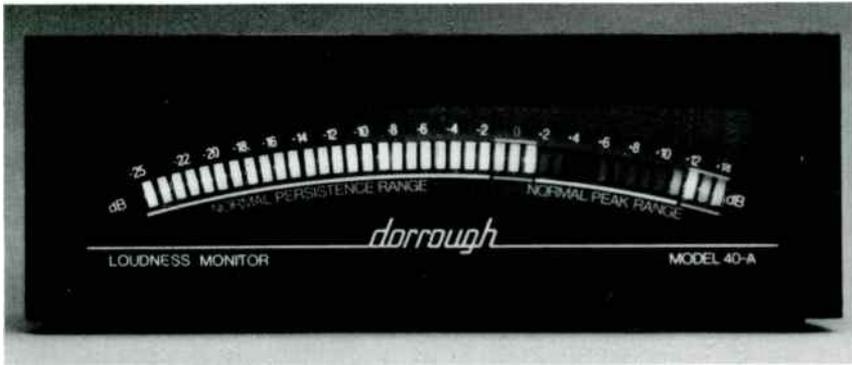


Figure C.2. The Dorrough Meter.

between actual electrical levels and meter movement varies with meter mechanics and the type of program material being metered.

Digital recording offers a much more black-and-white decision process for metering: "0" on a digital meter is the *highest* signal a digital recorder can record. Any signal stronger than digital "0" will be distorted significantly; the digital process cannot "describe" that signal because it has run out of 1's and 0's. (See Chapter 15, "Emerging Technologies and Techniques," for more information on digital audio.)

The trick with digital recording, then, is to keep the highest audio peaks as close to "0" as possible *without* going past "0." In practice, most manufacturers recommend that a test tone showing at "0" on a VU meter be adjusted to show -15 to -20 dB on a digital recorder's meter. This leaves 15 to 20 dB of headroom above the program operating level.

Appendix D

Tips on Recording from the Telephone

For news and information programming, audio from the telephone is a staple. Even in these days of satellite transmission, fiber optics, and digital technology, the telephone remains the most common conduit for on-location sound (actuality) that must hit the air quickly. And despite the fact that improvements in audio technology have made telephone audio even more of an “earsore,” a phone feed often is the only way to get something newsworthy from a remote location on the air in a timely manner. And it’s likely to remain so for some time to come.

Programmatic Concerns

Your first approach should be to keep the use of “phoners” to a bare minimum. Don’t use a phone feed for anything other than a breaking story, and keep it as *short* as possible. Feature pieces or other non-dated productions should never use phone-quality audio. (Below are some ways to avoid the use of phoners entirely for distant interviews.)

Interfacing

When you record phone audio, be sure to use the proper equipment. Recording *from* the phone in the studio is more difficult than feeding *into* the phone from the field.

One simple device for recording from the studio phone is the **voice coupler**. This small box is permanently wired into a phone or line and provides a quarter-inch phone jack *output* for feeding a line-level signal to a console or recorder input. When using a coupler, it is most convenient to have the telephone instrument on-line equipped with a push-to-talk switch on its receiver. This is because the telephone receiver has to be "off the hook" while the feed is coming in, and the push-to-talk switch turns off the receiver's mouthpiece microphone when it is not depressed, thus ensuring that studio noise and conversation will not be included in the recording. (The coupler also allows feeding a line-level signal *into* the phone line as well, in lieu of "clipping on" to the receiver.)

For professional-quality phone feeds, *two-way* phone recordings, phone interviews, or broadcasts, you need a much more complex arrangement that usually involves a variation on the "speaker phone" or "telephone hybrid." This is beyond the scope of this book.

Improving Phone Audio Quality

Once the phone has been properly interfaced with a line-level input on a console or similar device, some amount of audio processing is usually in order. This can be done as the phone feed is being recorded, or the feed can be recorded "flat" (without processing) and then processed during subsequent production or dubbing. The audio processing that is useful for phoners can be divided into three steps: filtering, equalization, and compression.

Filtering. The first step, filtering, should use a device with a very steep "shelving"-type high frequency roll-off (a "low-pass filter"). This should be set to roll off at three to four kHz (but adjusted by *ear* to each phone feed). There is little or no audio above this frequency on a standard phone line, but there is *noise*. The longer the distance of the call, the more noise there will be on the line, generally. The filter's roll-off point should be adjusted relative to the amount of noise on the line. The trade-off to removing much of the noise is loss of high-frequency audio (i.e., intelligibility), so not all the noise can be filtered out. Your ear will determine the exact adjustment for the filter on that particular line, balancing the amount of noise removed to the amount of intelligibility lost. It is better to err on the side of intelligibility here, meaning that a little noise left in is preferable to a quiet but "dull" phone voice, which is more difficult to understand.

On some phone calls, or with some phone interfacing devices, low-frequency noise ("hum") is a problem. This can generally be removed without further audio quality degradation by the use of a "shelving"-type low-frequency roll-off ("high-pass filter"), set to around 150 Hz. So called "notch-filters" can also be used to remove this hum or any other discrete tones found on phone lines. A good device of this kind is the UREI 565 filter set.

Equalization. The next step is equalizing the phone line to increase intelligibility. Using an equalizer (see Appendix E) to reshape the frequency response of the phone line within its audio bandwidth can result in marked improvements in intelligibility. The equalizer should be patched into the audio chain *following* the filter(s). (Many processing devices offer high-pass and low-pass filters *plus* equalization together in a single, multi-stage unit.)

Although equalizer settings will be different for every phone line, the following basic curve is usually helpful, with the sections of the curve listed in decreasing order of importance.

1. 6 dB CUT at 400 Hz, wide bandwidth
2. 3 dB BOOST at 2.5 kHz, narrow bandwidth
3. 3 dB BOOST at 200 Hz, narrow bandwidth
4. 2 dB CUT at 800 Hz, moderate bandwidth

Basically, what this equalization curve does is decrease the energy in the middle of the phone line's bandwidth and increase the energy on both ends, in an attempt to flatten out the frequency response. The typical phone line's excess of energy in the 400 Hz region has a particularly negative effect on intelligibility. Reducing 400 Hz region energy alone will improve almost any phone line's sound.

Compression. Because of the reduction in energy caused by equalization, the phone line's intelligibility is improved, but its overall *volume* or loudness is reduced. For this reason, a moderate amount of *compression* after equalization is recommended. This will restore or even enhance the loudness of the phone line, which further improves its listenability, beyond the intelligibility increase from equalization. Compression can also serve as a protection device by helping to catch any excessive audio peaks that the phone line signal may have. (These peaks may even have been exaggerated by the equalization.)

More importantly, when the phone audio is going to be mixed with other full-fidelity audio (i.e., a phone interview, where the interviewer is in the studio and the guest is on the phone), compression of just the *phone* audio can help increase its apparent loudness relative to the studio voice. Without such compression, proper loudness-matching of the elements to the ear will result in widely divergent VU meter readings between the studio and phone audio. (Typically, an uncompressed phoner hitting 0 VU will match the loudness of a close-miked studio voice reading around -10 VU.) This can result in difficulties when matching *that* studio-voice recording to other studio-voice-only recordings in the same program, in which the studio voice is generally recorded at a much higher VU level. It is also an inefficient use of the dynamic range available on the tape, resulting in an *overall* noisier ("hissier") recording.

One drawback to compression is that while the phone audio's apparent loudness is increased, so too is any background noise on the phone line. In many

cases, this noise level is rather high to begin with, and compression just makes it worse. Therefore, as with any audio processing tool, use it with moderation.

Dynamic Noise Filtering

Another effective processing device for phone improvement is the Dynamic Noise Filter or "DNF," manufactured by dbx, Symetrix, Audio and Design Recording, and others. This device serves to filter out noise between the words of the voice on the phone, and can often clean up a noisy line without much negative effect on the desired audio. Some DNF units are easy to operate, and other, more flexible designs are quite complex. Some are designed specifically for telephone audio. Beware of using a DNF on digitally processed phone lines (such as the ITT/ROLM system and others), or other extremely noisy, satellite-fed long distance lines. In these cases, the "gating" (opening and closing around the words) effect of the DNF may make the noise more distracting by its "coming and going" with the words than if it were just there at a constant level all the time. In many standard phoner situations, however, a good, simple DNF can be a useful and expedient tool for improving phone audio.

Additional Enhancement

Some people have experimented with phoners played back through so-called **aural exciters**, with some favorable results. These devices are patented processors intended to enhance the realism or richness of high-fidelity recordings, but seem to have some ability to improve the intelligibility and listenability of phoners, without a trade-off in excessive noise increase. These devices are manufactured by Aphex, EXR, and others, and are expensive. They must be used with moderation, but often they can help to put the "edge" back in otherwise dull-sounding phone audio.

The Tape-Sync

A technique that can eliminate the phone sound entirely from an interview done by phone is one called the **tape-sync** or **phone-sync** (also called a "double-ender" or a "simul-rec"). It requires more production time, and is therefore generally inappropriate for breaking news stories, but can be helpful in feature-type stories or other highly produced pieces, where putting phone-quality audio on the air is especially inappropriate.

The process requires a stereo console and two-track machine at the studio end, and any good recording equipment at the remote end. At the studio, assign the studio voice *only* to the *left* channel console output and record it *only* on the left track of the tape. Assign the phoner output *only* to the *right* channel console

output and record it only on the right track of the tape. (It is helpful if the interviewer in the studio can hear a mono sum of both tracks in the headphones.)

Meanwhile, on the remote end, the guest merely conducts a normal phone conversation with the interviewer, speaking into and listening from the telephone receiver. However, someone at that location simultaneously makes a high-fidelity recording of the guest's end of the conversation by placing a microphone near the guest's mouth and rolling tape. This requires no interface with the telephone. In fact, it is important that no phone audio "leak" into the microphone from the telephone receiver earpiece, so the technician should be sure to place the mike on the opposite side of the guest's mouth from the telephone receiver and instruct the guest to hold the phone tightly to the ear and not to move around a lot.

Once the interview is completed, the recording made at the remote location is sent to the studio. There, put the recording on one tape machine and cue it to the beginning of the interview. Cue the studio (two-track) recording to the same point, which you find by listening to the right (phoner) track. Then start both machines at the same time, mix their outputs, and make a new, combined recording on a third recorder. Use only the *left* (studio mike) track of the studio recording in this mix.

Use the right track purely as a reference, since it is the only common element (or "sync-track") between the two tapes. Monitor this track occasionally in "cue," to see how far apart in timing the two tapes are drifting (which they always do). Once the two tapes have drifted sufficiently far apart to affect the dynamics of the conversation, stop all recorders, leave fader levels untouched, rewind the two playback machines a few seconds, re-sync them, and re-start the recording. You can make a pick-up edit in the new mix recording later. Any audible leakage on either end will make sync-drift instantly apparent, whereas without leakage, a full half-second or so of drift is often tolerable before re-synching is required.

If you're careful, and there is not a lot of background noise on either tape, you can re-sync "on-the-fly," by stopping the machine that is getting ahead for a second or two, and then restarting it (while the person on the lagging machine is speaking, of course). Quick fades down and up around the stop usually help. By the way, varispeed (varying the tape speed) during the synching process is not recommended, because it usually creates more error than it fixes, except when a gross speed error exists on either the studio or (more likely) the remote-end recording.

You can add audio processing to either side of the conversation independently, in an attempt to match acoustics, or whatever. Differences in microphones can be readily apparent to the listener in such a situation, so make every effort to put the remote guest in a quiet, "dead" environment, and use identical or similar sounding mikes on both ends.

Should the remote tape be lost in transit, or not arrive in time, you can mix-down or "sum" the studio two-track recording with optional audio processing on just the phone track. Regular phone-interview recording is the result; nothing lost, except time.

Other Tips

Remember that in most cases, you need not be satisfied with the quality of a phone line on the first attempt. Redial the call if the first connection is noisy, distorted, or low-level. If the call is long distance, call the operator and say, "This is station KXYZ, and we have been unable to get a broadcast quality line to (phone number). Can you please help us get one?" Occasionally the words "Press Urgent" have some effect, especially when dealing with overseas operators. Of course, if IDDD (International Direct Distance Dialing) is not available to the desired location and a call must be ordered for later delivery, you take what you get.

When someone is speaking into a regular telephone receiver on a phone feed or interview (especially from an outdoor pay phone) and the sound is muddy or distorted, ask the person to rap the receiver mouthpiece sharply against a hard surface a few times. This serves to break up any coagulations of carbon granules in the microphone that humidity may have caused (much like a saltshaker in the summertime). Often this will improve the sound.

Appendix E

An Introduction to Audio Processors

Audio processing is defined as the artificial manipulation of audio. It can be divided into three areas: manipulation of *frequency response*, *dynamic range*, and *time*. In the first case, the processors are called **equalizers** or **filters**; in the second, **compressors**, **limiters**, **expanders**, and **gates**; and in the third, **reverberation** and **delay units** of various types. There are occasional hybrids between categories.

Equalizers and Filters

These devices are designed to change the frequency response of an audio signal, so the resulting sound has a different tonal balance after being filtered or equalized. A "dull"-sounding recording can be "brightened" by having its proportion of high frequencies increased or "boosted" by an equalizer. A "tinny"-sounding recording can be "mellowed" by having its high frequencies reduced or attenuated (or "cut") by a filter. An equalizer can usually boost or cut, and generally a filter can *only* cut frequencies.

The actual design and layout of an equalizer or filter varies from unit to unit, but equalizers are generally denoted as being of the **graphic** or **parametric** type, with the hybrid "paragraphic" showing up now and then (see Figures E.1 and E.2). Filters are generally referred to as **low-pass** (filters out *highs*), **high-pass** (filters out *lows*), or **band-pass/band-reject** (*filters around/filters out* a certain middle band of frequencies). An extreme version of the latter is the **notch filter**, which can severely attenuate a very narrow band of frequencies, and leave all other frequencies basically untouched (see Figure E.2).

Compressors, Limiters, Expanders, and Gates

Compressors, limiters, expanders, and gates are all devices that change the dynamic range of an audio signal. For example, if a voice recording has VU meter readings that vary from -10 VU to 0 VU, a **compressor** can make that same voice read from -10 VU to -5 VU, or from -5 VU to 0 VU, or whatever. In other words, it *reduces* the dynamic range of a sound, or makes the difference between its loudest and quietest extremes smaller. A **limiter** does the same thing, but in a somewhat more brutal fashion. It acts as a sort of brick wall that does not allow any audio level to exceed a certain point, generally for protection purposes to avoid overmodulation, distortion, or tape saturation. Compressors can be used in a more creative fashion to increase the perceived loudness of a sound without increasing its maximum audio level. In other words, the meter never goes into the red, but stays at a higher level *more often* due to compression, which to our ears sounds *louder*. The *average* level over a period of time can be increased without the absolute maximum level being made any higher (see Figure E.3).

Expanders and **gates** are much less useful devices that basically do the opposite of compressors and limiters, respectively. They *increase* rather than reduce dynamic range, and are rarely used in broadcast productions.

Reverberation and Delay

These devices are used almost exclusively for special effects or in music and drama recordings. They can simulate a different (larger) acoustic space than the one in which the sound was really recorded. They can also be used to create surreal or "spacey" kinds of sounds, and can be quite entertaining and convincing.

A tape recorder can also be used to create a similar (though less versatile) effect by feeding its output back into its input. While the tape machine is recording something from a mixing console, put its monitor switch in the *PB* or *TAPE* mode, and carefully bring the recorder's output up into the mix on the console, so that now the recorder is recording the original sound *plus* a bit of its own recording of it, with the latter delayed in time by the amount of time it takes for a point on the tape to travel from the record head to the playback head (see Figure 14.4). You can experiment with tape speed as well; 15 ips produces a faster tape echo than does 7-1/2 ips.

The Dynamic Sibilance Controller

This device, usually referred to as a **de-esser**, combines some functions of an equalizer and a compressor/limiter, in an attempt to reduce some of the excessive "S" sounds that some close-miked voices exhibit. They cut high frequencies in this sibilant region (roughly 5 to 8 kHz), but *only* when sibilance is present. In this way, non-sibilant audio in this same frequency area is not lost, but when a

quick burst of it comes along, the “de-esser” drops the level of this frequency band very quickly, and equally quickly restores things to normal once the sibilance has passed. Excessive use of this device can make a person seem to have a severe speech impediment, so exercise care in its use (see Figure E.2).

Summary

These devices are handy tools to help solve problems, but they are *never* a primary solution. There is almost always a better way to fix the problem, but when worse comes to worst, audio processing *may* help. Moderation is the key here; overuse of any of the devices is a common trap, so beware. When using any one of these devices, experiment to become intimately familiar with its operation and its effect on various sounds before you use it on serious production. This will improve your eventual results as well as save you much time in the heat of the production battle.

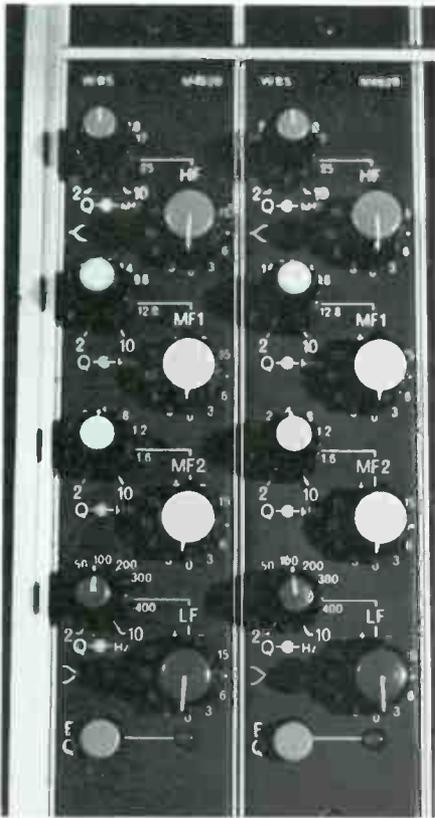


Figure E.1. A Parametric Equalizer (Ward-Beck Systems). This model is built into a mixing console.

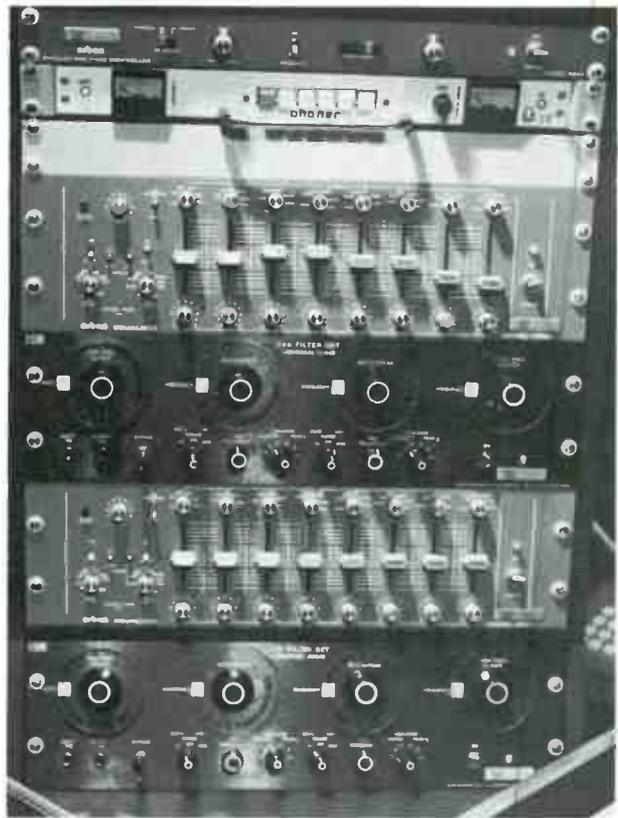


Figure E.2. A Rack of Audio Processing Equipment. From top to bottom: a "de-esser" or dynamic sibilance controller, a telephone interfacing device, a paragrahic equalizer, a notch filter, another paragrahic, and another notch filter. This system could be used to separate phone lines simultaneously, or one stereo tape.



Figure E.3. A pair of simple compressors.

Appendix F

Analog Tape Track Configurations

CASSETTE FORMAT

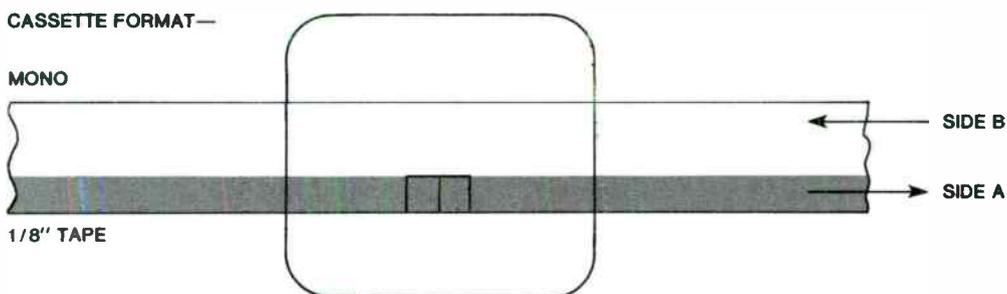


Figure F.1. Cassette format—Mono. Almost all mono cassette recorders use this bidirectional format, operating at 1-7/8 inches-per-second (ips). Cassette tape's width is 0.150 inches, or slightly more than 1/8 of an inch.

CASSETTE FORMAT

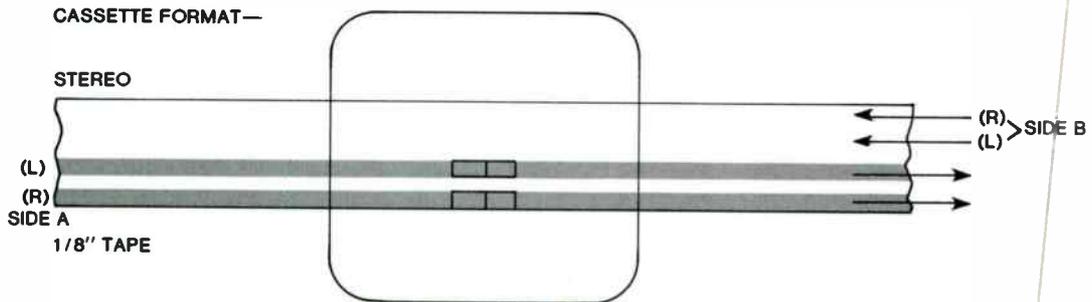


Figure F.2. Cassette format—Stereo. Stereo cassette recorders use two adjacent tracks in this bidirectional format. Playback of a stereo cassette on a mono cassette machine provides a compatible mono sum of the two stereo tracks at the playback head.

REEL-TO-REEL FORMAT

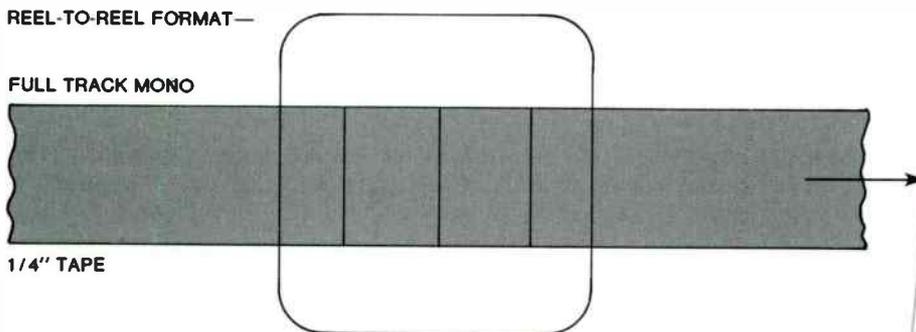


Figure F.3. Reel-to-Reel format (1/4 inch)—Full-Track Mono. This monaural format uses the entire width of the tape in one direction only. Standard tape speeds for all reel-to-reel formats can run anywhere from 15/16 ips to 30 ips, but professional broadcast (non-multitrack) recorders use 1/4 inch tape at 7½ ips and 15 ips.

REEL-TO-REEL FORMAT

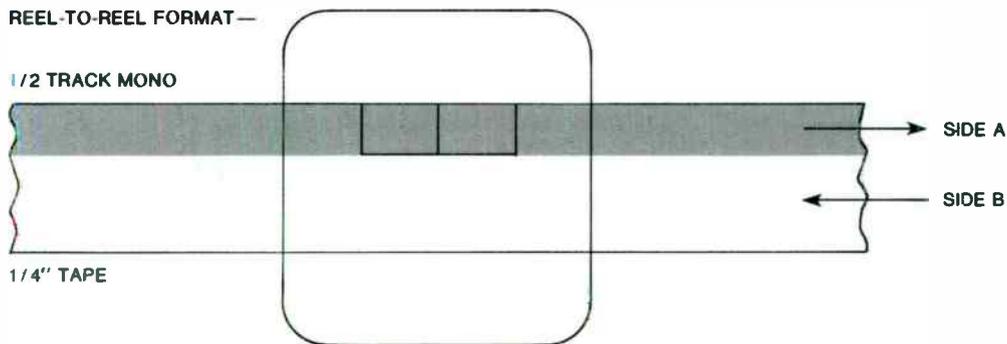


Figure F.4. Reel-to-Reel format—Half-Track Mono. This monaural format uses half of the width of the tape in a bidirectional format.

REEL-TO-REEL FORMAT

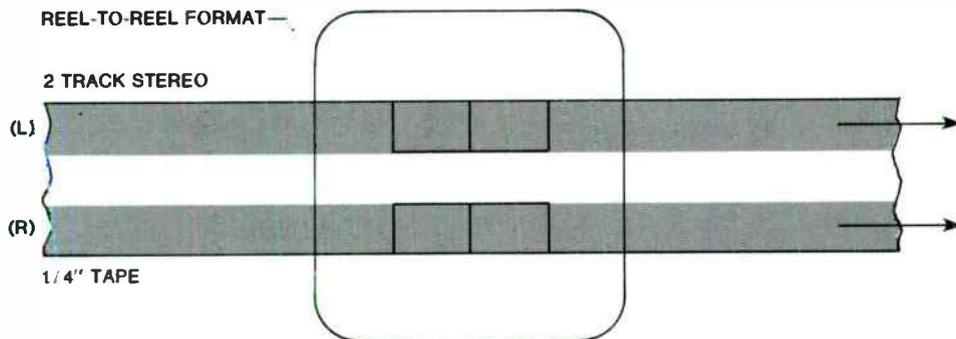


Figure F.5. Reel-to-Reel format—Two-Track Stereo. This is currently the most commonly found professional broadcasting format. This format splits the tape into two tracks with a rather wide "guard band" in between, for stereo recording, only in one direction. (Format shown is the U.S. two-track; European formats use wider tracks and a narrower guard band.) Also known as "half-track stereo." When this format is used for monaural recording, it is occasionally referred to as "twin-track mono." The upper track corresponds to the left channel input/output and the lower track corresponds to the right channel. (Half-track mono plays back compatibly on this format, but provides a left-channel-only output).

REEL-TO-REEL FORMAT

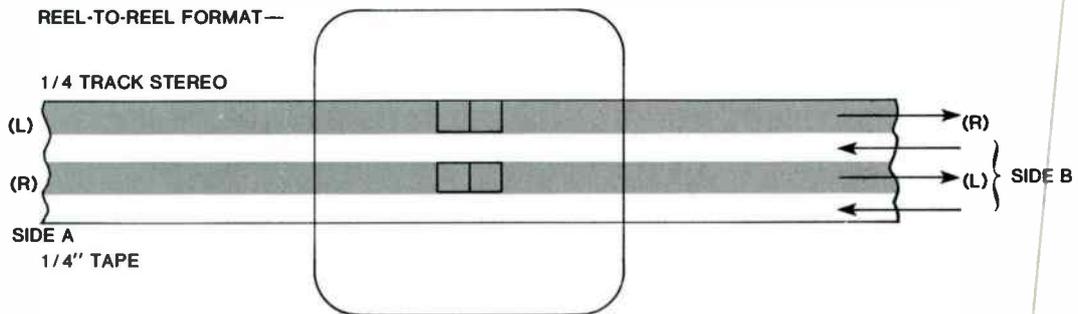


Figure F.6. Reel-to-Reel format—Quarter-Track Stereo. This format splits the tape into four bands with guard bands in between, for use as two pairs of stereo tracks in a bidirectional format. Unlike the cassette format, the two tracks of each stereo pair are not adjacent but alternate, such that the top track is the left channel, and the third track (from the top) is the right channel of the side playing forward. Tracks #2 and #4 are the right and left channel respectively of the "other side." Mono summing can only be done electrically after stereo playback.

CART FORMAT

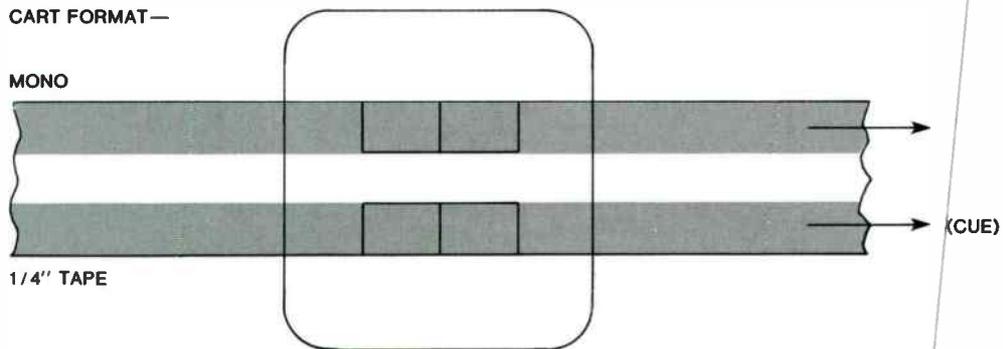


Figure F.7. Cart format—Mono. This two-track, one-direction format is used on all mono broadcast (continuous loop) cartridge machines at 7½ lps. The upper track is for audio, the lower track is for cue tones.

CART FORMAT

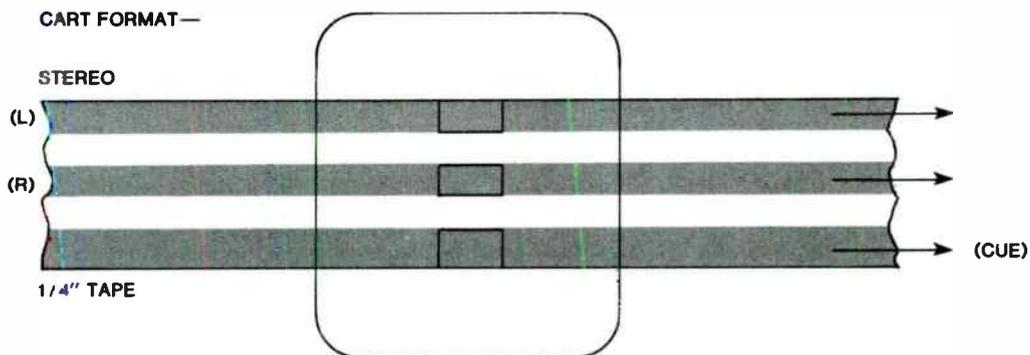


Figure F.8. Cart format—Stereo. This three-track, one-direction format is used on all stereo broadcast cartridge machines, usually 7½ ips. (Some cartridge machines have a 15 ips option.) The upper track is usually for left channel audio, the middle track for right channel audio, the bottom track for cue tones.

Appendix G

Sample Production Plan

Sample Technical Plan for Music Program

Technical Notes	Program Material	
Bring up music (guitar), hold for :35, then bring under for <i>Insert A</i> (Music peaks at +3 dB).	<i>Doc & Merle Watson</i> Cannonball Rag	2:00
Add applause cart (:10 secs) at end of music. Crossfade to ambience cart and roll Cut #2, MC Wallace. . . 0 level—should be -6 dB on MC.	<i>Insert A (Announcer)</i> in: "That's some pickin'. . . out: ". . . our MC onstage." <i>MC Wallace</i> in: "Welcome to the . . . out: ". . . Peg Leg Sam."	1:15 1:45
Backtime the applause for <i>Peg Leg Sam</i> :06 secs from the end of MC Wallace, and mix into master tape "A"	<i>Peg Leg Sam</i> (set begins w/applause)	:11
Level 0 dB, then jumps to +3 dB at 1:00 into <i>Talk</i> . Level normal at start of song "Greasy Greens."	<i>Talk and jokes</i> <i>Greasy Greens</i>	1:24 3:24
Equalization needed on "Greens". . . roll off bass, boost high end slightly	<i>Hard luck story</i>	4:00
Check ambience change at splice—occurs at 3:15 into <i>Hard luck story</i>	out: 16 secs applause; and "thank-you's"	
Fade applause after second "thank-you" (occurs :10 secs into applause) and roll <i>Insert B</i>	<i>Insert B (Announcer)</i> in: "At this 3rd annual. . ." out: ". . . Malvina Reynolds"	1:24

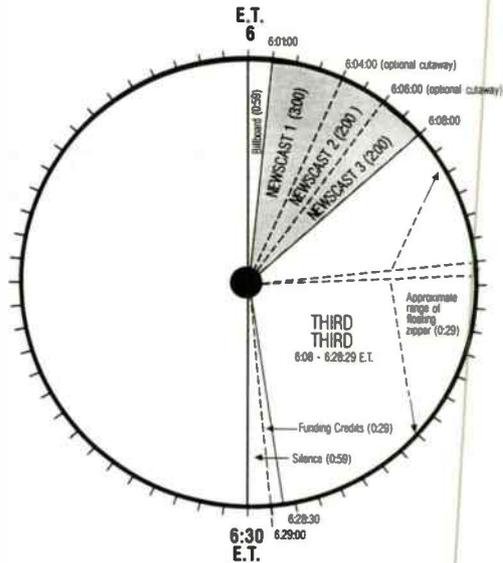
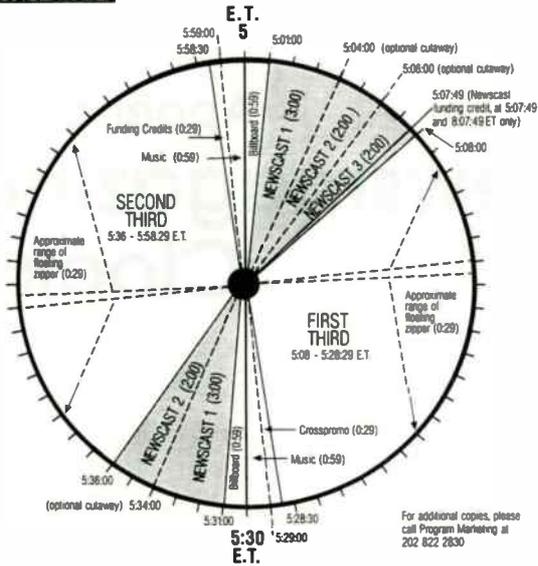
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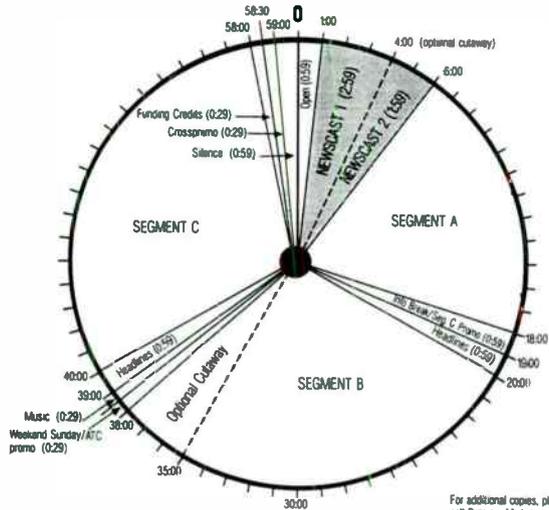
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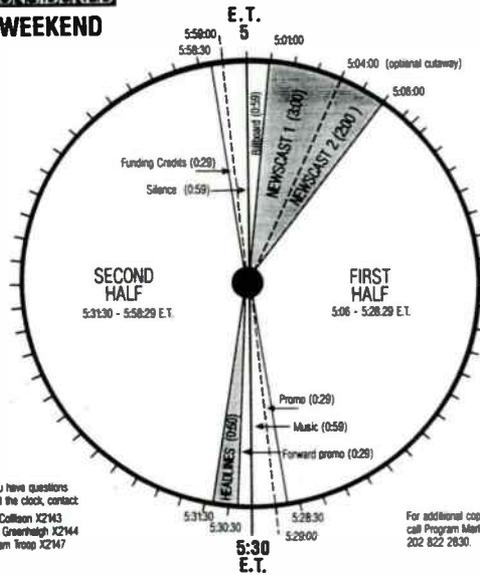
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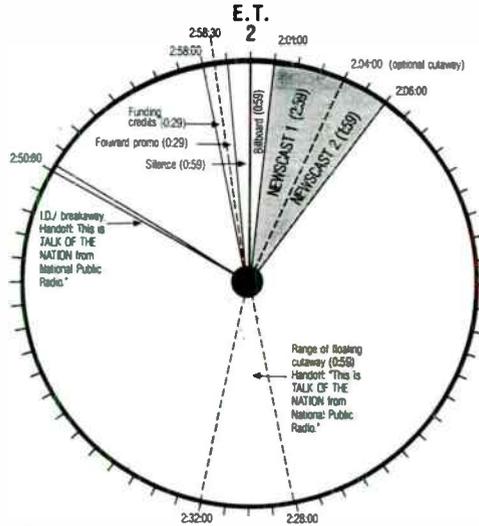
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Appendix I

Library Research

by Robert Robinson

Taking a look at what other people have written about your topic can be helpful. The **Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (RG)** is the basic low-tech index to magazine articles in the popular press (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *McCalls*, *Aviation Week*, *Science*, etc.). *Reader's Guide* is those thick green volumes available in just about every school and public library in the United States and Canada. But now in many libraries, *Reader's Guide* is available on a compact disc (CD) that you access with a personal computer (PC). You just type in what you are looking for (a name, a subject, etc.), and it tells you where to find stories related to that subject. Similar to *Reader's Guide*, and also available on CD, is **Magazine Index**, which indexes about 400 magazines back to the early 1960s. Another standard resource is **National Newspaper Index** which covers the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Wall Street Journal* back to the late 1970s.

If your library has a PC and CD drive, it probably has several other indexes or full-text products on CD that will be helpful to you. Many major newspapers and magazines are available on CD now, as they have been available for years on microfilm. Many encyclopedias and other large, expensive reference works are also available on CD and often sell for less than the printed versions. One advantage of the CD versions is that by typing in a few search terms, you can instantly find and display the full text of stories and print them on the printer attached to the PC. This '90s speed and ease makes library research far less painful and more productive than it used to be.

If you need to find information more specialized than that in the popular press, one of the **on-line databases** may have what you need. **Dialog** is a collection of 350 different databases, each with specialized medical, business, environmental, news, or scientific information. The advantage of on-line databases is the cost, as little as \$2 (1992 pricing) for instant acquisition of data. This depends on the amount of time needed on line to access the information. On-line rates are similar to telephone charges and are reduced during non-business hours. Many Dialog databases are available in **Knowledge Index**, a cheaper "after dark" service that is also available through Compuserve. Other on-line databases worth exploring are **NewsNet** (mostly newsletters and news wires), **VU/Text** and **DataTimes** (each has at least 50 full-text newspapers), **Nexis** (full text of hundreds of magazines, newspapers, news wires, and broadcasts, including NPR broadcasts), and **Burrelle's** (full text of television news and NPR broadcasts).

Libraries have many books that reporters find to be gold mines of information, but the following directories are particularly useful: *The Directory of Associations* can quickly tell you what groups have an interest in your topic and how to get in touch with them. *The Washington Information Directory* lists, by interest area, the federal government agencies, congressional committees and subcommittees, and interest groups in the Washington, D.C., area. People can be located and their biographical data verified with *Who's Who in America*, or *Current Biography*, or *Contemporary Authors*, or *Contemporary Musicians*, or *Contemporary Newsmakers*. *Thomas' Register* tells you which companies manufacture a certain product; *Standard and Poors* or *The National Directory* tells you where a company is located.

Robert Robinson has been library director in National Public Radio's news library since 1975. He began working at NPR in 1974 as the assistant program librarian in the tape library. Robinson has also worked as an editor on NPR's national desk and produced news stories for ALL THINGS CONSIDERED and MORNING EDITION. He received a B.A. in Psycholinguistics from Allegheny College in 1972, and an M.L.S. from the University of Maryland in 1973.

Glossary

- A-wire**—The main wire service news wire for newspapers.
- A/B reels**—Odd-numbered cuts are assembled onto the A reel, and even-numbered cuts on the B reel. When played back from two tape decks through a mixing console, the cuts alternate between reels for the proper sequencing, with short mixes possible between them.
- acoustical distance**—The perceived distance a sound source is from a microphone.
- actuality**—An interview or on-location voice recording in a news story. Also known as "cut," "act," or "sound bite."
- adapter cable**—Cable with different input and output plugs used to connect one audio source to another.
- advisories**—Notices on the news wire to alert subscribers about upcoming stories.
- alligator clips**—Spring-loaded clip connectors used to make temporary electrical connections.
- ambience**—In acoustical terms, the surrounding or pervading acoustic atmosphere, the sound environment.
- ambience beds or ambience tracks**—Sounds, recorded on location, that can be mixed under narration and actualities.
- analog audio**—An electrical sound system that responds to the continuous stream of pressure ridges in the air by producing a continuous electrical signal that varies in the same way the sound waves did. The result is an electrical "analogy" of the sound.
- anchor**—The primary on-mike or on-camera speaking talent during a news program. NPR uses the term "host" instead.
- and so**—The conclusion of a report. In broadcast journalism, it often is the element that the listener most remembers.
- angle**—The element that gets the listener to pay attention; a new approach to a topic. It is not an opinion or a point of view.
- assembly editing**—Dubbing audio elements from one or more sources onto a tape in sequence.
- assignment editor**—A person who assigns stories to reporters and manages the traffic flow of news stories.
- aural exciter**—A patented processor intended to enhance the realism or richness of high-fidelity recordings. It can also improve the intelligibility and listenability on phoners, without a trade-off of excessive noise increase.
- automatic level control (ALC)**—A gain system that monitors what's coming in from the microphone or other sound source and automatically adjusts itself up and down to ensure a safe average recording level. Also known as **automatic gain control (AGC)**.

- auxiliary (AUX)**—An additional line-level input usually found on home stereo equipment.
- axis**—A vertical line on a graph marking the center of a microphone's pickup pattern.
- backgrounders**—Stories that explain the events leading up to the main story.
- backing**—The side of plastic magnetic tape that provides structure for the tape. Edit marks are placed on the backing.
- backtiming**—The process of deciding where two sounds must occur together, and then measuring back in time to determine when each element must be started to arrive at that point simultaneously.
- balanced connection**—A three-wire audio connection in which two wires carry mirror images of an audio signal and one wire acts as a shield. This reduces noise in the line.
- band-pass/band-reject filters**—Filters that cut around or cut out a certain middle band of frequencies.
- beat**—The location or subject matter covered by a reporter.
- bed**—See *ambience bed*.
- bias tone**—A high frequency, inaudible tone added during recording to make the magnetic patterns flow more smoothly on the tape. This current must be adjusted for different types of tape.
- bidirectional or figure-eight**—Microphones that are sensitive to sound from the front and the back but not from the sides.
- binary**—A system of numbers using only 1's and 0's. (The traditional, decimal number system uses numbers from 0 through 9.)
- boundary microphones**—See *pressure zone microphones*.
- breaking news**—A hard news story that has just happened or is changing rapidly.
- broadcast wire**—A news wire written for radio and television broadcast copy.
- bulk eraser**—An electromagnet that erases tape without unspooling or removing the tape from its housing. Also known as a *degausser*.
- Burrelle's**—An on-line database that provides full text of television news and NPR broadcasts.
- cadence**—The rhythm and rate of speech. It must be preserved when editing.
- calibration (CAL)**—Adjusting console, tape recorders and any other equipment to a specified standard, so their measurements are equal.
- Cannon connector**—See *XLR*.
- capstan**—The rotating drive-shaft of a tape recorder.
- carbon microphone**—The low-quality microphone used in most telephones. Sound waves going into a carbon microphone cause the particles of carbon to jostle around and strike each other, modulating an electric current passing through them.
- cardioid**—A popular type of unidirectional microphone pickup pattern that takes its name from the Greek word for heart.
- cart or cartridge**—A continuous loop of quarter-inch tape contained in a plastic cartridge.
- cart deck or cartridge machine**—A tape deck that records and plays carts. The tape cycles in a continuous loop inside the cartridge. An inaudible cue tone is recorded on the tape during each recording, which allows the tape to cue itself.
- cassette**—A plastic housing containing two spools, a length of recording tape, and various rollers and guides

- that permit smooth motion of the tape during recording and playback.
- CBC style**—The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation system that structures a radio piece in three-element sections—sound, script, interview actuality.
- chromium dioxide**—A recording tape oxide often referred to as chrome type, because most tapes in this category are made with chromium dioxide (CrO₂) particles. Requires high bias and 70-microsecond equalization.
- clipping**—Extreme and sudden distortion of the audio signal.
- close-up**—A closely miked sound that, in audio terms, is analogous to a tightly framed picture in film or television.
- cold reading**—Reading copy aloud without rehearsal.
- color story**—A soft feature story that usually contains personality information about a prominent person.
- combo**—A studio where the producer or talent does the speaking and mixing.
- compact disc (CD)**—A plastic disc holding a digitally encoded recording that is read by a laser beam.
- compressor**—A device that reduces the dynamic range of a sound, or minimizes the difference between its loudest and quietest extremes.
- condenser microphone**—A microphone in which two metallic membranes (one of which is electrically charged) are suspended very close to each other. Sound waves striking one membrane cause it to move closer to or farther away from the second membrane. This movement creates a variation in electrical charge of the other membrane. This tiny electrical signal is then amplified in the microphone. Condenser mikes require a power source.
- copy editor**—An editor who deals mostly with a report after it has been written, to check for consistency, grammar, etc.
- crossfade**—Reducing the volume of one audio source while simultaneously increasing the volume of another.
- crossfade editing**—A computer editing function that provides a choice of transitions ranging from an abrupt cut to a variety of styles and lengths of crossfades.
- crystal**—A microphone that uses a piece of piezoelectric crystal, such as quartz, to transform sound waves into an audio signal.
- cue**—(n.) A feature that allows one source to be monitored while playing another. Or a setting on a tape machine that allows a tape to be monitored in fast forward to facilitate rapid location of a particular section of the tape.
- cuts**—Same as actualities.
- DataTimes**—An on-line database that provides full-text access to stories from at least 50 newspapers.
- daybook**—A listing of important governmental meetings and public events provided for journalists by the wire services.
- de-esser**—See **dynamic sibilance controller**.
- deadpot**—Same as **deadroll**.
- deadroll**—Starting a sound source at a specific time without hearing it in the mix, in order to have the sound end at a specific time.
- decibel (dB)**—A unit of measurement that describes the ratio of two sound or audio quantities. It can also be used to compare an electrical power level with a standard level of one milliwatt (dBm), to compare a volt-

- age with a standard of one volt (dBv), or to compare the sound pressure level of a measured sound with a standard silence level (dBspl).
- degausser**—See **bulk eraser**.
- delay**—The interval of time between a sound and the repetition of that sound.
- delay unit**—An electronic device that accepts and stores an audio signal, then sends it out again after a controllable amount of time has passed. Older analog units use a tape loop to create the delay, but modern delay units use digital technology.
- denatured alcohol**—A type of ethyl alcohol used to clean the heads of tape machines. It does not contain water.
- desk editors**—Radio editors who are comparable to section editors at newspapers. They are responsible for the news in a given geographical or topical area.
- desktop editing**—Using a computer workstation to assemble digital audio elements.
- Dialog**—An on-line collection of 350 different databases, each with specialized medical, business, environmental, or scientific information or news.
- digital audio**—A recording system that represents sound waves by sampling them and storing the sampled values in binary code.
- digital audio broadcasting (DAB)**—A transmission system that uses digital binary code to broadcast and receive radio signals.
- digital audio tape (DAT)**—A tape format using a rotary-head recording system, similar to that found in video recorders, to record CD-quality stereo sound on a DAT cassette.
- digital compact cassette (DCC)**—A stationary-head digital recorder that uses psychoacoustic coding to reduce a digital recording's data to fit 90 minutes of sound on a tape. It is able to play analog cassettes as well.
- digital signal processing (DSP)**—An electronic system that manipulates audio to change volume or tone, add spatial elements, alter pitch or running time, or make other changes.
- diphthongs**—Combinations of two vowels sounded in one syllable.
- dropouts**—Lost instants of recorded sound sometimes caused by an improper splice.
- dub**—To record a copy of an audio tape onto another tape.
- dynamic automation**—Computerized mixing that mimics the functions of a mixing board by allowing the operator to continuously vary adjustments of the volume of one or more elements in a mix while the computer memorizes the adjustments.
- dynamic microphone**—A microphone consisting of a metal diaphragm moving in the field of a magnet. The small movements caused by sound waves striking the diaphragm induce an electrical signal.
- dynamic noise filter (DNF)**—A device to filter out background noise on the phone. The amount of filtering increases as the volume of the sound decreases.
- dynamic range**—The distance between the quietest sound and loudest sound in a recording.
- dynamic range chart**—A conceptual diagram of the limitations in volume extremes inherent in an audio system. Too high a level causes distortion, too low a level causes the audio to be masked by system noise.
- dynamic sibilance controller**—A device for reducing some of the excessive

“S” sounds of some close-miked voices. It cuts high frequencies in this sibilant region (roughly 5–8 kHz), but only when sibilance is present. More commonly known as a **de-esser**.

earphones—See **headphones**.

edit—1. To review a story with an editor before recording it. 2. To physically or electronically cut tape elements.

edit block—A piece of machined metal with a specially designed channel for holding tape and angled slots to permit cutting the tape on a specific angle.

edit covering—Using ambient sound mixed under a voice montage to mask noticeable edits or ambience changes in the voice recordings.

edit mode—A tape machine function that disengages the take-up reel motor. Tape can be played and spilled onto the floor.

editor—A journalist, usually a supervisor, who makes assignments, briefs hosts, consults with reporters during the course of their reporting, or checks reports after they have been written for content, style, and accuracy—or all of the above.

electret condenser—Condenser mikes that have one permanently charged membrane.

entrance covering—To fade in an ambient sound bed before a voice to make the transition less abrupt.

EQ—See **equalizer**.

equalizer—A device designed to change, or **equalize**, the frequency response of an audio signal. The resulting sound has a different tonal balance. A “dull-sounding” recording can be “brightened” by having the proportion of high frequencies increased or “boosted” by an equalizer. Equalization

can be used to boost or cut a range of frequencies.

erase head—The head on the left side of the tape recorder that scrambles the magnetic orientation of oxide particles on tape, allowing them to be reorganized by the record head.

exit covering—Concealing the end of a sound effect by fading it out under a group of closely spaced words.

expander—A device that widens the dynamic range of a sound.

expert interview—An interview with someone who is knowledgeable about the issue at hand.

explanatory tape—Recorded tape in which a person tells the premise of the story, gives background information, or tells what the situation means.

eyewitness interview—An interview with someone who was present when an event occurred.

fade—To reduce gradually a sound source’s volume.

fader—A volume pot that controls the level of voltage in a circuit by moving a control up and down.

feature—A soft news story or sidebar that gives background information, description, personality profile, or takes an unusual approach to telling a story about an individual or topic.

feed hub—The hub on the left side of a reel-to-reel tape recorder where blank tape is placed for recording. Also known as **supply hub**.

feed spool—The spool on the left side of a cassette.

feedback—An output signal being channeled back into its input. Usually it creates a loud, piercing sound. When this is done at low amplitude on a three-head tape recorder, it can create an “echo” effect.

- to a low-Z input can result in distortion.
- in the mud**—Recording levels too low to make the sound audible over the noise floor.
- in the red**—Recording levels that exceed 0 VU. The recording is too loud and may be distorted.
- inches per second (ips)**—The speed reel-to-reel tape moves across the tape heads.
- inflection**—The changes in pitch and stress that occur within spoken words. It clarifies the meaning of the words.
- input**—The point where signals are fed into a tape recorder, console, or sound system.
- insert editing**—Allowing new audio to be rerecorded over an existing section of audio (sometimes called a punch-in). The existing audio is erased as the new material is inserted.
- interpersonal speaking distance**—Territorial space distance for conversations based on the familiarity of the speakers. This distance varies from culture to culture.
- jack**—A connector leading to the input or output of an audio source or patch bay.
- keeper reel**—Reel containing edited tape to be used in final production.
- kHz (kilohertz)**—One thousand hertz, or cycles, per second.
- Knowledge Index**—An on-line database containing many of Dialog's databases. It can be accessed only in the evening.
- lavalier microphones**—Small mikes that hang by a strap around the speaker's neck, or are clipped on at chest level. They can be either dynamic or condenser microphones. Also known as "lavs."
- laying up**—Taking many audio elements and transferring them onto open tracks on multitrack tape or a computer workstation. Each is placed in the appropriately timed location relative to the other elements.
- lead**—The opening sentence in a news story.
- lead-in**—The host's or newscaster's live introduction to a report, two-way, commentary, etc. Also called **host introduction**.
- leader tape**—Non-oxide plastic or paper tape used to visually identify sections of a reel of tape, such as the head, tail, or internal sections.
- level**—Volume or intensity of a sound or a signal.
- level-dropping or "attenuating" cable**—Allows a line-level source to be plugged into the mike input jack of a tape recorder.
- level matching**—Subjectively listening to the elements of a production to ensure that the apparent loudness of each element is similar.
- libel**—To knowingly, publicly write false statements about another person.
- light phoner**—An interview on a humorous or quirky topic that often is used to bring levity to a newsmagazine.
- limiter**—A device that does not allow an audio signal to exceed a certain level. Generally protects against overmodulation, distortion, or tape saturation.
- line**—(1) A short description of a report, two-way, commentary, etc. It is used by producers, editors, hosts—anyone who needs to get a quick understanding of what the story is about. Writing it helps reporters focus their

- report. (2) Another name for a **shot-gun microphone**. (3) See **line level**.
- line in**—An input jack of a tape recorder that receives a line level signal for recording.
- line input**—An input designed to receive line level signals.
- line level**—An audio power level greater than microphone level but less than speaker level. It is the standard for interconnecting most electronic audio equipment.
- line out**—The output jack of a tape recorder that feeds a signal at line, not mike, level.
- line up**—To adjust all of a studio's tape machines' meters so that a "0 VU" reading shows up on them whenever that same reading appears on the console meter.
- live**—In radio, a report is live when it is broadcast at the same time it is delivered by the reporter or program host.
- log**—(v.) To use a stopwatch or tape counter to keep running times or location references for taped material, making detailed notes on the content and quality of each segment of tape.
- long shot**—Placing the sound source beyond the normal pickup range of the microphone. The sound will seem "boomy" and fainter than close-miked sound.
- loop**—See **tape loop**.
- loudness**—The level of amplitude or intensity of a sound as subjectively perceived by the ear.
- low impedance (LO-Z)**—Mikes with resistance values in a range from 50 to 500 ohms.
- low-pass filter**—A filter that cuts out high frequencies and passes low frequencies.
- Magazine Index**—A publication that indexes about 400 magazines back to the early 1960s.
- manual level control**—Allows the operator to set the recording level manually while monitoring a built-in meter.
- masking**—When one sound is obscured by a simultaneous, louder sound close to the same pitch (frequency masking), or by a louder sound happening shortly before or after the first sound (temporal masking).
- medium shot**—Placing the sound source just out of the optimum pickup pattern of the microphone.
- metal**—Recording tape that requires a different bias and EQ from normal or chrome tapes, and higher-than-normal recording power. Uses particles of pure metal instead of oxides. Used in Type IV analog cassettes, DATs, and Hi-8 and S-VHS video cassettes.
- microphone level**—The lowest power level of all audio components. Mike level must be boosted by a preamp before it can be mixed with other elements.
- MIDI (musical instrument digital interface)**—Originally a protocol for controlling synthesizers and other digital musical instruments, its use has expanded to include control of audio recorders, mixers, and other digital devices.
- mil**—One thousandth of an inch.
- mini disc**—An optical disc-recording system that uses psychoacoustic coding to help fit up to 74 minutes of stereo digital audio on a 2½-inch disc.
- mix-minus**—Special output from a console designed to provide an audio feed to someone at a remote location. It contains everything in the

- mix except the speaker's voice, to avoid feedback or echo.
- mixer**—A portable console that can control the levels of several sound sources or microphones and combine the output into one signal that can be connected to the *AUX* or *LINE* input of a tape machine or cassette recorder.
- mixing**—Blending the relative volumes of two or more sound sources through a console or mixer.
- monaural (mono)**—A recording system with only one master channel, similar to listening with one ear.
- monitor**—A loudspeaker used for listening to the recording or playback of a sound.
- montage**—Layering a variety of short elements to create a single sound image.
- mult box**—A large box, with many output jacks, that receives the feed from a microphone. Each reporter can connect a tape recorder to one of the jacks on the box, and receive a signal from the microphone. (Sometimes called a splitter box or press box.)
- multipath interference**—Temporary loss of an FM radio signal caused when the radio picks up the signal from the radio station and also the reflection of the signal off of nearby buildings or hills.
- multitrack**—A tape recorder that is able to record more than two tracks at the same time. It enables the playback of several tracks while recording new tracks in a synchronized manner.
- National Newspaper Index**—An index that covers the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Wall Street Journal* back to the late 1970s.
- news analysis**—An explanation of events or issues that focuses on why they happened or what is at stake.
- newscast**—A short series of news stories read by one person (newscaster), highlighting the most important information of the hour.
- news conference**—An organized meeting with someone in the news where journalists can ask questions. Also called a "press conference."
- news judgment**—The journalistic process by which a determination is made about what is important and what is not—which stories will be covered, how they will be covered, and how they will be presented.
- newsmagazine**—A 30–120 minute news program usually featuring longer, prerecorded news stories introduced by a host.
- newsmaker or participant interview**—An interview with a participant in an event or an advocate of an issue.
- NewsNet**—An on-line database that provides full text of newsletters and news wires.
- news peg**—An event to which you can tie a news story.
- news spot**—A brief (usually no longer than 45-second) report that is part of a newscast.
- Nexis**—An on-line database that provides full text of hundreds of magazines, newspapers, news wires, and broadcasts, including NPR broadcasts.
- noise reduction**—A sound processing system such as Dolby or dbx, that reduces the hiss in audio recordings.
- notch filter**—A filter that can severely attenuate a very narrow band of frequencies and leave all other frequencies basically untouched.

- off-mike**—Recording a voice or sound too far away from—or off—the normal pick-up pattern of a microphone. The voice will sound distant and indistinct.
- off-tape monitoring**—A setting on a tape recorder that allows the operator to listen to the sound being recorded a fraction of a second after it is on tape.
- off the record**—Information revealed by a source that either cannot be used for a news story or cannot be attributed.
- ohm**—A measurement of resistance in direct-current (DC) circuits, or of impedance in audio or other alternating-current (AC) circuits. Often abbreviated as the Greek letter omega or as "Z."
- omnidirectional microphone**—A microphone sensitive to sound from all directions.
- on-line databases**—Reference indexes available through a computer and a telephone modem.
- on-mike**—Placing the sound source within the pickup pattern of the microphone.
- on the record**—Information that can be quoted and attributed in a news story.
- on the satellite**—A short hand term meaning that satellite transmission is involved. Another slang term for satellite is "the bird."
- open-reel audio tape recorder**—A tape recorder that openly moves the audio tape from a feed reel to a take-up reel. The tape is not enclosed in a cassette or cartridge.
- optimum pitch**—The best pitch for the normal speaking voice. It is usually about one-third of the way up from the lowest note to the highest note a person can sing.
- oscillator**—An electronic device that generates a pure tone at any frequency. The oscillator produces the electrical signal at a steady frequency and at a constant level. It is often used for calibrating audio inputs and outputs.
- oscillograph**—An electronic visual representation of a sound wave.
- outcue**—The last few words or sounds of an audio element or program.
- output**—1. The point on a console or component from which a signal is sent. 2. The outgoing signal being sent from one device to another.
- outtakes**—Sections of recorded tape not used in the final production.
- overlapping**—Mixing a longer piece in sections so that each new section begins with the same material that ended the previous section. The sections can then be spliced together, eliminating the repeated material.
- oxide**—The side of audio tape that faces the playback head. It is made of particles of magnetic metallic oxide.
- PA**—See public address.
- pack journalism**—A number of news reporters from different news organizations simultaneously covering the same story or beat. The term usually is a derogatory one because it implies that the reporters do not think or act as individuals.
- pancakes**—Reel-to-reel tapes wound onto hubs without flanges attached to the sides.
- parametric equalizer**—An equalizer that permits adjustment of several different parameters of the audio. For each frequency band of the equalizer there are adjustable controls for center frequency, bandwidth, and amount of boost or cut. Contrast with a graphic equalizer, which

- typically has controls only for boost or cut for each frequency band.
- patch bay**—A bank of jacks hard-wired to the inputs and outputs of audio equipment in a studio.
- pause**—A button or switch for momentary interruption of the tape motion during *RECORD* or *PLAY*.
- peak programme meter (PPM)**—An audio measurement device that indicates loudness peaks in the program material. It is designed to relate maximum audio levels to the human eye so they can be viewed.
- peak reading meter**—A meter that reads the absolute maximum instantaneous peak levels of audio.
- perceived loudness**—How loud a sound seems to the human ear.
- phase**—The time relationship between two or more sound waves or electrical currents. If they are exactly synchronous, they are said to be "in phase."
- phase cancellation**—When the time relationship between two or more sound waves or electrical currents is not synchronous, the amplitudes of the signals interfere with one another, lowering the volume of some frequencies and boosting others.
- phone-sync**—See *tape-sync*.
- phoner**—An interview conducted over the phone. It can be live or taped.
- pickup edit**—A place in a mix or track that allows the recording to be stopped and re-recorded with a small overlap. The two elements are then cut together to eliminate the overlap.
- pickup pattern**—The direction(s) in which a microphone is most sensitive to sound.
- pinch roller**—Rubber roller that pushes the tape against the capstan to drive the tape from the feed reel to the take-up reel.
- pitch**—The highness or lowness of a sound determined by its fundamental frequency of vibration. Sounds in the bass region are low in pitch, while those in the treble region are high-pitched.
- play**—To mechanically advance the tape recorder to listen to a recording.
- playback head**—The device on a tape recorder that senses the fluctuating magnetic patterns stored on a tape.
- playlist editing**—A computer audio editing system that places electronic markers at the beginning and end of audio sections, and then creates a list of which sections to play and in what order.
- plosives, also known as P-pops**—Bursts of air produced by consonants such as P, B, and T that cause distortion when the microphone is straight in front of the mouth.
- pot**—A rotary console volume control, short for potentiometer, a variable resistor. See *fader*.
- potentiometer**—A resistance device that controls the voltage in a circuit.
- PPM**—See *peak programme meter*.
- press packet**—Written background information about a person, issue, or group that is distributed by the person or organization.
- pressure zone microphones**—Microphones that typically are used on a flat surface such as a table, wall, or floor, and have a hemispherical pickup pattern with a very coherent sound for distant recordings. Also known as *boundary microphones* or *PZMs*.
- primary source**—Someone who has direct knowledge of an event, a decision, an issue, etc.
- production editor**—An editor who deals with the production, as opposed to

- the assignment, end of the reporting process.
- production script**—A script that has all the elements, outcues, and timing for a radio production.
- program editors**—Editors responsible for the overall content of a given program. They help decide what stories will be covered, how they will be covered, and what aspects of the stories should be included.
- psychoacoustic coding**—Digital audio processing that applies knowledge of the characteristics of human hearing to determine what sounds in an audio signal will be audible, then removes the inaudible ones. The resulting signal has much less data, so it takes only a small fraction of the storage space or broadcast spectrum that the original unprocessed signal would require.
- public address (PA)**—A sound amplification system usually consisting of a microphone, amplifier, and loudspeaker designed to reinforce a voice or other sounds for a large gathering.
- punch-in**—See **insert editing**.
- FZM**—See **pressure zone microphone**.
- quantize**—To quantify each value of a wave form as a discrete number. The values are compared to a step-ladder of discrete positions, and then rounded to the nearest step.
- quarter-inch phone connector**—Plugs and jacks used to connect audio equipment. They come in mono and stereo versions and are commonly used for headphone jacks and line-level audio connections.
- radio mike**—See **wireless mike**.
- radio time**—Compressed time. Translating real time to radio time necessarily compresses information through editing.
- random-access memory (RAM)**—A type of computer memory chip that can have data recorded into it and then read out in any order. Used in samplers and other digital audio recorders.
- raw tape**—The complete tape gathered for a story, before any editing or selection process.
- RCA phono connector**—A type of plug or jack most often used in home stereo equipment. It is only a mono connector, often used in color-coded pairs for stereo connections.
- Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (RG)**—The basic index of magazine articles in the popular press (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *McCalls*, *Aviation Week*, *Science*, etc.).
- record**—To mechanically advance the tape recorder to store electronic impulses as magnetic patterns on the oxide of the audio tape. Most recorders require that both *PLAY* and *RECORD* buttons be depressed simultaneously to engage this function.
- record head**—The second head of a tape recorder. It creates a fluctuating magnetic pattern in the oxide on audio tape to represent the audio information being recorded.
- record safety**—A switch that ensures that the record function on a machine cannot be accidentally engaged, causing erasure of the signals on the tape.
- recording ratio**—The relationship between the raw tape recorded and the length of the final story.
- reel-to-reel**—See **open reel**.
- regular condenser**—Mikes that require external power to charge the membrane and run the amplifier in the mike.

- reporter two-way**—An interview with a reporter who has covered an event or an issue.
- resolution**—The number of encoding steps on the stepladder of values in digital recording.
- reverberation**—A gradually diminishing series of sound reflections.
- reverse threading**—Threading the tape through the capstan and pinch roller so that when the PLAY button is depressed, the tape will play backward. Used for **backtiming**.
- review**—A setting on a tape machine that allows a tape to be heard while re-winding to facilitate rapid location of a particular section of the tape. Similar to *CUE*.
- ribbon microphone**—A sensitive microphone that has a ribbon diaphragm within a magnetic field.
- safe**—See **record safety**.
- sample**—To record a sound using digital equipment. Short-duration samples can be stored in a device called a "sampler," which may use random-access memory (RAM) storage rather than a tape or a disc.
- sampling rate**—The number of times each second that the analog-to-digital converter takes a measurement.
- shotgun**—A type of supercardioid microphone that picks up sound from a long distance.
- show editor**—The person with overall responsibility for the content of a news program.
- sibilance**—Excessively sharp whistling sounds produced while pronouncing "S," "SH," "CH," "Z," and other sibilant sounds.
- sidebars**—Reports that spin off from the main story and help explain it.
- slander**—To knowingly say false information about another that injures his or her reputation.
- snapshot automation**—Audio elements are placed in a computer, arranged sequentially, and assigned a series of points in time. For each point in time, a volume control setting can be specified for each audio element in the mix. The computer then "electronically mixes" the elements, gradually changing volume settings from one snapshot to the next or making immediate changes at each snapshot.
- social distance**—The distance from another person at which one feels comfortable conversing. It varies from culture to culture.
- soft pieces**—Reports that add color or human interest to the news.
- sound bed**—Recording of ambience or music played under a foreground sound.
- sound bite**—A very short actuality, often just a phrase.
- sound portraits**—A sidebar that gathers sound from a series of small events and weaves them with interviews, creating a sound impression of people, places, or things.
- sound tape**—The recorded ambience bed.
- source**—See **input**.
- sources**—People who provide information for reporters.
- spectral density**—The relative power of a sound's fundamental pitch and its harmonics (the amount of harmonic energy the sound contains). The higher the spectral density (i.e., the more powerful the harmonics contained in the sound), the louder the sound will seem to the ear.
- spectrum**—The range of audible frequencies.

- splicing tape**—Sticky one-sided tape used to hold two edited pieces of recording tape together. It is slightly narrower than its corresponding-width magnetic tape.
- splitter box**—See **mult box**.
- stand up**—A report that contains no actualities.
- stereo**—Audio recording and playback using two or more microphones, two tracks, and two speakers to give a natural image of sound from left to right.
- stereo cut**—A 63-degree angle on the edit block used to minimize the difference in time between the left and right channels of a splice in a stereo recording.
- studio**—A soundproofed room where voices are recorded. Sometimes the complex of production rooms with recording equipment and performance room is called a studio.
- subtractive editing**—Computer audio editing system similar to razor-blade style removal of unwanted audio material.
- supply hub**—See **feed hub**.
- tails out**—Audio tape wound on a reel so the end of the recorded material is on the outside of the reel. The tape must be rewound before it can be played back.
- take-up reel**—An empty reel placed on the right-hand hub of a tape machine to collect the tape as it moves past the playback head.
- take-up spool**—The spool on the right side of a cassette. See **feed spool**.
- talk to time** To deliver copy in the appropriate allotted time.
- taped or tape-delayed**—A report recorded onto tape and broadcast at a later time. Many live programs also include taped segments.
- tape editing**—A physical or electronic task (cutting the tape and joining it together again). A technique for manipulating audio information, like written words on a page, by "cutting and pasting" to rearrange it in a more concise form.
- tape editor**—A person who physically or electronically manipulates tape to condense, refine, and organize it for production.
- tape loop**—Recorded sound effects, music, or voice edited into a loop played continuously to extend running time or create repetition.
- tape-sync**—A telephone interview during which each person is simultaneously tape recorded in different locations, and then both tapes are later combined on a third tape. This is done to avoid having phone-quality recording for one voice. Also called "phone-sync," "double-ender," or "simul-rec."
- tempo and rate**—The speed at which one talks.
- temporal masking**—See **masking**.
- tension arm**—Same as **idler arm**.
- three-to-one ratio**—A rule of thumb for placing two speakers and two mikes: The distance from your mouth to the interviewee's mike should be *at least three times* the distance from your mouth to your mike, and vice versa.
- tie-tack**—A small mike that can be clamped onto the tie or other clothing. Also called **lavaliere**, or "lav."
- timbre**—The tone quality of a sound determined by the number of harmonics that occur, and their relative intensities.
- timing**—The pacing, movement, tempo, or length of a radio program.
- tracking**—Recording vocal narrative.
- tracks**—The vocal narrative in a report.

- transducer**—A device that changes mechanical vibrations (sound) into electrical signals or vice-versa, such as loudspeakers and microphones.
- transition**—Transporting the listener from place to place or idea to idea with changes in sound.
- two track**—A tape recorder that records information on two tracks (left and right).
- two-way**—An interview in the studio or over the phone with a reporter and one guest. Also *2-way*.
- unbalanced connection**—An audio connection using only two wires. One wire carries the signal; the second is called the ground wire. Unbalanced connections are more susceptible to electrical hum.
- unidirectional**—Mikes with this characteristic are most sensitive to sounds coming from the front and least sensitive to sounds from the rear.
- unity gain**—Aligning the console and tape machines so they are lined up to an absolute zero point. Nothing is added or subtracted from the level of the signal as it travels from one tape machine to another, through the console.
- upcut**—Cutting off a portion of the sound or word in the editing process.
- uplink**—A satellite ground terminal capable of sending a signal to a satellite.
- variable playback speed (varispeed)**—A device that adjusts the speed at which a tape is played back. It can be used to correct the slowdown that comes when recording with weak batteries or to vary the pitch or speed of a recording. When speed is increased, pitch and tempo also go up; when speed decreases, the pitch and tempo drop.
- voice coupler**—A small box permanently wired into a phone or phone line that provides a quarter-inch phone jack output for feeding a line-level signal to a console or recorder input.
- voice quality**—The basic nature of one's voice.
- voicer**—A short news story that has only the reporter's voice and no actuality.
- volume**—Loudness.
- volume unit (VU)**—A standardized, international unit measuring the short-term average of audio levels.
- vox pop**—The comments of ordinary people, collected unscientifically, usually in public places. The term comes from the Latin "vox populi" (voice of the people).
- VU meter**—An audio meter that measures the average volume of a signal.
- VU/Text**—An on-line database that provides full-text stories from at least 50 newspapers.
- windscreen**—An open-cell foam rubber screen placed on microphones to reduce the effect of plosives and wind.
- wire service**—National and international news-gathering agencies (e.g., the Associated Press, Reuters, United Press International, Agence France Presse) that provide daily news to print and broadcast customers.
- wireless mike**—A mike attached to a small, battery-operated radio transmitter that sends the mike's signal to a special radio receiver connected to a console or the input of a recorder. Also known as a *radio mike*.
- wires**—Collectively, the *wire services*.
- wrap-around**—A news story in which the reporter, newscaster, or host introduces an actuality and then adds at least one sentence after it.
- XLR connector**—This jack has three pins arranged in a triangular pattern and

surrounded by a round collar of metal. The corresponding plug on the cable, which "mates" with this jack, has three holes in the same triangular pattern. Used for most professional microphone connectors.

Y-adapter—A cable that can connect two microphones to one input jack.

zero VU or 0 VU—Aligning a sound to 0 Volume Units, also shown on many VU meters as 100 percent modulation.

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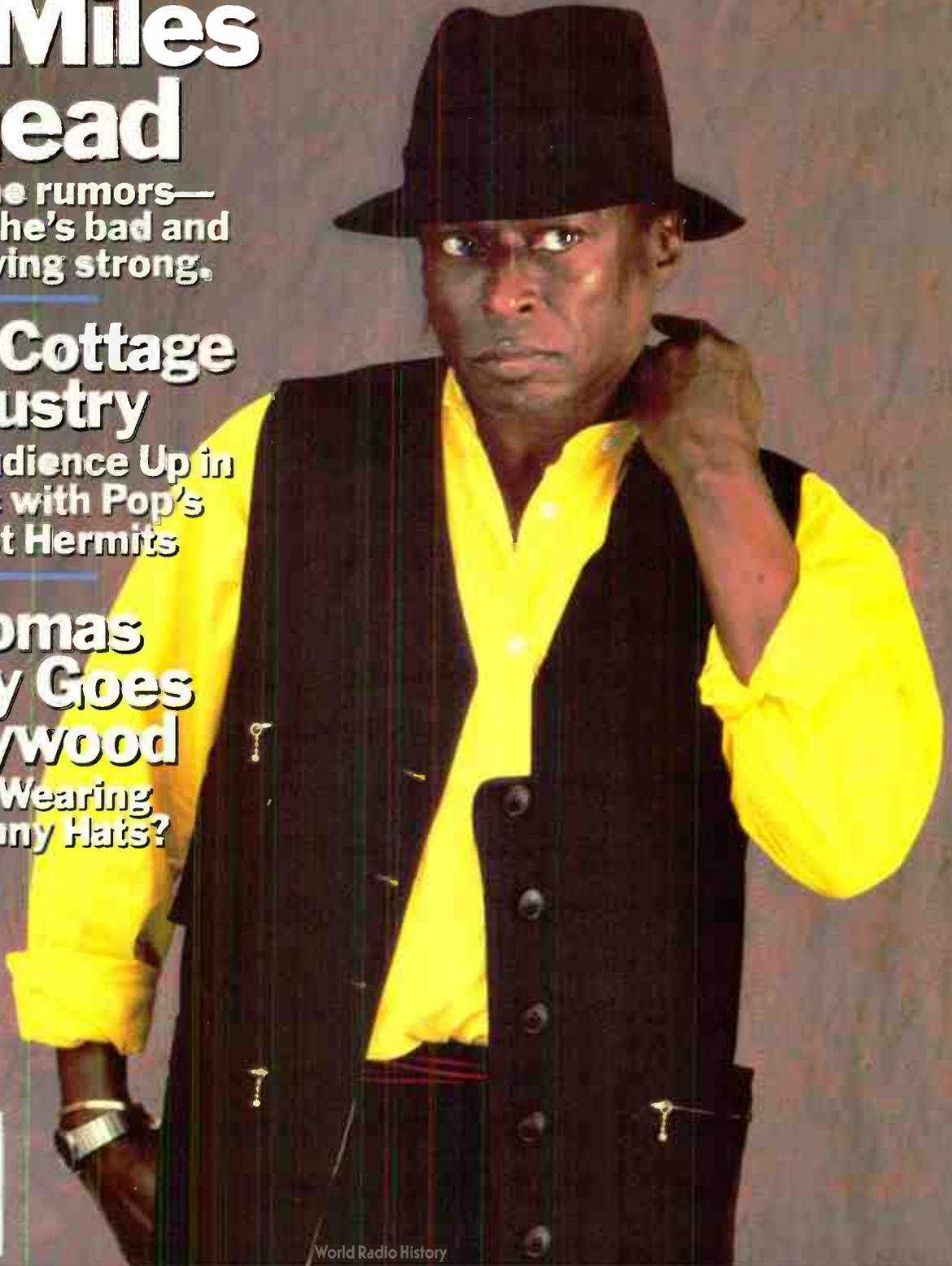
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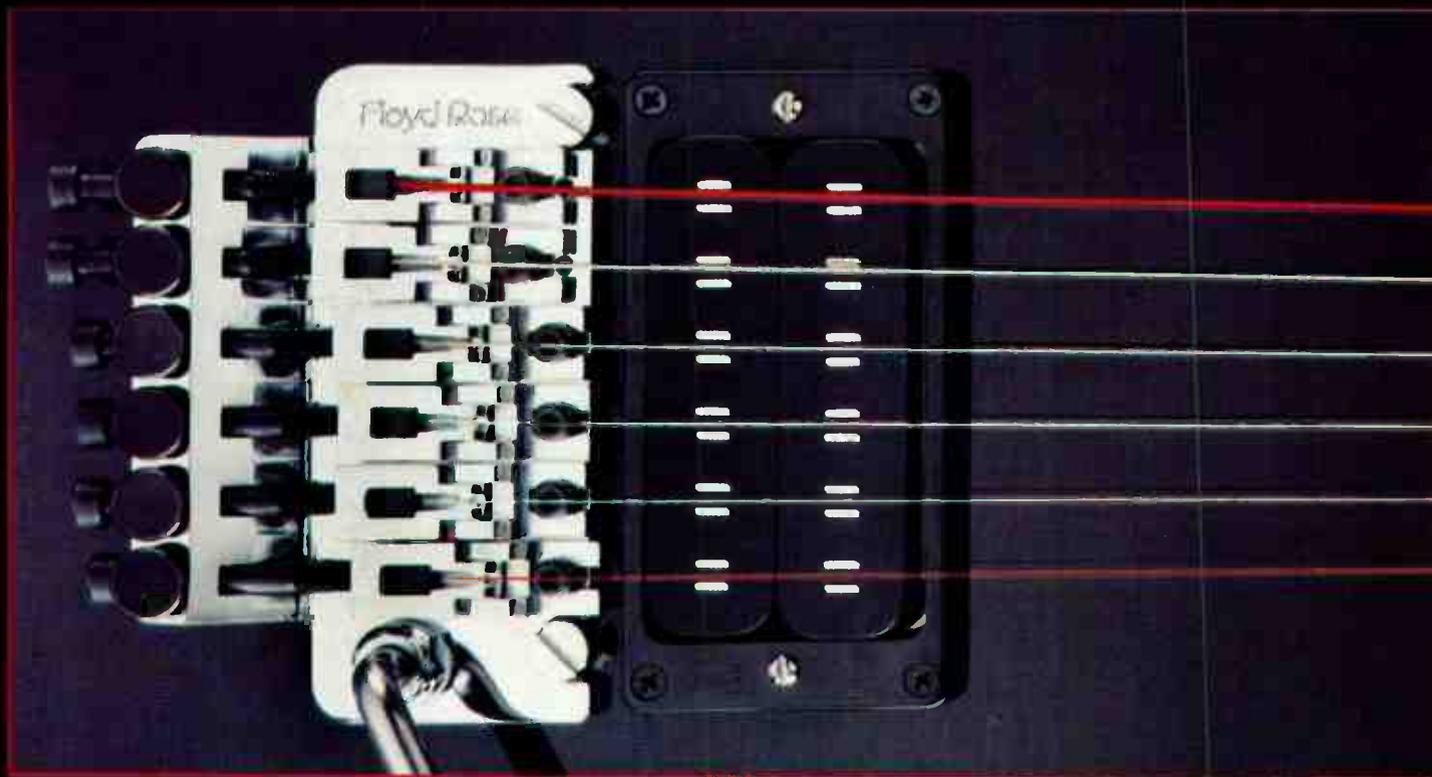
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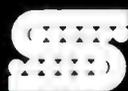
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MUSICIAN

A BILLBOARD PUBLICATION

COVER PHOTO BY
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MAY 1989 NO. 127

WORKING MUSICIAN

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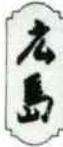
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IRREPLACEABLE

THANKS FOR THE EXCELLENT article about the remarkable Replacements (Feb. '89)! Paul Westerberg may feel he has "nothing to say," but to his many fans, he does. Their music has given me support through the difficult years of early adulthood, and, most of all, great fun! I'm glad Paul has now "grown up" enough to admit to himself he's an "artist"; I had no doubt of it!

*Linda Stevens
W. Brookfield, MA*

THANKS FOR PUTTING THE Replacements on the cover. At first I thought I was on "Candid Camera"; "It must be a joke." Then I realized that, even on *this* planet, things occasionally happen as they should.

*Big Bucks Burnett
Denton, TX*

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR the fabulous article about the Replacements. Since they

I CRINGED AT PAUL WESTERBERG's story of the Minneapolis punkers who laughed at the sight of him. I grew up in Minneapolis and saw the 'Mats in their wild and drunken state as well as in their cleaned-up let's-play-some-music state. The latter was the best live show I have ever witnessed—a packed house at London's Mean Fiddler on May 31, 1987. I never did get the courage to go up to Paul as he sat by himself off to the side of the crowded bar. I assumed it must be old hat, having fans come up to him and tell him that the 'Mats are the best band ever (not just of the '80s).

*Michele Schafer
Washington, DC*

STEVE PERRY'S SUGARY ARTICLE on the "new" Replacements seems like it was written by Sire Records' promotional department. Perry justifies the Replacements' change from intelligent



made your cover my new dream is that more people begin to listen to the band that has the potential of being to the U.S. what the Stones were to the U.K.

*Richard Holtzman
Boston, MA*

thrash-pop to Top-40 pop as a boon for the music industry.

However, the article really made me sick of Paul Westerberg and his band. Why, Paul, did you feed the record-buying public and your loyal fans the image that you were one

of the last rowdy, rude yet intelligent bands around? Deep down inside, as you thrashed your way to critics' hearts and the respect of fans like me across the nation, you actually wished that you could put out the bland Top-40 dribble we hear on the airwaves today. What a shame.

*Jeff Jotz
Notre Dame, IN*

THE REAL MAC

THANK YOU, TIMOTHY WHITE, for the in-depth article on Fleetwood Mac (Feb. '89). Even after all the changes within the group, there are some of us who still love their music, love to know what has been going on, and what is going on.

*Nancy Markel
Hampton, VA*

NEVER HAVE I READ A MORE thorough and perfectly written article on Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac.

*Ronnie McCarty
Jonesboro, LA*

YOUR ARTICLE REAFFIRMED the fact that this is a group of people who haven't stopped thinking about tomorrow.

*Tom Petrasko
State College, PA*

KEEP ON CHOOGLIN'

THANKS FOR THE UPDATE ARTICLE on John Fogerty (Feb. '89). Now he can continue to do what he does best: sing, write, produce and arrange music.

*Glenn Last
Brooklyn, NY*

THE FRIPP TRIP

THANKS FOR THE GREAT INTERVIEW with Robert Fripp (Feb. '89). I admire him as a person and musician.

*Illona Trejo
Kansas City, MO*

WHAT A SNOBBISH ASSHOLE.

*Jeff Gaynor
Franklin, NJ*

MAYBE SOMEONE SHOULD TELL Robert Fripp that Jeff Beck hasn't used a pick for at least 12 years. "Mr. Perfect"

should stop surrounding his narcissistic self with "Fripp (Guitar Craft) Worshipers" and come out into the real world.

*John S. Garcia
Houston, TX*

NAME GAMES

YOUR ELOQUENT AND TIMELY article on the great artist and educator Jackie McLean (Feb. '89) is wonderful. It is one of my most rewarding experiences to be associated with such a beautiful human being. And I'm sure Phil Bowder and Hotep Idris Galeta's ancestors would forgive you for misspelling their family names.

*Hotep Idris Galeta
Hartford, CT*

IN TWO DIFFERENT PLACES IN his article on Lyle Lovett (Feb. '89) Bill Flanagan spells Nanci Griffith's first name with a "y." But on the covers of both *Little Love Affairs* and *Poet in My Window* it is spelled with an "i."

I just thought you might like to know. I'm probably mistaken.

*Joe Carrera
Layton, UT*

SEEING PINK

J.D. CONSIDINE'S REVIEW OF Pink Floyd's *Live: Delicate Sound of Thunder* (Feb. '89) should prove one thing: that J.D. reviews all his albums from a different perspective, with his head up his ass.

*Matthew Krezevic
San Angelo, TX*

We recently circulated two pieces of misinformation: First, the Alesis QuadraVerb costs \$449 rather than the \$499 we reported. Second, there is no hard-disk retrofit available for the Casio FZ-10 rack-mount sampler, but instead a SCSI (or "scuzzy") port has been included on a new version, the FZ-20M. Apologies to both firms.

Please send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, 39th floor, New York, NY 10036.



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COMES

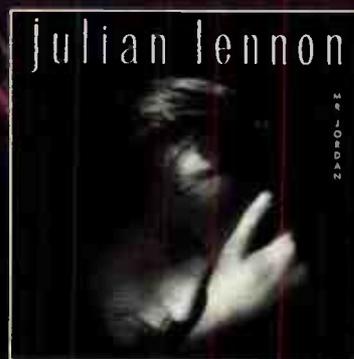
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FACES

BLITZKRIEG POP LAIBACH

Think Yugoslavia. Think of an anvil orchestra from hell, backed by a massed Wagnerian chorale of the damned. A house band for a Nuremberg rally that nobody's ever allowed to leave.

That's Laibach, sonic front line for the New Slovenian Art Movement. Back home in Yugoslavia, they've been waging a totalitarian-tinged aesthetic slugfest that, oddly, seems both in favor of and against the dictates of Communist authority.

We're talking Eastern European politics as art. Don't even try to figure it out. But it's got something to do with the individual as cog in a wheel, beamed to the masses from a region that's been both crossroads and sacrificial lamb since the days of the Roman Empire.

Laibach was the Third Reich's name for the four musicians' hometown of Ljubljana, and parts of the band's shtick are as ominous as 1939. Their live shows in particular are both goofy and monstrous, filled with muscular Aryan manhood, stag horns and syncopated goosestepping during covers of tunes like Queen's "One Vision"—a mechanized yet bestial salute to microchip might and purpose.

Somebody recently called Laibach "Volga boatmen on steroids." But band spokesperson Ivan Novak dismisses the darker descriptions (retro-Nazi, Orwellian, etc.) as "naive and romantic. If we were fascists or Nazis, we wouldn't do what we're

doing. As Orson Welles said, 'Nazis look exactly the same as everyone else.'"

Their latest recordings—a song-by-song reprogramming of the Beatles' *Let It Be*, and an EP sporting six readings of the Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil"—are as funny as they are disquieting, all tank-treaded percussion and blitzkrieg bombast. And bear in mind that the band played glitzy dance clubs on its last U.S. tour. But that

militant edge...

"Every person has a bit of that inside," Novak says. "Life in New York, for example, is war. But we don't aim to be harsh. Watching western groups, especially heavy metal, there's much more harshness. Western pop seems very wired and strained—though of course it's all very calculated."

So is Laibach—though it's hard to tell where show biz ends and the sinister begins.

"We are a mistake of the east and west," Novak insists. "We want to build that mistake into both their systems."

What's that supposed to mean? Don't ask.

"We are not producing one-dimensional information," he says, "and we don't seek one-dimensional reception. We are not afraid to pay for what we're doing. We are not afraid of being wrongly understood."

— Dan Hedges



JOHN SOARES

Michael Jackson: Hard Times

We're not necessarily saying the following two items are related, but we thought you'd like to know:

• **Das Damen's "Song for Michael Jackson to Sell" is one song that Michael Jackson's not selling—or anyone else, for that matter. In January, three months after SST Records released the song**

on Das Damen's *Marshmallow Conspiracy* EP, the company recalled it under threat of legal action. The song samples the Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour," which Jackson owns, along with most of the Lennon-McCartney catalogue. Publisher SBK Entertainment threatened a copyright infringement suit. The legality of song sampling has never been tested in court.

• **After selling a measly**

six million copies of his *Bad* album, Jackson has dropped his manager of the last five years. Frank D'Leo got his silhouette on *Bad*'s inner sleeve, but that wasn't enough to launch the album into the rarefied atmosphere of its predecessor, *Thriller* (20 million sales). Anyone interested in the job should write Jackson c/o Epic Records. Love of animals a must.

— Scott Isler

GREATNESS FIRST, HITS SECOND

PIERCE TURNER

"I come from a family of entertainers, so it's natural I would want to be one," smiles Pierce Turner, Irishman and New York resident. "Back in Wexford, my uncle, who always has a cigar in the corner of his mouth, plays accordion in bars. People will give me money to sit next to the man, he's so charismatic."

This affable singer/songwriter has chosen a different means of expression. His new LP *The Sky and the Ground* is chock-full of literate, synth- and piano-based pop tunes, delivered in what he calls a "piping" voice that echoes such notables as Peter Gabriel and Steve Winwood.

Though just on his second album, Turner has been



confront what you are, even if it's ludicrous, your songs will be unique." Anyway, he adds, "It's better to have a great record that's not a hit

than it is to have a hit that's not great."

Turner's reliance on his own life for material has given an edge to *It's Only a Long*

Way Across (co-produced by hip composer Philip Glass) and now *The Sky and the Ground*. The latter features the moving "His Reason," written after his mother passed away.

"It's about my father, who was a very inarticulate man," says Turner softly. "He became incredibly depressed when my mother died. He'd sit with me in the kitchen late at night and tell me how sad he was. Later he died of a broken heart."

Wasn't it hard to go public with such a private memory?

"No, not at all," Turner laughs suddenly. "Maybe I'm sick, but it's a great feeling—like an exorcism."

— Jon Young

HE'LL BE YOUR MIRROR

JOE HENRY

it," he notes. "I fancy myself more of a windowmaker or a glazier than anything else."

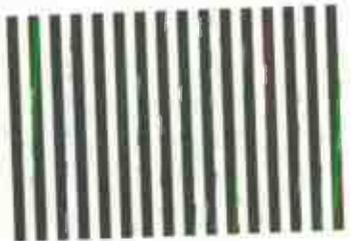
Henry's debut construction, *Murder of Crows*, looks out on a world made all the

for the help of such names as David Byrne, Mick Taylor, and Anton

Fier. But despite the heady company, Henry says his record is really just a road map.

"If you listen to the whole thing from start to finish," he says, "I hope you feel like you've passed through something—some dusty small towns or an old traveling circus." — Robin J. Schwartz

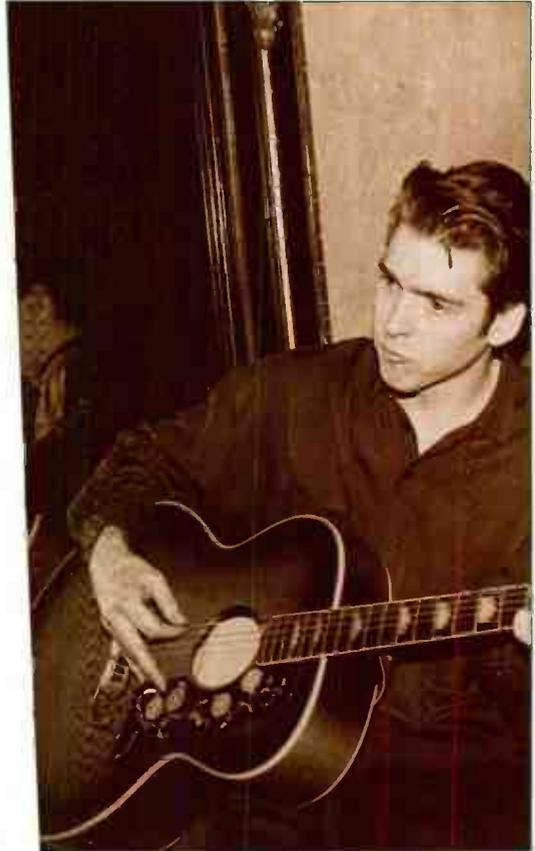
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EBET ROBERTS

NOTES FROM A SURVIVOR

DION

You can take the boy out of the Bronx, not vice versa. Dion DiMucci hasn't lived in his native borough for 30 years, but he'll never get a job as an elocution professor.

Fortunately he doesn't have to. Although he first hit in 1958 as a crooning teen-aged doo-wopper, Dion (as strangers call him—he's almost never used his last name professionally) has had a phoenix-like musical career that's avoided coasting on oldies brain-death.

"I never got into doin' the club thing with monkey-suits and, 'Hey, here's a medley of my hits,'" he says with a trace of excusable pride. "I'd rather be a rebel with a cause than just bullshit."

Recently Dion's been kicking up the dirt in a big way. Late last year he published a brutally honest autobiography that detailed his consecutive involvements with heroin (something else he started doing as a teenager), alcohol and, more peacefully, Jesus. In January an awed Lou Reed inducted him into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; Dion's corrosively funny speech showed he has no regrets about not living in the past.

Best of all, this April Arista Records released Dion's first new album of non-religious songs in 11 years. "I didn't know how ready I was," he admits. "The songs just flew out of me, man. I said [to Arista], 'I'll do it if I can make a rock 'n' roll album.'"

The result is not rock 'n' roll in the '50s-formalist sense so much as in its musical directness and forthright lyrics. *Yo Frankie* is gritty, street-tough and soulful. Dion's songs are sometimes nostalgic, never sentimental.

"I got a lot to fucking say, man. Over the years I've figured out a few things. I like expressing my feelings, my doubts, my fears, my joys. I

still like making people think or feel. That's my job."

Dion will be 50 this summer. So what. "I could almost

look at this record like a new career. This is from ground zero. This is me today."

— Scott Isler



DAVID SEELIG/STAR FILE

HAPPY AT LAST

GREGSON & COLLISTER

He quit being a music teacher to lead Any Trouble, a likable but ill-fated Manchester, England, quartet. She grew up on the Isle of Man and had a job singing in the predawn hours on a northern English radio station. By the time Any Trouble ground to a halt, Clive Gregson had grown so frustrated and depressed by the "haircuts and trousers" attitude of the music business that he had decided to quit performing and be a full-time songwriter and producer. Then he happened across Christine Collister singing in a Manchester folk club.

Collister guested on Gregson's solo album and followed him into the stage and studio rep company of Richard Thompson. After a 1985 Thompson tour, the couple began working as a duo. Gregson plays the instruments (guitar, mostly) and writes the strikingly honest songs; they both sing, finding harmony in a mixture of

roughness and purity. The effect—especially onstage—is magical. "Our partnership wasn't premeditated," Gregson notes. "We just started gigging to fill in some time."

Although Gregson and Collister will next tour with a full band, three years as an acoustic duo has left them tarred with the F-word. "I believe there isn't a folk re-



vival so much as an influx of people who wear acoustic guitars," Gregson observes. "It's become a fashion. I feel no great affinity to folk music as it's defined these days. I don't want to be involved." A forthcoming third album, con-

Blown Away

He was a face. He was an unregenerate drug addict. He was a trumpeter and singer who made jazz history—as much for his playing style as his Central-Casting good looks.

Chet Baker seemed to have it all and then blew it away. Last May he took his last shot, fell out a window and died. He was 58, looked 75 and probably felt that way too. A year earlier photographer/filmmaker Bruce Weber made a documentary on Baker, *Let's Get Lost*, which is just now being released. The Oscar-nominated film is a touching and disturbing portrait of a gifted and troubled human being. He was a genius. He was a creep. He was a musician. — Scott Isler

taining a jumping rock 'n' roll lament for Elvis Presley, should see to that.

Facing a packed house at McCabe's in Santa Monica in February, Collister sang up a storm and Gregson proved to be a surprisingly accomplished and resourceful guitarist. Jazz, rock, blues and folk influences mingled in his acoustic playing, while the

pair's unpretentious charm won over the crowd.

"We sell far more records and play to far more people than Any Trouble ever did," Gregson says, savoring the irony. "Everything about this feels positive." — Ira Robbins

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World Radio History

The New Yamaha APX. From Two Points Of View.



"When Yamaha asked me to try its new APX, I played it in rehearsals and I thought there was something exceptional about the guitar.

"I ended up recording with it on a Marc Jordan record. Everybody was so impressed, they wanted to buy it.

"But, what I loved about it was its sonic quality. It's just real musical. Real even. Real round. Very expressive. I plug it into a board and it sounds like a guitar.

"Another thing—the harmonics are great. Play the top, middle or bottom of the fret board, it's never too thin or too fat. Even just to play it by yourself in a room, it sounds great.

"I've already written stuff on it. There's no way I'm going to give it back."


Steve Farris
Mr. Mister

"When Yamaha asked me to try its new APX guitar, I was supposed to evaluate it then give it back. No way. It's a great guitar.

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"Not fake stereo. Real.

"Not done with delays. You play it and it goes left-side, right-side, left-side, right-side.

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"I told them I'd buy it, but I want this guitar.

"I've had other acoustic guitars, but none that could do what this one can. The APX's are the only acoustics I'm going to use."


Steve Lukather
Toto

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So whether you're performing or writing, it's the new Yamaha APX. No wonder no one wants to give them back.



THROWING MUSES

Shooting You
Between the Eyes
with Inspiration

—
BY JIM MACNIE

NOTHING MUCH HAPPENS in Newport, Rhode Island, in the middle of January—there's lots of time to contemplate the gray sky, gray water and gray streets. That gives Throwing Muses ample chance to rehearse, worry and write gray songs. During practice sessions these days, trepidation regarding their upcoming tour is the recurring topic. But gathered together, the band—guitarist/vocalist Kristin Hersh, guitarist/vocalist Tanya Donnelly, bassist Leslie Langston and drummer David Narcizo—breaks into chuckles.

"Yo, *Hunkpapa*, yeah!" laughs Hersh, while slapping palms with Donnelly. "To get psyched," she explains, "we have to do high-fives whenever anybody says the name of the record."

Hunkpapa is the Muses' fifth release, so these one-time critics' darlings should be used to plenty of mentions. It's been over four years since their first LP came out on the British 4AD label, and if getting psyched is an issue, all the Muses have to do is recall how it arrived to the hyperbolic hosannas of the British press.

"The fact that we were so untrendy is what took them by surprise," recalls Hersh. "Fascinated by our lack of style," concurs Narcizo with raised eyebrows. He's got to be talking fashion style, not musical, because the Muses' approach to interpreting Hersh's songs is idiosyncratic to say the least. Her harsh, minor-key tunes are tied in knots, and their density is compounded by the singer's relentless self-investigation. "When we first started playing out in Providence, we thought we were just like other bands," she offers, "but the reaction was, 'You guys are nuts, where did you come from?'"

They weren't nuts, just intense. Call



Piling on the music: Kristin Hersh, Leslie Langston, Dave Narcizo, Tanya Donnelly.

their approach Plath-matics: Their poetic examinations of the psyche are sometimes as confounding as their music is relentlessly piercing. Though the facade suggests the ease of folk music, their overall sound remains archly aggressive. Imagine Television's "Torn Curtain" being played at 78 rpm. Playing their electric guitars like acoustics, the Muses allow swirling, finger-picked interplay to underscore the hazy dread in Hersh's occasionally oblique lyrics. Narcizo's martial drum beats add to the anxiety, and the fact that he avoids the crash cymbals keeps the tension mounting on even the softest songs.

The Brit crits loved this fevered introspection, but according to Hersh, they didn't get the full picture: "I admit we don't look happy onstage, but offstage, we don't necessarily want to talk about razor blades."

Yet that kind of dire tone is what the band's music often conjures. Most of the songs are trilled in Hersh's Betty-Boop-from-hell avant-yodel, which has antecedents in Patti Smith, Yoko Ono, Diamanda Galas and Lauren Newton.

Hersh, who was only 14 when she and Donnelly first started trading songs back and forth in high school, actively acknowledges the first of those references. Patti's *Wave* is on in the background as the interview starts to roll.

"I studied music," she explains, "and learned technique for expressing sound, but I was never taught to grab that fire that music should always have. I could always trust my voice to do that. I like whiney voices, like Gordon Gano's. But when I hear myself singing, it sounds like this smart girl that I don't even know; I'd never be able to think of all that stuff. I think the way I sing has added to confusion about us."

Hersh's main fear is of being dubbed an art band; it isn't an unfounded worry. While the leader acknowledges that her fervent vocals might have steered the Muses toward a decidedly non-mainstream turf, the drastic design of their music accomplished much the same. By eschewing traditional verse/chorus/verse arrangements early on, the Muses divorced themselves from the rock norm. The build-build-blast arrange-

ments were a plus in helping individualize their sound, but the band has found them a bit tough to translate to listeners.

"I always thought that being a musician meant learning and growing and exploring every possibility you could," she offers seriously. "We tend to pile on as much music as we can, everybody playing at the same time. As our producer, Gary Smith, says, 'Kristin, you never heard of a whole note.' I just wanted it to be fast and full of life. Sometimes our parts were impossible to play."

On the indie circuit, out-of-stepness can beget its own currency. Yet at a time when every third or fourth band came off

as R.E.M. clones, the Muses seemed singular; some of their songs sounded drastic even for the fringes. "I thought you were *supposed* to sound original," Hersh says. "Why would we need another conventional band? You hear them all day long. 'I don't want to play a C major right now, okay?' I thought you shouldn't go back to playing chords, you had to explore the extent of every progression and rhythm you could, and see what happened along the way. But that alienates a lot of people."

Therein lies the rub. After six releases (*The Fat Skier* EP and *House Tornado* LP are also on Sire), the Muses'

churning counter-melodies, psychic housecleaning and visceral rhythms are still looking for a larger audience. *Hunkpapa* isn't a drastic change of scenery, but instrumentally it allows for some newfound breathing room. The Muses are often compared to wise, women-only units like the Raincoats and Slits, but *Hunkpapa* should widen the field of reference.

"I think we *do* rock out," Hersh maintains with a grin, "albeit in a different kind of way. Expressing ourselves on vinyl has been difficult; the albums sound a bit tame opposed to what we do on-stage." "I used to let the drums follow the guitar parts real closely," adds Narcizo. "There almost wasn't any difference. But this time I wrote drum parts that weren't quite so manic."

You can hear the change in "Dizzy," which yields to convention in an inspired, refreshing way. As the band sits around the apartment checking out the tune's newly completed video, Hersh comments about her need to communicate. "I continuously learn that I know nothing about listening habits of the general public. True, we attract an alternative crowd, and sell an alternative amount of records, but if I thought we were being elitist in this, I'd give up. We're not trying to alienate people."

"We never relied on our craft much; we thought that other groups were forsaking inspiration, just relying totally on craft, and because most of it was crap, we didn't want to be part of that. So everything we did was gut level; I wanted to pack a million emotions into one song. But people would say, 'That

CONTINUED ON PAGE 97

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MUSE-IC CLASS

WE couldn't afford electrics when we started," recalls **Hersh** without a trace of sentimentality, "but after a while we got a couple of \$50 guitars and a bass. We had one amp; we called it 'Big Fucker.' It was really old; we all plugged into it and it picked up every radio station within a 50-mile radius." The Muses have been plugged in ever since. Hersh finger-picks her Fender through a Mesa Boogie Simul-Class and Boss chorus pedal. **Donelly's** Strat (with rosewood fingerboard) chirps through a Roland Jazz Chorus 120. The service of a Boss Digital Metalizer and a Rat distortion pedal are available with one stomp. It's a Tune Technology Bass Maniac for **Langston**, with Yamaha pre- and power amps and a Gallien Krueger 4x10 bottom. She EQs herself with a Rane Graphic EQ. **Narcizo's** heartbeat approach comes from a Sonar Performance Series kit and Zildjian high-hat—no other cymbals.



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ENYA

Clannad's Little Sister Sails Away

BY MICHAEL AZERRAD

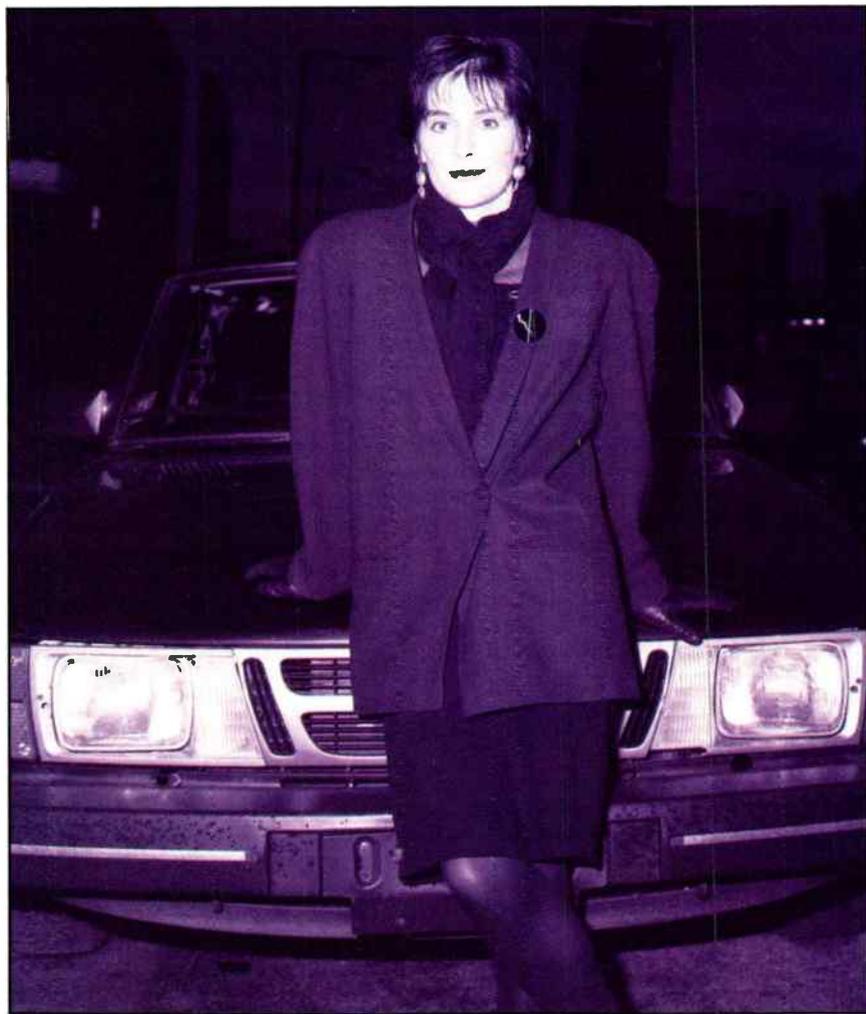
ENYA IS SITTING IN Geffen Records' New York offices, looking a bit perplexed. "People in the British press were referring to me as... 'beat.' Something about Paul Simon's *Graceland*..." You mean world beat? "Right. I was thinking, 'What is world beat?' I had no idea what it was!"

Enya has no idea what world beat is because, she says, she doesn't listen to music. In an effort to keep their music as original as possible, she and producer Nicky Ryan have cut themselves off from all outside musical influences. "Also, I've been in the studio working on music non-stop, so when I have any free time, the *last* thing I want to do is listen to music. I've never bought an album in my life," she says.

The isolationist strategy may have backfired—Enya's new album, *Watermark*, sounds a lot like a new age record, all reverberating spaces and soft timbres. *Watermark* echoes Gregorian chant, Satie, Eno's *Music for Airports* and more than a wee bit of Irish folk music. It would teeter over the brink and into an innocuous ambient wash if it were not for some frankly sweet melodies, evocative lyrics and an incredibly rich sound. The first single, the tuneful travelogue "Orinoco Flow," became a bi-continental hit; not coincidentally, it's by far the hookiest thing on the album.

Enya, a petite, soft-spoken woman of 27, is quite pragmatic and quite reserved; she's far from ethereal. Ask her about her emotional stake in the music and she'll give you a blow-by-blow account of how it was made. She wears a ring depicting two hands clasping a crowned heart, an old Celtic symbol whose meaning depends on which way the heart points. She wears hers with the heart pointing down, meaning what? "Meaning that I just like the way it looks with the heart pointing down."

And how does she respond to the new



Away from the mountains, Eithne Ni Bhraonain goes with the flow.

age tag? In classic fashion: "People can't categorize it, so they say it's new age." Nevertheless, *Watermark* is burning up the new age chart (if indeed anything can "burn up" a new age chart). The record is shot through with a sort of spirituality manqué. "Cursum Perficio," a choral piece sung in Latin, might sound like a Catholic hymn, but the lyrics actually come from an inscription on the portico of Marilyn Monroe's last home. Enya says, "The reason people say it's religious-sounding is the amount of reverb we use. That's what they keep relating to the church. That aura is around it because of the long, long reverb." But the lyrics contain many references to water, a classic symbol of rebirth. It's not just the reverb people are talking about. "It is, though. It's the sound that gives the church feel."

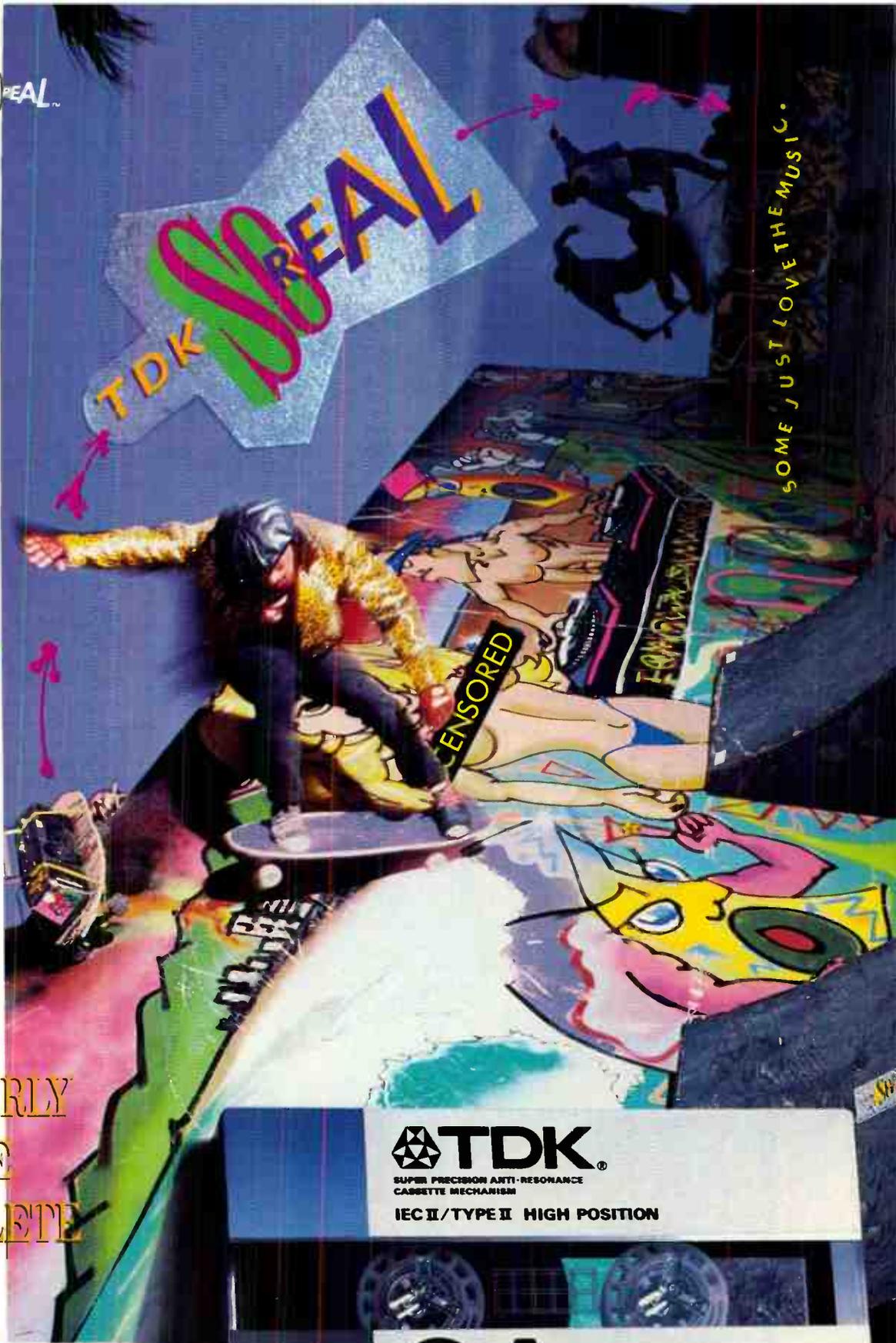
Enya, born Eithne Ni Bhraonain (pronounced Enya Nee BREE-nine), is influenced by the landscape—all mountains and beaches—of the northwest Irish

coast where she grew up. The Irish influence extends to the three songs on *Watermark* which she sings in Gaelic (her first language). Enya's older brothers, sisters and uncles make up the Irish group Clannad (Gaelic for "family"). In 1980, Nicky Ryan, the band's long-time producer/sound and light man/manager, enlisted Enya to play synthesizer in the band. She was 18, at least nine years younger than anyone else in the group.

Enya and Ryan left Clannad together in 1982. Enya's explanation is that she was tired of being a second-class citizen in the band, and Ryan was frustrated by Clannad's reluctance to try new things, including featuring more of Enya. It's rumored that Clannad fired the two after learning they were romantically involved, but the band refuses comment. "It sounds bigger than it was," Enya says of leaving Clannad, "and it wasn't because they were my family. When we were actually working with each other, it

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ENYA

was very different. They had a set way of working and were so used to being together. When I joined it was different, also there was a bit of an age gap. I had

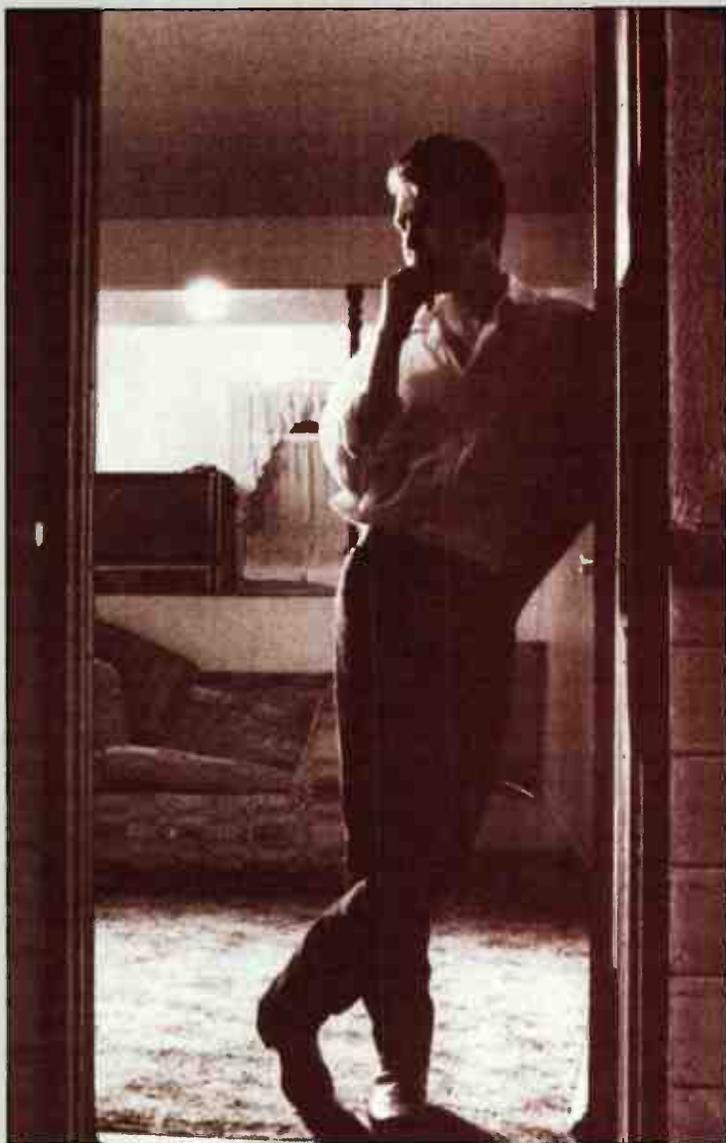
speaking terms with them. It was less so for Enya, who was only in the band for a couple of years and remains deeply loyal to her family. After the break, Enya

Tony McAuley commissioned a soundtrack for the BBC documentary series, *The Celts*, released as *Enya* on Atlantic's "New Age" imprint. The album cover

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ENYA

"This *sound* happened!" Then they went on to something else. While in a London studio re-recording *Watermark*, they needed one more track. They remembered that layered riff (the "sail away" section of "Orinoco Flow") and built the rest of the song around it.

After they completed *Watermark* in April of 1988, Rob Dickins, managing director of WEA/England, pronounced that "Orinoco Flow" would make a nice single (and not just because he's mentioned in the song). To heighten the mystery of the album, Dickins cannily decided against liner notes, even for the Gaelic songs. According to Enya, the ploy worked: "Everyone seems to conjure up their own images and emotions with the music. It's something very personal to them—which is true, because they bought the album, it is theirs. It's a strange feeling to touch so many people, especially when you weren't doing it consciously." Then again, maybe it's just the reverb. ❏

ENYA EAR

ENYA'S synthesizers include the Roland D-50 (she likes the "heavy feel," optimum for playing sampled tympani and strings), the Fairlight III, the Yamaha TX (the rack version of the DX), an older Oberheim rack version, and the Roland Juno 60 ("We wouldn't part with it for anything in the world"). "We also used this really old keyboard called the Wave, which has got wonderful sounds, like the little sound on the beginning of 'Evening Falls,' and the quiet 'turn it up' part of 'Orinoco Flow.'" Enya plays a piano of unknown provenance, given to Roma by her auntie. They'd like to use the new MIDI-able Yamaha acoustic piano. Enya and Ryan use the Akai S-900 for sampling.

For mastering they use a professional DAT machine—the 2500. They used to master on the Sony F-1, and still use it for flying-in stuff. Two Mitsubishi 32-track machines were used for "Orinoco Flow" and "Storms in Africa."

Microphones include a Sennheiser MD-421 and the Calrec Soundfield: "The interesting thing about it is you can telescope into the sound source, so you don't have to use a pop shield. It's an extremely transparent microphone—there's absolutely no noise inherent in it all. The stereo is extremely panoramic—it's a very magic microphone. It's also beautiful for monitor room work. We often record in the monitor room, and we pick up some of the sound from the monitors as well, so when you include that in the mix, it really widens out the sound."

Ryan likes the Alesis Midiverb II. "They have a texture to them that the Lexicon doesn't have. There's compression built in. They really shouldn't have it there, but it is there, and it adds something. The reverb hasn't been built for us yet, neither in length nor the sound we want."

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The



Dukes of Swindon

*XTC does it their way,
for better or worse*



first fly to London. Then catch a train to Swindon, 70 miles west. Then a cab from the station to a house in the Old Town section. Go through the door, up a flight of stairs. (Ignore the dog and two small children; you're not there yet.) On the landing, ascend a metal ladder through an opening to the attic. Stop. This is it: Andy Partridge's demo haven.

Whaddayamean, "so what"? Out of this small but fairly clean room have come some of the world's most cherished songs—"Love on a Farmboy's Wages," "Earn Enough for Us," "The Mayor of Simpleton"—and at least one of the most detested, "Dear God." This is where Partridge, guitarist and main singer/songwriter of XTC, comes to escape his idyllic family life and plunge into the whirling ferment of his brain that feeds his band's curious existence. If these walls could talk, how frightening that would be.

In today's high-powered rock world, XTC stubbornly remains a cottage industry. And like most cottage industries that manage to survive (a dozen years, in this case), the band's developed its own way of doing things. Their drummer left over six years ago and they never replaced him. That's not as bad as it sounds, because XTC doesn't play live. They stopped doing *that* seven years ago; Partridge realized he had a phobia about appearing onstage, and he's refused to tour ever since. Still, XTC's previous album, *Skylarking*, was its most successful yet, helped by a song that wasn't on the record; it was a single B-side, and the band's record company had to reissue the album to include the "hit." Can't these guys do anything, er, right?

Well, yes: the music. Partridge's songs are dizzyingly intoxicating in their felicitous wordplay and sinuous, multiple-strain phrasing—although he can also deliver charmingly straightforward "pop" tunes. Bassist Colin Moulding, the band's other songwriter, complements Partridge's giddiness with more delicate melodies and more introspective lyrics about the human condition—though both writers are way beyond the superficial themes of more popular music.

By Scott Isler

Photograph by Peter Ashworth



Strolling in the Garden of Earthly Delights: Dave Gregory, Colin Moulding and Andy Partridge stop to pick a bone with a fan.

Guitarist/keyboardist Dave Gregory, the most technically accomplished of the three, helps work up arrangements that at XTC's baroque best reveal new touches with each listen.

The resulting rich concoction may well be too much for the masses who determine this country's Top 10. But the band's attracted a loyal cult that supports three XTC fanzines in as many countries (and two languages), and whose members aren't afraid to invoke the Beatles in the same breath as Swindon's finest. They may even have a point: Both groups push the pop song into the realm of art while keeping a sense of humor. Perhaps the only thing the Beatles had that XTC doesn't was Beatlemania. It couldn't hurt.

"As a schoolkid I was totally in awe of groups like the Small Faces and Pink Floyd," Partridge remembers. "Singles like 'See Emily Play,' 'Arnold Layne,' 'Itchycoo Park'—singles that had a high magic content: a three-minute thing of a very memorable tune but with a big dollop of magic injected, either some strange effect or totally nonsensical lyrics that painted great brain pictures. I did love psychedelic singles."

Oranges and Lemons, XTC's ninth album of new material, is a brilliant collection of songs that pay homage to Partridge's

influences without slavish paisley revivalism. A nursery rhyme inspired the album title (which also unintentionally recalls Pink Floyd's "Apples and Oranges"), and a sense of childlike wonder pervades the 15 songs—from the burbling glee of the opening "Garden of Earthly Delights" to the dreamy conclusion of "Chalkhills and Children." Most amazingly of all, XTC recorded the album in Los Angeles—a mixture as friendly as spring water and strychnine.

"I never went out at all," Partridge says of his five-month stay. "I'm really anti-sun. Los Angeles is not my idea of a dream place to live. Everything about it I find rather 'waaaaah!'—from the weather to the people. I don't think I can honestly say I believed anything a Los Angeleno told me."

He seems more in his element sitting in his attic studio on a gray Swindon day in January, comfortably attired in a flannel plaid shirt, blue jeans and moccasins worn through at the big toe. There's nothing put-up about Andy Partridge; he's almost aggressively friendly. He's also the usual bunch of contradictions found in creative artists: a sharply clever individual who left school without papers or tests at age 15; a critic of warmongering political leaders who has shelves full of troops—

battalions—whole *regiments* of toy soldiers; the composer of the sincere “Thanks for Christmas” and the militantly agnostic “Dear God.”

Two years ago “Dear God” gave XTC its biggest publicity boost in the U.S. when some adventurous radio stations (talk about contradictions) discovered the song on the flip of a British single from *Skylarking*. Partridge says he didn’t want “Dear God” on the album. He was dissatisfied with it because “it wasn’t spiky enough; I thought it’s got to stick in people’s throats. It failed in that respect.” (At least one Florida XTC fan, however, thought enough of “Dear God” to phone in a bomb threat to a local station spinning the song.)

XTC began its musical life in 1976 with much the same agenda. “We really wanted to annoy people, to get up their noses,” Partridge says of *White Music*, the debut album a year later. Partridge, Moulding and drummer Terry Chambers had been musically terrorizing Swindon under a variety of aliases since 1973. In 1977, with keyboard player Barry Andrews (since replaced by Gregory), they signed with Virgin Records, who probably thought they were getting a new-wave band. Despite a very occasional U.K. hit single over the years, they’ve had a rocky relationship with Virgin ever since.

The situation wasn’t much better in the U.S., where XTC bounced from label to label. The band signed to Geffen Records in late 1983. Three years later Geffen was “rather despondent at the lack of sales,” Partridge says, and tried to unload the band back to Virgin. The British company hadn’t started up its Virgin America division yet, so it “panicked and said, ‘No, keep them.’ They didn’t want to farm us around to other labels with a past record of no sales. *Skylarking* came out and Geffen just patted it on the back and sent it off—put it in a bag and threw it in the river.”

Whether because of “Dear God” or in spite of it, *Skylarking* became XTC’s best-selling American album, a sleeper that sold almost a quarter-million copies. Its corporate faith in XTC restored, Geffen actually seems excited about *Oranges and Lemons*. Typically, XTC hasn’t made it easy, delivering an over-budget, hour-long album that needs a double-LP set to do it justice.

“I wanted to make a very simple, banal-sounding record,” Partridge says ingenuously, “and it got lost in translation a little and came out rather multi-layered—in fact, very dense. We just got swept along with the enthusiasm: For the first time since our very first few albums, we were making an album that people actually wanted to hear.”

Partridge wrote many of the songs just before the band went into the studio. Consequently they tend to reflect his optimism over both his professional turn of luck and his burgeoning family: His daughter Holly is almost four, and a son, Harry, will be two this summer. On the other hand, he’s also capable of scathing topical commentary like “Here Comes President Kill Again,” “Scarecrow People” and “Across This Antheap.”

“There is a bit of split personality,” Partridge acknowledges. “On ‘Garden of Earthly Delights’ I’m trying to get a message over to my kids, although they’ll have to wait some years before they can appreciate it: Somebody’s being born and I’m saying welcome—like, ‘Welcome to the Holiday Inn!’ I’m in the foyer: ‘This is life. Come in and do what you want to, but don’t hurt anyone.’” (The song’s lyrics add, with Partridgian wit, “‘Less of course they ask you.’”) “I’m sure that’s what heaven is, really. Heaven is not hurting anyone.”

So Andy Partridge, nonbeliever, believes in heaven?

“Yes. Here, now. This is heaven and hell. It’s all metaphor stuff.” But don’t get him started on the subject of religion.

On the fatalistic “Here Comes President Kill Again,” “I’m just saying, ‘Go ahead, have your little bit of power and vote for who you want, but there’s no difference.’” Partridge says he “won’t” vote: “I can’t feel part of giving people that sort of power. There’s a certain sort of person that wants to be voted in; it’s almost like, if they’re a politician, that’s the very reason you shouldn’t vote for them.” This might strike some as an evasion of responsibility. Partridge feels, however, that “it’s not like mankind can’t find a better way. But I don’t think mankind is smart enough to control itself yet. I totally distrust mankind, to be truthful.”

The album’s most affecting song may be “Hold Me My Daddy,” a first-person plea for understanding between fathers and sons. “I found it difficult writing that,” Partridge says. “It’s a subject matter men aren’t supposed to think about, loving their fathers. I played it to my father; he insisted on hearing it. We got to that point on the album and I had to leave the room: ‘Hm! Is that the baby crying? I’ll just go and have a look.’ I came back, and I don’t know if he was embarrassed or whether he really didn’t hear the lyrics.” Partridge adopts a gruff lower register: “‘Couldn’t ‘ear a bloody word of that bloody row.’ Maybe he did and he didn’t want to say. It’s sort of a primal oink, a snuffle.”

Partridge’s father was a musician himself, a drummer in jazz/dance bands. “I’m sure my parents still think I’m going to get a proper job one of these days. My father’s sort of interested but he thinks it’s too weird, too unusual—noisy pop music and loud guitars. My mother just likes it when people say to her, ‘Oh, I saw your son in such-and-such magazine.’”



Funk Pop a Roll: Chambers, Partridge and Moulding fight the phobia at CBGB, 1979.

He himself disclaims fame. “I like people to buy the records, but I’d be quite happy if we were faceless musicians and it was just the name XTC they bought, like a steak sauce. I always felt uncomfortable with fame. Howard Hughes is my hero.” The self-described “Charles Laughton of the new wave—the last new wave” appreciates XTC’s hard-bitten fans, even if he

can't quite understand them. "It's like an odd-shaped mirror: very flattering to look into, but very weird 'cause it's so distorted and unreal."

Okay, Andy, we understand. Now how do you write the stuff? "Tricky to say. Deadlines can help scare music out of you. I always get this feeling that I'm never going to write another song. I'll sit up here staring at a blank page. Then some song will come out and it's complete... rubbish! Then a few more rubbishy ones come out. And then, suddenly, whaa! Something good'll come out. And whoa! Where'd *this* come from? It is like crapping; you have to get the blockage out of

difficult to swallow, and it obviously put me in a belligerent mood from day one."

For *Oranges and Lemons*, Virgin Records was pushing the band to stay with an American producer—for dubious commercial reasons, Partridge believes. They chose the relatively inexperienced Paul Fox on the strength of a complete overhaul he'd done of a Boy George single. "The stuff they heard that I had done," Fox says, "was a little more mainstream than what they were used to doing." But Fox, an XTC fan, "knew that they did not exactly have a great time making their last album," and was determined to give them a better experience. He also had a valuable background in keyboards as a former session musician—and an even more valuable in at Los Angeles' Summa Music Group Studios, available to XTC for one-sixth the rate of the English studio that was their first choice.

Partridge professes satisfaction with the results and Fox's respect. "It was nice to have somebody who listened to and tried our suggestions, even if they failed. It's difficult to play tennis on your own. You have to have somebody to whack the ball back; that's what keeps it going."

The drummer this time around was Mr. Mister's Pat Mastelotto, an old session-mate of Fox's. "I had known he was a big XTC fan," Fox says of the drummer, and he also thought Mastelotto's "bandier" approach—that is, less like an L.A. session pro—would fit in well with the group. "I knew that he could already play like Terry Chambers," Fox adds. Mr. Mister agreed to lend out Mastelotto, who had a blast requesting old XTC songs during the three weeks of rehearsals that preceded recording.

During those rehearsals Fox and the band arranged and restructured the demo recordings which were in varying stages of completeness. Partridge admits his are pretty rough. "Sometimes you have a definite image of what you want. You hand the song over to other members of the band and say, 'Do what you will; I'd like this kind of atmosphere.' Sometimes they get it totally wrong and it can be surprisingly rewarding. Sometimes they get it totally wrong and they'll smother it."

"The Mayor of Simpleton," the initial single from *Oranges and Lemons*, started with lyrics Partridge wrote a few years ago. "It was a much more slow, mournful kind of song; early demos put it somewhere between UB40 and the Wailers, very reggaefied. It had a different tune, with much more of this miserable lode to it. I liked the lyrics, and I thought it needed vitality." "Across This Antheap" also accelerated from a bluesy tempo to its current "Latin" feel, according to Partridge—"from Tony Joe White to War." That's a sampled Partridge shouting "hey!" throughout. "I said, 'Look, can you make it sound like I'm shouting down a ventilator shaft?' The engineer said, 'Why don't you go and shout down a ventilator shaft?' The simplicity of ideas sometimes is astounding!" Partridge did, and that's what you hear.

One pronounced trait of *Oranges and Lemons* is the crisscrossing of vocal lines. "Counter melody madness!" Partridge exclaims. "It's just a habit we've gotten into—the joy of several songs happening at once. It's musical masturbation; I can't leave the thing alone. We feel like we sort of own it. Not many people do that now—not since *West Side Story* or *South Pacific*."

He notes that the three drummers on XTC's four post-Chambers albums "all have different personalities. Prairie Prince [on *Skylarking*] had a tight, flicky kind of sound—a very controlled feel. Pat Mastelotto was not afraid to use a lot of electronic bits and pieces, and not afraid to play along with



"If I don't find playing live pleasurable, why be given money for something I don't enjoy doing? I might as well go sweep out the sewers."

the way and then it all comes flowing out.

"Each time we finish an album I think that's the last thing I'm ever going to write. Then somebody says, 'Time for another record, isn't it?' The motors start clicking inside and I think, 'Hmm, have I got any songs?' And each time it's usually better than the last time out. 'Chalkhills and Children' is as good as anything I've ever done. 'Here Comes President Kill Again' is a fine marriage, the way the lyrics fit the music."

It's now time to meet Colin Moulding, who's been very patient. Moulding contributed three songs to *Oranges and Lemons*—thematic bummers, each and every one of them. (Though Geffen is considering the musically sprightly "King for a Day" as a single pick.) "It's the winter of discontent," he laughs. "If you're in a writing spree for two or three months, usually you don't feel up and down and up and down. I suppose it was more of a down period for me. I was just feeling really depressed. I think I've dragged myself out of it now. I tend to go through these, 'Oh, what's going to happen?'"

Moulding apparently labors longer over his songs than Partridge, which accounts for his smaller output. He had an unusually high percentage on *Skylarking*, a result of producer Todd Rundgren choosing the material. "I caught 'im and Todd holding hands a few times," Partridge says with malice towards none. "To be fair," Moulding quickly interjects, "we sent tapes over for *Skylarking*—I hadn't even met Todd—and the album running order was sealed." "It was a very weird sensation," Partridge adds, "to have somebody tell you what your album's gonna be, the order it's gonna be in, and how the songs will segue together."

That was just the beginning of a clash of wills that marred *Skylarking* for Partridge. "The whole Todd experience was frustrating," he says. "We were obliged to shut up and be produced, or else; 'it's your last chance.' That was very

machines; in fact, he encouraged it, which we thought was quite revolutionary in a drummer, 'cause drummers mostly think of machines as putting them out of work. He's very metronomic, and that underscored the precise feel to a lot of tracks on this album."

Doesn't Partridge ever long to have a permanent drummer?

"No, 'cause I wouldn't know what to do with him—bring him around once a week for a cup of tea and, 'See ya in seven months' time when I've written some songs, then!' We're not like the Monkees; we don't live in one big house."

Still, he likes the interplay of a band situation. "I need Colin to upset me, to bring demos around and for me to go, 'Shit, these are really good.' I need competition. If I was doing it all I'd get really lazy." He describes Gregory's role as "icing chef, decorating the cakes that we give him. He knows the chords I'm playing"—unlike Partridge sometimes.

With the album out, Partridge feels he's due for another bout of arm-twisting from Geffen to get him to tour. "They try that regularly. Someone gets very chummy, a few drinks go down, I get a little bit merry—and then he starts on a touring thing.

"I don't want to tour because I don't see that as pleasurable, and I don't see any reason at my age [35] to do anything or have anything inflicted on me that I don't find pleasurable. I should

be in complete control of my life at my age, and do what the hell I want to 'cause I've earned the right—well," he reconsiders, "these various roads have led to the point in my head where I don't feel indebted to anyone; I don't have to follow any particular orders or instructions." He's speaking softly now. "If I don't find playing live pleasurable, why be given money for something you don't enjoy doing? You might as well go sweep out the sewers."

Partridge doesn't think XTC's "living death" as a studio band bothers Moulding, another family man. Gregory says he'd like to do more, "but I'm just a lone voice. These two guys are writing the songs and keeping the band afloat—if indeed there is still a band."

"He likes to play and crank it up," Partridge says of Gregory, "so I think he's a little frustrated. I've tried to urge him to go on the road with other people so he can get that evil spawn out of himself and come back and be with us." He switches on a broad west-country twang: "You're not having sex in this marriage so it's all right to go to a prostitute if you want."

He's suggested that Moulding and Gregory find another singer/guitarist for touring purposes: "I can stay at home and write songs and design stage shows for them. But I think that was a non-starter—we'd probably get all the Beach Boys shit

CENSUS WORKING OVERTIME

HE may (or may not) be the Mayor of Simpleton, but **Andy Partridge** knows one thing: The Roland PG-1000 programmer that goes with his D-50 confuses the hell out of him. "I'm not a very logical person," Partridge declares, and the PG-1000 "is aggressively logical and it rather upsets me." Until he figures it out, he's happier with a "tiny little Yamaha sampler" that he used for songwriting until recently. He seems to be having more fun with a new toy, an Alesis HR-16 drum machine. Partridge records home demos on a 1982-vintage Tascam Portastudio; for that purpose he keeps a "fizzy" Session MKII amp—"not fantastic." He was impressed with a Fender Stage Lead he played through during the *Oranges and Lemons* rehearsals. Oops, guitars: Until '82 he played an Ibanez Artist exclusively, but that changed when he got a Fender Telecaster Squier—"it has a nice clangorous tone"—that's his current electric one-and-only. On the acoustic side, Partridge has played his Martin D-35 on all XTC albums dating from *English Settlement*. He also has a small Yamaha acoustic for "twanging" purposes, and a "Woolworth's" bass guitar (no name on head) with a "very unusual tuba-like tone to it." Guitar strings are D'Addario or Ernie Ball Regular Slinky. Other gear: Korg DDD-1 drum machine, Yamaha D1500 digital delay, Alesis MIDIverb, Hitachi boom box. He has PG Tips teabags but prefers coffee.

Colin Moulding used three basses on *Oranges and Lemons*, predominantly a Wal. Back-up basses were a Fender Precision and, for the double-bass sound on "Pink Thing," an Epiphone Newport. "It goes 'poun,'" Partridge describes helpfully. Moulding's album rehearsal amp was a Trace Elliot—"so clear it was unbelievable"—and he holds his group together with Rotosound strings. Instead of a pick he prefers a fingernail (home-grown). He writes with the help of an Ovation acoustic guitar.

Now if you want to talk guitar, ask **Dave Gregory**. He was crushed that he couldn't take his entire guitar harem (over 20) with him for *Oranges and Lemons*, but he made do with his faves: a 1953 Gibson Les Paul gold-top; a Schecter Telecaster-style ("quite versatile"); a 1963 Stratocaster; a semi-hollow 1964 Epiphone Riviera with miniature humbuckers, heard on the "Pink Thing" solo ("It has a nice Beatley sound"); and one of the first 25 Rickenbacker 12-strings shipped to England in the wake of "A Hard Day's Night." Gregory uses Ernie Ball strings "out of force of habit," but creates his own gauge set: .011-.013-.016-.024-.038-.050. He has a Roland JC-120 amp "for those rare occasions that I go out of the house," and a Japanese Fender Sidekick 30 amp for home practice. Effects include a MIDIverb and D1500. For

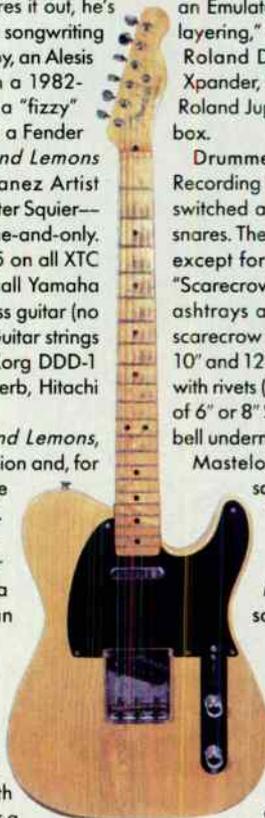
keyboard dabbling he keeps a Roland JX3P with MSQ-100 sequencer, and "an old acoustic piano."

Co-producer **Paul Fox** called upon his background as a session musician to add some keyboards to *Oranges and Lemons*. He used mainly an Emulator III (e.g., the "strings" on "Across This Antheap") and, "for layering," a Roland Super Jupiter. He also employed an Emulator II, Roland D-50, PPG Wave, Prophet VS, Yamaha DX7, Oberheim Xpander, and his "museum rack" with an Oberheim 4-VC, Prophet 5, Roland Jupiters 6 and 8, and a Juno 106 MIDI'd through a Sycologic box.

Drummer **Pat Mastelotto**, a Yamaha endorsee, played on a Recording Series kit with Remo heads. But he obviously loves variety: He switched among eight different tom-toms (8" to 16") and 15 different snares. The 22"x16" kick-drum with a DW pedal pretty much stayed put, except for "President Kill"'s early-'40s Leedy parade drum; and on "Scarecrow People," featuring Mastelotto's old red Rogers—as well as ashtrays and pots and pans to approximate Partridge's idea of a scarecrow drum kit. Cymbals tended to be Paistes for crashes, small (8", 10" and 12") Sabians for rides. "Scarecrow People" has an old K-Zildjian with rivets (courtesy of Fox); "Garden of Earthly Delights" includes a pair of 6" or 8" Sabian splashes. The high-hat was a 10" Sabian with a Paiste bell underneath.

Mastelotto isn't shy with electronics. He used "a fair amount of samples" for composite snare sounds, including three alone for "King for a Day," played on a Roland Octapad, and the overtone of "a very ringy Ludwig similar to a tube-lug snare" sampled on an Akai S900. The drummer and his tech Paul Mitchell bent the samples with a warp function "to a note that sounded good" for each track. Tambourine-shaker, congas, tablas and other oriental percussion come from Casio FZ-1 samplers. A Yamaha RX5 drum machine crops up on the fade of "Hold Me My Daddy"; elsewhere Mastelotto used an MX8 MIDI patch bay to increase the velocity of a LinnDrum fed into a Yamaha QX2 program. An old Simmons SD55's kicks and snares are on "Chalkhills and Children" and "Poor Skeleton Steps Out." There's a Pearl SC-40 on "Cynical Days"—"similar to a tambourine but more of a bongo"—and "Garden of Earthly Delights," "for a low kick that bends up like a tabla." "Garden" also employs a Roland TR727 drum loop. And Mastelotto still uses sticks: Pro-Mark 5Bs or 909s, "butt-end."

Finally, a few words of discouragement from Andy Partridge: "I don't take that much pride in instruments....There's still no equation between better gear and better-quality songs, unfortunately."



flung at us. I've even considered getting a band together, calling them something like Farmboy's Wages, and they'd go out, like *Beatlemania*. It probably wouldn't be quite the same."

"They're really great live," says Fox, who had the privilege of being the entire audience at XTC's *Oranges and Lemons* rehearsals. He'd love to see a tour, though "I'm not going to hold my breath. They're all such good musicians." (Those with fading memories of exciting XTC shows will vouch for that.)

"I understand his—no, I don't understand his reasons for not touring," XTC manager Tarquin Gotch says of his recalcitrant charge. "I work on the assumption there will be no live touring, but secretly hope, in the back of my mind, some miracle might happen." Until it does, Partridge is likely to remain in Swindon, for which he harbors no great love. "The place is a dump, no romance about it. London is a bigger dump. I'd like to move out to the edge of the countryside, away from people a bit more."

It's not so much that adoring locals follow Partridge wherever he goes. "No, they probably resent the fact that we actually did something."

"Swindon's quite an apathetic town," Moulding concurs. "A lot of them think we split up, I think."

Only Gregory speaks for the defense. "There are pockets of people who are proud of what we've done on behalf of the town, I suppose," the soft-spoken guitarist says. "We put the town on the map."

Now if only the public would put XTC on the charts. "It's sort of like a hobby, a paying hobby," Partridge says of his shabbily genteel career. He sounds incredulous when he notes that both Virgin and Geffen "are very happy with the songs we've given them. It's nice to have them positive for a change, rather than surly and saying, 'Well, I don't hold up much for the

future if you don't get the sales figures up.' But it's funny: The more positive they get, the more unserious I get. They can sniff cash in it now, it's losing its appeal to me. If that redresses itself properly, I'll end up a house painter."

Speaking of hobbies and house painting, no XTC article would be authoritative without mention of the band's alter ego, the Dukes of Stratosphear. XTC almost *was* the Dukes of Stratosphear, but the shorter, snappier moniker won out the last time the group changed its name, in the mid-'70s. In 1979 Partridge asked Gregory—not yet in XTC, and an even bigger psychedelia nut than himself—"if he would be interested in making a psychedelic album under another name, like Electric Bone Temple."

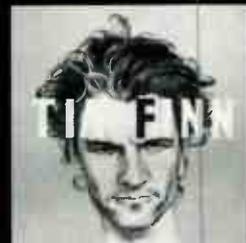
That project was shelved until 1985, when Partridge dusted off the "Dukes of Stratosphear" handle for a remarkably authentic-sounding EP of pseudo-psychedelic p'tributes. Partridge was pshocked to discover that the tongue-in-cheek *25 O'Clock* sold twice as well as the previous XTC album, *Big Express*. Virgin insisted "the Dukes" record a follow-up. (Geffen hadn't released the EP in the U.S.) "I'd told the Dukes joke and that was it," Partridge says. "But lots of letters came in; 'Can you *ask* the Dukes to do another album?' I relented, and I felt like we were doing *The Empire Strikes Back*, or something 'II.'" The full-length Dukes album, *Psonic Pspot*, contains better songs than its predecessor, Partridge feels, but with less of a period ambience.

In between these efforts, XTC proper was starting to play for real what the Dukes of Stratosphear did as a studied goof. The '60s aura of *Oranges and Lemons* makes it even harder to tell where one "group" stops and the other begins. Partridge

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

There's a pure idea in every mind.

TIM



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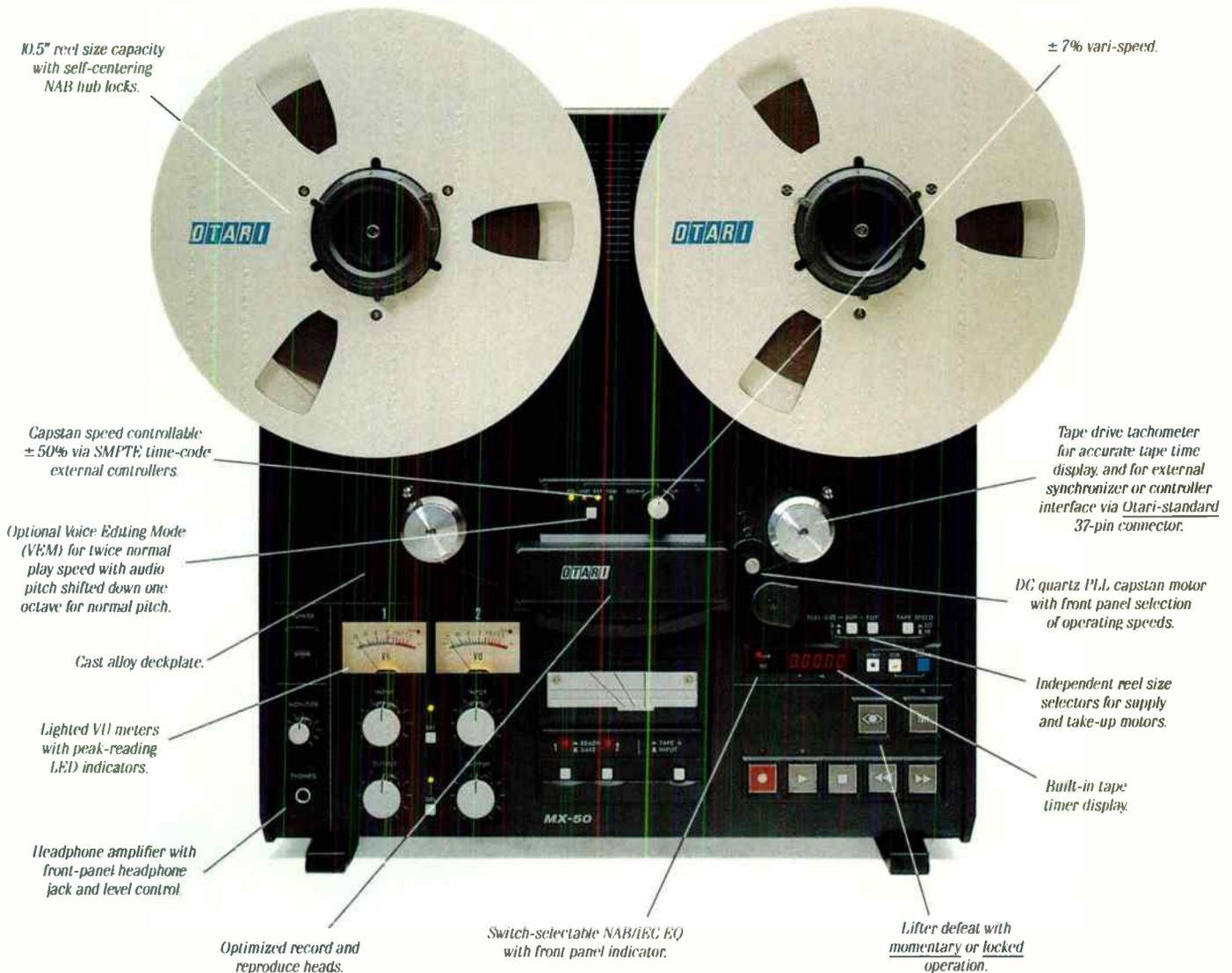
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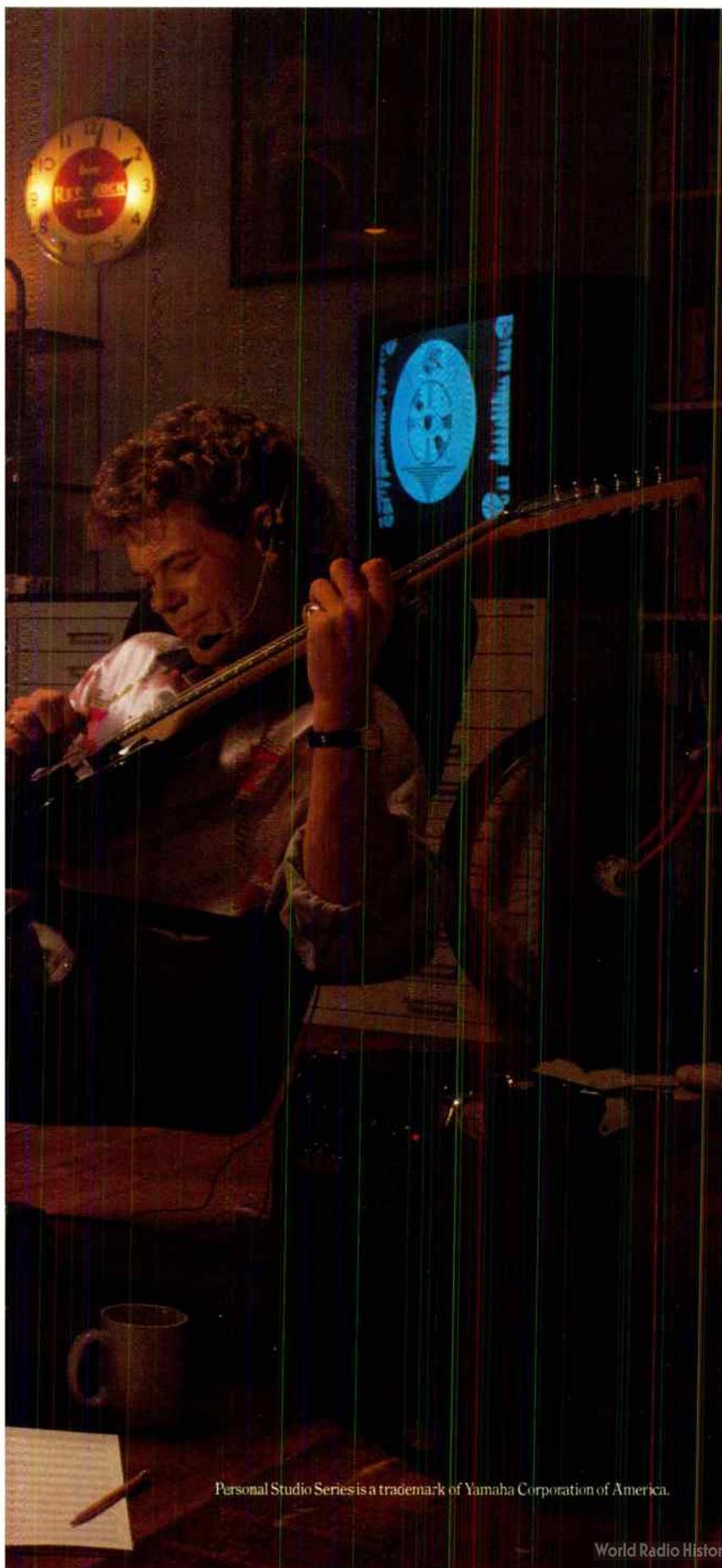
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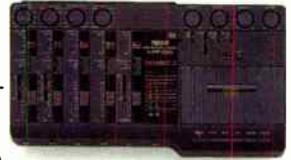
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Cooking with Fine

The Band That Plays Apart Stays Together

— By Scott Isler

CERTAIN PEOPLE may start bands only for the purpose of making money. Most musicians, though, presumably can temper their greed—or at least cloak it tastefully—with more elevated reasons for uniting: The desire to join together to achieve artistically what the individuals couldn't accomplish on their own. An urge to celebrate the community of mankind. A loophole in the in-

come tax laws. The realization that in unity there is strength. One member's particularly good stash of pot. A place to crash.

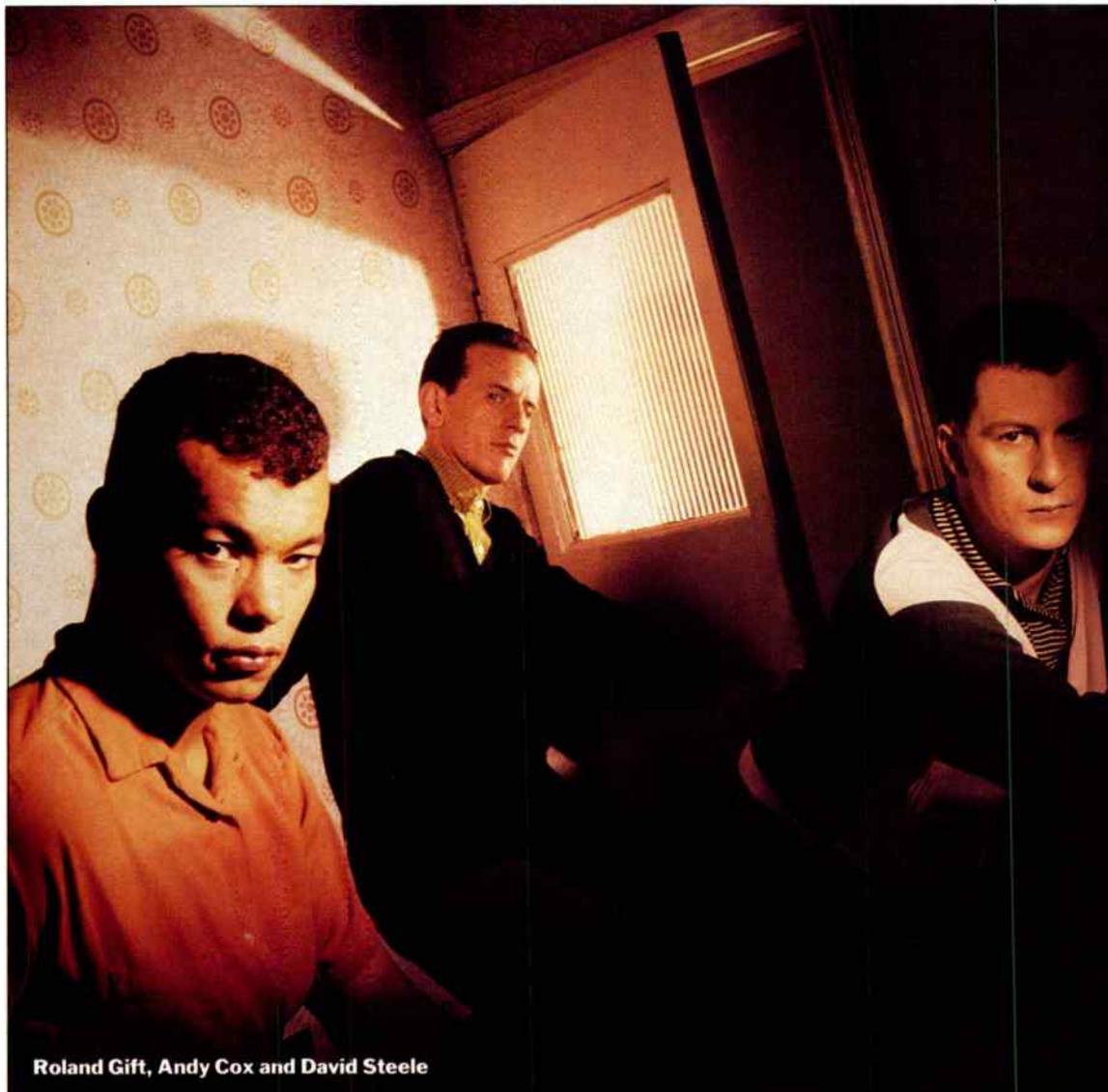
Now welcome to real life, stupid. The Beatles not only didn't live all in one room that looked like four joined houses on the outside, they've been suing each other for years. In case you just graduated from col-

lege, this is an age in which raiders plan hostile takeovers, and dewy-eyed newlyweds get dewy-eyed from studying the fine print in their marriage contracts. You can't even share a needle these days, and crack smokers tend not to pass the pipe.

In short, the Woodstock Nation communal ideal has long since shattered into

Young Cannibals





Roland Gift, Andy Cox and David Steele

neurotic shards. Let Iran pose as a community; in the civilized western world, it's strictly an I for an I. The late '80s are a time of platinum-card-carrying individualists stalking the Darwinian jungle, all looking out for number one. In England Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is busy dismantling the country's socialist institutions: privatizing the post office and water companies, proposing to make the National Health Service a little more, er, selective...

"Everything must go!" Andy Cox comments drily. "Closing-down sale." Who does this punk think he is, criticizing a head of state? Before you get too excited, consider that Cox's band, Fine Young Cannibals, is a perfect example of the social disintegration all the above tried to convey. The band is a drummer-less trio, so right away you know there's gonna be a certain anomie. They've released two albums in four years, which normally would indicate admirable sloth. But Fine Young Cannibals have been breathlessly busy; they just haven't been busy with each other.

Guitarist Cox and bassist/keyboard player David Steele worked on the soundtrack to *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, produced British acts the Wee Papa Girls and Pop Will Eat Itself, and landed their own dance-floor hit single (Top 20 in the

U.K.) as 2 Men a Drum Machine and a Trumpet. Singer Roland Gift was acting in movies: first as a mysterious squatters' leader in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, then in *Scandal*, about England's early-'60s Profumo affair.

On paper, it looks like these guys are rushing into solo careers without waiting for public confirmation of their band's appeal in the first place. On tape, though, Fine Young Cannibals have consistently delivered the goods: The 20 tracks on those two albums infuse '60s and '70s soul forms with current ideas about arrangement, production and song themes. The result is a timeless distillation of an American genre, with Gift's remarkable vocals building on the tradition, not resting on it.

Despite being two mild-mannered mumblerers, Steele and Cox have already made their mark in British pop music history. The former grew up on the Isle of Wight; he remembers his mother taking him, aged nine, to see Jimi Hendrix (10 days before his death) at the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival. Eight years later he met Cox and Dave Wakeling, two Birmingham teenagers summering on the Isle of Wight by making solar panels for Cox's brother-in-law. The three shared musical interests, and when Cox and Wakeling returned to their Midlands home they invited Steele to join them. "I think

they were quite amazed that I actually did!" Steele recalls.

His arrival catalyzed the formation of the Beat, known in this country, for legal reasons, as the English Beat. The band debuted 10 years ago this March; reminded of this anniversary, Cox comments, "We usually celebrate the day it broke up more." The Beat appeared simultaneously with other Midlands-based bands that were racially integrated, used the jumpy, up-tempo rhythms of Jamaican ska (reggae's predecessor) and criticized the government early and often. But unlike the Specials, Selecter *et al.*, the Beat never fit in comfortably with these "2-Tone" bands—and not just because they didn't record for the Specials' record company of that name.

The independent streak began with the band's eccentric make-up: six people, including a 50-year-old saxophonist. It continued with the Beat's musical taste, which couldn't be pigeonholed; they had a U.K. hit single with an Andy Williams chestnut, "Can't Get Used to Losing You," and were thinking of recording "Begin the Beguine" when they split up in 1983. Even the split was distinctive: Another record company announced they'd signed Wakeling and fellow Beat singer Ranking Roger as General Public before anyone knew the Beat was no longer together.

In contrast to Wakeling's instant transition (and first General Public album a year later), the Steele/Cox faction of the Beat seemed to take an extended vacation to inner earth. Actually they were looking for a suitable singer, one with plenty plenty soul. They set their sights on the U.S., advertising via MTV—not the most likely source for a soulful singer, come to think of it. They spoke with Bernard Fowler of the funk-dance group N.Y.C. Peech Boys. Then they remembered Roland Gift.

Gift was the singer and sometimes-tenor saxophonist of the oft-misspelled Akrylykz, who had opened for the Beat on tour. His looks alone guaranteed him attention: Mephistophelian widow's peak, crème-caramel complexion, almond-shaped eyes. But Gift could sing—and write lyrics too.

They found him in London, playing clubs with a band called the Bones. It must have seemed a logical step for Gift to move from the Bones to Fine Young Cannibals, named on a whim after a 1960 Hollywood film. The new band's first release was the single "Johnny Come Home" in May, 1985. From the opening guitar note, "Johnny Come Home" is a compelling soundscape of cool textures, propulsive rhythm and shifting harmonies befitting Gift's equally rootless protagonist who wonders, "What is wrong/In my life/That I must get drunk/Every night?"

"Johnny Come Home" was the last song written for the first Fine Young Cannibals album. Gift feels it points the way to the band's approach on its current album, *The Raw & the Cooked*, in its dance orientation and use of a drum machine (unlike the other tracks on *Fine Young Cannibals*). "We wanted to keep the idea of songs and give them a modern groove," he says, "but not sell out to the groove. This sort of soul music—Motown, Stax—is what we were greatly influenced by. We don't want to throw that influence away."

Gift's well-modulated speaking voice is considerably lower than the range in which he usually sings. "His voice is very changeable," Cox notes. "He's got a lot of different tones—to the point that you try to get him to match something the following day and he'll be slightly different. His voice used to change a lot all the time—which is great in some ways and kinda irritating in other ways."

Although Steele and Cox relocated from Birmingham to London partly to live in the same town as Gift, Gift himself—the youngest Cannibal at 28—was born in Birmingham. His mother is British, his father a West Indian who immigrated during England's sweep of its colonies for labor in the 1950s. "A few hundred years before," Gift says, "they were brought in as slaves to do the work and then told to fuck off. This time they were invited and coaxed and led to believe they'd have a wonderful time if they came to England. And now they've been told to fuck off—again. It's an irony." He's not smiling.

When Gift was a teenager his family relocated to Hull, in northern England. During these years he got involved in acting. When the British new-wave music explosion detonated in the late '70s, Gift turned his attention to that art form. "I used to like singing, but if you were a good singer it would inhibit you, around the punk days. So I decided if I wanted to be involved in music I ought to play an instrument that demanded some skill, which singing didn't."

He chose saxophone and then proceeded to ignore it, as he couldn't sing and play at the same time. When someone offered to buy the sax from Gift, "I said, 'Give me two weeks, I'll let you know.' I had the saxophone case open in my bedroom. In two weeks I never picked it up, so I realized I didn't really want to and I sold it."

Before that happened, Gift had joined the Akrylykz and toured with the Beat. "I quite liked them at first," he says of the Beat's live sets, "but after about 45 minutes they got boring. I actually used to like Andy and David from that group, personally. They gave off a comfortable vibe."

That chemistry undoubtedly helped bond Fine Young Cannibals. Although Cox takes an occasional co-composing credit, the main songwriters are Steele and Gift. "I don't really like to explain how we write our songs," Steele says, "'cause I think it ruins the mystery." Mystery be damned, after an applied Yankee headlock he's a little more forthcoming:

"We start with the music—Andy writes or I write—and between us we get it so you can actually play a whole song. We play it to Roland as a finished piece of music."

"I'll listen to that," Gift continues, "and whatever that brings out of me—I usually let the music coax ideas out. Sometimes I might have a title. There's a song called

'Couldn't Care More' on the first album. I remember I was having an argument with somebody about that whole subject, about wanting to care and not being able to, so that's where that song came from. But normally it's just whatever the music brings out."

Listeners often notice that what the music brings out of Gift in the way of lyrics would induce mass suicide among Brownie troops. On *Fine Young Cannibals* the songs' narrators rail against the government when they can rouse themselves from the emotional wreckage of their own lives. The album's most ingenious set of lyrics, "Move to Work," combines the two themes: economics forcing a couple apart.

The Raw & the Cooked's lyrics are even more singlemindedly depressing. Don't be fooled by the titles: "Good Thing" is about a bewildered, jilted lover; the singer of "It's OK (It's Alright)" is neither, since his baby's up and left in the middle of the night. Only "Don't Look Back" offers a glimmer of hope: "We'll get by," Gift sings, although, of course, "times are bad/ And it makes you want to die." Even the band's choice of non-originals—"Suspicious Minds" and the Buzzcocks' "Ever

"We wanted to keep the idea of songs and give them a modern groove. But we didn't want to sell out to the groove."

Fallen in Love"—maintain the downward course. Are Fine Young Cannibals the Most Successful Pop Group Ever Eligible for Lithium Treatments?

"It could look like that," Gift admits. "But I also think you could describe what we do as modern-day blues, where you maybe are singing about horrible things or things that hurt, but just the act of singing them is cathartic, makes you feel better about them. That's what it is for me. The subjects probably are quite miserable, but when we're playing live I feel far from miserable."

Too bad they haven't toured in nearly three years. Gift doesn't act like someone about to throw himself out a window, but he does allow there's a strain of existential angst running through *The Raw & the Cooked*. He denies he's living the life of his gloomy protagonists, "but there's always that danger. You can become what you're performing, like that actors' disease; they take their work home with them. But sometimes I do wonder what the fuck is going on. When I'm flying, for instance, I think, well, so what if I do die? It isn't going to be such a big deal. But at the same time I really want to live."

"When I was younger I don't think I minded much either way if I lived or died—really. I wasn't that worried about what was gonna happen. Life's a bit more important to me now than it was then."

Unhappy childhood? "Not particularly. Not more than anybody else. It wasn't a fantastic childhood, but it wasn't fantastically awful. There wasn't really very much money around. But money's not everything."

That may be easier to say when you've got a single homing in on the top of the charts and an album that's sold a half-million copies in two weeks in the U.S. alone. Fueled by "She Drives Me Crazy," *The Raw & the Cooked* is just as deserving to be a huge hit as *Fine Young Cannibals* should have been. Steele argues that the new album's music is stronger than before, but the sudden U.S. acceptance has taken the band by surprise.

"The whole thing's been pretty weird," Steele marvels. "I don't know really why it happened"—though he suspects MCA Records' hot promotion team of doing a better job than A&M Records, who distributed the first album. "We didn't know what was gonna happen," Gift says of the current album, "because it was so long since the last one. After you've been away for three years you can't expect to go Top 10 with your first single off the album."

Helped by MTV exposure, "She Drives Me Crazy" has done just that. The song boasts the "raunchy rock guitar sound" that Cox claimed to hate four years ago. "Born again!" Steele offers helpfully as Cox ponders his aesthetic about-face.

"There's only so far you can go," the guitarist responds, "using no amplifier and no effects. Eventually you have to try something else." Cox furthermore takes distorted guitar breaks on two of the new songs. Can a heavy-metal solo be next? "We'll be working up to it on the next LP," Steele says.

Not likely. But "She Drives Me Crazy" is instructive of how Fine Young Cannibals (two of whom are vegetarian—insert big laugh here) go about their work. "It started out as 'She's My Baby,'" Gift says. "That just didn't have enough of an edge, so David came up with the title 'She Drives Me Crazy.' Then we brainstormed that one a bit. It wasn't really working."

"'She Drives Me Crazy' must have taken, like, two years to write," Steele says. "The riff came right at the end."

"It was a chord sequence for a long time," Cox adds. And Steele mentions that Gift "couldn't find the right way to sing it for a long time either. It was only when he tried the falsetto that it sort of clicked in. . . . We tried it a lot of different ways. He was just messing about, really, and he thought it sounded good. So we kept it."



"We may sing about horrible things, or things that hurt, but just the act of singing them is cathartic, makes you feel better."

They try to have songs nailed down by the time they enter the recording studio, but flexibility appears to be a Cannibals hallmark. "We usually try three or four different arrangements," Steele says. "Sometimes if we've got a verse we think is really good, we drop the chorus and write a new one."

"Then the chorus is better than the verse," Cox picks up, "so the verse goes. We change the key a lot—and always end up where we started."

"It just seems to be something—" "—we have to do with every song: play it in every possible key before we can record it."

Anyone taking the time to figure out *The Raw & the Cooked's* infuriatingly encoded production credits—the symbols are in different colors overseas, and so less of a struggle—will realize that nearly half the album was originally heard on film soundtracks. "Ever Fallen in Love" was in 1986's *Something Wild*, appears on that film's soundtrack album (also on MCA, conveniently), and was further released as a single. Three other tracks are from 1987's *Tin Men*, for which no soundtrack album exists; "just this," Cox smiles, referring to

The Raw & the Cooked.

"The *Tin Men* stuff was like doing an LP," Cox says. "We simply did it a lot earlier"—and threw it in a film. (The band unanimously hates its recording of "Ever Fallen in Love," however. It's on the album due to the insistence of the record company in England, where it was previously a hit single.)

Okay, we'll give them the *Tin Men* songs. Still: Three years to come up with nine new tunes? "Shocking, really," Steele yawns. "It's hard for us to write songs. We write very slowly. Roland found it hard to write lyrics for a while."

Gift speaks for himself: "I got a bit too self-critical. I just couldn't feel it. I think it was because I was probably forcing myself too much. Also, it's a second album. Even some friends were saying to me, 'After your first album you'll be crap, you'll be too rich to write any good songs.'"

Another reason for the long wait between albums is that the band spent virtually all 1986 on tour. "It just made us tired," Cox says. "It didn't really seem to make any difference to how the record was doing anyway. In fact, it seemed as soon as we arrived in a country the record would go down the charts."

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World Radio History

That experience left the band extremely reluctant to hit the concert trail again. They'll undertake grueling international promotional tours for interviews and personal appearances, but please, no shows.

"They have a horrendous time doing tours," says the band's U.S. manager Tony Meilandt. "They *hate touring*. They went into their shells after the last one." For now, band members say they're thinking of touring after the *third* album. No timetable available.

Fortunately for the band, *The Raw & the Cooked* has been selling at such a clip as to make touring unnecessary—at least for the time being. That also means more free time for Martin Parry, Fine Young Cannibals' hired drummer. Parry played on almost the entire first album, but is on only one *Raw & the Cooked* track. The explanation is an increasing use of—and preference for—drum machines.

"You never have to make three takes," Steele explains, "and you're listening to 'em all and thinking, 'Does it slow down there?' It gives us the freedom to work on our own. Andy and I program the drum machines. We don't have to explain to someone what we want, we just do it. I like the sounds you get out of drum machines as well. Who wants a real live drummer? It sounds worse!"

Cox qualifies this enthusiasm. "There's probably three or four drummers in the entire world that it's worth getting their feel. But a lot of the time you're just struggling to make a drummer play in time—or, if not struggling, there's always that little variation."

So drum machines are go with Fine Young Cannibals—even if they did recruit Jenny Jones for the relaxed ballad "As Hard as It Is." "She's really good with 6/8 tempo," Steele says, but "we'll never use her again. She's become too right-wing in her politics. She reads [British tabloid] the *Sun*. That's how we fell out with her. *Sun* newspaper—she loves it."

"So we can't really work with her anymore," Cox adds, reasonably enough. Martin Parry doesn't read the *Sun*.

"Luckily," Cox says. "Although he has bought a pair of really weird shoes lately. We're gonna have to have words with the band."

That doesn't quite hide the fact that Fine Young Cannibals do take their politics seriously. Their second single, "Blue," contains such single-entendre lines as "Government has done me wrong/I'm mad about that"; the song's title refers to the color of Great Britain's Conservative party. If Americans didn't pick up on that, Gift says, "they sure as shit did in England! Loads of TV shows dropped us 'cause it was a political song."

His lyrics are less overtly political on *The Raw & the Cooked*, "but I've got no reason for that. I'm not afraid of political songs. I feel if I actively try to write a political song it would sound contrived and a bit clumsy. Of all songs, political songs, unless they're good, sound really really bad."

Gift may not consciously try to write protest songs, but other factors in his life are less avoidable. "Racism is not something I come into contact with that much because you tend to lose your color when you become a celebrity. Now and

again, when people don't recognize you, you get reminded of it. That, in a perverted way, is quite a good thing because it does make you aware of what it's like for other people who aren't as protected. To a degree, I'm not gonna be brutalized by the police; the record company's got money invested in me, I've got an agent who'd like to see me do some more movies.

"Four or five months ago I went up to Stratford-on-Avon with some friends to see a play. We checked into a hotel and went out to have something to eat. We came back and as we were walking up to the door a security guard jumped up and said, 'You can't come in, we're closed'—and this is a hotel, hotels don't close. We said, 'We're guests here,' showed the keys, and he let us in.

"Then we saw there was a discotheque across the hall. We walked across to have a look and this other security guard jumped in front of us and said, 'Sorry, lads, you can't go in there, you're wearing jeans.'

"There were four of us. Three of us did have jeans, I didn't—and it was three black guys and one white guy. As soon as we were in there, the security guards were sort of—uncomfortable, alert and jumping around.

"We went to the manager and said, 'Can't we go in, we're guests.' He said, 'No, if you're wearing jeans you can't go in.'

So we got some drinks and sat over somewhere else.

"Then I said, 'Look, I'm not wearing jeans, I think I'll go in.' 'Cause I was a bit suspicious. I went to go in and this security guy jumped in front of me and said, 'You can't go in, you're wearing jeans.' I said, 'Look, these aren't jeans.' He said, 'Yes, they are.' I was pushing him and he was pushing me. I said, 'I'm gonna go in there, and a tin soldier like you is not gonna stop me.'

"He got the manager of the club and said to her that I was wearing jeans, and what's more I'd called him a tin soldier and that I couldn't go in. So she didn't have to make up her own mind. She said, 'You're wearing jeans,' I said, 'No, I'm not,' and it just got ridiculous.

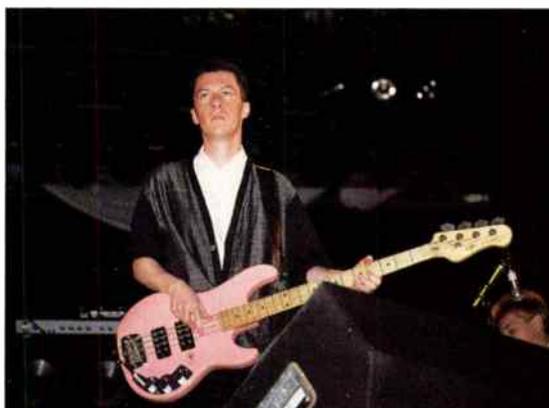
"Eventually I said to her, 'I think you're doing this because you're racist.' She said, 'Oh no, there's

some black people in there already.' I said, 'Well, I'd like to go meet them.' And she said, 'No, you're wearing jeans.' And *then* she said, 'You mean you're gonna go in there without your friends?' Sort of proved to me it wasn't because she thought I was wearing jeans. 'Cause she needn't have said that.

"It really upset me for a few days because it was just ridiculous. What was really sinister and strange about it was I wasn't actually wearing jeans, but they said I was. They were just changing language and meaning there on the spot. That kind of thinking is very dangerous; it leads to genocide."

Not exactly your typical rockstar adventure, but it helps explain the background against which Fine Young Cannibals work. And if Gift's lyrics often wallow in despair, the band's music can preach a different story.

"Just the act of singing makes you feel good, it raises the spirit," Gift says. "Music is an important thing to have in your life because it does that. You can do it with narcotics but it's not as good. I don't want to sound like an anti-drug person,



"I like the sounds in drum machines, and we don't have to explain what we want. Who wants a real drummer? It sounds worse!"

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"When I first used to go onstage I used to drink loads. Then I decided I'd try to do it without, so I cut down; each time I'd have less to drink. In the end I didn't have anything. I enjoyed it more 'cause I could see, I could feel more. I drink now and

GOOD THINGS

JUST how technoid are Fine Young Cannibals? "When we finished the last tour of America," guitarist **Andy Cox** says, "we sold everything." Well, what do they use, if not own?

Cox prefers Fenders: On *The Raw & the Cooked* he plays an early-'60s Telecaster and a Mustang. He also plays a "real weird thing" that fellow Cannibal David Steele cannibalized from an American guitar. "We used loads of different amplifiers: Fender Twin-Reverbs, a Marshall combo, Mesa Boogie and a really old Fender about the same size as a combo" but two different units. In-house engineer Robin Goodfellow has created various effects for the band, including "a version of a Roland GP-8 with a valve in it." (NB to Americans: "Valve" means "tube.")

David Steele still uses a G&L bass he sprayed pink during the Beat days. On keyboards, "I usually use a lot of samples. Also, I must be the only person in the world to still use a Yamaha DX7." He further mentions Akai, Roland, a Casio CZ-101, toy keyboards and "really cheap effects." Drum machines are an Alesis, Casio, "sometimes an Emulator" and something called a Movement of which apparently only six were made. "It looks very science-fiction," Steele says, and we'll have to take his word for it. Pianos by Steinway.

Steele adds that the band made an interesting discovery about recording singer **Roland Gift**. "He sounds good through this cheap microphone. We had these really expensive microphones and we couldn't understand why he didn't sound any good. Then we put up the one we normally use—a Shure 57—and it sounded great."

again, but sometimes it stops me feeling. I don't like that."

Critics have compared Gift to various soul legends, most of whose names start with Otis. The comparisons are unnecessary. If there are any similarities, maybe it is because Gift has seen some of the things they saw, felt what they felt. Fine Young Cannibals' success is a victory for communication. Theirs is the sound of hurt—the sound of life. **M**

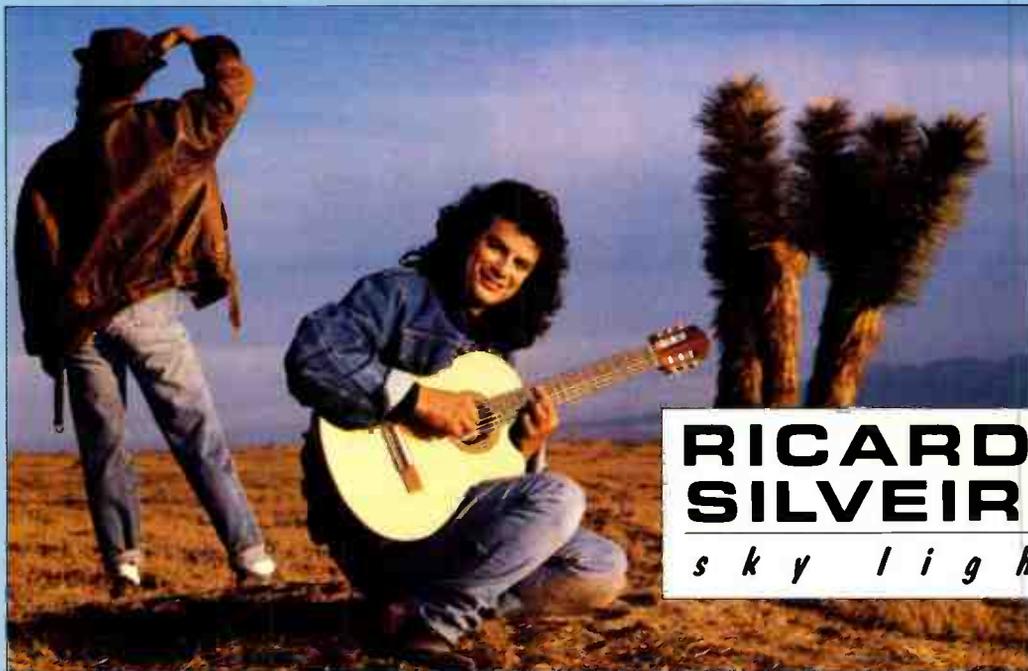
MILLER from page 53

For *Amandla*, Miller made the most of Miles' current mania for go-go. "Coincidentally I had been working with a band called E.U. from D.C. I wrote a song for them called 'Da Butt,' and E.U. turned me on to go-go rhythms. At the same time Miles had hired Ricky Wellman, who was the teacher of a lot of the young drummers in the D.C. go-go scene, so it seemed like a natural way to go. Go-go has got a swing to it, and I thought it would be interesting for Miles to superimpose some of the swing phrasing from his earlier days over this beat. The sound is a little like a throwback, yet completely new."

So after nine years of knowing Miles, does Miller *really* know Miles? "Well," he says with a trace of perplexity, "if you ever go over to Miles' house, he'll be painting, because that's what he's always doing. But his painting's like the opposite of his trumpet playing. You'd think somebody like Miles would paint a red line down the middle of the canvas and a blue line across, and that would be it. But his paintings are a lot more dense. There's a lot of interesting stuff: Each person has, like, three legs and four heads. Wild stuff. And yet when he plays he says so much with those little phrases. Still, I guess it all comes from the same place." — *Ted Drozdowski*

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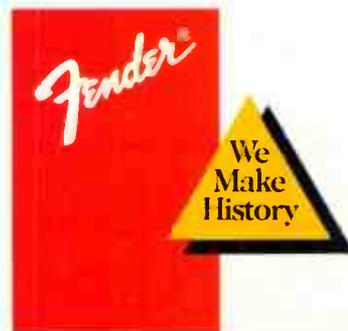
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*Reflections
on the Art of
Playing Changes*

WHAT DO YOU WANT?" asks Miles, like I'm wasting his time.

It's hard not to stare at him. Thin, with taut skin, he's immensely imposing, even though he's probably 5'6". He looks fit, and handsome, and he stares at you when he speaks, waiting for you to respond, like a snake waiting for a mouse to move. His eyes have the milky white circles around the iris that old people often get. He walks with a bit of a limp.

I've been at his Malibu beach house, an hour away from Los Angeles, for 45 minutes; Miles was in town getting acupuncture treatment for a crick in his neck. There is art all over the house. The tile porch overlooks impossibly beautiful ocean, strewn with rocks and clumps of seaweed that break the surface, causing ripples. A path wanders down to the beach; at the window in the living room a huge telescope stands silhouetted against the sky. It's just been reported

PHOTOGRAPH BY GILLES LARRAIN/RETNA, LTD.

in some seedy paper that Miles has AIDS; around New York rumors of his demise—bone cancer, lung cancer, anything else—float like trash on a wind down Broadway. He looks fine, even healthy, and the exercise cycle is prominently displayed near his piano and an oversized TV. He drove up to his house in his silver Ferrari.

"I want to ask you some questions," I say, playing the stare-back game. It's obvious he has no idea who I am. No response. He goes and talks to his assistant, Mike, who's gotten out of the car by now. Then he returns.

"Go make yourself at home, Peter. Go out on the porch. It's nice out there." Miles, it turns out, is a nice guy.

He's also a guy who, for all his musical movement and lip service to the present, is inexorably drawn to the ideas of his youth. He has taken the original tenets of the beboppers and lived them: change, elusiveness, a sense that art had radical imperatives. But still, this dates him both ideologically and as a memoirist. His comparisons are all to the great figures of his youth, before he became great himself. Of his musical compatriots, Charlie Parker's name comes up over and over, not Wayne Shorter's. And although he has a paternal interest in his band, his new record, *Amanda*, isn't much on his mind. His autobiography is coming out soon, and Columbia Records' boxed-set summation of his Columbia career—instead of reissuing the records themselves—brings a frown to his face. When I ask him a question about it he misunderstands and thinks that Columbia is doing another one. This genuinely shocks him.

"Yeah, I think people are trying to close the chapter of the book called Miles Davis. I know the nature of man, which is to do that. People don't like to talk about the same thing over and over again," he says. "You see this pin? It's from the Knights of Malta; I'm Sir Miles Davis. The guy who gave it to me said, 'We know style when we see it, but we don't know how to teach it. We can see a person and say, 'They have style,' but you can't take a person with non-style and teach him style.' That's what they told me when I got knighted: Keep on doing what I'm doing and not to discriminate. They said that I was the one they picked because I kept trying to keep the music going, change the colors. But that's my nature."

When did you start thinking about your sound?
"Forever."

But what were you thinking? Did you think that you had to have an individual sound?

"I just followed the sound that I liked. You just follow your body; I liked my instructor's sound when I was a kid in St. Louis."

What were you thinking about yourself, your playing, when you were a kid?

"Me? I didn't have time to think about myself! I was too busy playing."

But to get something distinct musically, you have to think.

"I was thinking about what chord Dizzy was playing. Sarah Vaughan and a woman named Mabel showed me major sevenths, what to do with them."

But you leave all this open space in your playing, I bludgeon.

"If you get a good rhythm section, why blow over it? It knocks me out when I hear it. I play against a rhythm section. They push you; that's what it's all about. You have to fit in, not over, in, like you fit in a chord, not over a chord. You do all of that to goose a rhythm section, 'cause they get tired of playing like this [*imitates a drummer*

playing a ride cymbal] if you don't do nothing. Tony Williams played with one of them trumpet players, it wasn't Freddie Hubbard, might have been Wynnton. Put his sticks down. Tony's like that anyway. If he doesn't get a chance for interplay, he'll get fed up; if you're not going to play with the drummer, why not get a drum ma-



chine and hook it up?"

Very few people of his generation have changed contexts as readily as Miles—Max Roach is another, maybe Roy Haynes, but that pretty much sums it up. And of his generation, Davis is easily the most controversial. Bringing up his electric music in a room of the wrong jazz critics is like bringing up Salman Rushdie at an ayatollah conference. Does he adapt his musical principles to his market, something which would be anathema to a hardcore bebopper?

"Me? I know what you're saying, but I don't do that, I wouldn't change my style because that's the going thing. I make music that I like, but I found out that usually what I like, somebody else will like, too. If you're sincere about it, somebody else can see it. But I have to change."

So what if the music doesn't change? Say if you said to yourself, "Well, I really like this group

with Herbie and Wayne, I'm going to do it for the rest of my life and explore all the things that weren't explored." Why not? It's good music.

"It's good, but styles change. All cars look like Mercedes now. Corvettes look like Ferraris. Styles change, man, if you're not here to see it, say you're in jail and you've just come out, it becomes really obvious. Styles change subtly, words change their meanings."

But why do you have to change? Nobody *has* to change.

"Who? Me? I just have to play in different styles. Which doesn't mean that I'm not me. When your friend calls you

"If you get a good rhythm section, why blow over it? I play against it. They push you; that's what it's all about."

can tell it's them by the tone of their voice. It's not that you change, right? I can't say I'm going to change tomorrow. You've got to do it gradually, you change every day; last year was go-go music. Now people have added something to it. Those that didn't hear it last year have to listen twice. I love the beat; we got it on the new record.

"Go-go is like Max used to play, the beat swings. I can tell you where it came from. Years ago when Art Blakey and Max and Kenny Clarke, Kenny Klook a mop we called him." [Davis starts singing rhythms.] "'Salt peanuts, salt peanuts.' See? That's the same thing."

When you heard go-go, you recognized it?

"Uh-uh. I felt it first. If I analyze something, I won't like it. But you can break it down, hear 'Salt Peanuts.'" He sings more rhythms. "I showed Vince, my cousin, that and he said, 'What!!!' What else you going to ask me? When can I be free?"

Even though you say your music hasn't really changed, it's become more pop than it was before.

"How so, what's pop?"

It's dealing with popular rhythms more than it did before. It's closer to dance music.

"For who? All people? Chinese people? Japanese people?"

We're talking about American people. If you play "Kind of Blue" or "Round Midnight," that's not dance music.

"It was then."

People were dancing in the Blackhawk or at the Vanguard?

"Not in the Blackhawk, not the Vanguard. But Art Blakey, Kenny Clarke and I would play the Audubon Ballroom and people would dance."

But the newer music sounds like dance music.

"How? It's the beat? Lionel Hampton had the same beat, and Mingus threw the drums off the stage, because Lionel liked the beat too much, which drove Mingus nuts." Miles laughs at the memory. "Anyway, I don't think if something is popular, it's bad."

But people say that, right?

"The only person I ever hear say that is Wynton Marsalis, and he doesn't think like that unless he's being interviewed. He wants to be an innovator, and he is, but he doesn't talk like that. Wynton plays perfect, like Fats and Brownie, he's a hell of a trumpet player. We're not talking about his mouth, his vocal cords, we're talking about his musicianship; he's a motherfucker. Maybe he has to talk to let off steam. I know some crazy bitches that made the best love.

"Crazy guys too, the tone that we all had in St. Louis, that we all got from listening to a guy called Levi. Levi was crazy. He'd start laughing and they had to take him back to the asylum. Clark Terry would call me and say [imitating Terry], 'Levi just got out. And he's over at whatchamacall-it. And he has his horn.' I'd say, 'Levi, just put your horn

up to your mouth.' And he'd just smile.

"You look at Wynton's mouth. Wynton is a perfect trumpet player. It's just what he says... you have to let people think for themselves a little bit."

Davis' greatest influence has been his own unmistakable sound. He revolutionized mute playing. His broad, vibratoless sound matched the plains around St. Louis, dry and unsentimental, but immensely romantic. And it's his sound that has wrecked generation after generation of trumpet players, as well, musicians who should have been

finding their own way, instead of Davis'. "Sound is the most important thing a musician can have," he says. "Because you can't do anything without a sound. If a musician is interested in his sound, then you can look for some good playing. Because if he doesn't find his sound, he can't play what he wants to play, can't do what he wants to do,

can't play a good line. In the electric age, it works with the mix onstage, too. When I played out in Brooklyn I told the promoters, 'If you don't get the sound together, I'm not going to be in the band.' If the sound ain't good you want to kill yourself.

"The least little thing is exaggerated. Like the spit in your horn: With electronics it's like..." He makes a sound like an elephant dying. "If you don't hear your sound, you won't be able to play what you want to play, to connect phrases, you won't get nothing from it.

"Nobody can sound like Coltrane, for example. 'Cause it's Trane. First place, he had one tooth out. And it took Coltrane a long time to mature and ripen. Lucky Thompson and I used to talk about chords and shit, so I'd give Coltrane four or five chords to run on one chord, and he's the only one that can do it, he and Lucky and Bird and Coleman Hawkins. Nobody has that thing he had, which is from Eddie Davis and Sonny Stitt. Benny Carter [one of Davis' first employers] could do that too, if he chose to. He's real slick. He's always blinking his eyes and saying, 'Do I sound like Charlie

Parker?' I'd say no. Because he knew that I used to play with Bird, and Bird was all the noise then. But Benny was a brave musician. Working with him, I learned a lot and so did J.J. Johnson. Look out, Vince!" he yells to his cousin, who's cooking barbecue. "What's happening over there? What else you want to know?"

What effect did living in New York have on your playing?

"New York is the place for me. You get that rush. You see so much art in New York, a guy can do something like that," he motions to the art work on his dining room table, "you can play like that. I think Charlie Christian had a big influence on me and Bird. Blanton, the Southwestern style, that's the way I play. I thought everyone was playing like Dizzy when I turned on the radio and it's the John

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musicians! You could
take your pick."**



Kirby band, and I hear this trumpet player that sounds like Dizzy. I say, 'Goddamn, I got to go to New York, because if all the trumpet players play like that I got to get up there.' So I asked Dizzy, 'Who's that playing with John Kirby that sounds like you?' He said, 'That was me! Charlie Shavers was sick.' Goddamn! That made me go to New York sooner. When I got to New York nobody was playing. Dizzy, Bird, Vic Coulson had a nice tone.

"But back to Charlie Christian. He was one of the first be-boppers, 'Solo Flight.' We used to play like that. I was in school, and right across from school my friend Duke Brooks lived, and he'd get so high his mother put him on the porch and made a room for him. He was about four years older than me, but he played like Bud. He'd say, 'I got something to show you.' The piano was right there. He smoked so much reefer: reefer, piano and the bed, that's all he had in there. We played 'Airmail Special,' everything that the Benny Goodman sextet played. That was a good band. He and I, a bass player and a drummer. He'd play octaves, and we'd add a little bit to the arrangement. Ben Webster used that diminished chord in 'Cotton Tail,' stuff like that made my ear go west."

When you came out to Los Angeles in the '40s, what was the difference between New York and Central Avenue?

Davis rolls his eyes. "First place, they had two unions in Los Angeles. A black and white union; the black union, all the Tarzan movies—you saw the natives?—they just called up the black unions and got their extras. Central Avenue wasn't nothing like New York. New York was the best school you ever go to, 52nd Street, Ben Webster, Art Tatum, Charlie Parker, Dizzy, Sid Catlett, Earl Bostic, Savoy Ballroom, I got in on the tail end of that.

"All the musicians! You could take your pick for what you wanted to hear. For instance, Bird, you never heard anybody play as fast and loud as that, and with the long length of each note. That was the way I was taught. Don't sacrifice height for speed, if you play high; the only person I know who could play even in all the registers is Fats Navarro. He'd come and get me to jam. We'd go to Minton's. Funny too, when we'd play together, we'd sound alike. When you do art with someone, whatever that style is, that's what you do. Even if you write together, 'What about this, how about this!' It's exciting to collaborate.

"52nd Street was much more progressive. They didn't even like us out here. I remember working with Benny Carter; I came out to see Bird, and they gave him shock treatments because he was... America should be ashamed of itself the way it treats artists. A guy doesn't have to be white to be a bad motherfucker. Somebody should recognize these people. If someone wants to use dope, let him use dope; it's his life. Bird scared a lot of

people, especially white people. When they don't understand something, they put it down."

It wasn't just white people putting him down then. Black people didn't pay that much attention, either.

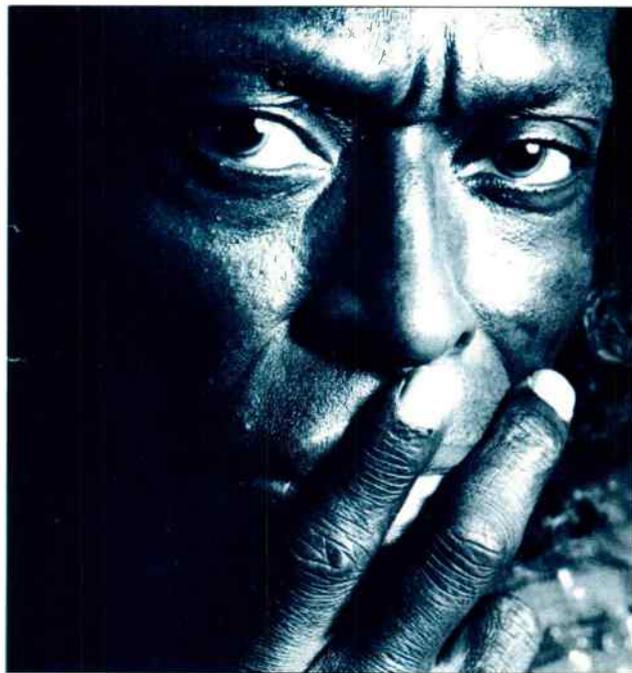
"That's true, but during that time, playing like we played, when we came out to L.A. we'd go to jam sessions, and people would want to hire us and the union would say, 'No, you have to wait three or six months. That's not fair, to put you on ice. I'd go to the union hall and they'd whisper, 'There's Davis, he's

playing that new stuff from the East.'

"I didn't give a fuck what they were saying, because I knew what I liked. I had gone out there—I had let Lucky Thompson stay with me in New York—and when I came out here I said to him, 'I can't stand Benny Carter's band—Benny's all right, but his band...' He said, 'Well, just leave, stay with me'; he'd bought a little house.

"I played with Mingus then, you know. Mingus is so funny; he likes the way Duke Ellington wrote. Myself, I like smooth voice leading and Mingus was a bad motherfucker, everybody can't do what he did. To me he was like a relative. He used to write things and we'd play them in the living room with six or seven people. And he'd order us to play them again, because he wanted to hear it. We'd argue a lot too, about chords. Bird and Dizzy, Bud Powell, the beauty in their playing is the way they add on to a chord. A chord is given, so add on to it, instead of changing it completely. Mingus would be walking along straight and all of a sudden he'd walk down five steps. I'd say, 'Mingus! How can you do that? You hear what the tune's doing.' But he was so stubborn. Then he wouldn't say anything. He gradually cleared it up.

"A lot of guys will do things like Sun Ra; you can't recognize the tune, it's destruction. Gil Evans and I had to



"America should be ashamed of the way it treats artists. When they don't understand something, they put it down."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 97

Doin' the Rat Dance

Marcus Miller on Collaborating with Miles

Ask him. Marcus Miller will tell you that Miles Davis is a reg'lar guy. A genius? Sure. An institution? You betcha. But a reg'lar guy all the same.

It's not obvious, of course. Nothing about Miles is. Hell, Miller knew him for five years before he found out. "I didn't *really* get to know Miles until I started producing him, on *Tutu*," he relates. "Honestly, I was scared to give him any kind of direction. I was even scared to tell him where to play. Because he's Miles, you know? I'd just turn on the tape and say, 'Do what you want.'"

"But he pulled me aside and said, 'C'mon, man, I don't mind a little bit of direction. You wrote the tunes. Tell me where you want me to play. It helps me out, gives me a framework.'" See, a reg'lar guy.

Miller has been Miles' closest collaborator in the '80s, following in the giant steps of Gil Evans and Teo Macero. He's played bass in The Man's band, written music for and with Miles, hung out, and produced three of his records. Back in '81 when Miles first beckoned, Miller was a session man who'd "learned bass in the streets" and held a degree in clarinet from Queens College. "I was doing this country & western date when I got the message. I called Miles back, and he wanted to know if I could be ready for a session in two hours!" Miller made the gig and stuck around for three years, playing on *The Man with the Horn*, *We Want Miles* and *Star People* before splitting for producerville.

"Miles is always good at putting the pressure on you," Miller testifies. "He really made me find my own voice as a bass player. I mean, I had the facility, but... It's one thing to play like somebody else on a record. If you get criticized you don't really feel responsible. But in Miles' band, there was no one I could copy and sound right. He forced me to play what I felt. And once you put your soul on a record, you have to deal with criticism, because it's criticism of you. Miles taught me how to deal with that, too, because he's always heard it, but you could tell criticism never got beyond that first layer. He'd go, 'Yeah, yeah, I'm gonna do what I do anyway.'"

Miller had already produced and written songs for Luther Vandross, Aretha Franklin, David Sanborn and Natalie Cole when he heard that Miles had jumped from Columbia to Warner Bros. "I hadn't seen Miles for a couple of years, but I called [Warner VP] Tommy LiPuma and told him I had some ideas, so if Miles had any space on the record I'd like to send him stuff. Miles said yeah, so I finished three demos, 'Tutu,' 'Portia' and 'Splatch,' and asked Tommy if he wanted me to send them to L.A. He said, 'Nah, just come out here and we'll record them.' I went, but I was really nervous because they hadn't heard a note. I was scared they'd put me on the next plane back to New York.

"Tommy liked them, but the big test was Miles. The first one he heard was 'Tutu.' A friend of mine, Jason Miles, who's a synthesizer programmer, just happened to have a Miles sample, so we used it on that demo. I played the solo on a keyboard, thinking I sounded just like Miles. When I played it for Miles I waited for his reaction. He listened for a while, finally turned to me, and said, [*in a rasp*] 'Who's that on trumpet? Sounds like Nat Adderley.'"

"I've found out that when he's working on a record he's always up, very creative, never has a bad day in the studio. I try to get all the mundane work, like setting up the machinery, out of the way before he comes in so when he shows up we're ready to roll. Because usually his first or second takes are the ones. After that he says, 'Hey, that's it. That's the best I can do.'"

"He's unpredictable, too. 'Portia' on *Tutu* was a first take. I showed him the melody on a soprano sax I had, so he could relate to another horn, and then we started running tape. I was sitting there while he was playing, and he picked me up by my collar and pushed me up to the microphone to play the melody with him. I'd never played soprano on a record before, and we were both going onto the same track. He was playing so great that I was afraid I was going to make a mistake and ruin everything Miles played. That was one of the most tense experiences I'd ever had."

In comparison, cutting tunes like "Rat Dance" and "Lost in Madrid" for 1987's *Siesta* soundtrack was a sleepwalk. "I'd just roll the video tape, which was SMPTE'd to the multi-track, and play some things on keyboard that I thought matched the scenes. Then I'd get my bass clarinet and Miles and I would react to that, then go back and see how it worked with the film."

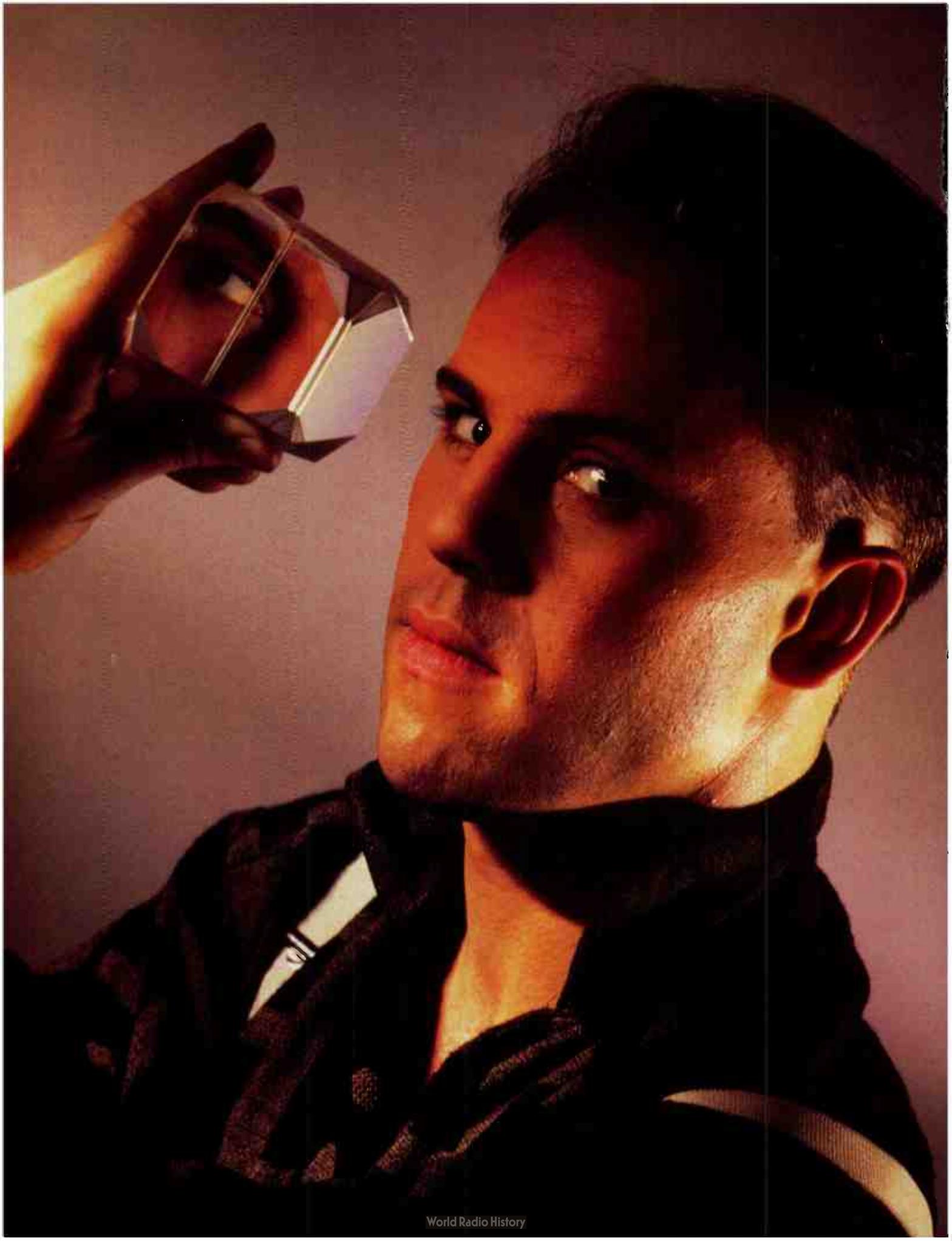
"The trick was to have Miles play Spanish music and not have it be a carbon copy of *Sketches of Spain*. It may remind you of *Sketches*, but the movie had a lot of eeriness to it, so I got to use darker colors and more space. It really let Miles explore his tones. And he's a master of that. He can

imply different keys without playing them; he can imply time without playing time. The more space he gets, the more creative he gets."

Miller says that "what you need to do to produce Miles is really get to know him and his music—hang out and listen. A lot of people associate Miles with one kind of music: whatever period of Miles' career they love the most. But you have to combine all the elements of Miles' experience with what's new and exciting today, because that's what Miles is into."



CONTINUED ON PAGE 44



THOMAS DOLBY

Has The Man of a Thousand Faces

Spread Himself Too Thin?

BY ALAN DI PERNA

1 OPEN ON LONG SHOT of Hollywood skyline. Grimy fog and half-hearted drizzle give the city the mean, seedy look it always has when the sun deserts it.

2. Dissolve to medium shot of Thomas Dolby's living room. A fire glows warmly beneath an ornately carved mantel, providing welcome contrast to the bleak opening shot. The camera pans left, across the eclectically decorated room—an antique floor lamp, several model ships, some Memphis chairs, arched doorways with '30s-style "Hollywood-Moorish" grillework, two grand pianos and large French doors overlooking the 101, the Hollywood Freeway, where the guy in Dolby's "The Key to Her Ferrari" has his auto-erotic epiphany.

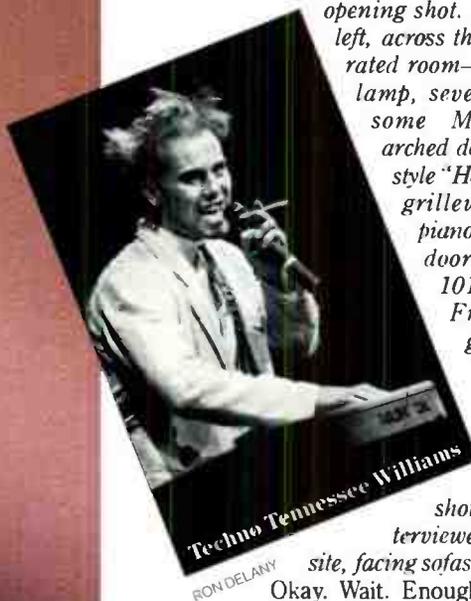
3. Cut to two-shot of Dolby and interviewer seated on opposite, facing sofas.... Okay. Wait. Enough already. CUT!!!

Let's get real here.

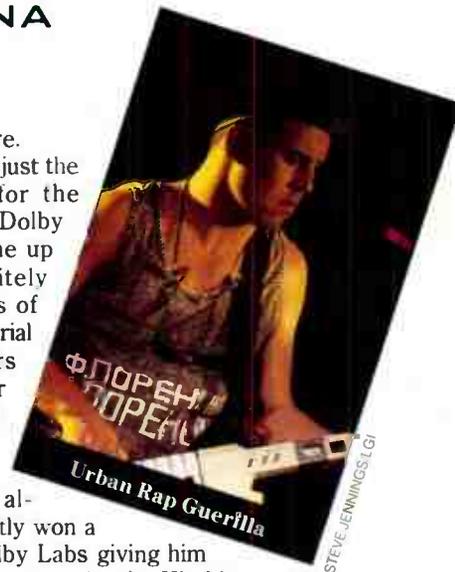
Ah, but that's just the problem. Dig for the "real" Thomas Dolby and all you come up with is an infinitely receding series of personas. Mercurial little characters you remember from videos and songs. Dolby? That's not even his real name, although he recently won a lawsuit with Doiby Labs giving him the right to keep on using it. His bio reads too much like a movie plot.

Voice-over: The precocious son of globe-trotting academics, young Thomas became a citizen of the world....

Very likely, all this is true. But from "Europa and the Pirate Twins" onward, Dolby has woven his bio/plot into his songs in such a way that you can't tell where the story leaves off and "real life" begins. Yeah, that's what good entertainment should do. But Dolby's way of blurring the line between reality and illusion makes it hard to get him into focus. Maybe it's that wistful, filtered-



Techno Tennessee Williams
RON DELANEY



Urban Rap Guerilla

STEVE JENNINGS/LGI

lens, geographic rootlessness of his first two albums—part and parcel of the pan-European bio/plot, once again.

"In the past, my songs have been very abstract in that sense," Dolby acknowledges. "Very devoid of any focus in time or place. They could be set now or in the past, in England, Europe in general, or wherever."

All that changes, of course, on Dolby's most recent album, *Aliens Ate My Buick*. Much of the record is an exercise in Hollywood regionalism. A brash romp in Tinseltown which surprised, perplexed and even repelled some fans of Dolby's oddball Oxford don persona. All of a sudden, he's writing songs packed with tatty local detail... smog alerts, Bel Air bimbos, pink leather upholstery, stupid license plates....

"You could say there's a slightly journalistic quality to it," is how Dolby sums the album up. "I come here, take in all the impressions I can and reflect them in songs. I think the English are very snobbish about America—particularly L. A. I've tried to resist being that way about it. But at the same time, it is a curious kind of culture."

The album, of course, stems directly from the latest chapter in the Dolby saga. He relocated to Los Angeles two-and-a-half years ago and, just last June, married actress Kathleen Beller ("Dynasty"'s Kirby Colby, who can also be seen clinging helplessly to hubby on the *Aliens Ate My Buick* front cover).

Voice-over: After years of restlessly wandering, the artist settles down to wedded domesticity in the Hollywood hills....

It seems eerily like a dramatization of Dolby's song "Screen Kiss." But could this be the real thing?

The man sitting across from me on that wet afternoon is real enough, a two-day stubble covering his face and the portion of his recently-shaved scalp that's visible beneath a black leather cap. The house, too, is real, as described.

"It's an old movie star mansion," Dolby explains. "The last person to live here was the art director for *Bladerunner*." The place does seem like a governor's residence in India or the Sudan—an expatriate enclave, a cozy bastion of civilization in a wild, tropical land.

"But I don't consider myself an expatriate," Dolby insists. "Because I was never really a 'patriate.' I spent all of my life traveling around. And I always felt divorced from that kind of Englishness. It's something I'm not

really proud of. I think the familiar gripe of English people in L. A. is 'well, there's no history, no culture, no ideology.' Which would seem to suggest that there is in England. But what there is in England is the residue of an empire which in the last hundred years or so has just crumbled around us. And I think what you're left with is this very low morale—a very intolerant race of people.

"The way that's reflected in music—although there's lots of musical talent coming out of England—is a very low acceptance of anybody who chooses to be different. If you're going to be

different it has to be in a very predictable direction. You're only allowed to be unconventional if you do it in a conventional way—a new hairstyle, a slightly new beat to the music. And I find that my sort of stubborn individuality as an artist is not really accepted in England the way it is here. I think that here it's applauded. People say, 'Yeah—go for it.' That's why, as a creative environment, I find it a lot more positive. And that, to me, is more important than what side of the road people drive on or what the interior decoration of the restaurants and nightclubs is like. Those are all things that I can tolerate. But I'm really here because I enjoy living and working here. I find it a healthy place to live and work in."

Geography aside, this whole business of defining the "real Dolby" wouldn't be such an issue if it weren't so important to the man himself. It's well known that he's devoted quite

a bit of energy to making sure he doesn't get typecast as the lovable P.G. Wodehouse zany for the rest of his days. "The songs on the first album [*The Golden Age of Wireless*] were quite varied, but it was 'She Blinded Me with Science' that broke through. That's what people identified me with and maybe missed the point that there was quite a range to what I did. So when I came to make the second album I tended to lean more in a quiet, moody direction. Just to restore the balance, I guess. To show people that I wasn't just making novelty dance records.

"And I think I got that off my chest with *The Flat Earth*. I felt, 'Okay, now people get the point a little more. They don't just identify me as this sort of nutty scientist. And that freed me up, on *Aliens Ate My Buick*, to just go

where the mood took me. And where it took me was back to a more outgoing attitude, certainly in the personality of the vocals and the lyrics."

The three-album process that Dolby describes, though, has taken seven years to unfold—hardly a prolific output. "I think it's plenty, personally. Although I know it's the low end of the statistic as far as artists go. But then most artists don't also write, play keyboards and produce for other people, act, write and direct videos and movies and all those other things. And if I've just spent three months in the studio on an album of my own, I'm not really ready to dive back in there and spend another three months working on someone else's album. So yeah, as it pans out, it takes me time to do things; but it's also a situation that allows me to keep a fresh attitude."

There's no denying that Dolby has always moved in increasingly concentric—and sometimes downright incongruent—artistic spheres. Before the 1982 release of *The Golden Age of Wireless*, he'd played with Bruce Woolley and the Camera Club, penned Lene Lovich's 1981 single "New Toy" and performed session synth duties on Foreigner's 4 and Joan Armatrading's *Walk Under Ladders*, among others. The success of "She Blinded Me with Science" launched him as a video director as well.

He originally approached rockvid pioneer Steve Baron to direct the "Science" clip. "But he was busy with another project at the time. However, he and his sister Siobhan Baron [at the time a producer for the siblings' Lighthouse Productions company] looked over my ideas for it. They said, 'Well look,



some of your vocabulary is incorrect, but all your ideas for the video are very good. Why don't you just come hang around one of our shoots and you'll soon pick up the lingo. Then you'll be able to direct it yourself.' So it's really because of their encouragement that I started directing."

As a result, Dolby became one of the first musicians to direct his own videos *and* do a good job of it—an anomaly even in rock video's initial and most creative era. He's in a unique position as a video director: able to sense and punctuate every key sound or riff with some onscreen action, cut or facial twitch.

"I had a pretty clear idea of how the video for 'Hot Sauce' was going to be before I ever recorded the song. There's one section that's a very Broadway kind of musical flourish: some fairly radical chord changes ending in this big string cascade. And when I wrote that, I had this vision of me spotting this large Latin lady across a room and getting a little glint in my eye like Davy Jones in the Monkees when he falls in love. So I recorded this piece of music to accompany the video."

Rock video, as is well known, often leads to the harder stuff: feature films. Dolby wasn't exempt from their lure. In the years following the 1984 release of *The Flat Earth*, he scored a few small-scale box-office flops like *Quicksilver* and *Fever Pitch* before getting a chance to write music for a colossal, big-budget flop, George Lucas' *Howard the Duck*. While working on the picture, Dolby became attracted to the idea of using film as an alternative means to radio for getting his music across. So, although he went on to score Ken Russell's *Gothic* in 1987, the Lucas project understandably left him with a bitter taste.

"As *Howard the Duck* illustrated very well, you ultimately have so little control of the end product in film. I still do love the idea of people first encountering my music in a movie theater rather than on the radio. But in the process of getting tied up in somebody else's project, I have to give up a lot of control. At least with radio, in ideal circumstances, you give your record to a radio programmer who says, 'I think the audience will like this.' And he plays it. With film, there are so many more layers of distillation. You can write great music for a lousy movie that nobody sees and you've defeated your purpose entirely."

But Dolby didn't spend the entire four-year stretch between *The Flat Earth* and *Aliens Ate My Buick* courting the movies. He kept active as a player and producer, too. On one hand, he's gravitated toward introspective lyricists like Joni Mitchell (whose *Dog Eat Dog* album he co-produced) and Paddy McAloon of Prefab Sprout, for whom Dolby has produced two records: *Two Wheels Good* and *From Langley Park to Memphis*. But on the other hand, he's been increasingly drawn to the out-of-bounds funk of Mr. George Clinton. Dolby co-produced Clinton's *Some of My Best Jokes Are Friends*. Funk's founding father reciprocated by contributing vocals and the song "Hot Sauce" to *Aliens Ate My Buick*.

"George taught me a lot about attitude really. He always regards going into the studio as an occasion—an event. He'll have arrangements with some studios whereby they'll call him up if there's a cancellation. Then he'll call anybody from his whole entourage who's in town and say, 'Come on down to the studio.' This is all without any specific idea of 'Well, tonight

we're going to cut that Funkadelic tune....' He'll just get in the studio with whoever's available and then decide, in the cold light of morning, what to call it, who to pay or not to pay. If you have a methodical mind like me—a lot of it's out of insecurity—you need to be reminded all the time that the best stuff comes about when there's a sense of occasion."

Dolby's flirtation with the funk points up one thing that makes it so hard to get a fix on him as an artist. He's a compulsive appropriator of styles. "Pulp Culture" from *Aliens*—which hints that popular culture is "there to be plundered" and "redefined"—can almost be taken as a summary of his favorite artistic method. Time and again, Dolby will latch onto a signature groove, sound or catch phrase and find some sly way to wrench it out of context—making it uniquely his own in the process.

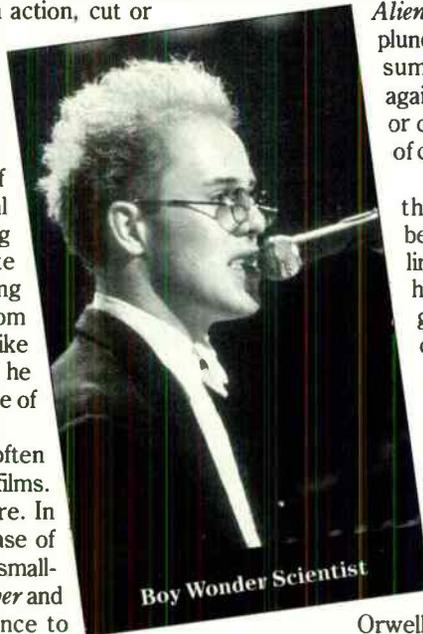
"In a way, 'Pulp Culture' is an anthem to that kind of thing," Dolby allows. "The song is interesting because it doesn't mean very much. A lot of the vocal lines were just the first words that popped into my head when I was writing the song. Lines like 'with a gun' are very iconoclastic in a way, because they're completely meaningless in the context of the song. A lot of what I do is really a collage, where you have little found bits and pieces you just throw together until the whole creates the impression you want."

So while Dolby may change musical styles from album to album, there is one constant: You'll always find him snatching those cultural signposts and replanting them in unlikely places. The first wave of British synth bands used techno gear to come off, predictably enough, all futuristic and

Orwellian. Dolby came along on his first record and used the same electronic pop timbres to evoke that elegiac, Old World nostalgia that defined his early style. And speaking of appropriations, even the phrase "blinded with science" is an old Brit expression for praising... shall we say... female pulchritude. (As in, "Cor, that one fair blinds you with science!")

This continues on *Aliens Ate My Buick*, where you get tunes like "My Brain Is Like a Sieve." Here Dolby uses a reggae rhythm as the tongue-in-cheek backdrop for a song about some poor guy who wants to lose his memory so he doesn't have to dwell on how his girl has dumped on him.

"I tend to lock onto a specific style of groove fairly early and work with the conventions within that," says Dolby of the tune. "Triplet echoes are something that obviously go with that up-beat reggae kind of lilt. So when I get an environment to work in, elements will come up and propel me to a certain style of singing. I'd never done anything in a reggae style before. I guess eventually I'll run out of styles. But when I'm exploring a new area like that, I try to make use of it by twisting clichés around. For example, in the part of the vocal where the word 'murder' gets echoed (a standard DJ dub move), I had the idea of using a



'50s cop-show voice for that toasting yelp in reggae."

Aliens does differ from Dolby's past records, in that it's the first album where he decided to assemble a good old-fashioned, gigging band—the Lost Toy People—rather than relying on session players and arrangements based on layers of overdubs. "Going into this album, I was at a bit of a loss. When I recorded my first album, the sounds I was using were considered fairly techno. And in those days, I really felt like a pioneer. Not many records had synthesizers or drum machines. But now that's flipped completely. My accountant has a DX7 in his office. So in a way, I felt a lot of pressure. Like, what sort of bizarre drum sounds am I going to come up with this time? I don't like to think I have to make a certain kind of album because I have to use certain kinds of sounds. It really felt like, to continue the path of exploration that I've always taken, I had to go back to playing with a band."

Shortly after he got to L.A., Dolby began advertising for players in a local paper, rather than harvesting the L.A. grapevine for the usual session sauternes. Many of *Aliens'* groove-oriented songs grew out of auditions for the Lost Toy People: "I didn't want to give unfair advantage to people who really knew my songs well, so I just came up with several grooves that I'd have the players work on."

The grooves grew into songs. And when the Lost Toy People played a series of L.A. gigs—deliberately underpublicized—Dolby's vocal approach for *Aliens* began to gel. "The vocals are much more 'in your face' than anything I've done before. That's because I was used to going out and singing the songs in clubs, trying to get the whole idea over. The vocals had to be in your face in order to convey a song like 'Pulp Culture' over a bad P.A. in front of an audience that had never

heard it before. And that attitude just carried into the album."

Dolby's impulse was to transfer the band's live arrangements directly to record. In practice, though, that proved a little more complex than it sounds. "We did a set of demos of all the songs on the album in about a day and a half, which I think

DOLBY'S LAB

FOR years, Thomas Dolby's Fairlight CMI Series III took care of nearly all his sequencing and sampling needs. But now that Fairlight has fallen on hard times, this is likely to change.

"I'll probably be okay for my next album," he speculates. "But after that, my Fairlight will probably be demoted to the role of expensive sample player and I'll most likely be using a different front end. I've started investigating Mac sequencers. It's hard for stand-alone systems like the Fairlight or Synclavier to compete with software-based systems because of the standardization that happens when you've got many software companies in competition. When somebody comes out with a new innovation, everyone incorporates it into their next revision. I mean, look at word processors. If you can work one Mac word processor, you can probably work any of them. I think the same thing will happen with waveform management, sample editing and hard-disk recording.

"As for which sequencer you choose, I think that depends on what style of musician you are. If you're basically a player, then [Mark of the Unicorn's] Performer is great, because you just sit down, pick a track and record. But I've always done a lot of graphic editing. My approach very often will be to play in a bar of something and then copy it across to the next eight bars. Then I'll transpose it and make the next eight bars. I tend to do things mathematically in that sense. And for that I prefer [Passport Designs'] MasterTracks Pro to Performer. But the one that I've finally settled on, and which I'll probably use for the next album, is Opcode's Vision. It's really like the best aspects of Performer, MasterTracks Pro and MIDI Paint all rolled into one."

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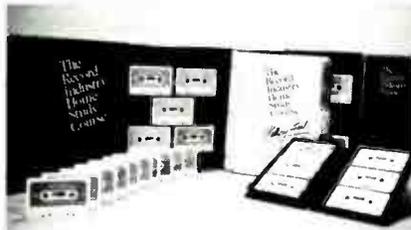
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mallory Earl is a 20 year veteran producer/engineer who's long list of credits include, Freddy Jackson, Brenda K. Starr, Blue Oyster Cult, Jefferson Airplane, Hot Tuna, Graham Central Station and hundreds more. His years of experience with musicians made him realize the need for affordable information regarding this business. With years of research and first hand experience Mallory Earl has compiled the vital information of business practices and attitudes in one easy to understand Home Study Course.

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is the fastest I've ever worked in the studio. We just set up as if we were onstage, miked everything and recorded. If I really had guts, I would have just released that. It was reasonably well recorded, but it sounded kind of old-fashioned. Unfortunately, if you just mike up a drum kit, it doesn't sound very

While Dolby stays on top of the techno arms race, he hasn't been blinded to the down side of science. "People confuse production with engineering, I think. But the approach I take is that 80 percent of production is good arrangement—song structure. Engineering a good sound is pointless unless the arrangement is there to begin with. Records have gotten very, very brittle and overly bright in the last five years. And I hate that. I can't listen to a lot of records. *Aliens Ate My Buick* is a lot duller than the average these days, but I think it's more listenable. In order to compete, to jump out on the radio, people tend to crank up the high-end, eight- to 12-kHz frequencies. Because that does open your ears up the same way a fire in a fireplace or crickets outside alter the audible spectrum you're aware of. But still, once you've opened people's ears up, you have to justify that by proceeding to play music that's worth opening them up for. And a lot of people seem to miss that."

Onstage, Dolby hyperactivates with a MIDI rack consisting of an Akai S900 sampler, Roland MKS-80 and MKS-20 modules, a J.L. Cooper MidLink switcher, Yamaha SPX90 and Alesis MIDifex signal processors and an Akai MPX-820 MIDI-automated mixer. The latter feeds the house P.A. and Dolby's personal monitor system, QSC amplification with two TOA full-range speakers.

"Every patch that I have on the MIDI switcher is a combination of the source instruments, effects patches and a mix on the Akai mixer with panning and EQ." Patches are selected via two Yamaha programmable footpedals while Dolby gets his fingers on the keys to his Yamaha KX5 MIDI remote keyboard.

exciting anymore."

When the final versions of the songs were cut, "The Key to Her Ferrari" was played live, but Dolby's Fairlight Computer Music System crops up on other songs. "A lot of the album was programmed," Dolby elaborates. "'Pulp Culture' is actually all Fairlight, including the lead vocals. Everything is samples. But the difference is this: In the early days of sampling, the elements you had were single notes. You had one note of a marimba and you played tunes with it. What I did on this album, however, was to record each song in the studio, the way we'd done it live, against a click track. Then I'd find two good bars of drums and I'd sample them—the whole kit at once. I'd do the same with bass, guitar...everything. And I'd put my groove down by combining the best segments. In other words, I was working with much larger elements than you normally do with a sequencer. So it doesn't really sound sequenced in the way that we're used to hearing."

Aliens' grooves do often rock with an authenticity that's far from mechanical. And the idea of a mild-mannered white guy from England playing hard funk—and decently, too—gives extra punch to the record's culture-shock wit. But funk is a genre where Dolby definitely sees a role for himself:

"I think black music in America is generally very inward-looking. But from time to time, things begin to stifle; and then an element from the outside is brought in which breathes new life into the music. A good example of this is the fact that Kraftwerk, a bunch of Bavarian aristocrats with synthesizers, could create hip-hop—without even knowing it really. But within black music, I think there are really only a couple of artists who, instead of funneling inward, have always branched out. George Clinton is one and Prince is another. So although

THE NEXT STAGE

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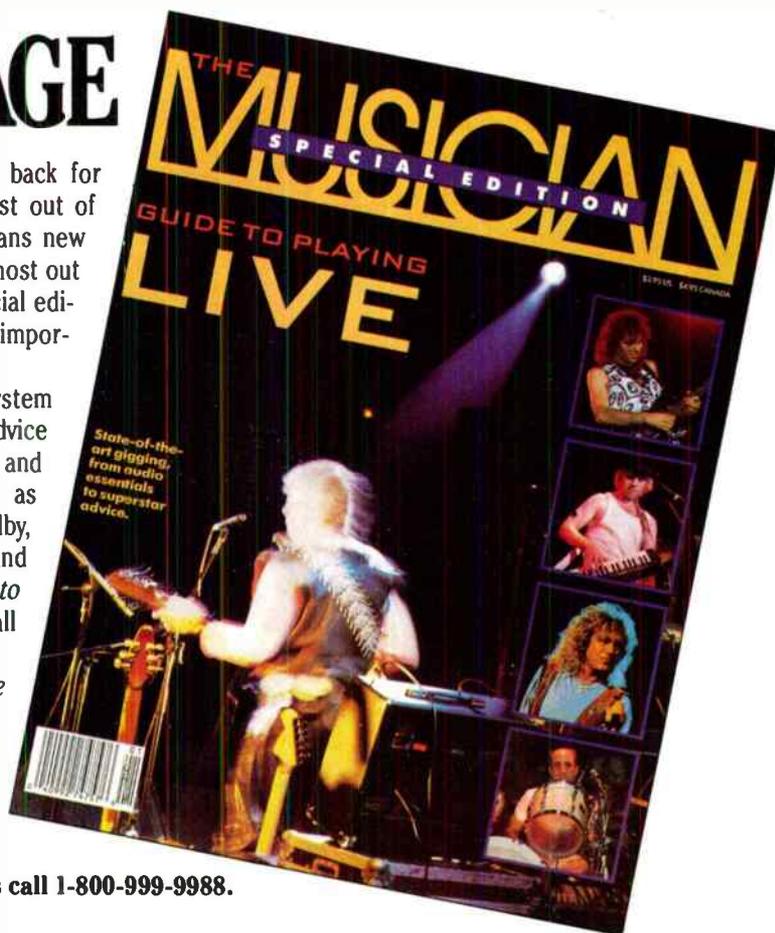
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Freddy Jackson may claim I have no right to be making funk music, I think I can say I'm such an outsider that maybe I can contribute something new to it."

He's not that much of an outsider, of course. This year, he was nominated for two Grammys: Producer of the Year for *Aliens* and Best Instrumental Arrangement with Vocal Accompaniment (huh?) for "Ferrari." He won neither, but appears gratefully surprised to have been nominated at all: "I mean, look at the producer category. There's nobody else in that category who didn't sell two million albums this year. Ten times as many people must have heard Tracy Chapman's album as heard my album."

Meanwhile, Dolby's role in mainstream music circles is beginning to move beyond mere session keyboard duties. He's entertaining a few production offers and has just written some songs for a new Maurice White album. Dolby hints that we can look for similar projects in the future. "I come up with a lot of songs that wouldn't be right for me to do personally. In the past, I've very often just let those sit. I'm feeling now that I'd like to put my publisher to work and get some covers."

And for an artist who'd like to add films to his bio/plot in a big way, what better place could there be than Hollywood?

"While I was still in England, I put out the word that I wanted to do film scores, but I didn't get any decent offers. At that time, I remember that people I knew in England—among them XTC and the Art of Noise—told me they'd had similar experiences. They'd always wanted to do film but they'd never been asked. Then, very shortly after I arrived in Hollywood, I just happened to meet Martin Scorsese at a party and he said, 'Oh, I love your music; I wanted to get you to work on *The King of Comedy*.' So I said, 'Well, what happened?' And he said, 'I

didn't know where to find you.' So he went with someone who had a reputation in his circle, rather than lifting a telephone, calling a record company and finding me—which he could have done in 10 minutes. I mean if your name is Martin Scorsese, you can get a foot in most doors.

"So it is a very cliquey thing. It works against you if you're outside it. But once you're in, it works in your favor. Because they can't be bothered to find the Art of Noise they'll go, '... Well, what about Dolby?'"

So now Hollywood knows *where* Thomas Dolby is. But do they know *who* he is? ❏

XTC

from page 32
hints darkly that he may have to "do in" the Dukes, perhaps "in a bizarre kitchen accident." Are the Dukes of Stratosphere the real XTC? Since his school days Partridge had "wanted to be in a group that made that kind of music. It looks like XTC has now turned into that kind of group. We'll either get a damned good kicking because of that, or people will allow us to be what I always wanted to be. There was a split image and now they've merged."

Maybe the moon is in the right house now for XTC. They've got a striking new album, a pushy new manager and even some record-company interest. Too bad Partridge—proud but not conceited—doesn't share the enthusiasm.

"We're just like dough," insists Swindon's swami of simile. "What can you say about dough? We are the record, and nothing else."

That's the way he likes it. ❏



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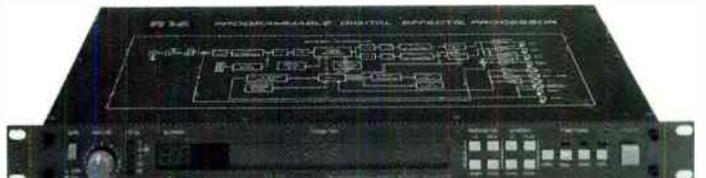
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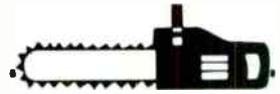
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Live Deals

What you need to know about the business of gigging, including agents, contracts and getting paid.

By Stan Soocher

THERE MAY BE NOTHING more discouraging than walking off a stage after a high-powered performance only to discover a club owner has decided to delay paying your act—maybe indefinitely. Some musicians simply storm out the door never to return to the venue. But others aren't willing to give up those hard-earned dollars without a fight. Take, for example, Atlantic Records'

tled with the band. A club window was broken. But it was all to no avail. The police were called and we were asked to leave the premises."

Since then, the Subdudes have thankfully learned less physically demanding ways of attempting to procure concert wages [*including placing in Musician's Best Unsigned Band contest last year*]. But the non-payment problem they encountered dramatizes all sorts of business and legal issues that musicians who work the live circuit must face. What methods are typically used to determine payment? Should you or shouldn't you work with a booking agent? If you think you should, how do you find a good one? What terms—such as backstage hospitality requirements—can a band reasonably expect to get from a venue operator or concert promoter? It's said that a little legal knowledge can be more dangerous than none at all. But in this case, some preventative medicine can help musicians concentrate on sharpening their stage presence rather than worrying whether there'll be money at the end of the night to cover the next payment on that new amplifier.

THE PAPER CHASE

The performing contract—an agreement between the band or its legal representatives and the venue operator or promoter—is the basic legal tool for staging a concert. Not all acts sign such written agreements. This is especially true of up-and-coming bands that haven't released any recorded product or who have no guaranteed following or audience. But the critical points in oral and written agreements are fundamentally the same, varying primarily in degree.

The essentials of the written deal are often laid out in a short document prepared by or similar to the one used by the American Federation of Musicians. This is known as the "contract face." It contains the agreed-upon date, place and time of the show, length of



TIM BOWER

cajun-style rockers, the Subdudes.

"When a club owner in New Orleans refused to pay an earlier incarnation of our group, we were so outraged that we refused to leave the club," recalls Johnny Allen, bassist for the Colorado-based outfit. "The sound man wres-

LIVE DEALS

set(s), venue capacity, ticket price, gross sales potential and method of payment.

An act that wants a written agreement will consult an attorney to draw up a standard rider to be utilized in all situations, from clubs and middle-sized halls to large arenas and stadiums. This rider supplements and expands on the basic terms stated in the contract face. It covers specifics such as sound, lighting and backstage hospitality, along with a variety of other details. (More on this later.) The act and its manager present the rider to a booking agent, who adds his or her own thoughts to the document and then procures concert employment for the act.

DOING IT YOURSELF

Verbal agreements offer a simpler, somewhat less reliable—but often necessary—alternative to all this. Oral deals are often struck up when a band contacts a venue operator directly. The informality of these agreements can convince a club owner a band is flexible and that a booking will require little negotiating time. However, particularly in oral deals, unequal bargaining power can work in the club owner's favor on many issues. For instance, dressing room accommodations will likely have to

be accepted "as is" (read "minimal"). The band may be allowed free guests but, in exchange, may be required to pay for their own drinks and for guest drinks. But for most acts on the rise, a network of such informal club relationships is crucial to gaining exposure before as many people as possible to build a word-of-mouth base for that hoped-for breakthrough to success.

WHAT DO I GET?

One of four methods of payment is commonly used to determine compensation for a concert appearance: 1) a simple percentage of the gate; 2) a flat guarantee with no percentage of the gate; 3) a guarantee with an artist/promoter split at varying percentages for all amounts over the guarantee plus promoter's expenses; 4) a guarantee against a percentage of the gross, whichever is higher. Promoters typically pay an act or its booking agent an advance of 50 percent, with the balance payable just before showtime or on a weekly basis for a tour.

"We usually work for a small guarantee against 80 percent of the door," notes the Subdudes' Johnny Allen. "One club we played in Denver was booked exclusively through an agent. But he took 10 percent and the club took nothing,

so we ended up with a better deal because we got 90 percent of the door."

Bands that rely on percentages in oral agreements will have to post their own



Colorado's Subdudes wouldn't take no for an answer.

personnel at the door or trust clubs to keep an accurate customer count. Once you become familiar with a club, though, you'll be able to come up with a good estimate of audience size.

But what if the worst happens and the club simply refuses to fork over the money it owes you at the end of the night? For a modest filing fee, clubs that fail to pay can be brought to task in small claims court, if the money owed falls below a certain ceiling (e.g., \$1500 in California and New York). And of course, after one non-payment snafu, the band may choose simply to drop the club from its working list of live venues.

Members of the American Federation of Musicians can also call the AF of M's Travelling Engagement Emergency Relief Hotline (800 ROAD GIG). In the event of a non-payment problem, the AF of M will advance emergency cash for its members, hire legal counsel for them and add the defaulting venue to a list of "known offenders" which it maintains.

THE BOOKER TEASE

Many groups try to find booking agents near the outset of their careers, an unenviable task at best because booking agents won't be interested until there's at least enough income from which a worthwhile commission can be drawn. More likely, the band will first connect with a manager who may call clubs and

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colleges on the band's behalf. (Note, however, that California limits such concert employment activities to agents licensed by the state; New York's more liberal statute allows managers to book "incidental" employment for musicians.)

According to Stanley Snadowsky, a lawyer and co-owner of the Manhattan nightclub The Bottom Line, "a good rule of thumb is, if you gain such stature that an agent comes to you, then you should consider signing with an agent, though maybe not the first one that comes along. It's very draining and time-consuming trying to represent yourself. An agent may be a tougher negotiating

representative for you when it comes to getting bookings."

Finding an agent may seem like a chicken-and-egg dilemma—you can't get a good agent without first having big-name recognition, and you can't have big-name recognition without first having a good booking agent. In fact, most groups who send unsolicited demo recordings and videotapes rarely attract the interest of booking agents. Instead, the tape drop usually works when an act is recommended by a record company, venue operator or promoter whose taste the booking agent has come to trust. Good press can also help convince an

agent to represent an act.

A band that has yet to gain regional recognition may do better with a local agent familiar with the concert scene in that group's home territory. A nationwide agency can be more beneficial for snaring tough-to-get slots on high-profile tours.

Says Johnny Allen, "We've booked our own gigs at pure music venues and worked with local agencies for bookings at ski resorts and weddings. But once we signed a label deal with Atlantic Records, we began to be courted by quite a few booking agencies."

What are the personal qualities a band might want in a booking agent? "You want to find someone who, like a manager, really believes in the act," advises Ian Copeland, president of the New York-based Frontier Booking International. "As an agent I think of myself as managing a band's career with an eye towards building them on the basis of road work, rather than recorded product."

And here we come to another contract, this one between artist and agent. "You [the act] sign a separate contract that gives the booking agency the exclusive right to negotiate all performing deals, subject to management approval," explains Copeland. "A term of three to five years is typical, with the agent getting 10 percent of your gross concert earnings."

The basic conditions of an agreement between an agency and an artist who belongs to the American Federation of Musicians are guided by a separate agreement between the agency and the guild [i.e., the AF of M]. Non-guild artists will be bound by a general services agreement with terms more favorable to the agency.

"To keep the agreement in force, the agent may be required to procure a certain dollar amount of bookings within a specified period, though the term of the agency contract is longer," notes music attorney Samuel Fox, of the Los Angeles firm of Engel & Engel. "On the other hand, if the agency agreement ends while you are in the middle of a tour, the agency may still have the right to be paid those tour commissions."

An up-and-coming act will probably be asked to sign to an agency for up to a five-year term because the agency will want to reap larger commissions that will come in as the act becomes more established. Acts already established will have the bargaining power to sign to a shorter term of three years or less.

Additional agency agreement provisions cover the scope of the territory the

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agent will work, the size of the agent's commission (ranging from 15 to 20 percent for less established bands, 10 for established acts), the exclusivity of the musician to the agent and the procedure for resolving disputes between the agent and the artist.

Some bands become so attached to their booking agents that they try to negotiate a "key man" clause in their agency agreements to allow the group to continue to be represented by a particular agent if that agent ends up leaving the agency before the term of the band's agency agreement is up.

All states have statutes that regulate employment agencies. The California and New York licensing statutes are drafted specifically for talent agents but state officials don't cruise the music scene looking for licensing violations. So a friend who gets a gig for a band won't have to worry. Instead, in California for example, the state labor commissioner is usually called on when an artist seeking to terminate a management contract claims the manager has procured employment. If the artist wins the dispute, the manager may also have to return any booking commissions.

"The labor commissioner has even said this could apply to a manager who simply discusses a booking for an artist over lunch," Samuel Fox points out. "But this creates an unfair predicament all around. It's a problem for the artists, because there's never a shortage of managers but there is a shortage of agents. Plus the statute ties the manager's hands in establishing an artist during the early stages of a career. And it's a predicament for managers, because artists can use the law as leverage to get out of the contract with the manager."

A TYPICAL SCENARIO

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Rider provisions, which in some instances have run 100 or more pages, can cover headliner and support act billing and advertising; stage lighting and sound

CONTINUED ON PAGE 79

STEVE REICH

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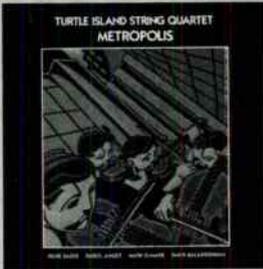
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Bill Nelson

Still walking the line between pop and impressionism, a former Be-Bopper heads into the Mystic.

By John Diliberto

IN THE LARGE COUNTRY kitchen of his 300-year-old Yorkshire mansion, Bill Nelson plays a cassette of his new pop song demos and laughs. "I don't know whether I'll ever make a mature statement when it comes to writing lyrics," confesses Nelson, "because I still have this terrible heritage of being a pop musician, which is rather like an unwanted erection. It crops up at

"I either tumble into a pit of obscure instrumental arcana or I end up trying to sound like the Archies," he says, his eyes tearing with laughter. "Wait until you hear this new stuff. Lyrically, I mean it's kindergarten 'I love you' stuff. 'Come home, I miss you, all is forgiven,' boom, boom, cha."

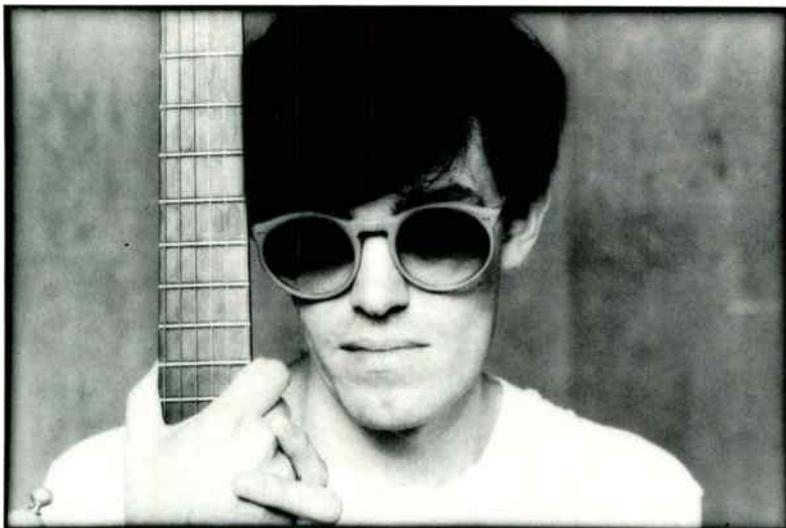
But Nelson's pop music is more sophisticated than he'd lead you to believe, walking the borders of kinetic techno-pop grooves with sinuous melodies and supple lyricism. Despite his self-derision, the emotional trauma these songs represent is still evident. "They were very therapeutic for me," he admits.

Having just turned 40, Nelson feels far removed from the rock music he made in the 1970s with Be-Bop Deluxe, a second-string British progressive group that had modest success in England and cult status in the U.S. When Be-Bop disbanded in 1978, Nelson split his career in two, making quirky pop records on one side and personal instrumental miniatures on the other.

Nelson began experimenting in his home studio on antiquated tape machines, making musique concrète structures out of backward tapes, loops, kitchen utensils, found sounds and voices recorded off the TV. "Yeah, retro-tech stuff, it really was," he recalls. "I had the Mini-Moog I think, and I had an old ARP string machine. And a four-track machine, an autoharp and some bits to bang together, old toms and things. Very crude, you know."

The early solo records, 1981's *Sounding the Ritual Echo* and *Das Kabinett*, were darkly impressionistic, psychological diaries, full of distended melodies and peripheral whispers, much like the films of Nelson's heroes Man Ray and Jean Cocteau. His own photography reveals inclinations towards subjects lifted out of context and viewed in ambiguous, shadowy light.

Nelson formed his Cocteau label for these



"You see, regardless of whether it's a guitar or a piano or whatever, it's still the same person with the same thought."

the most awkward time. I'm always thinking, 'Well, I'm singing now, maybe this could get on the radio; let's lighten it a bit here.'"

Over a period of a few months he wrote more than 120 songs, love letters to his then-estranged wife, and he seems embarrassed by the sentiments, especially after the volumes of cerebral, atmospheric instrumentals he's crafted in the last few years. In fact, he thinks they're so personal and rough that he's only making them available to his fan club. He's more comfortable with *Simplex*, an album of impressionistic music he composed for a film about the sculptures of Henry Moore.

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tone poems and has issued over 13 LPs of this material, including *Trial by Intimacy (The Book of Splendours)*, a four-record boxed set with a book of his photographs, and, in 1988, the two-volume *Chance Encounters in the Garden of Lights* and *Optimism*. The latter two are available on Enigma in the U.S., which plans to release the entire Nelson catalogue.

Despite an improvement in technology with 16 tracks, digital synthesizers and samplers, Nelson's instrumentals still have a home-grown, clandestine diary charm. Even the dance grooves of *Iconography* and *Optimism* are deployed

amidst a psychedelic stream of consciousness. They're so far removed from Nelson's usual oeuvre that he released them under the thinly veiled pseudonym Orchestra Arcana.

Nelson thinks of *Chance Encounters in the Garden of Lights* as a meditation record, although its turbulent atmospheres would trigger psychotic reactions from most meditators. In its liner notes, he writes that the album is "ideally suited to the occultist in search of ritual atmosphere or serene meditation," a claim that should bring Geraldo Rivera beating the Yorkshire bushes.

"It seemed to be music that was deal-

ing more with meditational states and I thought it might be useful for people who wished to use it in a ritual context, for meditation purposes or magical purposes or whatever," says Nelson. "And the cover, the whole mode of the thing, was done for that purpose. It's a philosophical album in many ways, in terms of my own beliefs."

One of those beliefs is automatic writing, the idea of the unedited subconscious creating the music. "One of my heroes besides Cocteau is a man called Austin Osman Spare," explains Nelson. "Spare died in 1956. He was an artist who was also involved in occult and magical practices. And one of his techniques was automatic drawing. He believed greatly in the idea of the subconscious knowing more than the conscious and the Jungian idea of an archetypal set of imagery. So I use some of these ideas to apply to the musical side of it. Which means basically doing things very quickly and not thinking about them too much and allowing the subconscious to take a greater hold. Of course, sometimes it produces terrible results. And in a sense the music becomes a living entity."

"Alchemy, Rosicrucianism, esoteric Freemasonry, Hebrew Kabala, tarots, I've looked at the whole gamut of things available and kind of synthesized things for myself. You get to the stage where you invent internally your own philosophical structure, which is impossible to explain to anyone, because it only works for you. Now I've been involved in this for several years and it's something that's difficult to talk about," he admits.

It's also difficult to incorporate into music, let alone rock music, without coming off like some sword-and-sorcery caricature or a new-age airhead. But Nelson has done it on several rock vocal albums, beginning with 1982's *The Love That Whirls*, a record powered by a hypnotic rhythm-machine pulse infused with sexuality and spiritualism.

"One of the techniques was to use sexuality as a means to some kind of spiritual enlightenment, which is a common sort of idea throughout the whole world and different cultures, apart from the repressed Westerners," he laughs. "But the Indian tantric ideas and the idea of dance, at that time, I found fascinating, particularly the idea of whirling dervishes. They have kind of white skirts that spin out, so they look like human spinning tops. And they just whirl and whirl and whirl for hours on end."

Despite the high-tech gloss, infectious melodies, undulating guitar lines and Nelson's smooth tenor voice that recalls

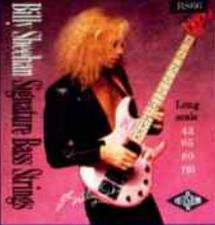
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BILL NELSON

David Bowie, *The Love That Whirls*, an American compilation called *Vistamix* and *On a Blue Wing* failed to catch on in the United States. It was a mixed blessing for Nelson, because it gave him additional time to work on his more experimental compositions and his performance art work, "The Invisibilists Exhibition," a multi-media show he occasionally puts together.

Nelson inserts found dialogue into the music as non-sequitur evocations, with disembodied voices seemingly appearing out of nowhere. Sometimes it's familiar, like the dialogue from *Citizen Kane* on *Optimism*, rhythmically repeating "Wel-

come home, Master Kane." But more often they have an out-of-context mystery, as if tuning in short-wave radio broadcasts late at night, mumbling things like "I believe that all of my imaginative work is composed during deep sleep, but I'm very seldom aware of dreaming."

"Some of the early ones were just literally taken off TV into a hand cassette machine and then I'd just spin them in," he reveals. "So they are not structured greatly in any way and are more there for their own sake, because they are charming little quotes. But you find by throwing them in at random, 'Oh, I like this one, I like that one, let's put them in,'

that somehow a meaning starts to emerge. They start to talk back to you and dictate, 'Oh, that should move around a bit, you know.' Some of the newer stuff is much more structured because I've had the facility to sample and that gives you the chance to think about it a little bit more and maybe you give it more meaning and so on. But I hope they have meaning."

Nelson's brooding environments have drawn him to film composing. He scored a TV documentary called *Map of Dreams*, an action series called "Bronr" and the movie *Dream Demon*, a stylish horror film that plays on the dream/reality themes of *Nightmare on Elm Street*, but without the cartoon cut-ups of Freddy Krueger.

Lost in all these textures has been Nelson's sinuous guitar. In the late '70s and early '80s he developed a sensual solo style using the E-Bow, a device that drives the strings into continuous sustain, allowing him to sculpt long, curving lines through his techno-rhythms. But recently, he probably played more guitar on David Sylvian's *Gone to Earth* album, albeit mostly acoustic, than he has on his own records.

"You see, regardless of whether it's a guitar or a piano or whatever, it's still the same person with the same thought," he says. "And the thoughts have changed the use of the instrumentation. For a while I really did look upon the guitar as being an overstatement of the very obvious things, and there were so many guitar players around with the same kind of clichéd approach. And it suddenly

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ARCANE ARTIFACTS

ALTHOUGH Nelson's music is increasingly electronic, he still plays guitar. His main instruments are three Yamaha SG2000s, a Japanese knock-off called a Tokai and an unusual acoustic fretless bass guitar made by Kif Wood. His long sustained solos are via E-Bow.

His electronic arsenal includes the Sequential Circuits Studio 440, a Yamaha DX7, Yamaha CS-70M, a Mini-Moog, Akai-Linn Drum Machine, the Emulator E-Max and under a tarpaulin is a Bergeault Marimba that he doesn't play much now that he can sample it.

For processing he runs through an MXR 01 Digital Reverb, Roland SDE-3000 delay line, Yamaha SPX90, Fostex compressor and delay line, an old Marshall Time Modulator and an Ibanez rack-mounted effects unit, which combines compressor, phase, overdrive and stereo chorus and flanger.

It's all tucked into a corner of the room around an Allen & Heath 24-channel console linked to a Fostex 16-track deck and a Sony PCM-F1 digital recorder.

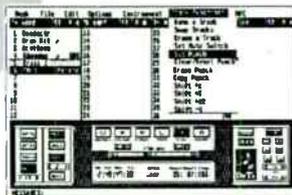
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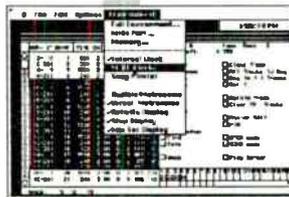


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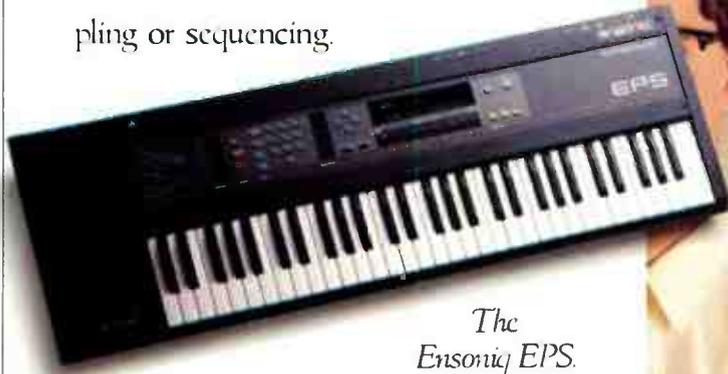
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seemed like guitar playing had developed into a language, which was very set and stylized, and that nobody would recognize as guitar playing unless it spoke that language. In fact, on *The Love That Whirls*, there's more guitar playing than on some of the albums I'd done earlier. But nobody recognized it because I was using the E-Bow and they thought it was a synth, you see. And it worked well with the synthesizers because it has a different quality to it because of the fact that the guitar is more lyrical and the harmonic overtones are strange and, therefore, it would give it more of an electronic quality. But I suddenly realized that people don't recognize this as guitar because the common language of guitar has become so nailed to the floor."

Nelson's contemplating a return to the pop world with mixed emotions. "I think I've spent a lot of time with the serious composer's hat on and maybe for a year I can allow myself to dress up like a fool again and leap around a spotlight, you know, hopefully get some applause."

Nelson might also be a little gun-shy. After *Be-Bop Deluxe*, he went solo with a fictional group called Red Noise and the 1979 album *Sound-on-Sound*, a brilliant *Future-Shock-1984-is-now* work that did worse than languish. His American record company, Capitol, sent him some survey responses, all of which ran along the lines of "out-Devo's Devo" and "Too whacko for us." Which might account for why the album still sounds so good a decade later.

"It's funny," says Nelson. "I was talking to Andy Partridge from XTC a year ago and he said, 'I dug the Red Noise album out the other night. That was a great album.'" Nevertheless, it took Nelson two years to get his next record, *Quit Dreaming and Get on the Beam*, released.

The situation hasn't improved. His 1986 album, *On a Blue Wing*, a danceable exploration of Western mysticism and Christian imagery, provided him with another controversy. In England it was called *Getting the Holy Ghost Across*. The original cover, changed for American release, depicted an angel holding a city in her hand, surrounded by "magical" alphabets and seals. Apparently it didn't quite fit in with the PMRC-fueled retreat of the record industry in 1986.

"Basically they said, 'We can't have this cover here and we can't have this title, because these shops won't stock it,'" claims Nelson. "It was, in a sense, an immoral judgment because they are saying, 'We'd rather have money than present your true ideas to people. And you know if it means we can make less

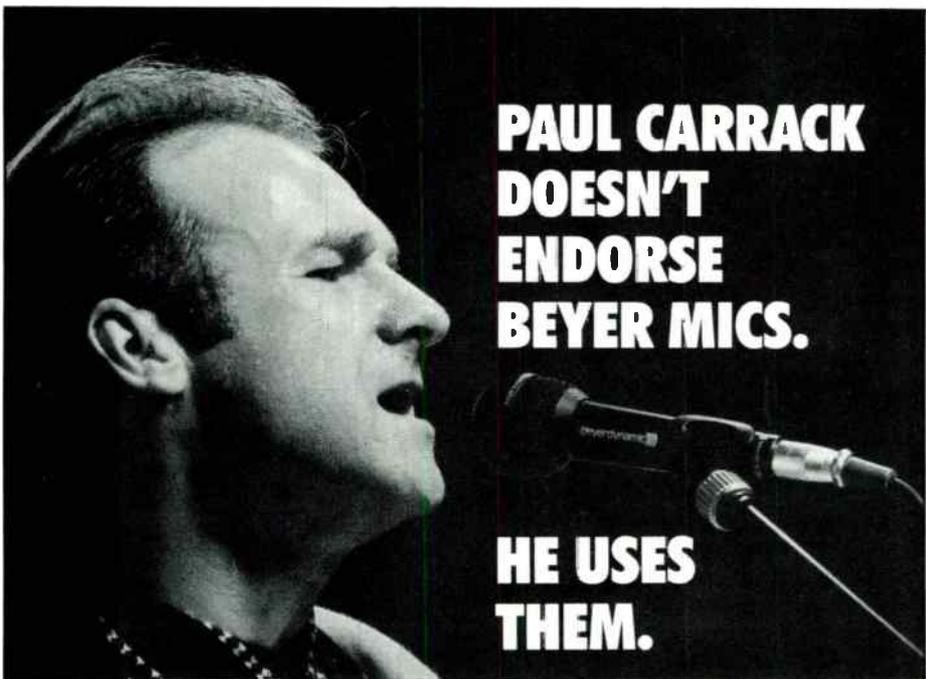


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money from the record by putting it out in its true state, then we are going to have to change it,' so eventually they came up with a cover of their own.

"But certainly I must be a threat to religious morality in America," he laughs sardonically. "I wish I was."

However, Nelson is not one to deny the rock artist within him, especially when he picks up the guitar. A few months back he performed unannounced in a local pub with a pick-up band, and the rock guitar heroics were still there. "We just turned up on the evening and jammed on blues things and within half an hour, I was wiping the guitar up and down in front of the amplifier and throwing it in the air and, you know, it was there, it's there," he says exuberantly. "All I need is a rebel to help rouse it in me. And the audience was going for it, so I just had a good time. So that's not dead. It's something I can call upon when necessary, I think." ❏

LIVE DEALS from page 69
specifications; insurance, security and hospitality responsibilities; ticket sale arrangements; and provisions for personal appearances and interviews in the concert area. These conditions are all negotiable to some extent.

The hospitality clause in particular can be the subject of lengthy negotiations. After years of hospitality excesses, venue operators and promoters have become reluctant to provide unusual demands to all but the most sought-after acts. For example, one recent hospitality condition required a Pacman video game be made available for a popular singer touring Australia. If not, the singer had the right to cancel the engagements and keep the advance.

"One band wanted a dressing room painted a certain color before they walked in," Snadowsky claims. "But once you get past sandwiches and drinks, it's all ego."

The merchandising clause, on the other hand, has grown tremendously in importance in recent years as bands have come to realize that sales of T-shirts, posters and buttons can help make up for a weak turnout at a concert. Some acts have even lost money touring on the basis of ticket sales alone, but earned an overall profit when merchandising revenues were added in. Younger fans usually spend more money on such merchandise, especially for heavy metal groups. A venue operator will generally receive a percentage of gross receipts from merchandising sales.

Of course, the proliferation of music

videos has made musicians more careful about prohibiting the filming of their performances for either commercial or private purposes without prior written consent. Some rider clauses even provide for specific damages a venue operator or promoter must pay if any unauthorized tapings are made.

But, according to Ian Copeland, the most profound change in concert deals has been the shift of responsibility for an unsuccessful show from venue operators and promoters to the acts. "In the past if a show was cancelled due to an artist's illness, or low ticket sales from delay of an album release, the promoter would shoulder the burden [though non-appearance insurance is now popular]. Today the acts are being asked to renegotiate if this occurs and may even end up returning part of the guarantee paid by the promoter."

Which brings us back to our starting point: Careful attention to the details of performance negotiations can make it a lot easier to get paid nearer showtime, or to find a legal way to collect if you do play and you don't get paid promptly. ❏

Reprinted from The Musician Guide to Playing Live, now on sale at your musical instrument or record dealer.

DEVELOPMENTS from page 82
where the string sits actually dampens it by pulling it down. But when you pluck the string, it travels from side to side, where the Trembucker pole pieces are. In fact, the magnetism on either side pulls the string back and forth a bit longer and makes the tonal output richer. The Trembucker ain't cheap at \$115, but think how long you've been waiting for it. Another thing Seymour Duncan's been up to is releasing the Duncan Custom pickup Seymour did for Jeff Beck in an Alnico II magnet version, reportedly the same thing he's been doing privately for Eddie Van Halen. This is the Custom Custom, part of the Underground Series. And metalmongers will surely want to hear the Metal Live Wire Humbucker, a low-impedance, high-output pickup with more scream than cream and a nice lift in the midrange.

As we exit to the sound of high-octane guitar squeals, we still haven't gotten to everything at NAMM worthy of mention. But since our big Drum Special is coming next month, we'll save the new Hotz and KAT MIDI percussion controllers till then, as well as the big blitz in multi-tasking and notation in MIDI software and the big roar in reinforcement. Till then. ❏

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Developments

More hot product from NAMM, like a MIDI audio switcher, luxury wireless and better sequencing.

By Jock Baird

WHEN WE TRY TO cover the moving-and-grooving Winter NAMM show in one story, there's inevitably stuff that gets left out. These remainders get cobbled together into the following issue's column, and usually tend to be about as exciting as warmed-over macaroni and cheese. Not so this month. It's a measure of how good a NAMM show this past

chain configuration most guitarists use is what those little boxes do to your sound when they're not in use: between the signal losing its crispness and gaining plain old noise, you're much better off just bypassing them until you need them, which is what the Audio Matrix 16 will let you do. What will you do with all those pedals now that you don't need to keep them at your feet? Well, 360 Systems has a little rack-mount shelf with velcro fasteners to keep them



360 Systems' remarkable \$700 Audio Matrix 16x16 switcher; (below) Shure's Beta 58 mike, a radical update of the redoubtable SM58.

one was that the leftovers are as tasty as the main course. For some, even tastier. Let's say, for instance, you're a guitarist who knows a big rack of signal processing is the wave of the future, but you have most of your processing bucks already tied up in untrendy stomp boxes and/or pre-MIDI racks. You certainly can't junk your whole rig, especially because it's now part of your sound, but you're getting tired of stepping on six pedals between songs or (God forbid) solos. Boy, has 360 Systems got a solution for you!

Meet the Audio Matrix 16 16x16 crosspoint switcher. It's a MIDI-controllable audio switcher and patch bay that routes 16 inputs to 16 outputs in any configuration you desire and saves the patch in one of 99 memory locations. You can send one input to all 16 outs without signal degradation, and you can even program what they call performance chains of up to 32 steps. That means if your rig sounds different with the compressor patched in *after* the distortion box than vice versa, you can have it both ways. Another problem with the single-

all up where you can actually adjust them—what a concept! Then you can run your whole rig from one master MIDI pedal, and because the Audio Matrix 16 also sends program changes out through MIDI it can run your MIDI-equipped processors as well.

You keyboardists and studio heads will immediately see this affects more than guitarists. One-finger repatching for multi-track tape playback, automated MIDI muting for mongo keyboard stacks, multiplying capabilities for single effects busses or small consoles... the possibilities seem endless. And if you find it inconvenient to patch in through the back, channels 15 and 16 can be accessed from the front. Now how much is all this worth to you? A company named Tantec sold something like this for around \$2400 a year or so ago, but this baby is only \$700. And if you'd rather have it in a balanced version, with a ring-tip-sleeve phone jack configuration, a new model coming this summer will go for an even grand. No wonder NAMM shows are so exciting.





WELCOME TO THE FAST TRACK

Your music sounds better than ever. But until you get someone to listen, talent alone won't put your career on the fast track. You've got to sound good on tape, too. Ask any talent agent or A&R person. They'll tell you, that without the right production values, it's hard to make great music stand out in a world full of mediocrity.

Having the right equipment can make all the difference. Whether you're getting ready for a session or polishing your demo, the Seck 1282 and 1882 recording consoles can give you more quality, features, and capabilities than many expensive mixers, in a compact and very affordable package.

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boards include features like three band mid-sweep EQ, in-line monitoring, solo and stereo LED meters. And, Seck consoles make mixing with effects simple. You can layer effects through 6 aux busses and 4 aux returns, plus use the pre-fader inserts to enhance individual tracks.

For eight or sixteen track recording, Seck consoles are versatile enough to make your job easy, yet are rugged enough to take on the road. Features, size and rugged construction combine to make the 12 input model 1282 and 18 input model 1882 ideal for the sophisticated home studio and double nicely for sound reinforcement.

So remember, you'll find the on-ramp to the fast track is as close as your nearest Seck dealer.

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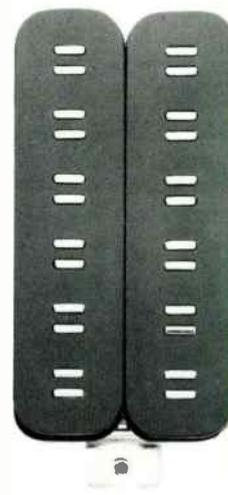
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The trend in wireless systems lately has been to do the limbo—as in, how low can you go? But **Samson** has decided to work the other end of the price spectrum with their \$2000-area Broadcast STD Series wireless. What more can you get for that kind of cash? A lot. For instance the receivers and transmitters—be they mikes or belt-packs—both have 10 selectable channels of frequency to send and listen on. A five-segment LED indicator on the BR-3 receiver then allows you to check the RF level on each side of a channel (a true diversity system has two signals, remember) to find the quietest path. You dial up a channel on the display window and then look at the RF level. If it's nice and low, great, but if it's blitzing and fritzing away at the right side of the LED, it's telling you to avoid

worthy feature aboard the MQ8 is called "auto event trace"; if you start the sequence in the middle, it looks backward to find the last program change before your begin point. That way you won't suddenly find flutes playing your lead brass part. Beyond the features, this sequencer has a nice simplicity and logic to its panel, and seems to be more roadworthy than many—it excels at taking a one-pass, multi-channel dump of your home computer-built sequences so you can gig with it. And speaking of Technics, the AX series of synths they debuted last summer are finally rolling out; with their competitive prices and "soft-knob" style idiot editing features, they're definitely worth a second look.

One sequencer that's been the subject of some disagreement is the one aboard the **Korg M1** workstation. While some users are more than satisfied, others wish it could do a bit more. Enter the Frontal Lobe, from **Cannon Research**. It patches into the MIDI plugs and sits right on the top of the M1, like a helpful consultant. Once activated, the Frontal Lobe gives you a better window into the sequencer, allowing you, for example, to access various edit windows while the sequencer is playing, giving you real-time loop control with a foot pedal, and offering a big boost in onboard memory—15,000 events worth. It'll also let the M1 behave like a regular multi-timbral keyboard when it's in sequencer mode. If you want even more, the \$400 Frontal Lobe can be enhanced with two \$200 memory upgrades, both of which double the capacity, up to 64,000 events. There's also a \$400 1.44 meg disk drive which turns the Lobe into a sys-ex librarian. And it also has an RS-232 port for computer interfacing. With tens of thousands of M1s out there, this product could be a sleeper.

Talk about sleepers, who knew that when **Shure** first put out the SM58 microphone all those years ago that it would become such a universal workhorse? But the competition has grown fierce for the dynamic cardioid live-mike



Seymour Duncan Trembucker: at last, a humbucker to fit your Fender or your Floyd.

stage directional tuning network to tighten up the pickup pattern at a broader range of frequencies. Y'see, not all super- and hyper-cardioid mikes are that way at every frequency; sometimes a low-mid might creep in even though the mike's rejecting a high. That means discolored sound and feedback bumps. The Beta Series is said to maintain a supercardioid pattern at all frequencies, which means you can crank it louder before the feedback devils start wailing. Shure also put new shock-isolation ideas into the Beta 58 and 57, the latter being the rough-and-ready instrument counterpart to the vocalist's 58. This is one sequel that could outshine the original.

Finally, our award for the Most Overdue Product at NAMM goes hands-down to **Seymour Duncan**. How many readers out there have put a humbucker on your Strat, or any Floyd Rose-equipped axe, only to notice that the pole pieces didn't quite match up with the strings because the Gibson spacing is wider than the Fender spacing? And though guitarists have been doing this for well over a decade, no one made a new humbucker with Fender spacing—until now. Enter the Trembucker, which is not only a kick-ass little humbucker, but it has an



Technics' SY-MQ8 sequencer, a "home"-priced unit with "pro" features.

that channel like the plague. This way you can tell in seconds what your best channels are, saving the aggravation of trial-and-error searching or the extreme expense of bringing in a spectrum analyzer just to find a good frequency. The Broadcast STD series also has **dbx** noise reduction, adjustable sensitivity controls, balanced outputs and a nice selection of mike elements. Who says you don't get what you pay for?

Not everything making waves at NAMM was cutting-edge high-tech. One item was a cute little hardware sequencer from **Technics** called the SY-MQ8 and designed primarily for the "home"/P&O market. But hold on—for around eight hundred bucks the MQ8 is actually competitive with most of the so-called "pro" sequencers costing twice that. It's got eight tracks, a disk drive, holds 23,000 notes and standard sequencer edit functions like copy, merge, delete, loop, punch-in/out, transposing, quantization and variable tempo control. About the only thing it can't do is individual note or step editing, which many musicians don't use anyway. One news-



Samson's Broadcast STD wireless lets you check your channels for heavy RF traffic.

dollar, and Shure has launched a new counter-attack using an old number: the Beta 58 and 57, or Son of SM58. Two great leaps are incorporated, one being the use of neodymium in the magnets to get a hotter output (this to call Electro-Voice's N/DYN bet). The second is more significant—the development of a triple-

'80s wrinkle: two pole pieces for each string, known as the Parallel Axis system. The idea is to keep the area between the pole pieces in a low flux state, because excessive magnetism right

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CAPTURE YOUR CREATIVITY



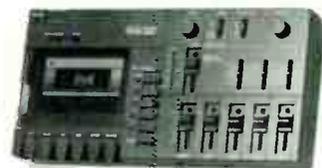
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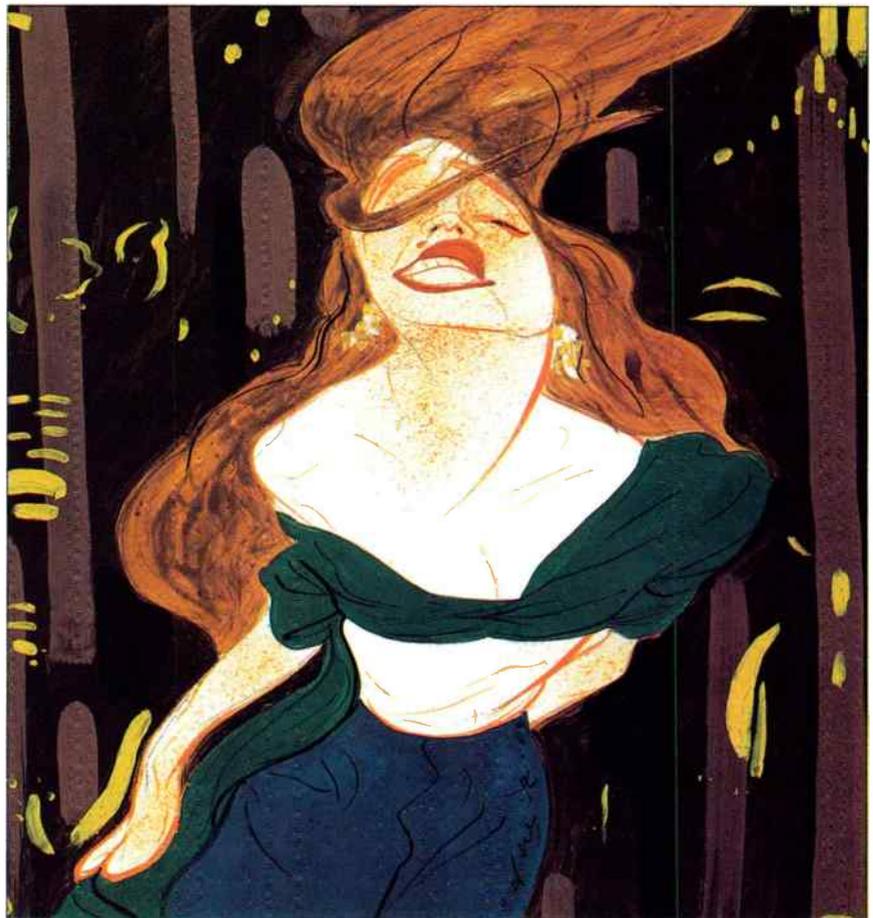
M A D O N N A

Like a Prayer
(Warner Bros.)

EARLY REVIEWS OF Madonna's new record are hailing it as her most nakedly autobiographical work to date, picking through the wreckage of her marriage, wandering the lonely corridors of her sad childhood; in short, Madonna's *Plastic Ono Band* record. Do not be misled! Yes, there are some unusually personal songs here—one for her mother, one for her father, one for estranged hubby Sean—but this ain't ponderous psychodrama. This is a classic Madonna album, the kind of big pop we've come to know and expect, so touch up your lipstick, toss a crucifix around your neck and hit the dance floor.

Madonna has summarized *Like a Prayer* as "an album about what I was going through when I was growing up, and past musical influences" (she describes two tracks as tributes to Sly Stone and one as an homage to Simon & Garfunkel). These portents of seriousness may alarm longtime fans who appreciate her music for its brazen lack of depth, but Madonna knows exactly how far she can push her audience. *Like a Prayer* is thematically more ambitious than previous LPs, but the overall gestalt of her music hasn't changed a whit, and this LP is perfumed with the teasing eroticism Madonna's parlayed into an empire.

The debut single, "Like a Prayer," which you've all heard by now thanks to esteemed patron of the arts Pepsi-Cola, is vintage Madonna à la "Into the Groove." The kind of song you want to blast on the car radio, it segues smoothly into "Express Yourself," and the pair of tunes combine to kick off the record in an upfill way. Next is "Love Song," a collaboration with Prince that's more Prince than Madonna: Deep funk built around a



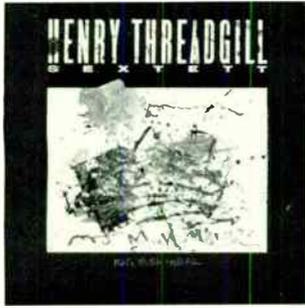
heavy, whomping bass track, this song has considerably more bottom than your usual Madonna fare, which skips along a few feet off the ground as a rule. "Till Death Do Us Part," an oddly perky eulogy for her recently bagged marriage, is next, and the side closes with "Promise to Try," a mournful ballad Madonna wrote for her deceased mother.

Side two opens on a cheery note with "Cherish," a starry-eyed pledge of devotion tailor-made for adolescent first love; from there, the record begins to lose steam. "Dear Jessie," a sticky-sweet song to a child, is too cute for comfort with its "Puff the Magic Dragon" lyrics and orchestral arrangement reminiscent of the Beatles' "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite." Next is Madonna's song for her father (an angry, accusatory song it is, too), followed by a celebration of family titled "Keep It Together" and a sultry tune with a Caribbean flavor titled "Spanish Eyes."

Production throughout is high-tech—occasionally a tad clinical and rote—but, whereas the sound fails to break much new ground, Madonna's voice has improved considerably. For proof of that, go back and listen to her first hit single, "Everybody"; that thin, high chipmunk chirp of yore has ripened into an instrument of character and range.

More than the pedigreed pop that she makes, the real marvel here is Madonna herself and the persona she's created. Few among us are up to the task of being a goddess, and this driven girl from Detroit works at it with a vengeance. Now 30, she's succeeded in fashioning herself into a singularly glamorous woman, an icon that people around the world understand and respond to. If Madonna occasionally seems narcissistic and vain as well, who can blame her? She's as smitten with the creature she's conjured as we are.

— Kristine McKenna



HENRY THREADGILL

Rag, Bush and All
(Novus)

HENRY THREADGILL, WHO with Air explored the trio format more thoroughly than most jazz musicians, has been shifting his focus toward composition and large ensemble arrangements. Specifically, *Rag, Bush and All* continues where Threadgill's previous *Easily Slip into Another World* left off: His "Sextett," a seven-piece now including trumpeter Ted Daniels, trombonist Bill Lowe and percussionist Newman Baker, explores sonic textures a trio could never manage, while providing the same instrumental kick on a more abbreviated scale. On one level, nothing has changed—Air bassist Fred Hopkins is again present providing a solid bottom; on another, there are intricacies, contrasts and subtleties in Threadgill's music here that simply weren't apparent in his trio work. The results are amazing and surprisingly accessible.

Two tracks clock in at nearly 13 minutes and make the point eloquently. "Off the Rag" opens with a double drum blast and a fanfare, followed by Threadgill's sax, some trombone and Diedre Murray's cello; all the while, the newly beefed-up reeds and brass set up the solos in unison while individually popping in and out on their own. The closer, "Sweet Holy Rag," begins with a near-classical cello motif, shifts into high gear with double drums and follows with Threadgill, precise and passionate, intoning amid full group accompaniment.

His brief flute playing on the very beautiful "Gift" drives it home: Threadgill then, during Air's most inaccessible, out-on-a-limb, high-energy moments, and Threadgill now, during a poignant, slow-moving ballad, differ only in terms of musical context. That context, and his band's precise playing, is ultimately what's going to win him friends in new quarters, friends who maybe never grasped Air or who shy away from all things AACM-like or who grimly recall side-long solo-instrument excursions

bearing numbers rather than titles.

Drop the comma and *Rag, Bush and All* sounds like the political imperative of the '90s; drop the needle, and it sounds like a man refining a music that by anyone else's standard was fine enough already. Sit back, let it sink in and thank God it's on an American label. — **Dave DiMartino**



THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

Voodoo
(Columbia)

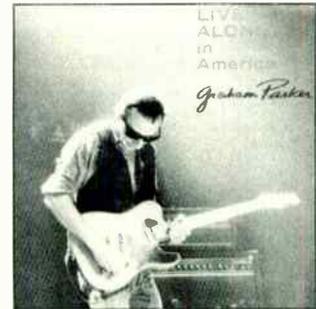
HAVING BACKED ELVIS Costello (*Spike*) and inspired David Byrne (*The Knee Plays*), the Dirty Dozen Brass Band of New Orleans may be poised to capture the hearts and ears of pop fans hungry for a little serious jazz. Then again, maybe not, because *Voodoo* can't be considered a high-minded venture by any stretch. Instead, the Dirty Dozen's first major-label outing (following two indie discs) is a consistently genial, sometimes goofy, set distinguished by tons of good, hard blowing. Screw art, let's wail, as it were.

From cameos by Dr. John and Dizzy Gillespie to songs of Charlie Parker and Stevie Wonder, variety rules, but it all sounds like the same cool party. The Dirty Dozen—actually a "mere" six brass men, plus two drummers—resembles a giddy marching squad hell-bent on disturbing the peace no matter what they play. After leading off with a rollicking version of "It's All Over Now" that Professor Longhair would've loved, they turn to the bebop wellspring for the smokin' title track, with Kevin Harris' tenor sax and Gregory Davis' trumpet drawing crazy patterns. Rarely has a history lesson been so fun: Bird's "Moose the Mooche," featuring molten tenor from pal Branford Marsalis, and Diz's late-'40s fave "Oop Pop a Dah," with sly scatting and deft trumpet from the man himself, generate more warmth than all of Wynton Marsalis' chilly masterpieces put together.

It's a short jump from the classics to "Gemini Rising," a blistering recreation

of James Brown's trademark horn grooves. (And while we're on the subject of the Godfather, why not invite the great Maceo Parker next time?) When Charles Joseph's trombone and Kirk Joseph's sousaphone fatten the attack, the sheer noise would put an army of power guitarists to shame.

Enthusiasm doesn't always suffice, since fiery riffs alone can't sustain Stevie Wonder's slight "Don't Drive Drunk." Digging at the roots, though, the Dirty Dozen can do no wrong. *Voodoo* gets seriously silly with "Black Drawers/Blue Piccolo," nine minutes of leisurely blues spotlighting Gregory Davis' cartoon vocal. And "Santa Cruz" brings it all back home via precision ensemble work, reasserting the power of those crisp second-line rhythms. As a wise old philosopher once observed: Let the good times roll. — **Jon Young**



GRAHAM PARKER

Live! Alone in America
(RCA)

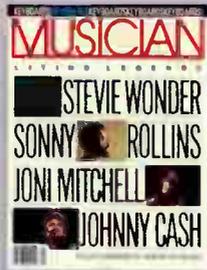
ONE IMAGINES THE RESPONSE of the marketing folk at RCA to *Live! Alone in America*, the new album from Graham Parker. A solo acoustic live set, recorded in Philadelphia? Where will that fit on tight-listed AOR stations?

Though *Live! Alone in America* is a commercial gamble so soon after *The Mona Lisa's Sister* reintroduced Parker following three years of between-labels exile, it's an ideal forum for Parker to rediscover and recast some of his most lasting songs. Early Mercury-period cuts like "White Honey," "Black Honey," "Hotel Chambermaid" and "Back to Schooldays" respond most agreeably to the bare-bones treatment; paring the tunes down to just words and elemental chords lets Parker play with the melodies and turn the songs into something fresh.

The new songs, especially the reggae-tinged "Durban Poison," put across Parker's usual obsessions, both personal and political, with tempered anger. The



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The Clash
Ronald Shannon Jackson



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Stevie Wonder
Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash



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Boston
Kinks, Year in Rock '86



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album climaxes with "A Change Is Gonna Come," the latest in Parker's series of alert Sam Cooke covers. Parker's dark tenor swells with the angry optimism of the song, and Cooke's tale of rights denied and rights demanded sounds as real and as immediate as it did when Cooke sang it more than two decades ago.

Graham Parker's whole career has been about giving a voice to those who haven't been allowed one. By calling up an anthem about just that, he comes full circle with a statement of purpose. *Live! Alone in America* is a consolidation, but on sharp performances like "A Change Is Gonna Come," Parker ups the ante: quite impressive for an LP that could easily have been a holding pattern.

— Jimmy Guterman



D E L A S O U L

3 Feet High and Rising
(Tommy Boy)

YOU AND I KNOW that George Clinton is used as a reference point every time a black singer steps into hard funk or silly putty. Granted, more than a few black (and white) popsters have been Funkadelicized, but unless the humor is outwardly acid and the funk so wide you can't get around it, the Clinton reference should be shelved for a while. Or at least after we talk about *3 Feet High and Rising*, the first record in years that actually wears the Clintonian crown with style.

When I say style, I mean sexual glee, racial pride, political cognizance and a bunch o' yucks. More so than any prior hip-hop LP, *3 Feet* is down with both beats and buffoonery. The rhythm of the former is swing, swang, swinging; the patter of the latter is double-edged. From start to finish, the De Las—three non-belligerent rappers from Amityville, Long Island, who would rather giggle than rant—have put together a record that Uncle Jam would be proud of.

One way they do it is by cramming the record with pop history and pop humor.

YOU'LL BE TAKEN OVER BY "VOODOO."



"Hearing The Dirty Dozen Brass Band for the first time is like waking up from a beautiful dream and finding that the music you heard really exists."

—Elvis Costello

**THE DIRTY DOZEN
BRASS BAND.
"VOODOO."**



The new album featuring special appearances by Dr. John, Branford Marsalis and Dizzy Gillespie.

On Columbia Cassettes, Compact Discs and Records.

Produced by Scott Billington. "Columbia," "®" are trademarks of CBS Inc. © 1989 CBS Records Inc.

A non-stop sampling feat, *3 Feet High and Rising* widens the insularity of rap's insistent self-referencing, grabbing its snippets from anywhere it wants. Steely Dan's "Peg" fuels "Eye Know," while Muzak, Hall & Oates, Tommy Roe and Otis Redding's "Dock of the Bay" whistle get as much space as cuts from current rap records (a high point is Liberace's announcement of the band's "Plug Tunin'" as "perhaps the most famous classic in all the world of music").

The fact that it's a conceptual hoot doesn't hurt the LP's flow either. Employing the guise of a TV quiz show (sample question: "How many times did the Batmobile catch a flat?"), the De Las and producer Prince Paul (Stetsasonic) steer this constantly shifting cultural patchwork through a potentially unwieldy maze. Much of this tomfoolery is designed to distance them from their hip-hop brethren. They don't claim to be the cuttingest rappers; they simply remind that three is the magic number.

They challenge other rap norms as well: The De Las realize there's only so much bone-grabbing one can do, and all the "yo yo yo!"s in the world ain't gonna change what's wrong. Because of their affinity for daisies, proffering of love and jokes, they've been labeled hippies. ("That's just pure plug bull!" they retort,

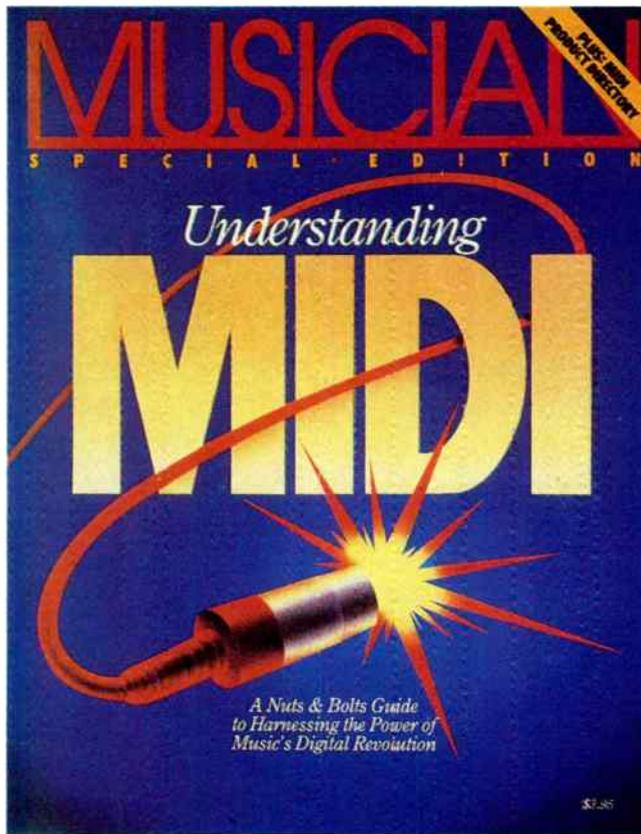
adding, "I love peace/ Or at least/ I think we need some.") The De La rhymes are fun, but carry weight. "Ghetto Thang" rationally explains what keeps the poor under capitalism's thumb, and "Say No Go" forsakes declamation for logic, listing reasons why crack should be avoided.

Using caustic, insightful sprawls like *We're Only in It for the Money* and *America Eats Its Young* as starting points, De La Soul takes a shot at addressing a gaggle of today's issues. Thanks to the inclusion of a few larfs, they not only make their ideas connect, but widen the possibilities of the medium. — Jim Macnie

A N D Y S U M M E R S

The Golden Wire
(Private Music)

AS ANY PICKER WHO'S ever attempted to cop his chord patterns and pealing Police-era harmonics can attest, Andy Summers can be a marvelous (and demanding) stylist, composer and technician. Yet his uncommonly rich and fluid approach has slowly become eclipsed



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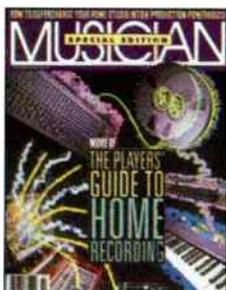
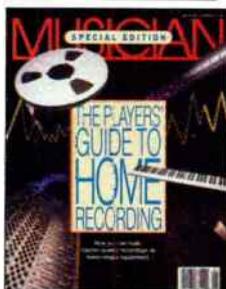
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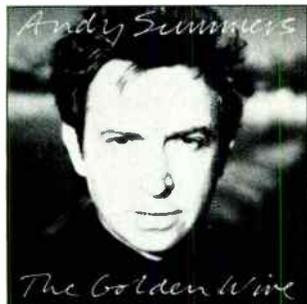
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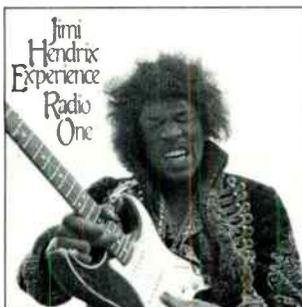
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in the rock lexicon by the giddy dexterities of Eddie Van Halen or the motley grandstanding of Joe Satriani. Sure, Summers remained plenty productive after the Police disbanded in the mid-'80s, knocking out a string of rather outré solo albums while also scoring such successful movies as *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*. Yet the fire and invention of yore grew sporadic at best, making many feel he required the trappings of arena-band megastardom in order to shine. In one deft stroke, *The Golden Wire* is likely to dispel that estimation for good.



By turns spooky, propulsive and spell-binding, *The Golden Wire* is a guitar-paced cascade of rock, jazz, blues and classically textured world beat that translates into 11 exquisite numbers. The support crew for the album is intriguing, including keyboardist/co-producer David Hentschel, Doug Lunn and Yellowjacket Jimmy Haslip on bass, Paul McCandless of Oregon on brass and reeds, drummer Kurt Wortman and, on one transcendent track, Anglo-Indian singer Najma Akhtar; the sound they achieve under Summers' guidance is extraordinary. But the ultimate strengths of *The Golden Wire* are in the playing and song structures. From the impeccable sonic vocabulary of "A Piece of Time" to the siren-pitched guitar and banjo exclamations of "Vigango," there is a sure sense of tension and release on each story-like track. Throughout, the rhythm section offers enough sensual drama and melodic atmospherics to give both Bryan Ferry and Enya a few contemporary pointers; while the art of constructing pan-cultural rock soundscapes hits new heights when Summers' instrument embraces Najma's ecstatically sexy vocals on "Piya Tose." This is music born for CD, its surges and subtleties a delight.

For Andy Summers, *The Golden Wire* is the guitar equivalent of Peter Gabriel's *So*, a personal and artistic breakthrough which becomes an instant treasure. Those with a sense of rock history also are reminded that, for its alumni, no band is an island. — Timothy White



J I M I H E N D R I X

Radio One
(Rykodisc)

WHY SHOULD THE MUSIC of Jimi Hendrix continue to hold such a fascination for listeners? The answers are fresh and vibrant and alive on *Radio One*. Of all the post-mortem celebrations of the great electric guitar innovator, this CD is probably the truest indication of how the Jimi Hendrix Experience actually sounded at their rocking peak. A compilation of prime cuts recorded "live" in the radio studios of the BBC during five 1967 sessions, with no overdubs or Electric Lady trickery, it's as crunchy a documentation of the Ex-

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NEVILLE BROTHERS*Yellow Moon* (A&M)

EVERYBODY KNOWS THE NEVILLES ARE A walking repository of New Orleans musical tradition, but this is where the group connects that sound to the African-American experience. Listen to how Aaron Neville's heart-wrenching rendition of "A Change Is Gonna Come" seems a piece with the rap-oriented "Sister Rosa" and the group's disarming gospel reading of "With God on Our Side." Or note the ease with which the Nevilles link "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" to the Mardi Gras classic "Wild Injuns." What makes this such a magnificent whole is that the Nevilles play this music as if it were as much a part of them as their hearts and souls—which, frankly, is the point.

XTC*Oranges and Lemons* (Geffen)

IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO BE SUSPICIOUS WHEN an act as self-consciously clever as XTC delivers such an engaging tribute to the bliss of ignorance as "The Mayor of Simpleton." Don't think the band disingenuous, though; deep down, this album is as heartfelt a celebration of simple melody as XTC will ever make. That's not to say the lads don't indulge themselves occasionally—"Here Comes President Kill Again," for instance, is packed with stupid political puns—but from "Scarecrow People" to "Garden of Earthly Delights," *Oranges and Lemons* is sheer idiot glee.

VARIOUS ARTISTS*Hillbilly Music: Thank God!, Vol. 1* (Bug/Capitol)

MARSHALL CRENSHAW MAY NOT BE THE likeliest champion classic country ever had, but his 24-tune historic tribute to the Bakersfield sound is a true fan's tribute. There's a great sampling of the stars—Buck Owens, Merle Travis, Rose Maddox, the Louvin Brothers—but better yet, its inclusion of everything from red-hot picking to weepy ballads to cornpone novelties makes it an excellent sampler of country music's eclecticism. A must-own collection.

MOJO NIXON AND SKID ROPER*Root Hog or Die* (Enigma)

ON A CERTAIN LEVEL, THIS ALBUM IS WORTH buying for the titles alone. Who, after all, could resist the likes of "She's Vibrator Dependent" or "Debbie Gibson Is Pregnant with My Two-Headed Love Child"? Laugh as we might when Mojo growls "She put a Louisiana lip-lock/ On my love pork chop," what ultimately makes this platter worth playing is the music behind the jokes. Hell, "Chicken Drop" and the Elvis-sighting tribute "(619) 239-KING" are catchy enough to suggest that Mojo and Skid would have had a career even if they weren't funny.

TONE LOC*Loc-ed After Dark* (Delicious Vinyl)

"WILD THING" (THE TONE-LOC RAP NUMBER, not the Troggs oldie) may have been the most successful sex song in recent memory, but it doesn't take too many spins through *Loc-ed After Dark* to conclude that ol' Tone shot his wad on the single. So much for staying power...

E.U.*Livin' Large* (Virgin)

MOST GO-GO RECORDS ARE SO MUSICALLY one-dimensional it's no wonder nobody believed the Great Go-Go Hype of '86. Still, it's not too late to be converted, and this is the album to do it. Though the ballads are less than convincing, the beat numbers are larger-than-life, from the upwardly mobile title tune to the racial irreverence of "Shake It Like a White Girl." And if you thought "Da Butt" was funky in its original incarnation, wait till you hear the '89 version.

SILLY SISTERS*No More to the Dance* (Shanachie)

"SISTERS" MADDY PRIOR AND JUNE TABOR take a modern approach to traditionalism, seeing it not as an immutable set of rules but as a richly versatile source. As a result, the range of their material is frankly astonishing, from the overt Anglicism of "Cakes and Ale" to the almost Bulgarian flavor of the harmonies in "Blood and Gold." New songs from old—who could ask for a better bargain?

ROBYN HITCHCOCK 'N' THE EGYPTIANS*Queen Elvis* (A&M)

FEW SONGWRITERS ARE AS FAMOUS FOR their whimsy as Robyn Hitchcock, so it should hardly come as a surprise to hear that *Queen Elvis* is packed to the gills with nonsense and non sequiturs. What is noteworthy, however, is Hitchcock's melodic acumen; from the dreamy cadences of "Madonna of the Wasps" to the frenzied pace of "Freeze," this is easily his most effortlessly tuneful work since *Fegmania*.

TOMMY KEENE*Based on Happy Times* (Geffen)

ANYONE WHO BELIEVES THAT POWER-POP should put the emphasis on power will find a kindred spirit in Tommy Keene. His guitar doesn't jangle, it roars, surrounding his melodies with a shimmering torrent of sound that all but sweeps the listener away. Keene's eminently tuneful writing has much the same effect, from the raw urgency of "Light of Love" to the lush outchorus of the title tune.

ALYSON WILLIAMS*Raw* (Def Jam/Columbia)

ALYSON WILLIAMS' STRENGTH IS OLD-FASHIONED, over-the-top soul singing—drippingly histrionic ballads, sizzingly emotional love songs and gritty, gospel-fueled declarations of passion. Though the writing leans a little too heavily toward cliché, Williams delivers even the most banal lyrics with the fervor of a true believer, heating the melody until it crackles with emotion. A voice to contend with.

CHIEF COMMANDER EBENEZER OBEY & HIS INTER-REFORMERS BAND*Get Yer Jujus Out* (Rykodisc)

HE MAY NOT BE A STYLISTIC INNOVATOR like Sunny Adé, but Ebenezer Obey sure knows how to ride herd over a percussion section. And it's that roiling surge of drums, driving the percolating guitars and careening pedal steel, that makes this '87 live date such an electrifying recording. (Pickering Wharf, Bldg. C-3G, Salem, MA 01970.)

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

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Live at Carnegie Hall (CMF)

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— Jim Macnie

ROOSEVELT SYKES

Raining in My Heart (Delmark)

THIS IRRESISTIBLE EARLY-'50s REISSUE—recorded midway through Sykes' distinguished five-decade career—captures this rollicking blues singer and pianist in exuberant peak form. Sykes' tight, sophisticated combo—including sax, violin, and vibraphone—hangs right with him, whether he croons urbanely or moans the down-home blues. Sensual, danceable, and highly recommended. (4243 N. Lincoln, Chicago IL 60618.)

— Ben Sandmel

BAD BRAINS

Bad Brains Live (SST)

IN THE EARLY '80s, BAD BRAINS SURPRISED nearly everyone by arc-welding the rapid-fire Uzi bursts of hardcore with the slow-motion rhythms of dub. The result was a killer sound, one that throbbed as much as it thundered. Onstage, vocalist H.R. supervised the band's proceedings like a voodoo shaman, his ghostly whispers a far cry from the manic screeching of the rest of the hardcore herd. Unfortunately, *Bad Brains Live* is not the group in its prime; the studio LP *I Against I* remains Bad Brains' finest hour. Although there are moments when the band's essence manages to emerge from somewhere

beyond the speakers, the sound and engineering are so abysmal that you seldom feel you are there. Which should be the point. — Tom Graves

RAL DONNER

She's Everything (Murray Hill)

HE LACKED THE KING'S RAW ANIMAL charisma, but Presley soundalike Ral Donner's best efforts were nearly as electrifying as prime Elvis. This overdue compilation from reliable Murray Hill bids to rescue Donner from footnote status, gathering an impressive batch of his early '60s hits, misses, and unreleased cuts. Though adept at swaggering rockers like "Nine Times Out of Ten," his true forte was epic ballads, including "Girl of My Best Friend" (originally a Presley LP track), the magnificently overwrought "Half Heaven, Half Heartache" (predating Gene Pitney's tamer hit version), and "So Close to Heaven," a reverie so dreamy it's downright spooky. These towering melodramas would border on camp, except for this: Ral Donner was clearly one hell of a performer. — Jon Young

LIZ CARROLL

Liz Carroll (Green Linnet)

AS IDIOMATICALLY IRISH AS LIZ CARROLL'S fiddling may be, it's hard not to hear a brash Americanism in her sound and attack—and it's precisely that balance between the old and the new that makes this such a lively and entrancing recording. The tunes are mostly originals, give or take a reel, and show a spritely melodic imagination, but it's Carroll's exquisitely articulated delivery that makes the difference, suggesting an incisive wit and a fine sense of melodic line. (70 Turner Hill Rd., New Canaan, CT 06840.) — J.D. Considine

THE SOLDIER STRING QUARTET

Sequence Girls (Rift)

THE SOLDIERS ARE THE "OTHER" CLASSICAL foursome, the one with the drum set. Though context places them in the realm of sweater vests and chamber music, their multi-sourced songbook soon finds them spilling wine on the rug. Last year it was their interpretations of Elliott

Sharp's notated buzzes; here they weave their way through Skip James, Charley Patton and Muddy Waters. On paper that sounds cutesy, but the ensemble gets to the bottom of delta music's polyglot informality. More important is the scope of bossman Dave Soldier's compositions. The title piece mimics woozy "vocal" techniques; understated tone poems hover around; an ersatz funk beat aids and abets. No ivy on these walls. (Box 663, New York, NY 10012) — Jim Macnie

DAVID GRISMAN

Home Is Where the Heart Is (Rounder)

THERE HAVE BEEN RUMOURS ABOUT THIS cross-generational everybody-and-his-brother bluegrass gathering for almost a year now, and the 24-song, double-record set was worth the wait. With the vagaries of *newgrass* starting to retrace their own steps these days, the retreat to the classics by the style's top-dawgs makes for a breath of fresh air. Actually, the Nashville Bluegrass Band has never ventured into the improvisational realm; maybe that's why their tracks here ("Leavin' Home," "Pretty Polly") carry the highest percentage of relaxed authenticity (not to discount Del McCoury's aw-shucks blues sense or Doc Watson's formal fleet-fingeredness). The songs are mostly from touchstones such as Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley and the Carters. *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* part two is coming soon, but it will have a way to go to beat this headstrong hoedown. — Jim Macnie

REVEREND BILLY C. WIRTZ

Deep Fried and Sanctified (Hightone/King Snake)

THE MULTI-TALENTED REV. BILLY IS A brilliantly clever lyricist, a sick-to-tasteless comedian with impeccable timing, a gravelly singer and a dexterous blues-and-boogie pianist. Suggesting a mutant hybrid of Randy Newman, Sam Kinison and Meade Lux Lewis, Wirtz specializes in twisted tales of the South, rife with inbreeding and sleazy evangelists, set in fictional towns like Chromosome, North Carolina. Fun, but not for the squeamish. (220 4th St., Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94607.) — Ben Sandmel

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jars me, I can't take that much assault at one time; I can't take your raw emotions over and over again.' Hey, I don't mind paring down to forward communication—that's the whole thing. So we're trying to simplify the elements, make it much more palatable for people, give them a little fluff—not a lot, just enough so we can catch 'em off guard and shoot 'em between the eyes with inspiration."

It works. *Hunkpapa* allows time to wipe the brow between the obsessive whirl. "Dizzy" is the new stance's high-point: an almost followable, somewhat eerie narrative with overt descriptions of the American Southwest. Has Hersh been traveling or dreaming? "Neither," she laughs. "That's the one that uses no inspiration at all. It was pretty much researched completely in the library."

The other extreme is "Mania," a flat-out rampage, propelled by Narcizo's snare and Hersh's machine-gun delivery and glottal histrionics. The song suggests that anywhere—a wife's kitchen, a lover's bed—can become a rubber room; it attempts to crack the mental ties that bind.

"I don't think you should have to let a song into your mind in order to 'get it,'" Hersh concludes. "If it hits you in the gut then you've pretty much been affected. That's the whole thing with music; I can't help but respect its power, because nothing else hits me as hard. There are times when it feels so dangerous, I can't listen. I'm afraid I'll do something weird." ▀

RECORDS from page 89

perience's formative sound as guitarists could ask for. It should also give today's sawtooth-wave metalheads pause to hear how clear and singing was Jimi's tone, even at bulldozing distortion levels.

Of course Hendrix frequently used feedback, clipping and extreme volume to achieve an unnatural, horn-like sustain, to "bypass the listener's ear and go right to their soul," Hendrix once pointed out. Remember that Hendrix came to prominence just as tenor innovator John Coltrane checked out in the middle of his vanguard "free jazz" experiments. Coltrane's group concept (particularly the orchestral drumming of Elvin Jones) was a polyrhythmic role model for Hendrix's vocalized "free blues." *Radio One* is about as chainsaw raw as that sound ever got.

The live-in-the-studio reprisal of classic rockers and singles from the *Experienced...Axis...Ladyland* trilogy

makes this compilation especially valuable. "Hey Joe" was then their big single on the British charts, and this is how the band sounded in England hot out of the blocks, just before they conquered America. In that formative commercial cauldron, the Experience had a couple of high-spirited, slice-'n'-dice cover tunes by rock's royal antecedents in their repertoire; a truly nasty "Hound Dog" and a jet-propelled "Day Tripper." *Radio One* also lends perspective to Hendrix standards like "Fire," "Foxy Lady" and "Purple Haze," while true fan favorites such as "Love and Confusion," "Spanish Castle Magic" and "Burning of the Midnight Lamp" are given the deep-heat treatment—surely drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding have never sounded more agitated and committed. Not to slight *Radio One's* vivid portrayal of Jimi Hendrix, virtuoso bluesman. Concert staples such as "Killing Floor," "Driving South" and "Hear My Train a Comin'" show that no matter how far gone Jimi was harmonically and rhythmically, he never neglected early inspirations like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

The success of Rykodisc's *Live at Winterland* set and *Radio One* holds the promise of future releases—and if my bootlegs are any indicator, there's more where this came from. There are also plans—worth reconsidering—to release the legendary but largely dispiriting Isle of Wight concert. Only Hendrix's Copenhagen concert of 9/3/70 at K.B. Hallen Hall was really transcendent on that final tour—it was also the best indication of Hendrix's burgeoning jazz-rock directions. Still, with more early gems like *Radio One* and quality performances like the 1970 Atlanta Pop Festival in the can, there's no shortage of truly memorable material to cherish. Which is why, for our generation of jazzmen, rockers, bluesers and middle-aged fans like yours truly, Jimi Hendrix's music retains a revolutionary resonance to rival that of Igor Stravinsky, Louis Armstrong and Charlie Christian.

— Chip Stern

MILES from page 52

re-write things like *Porgy and Bess* and *Miles Ahead*. It sounds like a different thing; we had to write a whole other composition. So he stopped doing things like that.

"Gil's mind was like a computer. Because he stored everything he liked in his head. He'd call me up in the middle of the night and say, 'You know that part where Teddy Wilson did this, or Fletcher Hen-

derson did this?' He called me up once and said, 'If you ever get unhappy or bored, listen to *Miles Ahead*, listen to the arrangements.' He was like that.

"If I took him to a record date of mine, and I'm playing and he has his legs crossed; he'd pull me over [*tugs my sleeve and whispers into my ear*]. 'Remember, you have a round tone. Remember that. And remember that they're white, and you have to put your sound on top of what they're doing, or it's nothing.' He's one of the few music lovers that I know. If I have to make a decision about something, I can always say, 'What would Gil say right here?'"

So you miss him?

"I don't miss him. Well, I miss him, you know. Other people missed him because they missed him when he was here. I don't really think about death. I don't think people die, you know what I mean? I don't believe their head stops. I don't know what happens; they have to come back and be around somewhere. I can't see where Gil Evans is dead at all. He's not dead to me. People like your mother and father, you can always tune in to them. I get this kind of thing sometimes, like when a little breeze blows a door open in New York, in your apartment; things that old folks tell you, they have something. My sister said that she smelled my mother's perfume. I never smelled it because the perfume I bought her was from Paris, and she used to use it only at certain social functions; I bought it in 1949. I believe they communicate in different ways. I can see things I've never seen before, I really believe in that.

"I don't believe that thoughts get lost, you know what I'm saying? The thoughts are still there. I often think about—you can see TV, hear it—music on the radio, if you talk on the radio I can pick it up; it must be going on all over the earth, music's floating around, and one day somebody's going to be able to pick it up. It's too much just to lose a night of playing like that. I was going to write a story like that, where all of a sudden you pick up a set you remember on 52nd Street and nobody remembers it but you go around and find the people you were there with. And maybe someone remembers it. It's got to be somewhere, 'cause things like that are not going to be

KINDA BLEW

THESE days Miles Davis is attached to a Yamaha DX7 and an Oberheim OBXa. He plays a Martin trumpet with a Giardinelli mouthpiece. His horn is heard through a Nady wireless.

done again. The time, the humidity, everything comes together. It'll come back. I can pull in Gil or my parents whenever I want to. Gil knew he was going to die. He just didn't want to die around anybody he knew. That's why he went to Mexico. Around people, he'd get the routine: 'Hey man, you sure do look thin.'"

I guess you've been getting a lot of that recently?

"That thing came out [referring to an article claiming Davis had AIDS]. I didn't read it. I think an ex-wife must have had something to do with that. Sounds like some shit an ex-wife would do. Bitches are vicious. Maybe she thinks some girl will read it and won't want to fuck me. I got pneumonia in Europe, and I never did get rid of it. I never stayed in this house this long. I like it out here, I love it. Once you stay here for a few days it gets better. I can't stand the city unless it's New York. So I stay here, exercise, and the other day the doctor told me the pneumonia was all gone. I don't have AIDS now. I don't think I'm going to sue. You have to say, 'You already got mad at that, don't get mad again.' But women are bitches. It's just a way of thinking some women have. If they can't have it, nobody else will. They want to fix it like that. The only thing I can think of that I haven't done is to live to be 90, and I'm not 90 yet. I'm going to do it, too."

Do you still like boxing?

"I like to watch Mike Tyson, yeah. Because he's a heavyweight. He's slipping. I look at him, pick things apart, every time he moves to the left he's coming. The best guy I've seen fight him was Bruno. Bruno let him off the hook. I saw him fight Green, too. All boxers play drums, there's a connection. You can see it in the ring. Timing, rhythm, I can tell from how a musician walks that he can play. They gave me an honorary doctorate in music in Boston, some university. So I went up there to get it, and every person who got their degree was like this:" Miles walks crabbed. "You could tell that they were fucked with when they were kids. No balance, repressed, you can see it. They might have an umbrella, too."

Did you really tell Monk not to play on "Bags' Groove," behind you?

"Yeah! Because I can't play when he plays behind me like that. I just can't play; he knows that. The way he played, he played what he wanted. If we're going to play something other than ballads he wrote, the chords he would play behind you, you couldn't improve on. Flatted fifths, there's only one thing you can play, is to play that chord. I like Herbie's comping, he doesn't get in the way. Al Haig, Bill Evans, Red—they were all good at it."

Did you ever play with Ahmad Jamal?

"My sister called me once, she was in the Pershing Lounge. She said, 'Listen to this.' I said, 'Who the fuck is that?' She said his name is Ahmad Jamal. That's the same thing I got when I heard Art Blakey. You know that feeling when you're frightened, when you're out of breath, on coke, or when a pretty woman walks in and you just have to say, 'What the fuck

is your name?' I got it from Ahmad, Art Blakey. The older you get, it comes in smaller doses. It wasn't the same thing I got watching Bird, or when I heard Bud. And I'd heard Art Tatum; my mother had his albums."

Davis' last engagement in New York had him playing with a new band, the best he's had since his comeback. The band thunders. It may not be art, but it is good entertainment, and Davis, when he wants, can be brilliant over the burly roadhouse underpinnings. That brilliance can be heard on *Amandla*, which like Davis said, has go-go beats on it. But the



best parts about it are also the most tantalizing: Among the funk grooves, which open up to let his trumpet shine through, like sun through clouds, are two ballads, which until they drown in saccharine electronics, offer proof that Davis could, if he wanted to, play up to his old standards.

"In a way, I can't throw all my ideas on my band, you know. All I can do is let them play what they do best. Kenny [Garrett, his saxophonist] is a motherfucker. He's improved a lot. Sometimes I give him things to play, like a long phrase

like if you play 6/8 you have to play it, but you bust it up. And on the new album I heard him doing that. Marcus and myself and Kenny, that's the only thing I listen to in the arrangements. George Duke played a little bit, Joey De Francesco played about four bars. But Kenny and I do a lot of interplay, we're doing more and more. Sometimes he just looks me in the eyes to start with, and he and I just go; we do a lot of that. His mind is opening up, he doesn't sound like anybody else.

"Now, if we're playing and I hear something I don't like I'll just say, 'Play this, within the tunes,' or 'Put a tag here' or 'Add chords, to sweeten it up a bit.' Every time somebody new joins the band, they change it. The personalities change it. With Joey in the band, he changed it, it was a lift. 'Cause he would do something that nobody else could do.

"And you have to organize everything. I told one guy in the band, 'You're no soloist, I got you to play the parts.' But you know, men are very vain. I thought women were vain, but women

just dress like that. Men are the ones. Like a guy who can't solo, can't space a solo, some people can't just space things along, on the canvas, sometimes too it'll be too heavy here or there. Guys who go to be-bop school, forget it. I had to pull Joey out, I said, 'Joey, you're running this chord, but play half a step up, a diminished chord, or an augmented chord, play both of them!' That's why I said that about Coltrane. Gary and Kenny have this other style, which I like. Let's eat. You want some ribs? Damn, I shouldn't have asked you, now you'll say yes."

On the TV, Don Jackson, a black undercover policeman who was arrested and pushed through a plate glass window by white policemen for no reason, is on the news.

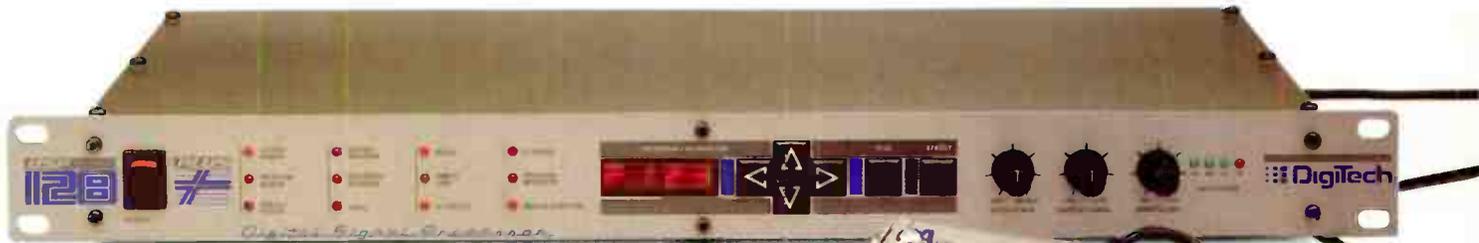
Think America's changed?

"No."

We hang out and by the time I leave, Miles is watching Geraldo Rivera take on teen lesbians, and the sun's setting. ☐

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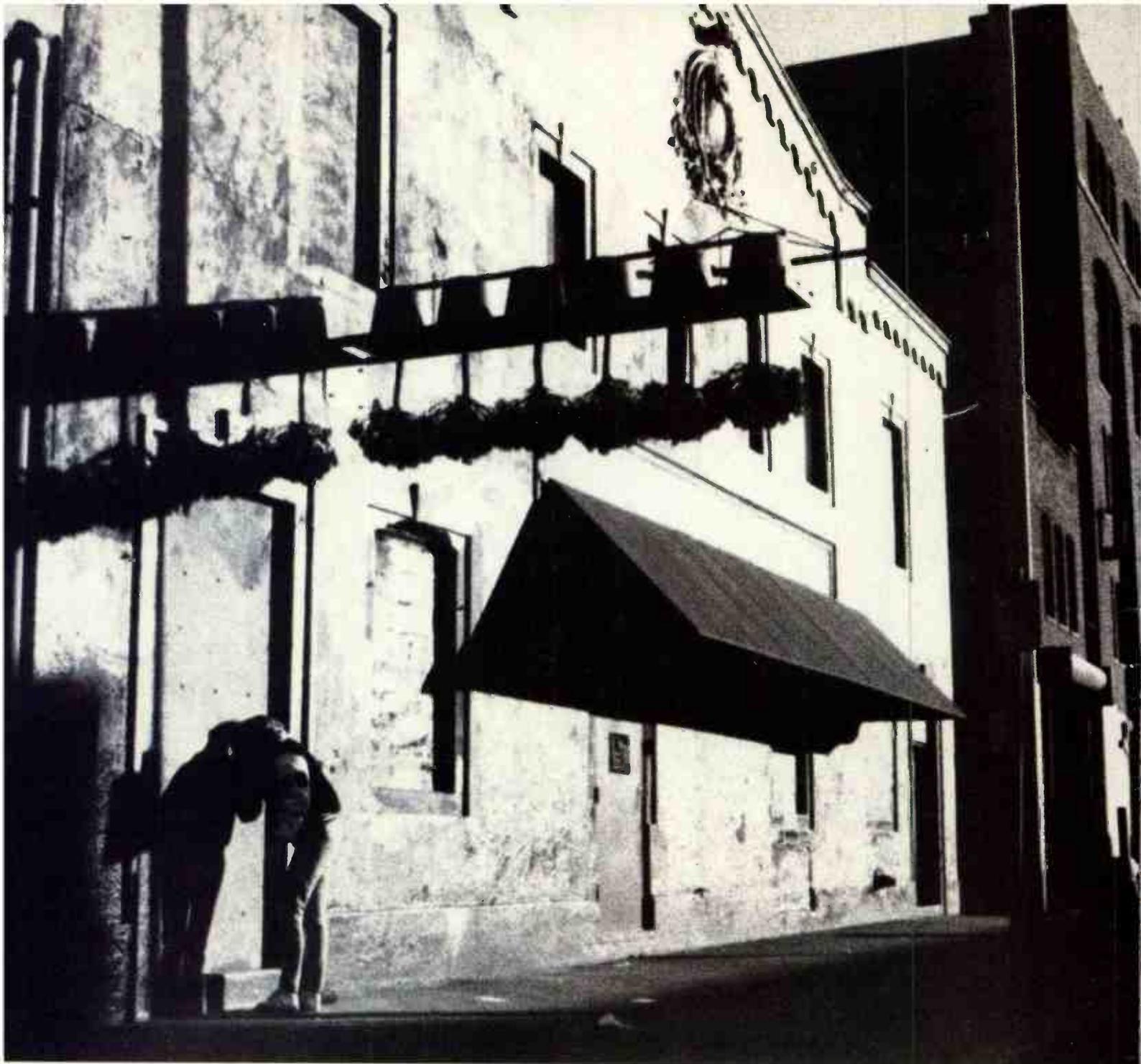
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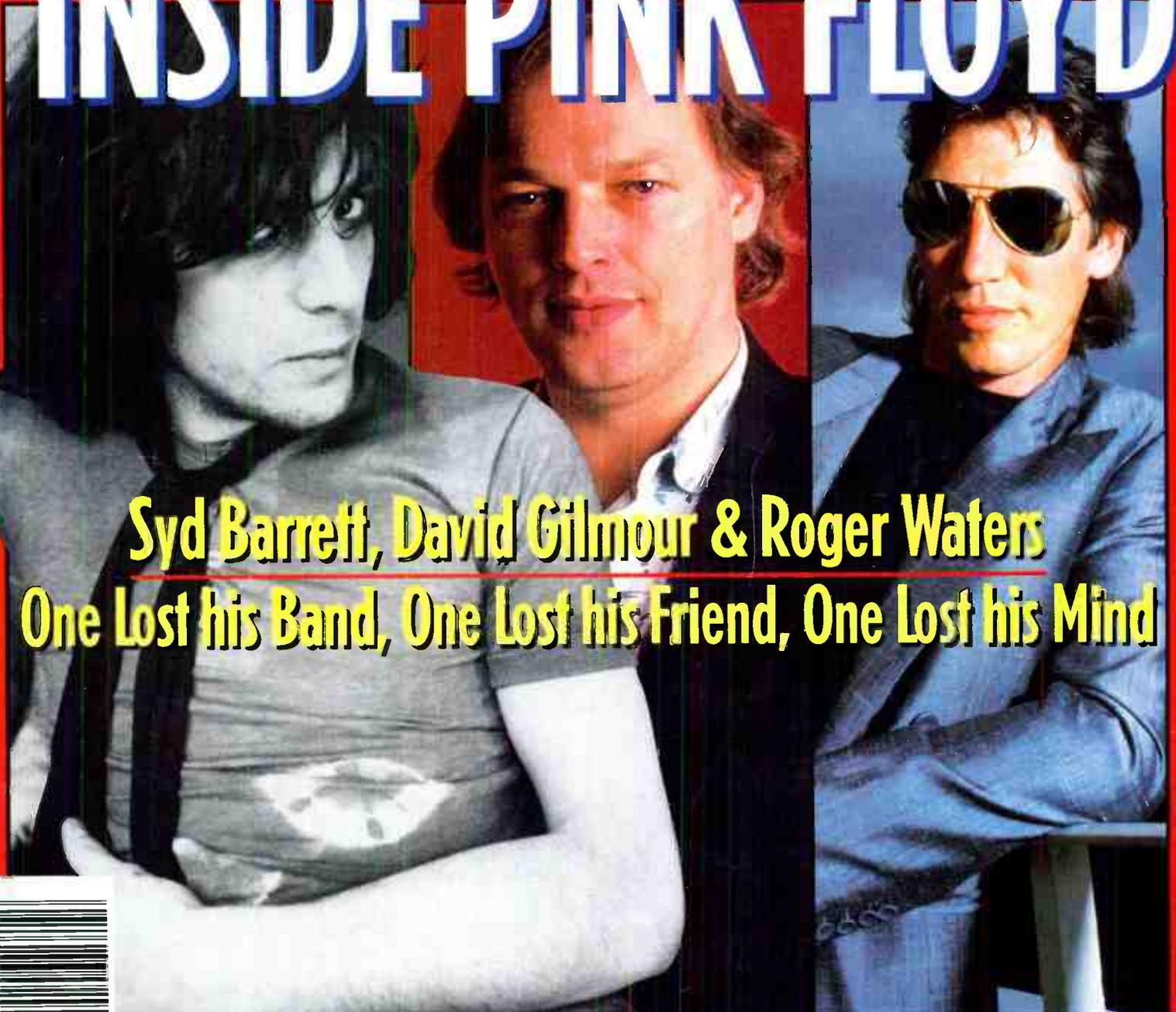
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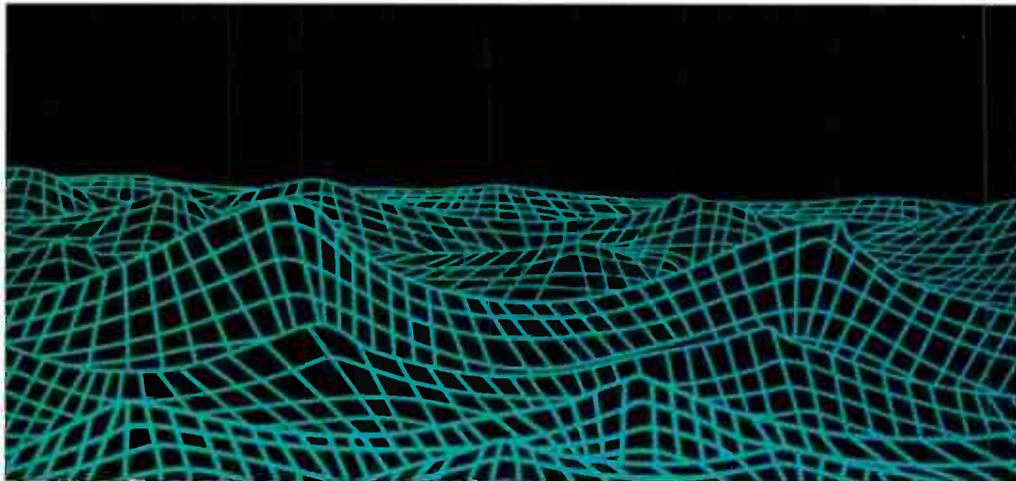
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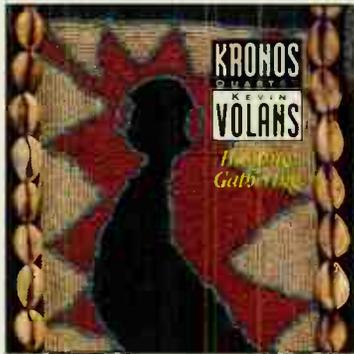
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The real story of Pink Floyd is revealed in an excerpt from their upcoming biography: how Roger Waters, Nick Mason and Rick Wright rode to rock stardom behind Syd Barrett, only to watch in horror as Barrett began losing his mind. Beautiful music, sudden success and visions of madness collide in swinging London.

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Mergers, lay-offs and belt-tightening throw a scare into the record and concert industries.

BY FRED GOODMAN

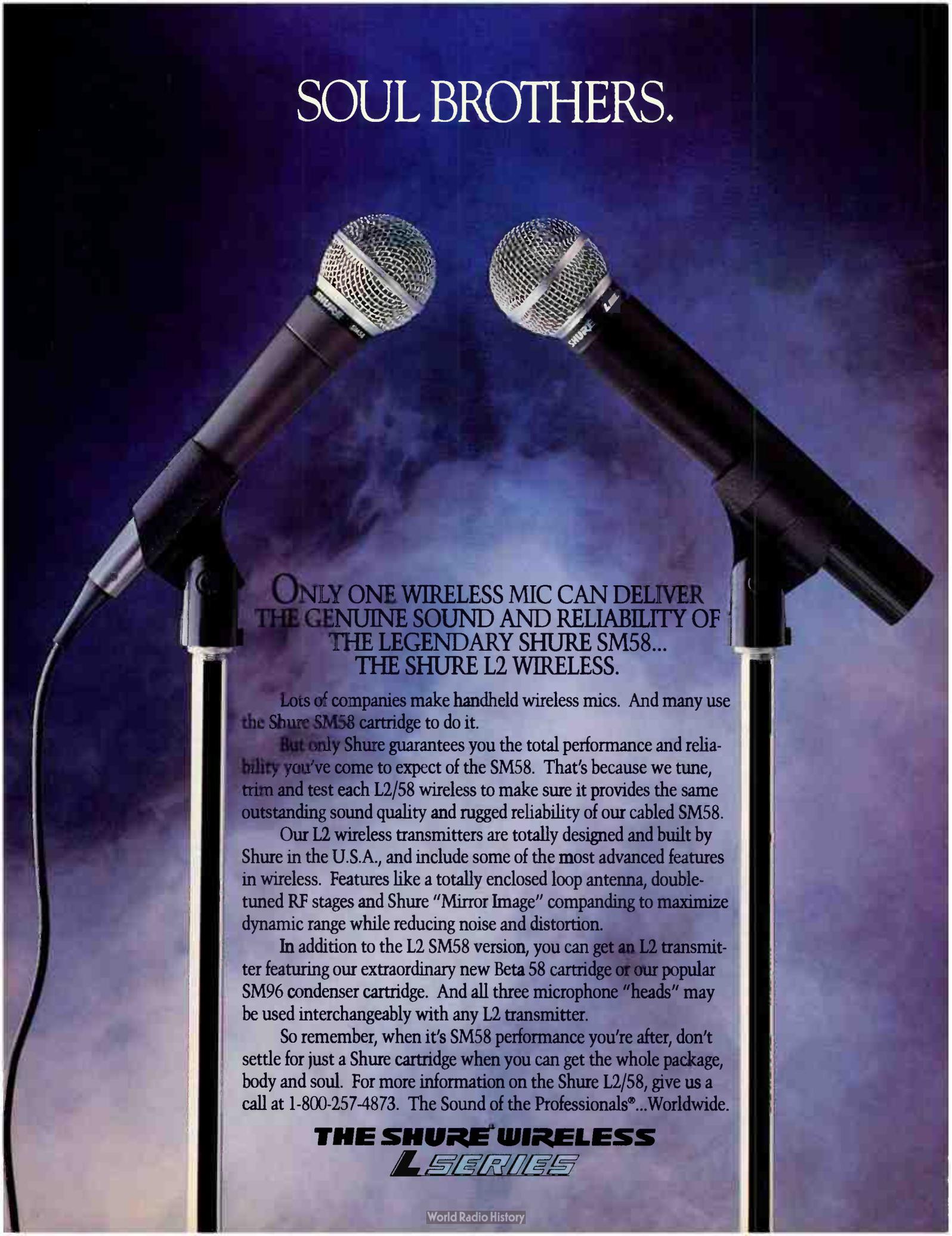
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BACKSIDE

HOW TO NAME YOUR BAND

BY PETER DOSKOCH

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Bill Wyman

The Stones played really well on the Steel Wheels tour, better than I've ever heard the band play live.

We did tighten up. We rehearsed longer, for a start. What we especially did was we got the tempos right. We had timed count-ins for every song, which we'd never done before. "Miss You" used to be so fast I couldn't play the bloody thing! I'd say, "Come on, Keith, don't start it off that fast!" and he'd say, "Oh, that was just an accident, it'll be alright tomorrow," and it'd be the same thing. This time we held all the tempos exactly the same, which was a great improvement. And we worked endings out. We never did that before.

We never did *soundchecks* before, really. It's a joke, but we never did. And we had two very straight and brilliant keyboard players who kept that discipline and kept us in shape. The Stones have always had a sloppy, almost falling-to-bits rhythm; it wobbles a bit and that's part of the charm. But you can get that and be precise as well. We got the starts right and the middle breaks and the endings. Even then, Keith would still blow right through the breaks and play all over them. But generally it worked out very well.

Woody was impressive this time.

He played really well, because he was told not to run around and to concentrate on the music! In previous tours he'd tear ass all over the place, forget all his solos, forget where he was, couldn't hear, and just make these horrible noises and fall over. Once again: discipline. He stuck to his place and it really worked.

Do you play guitar?

No. I did rhythm bits on my solo albums but I'm not a guitarist. I never learned chords. I'm a really strange bass player. I was musical as a child, clarinet and piano lessons. From that I was able to anticipate where a chord change would be, melodically. If we were working on a song I might say, "Oh, there's a better chord than that, Keith, try to find another," and he'd find it. But I never learned chords. If they say, "A to

D and then to G," I would not be able to follow that quickly on the bass. I'd have to find it. But I can *feel* it. I don't think there's another bass player in the world who doesn't know chords. If I'm on the G on the second string and they say, "Go to C sharp," I have to think, "Where is C sharp on the bass?"

How do you rank Keith and Woody as bassists?

"THE STONES
RHYTHM WOBBLERS
A BIT. THAT'S PART
OF THE CHARM."

Not very highly. Keith has good basic ideas but he doesn't play them very well. It disturbs me when I listen to his bass on some things. I'm bloody sure if I played guitar it would disturb him greatly! He'll find a really good line on the bass—like on "Happy"—but his timing on the bass isn't very good. And Woody just plays too much, I think. I often pull him back and say, "Look, Woody, if you're going to play bass on this, put in some bottom notes. Don't keep wandering around on the top, soloing all the time. Put a couple of low ones in just to keep it together, something to hang onto." Jeff Beck probably wanted Woody to be busy. It probably worked in the Jeff Beck Group, but it doesn't work in the Stones. Charlie's a great drummer but he's basically a simple drummer. I stay simple with him and that works very well.

Have the other Stones reacted to Stone Alone, your autobiography?

No. When the band does solo projects no one takes much notice of them, really. I sent them all a book but they were all on holiday after the tour. We all just met yesterday afternoon, actually. We had one of our usual six-monthly get-togethers to go through business stuff, tax stuff. At the end of the meetings we always have a chat about "What are we going to do next year and the

year after?"

Certain members of the band—I was not one of them—said that they don't want to work for at least a year, maybe two.

I said to Mick, "Have you read the book yet?" He said, "No, I haven't read it yet." It's still at his office. It didn't go off to Bali or wherever he's been. We don't talk about solo projects; you don't talk about Woody's solo album or Mick's Australian tour. A few days earlier, when Woody was in hospital with his legs injured I said, "Have you read the book?" He said, "No, you sent it to my house and the next day someone came along and stole it, so you're gonna have to send me another." Charlie doesn't even read books really, but his wife liked it very much. Andrew Oldham phoned and said he thought it was very even-handed. He thought he came out a bit nicer than he's ever come out in a book on the Stones. And I thought I really slagged him off!

Where do you draw the line between telling the whole truth and saying, "I still have to work with



these guys—I'd better not tell that story?"

You do have to hold back just a little bit on some things. I wouldn't delve into Mick and Marianne's private lives. I wouldn't talk about Mars bars and things.

—Bill Flanagan

LETTERS



Stevie Remembered

BOTH MATT RESNICOFF'S EPITAPH and Dean Markley's tribute (Nov. '90) to Stevie Ray Vaughan were lovely remembrances of a man whose music and honesty will be sorely missed. It makes me so damn sad to know that he's gone. Rest in peace, Stevie. We loved you.

Jay Blackburn
Seattle, WA

THAT MONDAY WHEN I HEARD THAT Stevie Ray had died, I listened to his music all night and cried a river of tears. The river will never stop flowing every time I hear Stevie Ray. But I will never stop dancing, either, every time I hear his music.

Beth Nadrow
Aurora, IL

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN WAS A GIVER. He gave love, warmth, kindness, but most of all, soul. You could open your heart to his music because you knew it came from way down deep inside, a place we usually keep hidden, but a place Stevie shared with us.

Andrea S. Thrasher
Double Oak, TX

I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR being the only magazine to acknowledge the untimely death of Stevie Ray Vaughan (except *Rolling Stone*, who threw together some

half-assed tiny article about his memorial service). And the "moment of silence" tribute from the Dean Markley company was beautiful.

Kevin M. Farrow
Chicago, IL

I WAS NOT TOO SURPRISED when *Rolling Stone* thought it more important to put the women of "Twin Peaks" on their cover. But I was dismayed at the fact that somehow to *Musician* Jimmy Page seemed to be a more relevant and appropriate choice for a cover than Stevie Ray.

Robin Lubatkin
Storrs, CT

STEVIE RAY SHOULD'VE HAD THE cover all to himself.

Sonia Ann Moss
Jamaica, NY

Turn the Page

THE FIRST THING I DID WHEN I SAW the cover of the November issue of *Musician* was scream! Then I composed myself and immediately read the Jimmy Page article.

Thanks to Matt Resnicoff for a terrific article. Now we can only hope that Robert Plant will put his ego on hold for a bit so that the best group of the '70s will be able to prove they can still rock 'n' roll.

Kim Andrewes
Jersey City, NJ

I'VE ALWAYS PAID CLOSE ATTENTION to what Jimmy Page has been doing as a solo artist, and I thought that it was unfair of Matt Resnicoff to mention the Zep reunion at the Atlantic Records celebration the way that he did. I've heard Jimmy play guitar several times since then and his playing sounds great.

Laurie May
Leesburg, IN

ENOUGH ENOUGH ALREADY WITH articles on Jimmy Page, Robert Plant or anybody or anything to do with Led Zeppelin. No more about that highly overrated band and anyone connected to it for at least five years. It's absolutely shocking to me that a godawful, bombastic con job of a band like them could be so popular in its original heyday, and, worse, be even more popular 10 years after they broke up. Together they were nothing less than pompous, obnoxious, melodramatic, self-indulgent, lugubrious, narcissistic, bloated and unnecessarily excessive, and in concert were even worse.

D.A. Kelly
Louisville, KY

THE TITLE OF THE LIVE YARDBIRDS bootleg album (Nov. '90, page 62) was *Live at the Anderson Theatre*, not *Emerson*.

Dave McLeod
Greenwich, CT

Kick Out the Jams, Monkeys!

THANK YOU, DAVE MARSH, FOR THE impassioned article on Rob Tyner and MC5. It was completely refreshing to read about a man so passionate and religious about his life and music. Tyner the "Art Warrior" has hit the nail on the head when he said man has descended from lemurs instead of apes because lemurs live in fear. In a time where videos and power ballads are essential for success, it's nice to know there was a time when fire and passion ruled.

Matt Cameron
Seattle, WA

SOMEONE NEEDS TO TELL ROBTYNER that lemurs are monkeys!

Jonny Gillespie
Keeper

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
Fl. Wayne, IN

End of the Innocence

NICE JOB ON MACKENZIE ROCKMAN. But are you sure you want Don Henley in the cast as Arnie, the epitome of money-grabbing lawyers? This is the man who has sung: "Cross a lawyer with a godfather, make you an offer you can't understand," and the hauntingly true "A man with a briefcase can steal more money than any man with a gun."

Mark Brown
Philadelphia, PA

I FOUND THE THOUGHT OF BRIAN Wilson playing the part of the slightly retarded character on "L.A. Law" insulting! Brian is a genius, and should be celebrated as such, not dismissed or made fun of! Hey, George, Jeff, Bob, Tom and Jim...How about making Brian a Wilbury?

Yann Poisson
New Haven, CT

Contests & Awards

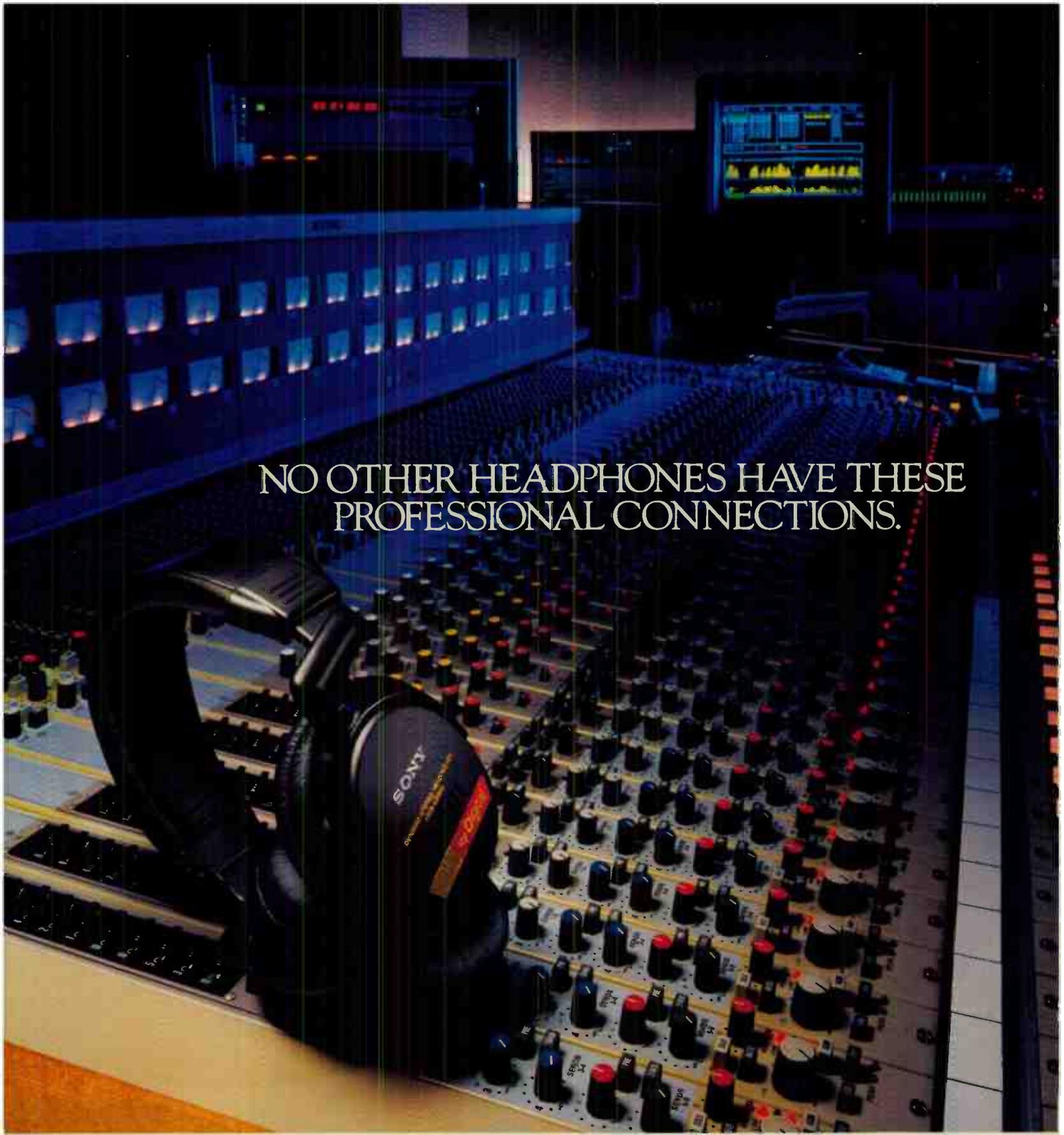
HEALEY HELLRAISER KENT LINDERmere of Roxbury, CT and Cray contestant George Fox of Cincinnati, OH are winners in the FENDER/MUSICIAN Fall '90 guitar promotions.

Musician has won the Deems-Taylor award for editing and publishing the lost diaries of Charles Mingus in issue 128. Congrats to Tom Moon, Stephen Davis and Sue Mingus for their tireless work. All the rest of you: Order the back issue!

Erata

THE BAND TIPPARIE WAS INCORRECTLY spelled Tippa Trie in *Faces* (Dec. '90).

PLEASE SEND LETTERS TO: MUSICIAN,
1515 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10036.



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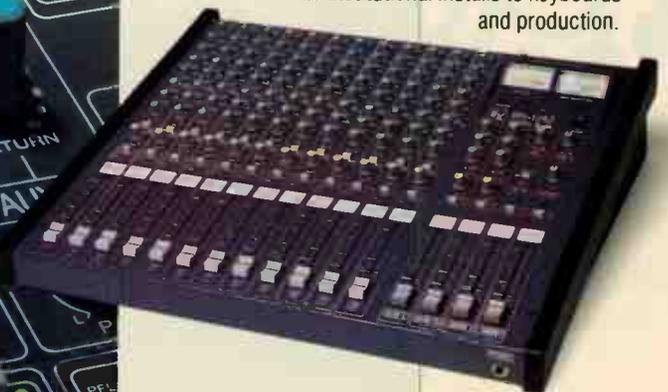
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FACES

Cocteau Twins

THE MUSIC OF SOUND

"People think, for some reason, that we're quite musical," chuckles Simon Raymonde, one third of the Cocteau Twins. "But it's not something I ever really think about."

Nor should he. After all, one of the most endearing aspects of the group's shimmering, soft-focus sound is its utter lack of self-consciousness. As singer Elizabeth Fraser puts it, "I enjoy talking about music, but I can't dissect and break down our music, because it's such a natural process. It's just not thought out to that extent."

But neither is it just a happy accident. Although Raymonde admits that he and bandmate Robin Guthrie are "pretty shit at playing everything," he also makes it plain that instrumental technique has never been a priority for the band. Instead, what the Cocteaus focus on is the *sound* of music.

"That's where a lot of the songs actually come from, the sound of it," he says. "I mean, if you just plug a guitar into an amplifier, it sounds, essentially, quite boring. You find yourself just playing rock riffs, because that's the history of that sound. But if you put it through some peculiar effect, you create something you haven't heard before, and that inspires you."

J.D. CONSIDINE



Ellis Marsalis LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

If you can manage to live long enough and do anything, there's a point when people are going to notice," Ellis Marsalis says. At 57, the New Orleans jazz pianist who fathered Wynton, Branford and Delfeayo is stepping into the limelight: He's just signed a multi-record contract with Columbia Records.

Like Wynton, Ellis has a classical technique and training, the legacy of a 1950s musical education which did not deem jazz worthy of the classroom. Miles Davis, who has taken jazz

in more directions than a compass, has intimated that learning classical music is the worst thing a jazz musician can do.

"I don't think you can



make a blanket indictment like that," says Marsalis. "You see, I've got a son named Wynton, and he's got a whole lot of people imitating what he's doing—playing jazz—and needless to say, he was a classical musician."

Ellis has spent the last 12 years with the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, teaching hot young musicians like Wynton, Branford, Terence Blanchard and Kent Jordan. Recent work with Wynton (*Standard Time, Volume 3: The Resolution of Romance*) and Courtney Pine turned out to be warm-up exercises for his new contract. But

the main reason for the elder Marsalis' musical renaissance is simply that he never lost his chops. And he never pressured his kids into music.

"Wynton could have been a scientist, anything. See, it didn't make any difference to me. I've seen what they call stagedoor mummies and stagedoor daddies. Those are people whose ambitions were never fulfilled and they live 'em through their kids. I never stopped playing. I had no reason to live anything through my kids. Had I quit playing, I would have probably been a real pain in the ass." GEOFF OSSIAS

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month.

1 • 3	Vanilla Ice <i>To the Extreme/SBK</i>
2 • 1	M.C. Hammer <i>Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em</i> /Capitol
3 • 4	Mariah Carey <i>Mariah Carey/Columbia</i>
4 • 55	Paul Simon <i>Rhythm of the Saints</i> /Warner Bros.
5 • 2	AC/DC <i>The Razors Edge/Atco</i>
6 • —	Whitney Houston <i>I'm Your Baby Tonight/Arista</i>
7 • 53	ZZ Top <i>Recycler/Warner Bros.</i>
8 • 6	Wilson Phillips <i>Wilson Phillips/SBK</i>
9 • 29	Bette Midler <i>Some People's Lives/Atlantic</i>
10 • 5	George Michael <i>Listen without Prejudice Vol. 1</i> /Columbia
11 • —	Traveling Wilburys <i>Vol. 3/Columbia</i>
12 • 12	Poison <i>Flesh and Blood/Enigma</i>
13 • 9	Bell Biv DeVoe <i>Poison/MCA</i>
14 • —	The Cure <i>Mixed Up/Elektra</i>
15 • 7	INXS <i>V/Atlantic</i>
16 • 15	Garth Brooks <i>No Fences/Capitol</i>
17 • 8	Vaughan Brothers <i>Family Style/Associated</i>
18 • 10	Warrant <i>Cherry Pie/Columbia</i>
19 • 30	Soundtrack <i>Pretty Woman/EMI</i>
20 • —	Phil Collins <i>Serious Hits...Live/EMI</i>
21 • 48	The Black Crowes <i>Shake Your Money Maker</i> /Def American
22 • 14	Jon Bon Jovi <i>Blaze of Glory/Young Guns II</i> /Mercury

Top Concert Grosses

1	New Kids on the Block, Perfect Gentlemen, St. Paul, Good Girls	\$1,809,225
<i>Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, MI/November 15-18</i>		
2	Billy Joel	\$1,677,284
<i>Target Center, Minneapolis, MN/November 13, 15-16 & 19</i>		
3	New Kids on the Block, Biscuit, Perfect Gentlemen, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond, Good Girls	\$892,400
<i>Richfield Coliseum, Richfield, OH/November 25-26</i>		
4	Billy Joel	\$654,836
<i>The Summit, Houston, TX/November 25 & 28</i>		
5	AC/DC, Love/Hate	\$606,246
<i>SkyDome, Toronto, Ontario/November 9</i>		
6	ZZ Top, Jeff Healey Band	\$573,330
<i>Great Western Forum, Inglewood, CA/November 25-26</i>		
7	New Kids on the Block, Biscuit, Brenda K. Starr, George Lamond	\$561,850
<i>Thompson Bowling Assembly Center & Arena, Knoxville, TN/November 30</i>		
8	ZZ Top, Jeff Healey Band	\$466,840
<i>Tuconia Dome, Tucson, AZ/November 18</i>		
9	ZZ Top, Johnny Van Zant	\$450,300
<i>St. Louis Arena, St. Louis, MO/November 7-8</i>		
10	New Kids on the Block, Perfect Gentlemen, Rick Wes	\$437,850
<i>Budley Center, Milwaukee, WI/November 11</i>		

23 • —	Clint Black <i>Put Yourself in My Shoes/RCA</i>
24 • —	Led Zeppelin <i>Led Zeppelin/Atlantic</i>
25 • 40	Dee-Lite <i>World Clique/Elektra</i>
26 • 11	Queensryche <i>Empire/EMI</i>
27 • —	Madonna <i>The Immaculate Collection/Sire</i>
28 • 59	Janet Jackson <i>Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation/A&M</i>
29 • 23	Nelson <i>After the Rain/DGC</i>
30 • 71	Al B. Sure! <i>Private Times...And the Whole 9!</i> /Warner Bros.
31 • —	Steve Winwood <i>Refugees of the Heart/Virgin</i>
32 • —	Paul McCartney <i>Tipping the Live Fantastic</i> /Capitol
33 • 20	Too Short <i>Short Dog's in the House/Jive</i>
34 • —	Scorpions <i>Crazy World/Mercury</i>
35 • 18	Michael Bolton <i>Soul Provider/Columbia</i>
36 • 19	Slaughter <i>Sick It to Ya/Chrysalis</i>
37 • —	Eddie Brickell & New Bohemians <i>Ghost of a Dog/Geffen</i>
38 • 13	Soundtrack <i>Glust/Varese Sarabande</i>
39 • 35	New Kids on the Block <i>Step by Step/Columbia</i>
40 • 16	L.L. Cool J <i>Mama Said Knock You Out/Def Jam</i>
41 • 63	Damn Yankees <i>Damn Yankees/Warner Bros.</i>
42 • 24	Soundtrack <i>Wish Peas/Warner Bros.</i>
43 • 41	Pebbles <i>Always/MCA</i>
44 • —	Guy <i>The Future/MCA</i>
45 • 37	Winger <i>In the Heart of the Young/Atlantic</i>
46 • —	Big Daddy Kane <i>Taste of Chocolate/Cold Chillin'</i>
47 • 17	Faith No More <i>The Real Thing/Slash</i>
48 • —	Candyman <i>Ain't No Shame in My Game/Epic</i>

49 • 25	Anita Baker <i>Compositions/Elektra</i>
50 • 27	Judas Priest <i>Painkiller/Columbia</i>
51 • 70	Tony! Toni! Tone! <i>The Revival/Wing</i>
52 • 28	Keith Sweat <i>I'll Give All My Love to You</i> /Vintertainment
53 • 22	Iron Maiden <i>No Prayer for the Dying/Epic</i>
54 • 31	Megadeth <i>Rust in Peace/Capitol</i>
55 • 35	Randy Travis <i>Heroes & Friends/Warner Bros.</i>
56 • —	Tesla <i>Five Man Acoustical Jam/Geffen</i>
57 • 26	Depeche Mode <i>Violator/Sire</i>
58 • 86	UB40 <i>Labour of Love II/Virgin</i>
59 • 47	Maxi Priest <i>Bonafide/Charisma</i>
60 • —	Lynch Mob <i>Wicked Sensation/Elektra</i>
61 • —	Pet Shop Boys <i>Behavior/EMI</i>
62 • —	Trixter <i>Trixter/Mechanic</i>
63 • —	Various Artists <i>Red Hot & Blue/Chrysalis</i>
64 • 85	Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti <i>Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti in Concert/London</i>
65 • 93	Daryl Hall John Oates <i>Change of Season/Arista</i>
66 • 38	Johnny Gill <i>Johnny Gill/Motown</i>
67 • —	Ralph Tresvant <i>Ralph Tresvant/MCA</i>
68 • —	Freddie Jackson <i>Do Me Again/Capitol</i>
69 • —	Debbie Gibson <i>Anything Is Possible/Atlantic</i>
70 • 65	Carly Simon <i>Have You Seen Me Lately?/Arista</i>
71 • 59	Heart <i>Brigade/Capitol</i>
72 • 21	Phil Collins <i>...But Seriously/Atlantic</i>
73 • 45	Jane's Addiction <i>Ritual de lo Habitual</i> /Warner Bros.
74 • —	New Kids on the Block <i>Merry Merry Christmas</i> /Columbia
75 • —	Van Morrison <i>Enlightenment/Mercury</i>
76 • 32	The Righteous Brothers <i>The Righteous Brothers' Greatest Hits/Nerve</i>
77 • —	Morrissey <i>Bona Drag/Sire</i>
78 • —	Jimmy Buffett <i>Feeding Frenzy/MCA</i>
79 • —	Cinderella <i>Heartbreak Station/Mercury</i>
80 • 52	Garth Brooks <i>Garth Brooks/Capitol</i>
81 • 44	Indigo Girls <i>Nomads Indians Saints/Epic</i>
82 • 36	Prince <i>Graffiti Bridge/Paisley Park</i>
83 • 50	The Robert Cray Band <i>Featuring the Memphis Horns</i> /Midnight Stroll/Mercury
84 • —	Stevie B <i>Love & Emotion/AMR</i>

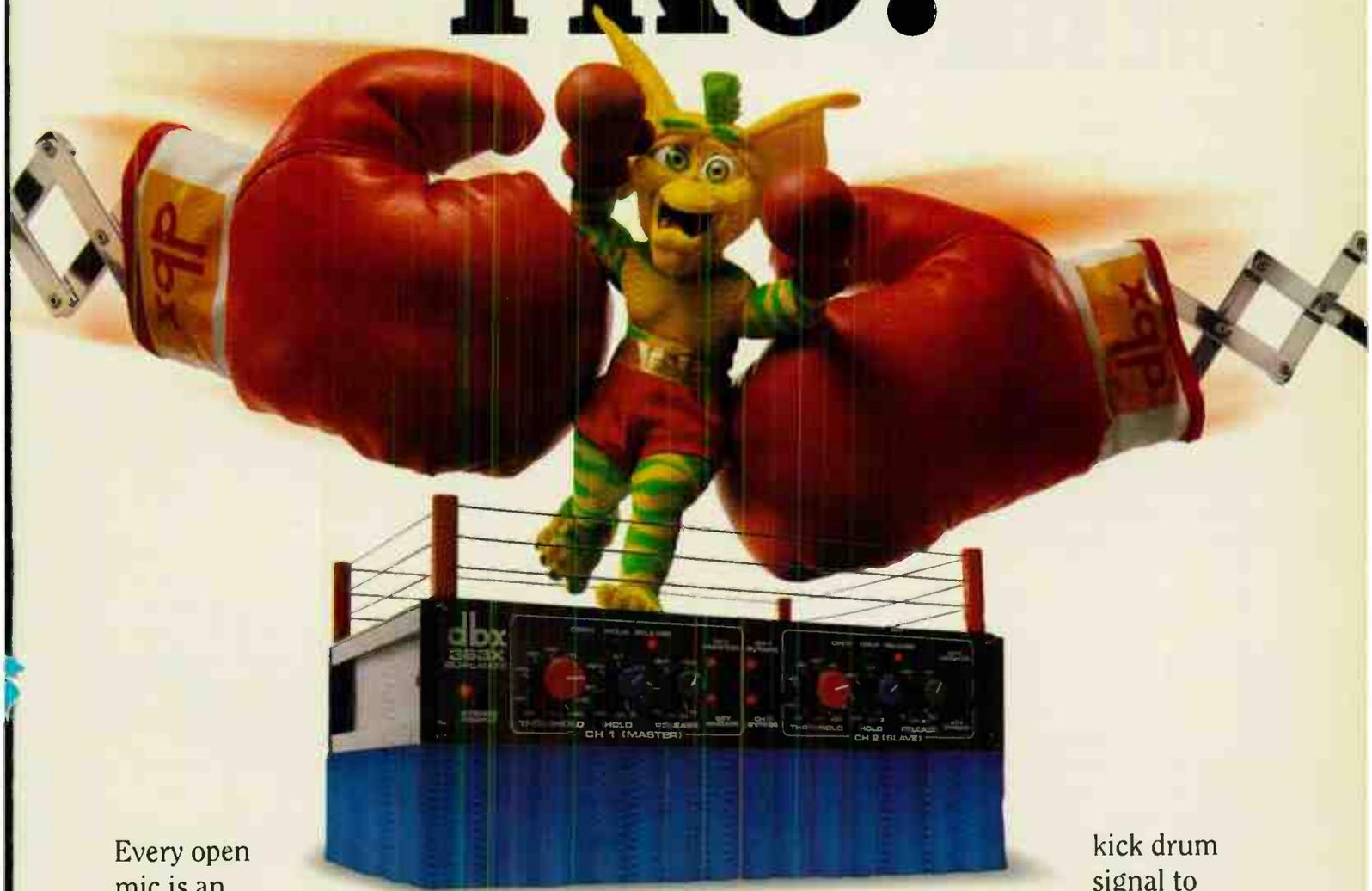
85 • —	Yanni <i>Reflections of Passion</i> /Private Music
86 • 72	Harry Connick, Jr. <i>We Are in Love/Columbia</i>
87 • —	New Kids on the Block <i>No More Games/Remix Album</i> /Columbia
88 • 58	Black Box <i>Dreamland/RCA</i>
89 • 34	Living Colour <i>Time's Up/Epic</i>
90 • —	Barry Manilow <i>Because It's Christmas/Arista</i>
91 • 42	N.W.A. <i>100 Miles and Runnin'/Ruthless</i>
92 • 57	Reba McEntire <i>Rumor Has It/MCA</i>
93 • 56	Mötley Crüe <i>Dr. Feelgood/Elektra</i>
94 • —	K.T. Oslin <i>Love in a Smalltown/RCA</i>
95 • 61	Concrete Blonde <i>Blonded Out/A.B.S.</i>
96 • 45	Neil Young & Crazy Horse <i>Rugged Glory/Reprise</i>
97 • 68	Clint Black <i>Killin' Time/RCA</i>
98 • —	Eton John <i>To Be Continued.../MCA</i>
99 • 69	The Kentucky Headhunters <i>Pekin' on Nashville/Mercury</i>
100 • 60	Slayer <i>Seasons in the Abyss</i> /Def American

The Musician album chart is produced by the Billboard chart department for Musician, and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the Billboard computers in the month of November. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for November 1990. All charts are copyright 1991 by BPI Incorporated.

Top Labels

1	Columbia
2	Atlantic
3	Warner Bros.
4	Capitol
5	MCA
6	Elektra
7	Arista
8	Mercury
9	SBK
10	EMI
11	RCA
12	Sire
13	Epic
14	Virgin
15	Atco
16	Geffen
17	Chrysalis
18	Enigma
19	Wilbury

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THE BLACK CROWES GO HIGHER

"CHRIS AND I HAVE ONE UNWRITTEN RULE: WE can't hit each other in the face." That's Black Crowes guitarist Rich Robinson, describing his relationship with his big brother.

Come again? In a separate conversation, here's singer Chris Robinson: "For us to write songs is a matter of hurling insults back and forth, then punching each other." Which isn't necessarily bad, he's quick to add. "Without that creative tension, we wouldn't have the thing I call the divine spark."

Thus, the Robinsons carry on rock's proud tradition of squabbling siblings that includes Don and Phil Everly and Ray and Dave Davies of the Kinks. However unsettling such mutual abuse must be for bystanders, the Crowes have flourished in the charged atmosphere. A sleeper smash approaching the one million mark in sales, the Atlanta quintet's *Shake Your Money Maker* is a roaring set of blues-based rock that's evoked enthusiastic comparisons to Rod Stewart's Faces and mid-period Stones. "People say, 'What about the Rolling Stones?' Of course! But that's so obvious," exclaims 24-year-old Chris, a classic extroverted frontman. "My textbooks were everything from *Exile on Main Street* to Funkadelic's *Uncle Jam Wants You* to Gram Parsons' *Grievous Angel*."

Rich: "If people hear the Stones, that's fine, but they may be missing Humble Pie, Sly and the Family Stone, Prince, Aerosmith, even the Jackson 5." Anyway, he adds, "All music is an interpretation of previous music. Jimmy Page and Keith Richards both listened to Muddy Waters, but had totally different interpretations."

If the Robinsons ever incorporate all their influences, the Black Crowes will be a pretty strange animal. Dad Stan Robinson was a minor teen idol who cracked the Hot 100 in '59 with "Boom-a-Dip-Dip," going on to open shows for Sam Cooke and Bill Haley. He joined the folk boom as one of the Appalachians, who entered the charts in '65 via an acoustic version of "Bony Moronie" (!). And growing up, they heard everything from Bill Monroe to John Coltrane and Jimmy Reed.

Throughout grade school, their musical activity was confined to Chris buying lots of records and Rich nicking the ones he liked. All that changed in '85. "My mom and dad call it 'Black Christmas,' when I got a bass and Rich got a guitar," laughs Chris. "I couldn't play like Bootsy Collins, but I could almost play like Paul Simonon of the Clash, so we

formed a little punk band in the basement. Rich started learning to play but I couldn't figure out the bass to save my life. Rich traded it and his guitar for a better guitar."

While Chris worked up the nerve to become lead singer (and learned to stay on key), Rich explored the six-string. "I remember messing with the tuning keys and listening to Led Zeppelin. When I tuned the A string down to where it sounded cool, things made a lot more sense and we started writing songs."

Recalls Chris, "I grew up going to see groups like the Gun Club and Dream Syndicate. I knew they wore their heart on their sleeve and loved what they did, but some-

times it seemed like they were just kickin' dirt up in the air. What I wanted to do was kinda like that, but I couldn't see anything wrong with being the biggest band in the world, as long as you did it on your own terms."

**The brothers
Robinson
work it out
By Jon Young**

The current lineup was set in '88, with Johnny Colt the seventh bass player to grace the group and Steve Gorman the fourth drummer. Jeff Cease signed on as second guitarist, allowing Rich to pursue offbeat tunings. "I can barely play in regular tuning anymore," he grins. "On the album a few songs are in regular and I use a capo on a lot of tracks. Some are in open-G, open-E and a couple in open-A. It's a pain in the ass for my guitar tech!"

Before landing a deal, the Crowes flirted extensively with A&M. "They farted around for over two years," remembers Rich, "spending a lot of money for demos. But we were never under contract. George Drakoulis, a junior A&R man, wanted to sign us, but was told we weren't metal enough." Instead, he jumped to Def American. With Drakoulis producing, the Crowes cut *Shake Your Money Maker*. "Luckily, Rick Rubin had nothing to do with us," notes Rich, a tight smile on his lips. "He wasn't there for any of the sessions."

Chris concedes he's surprised at the



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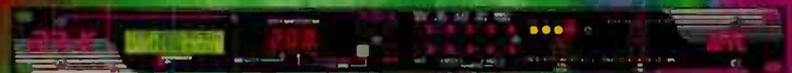


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Crowes' quick rise: "I figured we'd have a good career in the minors first, and maybe not even get to the majors." Now it's happened with a vengeance. "I feel the same as I did a year ago," he muses. "Maybe after someone lays a huge check on me I'll be corrupt, and you'll see me with Kip Winger singing duets on MTV, wearing clothes from the Gap."

For a self-professed music "geek" like Chris, mainstream exposure can lead to odd encounters. "I run into people all the time who say, 'I love the blues—you know, Jeff Healey and Robert Cray.' Now, they're fine," he winces, "but I'm talking about Skip James' 'Devil Got My Woman' and Mississippi Fred McDowell. That's the blues!

"After our cover of 'Hard to Handle' came out somebody asked, 'How do you feel bringing Otis Redding to the masses?' I'd never thought of it, but for kids who know nothing beyond MTV, that's what we're doing."

The Robinsons see songwriting, with all the attendant fireworks, as the most important step in the creative process. Says Rich, "We have a new song called 'The Words You Throw Away.' I played the music for Chris for a month and he kept saying, 'I hate it.' Finally he told me, 'I love it. Let's put it in the set.' It always happens that way," he sighs.

Still, Chris feels they've mellowed over the last year. In fact, he waxes positively corny contemplating his sibling. "I took my brother for granted in school. I never understood why he couldn't be like me and just have a good time. But I learned a lot watching Steve Tyler and Joe Perry when we were on the Aerosmith tour. While we were onstage, I'd think, 'That's my kid brother over there. I love that guy more than anything in the world!'"

Even bad dudes don't have the blues all the time. 

CROWES' NEST

CHRIS ROBINSON likes to wail into Shure SM57 wireless microphones, while his brother RICH boasts a guitar arsenal of Fenders, custom Telecasters, vintage Telecasters, Les Paul Customs, Standards and Juniors, Gibson Hummingbird acoustics and a Gibson Chet Atkins. **JEFF CEASE** wields Les Paul Customs and vintage Standards, J-200 acoustics and Hamers. **JOHNNY COLT** plays a Gibson Thunderbird, a Washburn acoustic and Fender Precision basses; **STEVE GORMAN** bashes Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals.

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is said to have come very close to leaving the company over the changes. Both men have discovered the downside of cashing out: After a lifetime spent building and shaping their companies, they are no longer in charge. Although Moss continues to be involved in running A&M, Island's president, Mike Bone, is clearly a PolyGram employee. Blackwell is little more than the head of A&R for the label he once owned.

Management at A&M is trying to roll with PolyGram's punches. "In the last few years we were trying to be huge," says one veteran A&M executive. "We're going to return to being the boutique label that we used to be."

There's no doubt that A&M was very good at doing some things when it was independent; it remains to be seen whether that huge PolyGram infrastructure can deliver the same way. "A&M always went for the left-of-center artists," says the label exec. "We sold a lot of records with people like the Neville's, Suzanne Vega and Toni Childs. Records by David Baerwald and the Neville's didn't sell well this time." One way A&M worked these kinds of artists was through its alternative marketing department. That function has been absorbed by PolyGram.

A&M still takes good care of artists. "I feel 100 percent good about the effort at A&M," says Morty Wiggins, who manages the Neville Brothers. "Their creative development and publicity departments are terrific." But he's less pleased with the job PolyGram has done distributing and selling the Neville's recent *Brother's Keeper*. "They've got some bugs to work out." He's being kind. According to executives in and outside the PolyGram web, PDG—PolyGram's distribution arm—is one of the least efficient in the industry.

Manager Will Botwin, whose clients include A&M's John Hiatt, says Hiatt's career has suffered as a result of the buyout. Botwin says Hiatt's most recent album, *Stolen Moments*, was the highest debuting release of Hiatt's career, but failed to get the support it needed. "It was off the charts in two months," Botwin says bitterly. "I'm very disappointed and I hold the transition responsible. I have the utmost respect for Jerry Moss, but I lay this on the label."

With no results forthcoming, Hiatt, who tours heavily, came off the road. "We're not gonna go trudge around Kansas or Oklahoma City under these circumstances. It's disheartening," Botwin concludes. "John's been around and he sees the signs of death

better than a lot of the record guys."

While Island and A&M are being hand-capped by the inefficiency of PolyGram, there's little doubt that the astronomical prices paid for the labels are an incentive to control costs today. "The deals were over the top," says the former PolyGram executive. "RCA dropped out of the bidding for A&M at a much lower number because they had distributed A&M and were privy to the realities. And the reality is that A&M hasn't delivered. Island's had some success, but overall you just can't justify the deal."

Unlike PolyGram, MCA will not have to live with its recent buying spree. The West Coast firm also went out shopping for market share—first co-acquiring Motown for \$60 million (a moribund company at a good price), then Geffen for \$550 million (a good company at an insane price)—and was then itself bought by Matsushita. Incidentally, the \$550 million worth of MCA stock David Geffen got for selling out to MCA was worth \$700 million in the Matsushita deal. Not bad, considering that he hasn't even released any records through MCA yet.

MCA said it was selling out to Matsushita because it needed the deeper pockets of the Japanese electronics giant in order to compete. At the record division, MCA Music Group Chairman Al Teller voices similar concerns when he says survival in the record industry will be tougher in the coming months: "I think we're in for a downturn. All the economic signs are that we're in a severe recessionary environment."

Although Teller predicts that all labels will become more selective about the artists they're willing to take on, he says that the spate of new labels born in the last year or so will be the most vulnerable. "I'm not sure how many are going to make it," he says. "I think that they're in for some tough sledding and that we'll see a shake-out."

The people who have started those labels see things a little differently. Irving Azoff, who preceded Teller as the head of MCA Music, is one of the record executives who didn't fail to notice the prices the majors were paying to acquire independently-owned labels. Azoff now heads his own Giant Records, backed and distributed by

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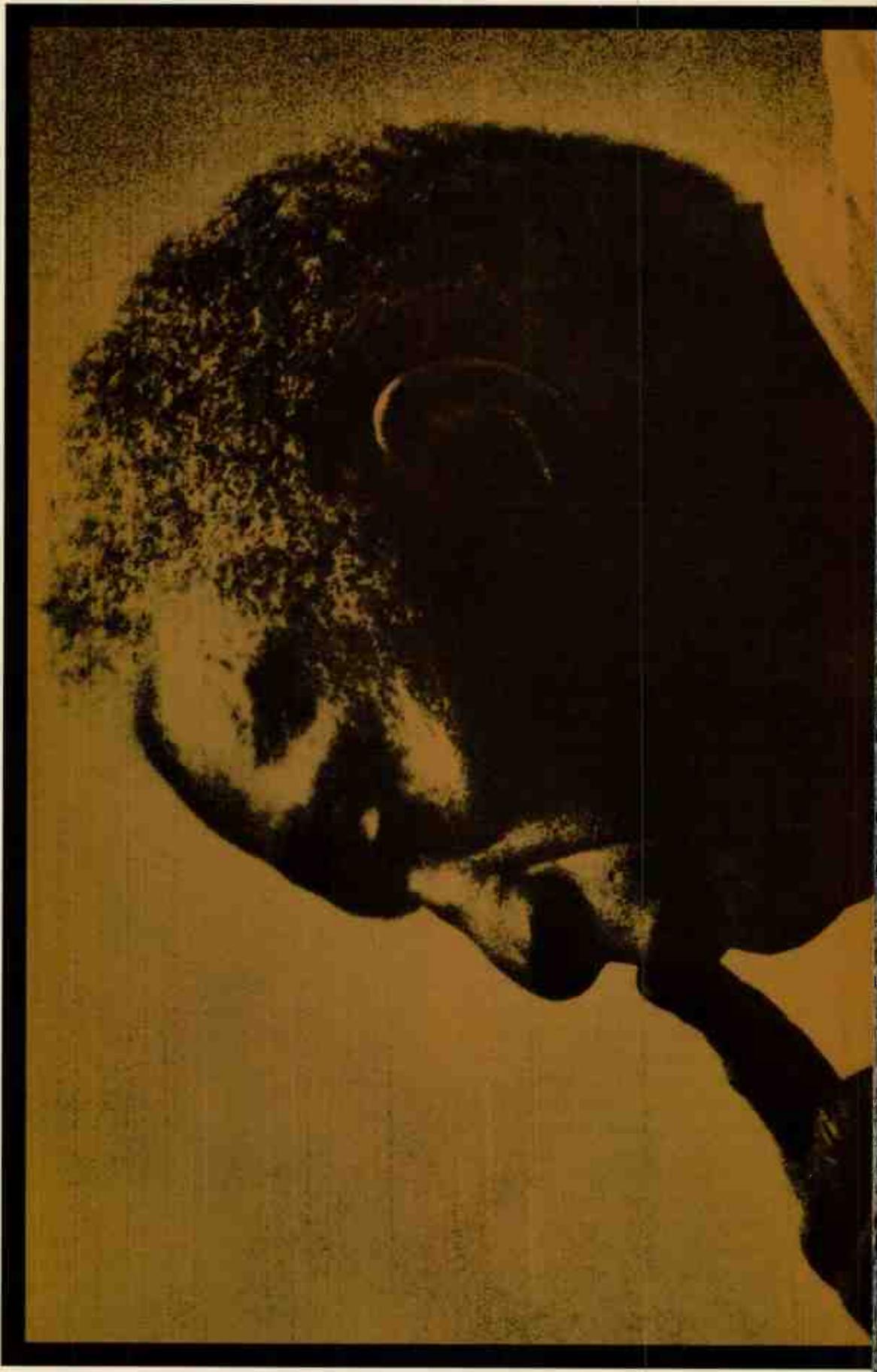
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A

AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PIANIST Walter Davis Jr. last June, several speakers took the podium to offer tributes and reminiscences. The final speaker was Art Blakey, who addressed the congregation as if they were his children. "I can see y'all didn't learn a thing from Walter," he admonished. "Look at you, all walking around with your chins dragging on the ground."

There was muted laughter from the crowd, half self-conscious, half relieved. "Walter has *made* it!" Art thundered. After reminding his listeners of Davis' enormously joyous spirit, he added: "From the moment we're born, we are preparing for death. What matters is what we do in between." In his five minutes at the lectern, Blakey gave the kind of performance he was

R

famous for: He delivered a powerful message that lifted the spirits of the audience and guided them back to the pursuit of happiness.

In October, there was a memorial service for Art Blakey, whose drums stood unmanned behind the altar at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Though the service had been moved to a significantly larger church than St. Peter's, where most of the jazz community's services are held, there was standing room only. Between speakers, whose anecdotes about Blakey prompted frequent laughter, there was music. (Art's daughter Evelyn Blakey provided both. "I'm Art's first-born," she said, pausing to add, "as far as I know." Then she launched into a stirring rendition of "God Bless the Child.") With Essiet Okon Essiet on

T

B Y K A R E N B E N N E T T

bass and Kenny Washington on drums, a host of Jazz Messengers past and present paid tribute to what Art Blakey accomplished in his 71 years in between the tumble from birth to death.

He kept jazz alive in a way no other single musician has, by establishing and continuously regenerating the Messengers, a group whose beautiful changes have spanned 40 years and whose members have included, among others, Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter, Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley, Benny Golson, Woody Shaw, Valeri Ponomarev, Jackie McLean, Lou Donaldson, Jymie Merritt, Bobby Timmons, Walter Davis Jr., Horace Silver, Cedar Walton, John Hicks, Gary Bartz, Johnny Griffin, Sahib Shihab, Bobby Watson, James Williams, Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Joanne Brackeen, Mulgrew Miller, Donald Brown, Benny Green, Kenny Garrett, Robin Eubanks, Philip Harper, Peter Washington, Javon Jackson—and old friend Curtis Fuller, who will lead the latest edition of the Messengers now that Blakey is gone. The list is seemingly endless. And while it is an obvious fact, it is astonishing to reconsider that behind this legion of musicians, there was only one drummer.

Art Blakey, whose Muslim name was Abdullah Ibn Buhaina, and was often called Bu, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and started studying the drums in grade school. He also played the piano, which is what he was doing with his band one night in Pittsburgh when a listener requested a tune that Art didn't know. Erroll Garner happened to be there, and took over at the keyboards. Art moved to the drumkit, and the rest, as they say, is history. He went on to work with Mary Lou Williams, Fletcher Henderson and Billy Eckstine. He recorded some of the most memorable jazz albums on the Blue Note label, working with Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk. As the leader of the Jazz Messengers, his name became almost synonymous with a school that provided invaluable training and a kind of unspoken accreditation for young jazz musicians. Through his music, Art served as an ambassador to the world, literally preaching his gospel at the end of each set: "From the Creator to the audience direct: split-second timing."

Art is remembered here by some great musicians, most of whom are former Messengers. I will remember him not only as a legendary drummer, but as a humanitarian with a great sense of humor. "People aren't meant to be alone," he said to me one night in the kitchen at Sweet Basil, reflecting on his life as an only child—and, perhaps, on the eight children who survive him. On another occasion, as he was making his way through a crowd of fans, he had this to say: "When you write about me, say whatever you want. Just make sure you spell my name right."

HORACE SILVER

FIRST AND FOREMOST, Art was one of the great drummers of all time, a master musician, and he continually amazed all the guys in the band with his consistency of performance. He hardly ever had a bad night. Of course his band was a great channel through which a whole lot of young cats got their start; now that he's gone, it's like Juilliard's been shut down. They have various music schools around the country, but there's nothing like that on-the-road experience, where you're playing with other young guys and some old pros, and a guy like Art is leading you and urging you on. Years ago, we knew harmony, but we couldn't read good; today they read the hell out of it, but if you want to be a good jazz musician, you have to learn how to improvise and solo. We want to keep this music

alive, but we also want to keep it well. And this is what they cultivate in a band like Art Blakey's. We're all going to miss him and I love him dearly.

JAVON JACKSON

THE BIGGEST THING Art taught me is to be a man and to have your own ideals. He was a father figure, a friend, a person you confide in. I was able to relate to him in a lot of different ways, even though he was older. That's why I asked him to be the best man at my wedding. When I joined his band, I was a 21-year-old boy, and within three years he turned me totally around; my whole perception of life became straightforward, like he was. He never said what people wanted him to say, he said what he wanted to say.

The bandstand was hallowed ground to him. You couldn't get on the bandstand and halfway play. He could be sick or ailing, but when he got on the drums, that was something that would take all the sickness and problems away.

PHILIP HARPER

IF THERE WAS EVER really and truly the strongest man in the world, that's how I would describe Art Blakey. Right until he left, he had an attitude of somebody who was about 18 years old. It kept him moving. And something most people don't realize is that Art was one of the most sensitive men you could ever meet, even within this very bold and strong attitude. When I was in the band, I had a family, a wife and kid, and when we had to go out on the road Art made sure I had half of my money before I even left home. He gave me his baby crib for my daughter, a beautiful oak crib, he just called me up one day to come and get it.

One of the greatest things about working with Art is that he never had the "attitude" of a bandleader. He would lead the band by getting everybody else to *their* leading potential. When he first called me for the gig, two days before we had to go out, he said, [*imitates Art's growl*] "Hey Philip, I got a gig and we're going to go out. But I need a *man*. Get your shit together and come on." I had two days to run around and collect all this music and learn all the stuff.

Art taught me how to play ballads, which I really liked to do. One day he sat me down in a room and taught me the words to several songs. He sang "Blue Moon" and "You've Changed." After that day it just took off for me. I did my ballad and I got a standing ovation, and had to do another ballad right after that. Sometimes while I was playing he'd be sitting back there singing the tune. He knew all the lyrics.

Another great lesson came one day when we were in Japan and a bunch of Japanese guys came up to Art, bowing and repeating, "So great, so great." And Art said, "God is great. Only God is great. I can only try and achieve a certain level of excellence." And that he did. But it's hard not to call Art Blakey great. Working with him was definitely the greatest experience in the world for me. I have had nothing yet to equal the feeling of first finding out that I was going to be a Jazz Messenger. That was a dream. Because I used to put on those records, turn out the lights and imagine that I was Lee or Freddie. And Art was sitting back there saying, "Blow your horn."

JOHN HICKS

THE FIRST TIME I went to Europe, to Japan, my first recording, the first compositions of my own that were recorded—all that happened with Art. At first, I had to learn all this music that these

DAUGHTER EVELYN BLAKEY PERFORMING
AT HIS MEMORIAL SERVICE, OCTOBER 1990

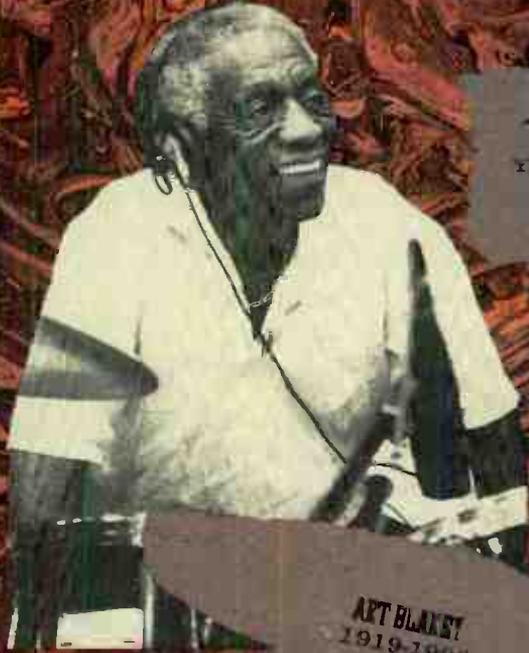


"HE WAS A TROPEUT,
AND WE WERE THE MESSENGERS."
FREDDIE HUBBARD



"ART BELIEVED IN THE MUSIC,
HE LOVED BRINGING JOY TO PEOPLE."
WYnton MARRALIS

"HIS SOUND WAS LIKE THUNDER,
YET EXTREMELY DELICATE."
JOANNE BRACKEN



"ART CONSTANTLY AMAZED US,
LEADING AND URGING US ON."
HORACE SILVER

ART BLAKEY
1919-1990

"HE'S LIKE A SPIRITUAL FATHER TO ME."
BILLY HOBBS



"HE TAUGHT US TO MATCH
THE STRENGTH OF THE WORLD AROUND US."
KEVIN WOODMAN



other folks had written over the years, but the first thing he asked me was, "You got any tunes?" And if you didn't have any right then, you were gonna have some! I think most of the people who played in his bands have come up with at least one or two decent tunes that keep being played and recorded by other people.

I was thinking earlier today about things that you learn with Art that you don't think that much about, and I've been watching others like Wynton, Terence...all these guys have a certain decorum, a way of being up on the bandstand, like taking a little bow when you're introduced, that comes directly from Art.

Musically, he had a way of letting you know how to construct a solo, not to start at the very top end but to build it. He also gave you a very good idea of how not to play too long—and not by cutting you off. He knew when enough was enough and he let you know that. You learned that the object is to communicate some kind of real message or idea. And when that's done, move on.

WYNTON MARSALIS

THE MOST AMAZING THING about Art was his tremendous strength; not just physical strength, but integrity. If you were around him, that integrity would rub off on you. He believed in the music and he loved people. If he could walk, he would be on the bandstand, because he loved playing and he loved bringing joy to the people. He looked out for a lot of musicians down through the years, gave some of them drumkits and other things. When I started, I couldn't believe that I was going to get to play with him, especially since I'd sounded so sad when I'd sat in with him. But he would give you *time* to develop. He wouldn't pass a hasty judgment on you.

FREDDIE HUBBARD

I FEEL VERY BAD about his death. It's such a great loss. I called him the day before his birthday and Art told me to bring him a gift. I said, "What do you want me to bring you?" And he said, [*snarls like Art*] "Well, you can bring me somethin'! Bring an old sock!"

I was proud to have been a part of his teaching, because I feel as though he was a prophet, and we were the messengers. He said, "You play this music and you respect it and you love it, because when you die the only thing you can leave is a reputation. The Creator gave you this gift and it's up to you to carry it on." That's what he instilled in me.

He had my idol in his group, Clifford Brown. When I heard him, I picked up the trumpet. And the band that we had with Art was one of the best groups in the world. Wayne [Shorter] was writing the hip shit, Art was leading the band; when we would rehearse he'd say, "Go ahead, run it down," and he'd listen. Then when he sat down to play, he made the arrangement whole. With him not reading, it was all by instinct, it was being able to *hear* something, not like a guy studying music. It was the most creative experience in this music that I've ever had.

He helped me so much, not only in music but as a man. One time we had a disagreement, and he said, "You're not the boss, you're not even the straw boss!" And I said, "Well, who's the straw boss?" And he said, "Wayne." So I quit the band. Then he came to my hotel room, and got down on his knees with tears in his eyes and begged me to come back. So I said okay. The next second he was up and he said, [*growls*] "Well then, get up and put your clothes on!" And I said, this is some different kind of man.

One time we were between Kansas City and St. Louis, and he had

some woman with him. We had just left a restaurant, and the police stopped us and the sheriff said, "Get out of the car, boys, we hear you left that restaurant without paying your bill." So Art gets out and the sheriff says, "What's your name?" And Art says, "Abdullah Ibn Buhaina." His Muslim name. And the sheriff says, "How do you spell that?" I laughed so hard; now who would know how to spell Buhaina? So they let us go.

BRANFORD MARSALIS

MOST BANDS JUST listen to each other theoretically—if you play F#, they play F# and they grin at each other like they're doing something hip. But Art was the one who really listened. He used to tell me, "You've got good reflexes, use them." He'd tell me stories: "Charlie Parker would be playing and a fine woman would walk in the club and he sees her and plays, 'Where Have I Known You Before?' An hour later, some sailors would come in and he'd quote 'Anchors Aweigh.'" What he was telling me was that the quote is valid because it relates to something in the present. Most musicians play the quotes they practiced. Art realized that the real essence of what bebop represented was gone, because now everyone played "prepared."

Art was a very good showman. He was always smiling when he played, and he had that whole routine down. I didn't like that at first. [I thought] you were supposed to be a young black man with an attitude. But now when I do my show, we tell jokes; it's not as prepared as Art's routine was but I understand now that when you're playing some music as difficult as this, you have to find an alternative way to bring the audience in, because left to the merits of their own intelligence, they wouldn't know what the fuck was going on.

The funny thing about being on tour with rock bands is that these guys think they're wild. People used to ask me if it was wild [working with Sting] and I'd say if you multiplied it 10 times, it wouldn't amount to one week with Art Blakey. He was the original wild man, and he did some funny shit, but most of it is unpublizable.

GARY BARTZ

WHAT ART DID WAS give you confidence in yourself that you are a musician, because if you can come in and play after people like Clifford Brown and others who've gone through his band, you know you've reached a certain plateau in your musicianship. But he didn't allow you to get a big head; he made you realize that you're just a man. For example, one night after I had been with the band about six months, he hands me the mike and says, "Make the announcements." And he left. I'm a very shy person and all of a sudden I'm gonna speak in public! I couldn't even remember Art Blakey's name! He got me over my fear of the microphone, and I learned how to have a rapport with the audience.

I got to know Monk working with Art because they were good friends and Monk used to come in all the time when we worked. Seeing those two together was a trip. They were like Heckyll and Jeckyll. Monk used to pick Art up after the gigs in his big car, and they would go off to the Baroness' place.

I began to really grow up in Art's band. But I noticed that, in every band that he ever had, he would plant seeds of doubt. If a sax player came by, he would ask him to join the band in front of you, and the person who was in would say, "I guess I'm out." You start thinking ahead: You're not always gonna be in the band. I guess in essence he's letting you know that even though now you've got a gig, you



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World Radio History

can't stagnate.

One time, in 1966, we had come back to New York from a gig in Cincinnati, and all that week we were hearing advertisements on the radio for Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers at the Jazzmobile. Neither Hicks nor I had heard from Bu about this, but we figured, "Well, we know where we're working." So we went up there. We could hear music from all the way down the block. And there was the Jazzmobile moving down the street, with Art and a whole new band!

I feel like I've lost another father. He was family. I guess that's what he meant most of all to music: He brought us together, he made us all one family, because we all worked with Art, including Miles. I never got fired with Art; he would just hire other people in my place, and he would call me when he needed me, so I felt like I was always in the band, like I never left the Messengers. Unless he fired you and never called you back, you were always a Messenger.

REGGIE WORKMAN

I KNEW ART WAS SICK, but I didn't realize it was that bad. Last time I saw him at Sweet Basil, I went up and said, "Art, you don't look too good, why are you out here working?" He said playing the music made him happy. His spirits were so high most of the time and that is something that he gave to the world not only in his music, but in his demeanor.

One of the great things that he taught each of us who passed through his school was to be strong in your convictions. To have the courage to put forth an idea with a profundity and a strength that would match the strength of the world around you. And to believe in whatever it is that you're doing, to make sure that your voice will reign in a professional and convincing manner.

MULGREW MILLER

I VE NEVER SEEN a mature man, by which I mean a senior citizen, with that kind of vitality. There was nothing old about Art Blakey.

BENNY GREEN

A RT BLAKEY HAS ALWAYS been my favorite musician because of the feeling he projects through his drums into the listener. When I first got on the bandstand with Art I was terrified, because I'd been listening to his records and going to see the band for years, and he was this great figure that I looked up to. When I walked on the bandstand, Art looked at me. And the look he had in his eyes said so much: It said that he'd seen the look in my eyes so many times before, over so many years, and that he wanted me to have confidence, because he chose me and I wasn't the first musician he'd chosen, and I wasn't gonna be the last, and we were on the bandstand to make music for the people. He said so much with just his eyes, he inspired me in a very large way to play; he inspired me for life.

One of the things Art taught me about playing music is that you should never let what is happening in your personal life be a detriment to your performance. If you're going through any personal changes, when you step on the bandstand you need to leave all your mortal drudgeries aside, and remember that you're there to help the people who have come to hear you forget whatever may be happening in *their* lives that needs soothing. Art taught me that the spirit of the music can not only restore lost emotions in the listener, it can

allow the listener to feel things they've never had a chance to experience before.

JOANNE BRACKEEN

T HE THING THAT EVERYBODY has noticed is that since he's left, it's as if he hasn't left at all. I think that's because he lived fully and shared his musicianship and every aspect of himself with all the people he came in contact with. As for me, I think I was probably the only woman to have worked for any length of time in his band. He called me his adopted daughter. He was like a philosopher, or an actor; this guy could tell stories you'd know could not possibly be real—but that story would become real, and that's how he played too. He was one of the very rare people who was able to keep the genius of childhood alive in himself throughout his whole life. Just like a little kid for whom everything is new.

He had to be one of the most helpful people to musicians who ever lived. He would pick all kinds of people for his band—short, tall, black, white—and whoever he picked was good. He loved the mixture of the races; that was how he lived his life, he felt that everything should blend. The sound that he got on the drums was remarkable and not duplicated by anybody that I've heard. It was like thunder, and yet could be extremely delicate. He was one of the most fantastic people that I've met, or that I could even imagine.

BILLY HIGGINS

H E HAD THAT BREATH of life that he could breathe into a person and into the music. His Muslim name was Abdullah, and Abdullah means slave servant to Allah, and so he already knew what he had to do: He was a Muslim in deed. He's the one who got me to come to New York; he's been like a spiritual father to me from the late '40s till now. I feel a close association with him behind the drums, and with what he represented. Believe me, he'll be missed. I know I miss him already. But that just means the drummers have got to play three times as much as they're playing now.

BUSTER WILLIAMS

W HEN YOU PLAY trumpet or saxophone you have to develop an embouchure to get a sound, to get your own sound. It's kind of hard to comprehend developing an embouchure on the drums, but the sound Art Blakey got somehow sounded unique. He was a champion of setting a groove, and of dynamics. Some of the greatest moments that I've had in my career were playing with Art. When he decided he wanted me in his band, he just called me one day and told me to come to the club and bring my bass. That was it! He was a real father figure, a mentor and a friend.

BEN RILEY

I THINK MY MOST lasting impression of Art is the understanding he had for the younger players. He always had advice that was helpful. I remember one time I was doing something, I was probably pressing, and Art came up to me and said, "You know you have nothing to prove. Just go off and have fun." And I always remember that, especially when things get rough. So physically, he's no longer here, but spiritually, Art will always be here. He's a guy that, if you knew him, he'd touch you, and if you didn't, you listen to the records and he touches you. Those recordings with Dizzy and Monk—it almost sounds like they're going to walk through the door! Art left such a heavy message that you have to feel it.

CLIFFORD JORDAN

THERE ARE PEOPLE who come into your life from time to time who help you along the way. I met Art when I was in jail. I was 18 years old. Art and Miles had got busted and he was in for three days, and he was talking about his Muslim ties. I stuck with him for three days in the L.A. County Jail, and I ate all his pork! (They were serving green hot dogs, the food was awful.) And then, about six years later in Chicago, I was embraced and befriended by the Jazz Messengers. They always let me play with them when they came to Chicago, and they encouraged me to come to New York. So I did, and Art was on my first recording session. Art Blakey was placed on earth to give encouragement to our art form, and to prove that no isn't the answer. He led a true life of an angel. Long live the message and the rhythm.

CURTIS FULLER

I DON'T THINK a good player learns to play real *deep* unless you come through Blakey. The way he breaks up a beat, he literally drives you into the ground. The press roll, the little staccato triplets he plays behind you...he instigates, provokes you, almost; he takes you to another level. Like having the right woman. Other drummers can keep the tempo, or do fancy things, but Art is not a hotshot. He's all about playing, in the most primal way. He's doing it to get the max out of you. Some drummers get in your way, some drummers try to dictate to you; Art was just a steady climb into the explosion.

Art was more like a father to me, because I lived with him years ago. We were very close. I was the first trombonist in the band; there

were those who didn't want another piece in the band, because it would cut into their money, but that was the sound Art wanted, so he insisted. He went to bat for me.

My nickname in the band was Deputy Dog. It stuck! I played with Lee and then again with Freddie and Wayne. *That* was a band. Everything this current band plays is what we played; sometimes they even play our solos!

Something else that Art instilled in us that you don't hear too much of today even in large bands was, when you play, play dynamically. He knew about dynamics. He didn't read music—neither did Buddy Rich. What he liked about me was my resourceful playing. He used to say, "Don't dig a hole for yourself, say what you have to say and get out of it." No 20-minute solos! I can't do with a trombone what guys do with a saxophone.

You know, when I was very sick years ago, Art came to the hospital. When I woke up he was holding my hand. And he said, "If you die, I'll kill you."

It was very strange, because for days before he died, I'd call the hospital, but Art was too sick to talk. Then one night I got a call, and a guy said, "Someone wants to talk to you." And Art got on the phone and he said, "Deputy, get your horn and go take care of the band." And the next day Benny Golson told me Art was gone. So I'm taking the band to Japan. I loved him. That's about the size of it. ♫

Photo credits page 33: Art Blakey photograph: Teri Bloom/Retna; others, from top left clockwise: Gilles Lurain/Retna; Leslie Ann Lyons; David Redfern/Retna; Alison Perry/Retna; David Redfern/Retna; Pat Blushill; Photofest

BOB BERG JIM BEARD ART FARMER DIZZY GILLESPIE BENNY GOLSON CHARLIE HADEN

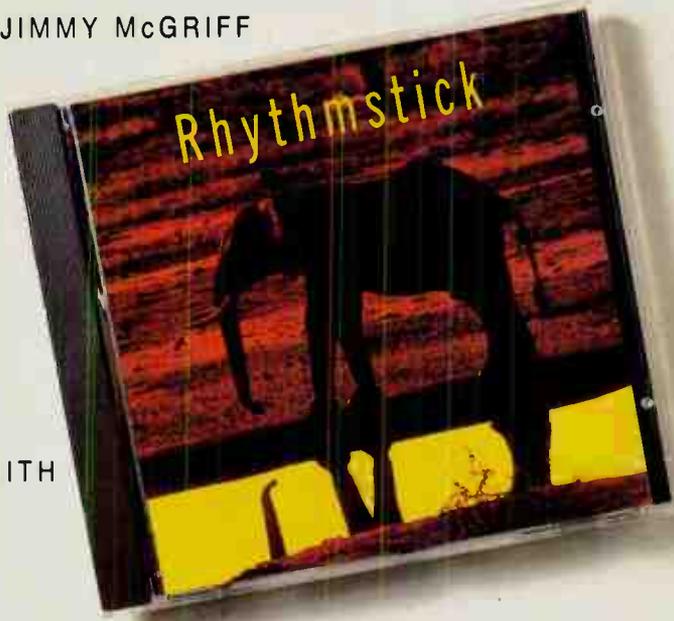
ANTHONY JACKSON JIMMY McGRIFF ROMERO LUBAMBO

AIRTO MOREIRA

BERNARD PURDIE

HILTON RUIZ

MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH



TITO PUENTE

FLORA PURIM

JOHN SCOFIELD

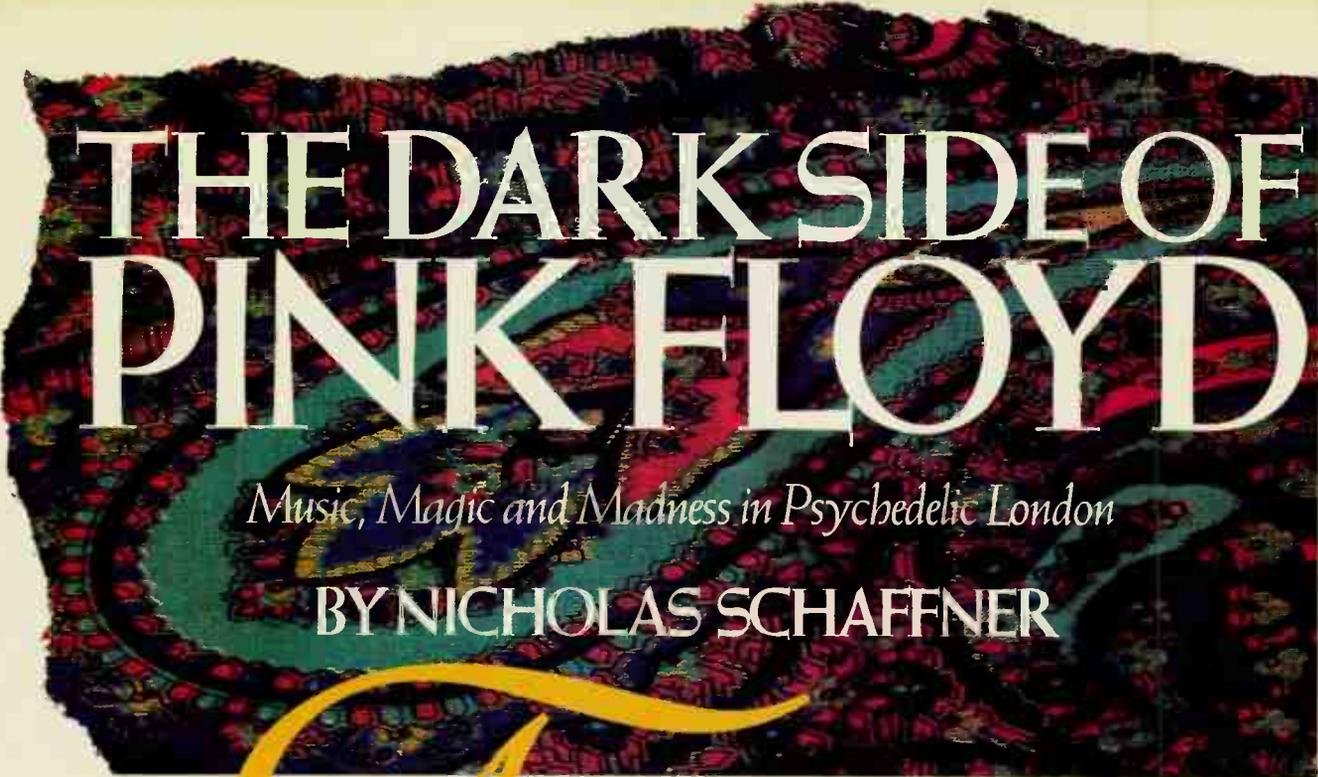
PHIL WOODS

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THE DARK SIDE OF PINK FLOYD

Music, Magic and Madness in Psychedelic London

BY NICHOLAS SCHAFFNER

THE FINAL WEEKS OF ROCK 'N' ROLL'S MOST MAGICAL YEAR CAUGHT BRITAIN'S MOST PROMISING NEW BAND IN AN EXCRUCIATING DILEMMA. IN 1967 PINK FLOYD EPITOMIZED THE EMERGING REVOLUTION THAT HAD ALREADY TRANSFORMED THE LOOK, SOUND AND MESSAGE OF THE BEATLES, THE ROLLING STONES AND OTHER ESTABLISHED POP IDOLS. AS "THE MOVEMENT'S HOUSE ORCHESTRA"—BASSIST ROGER WATERS' PHRASE—PINK FLOYD WAS ALREADY RENOWNED FOR THEIR FUTURISTIC MULTI-MEDIA CONCERT HAPPENINGS.

DURING MUCH OF THE SUMMER OF LOVE, THEIR SECOND SINGLE "SEE EMILY PLAY" HAD RIDDEN THE BRITISH CHARTS. THE FIRST PINK FLOYD ALBUM, *THE PIPER AT THE GATES OF DAWN*—RECORDED IN THE SAME ABBEY ROAD BUILDING AND AT VIRTUALLY THE SAME TIME AS

From: *Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey*, Harmony Books.



The original Floyd (from left):
Nick Mason, Rick Wright, Roger
Waters and Syd Barrett



the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—entranced listeners with its innovative blend of lyrical fantasy, melodic pop inventiveness, spaced-out improvisation and surreal sound effects.

But for Waters and his two former architecture college classmates, drummer Nick Mason and keyboard player Richard Wright, any aura of promise and triumph had been all but nullified by the problem of Syd. The band's songwriter and artistic catalyst, as well as the sole member endowed with unalloyed pop star charisma, guitarist Syd Barrett had provided Pink Floyd with its voice, its identity, even its mysterious name.

Onstage, when the players weren't altogether obscured by visual projections and flashing lights, Barrett would dominate the lineup with the intensity of his presence, ominously flailing his cape-shrouded arms between transports of interstellar feedback. On record, the words and music evoked a magical world—peopled by futuristic space travelers, rocky horror transvestites and the gnomes and unicorns of English fairy-tale lore—that was distinctively Barrett's own. "The imagination that he had..." Rick Wright marvels a generation later. "He was brilliant. And such a nice guy."

Pink Floyd without Syd seemed unthinkable. Yet, the way Syd was going, the prospect of the band continuing with him was becoming hardly more conceivable. Sometimes Barrett was so remote as to be almost invisible; other times he was simply impossible.

In London's "underground" and pop music circles, tales of Syd's erratic behavior were already legion. Pink Floyd had been invited to make three consecutive appearances on the televised hit-parade countdown "Top of the Pops." For their first performance, Barrett and his bandmembers were arrayed in satins and velvets from the exclusive pop-star boutiques that lined the King's Road. The next time 'round, Syd retained his Summer of Love finery—yet looked as if he had slept in it over the past week. Then, for the third show, he arrived at the TV studio resplendent in a trendy new costume—but clutching a pile of smelly old rags into which he changed just before the Floyd's appearance.

Friends and associates variously attributed Barrett's metamorphosis to some long-dormant mental dislocation; to the pressures of terrestrial celebrity on a highly strung 21-year-old visionary artist; and to a steady diet of LSD and other such brain-frying substances. Whatever the cause, everyone could agree the situation was going from mad to worse.

While Syd lingered before a dressing room mirror at a gig in late '67, primping up a luxuriant Afro—the obligatory *Hendrix perm*, as

Roger Waters would call it 12 years later in *The Wall*—his exasperated colleagues finally hit the stage without him. This prodded Barrett to take decisive measures: Crushing the contents of a jar of his beloved Mandrax tablets, he ground the fragments into his hair along with a full tube of Brylcreem. Syd then joined the group onstage, where the heat of the spotlights turned his unique beauty treatment into a dribbling mess that left the oblivious star looking, in the eyes of their dumbstruck lighting director, "like a guttered candle." The only note to emanate from Syd's guitar all



THE FLEDGLING PINK FLOYD SOUND, CIRCA 1965 (LEFT TO RIGHT): MASON, WATERS (BACK), SYD, BOB CLOSE, WRIGHT

night was an endlessly repeated middle C.

The rest of the band decided that they had to augment the line-up with another singer/guitarist to pick up the slack Syd so often left. The blond sometime-model David Gilmour seemed the perfect choice—he was as steady and easygoing as Barrett was not, and had known and worked with Barrett even longer than the rest of the band. Growing up with Syd in Cambridge, Dave had taught him Stones licks before the pair developed the guitar style each in turn would make famous. In the likely event that Barrett might not be all there during a gig, Gilmour could flawlessly recreate all his parts and few would be the wiser.

For a while, the other Floyds and their managers discerned a possible solution in the precedent set by the Beach Boys, whose similarly mercurial songwriter and resident genius Brian Wilson was left at home to compose when the band went off on tour. But Barrett's harrowing new songs "Vegetable Man" and "Scream Thy Last Scream" hardly seemed calculated to boost the Floyd's popular appeal. And "Have You Got It Yet?" appeared to acquire a completely new melody and chord progression each time Syd rehearsed it with his col-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMIE HOGAN



leagues. Calling the piece “a real act of mad genius,” Roger Waters later remembered: “I stood there for an hour while he was singing... trying to explain that he was changing it all the time so I couldn’t follow it. He’d sing, ‘Have you got it yet?’ and I’d sing, ‘No, no!’”

Roger was out of all patience with Syd. Perceiving Pink Floyd’s dreams of fame and acclaim fast slipping, he responded to Barrett’s transgressions with a withering antagonism that the bassist was to rue profoundly in the years to come.

One afternoon in February, 1968, Waters, at the wheel of the band’s oversized old Bentley-Rolls, was making the rounds of Pink Floyd’s various London habitats prior to the drive down to the next gig in the southern provinces. Barrett, living in suburban Richmond, was always the last to be collected. “Shall we pick Syd up?” said one of the group. “Oh, no, let’s not,” groaned another. And in that moment, everyone suddenly understood that they much preferred simply to manage without him as best they could. There was to be no looking back: When they returned to EMI’s Abbey Road studio to record their second album, a bemused Syd was sometimes left holding his guitar in the reception area while the others put down tracks for *A Saucerful of Secrets*.

On April 6, 1968 it was confirmed that Syd Barrett was no longer a member of Pink Floyd. As far as the London pop music media—and even the group’s managers—were concerned, that news flash spelled the end of the Floyd. Syd, after all, *was* Pink.

Barrett never did accept the notion that Pink Floyd was anything other than *his* group. He continued to turn up unannounced for subsequent Floyd shows at “alternative” London clubs like Middle Earth, planting himself at the front of the audience and leveling an unblinking stare at Dave Gilmour throughout the admittedly shambolic performances. “It was a paranoid experience,” said Gilmour. “It took me a long time to feel a part of the band.”

Gilmour says his contact with Syd throughout the ’80s was limited to “a bit of checking on whether his money was getting to him properly, stuff like that. And I asked Rose, his sister, whether I could go and see him. But she didn’t think it was a good idea, because things that remind him of that period of his past tend to depress him. If he sees me or other people from that period, he gets depressed for a couple of weeks. It’s not really worth it.”

The closest anyone came to re-establishing contact was in Octo-

ber 1988, when BBC’s Nicky Campbell persuaded a family spokesman to mark the appearance of *Opel*, a Syd compilation, by saying a few words on his show. Sister Rose’s husband, hotel manager Paul Broom, let it be known that Barrett was pursuing “a very ordinary sort of lifestyle”—albeit one devoid of any regular human contact beyond an occasional shopping trip with his elderly mother—and “doesn’t play any musical instruments anymore.”

As for Syd’s musical career, that was a “part of his life which he prefers to forget now. He had some bad experiences, and, thankfully, has come through all the worst of these, and is now able—fortunately—to lead a normal life here in Cambridge.”

In Cambridge, tucked away on a cul-de-sac in his little semi-detached suburban home, the man who named Pink Floyd follows a quiet, solitary existence. Among his pastimes, only the unfinished canvases—painted in a style that is, to say the least, *abstract*—give any indication that this is an individual of any exceptional sensibility. The rest of Roger Barrett’s time is whiled away tending to his beloved garden and his coin collection, watching TV, reading and endlessly redecorating his cozy Shangri-La.

He has not touched a guitar in years, and the only music he ever listens to is jazz and the classics. This portly, balding, middle-aged man is not entirely unaware of that other life he led as “Syd,” or of the ongoing fascination with his extinguished alter-ego’s work and legacy. Syd’s Floyd records continue to bring in more than enough to subsidize Roger Barrett’s modest needs; he rarely buys anything, and money in the bank means nothing to him.

While his family and few friends are grateful that he is “getting better” with each

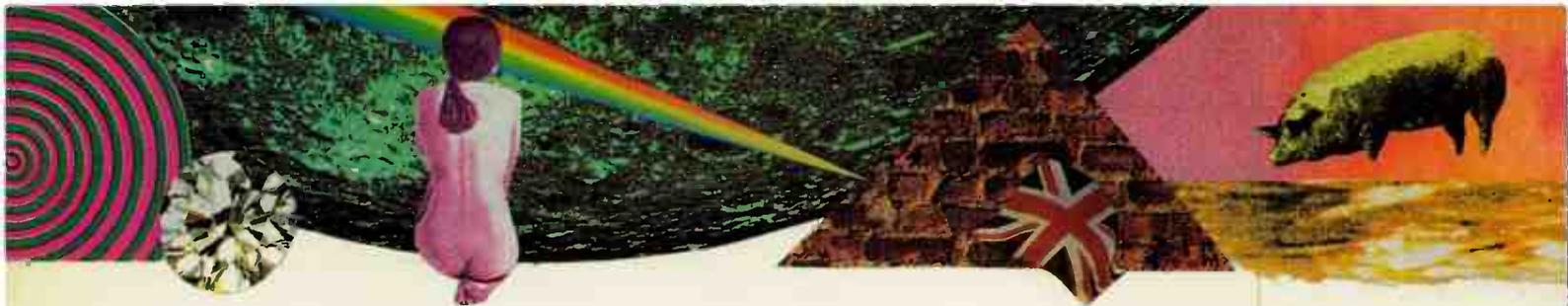
passing year, it remains painfully difficult for him to communicate with other human beings on almost any level. But though he seldom ventures beyond his English garden, the man who was once Syd is settled and reasonably content—and almost determinedly ordinary as he shuffles through his simple daily routines. Sometimes, he even dreams that he will soon be well enough to hold down a nine-to-five London office job, and commute every day into the big city.

WE were interested
in the business of being a pop
group: Successful! Money!
Cars! Most people get involved
in rock music because they
want that sort of success.”

—NICK MASON

From: *Saucerful of Secrets: The Pink Floyd Odyssey*, by Nicholas Schaffner to be published in May of 1991 by Harmony Books, a Division of Crown Publishers, Inc. Copyright ©1991 by Nicholas Schaffner. All rights reserved.

DOMINATED SINCE THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY BY ITS WORLD-RE-
nowned university, Cambridge is exceptional for its affluence and



sophistication, and for its unspoiled medieval character and scenic beauty.

Unlike some other British rock luminaries, the leading lights of Pink Floyd never pretended to be “working-class heroes.” Their backgrounds were strictly white-collar, their parents downright distinguished. Doug Gilmour was a professor of genetics and his wife Sylvia a schoolteacher turned film editor. Max Barrett was a police pathologist also known as one of Britain’s leading authorities on infant mortality. Mary Waters was a schoolmistress active in local politics; her husband had also been a teacher, specializing in religious training as well as physical education.

Eric Fletcher Waters, however, was long dead—gunned down in 1944 in Italy. Waters senior was only 30 when he died, only a few months after his third child had been born on September 6. Along with 40,000 other British soldiers, he was slain in a reckless British campaign to capture the bridgehead of Anzio from the Nazis. One need look no further for the source of the chip on the shoulder that marked George Roger Waters throughout his years with the Floyd—to say nothing of the militant anti-militarism that cauterized his song lyrics. In Waters’ terminology, the absence of his father amounted to the first—and the worst—brick in his wall.

Anyone familiar with the album and film of *The Wall* will recognize certain details drawn from Roger’s childhood: stumbling upon his father’s uniform, and a scroll of condolence from King George VI, in one of his mother’s drawers; rescuing a dying animal, only to be made to toss it in the garbage by her; getting packed off to a grammar school staffed by Dickensian sadists bent on purging their hapless little victims of any spark of creativity or individuality. “It was terrible,” Waters would recall in 1979. “Never encouraging them to do things, not really trying to interest them in anything, just trying to keep them quiet and still and crush them into the right shape so that they would go on to university and *do well*.”

All further bricks in the wall, but animated in Roger’s magnum opus by a certain amount of caricature. *Some* of his teachers were “very nice guys,” he admitted; and his mum did give him a “reasonable view of the world and what it was like—or as reasonable as she could.”

As a young teenager, Roger’s favorite pursuits included playing

with toy guns (and shooting real ones)—and staying awake at night with his “wireless” tuned to American Forces Network or Radio Luxembourg (a memory that he was to draw upon 30 years later with his solo album *Radio K.A.O.S.*): “In a solitary way, the radio station was the first thing I established a kind of relationship with, outside of my family or school.... It’s not bombarding you or forcing you into corners, and yet you’re getting other people’s ideas through it, more so than with television. There’s no image on the radio. Radio is much easier to concentrate on. You can’t watch TV in the dark because it makes it light.”

He was less enchanted by his weekend apprenticeship as a naval cadet, despite attaining the rank of Leading Seaman. In one prophetic incident, his young subordinates, riled by Roger’s overbearing manner, mutinied and beat him up. Waters summarily turned in his uniform and was slapped with a dishonorable discharge. He became instead the chairman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’s local youth chapter.

Also attending Cambridge County High School for Boys were several colleagues-to-be. One of Roger’s classmates was Storm Thorgerson—son of Mary Waters’ closest friend and future mastermind of the Floyd’s classic album covers. Two grades below them was Syd Barrett, with whom Storm became increasingly friendly, and two below *him* the latter-day second Floyd (and Roger Waters’) guitarist Tim Renwick—who cherishes memories of Syd’s stint as his Boy Scout patrol leader.

Roger Keith Barrett—born on January 6, 1946—was raised in a large house on Hill Road, the nicest street in Cherry Hinton, by loving parents. A popular and successful student, his passions ranged from camping and sports to drama and painting, at which he particularly excelled. His father was a classical music buff around whose prized grand piano young Roger Barrett (or “Syd,” as he came to be nicknamed) and his two brothers and two sisters would regularly be drawn into musical family get-togethers. Max also encouraged his youngest son’s interest in music with the gift of a banjo—and then, at the boy’s insistence, a guitar.

When Syd was 14, however, the idyllic picture shattered with Dr. Barrett’s sudden death. Storm Thorgerson proposes this trauma as the first “catalyst” in his friend’s eventual dementia. It was, in Waters-speak, the first brick in *Syd’s* wall.

Storm’s lifelong “best mate” David Gilmour was born exactly two months after Syd, on March 6, 1946. In marked contrast to Roger Waters, the athletic young Dave was raised by permissive, easygoing parents characterized by one Cambridge friend as “fairly Bohemian, pretty trendy for that time.” Gilmour found his calling at 15 when he inherited a cheap Spanish guitar from a neighbor.

RICK used to
tune everybody's guitars.
Syd couldn't be bothered and
Roger was tone deaf, didn't
have a clue."



By 1962 Cambridge, like most British cities, was enlivened by a thriving music scene, with well over a hundred local bands springing up on both sides of the town-and-gown divide. Among the lesser of these was Geoff Mott and the Mottoes, whose lineup encompassed Syd Barrett on a proudly acquired electric guitar for which he had constructed a small amp. Partly to help Syd get his mind off his father's death, the ever-indulgent Mrs. Barrett encouraged her son's band to rehearse and perform in the spacious front room of the home that reduced circumstances had obliged her to turn into a boarding house. The Mottoes' repertoire consisted of current British hit-parade fodder like Cliff Richard's Shadows, with an occasional stab at Chuck Berry.

A frequent visitor to their gigs was Barrett's older school chum Roger Waters, who would roar into Hill Road on his beloved old AJ5 motorbike—but had yet to evince great interest in playing music.

Like all Syd's Cambridge friends, the Mottoes' drummer Clive Welham detected few signs of incipient musical genius—or mental instability. Welham regarded Barrett first and foremost as “an excellent painter, a much more talented painter than musician. To be honest, Syd was a very rookie guitarist. Even when the Floyd became famous, his real skill was his innovations rather than his musical ability.”

Dave Gilmour and Syd grew close at Cambridge's College of Arts and Technology. “He was in the art department,” recalls Gilmour, “and I was doing modern languages. He and I, and quite a lot of other people who were interested in music, would hang out in the art school every lunchtime and play songs, with guitars and harmonicas.”

The songs played at such gatherings were by British artists—the Beatles and their successors. Gilmour—much the more fluent guitarist—helped Barrett figure out Keith Richards' licks; the pair also experimented with slide guitar and echo boxes (not to mention hashish). But until the Floyd's brief incarnation as a five-piece in early 1968, their musical partnership extended only to a handful of acoustic sessions at a Cambridge club called the Mill—and dueting for spare change on the streets of southern France.

Dr. Gilmour, meanwhile, had been drawn overseas—to lower Manhattan, in fact—in the “brain drain” of Britain's top scientists and scholars, able to command vastly higher salaries in America. (“Roger,” Dave once quipped, “lost his father in the war; I lost mine in Greenwich Village.”) Always encouraged to be independent by his parents, Dave was left to fend for himself in a small flat on Mill Road. “He was pretty hard up in those days,” says Clive Welham. “Just a pair of jeans and a donkey jacket, that was about it.”

Gilmour recalls nights of playing U.S. military bases in a cover band called Jokers Wild and collapsing into bed at 4 AM—only to rise three hours later to tackle odd jobs. (Among these, the most lucrative—for a blond, handsome youth like Dave—proved to be posing as a male model.) All of which helped instill in the easygoing guitarist his underlying grit, and a determination to succeed on his own terms that was to resurface during the Floydian civil wars a generation later.

While Gilmour and Jokers Wild remained based in Cambridge, Waters and Barrett moved to London to pursue their destinies as, respectively, an architect and a painter. At Regent Street Polytechnic, Waters—having acquired a guitar after becoming a Stones fan—fell in with fellow architecture students Rick Wright and Nick Mason, who shared a flat in Highgate and wanted to form a band.

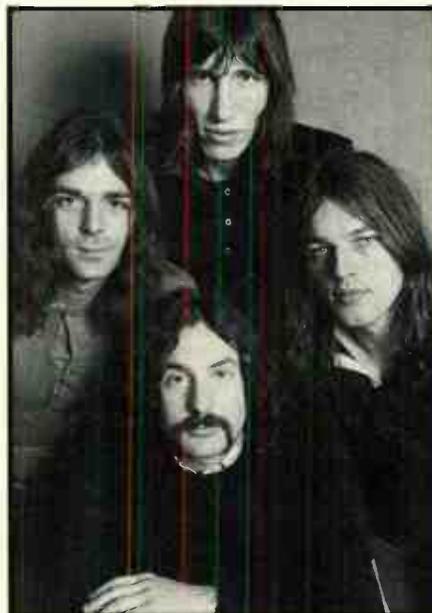
Born July 28, 1945, Richard William Wright (son of Bridie and Cedric) had attended a haberdasher's prep school before changing to architecture. “I didn't want to be an architect,” Rick recalls. “I wanted to be a musician. Jazz was my main love then. The only time I've ever stood in line for tickets was for Duke Ellington, when I was 17.”

While all the Floyds were well-off by the standard of aspiring '60s rock 'n' rollers, Nicholas Berkeley Mason was rich. He was raised by

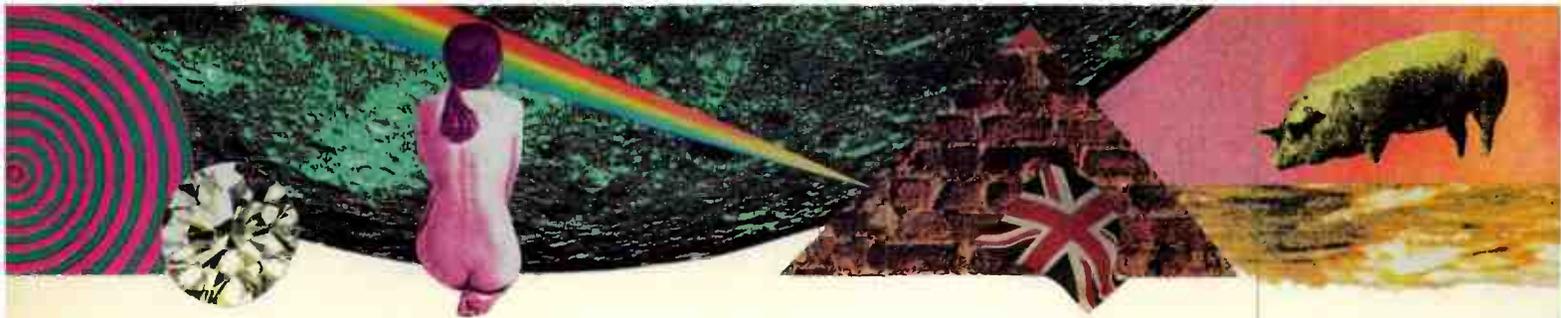
Bill and Sally Mason in a stately home on one of the most exclusive streets of London's exclusive Hampstead district. The Masons' driveway was often rendered impassable by flashy sports cars, including the Lotus Elan and Aston Martin that Nick himself already owned around the time he linked up with Wright and Waters.

Sigma 6 was the name of the first band featuring Waters, Wright and Mason—on, respectively, lead guitar, rhythm guitar and drums, none of which they particularly knew how to play.

Waters moved into Mason's Highgate pad. Given the tendency of students from Cambridge to seek one another out in the big city, it was hardly surprising that two acquaintances from home should also wind up there—and begin playing in Roger's band. One was Bob Close, a fellow student at the Regent Street Poly and an accomplished jazz guitarist who cut his teeth in a group called Blues Anonymous. The other was Syd Barrett.



WATERS (TOP) TAKES OVER, BRINGING IN DAVE GILMOUR (CENTER RIGHT) TO COVER FOR SYD



"With the advent of Bob Close," Waters recalled, "we actually had someone who could play an instrument. It was really then that we did the shuffle job of who played what. I was demoted from lead guitar to rhythm guitar and finally bass. There was always this frightful fear that I could land up as the drummer."

Syd very quickly clashed with the incorrigibly square Close—who failed to share the art student's fascination with guitar feedback and echo boxes, let alone his burgeoning interest in Eastern mysticism, supernaturalism, ESP and LSD. Bob bailed out—leaving Syd, almost by default, fronting the group.

Barrett found more permanent lodgings near the West End theater district, at 2 Earham Street, which several Cambridge acquaintances had already made their home. These included Susie Gawler-Wright, whose live-in boyfriend Peter Wynne Willson, a lighting technician at the New Theatre, was to become one of Syd's closest friends and artistic partners.

Barrett was profoundly troubled by an incident that Storm Thorgerson suggests may have been the second catalyst for what was to come. Many of Syd's Cambridge "gang"—most of whom had already sampled LSD—became deeply involved with an Indian-based religious cult called Sant Mat, or the Path of the Masters. "A lot of people tried to capture Syd and force him into their religion," says Susie—who was one of its adherents.

"So Syd and I went to a hotel in the center of London to meet the Master," Thorgerson recalls. "Syd was seeking initiation to become, as it was called, a Sat Sanghi." Barrett was rejected by the Maharaji Charan Singh Ji on the grounds that he was a student who should focus instead on finishing his courses. Though he seldom discussed it with his friends, they sensed that Barrett took the inscrutable guru's rejection very personally. Henceforth, he would feel obliged to seek his enlightenment elsewhere—notably through artistic expression, and through chemicals.

The strange moniker Syd bequeathed to his band was suggested not by a drug vision but by two obscure names in his record collection: Georgia bluesmen Pink Anderson (1900–1974) and Floyd "Dipper Boy" Council (1911–1976). The Pink Floyd Sound's early choice of material was less esoteric, consisting mainly of Rolling Stones hits and chestnuts like "Louie Louie" and "Road Runner." The one feature to set the group apart from 10,000 others playing the same numbers at parties and pubs was the instrumental breaks, pregnant

with distortion, feedback and possibilities, during which the guitarist (increasingly abetted by the Stockhausen-influenced keyboard player) would drive his stolid little R&B band into another realm entirely.

The Pink Floyd Sound was first billed as such at London's Countdown Club in late 1965—a gig for which the four students received £15. During the next several months, Jokers Wild and the Floyd

often opened shows for one another in their respective bailiwicks of Cambridge and London. One memorable evening, Gilmour and Barrett—"twin luminaries from a small town," as Thorgerson puts it—co-starred with their bands at a large party in Shelford, just outside Cambridge. The "cabaret" slot—during which an acoustic act or a comedian would give the dancing crowds a respite from the amplified rock 'n' roll—was filled by a struggling New York folkie named Paul Simon.

THE EMERGING LONDON COUNTERCULTURE gathered steam with a series of Sunday afternoon happenings at the Marquee Club, the celebrated Soho venue where the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds and the Who had launched their legends. "Spontaneous Underground"—

roughly equal measure jam session, costume party and free-for-all—offered a British variation on the American Be-in.

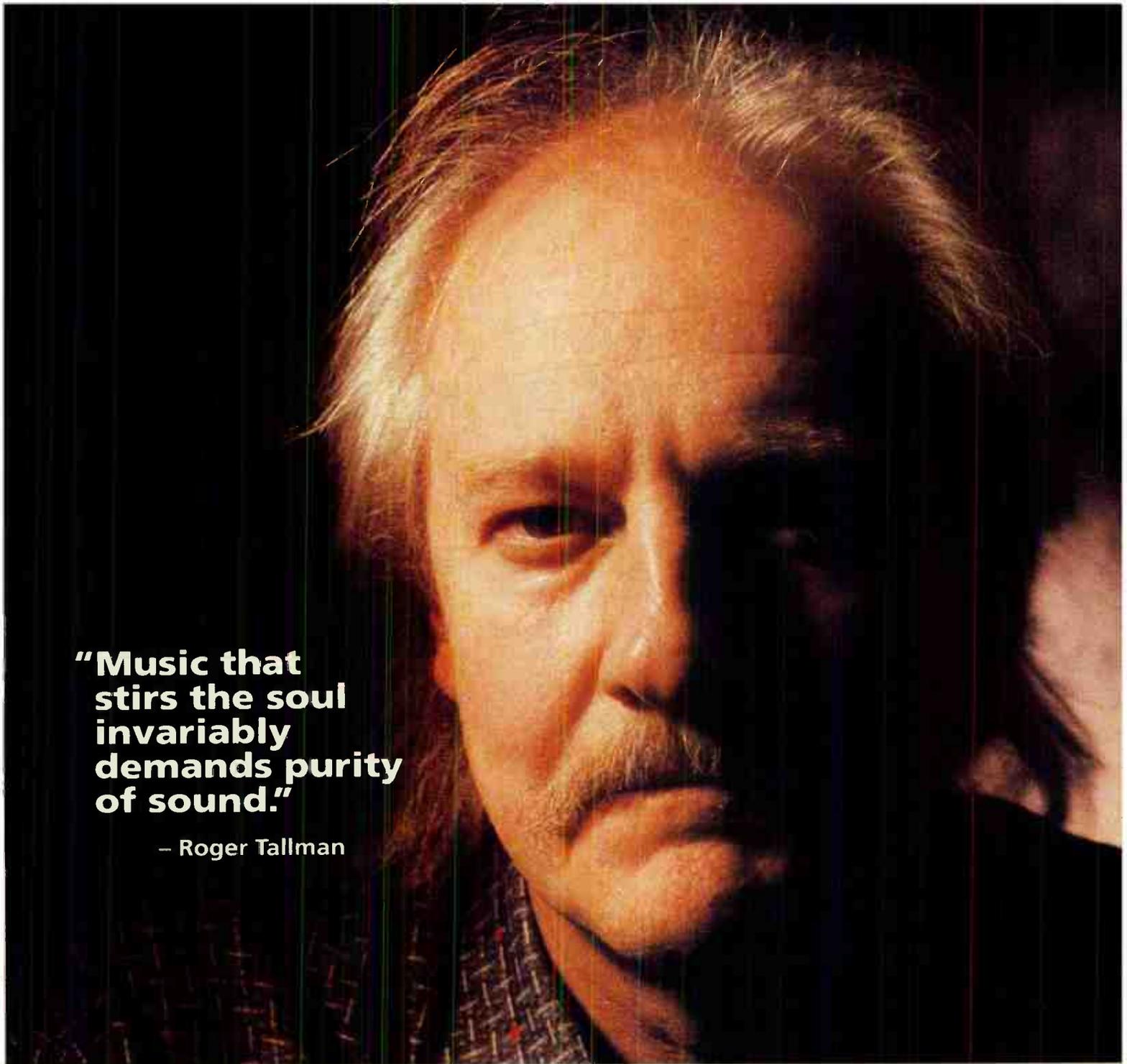
The invite to the inaugural Marquee happening in February 1966 read: "Who will be there? Poets, pop singers, hoods, Americans, homosexuals (because they make up 10 percent of the population), 20 clowns, jazz musicians, one murderer, sculptors, politicians and some girls who defy description...."

Though a rock band or two might be included in the afternoon's entertainment, no one act could expect to be the sole focus of attention. Eight-millimeter films flickered on the wall throughout the performances, and little distinction was made between player and audience. The latter were encouraged to dress as outrageously as possible, and to contribute to the mayhem with such "found" instruments as toilet plungers, mailing tubes and transistor radios.

On March 13th came the Spontaneous Underground debut of a group of four students identified by the inscription on the bassist's amplifier as the Pink Floyd Sound. John Hopkins was there. "There weren't many people, maybe 40 or 50," he recalls. "The band was not playing music, they were playing *sounds*. Waves and walls of sounds, quite unlike anything anybody in rock 'n' roll had played before. John Cage had done stuff like that. And suddenly here were

I was demoted from lead guitar to rhythm guitar and finally bass. There was always this frightful fear that I could land up as the drummer."

—ROGER WATERS



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World Radio History

these young art students playing the same crazy stuff. It blew a lot of people's minds. It was exciting."

Local scenemaker Peter Jenner was trying to get an experimental record label off the ground. It dawned on him that under the terms of his fledgling avant-jazz label's contract with Elektra, "we'd have to sell millions of albums to make any money. We couldn't even pay off the recording costs out of our two percent royalty. I concluded we needed a pop group—because I thought pop groups made money."

One Sunday in May, Jenner dropped by the Marquee. As far as many of the Spontaneous Undergrounders were concerned, the chief attraction that afternoon was one of the first of the great pink jellies (known to Americans as Jello) that were to become an obligatory feature of alternative-London happenings. Several daring young hipsters doffed their Kings Road finery to squirm in the pink ooze—to the music of the appropriately named Pink Floyd Sound.

"I have this recollection of walking 'round the stage at the Marquee," says Jen-

ner, "trying to work out where the noise was coming from, who was playing it. Normally you'd have the bass, *bomp, bomp, bomp*; the piano, *clink, clink, clink*—and, *clang, clang, clang*, that's the guitar. But during the solo instrumental bits, I couldn't work out whether it was the guitar or the keyboards. It wasn't neat and tidy like most pop music, which I'd found quite boring: *My baby loves me, yeah, yeah, yeah*, with the same chords going 'round and 'round."

Jenner subsequently tracked down the bassist and drummer at their flat in Highgate. In a 1973 interview, Roger Waters recalled Jenner proclaiming, "You lads could be bigger than the Beatles"—and we sort of looked at him and replied in a dubious tone, 'Yes, well, we'll see you when we get back from our hols,' because we were all shooting off for some sun on the Continent."

After their summer break, Barrett, Waters, Mason and Wright were ready to talk business with Jenner and his friend and prospective partner Andrew King. The four students had no manager or agent, minimal equipment in varying states of decrepitude and a van about to give up the ghost. After they agreed to throw in their lot with Jenner and King, one of the latter's first gestures was to buy them about £1000 worth of new instruments and amplifiers. (These were almost immediately stolen, obliging the musicians to acquire yet another set of gear on the installment plan.) Jenner turned Syd Barrett on to such performance techniques as rolling ball bearings down guitar strings—and suggested that Pink Floyd rid their name of the superfluous "Sound."

The original plan to turn the Floyd into a flagship for Jenner's DNA Records was quickly forgotten, after Roger insisted that what the group really needed was a full-time manager—a role that Peter and Andrew enthusiastically agreed to share.

Rick Wright has described early Floyd performances as "purely experimental for us and a time of learning and finding out what we were trying to do. Each night was a complete buzz because we did totally new things and none of us knew how the others would react to it."

Writer Barry Miles nonetheless recalls that after a typical Sound and Light Workshop the Floyd "took questions from the audience, while earnest young avant-gardists like myself asked about multimedia experiments and all the rest of it. It was an 'educational event.' Very serious."

Marcus Miller

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Syd Barrett was now sharing the top floor of Peter and Susie's house with his lookalike girlfriend, model Lindsay Korner. Good-natured and comparatively low-key, Lindsay was to remain devoted to Syd through all the ups and downs of his Floyd years.

Now that the Pink Floyd were taking flight, Syd had abandoned his canvases to create "music in colors" instead: writing songs with a flair and dedication that astonished even his closest associates. His typically "underground" enthusiasms and influences—Chinese oracles and childhood fairy stories; pulp sci-fi and J.R.R. Tolkien's tales of Middle-Earth; English folk ballads, Chicago blues, avant-garde electronics and Donovan, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones—all percolated in the cauldron of his subconscious to re-emerge in a voice, sound and style that was uniquely Syd.

"In the early days," says Wynne Willson, "much more time would be spent writing numbers than performing. He would be building towards a performance rather than writing for a record. Writing the lyrics for a number, he would compose the basics of it—and then endlessly play around with how he was going to take his improvisation during the gig. Those were halcyon days—everything was very pleasant then. It was going exactly the way Syd wanted. He would have endless time to write and play.

"I can remember him sitting around and playing with lyrics, and copious quantities of grass and hashish would be smoked. It was all very mellow—and later became far too pressured and plastic."

"He was very, very much the creator of the group in those days," says June Bolan. "When he would sit at home and write a song, he'd think of what the drummer ought to play, how the bass line should be. He played very good rhythm as well as lead, and he'd know what he wanted to hear. He'd go into rehearsals and say to Nick, 'This is what I want you to play'...and that's how it would come out."

Sumi Jenner never found Syd very communicative: "He just expressed himself through his music." Her husband remembers Barrett as "the most creative person I've ever known. It was extraordinary—in those few months at Earham Street he wrote nearly all his songs for the Floyd and the solo albums. It was all very casual, done off the top of the head. No tortured genius sweating through his pain. When people write without any inhibitions, they write so

much better than when they start getting concerned that they're great writers."

Peter Jenner's own most tangible contribution to this output, however inadvertent, may be found in the power-chord leitmotif of "Interstellar Overdrive"—the long instrumental freak-out that became a highlight of Syd's performances with the Floyd. It began with Jenner's attempt to serenade Barrett with the guitar hook from Love's version of Burt Bacharach's "My Little Red Book." "I'm not the world's greatest singer; I've got a terrible sense of pitch," says Jenner. "He played

back a riff on his guitar, said, 'It goes like this?' And of course it was quite different, because my humming was so bad!"

The overnight flowering of Barrett's creativity was soon evinced onstage. "He took you into a whole other world," recalls Sumi Jenner. "The others always seemed to be struggling to keep up with him." During the course of the shows' centerpieces—30- to 45-minute freeform disarrangements of "Interstellar Overdrive" and "Astronomy Domine"—Barrett would transform into a dervish, unleashing salvos of feedback, the

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had "taken place around us—not within us." Much as these words may also have applied to Waters, Barrett could hardly have been more unequivocal in his embrace of the underground's ideals and excesses. One close associate states that Waters and Mason actually "represented exactly what Syd was rejecting. Even though they were now playing in a rock band, they were very pleased with themselves for having been architecture students, for having followed that nice upper-middle-class script."

By the beginning of 1967, LSD had come

to rival cannabis as Barrett's drug of choice at Earlham Street. "Syd was the only one of the group," says Wynne Willson, "who was part of the—these words sound absurdly pretentious now—consciousness-expanding experimental movement. Which isn't to say we didn't take acid for fun, but we were anticipating some *progress*."

At first, the acid seemed to raise Barrett to even greater heights of inspiration and creativity. There were a few dodgy moments, such as when the police appeared at 2 Earlham Street's purple-painted door in search

of a sometime-tenant with a heroin habit and a criminal record, and Barrett—in an era when "the fuzz" were a byword for paranoia even if a "freak" *wasn't* tripping—seemed to lose all powers of motion or speech as he fixed the men in blue with (in Susie's phrase) "huge horror eyes." (Fortunately another charming lady friend of Syd's named Carrie Anne stepped in to distract the bobbies with small talk and tea.)

On February 1, 1967, the Pink Floyd officially "went professional," shelving their college careers to focus on the band. "Mind you," bantered Nick Mason—who still thought he might return to college the following year—"the best chance for an architect to find clients is in show business. I'm always on the lookout for someone who has half a million pounds to spare and wants me to design him a house."

The Floyd's priority now, however, was to put out a record. A hoary EMI executive named Beecher Stevens, having heard "a lot of fuss about their music and lights and so on," had sniffed around All Saints Church, accompanied by his A&R man Norman Smith. Smith was best-known as a longtime engineer for the Beatles—whom Stevens, during his previous job at Decca, had deemed (to his subsequent embarrassment) undeserving of a record contract. Stevens rated the Floyd "weird but good"—yet was given pause when "one of the boys, and some of the people around them, seemed a bit strange."

Hoping to excite more record-company interest, the Floyd went into Chelsea's Sound Techniques Studios with Joe Boyd to record "Arnold Layne"—a catchy Barrett-penned fable about a kleptomaniac transvestite. The late January sessions also yielded an early version of "Interstellar Overdrive" and a proposed B-side hastily rewritten as "Candy and a Currant Bun" after someone from the BBC took exception to the original title "Let's Roll Another One."

EMI's top brass were suitably impressed, and upped the ante to a then-considerable £5000, contingent upon the band agreeing to work exclusively with a staff producer at EMI's Abbey Road studios. Stevens was determined that a sober-minded citizen—specifically, Norman Smith—"keep a firm hand on the sessions."

Upon its March 11 release on EMI's Columbia label, the creepy yet seductive "Arnold" drew both controversy and acclaim. *Melody Maker* hailed it as "an

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amusing and colourful story about a guy who got himself put inside whilst learning of the birds and the bees...without a doubt, a very good disc. The Pink Floyd represents a new form of music to the English pop scene so let's hope the English are broadminded enough to accept it with open arms."

Those who didn't included the popular and hipper-than-thou pirate Radio London, which slapped the "smutty" platter with a ban. "If we can't write and sing songs about various forms of human predicament," responded Waters, "then we might as well not be in the business." Wright suggested that "the record was banned not because of the lyrics—because there's nothing there you can really object to—but because they're against us as a group and against what we stand for." The song's 21-year-old author said that "Arnold Layne just happens to dig dressing up in women's clothing; a lot of people do, so let's face up to reality!"

A little controversy, of course, has never harmed sales; the music and production, moreover, did not stint on good old-fashioned pop hooks. A decade later (on Capital Radio's "Pink Floyd Story" series), Nick Mason said "Arnold Layne" was expressly devised to establish the Floyd as "a hit parade band.... We were interested in the business of being a pop group: SUCCESSFUL—MONEY—CARS—that sort of thing. Good living. I mean, that's the reason most people get involved in rock music, because they want that sort of success. If you don't, you get involved in something else."

"Arnold Layne" did crack the British Top Twenty—just barely—which was actually a better showing than all but two of the Floyd's singles were to achieve throughout the rest of the band's career. Yet the record rose far higher in underground London, and by dint of endless playings became a virtual anthem at clubs like UFO.

"Arnold Layne" was probably the first-ever pop hit that dealt in an English accent with English cultural obsessions and English fetishes," declares Pete Brown. "There had never been anything quite like it; everyone had been behaving like Americans."

Many of the group's early associates agree that were it not for the tireless efforts and devotion of Jenner and King, the Pink Floyd might never have taken off as they did. Yet Waters was already betraying impatience with the duo—especially with the more nervous and intense King. This was dramatized that spring, on the Floyd's first

European tour, when Andrew managed to drop the contents of his pocket into a Copenhagen drain while fumbling for his keys—and Roger turned on him, sneering, "We can't have a manager who throws our money down the drain, now, can we?"

Though Norman Smith had already taped such tuneful Barrett compositions as "The Gnome" and "The Scarecrow" at Abbey Road, both he and the Floyd's managers instantly recognized a new ditty called "Games for May" as the most suitable follow-up to "Arnold Layne." Syd then

changed his title to "See Emily Play."

Barrett later put forth the story that "Emily" had materialized whole-cloth in a dream—à la Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"—after he dozed off in the woods. Be that as it may, the lyric was directed at a flesh-and-blood Emily well-known to the UFO crowd—the "psychedelic school girl" daughter of the aristocrat author Lord Kenneth Arnold the sex fetishist made way for Emily the flower child....

"See Emily Play" was a hit. Radio London listed "Emily" almost in- [cont'd on page 95]



DAVID LEE ROTH

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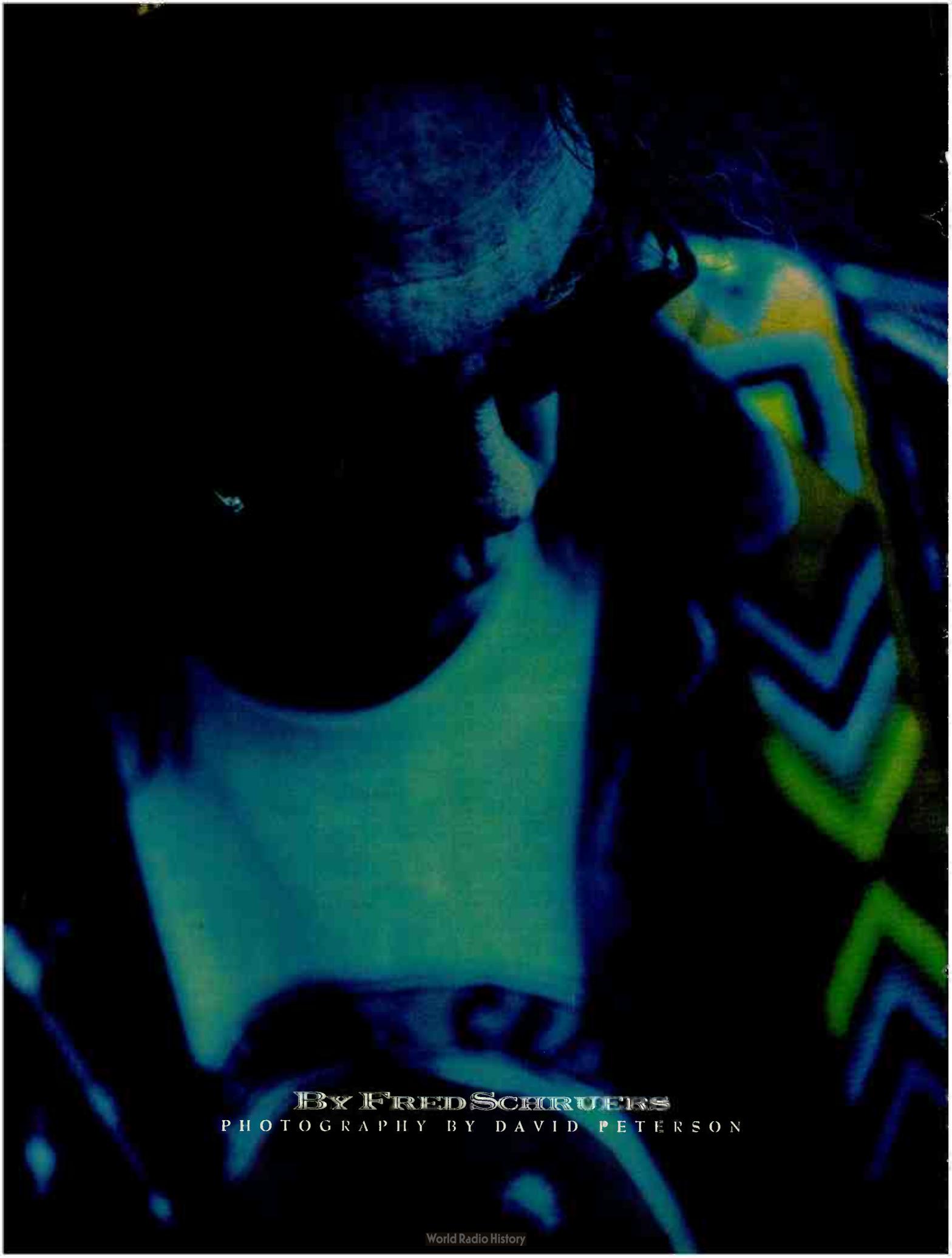
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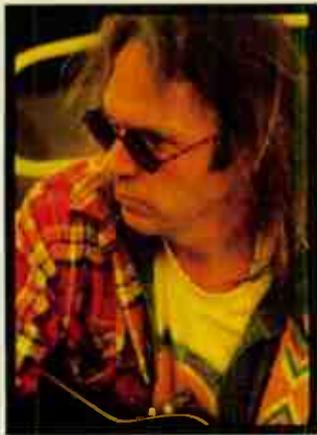
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NEIL YOUNG

Right this minute out here on the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu, the future of gutbucket rock stands in some question. Neil Young, clad in a pair of flip-flops, his wiry bird's nest of hair flipping this way and that in the updraft as everything from Maseratis to dumptrucks

bears down, is halfway across the six-laner with only a symbol—double yellow stripes to front and rear—protecting him from becoming road pizza. He and Crazy Horse would look like a lost family of crows if not for the more substantial figure of Frank “Pon-

cho” Sampedro. Frank looks nimble on his feet in his ponytail and

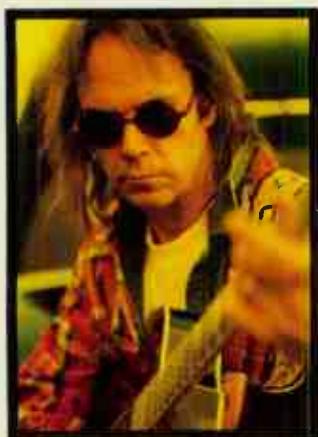
RAGGED tenny runners,

and the wiry Ralph Molina could probably skitter out of harm's way.

But bassist Billy Talbot, sunglassed and long-haired like 45-year-old



Neil, seems to move about with an eternally bell-bottomed air. ♦ Amid scores of poser bands still trashing their first hotel rooms, the members of this troupe are genuine-article rock 'n' roll



outlaws, determinedly going against the grain with the low-tech, largely unrehearsed, chunky guitar rock of *Ragged Glory*. Their leader's high, scratchy voice, as warm and recognizable a conveyance for lyrics as any around, can still turn effectively snide or anguished in the mid-

BUT RIGHT

dle of a verse, and his guitar playing can still run the gamut from prettily, melodically legato to angrily telegraphic, never losing his signature sound. The last sessions Neil did with this bunch were for 1987's up-and-down *Life*. Now, after some deep research into the potential of bigger-band sounds with *This Note's for You*, Young is back as part of the freewheeling Crazy Horse quartet, the clear leader but somehow happily subordinate to their usual ragged-but-right (hell, but glorious) recording ethic.

In fact, having been told in the middle of this parlous stretch of highway that a friend had said how pleased he was at again hearing some "Crazy Horse violin concertos," he begins barking into a proffered tape recorder right on the spot. "Yeah, it is classical," he admits, looking momentarily abashed at his own terminology. "It's rooted in the classics, it really is—the development of themes and grandness and all of this bullshit that goes in there." He pauses with a can't-go-on-meeting-like-this look as a load of liquid nitrogen thunders by, blotting out sun and speech. "It's cool," he declares. "I love it." And you don't rehearse much? (It's hard not to quiz my captive audience, even though I can see the "Young, Band, Area Man Killed Crossing PCI" headline.) "No," he hollers. "There's a theme at the beginning and end, every song has got a theme we learn. It comes at the beginning and the end of every instrumental—that's how you get in and out of the verse. That's all—everything else is improvised."

At long last a break in the traffic lets us scurry across to the barbecue place that's been selected for today's seminar. Young (who's been clutching that celebrity accoutrement of our day, an Evian bottle) and band are ready to consume quantities of beef and poultry. This is his old turf—he lived not far south in Topanga, just north in Zuma, and he's often recorded nearby at Wally Heider's—and the storefront establishment we now completely fill is clearly familiar turf. "Haven't seen ya in a while," the guy behind the counter ventures. "Well," says Young amiably, "we finished the record." A brief pause. "Still ain't seen ya in a while," ventures the guy. "Well," says Young, not about to be trumped in a contest of dueling absurdities. "I quit eatin'."

Ralph is "the quiet one" every band has. Billy steps in for sporadic runs, offbeat but effective, and Frank, like the inspired rhythm guitarist he is, has a way of herding some of his bandleader's wackier observations back into the mainstream. When they're asked if their recording dates were rigorous, it's Frank who steps up first: "It was a sweet job, it wasn't painstaking. Fast and fun, wham-bang! The only hard part was picking out takes after we did all the recording."

Neil: "That was the hard part, 'cause we never listened to playback." Nor did they have many leftovers, he adds, musing deeply: "No, nothing.... Oh, 'Born to Run' [not the Springsteen song], 'Box-

car,' 'Interstate' [no, not outtake titles from Bruce's *Nebraska*]. What about 'Natural Beauty'—that's probably the acoustic thing that should be on the record. We forgot to listen to that."

They're informed that their interviewer's mistaken notion, after he got a tape of the album, had been to listen to it while running errands in the car. "No," grins Neil, "you gotta go on a long trip to hear the whole record. There are three songs that are longer than nine minutes, and the whole record's 57 minutes long." Is he bucking for a gold star from Ralph Nader? "Hey, my next record might be 36 minutes, and it'll be on a CD too." In fact, *Everybody's Rockin'*, Neil's 1985 visit to the early rock era, was about right for an extended grocery run. "Probably the shortest. But that was the style of the record. At the time depicted on that album, the songs were short. Everything was in perfect perspective.

"*Freedom* was over 60 minutes, and it was done on a metal master [like *Ragged Glory*]. We got a couple more dB that way, because with direct metal mastering, nothing caves in, everything stays up. Instead of doing it acetate to vinyl—they make it out of that shit, the canyons are too skinny—they're metal, so they stay in there."

Given our geographical position in the middle of his old stomping grounds with Crazy Horse, it seems apt to ask Young about the changes over the years. In the mid-'70s, he caused a stir with some public hints that he was planning a change. "Yeah, that was in '75. We'd just recorded *Zuma* and *Tonight's the Night*. It was, 'I dunno what I'm gonna do about those guys—have to get all fucked up by myself.'" Young had been living in relatively remote Topanga Canyon then—a landscape strewn with horses, dogs that lived in the yard, junked cars

rusting next to gleaming new Volvos. Crazy Horse was up in Laurel Canyon, where life was also easy but the drugs were harder. "Yeah," says Billy, "Laurel Canyon with all the rock 'n' rollers. Neil lived there too for a while."

Neil: "Yeah, but I got sick of all the—it was like a slum for me. I had to move out of the neighborhood. Moved to Topanga with the upper crust." He tilts his head to the band: "We rehearsed 'Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere' up there, remember, then took it down to Wally Heider's. Remember the first time we played 'Cinnamon Girl' up there—we were fucking Egyptians, man, rolling pyramids across the desert. Had this whole picture of what it was supposed to sound like." And what time of night would that have been? "It was in the middle of the afternoon! We played it loud enough for everybody in the neighborhood to hear us, too—opened up all the windows to make sure they would."

Then as now the Young recording ethic was to cut tracks, not build them. "We hate doing that, never do that," explains Young.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

F **FRANK:** I have a '53 Les Paul gold top. I play through a Vox top with a Marshall bottom. Never used that before—always used the old Fender tweed amplifiers. For playing rhythm guitar I used a really heavy set of strings—I think my low E string was .068, that's almost a bass string.

NEIL: Frank's are big strings—with a lot of sustain. Hard to knock out of tune. I've got real light-gauge strings on my guitar, it's like a whole other sound.

FRANK: Like a beautiful woman laying on a big oak bed.

NEIL: My guitar is really nice. Actually, I've got two now. I traded Jim Messina for my black Les Paul, traded him a Gretsch for it, and a gold one, same vintage, same setup. Over the years I've lost the original pickups on each so now on each of them I've got one humbucking pickup and one Firebird pickup. Real light rock 'n' roll-gauge strings and a Fender Deluxe amp that goes to a preamp. Sometimes I go right through the Fender, sometimes I go through effects. The back end of the thing is the Baldwin Exterminator—it exterminates anything that gets in its way, wipes out the high end and has a real beautiful sound—more bottom, more funk—with its own reverb unit.

BILLY: I've used a Fender Precision bass with a Telecaster neck since 1962 and a MESA/Boogie 400 bass amp with some Ampeg bottoms.

RALPH: "That's right: Ludwig drums, Zildjian cymbals."

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"That's for fucking wimps, and there's a multitude of them out there, just doing little piece by leettle piece."

Weren't the Eagles taking a year to layer their albums in the same town, maybe the same studios, where you were slamming them out? "We didn't know 'em well enough," says Young, "to walk in and say, 'What the fuck are you guys doin'?" After his contentious mid-'80s years at Geffen, when the label sued him for delivering "uncharacteristic" product, Young seems happy back on his old Reprise label at Warner Bros. *Ragged Glory* was selling respectably through the last two months of '90 and the tour in the new year seemed likely to kick it into gold status. "It's kinda ironic," says Sampedro. "They leave us alone, and we just end up making them happy." "Yeah," adds Young, "instead of them trying to tell me what to do. Making me unhappy and pissed off."

Artistic freedom is a blessed state indeed—but didn't Crazy Horse feel a little restless during the back-to-back sequence of *Re*ac*tor* (1981), where they were part-timers, and *Trans* (1983), where they were completely excluded?

"Well," allows Frank, "*Re*ac*tor* shocked me. I couldn't believe it was done when it was done. I thought we could have done a better job, done more, recorded a little more. And the other one, *Trans*, we didn't have a lot to do with, so I really don't have a lot to say about that record."

Billy: "It was experimentation time, ya know?"

Neil: "It was just where I was at the time. My life put me in a place where that was what I was doing. I was experimenting with

things...the only fucking problem was I was 'Neil Young.' Problem one and problem googolplex and every problem in between would have been solved if it wasn't me." In fact, Young was suffering considerable personal turmoil at the time, dealing, for the second time, with a child who'd been stricken with a disabling congenital disorder. But time has let him, and may someday let the pop pundits, look at those two contrary records as needed growth time. "You take the original product," he says, flashing what one English writer has called his "mad frown," "put it in a meat grinder, and it comes out the other end a complete original copy—every one a duplicate of the next, Neil II, III, IV, V, VI, all coming off the line."

For the *Ragged Glory* sessions, Young and band set up in a rough-hewn studio Neil's built on his sizable ranch property south of San Francisco—a "big, big plywood-roofed room," as Sampedro puts it, with Young adding, "On stills. We've gotta be able to groove. Ralph didn't like this room, but he played great on this record. I thought he played greater than any record we've played on. It wasn't until after we finished playing the record," adds Young with a sideways smile at his drummer, "that Ralph told me he didn't like the sound."

"No," says Ralph as he laughs with the rest of the table, "I said it at the beginning. It's just that swing we get, I couldn't hear it." That he indeed played it is clear from a minor interruption that comes next. Even as lunch turns up—the double slab of barbecued chicken with onion rings, the baby-back ribs, the roast chicken, etc.—a local construction, central-casting-real-person sort of guy pipes up as he walks by, "Hey, Neil, I heard your tape. Sounded real good."

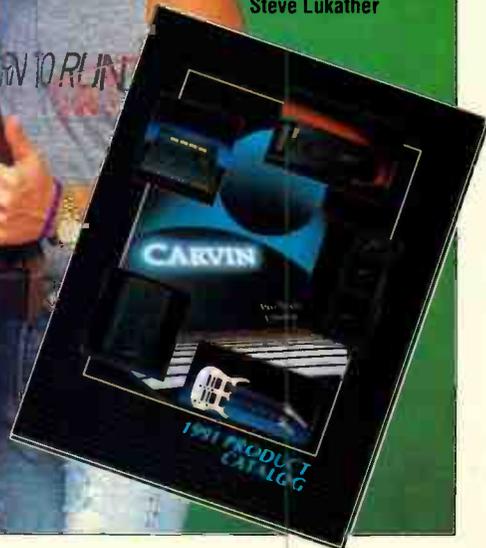
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"All right," says Neil, unfazed by this advance distribution of his product. "Thanks a lot, man." He shakes his head at the ad hoc way the sessions came: "I was still trying to finish some of the songs while we were rehearsing—wondering, 'Well, shit, maybe some song should have a third verse.' Never could get any further than where I was. We played the songs a couple times a day for a couple weeks, then one day we knew we were done—that was the day we cut 'Farmer John.' It was a one-shot deal."

Frank: "That's the only time we ever played it."

Billy: "Frank asks Neil what's the first song he ever played in a rock 'n' roll band, and Neil's answer was"—Billy air- and mouth-guitars the opening chords to "Money."

Neil: "So then he asked me, 'Why don't you play something you did with your old high school band?'"

Frank: "Yeah, one of your old Canadian-high-school-type favorite songs?"

Neil: "'Farmer John' was good for those college bars in the East. I see Daisy Mae from *Li'l Abner* every time I hear that song. That was the last day of recording—we started recording on a Thursday and finished on a Monday, three days short of three weeks." Pretty quick for these days, one observes, teeing Neil up for a characteristic zinger: "These days don't have shit to do with us."

After the almost folk-era topicality of *Freedom*, with songs like the angry "Rockin' in the Free World," Young's indeed working on more timeless themes of love and its alienations. "I thought this was a folk album with a good rock 'n' roll beat," says Frank. "I don't hear any

political songs so I guess it's really not folk music..." He turns to Young: "You're just singing about folks."

Before we discuss "Days That Used to Be"—should Young maybe send Bob Dylan a note thanking him for the melody to "My Back Pages"? "It is the same melody in three or four notes, and there's no doubt about that, but it lends itself to bringing you back there. For the efficiency of the lyrics, it's in keeping with what the song is about to have a nostalgic twist on it." Any message in there for his old bandmates from Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young? "Yeah, but it's about everybody from that generation. It's to me as well as everybody else. Ya know, I was driving my wife's BMW just the other day. She has a nice little pink garter stuck up there. Thank god for that, gave the thing a little edge. Yeah, took the curse off the B'mer."

"What's the difference—I got a new car, it's just 50 years old. The most modern of my own cars is a '62 Chrysler LeBaron, four-door hardtop. I got a '53 Buick Skylark, Body Number One, the prototype. I got a lot." Young snaps out of it with a self-chiding grin. "But I don't want to flaunt my riches to the public. There could be somebody writing a letter to *Musician* saying, 'What the fuck do we give a shit about Neil Young's fucking cars, he's got so much money...'" Unfortunately, that's my lot in life, I have to be a fucking rich hippie and buy old cars."

It's time to flip the tape. "Check it out, man," Neil advises, "we might have to do the first part of this interview again."

Frank: "When Neil does a great solo in a song, and somebody says, 'Can you play that again?' That would be what doing this whole interview again would be like."

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Neil: "We'd have to call Dean Stockwell and get a 'Quantum Leap' arranged to do that."

Clearly, Neil has not gone all mellow just because he's one ribs sandwich to the good. He's got the bright light turned on himself now, but it's clear he'll start swinging it around soon. "I have plenty of indulgences. I'm a very material guy."

"He has 10 guppies," says Frank.

"I do have the guppies. I keep 'em in a miniature lake I spent a lot of time building. It's beautiful; the water circulates through. I decorated it with moss and things out of the forest."

"It's inside," he adds, his notorious quizzical eyebrows arching as he peers over his shades. "I have a replica of Brian Wilson's sandbox in my dining room—I do. And I think Brian's gonna come by someday and let me know if I did a good job or not. Dr. Landy is not invited, he can't come."

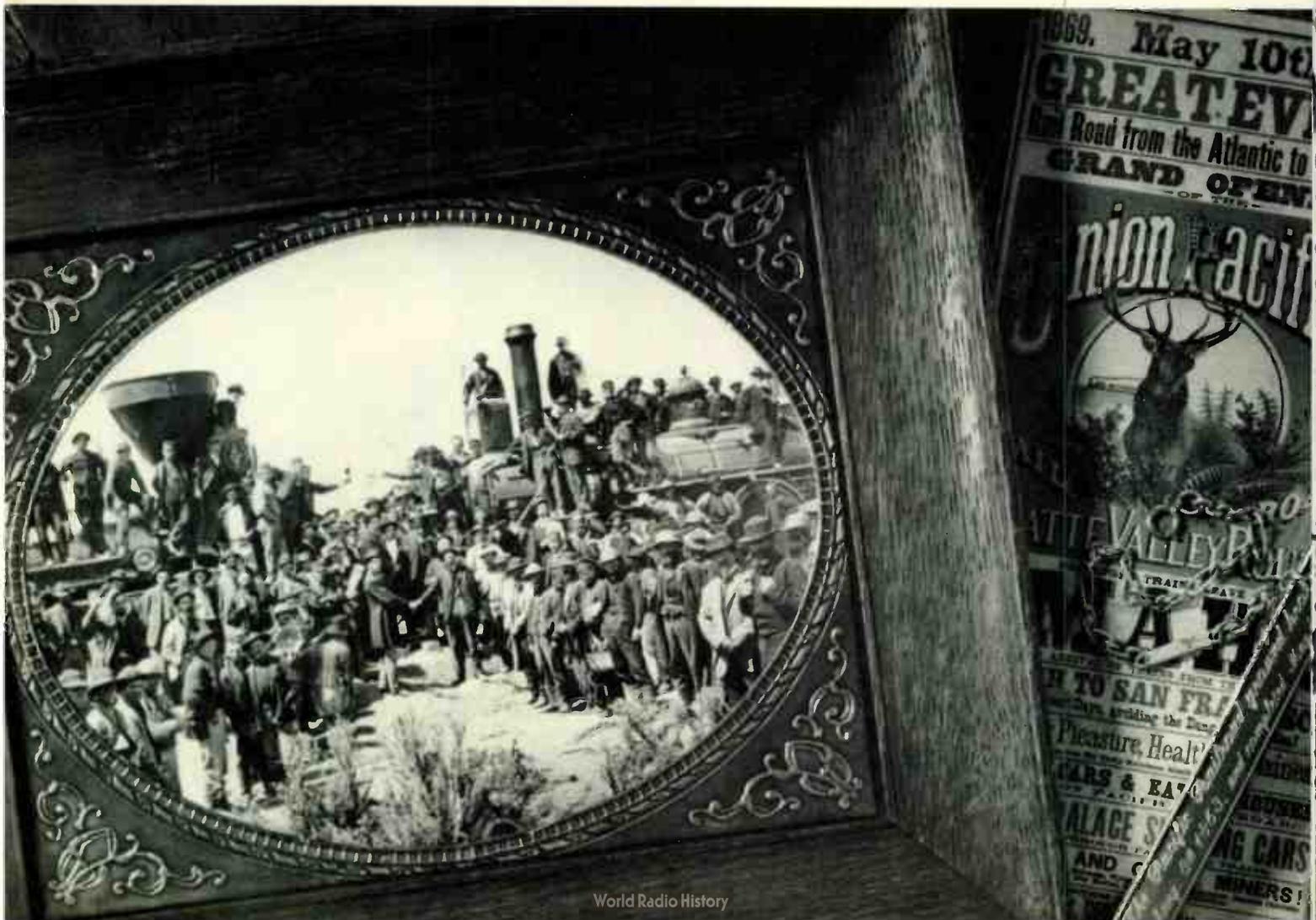
In fact, Young seems to feel a certain kinship to the Beach Boy maestro who planted his piano in 12 tons of sand. "I met him a couple times—seemed like a really nice guy. Of course, he's a genius, it's a cross to bear. But that's what he is, a fucking walking light-bulb—doesn't have the glass, just the filament."

If we looked back in on Neil Young circa 1971, down and isolated at home with crippling back troubles, we might see a similar soul. "Ummm, yeah-yeah, kinda, because I was taking a lot of drugs—had to take a lot of drugs to keep me down. I was on Soma compound—doesn't that sound heavy?" He deepens his voice, sounding like a record with a hand laid on it: "So-maaaahhh

comm-pound. That and Michelllloooob—the night belongs to Mic-hel-ob." And his typical day then? "Horizontal hero, 12 hours. I didn't even have any TV at the time. I was just out of it—I did drugs and stayed down."

"Now," he adds, brightening, "I have a personal trainer. I take him on the road with me and I work out three times a week. I work out before each performance to get my blood level where it should be. You get to be my age and you don't stay fit to walk onstage.... I'm not 19, it's not like I'm going berserk 'cause I'm good enough to play and have people go nuts. I'm not rushing at that level, I'm rushing on a deeper level. I get my blood level up so when I go out there people see me at the top of my game, whatever that might be."

Young's appearance on "Saturday Night Live" in '89 playing "Rockin' in the Free World" backed by Sampedro, along with bassist Charley Drayton and drummer Steve Jordan, is ranked by most who've seen it as the hottest two-some minutes of rock that show ever aired. Lunging forward, snarling the lead, jerking at his guitar strings like at so much barbed wire, Young popped right out of the tube with the pick-up band in his wake. How? "I removed myself from the whole fucking scene. Some of them are really nice people, Dana [Carvey] and Jon Lovitz, but I just ignored the whole thing, went to a room in the other end of the building, never hung out, never watched the show, completely ignored the skits. Steve and Charley were playing with us on the gig and Poncho and I went up and trashed their dressing room, fucking graffiti, broke everything in it and painted it with spray cans. Then we heard from NBC they



wanted to give us the bill, and I said, 'Hey, take it out of our check.' We probably got scale for doing it."

Frank: "We got \$658."

Moments before showtime, Young worked out with his trainer—"Pushups, situps, I worked up a real sweat to be where you should be at the end of a stage show. No wonder everybody looks like old farts playing 'Saturday Night,' everybody's being cool, but that don't have shit to do with rock 'n' roll. In my mind, you gotta be jacked, into it, man, it's fucking life and death and you're only as good as your last note. So I had to ignore what was going on there. I never do live rock 'n' roll on TV—that was a huge exception to the rule—and I probably never will again. I was very, very lucky that I played well and everything came off good."

Frank: "We played a version of 'Fuckin' Up' at soundcheck. We just hated going down there for—what was it?—blocking. They wanted us to play the song we were gonna play but we did that instead."

Neil: "Right—you guys just move the camera around like we were playing and we'll watch you do what you would do. I mean, get Janel Jackson, for Chrissakes, you know exactly where she's gonna be."

"Did you see the second time they showed it? They straightened it all out. That shows what a bunch of dipshits they are. Why clean that up? You miss the point completely. That's why I didn't play the show for 15 years and why I won't for another 15. That band was put together for a moment in time. The whole energy was focused on, 'Okay, we're just a little slat in the sky,' but we went out there locked together and we were great for that fucking song."

Billy: "I saw Neil up there with those two guys playing bass and drums and I thought, 'That's pretty good.' I told Neil on the phone, 'That sounded pretty close.'"

Neil: "Those guys, Steve is a pro and Charley is a master of the bass, they're great musicians, but Crazy Horse is not about that. They don't belong on television. We're going for the vibe, and if the vibe is a bunch of jerks lookin' at us, we're gonna sound like jerks. Crazy Horse is meant to play live in front of people who love Crazy Horse, then the music will come out. Put us anywhere else and we sound terrible."

Something about the memory of that "SNL" appearance has Neil charged up now: "We want to see people who look healthy and are lost in the music, dancing. Beautiful bodies moving, people grooving on each other and on us and our music.... We don't want to see these dildo jackheads in the first row—the record company or more likely the promoter or the radio stations they give free tickets to. All these dinkbrains that are in front, I hope they get crushed."

It seems natural to ask if a tour is in the works. "All I can say is: 'You've heard the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world, now Smell the Horse.' Whatever part you're looking for, it'll be there—the Smell the Horse Tour '91. We're playing in venues that are not sponsored by anyone, indoor arenas I'd like to play in before they fall down. Like the Boston Garden, the Forum in Montreal, Maple Leaf Gardens, Madison Square Garden before it becomes so expensive no one can even go anymore."

"We're gonna try to charge the tickets like a Grateful Dead ticket

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so we don't have to add on these expenses that the groups with sponsors add to everything—and pass onto the public under the guise of saving money by having a sponsor. What they're really doing is creating these mega-fucking shows that have nothing to do with music.

"We don't need that shit. So the kids don't have to pay for it. We want to play the indoor sleazebag places that fucking sound like cavernous barns: the only difference is that inside, the sound is contained. They're not gonna pay 25 bucks to come watch the sound disappear over their head into the neighborhood. It's gonna stay in the building until it dies. So that's what we're offering—a bargain in sound. The full fuckin' note—nothing leaves the building until the fucking money is down, you know?"

If I don't know—if I'm even a little foggy on the whole concept—I'm certainly not gonna tell this guy. Not with all these sharp plastic utensils in close reach. "Plus," Neil continues, "it'll be the first tour you can smell. We haven't figured out how we're gonna get the horse around without a sponsor, but we're gonna try. People get the music directly from the horse's mouth, and when this great song stops after 15 minutes, the horse is going nuts. It goes..." Here Neil does a short series of grunts and whinnies you had to be there to appreciate. "...Then all this draft and smell of shit comes out over the whole audience. That's the 'Smell the Horse' tour." Complete with the sound effects? "That's 'Hear the Horse,'" Neil says confidently. "We're saving that."

A COUPLE WEEKS AFTER SURVIVING OUR STROLL ON THE PACIFIC Coast Highway, we find Neil Young closer to home: in Mountain-

view, California, soundchecking the compact outdoor Shoreline Amphitheater. He's headlining a show that includes Steve Miller, Jackson Browne, Edie Brickell and New Bohemians and Elvis Costello. The \$500,000 they'll raise will benefit the Bridge School, co-founded by Neil, his wife and others to help kids who suffer from problems similar to those of their own sons. When Elvis Costello pops through the backstage gate in rabbinical beard and long coat, heads swivel. Greeting him fondly after a double take, Browne sputters, "It's—it's a whole *trip*," which seems to sum things up.

During his set, in the middle of "Veronica," Costello bangs a few changes out on his acoustic during one chorus and suddenly is doing a verse from Neil's "The Ways of Love." The composer, standing in the wings with his wife, grins with pleasure and regards Costello much as the dog looks at the old Victrola on the original RCA labels. Costello's "Tramp the Dirt Down" precedes target Margaret Thatcher's unseating by just a few days, and when Elvis runs over his allotted time to big applause, Neil sends him back on, saying, "Go for it—go!" then joins in on "Alison."

Young and Crazy Horse burn through "Love and Only Love," "Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere," "Days That Used to Be," "Helpless," "Down by the River" (Costello returning the favor and singing the choruses alongside Neil), and finally, with the whole troupe plus guests like Chris Isaak onstage, "Rockin' in the Free World." If this is a preview of 1991's projected tour, the Horse is going to come up smelling like a rose. 

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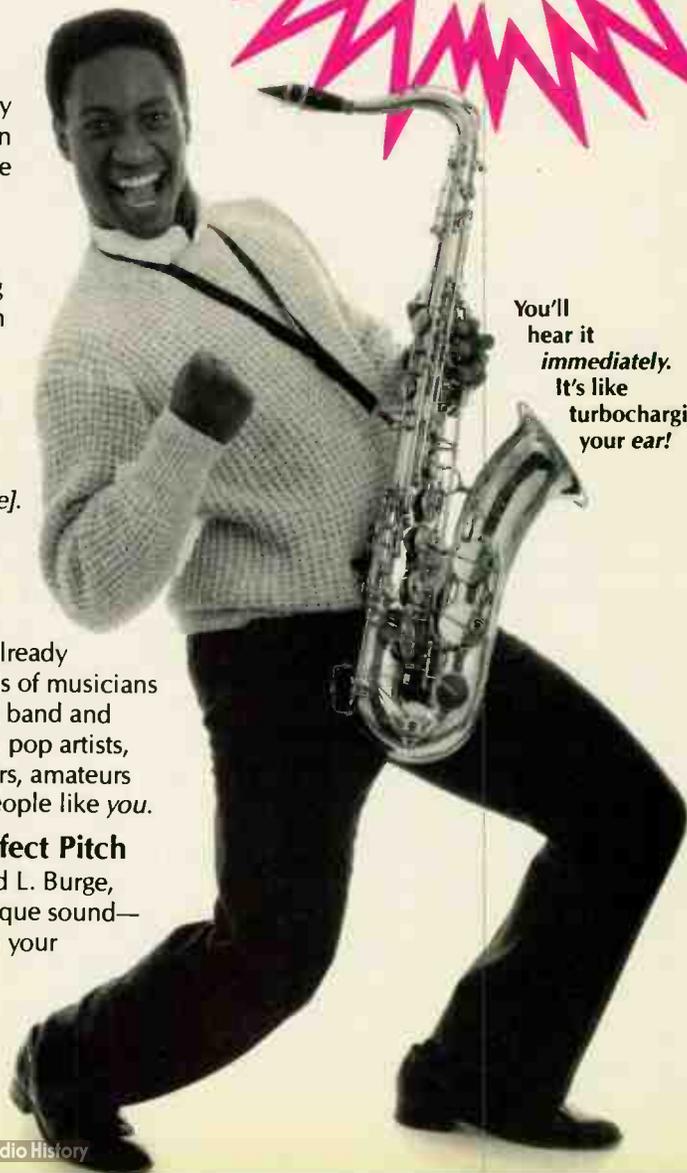
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Research reference: An experimental investigation of the effectiveness of training on absolute pitch in adult musicians, M. A. Rush (1989), The Ohio State University



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extraordinaire Bernie Worrell**

By Alan di Perna

NO NO, IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST ANGLE. First of all, stand here." A grinning Bernie Worrell grabs me by the shoulders and pushes me to the center of my keyboard stack. He's illustrating a fundamental technique of funk clavinet playing—slapping that thang. Much like a bassist, Worrell often uses the flat of his thumb to make a clav line pop. At the end, his thumb comes down on the keyboard in a slashing diagonal, just glancing over the B key, then landing hard on the C. "See," he says encouragingly, "it all comes from the

classical thing. The *Hannon Studies*."

It's odd to hear a streetwise funk monster cite a musty old piano exercise book. Until you learn his history, that is. Bernie was a child piano prodigy, a fate that ultimately led him to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. That's where he first started playing out at local jazz clubs. Around 1969 George Clinton recruited Bernie to play keyboards in Funkadelic. Maybe it was all those years of abetting Clinton's part-colored lunacy that made Worrell such a musical chameleon in later life. He became an auxiliary member of Talking Heads: the

keyboard lifeblood of hits like "Burning Down the House." And he's done records with everyone from the Stones and Pretenders to Black Uhuru, Fela, Sly and Robbie, Ginger Baker, and Manu Dibango.

Many of these artists return the compliment on Worrell's latest album, *Funk of Ages*. Keith Richards lends some bluesy licks to "Y-Spy" while Sly and Robbie anchor the reggae flavor of "Real Life Dreams" and "Sing." Herbie Hancock lays some avant synth lines over a demented version of the old standard "Ain't She Sweet," a track that also boasts a country bridge where Bernie and Gary "Mudbone" Cooper yodel like two good old boys while rock guitar ace Jimmy Ripp picks the five-string banjo.

"Merging musical styles is what I have fun at," Worrell laughs. "Which is what David Byrne was also doing when they asked me to join Talking Heads. They recorded almost the same way as Parliament/Funkadelic, which is to go in the studio and just jam on different ideas. Work out the arrangement then and there."

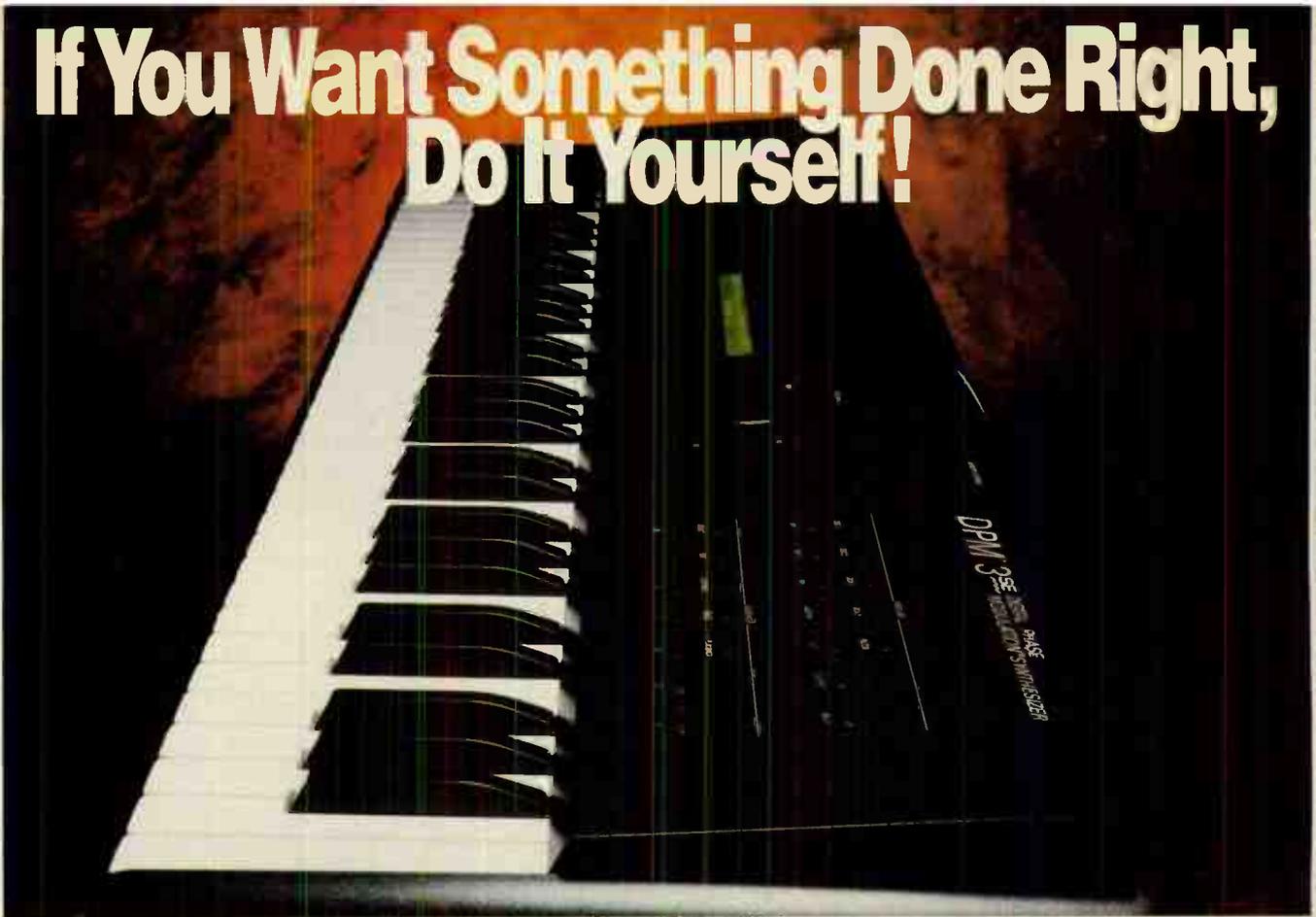
Which is also how Worrell did most of his own record. "Ain't She Sweet" was one of the tracks he arranged with his cohort from P-Funk, Bootsy Collins. "That bass line is a combination of Bootsy and me. When Bootsy brought the track in, he was doing this on electric bass." Bernie dials up a bass patch and plays a one-note figure with a syncopated quarter-note feel. "So I added this." He plays a busier root-IV-V-octave pattern an octave up from the electric bass riff. "You put them together and...heh, heh."

Playing the two parts simultaneously involves some wicked syncopations, but Worrell pulls it off. A shy, self-conscious guy when not behind the keyboards, Bernie is starting to warm up. A lot of his synth-bass style, he explains, was inspired by Collins, particularly the signature way he works pitch-wheel manipulations into bass phrases. Many of these moves—which Bernie pioneered on the Minimoog bass track for P-Funk's "Flashlight"—have become a standard part of the synth-bass lexicon. "Those pitch-wheel bends are just me trying to simulate the way Bootsy does this..." Bernie mimes a string slide on the bass.

But back to funk clav. It's a style that owes almost as much to drumming as it does to conventional keyboard technique. So how does Bernie like to divide the work between hands? "This is the genius hand," he answers, holding up his right hand. "And this



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other one is the anchor." We explore this with another passage in C, this one with a flatted fifth "blue note" that resolves to a fourth. My tendency is to use my third finger for this, sliding down from the F# to the F natural while my pinky holds down the C above. Bernie rejects this fingering, opting instead to play the F# with his second finger and the F with his thumb, while his pinky holds the high C.

"That's not so much of a stretch," he comments. "Whereas the other way, your wrist is off-centered a bit. Here it's more natural. You don't have as far to move."

I counter that I want my thumb free to reach the C below the F, but Worrell doesn't look convinced. "Your left hand can get that. It's there to give your right hand more freedom."

Bernie demonstrates with one of his seminal clav licks, from Chairmen of the Board's early-'70s single "Finders Keepers." "At the session, the producer said, 'Bernie, you know Stevie's "Superstition"?' "Worrell starts to play the classic lick, motioning toward his left hand with his head. "See? Straight fours. Only I don't like to cop anybody else, so I came up with this for 'Finders Keepers.'"

The left-hand feel becomes more syncopated, but stays on a single note, F# root. The right hand does some dense, rapid chording: "That's F# diminished into F dominant 7, C# minor, to F#, which is the common tone. Then to B to F# 7." As the passage continues, the root shifts to A, then B. Bernie reharmonizes the right-hand chords accordingly but keeps the leading tones the same.

"The roots are simple, really," he concludes. "I to III to IV: your local 7-Eleven on the corner. But it's what you do with those simple changes that counts. Every time." ♪

JUNK OF AGES

I DON'T WANT to do a gear list," says **BERNIE WORRELL** with a dismissive gesture. "Come to my shows and see what I got. Most of what I play is Roland D-50 and the Hohner Clavinet." Bernie also discloses that for those signature wah-wah clav passages he puts his Hohner through a Dunlop CryBaby wah-wah pedal and/or a DOD envelope filter. The Hammond B-3 organ he uses on sessions actually belongs to his mother. "It's at her house. I play it when I'm in the studio, but my mom won't let hers go out on the road. So they have to rent one for me."



PICKING DANNY GATTON'S BRAIN

Some of the tricks that make the world's greatest unknown guitarist great

By Gene Santoro

AT 46, DANNY GATTON IS STILL A well-kept secret, especially compared to the guitarist he came up with in D.C.—Roy Buchanan. Although Gatton's blitzkrieg runs entwine rockabilly, jazz, country and blues with seamless virtuosity, although musicians up and down the East Coast have long haunted his gigs, Gatton's first crack at a major-label deal came only last year, thanks to Elektra A&R head Howard Thompson. The result is *88 Elmyra Street*, an all-instrumental bash that gives Gatton's encyclope-

dic storehouse of licks and his jumpcut sensibility a serious staging area, from the funky "Muthaship" to the Caribbean-inflected "Red Label," from the title cut's James Burtonish rockabilly raveup to a "Sleepwalk"-evoking cover of the Beach Boys' "In My Room."

The album's title is the D.C. address where the pudgy axman grew up. His older sister brought home '50s Top 40 hits by Fats Domino, Elvis and Jerry Lee, and his parents had a lot of big band and western swing records—Charlie Christian, Benny Goodman, Django. "So I was always surrounded



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it's pitched one full octave lower. "Mostly I use it for single-line embellishments to project a theme," Nicholas says, "or a lot of times it'll be two notes: just the root and maybe a fifth with it."

Nicholas plays what has become known simply as a "Jones Guitar." He was turned on to the six-string bass by Highway 101 guitarist Jack Daniels, who was completely taken with the instrument's sound, if not the playability. Daniels decided to approach Jerry Jones, a Nashville guitar builder, about making him a more consistent version of the highly unpredictable Danelectro. "I had just finished blueprinting one for a friend," says Jones, "and I told Jack I wanted to build six of 'em." Several months later Jones had sold his six original Danelectro copies and the Jerry Jones Guitar Company was off and running. "Danelectro did not have a professional clientele," Jones explains. "I couldn't find two of their pickups that to my ear sounded alike, and the necks were the same way." Jones made his own components, trying to bring consistency to their design without sacrificing the baritone twang or mondo-bizarro "Longhorn" look of the old Danelectro. "I hesitate to knock the original," he says. "Even though it has shortcomings it's such a brilliant idea."

Leo Kottke agrees. After trying a prototype Jones six-string at last year's NAMM show in Anaheim, Kottke ended up taking it home. "I'd been trying for years to find something that could get down that low and still be played like a guitar," Kottke says. "There's a need for a guitar in that register, and the proof is that in the classical repertoire there is a baritone guitar which is operating in the same ballpark." On "Little Snoozer," from *That's What*, his latest album, he attacks all six strings with fervor, applying acrobatic

JONES BARITONES

JERRY JONES feels like he's "diggin' up bones" in his Nashville shop, making old Danelectros better than new. His six-string basses currently available include the Longhorn, with its mega-cutaways, and a more sedate-looking single-cutaway model. Also available are doublenecks in all combinations. Jones has started producing virtually all of the Danelectros once made by Nathan Daniels, including the incredibly cool Coral Electric Sitar and a 31-fret guitar/man-dolin hybrid called the guitarin.



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Brian "Damage" Forsythe of KIX,
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fingerings to the bass and turning the song into a bouncing rumble-fest. "If you pick one of these things up you'll go back to what you did when you started on the guitar because it likes simpler stuff and it likes rhythm, which is usually what you're into in the beginning," Kottke explains. "If you write you'll probably end up writing a couple of things on it immediately."

While Kottke basks in the lowness of his Jerry Jones bass, the Desert Rose Band's John Jurgenson takes advantage of the full range of his old "Dano," even using an octave pedal to coax out at least two necks' worth of notes. On "Desert Rose," the band's signature tune, Jurgenson fires off a flurry of triplets way up on the neck before dropping abruptly to an impossibly low E and climbing with eighth notes all the way up to finish where he started. "It's just like an acoustic flatpicking solo on the six-string bass," says Jurgenson. "Going way down to the open E, you just have to have a light touch."

Nashville guitarist Mike Henderson has found a way to overcome even that problem. He put that trademark growl on John Hiatt's "Real Fine Love" using a touch that is anything but light. "I've got a bunch of old Danelectro guitars that I've strung down low," Henderson explains. "I use big fat guitar strings and tune 'em down to A or C. When somebody calls me for a session, that's what they usually want me to do," he says. "I love low-sounding stuff and that's what I've become known for." Henderson's guitar approach also allows him to play some of the swamiest slide licks around without getting stuck in the mud. "I do that a lot," he says, "but it's not what you would call regular slide guitar because I'll use the slide for two or three bars of a solo and use my fingers the rest of the time."

Since Dave Edmunds was the one to dust the instrument off in the first place, it's only appropriate that he should bring its low-down sound into the studio of the '90s. On "All Men Are Liars," a cut from *Party of One*, the album he recently produced for Nick Lowe, Edmunds found a unique way to capture the Dano sound without having to fumble with his ornery old hard-to-tune Danelectro six-string bass. "That thing is a dog to play, so I just put it right into my Roland S-50 sampler," Edmunds says, singing the song's elephantine guitar hook. "I was bending the notes with the keyboard's pitch-bender. It sounds fabulous—and for once it stays right in tune!"

PETER ERSKINE'S OPEN DRUMMING

**Veteran offers shocking advice:
"Play what you *don't* know."**

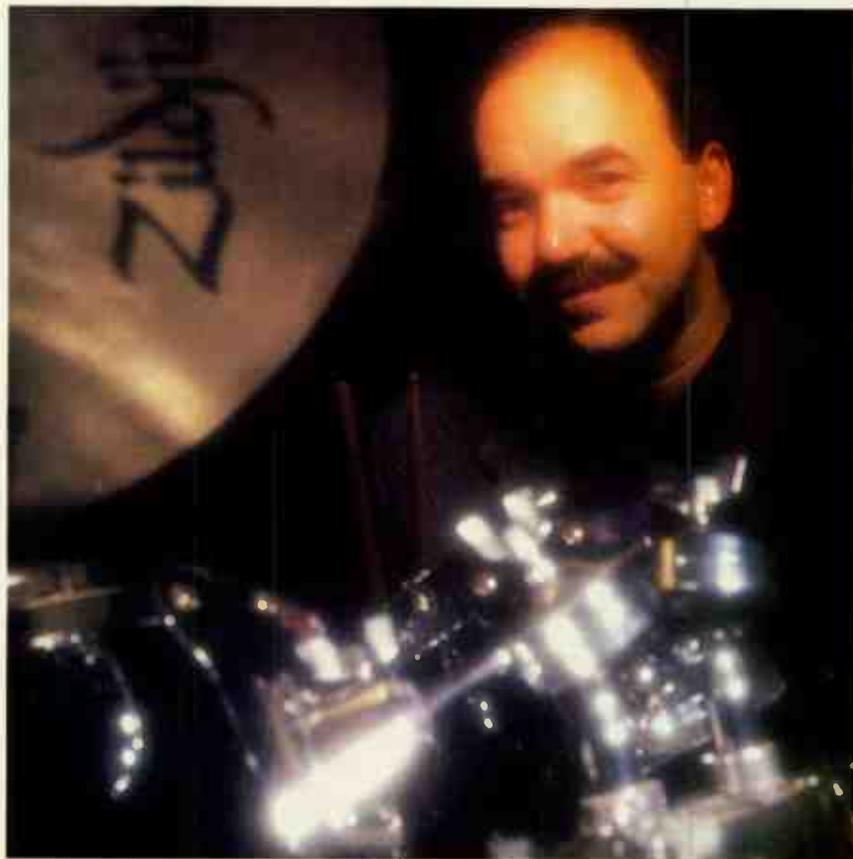
By Rick Mattingly

DRUMMERS COME UP TO ME AND SAY things like, 'I'm having trouble applying double paradiddles and ralamacues to the kit,'" Peter Erskine says, shaking his head. "I tell them to forget about that stuff. If you're conscious that you're playing a ralamacue, there is something wrong with your music-making."

Hearing him play with John Abercrombie, Bass Desires, Kenny Wheeler, Gary Burton or any of his many other musical associates, one senses that Erskine equates good drumming with musical phrases

instead of licks. It also involves being more subtle in terms of defining the form and structure of the tune. "It's funny, because I began my career in big bands," Erskine says, "and in that situation, there is a lot of structure. You're basically playing to serve the chart, and everything is fairly apparent in terms of the beginnings and ends of phrases. It's not very subtle at all."

"One day at a rehearsal with the Stan Kenton band, I was hitting every accent and cutting every figure—something I think drummers do just to prove that they can actually read," he laughs. "Afterwards one of the



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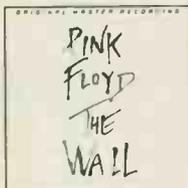
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writers came up to me and said, 'I've got 15 guys hitting these figures. I don't need you to do it too.' So I started thinking about ways that I could play with a lighter touch and not be so obvious about everything."

Peter discovered that orchestration on the drumkit could make a big difference. "Most drummers tend to end phrases by playing something on the snare drum and then hitting a cymbal and bass drum. *Bam*—there it is, right in your face. But you can often play the stronger part of the beat on the weaker part of the kit. You can hit the

snare instead of the bass drum, and a lot of times I like to crash a small cymbal without a bass drum underneath. Texturally, it's wide open. It's like putting a lovely question mark at the end of the phrase; that leads you to the next phrase, instead of just ending every phrase with an exclamation point."

When Erskine started playing with smaller groups, he was able to apply some other phrasing ideas: "I was getting more and more experience playing music that wasn't so obviously boxed," he says. "I really sensed that I couldn't 'gift-wrap' my phras-

es, ending them with these pat devices that would get me from one phrase to the next.

"Paul Motian and Jack DeJohnette best exemplify the kind of playing I was aspiring to," Peter says. "Here's the thing: You never hear drummers who can imitate Jack, right? Why? Because Jack doesn't have a bunch of licks that he uses over and over. But plenty of guys can imitate Billy Cobham or Steve Gadd or Dave Weckl, because there are things they do that you could latch onto right away. I'm not saying anything negative about that, because they have created a vocabulary that works well for the kind of music they play. But for a more fluid kind of playing, there are no set licks."

One habit many drummers find hard to break is using the bass drum to mark the beginning of a bar or phrase. "A lot of drummers are stomping the bass drum on downbeats because they don't have enough confidence in their timekeeping abilities on the ride cymbal. The bass drum becomes the drummer's anchor. So start with just the basic jazz ride pattern on the cymbal and make sure that the quarter-note pulse is steady and that the swung eighth-note subdivisions are clearly articulated. As you develop your strengths on the ride cymbal, not only will you gain ability and confidence, but you will also start to internalize the time. Then you can start experimenting with different phrasings.

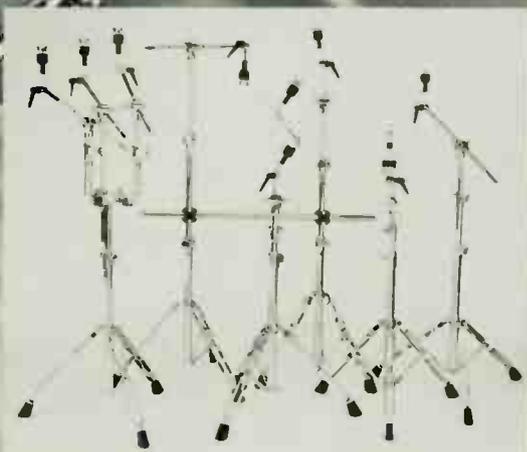
ERSKINS

PETER ERSKINE has a couple of Yamaha Custom Maple drumkits: For recording and more contemporary music he uses a 20" bass drum with 8", 10", 12", 13" and 15" tom-toms; for other gigs he uses an 18" bass drum with 12" and 14" toms. "That kit gives me the best focus and seems to inspire some of my most creative drumming," Peter says. He uses a Yamaha 4x14 Peter Erskine Signature snare drum. All drums are fitted with Evans Genera heads.

Erskine is using a new Zildjian "Pre-aged" K 20" Dry/Light ride, a 20" K Custom ride, an 18" K medium ride with three rivets, 14" and 15" K crashes, an occasional 17" for recording, 14" New Beat hi-hats and sometimes a couple of K splashes. Peter strikes with Vic Firth Peter Erskine model sticks or Firth 7As. He brushes with Firth Jazz Rakes or Calato Ed Thigpens. Erskine carries a Real Feel practice pad wherever he goes.

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"The next step," Peter continues, "is to play the swung eighth-note subdivisions in different parts of the bar. But always keep a strong focus. Imagine the ride cymbal is the string on a bass and your stick is a finger plucking it. It's easy to just let a stick bounce over a cymbal, but a bass player has to make a very specific motion for each note, and that's how you should play the cymbal."

"Once you are comfortable doing that, you can get away from the steady quarter-note and not state every beat. Maybe play the 'and' of 4 and let it ring into the next beat, then pick it up again. But always keep the forward motion; when you start playing again, come in at exactly the right time."

Once a drummer becomes confident with timekeeping on the ride cymbal, Erskine suggests doing basic independence exercises on the snare and bass drum. "Just be able to play simple rhythms on and off the beat," he says, "with the ride cymbal providing the 'motor.'"

"Now you're ready to play some *music*. Don't just start throwing in triplets all over the place. Take a simple motif between two drums and develop it. It's almost like serial composition technique, where you take a tone row and invert it, then do the retrograde inversion, and so on. Play with dynamics and with an awareness of where the notes are falling in the bar."

Erskine does not advise boxing these motifs into four- or eight-bar phrases. "You want to get away from those predictable blocks of timekeeping. I always play on the form of the tune, but within that, I might play a nine-bar phrase. That's part of going over the bar line. It's like wearing baggy shorts and a T-shirt instead of a suit and tie."

"Remember that 'creative' does not equal 'busy.' A few notes well placed make a lot more music than a whole bunch of notes squeezed into a short amount of time. Try this: Sit down at the drums and play some whole notes. How little can you play over a period of a few minutes and feel comfortable? Really listen to the tone of some isolated hits on the cymbal or bass drum or toms, and just appreciate the *sound* of the instrument. Some guys paint themselves into a corner with wall-to-wall drumming; everything is loud and fast. It's hard to make music when you put yourself under that kind of pressure. Your creative mind shuts off and you're just playing stuff you know how to play and that you know will work. Take a chance. Play something you don't know." 

PERFORMANCE

DON'T BOSS ME NO MORE

By Kristine McKenna

THERE'S A LONG AND AUSPICIOUS CONNECTION BETWEEN ACOUSTIC MUSIC AND social activism, perhaps because acoustic—whether folk, bluegrass or blues—has always been the poor man's music. So when Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt decided to do a benefit concert for the Christie Institute,

*Special
Bruce Springsteen,
Jackson Browne,
Bonnie Raitt
Shrine Auditorium,
Los Angeles
November 16, 17*

it made sense that they leave the electric arsenal at home. Given the spirit of the acoustic shows at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, it's ironic that they were hardly accessible to the common man, with a decent seat going for \$100 a pop. But the Christie Institute knew that Springsteen, who's been absent from the concert stage for two years, could easily sell out the hall at twice that price. And sell it out he did.

A watchdog agency devoted to informing the public of things the U.S. government would prefer go unnoticed, the Christie Institute played a central role in exposing the C.I.A.'s questionable involvement with the war in Central America, and worked on behalf of the Karen Silkwood case against the nuclear power industry. Jackson Browne has supported the organization since it was founded in 1980, and the issues the institute represents are obviously important to Raitt and Springsteen, who gave brief pep talks midway through their sets.

However, it seems unlikely that the legion of Bossheads moaning "Brooooo" like a herd of howling cattle ever gave a thought to the Christie Institute, nor are they likely to. Rather, they came to pay obeisance to a man who has clearly had his fill of the idol/role-model gig. Much to his credit, Springsteen seemed uninterested in reclaiming the throne he abandoned in 1988; moreover, he seemed less than pleased with the slavishly adoring response his dignified, understated set elicited. He repeatedly asked the audience to "Please be quiet so I can concentrate on the songs" and when an enraptured fan shrieked, "We love you!" he crisply replied, "But you don't really know me." He forged on with an 80-minute set featuring material from every phase of his career. Highlights included five tunes from his brooding folk masterpiece *Nebraska* and a handful of new songs—one of which, "Red Headed Woman," he dedicated to Patti Scialfa and Bonnie Raitt.

Local press coverage of the show tended to focus on Springsteen's return, ignoring the fact that Raitt and Browne turned in equally strong, if not superior sets. Browne's performance in particular was a revelation. Browne is so vociferous in his role as social activist that it's easy to forget he's an artist of considerable gift and complexity. Accompanying himself on guitar and piano (with occasional backing from Scott Thurston and Debra Dobkin), he pulled one treasure after the next out of his song bag. Browne is most effective with his earlier songs, which have a moving simplicity that speaks more eloquently than the overtly political tunes he's currently writing. But regardless of what he's singing, he never blows a note. He's an effortlessly impeccable vocalist.

Raitt, of course, is on a major roll these days, but you'd never guess it by her self-effacing manner. She directed herself towards showcasing the talents of the stellar cast of songwriters she's come to appreciate over the years: John Prine, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Sippie Wallace and one of music's great lost geniuses, Paul Siebel. She joined Springsteen and Browne for an encore of Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Borderline," a tune written by Ry Cooder, John Hiatt and Jim Dickinson. All told, the show was a rousingly successful exercise in balance. Without resorting to sanctimonious preaching, all three performers made it clear that this was a show with a larger purpose. In the meantime, it was no sin to groove to the music. 





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WHEN DOES YOUR STUDIO BECOME A BUSINESS?

Zoning laws say,
"Don't try this at home."

By Craig Anderton

WEVE ALL HEARD THE PHRASE "Tape a record, go to jail." If you live in Broward County and sell 2 Live Crew, it's "Sell a record, go to jail." But are you ready for "Make a record, go to jail"?

Some big-time studio owners think you should at least be shut down if your home studio is in violation of zoning laws, which is a polite way of saying... "if your home studio is taking business away from us." According to a survey in *Pro Sound News* magazine, 22 percent of studio owners

nationwide feel that home-based studios provide "very much" competition, and 59 percent feel it "to some degree." Furthermore, 59 percent believe that producer/artist project studios—a cross between a home and commercial studio—provide either very much or some degree of competition. With costs skyrocketing, a few studios are in serious trouble. But are home studios the root cause?

Some people think so. The Hollywood Association of Recording Professionals (HARP) sounded the initial alarm in late 1989, when home studio owner Chas San-

ford circulated a glossy brochure advertising his facility. City officials closed down his studio for being in violation of zoning laws. Instantly the battle lines were drawn: the feisty independent vs. city hall. Free enterprise against entrenched and powerful interests.

Yet this isn't a clear-cut case of good guys and bad guys, but just another instance of technology evolving faster than the legal system's capacity to absorb change. Up until about 15 years ago, it was inconceivable that home studios could compete on the basis of sound quality. A studio was a business, and run like one; the owners had to pay property taxes and comply with local ordinances specifying everything from how your sidewalk should be constructed to the spacing of the street lamps outside. A home studio was merely a place to produce hissy demos and sketch out song ideas.

Then the technology changed to where home studios could turn out recordings whose quality was indistinguishable from that of the majors. Society changed, too; in the world of desktop publishing and the home office, the home studio seemed, well, right at home.

The legalities, however, didn't change. If a home studio is a business, it's supposed to play by the same rules as any other business. Most home studios ignore these rules and the zoning laws that determine what you can and cannot do in your home. This will continue to affect the musical balance of power. Before any speculation, let's investigate how we got in a position where home recordings could even start to compete with music made in million-dollar facilities.

Although analog recording was rejuvenated through noise reduction and better tape formulations, nothing changed the face of home recording as much as when hardy souls hooked up \$1000 Sony PCM-F1 digital audio adapters to \$100 VCRs and found they could produce master tapes indistinguishable from tapes made on analog recorders costing thousands of dollars more. A few years later DAT (Digital Audio Tape) recorders, essentially a miniaturized version of VCR technology adapted for audio, provided the same result in a more convenient format.

Meanwhile, MIDI was also changing the rules. Musicians could record at home on a cheap personal computer using inexpensive sound generators, then take their disks into big studios and feed their data to Fairlights, Emulators and Synclaviers. Pro



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studios were used solely for mixdown at a considerable savings. MIDI also extended a home studio's capabilities. If you wanted to upgrade from eight tracks to 24, it was cheaper to sync a sequencer to tape and use the sequencer to drive electronic sounds, thus freeing up a multitrack deck to record only those sounds that couldn't be "MIDI-fied"—voice, sax, piano, etc.

MIDI also allowed for automated mixing, previously the domain of \$100,000+ consoles, and automated signal-processing effects; digital reverbs that now cost under \$200 outperform early designs that cost close to \$10,000. Alternate controllers for guitar, drums and wind instruments gave non-keyboardists access to sequencing and sound generation. Within just a few years it was possible to produce CD-quality recordings at home with relatively inexpensive equipment.

Although recording acoustic sounds remained the Achilles heel of small studios (good mikes and treated acoustic spaces don't come cheap), digital had the answer: Sampling keyboards, whose prices had

plummeted with costs of memory and microprocessor parts, could closely mimic acoustic instruments. Meanwhile, manufacturers like Ensoniq and Roland were busily developing disk libraries of acoustic sounds recorded by top engineers, using great mikes, in studios with superb acoustics. If that wasn't enough, third-party developers like Prosonus and Valhalla produced CDs of acoustic sounds designed specifically for recording into samplers.

All of which means that home studios are not going to go away. Neither will zoning laws. According to Patricia Jalongo of the Los Angeles Planning Department, they exist "to protect the integrity of single-family areas," but in practice, there is simply not the personnel to check and see if the law is being violated. As a result, if you're so unobtrusive in your home studio that no one knows you're there, the odds of being prosecuted are slim. But if you have a studio in a residential neighborhood and cause a day-and-night stream of people unloading equipment, there are going to be complaints—and at that point, the law kicks into action.

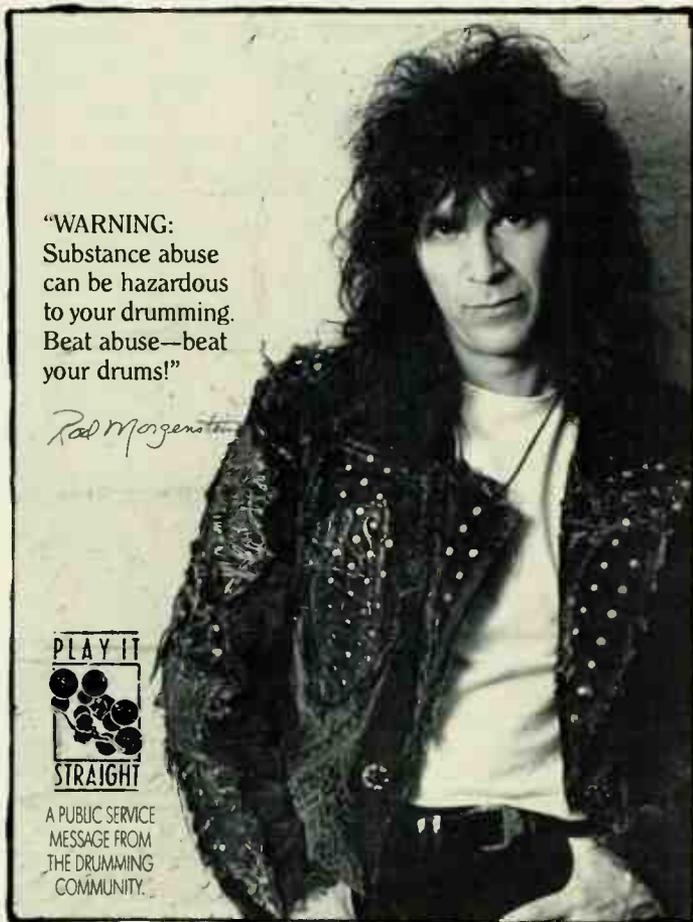
Currently, the dividing line seems to be whether you use your studio for yourself or rent out its services. Once selling begins, the studio becomes just another business, subject to all the same business rules. However, changes are afoot in the world of zoning laws. Jalongo has drafted new regulations that would legitimize low-impact home businesses. These proposals are in flux; they've been sent to the L.A. Planning Commission twice, and returned for revisions. In general, though, the new laws would permit home businesses under certain conditions and specify restrictions on client visits and deliveries.

Does all this mean that the big studio will soon be extinct? Some believe that the only studios getting hurt are those that specialize in demo work and those without big rooms and mike collections. Others see positive results: If more people do pre-production at home, more people will book time to finish those projects at commercial facilities. And quite simply, major studios can make even better sounds. Major studios have nine-foot grands; home studios have samples of nine-foot grands. Despite what some marketing types would like you to believe, there is a difference.

We may see the evolution of "super studios" that act as a mothership to the home studios in a particular region. It would be the place to go to make Dolby SR backup tapes, do a mix on a board with expensive long-throw faders and great outboard EQ, record acoustic groups or take advantage of sophisticated workstations that only larger facilities could afford. Professional engineers have mixed feelings about clients bringing in work started at home; some home recordists take a know-it-all attitude when they do work in a big studio. But the advantage is that clients are now more educated about the recording process: they're flexible and realistic about what can be accomplished.

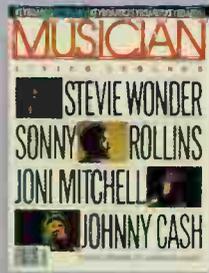
Whatever the future brings, the studio wars are the heat produced by the friction of the past rubbing against the future—a process perhaps accelerated to an absurd degree by the explosive rate of technological change. The argument will only get more interesting, but hopefully, recordings—whether produced at home or in a megabucks commercial studio—will do the same. 

Thanks to Randy Alberts and Frank Serafine for their contributions to this article.





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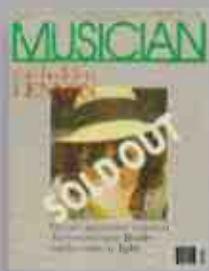
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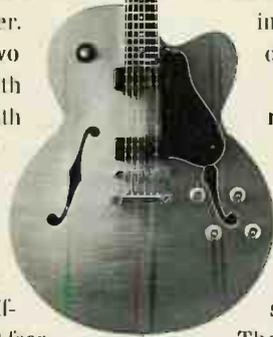
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the idea of removable, interchangeable input modules which allow for future interface with computer gear. They've dubbed the idea "open input architecture" and introduced it in September on their EX 4000 amplifier. QSC will be bringing out two new EX series amps, one with 500W-per-side and another with 400W-per-side, called the EX 2500 and EX 1600.

Meanwhile, the big guitar industry shakeout continues, with Kramer being the latest company to fall into financial difficulties and go Chapter 11. But fear not: There will be plenty of swell new guitars at NAMM. The latest Fender will have a



Yamaha's rockin' new hollowbody (above), the AES1500; SWR Engineering has improved Goliath bass rigs (right) at the old price; Korg is showing three new multi-effects boxes: the A2 (below) is an enhanced version of the popular A5; the Hohner Amadeus harp (bottom) has needs of a new alloy that let you blow harder and longer.

new, double-cutaway body shape. Fender also has three new additions to its Heartfield line. The carved-top Elan is aimed at the PRS/Pensa-Suhr market. The RR 58 and 59 are set-neck mahogany instruments with a vintage

'50s Les Paul Special look. And the Talon is a heavy metal guitar with a single-coil and two humbuckers, a Floyd-licensed locking trem, hockey headstock and very slender neck with a 17" radius.

better than the classic Gibson P-90 pickup." quip the Y-Boys.) And don't overlook the four new Altitude basses: the Standard, Standard V, Custom and Deluxe.

This latter is a four-string with an innovative six-pole pickup design.

In the wild world of synths, E-mu plans to introduce a whole new keyboard line at NAMM.

They've also got a new module called the Procussion: a slew of Emulator III percussion samples in a one-rack-space box at a fetching price.

The E-mu crew have also got an upgrade for the EII that bumps the machine up to 32 megabytes of internal RAM. And owners of the E-mu Proteus/I and Proteus/I XR may want to check out a new expansion board by InVision Interactive for those instruments. The \$495 board goes by the name of Protologic and adds four megabytes of memory and 192 new sounds: organs, percussion, guitars, basses and other much-needed goodies.



Korg will introduce a new rack-mount version of the Wavestation synth. The Wavestation A/D has all the features of its keyboard counterpart—except the keyboard. And you'll be able to plug in any external instrument or sound source and process it through the A/D's on-board effects processor. Korg has even laid on some new effects, including two vocoders. Korg will also introduce three new spinoffs based on everybody's fave multi-effects box, the A5. The weekend starts with the A5: a pedalboard unit that will come in three different formats: guitar, bass and general multi-effects versions. The A2 is an enhanced edition of the A5, adding stereo inputs and outputs and a new stereo reverb algorithm. And the A1 is really...well...A-1, with digital inputs and outputs, plus analog stereo I/Os and an all-new DSP chip.

The world's cheapest eight-track? That's how

Tascam is billing the new Tascam 888 MIDIStudio without the MIDI. For \$1599 you get [cont'd on page 97]

Shure VP88

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MID-SIDE (MS) MIKING IS AN OLD AND VERY effective engineering trick for recording a realistically three-dimensional stereo image. In classic MS you have two microphones or a stereo mike with dual cartridges. One is unidirectional (cardioid) and captures the center of the stereo field. The other is bidirectional (figure-eight) and captures the sides of the stereo field. The three-dimensional effect is achieved by "decoding" the side signal. It's split in two and one of the signals is placed out of phase with the other.

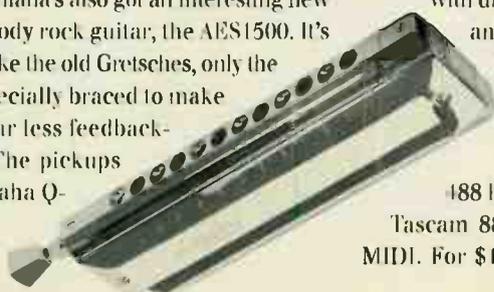
All this engineering esoterica may seem a bit much for the average musician. But what if you've got a home studio or stereo sampler and you're just burning to try MS? That's what makes Shure's new VP88 microphone (\$995, pictured below) so cool. As microphones go, this is a big mother—over 11 inches long. The two capsules are mounted in the front part of the mike, with the mid element out front and the side element positioned perpendicularly right behind it. Ergo, there's no way to mess up placement of the two elements and get nasty phase cancellations.

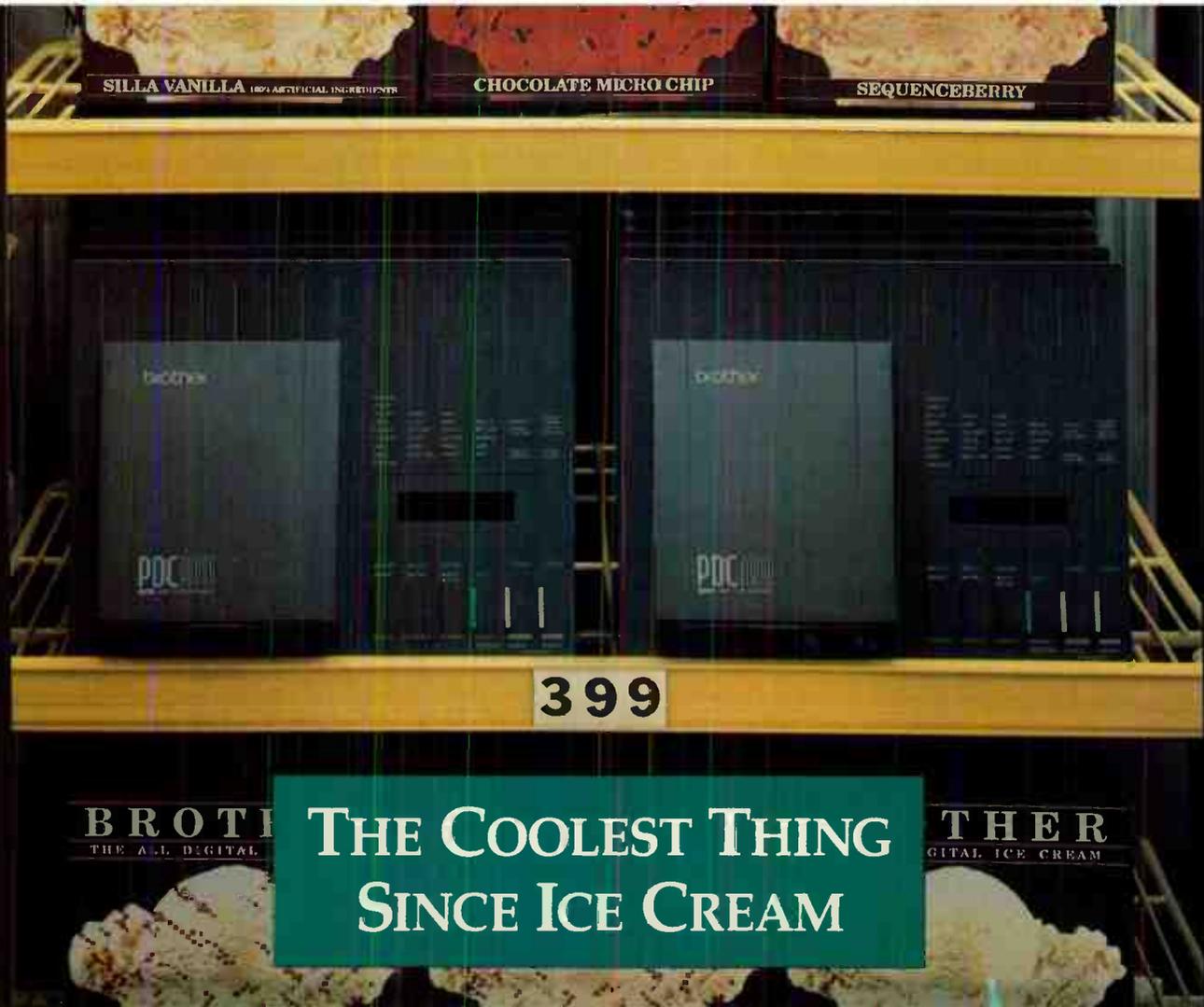
The VP88 can be phantom-powered or driven by an onboard battery, which means it's fully compatible with modest home recording-type consoles that don't have phantom power supplies. The VP88 also comes with a special adaptor cable that converts its five-pin output jack to two standard XLR lines, which also makes it very compatible with the kind of gear the average musician has lying around.

If you want to do your own MS decoding, you just select the MS option on the VP88's second onboard switch. But if you'd rather not monkey with decoding—and here's the beauty part—the VP88 will do it for you, internally. You even get your choice of three stereo fields: a very wide one on the High setting (which gives you a high amount of side level relative to mid level), a medium-sized amount on Medi- [cont'd on page 97]



Heavy metal guitars are a bit like sex: People can't seem to get enough of them—especially if they start young. Yamaha is taking its Pacifica line in this direction with the new 1200 series. Here too, we're looking at an angled headstock and ultra-thin neck. This one has a carbon graphite rod for stability and Yamaha's compound radius fingerboard. The pickups are custom-wound DiMarzios available in various combinations. Yamaha's also got an interesting new hollowbody rock guitar, the AES1500. It's kind of like the old Gretsches, only the top is specially braced to make the guitar less feedback-prone. The pickups are Yamaha Q-100s.





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SOUND OFF!

"I do not like green eggs and ham, I do not like them Sam I am."

—Dr. Seuss, *Green Eggs and Ham*

If you don't like it, eh yo money grip, then don't listen. If the hoodlums and derelicts that create such "artless" mumbo jumbo fall short of your approval, exercise your free choice, beg to differ, and throw some Perry Como wax on your Victrola. True indeed, the question of freedom of choice is the issue; however, millions do choose to listen to an array of musical forms which some consider obscene and explicitly profane. The millions most likely include your children, your cousins, your garbage man, your gynecologist or even your friendly neighborhood Dice Clay. As for your children, you probably don't pay them enough attention. Thus, your solution: infringe upon everyone's constitutional rights instead of monitoring your children's own musical choices. Thus far, in every debate of those heinously explicit lyrics, the bottom line always focuses on the impressionable minds of youth. It seems thus, the crux of the matter manifests itself in the systematic breakdown of the family ties and communication in America: the land of the free and the home of the big-burred birches, 9 millimeters, and a record buying public that "wants some Pussy." Perhaps marriages should be stickered in the future—surely most rappers enhance the psychological disorders of youth as much as a good divorce. The problem lies within the inherent racism, sexism and violence that this country has slowly but surely nurtured via "the idiot box."

A few months ago, M.C. Serch and I were invited along with Kool Moe Dee and various "geniuses" to discuss the music censorship issue with a Broward County sheriff, a rapper who's received so much press I refuse to scribe his name, and of course our chair-catching leader, Geraldo. Serch and I, ever cautious as to which shows, etc. we participate in, went against our gut feelings and appeared since it seemed a worthy cause. A synopsis: Geraldo kicked some weak rhymes (what a scrub); the sheriff butchered the English language; Geraldo referred to Moe Dee as "Kool"; a Harvard professor referred to black youths as "hormones in sneakers" (as if white kids had never possessed both); the guy who's getting all that free press exhibited his justified anger, and then swore a lot; a mongoloid-like Bible Belter told all of us she'd bring the wrath of God upon us, and finally, Serch and I gave Geraldo a strong gas face! Geraldo, the



original media-whore, the famed Capone safe-cracker actually sided with the gheri-curl lookin', sequined suit wearin' Southern pseudo-preacher that Luther Campbell referred to as an "Uncle Tom." Serch and I had been gassed, venturing into the bounds of media-exploitation, done in by the head sphincter himself, Geraldo. Who determines what "obscene" is, and is there a fair parameter which determines when a composition is deemed art? An answer is as difficult as the question is ambiguous. Having majored in English at Columbia University, I've encountered more than a few works of literature which rival our contemporary works of hip-hop filth in both vulgarity and profanity. No one seems to criticize the core curriculum which neglects all Afro-Asiatic achievements in lieu of the readily acceptable works of Greek thought, and furthermore, no one is up in arms to sticker Sapphos, *Symposiums*, *Gargantua* and *Decameris* at Barnes & Nobles. Does a sticker put the devil back in hell, or does it actually sell more records? To imply that one body of lawmakers can decide for us what is acceptable and creatively innovative is absurd. The fact the question is even raised irks my every sensibility, for it is only common sense that we are endowed with the inalienable right to

choose. However, this is America, a country that once counted blacks as 3/5ths persons for purposes of representation in Congress, oppressing a people on basis of color and now speaks of suppressing the musical and lyrical artform which the same black community has created. Perhaps Tipper Gore and some of the other pro-censorship pioneers should spend some quality time in America's ghettos and housing projects far from their prissy, lily-white Utopia. Art imitates life itself and the hip-hop compositions of today are a product of the economic and social ills we have neatly passed off into America's ghettos. Isn't it ironic that this sector of society is speaking its mind and the bureaucrats are up in arms. Come on around the way Tipper—I'm sure by the end of your visit you're likely to have received a healthy dose of bumps and bruises, it's a sad fact of everyone's life in this environment. Suffice to say, your "new look" wouldn't go over too well at your next social gala.

Prime Minister Pete Nice
Third Bass

MUSICIAN

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Eight-Hour Solo Flights

Mosaic unearths the Benedetti recordings

The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings of Charlie Parker
(Mosaic)

OVER THE LAST THREE-AND-A-half decades, Charlie Parker's musical breakthroughs have been pored over, deciphered, freeze-dried and reconstituted in a manner usually reserved for great literary figures such as James Joyce and William Faulkner. And if anything, Bird's death has served to confer on his work a sense of logic and beauty that grows more verdant with each passing year.

Unfortunately, the popular focus on Bird's legendary hedonism has tended to obscure his stature as *the* dominant stylist and

improviser in American music. Thus we have movies like *Bird* celebrating the hackneyed popular archetype of tragic Negroes wallowing in their own degradation, whereas a movie like *Amadeus*, for all its poetic license, managed to place the focus where it belonged—squarely on the music and on the notion of how genius is nurtured and squandered in this world. While this historic seven-CD (10-LP) boxed masterpiece from Mosaic doesn't seek to account for the mystery of Bird's genius, it makes a pretty compelling case for Parker's mystic impact on musicians of his generation, and on their descendants.

Recorded in 1947–48, these tracks specifically reflect the obsessions of saxophonist Dean Benedetti, a musician who, having heard the word, spent the rest of his life divining the intricacies of Parker's style (Benedetti died in 1957). Now available commercially for the first time, this collection stands with Columbia's *The Complete Recordings of Robert Johnson* as the most important musical discovery of 1990. Born in obsession, they must be experienced in a comparable state. For myself, I did most of my listening when falling asleep, leaving my CD player in the eternal cycle mode, coming in and out of consciousness throughout the night to focus in on some little fragment.

Why? Because we're talking about eight hours of almost nothing but Charlie Parker solos. Benedetti first began to record Bird on a portable disc-cutting device (later progressing to paper-backed tapes). Ninety-nine percent of the time, to conserve needles and discs, he only recorded Bird. (Which is why no less an innovator than Thelonious Monk gets cut off as he sits in with Bird on his own "Well, You Needn't.") Meanwhile, the demos of Benedetti himself included here show how, through his dedicated studies, he progressed from a pretty fair Hawkins-style tenor player to an acolyte capable of playing along with the master's studio recordings note for damn note and inflection for inflection.

This Mosaic set comprises Bird's work through entire engagements at Los Angeles' Hi-De-Ho and New York's Three Deuces and Onyx. They detail the machinations of Bird's art over the course of an evening in a nightclub—both brilliant and glib—sometimes presented in chronological order, other times edited into sound collages. Even for a fanatical scholar like Phil Schaap (who knows more about most jazz musicians

than their own mamas), the three years it took to catalog, clean up, comprehend and ultimately collate these fragile recordings into a comprehensive vision must have seemed like an eternity in bop limbo. The sound quality is wildly inconsistent, ranging from ragged to surprisingly clear, but engineer Jack Towers makes 'em sound like God's own bootleg reels, and from the clunky sound of Bird's 1947 West Coast accompanists to the streamlined purr of his 1948 New York band, the overall impact is one of wonder. Whatever did we do to deserve a belated Christmas card like this?

—Chip Stern



RUN-D.M.C.

Back from Hell
(Profile)

TIME WAS, NOBODY COULD TOUCH RUN-D.M.C. They were the hardest of the hardcore, with bigger beats and tougher rhymes than anybody on the scene, from the epochal thump of "It's Like That" to the echoing throb of "Run's House." That edge even held through their pop hits—"Walk This Way," "Mary, Mary"—as if to prove that the pride of Hollis compromised for no one.

But as self-crowned Kings of Rock, their reign hardly went unchallenged. First it was L.L. Cool J, then Public Enemy. And after a fight with their record company sidelined them for a year, and their foray into film (1988's *Tougher Than Leather*) went straight to video, the Hollis Crew lost ground and face. By the end of the decade, Run-D.M.C. may have been revered as rap's elder statesmen, but the emphasis was definitely on the elder.

So, it's comeback time. But *Back from Hell*, despite its fire-and-brimstone title, emphasizes the rest of Run-D.M.C.'s sound—rapid rhymes, crisply coordinated vocal interplay and a straight-from-the-street perspective. It kicks off with a we-bad

boast, but there's a twist: What we hear beneath the vocal hyperbole on "Sucker D.J.'s" is Jam Master Jay scratching the beat from the team's original we-bad boast, "Sucker M.C.'s." It's a nice nod to history, while making the point that this group is still building on their original promise. Build they do, from the pumping insistence of "Pause" (what MC Hammer's groove would sound like if it had any teeth) to the densely sampled swirl of "The Ave." (love the reggae interlude).

Admittedly, there's little here likely to turn your head the way "It's Like That" or "Rock-box" did, but so what? Despite what Audio Two or Ice Cube might think, nobody's young forever. And it's one thing to put out a single entitled "What's It All About," quite another to come up with an answer. Run-D.M.C. does both.

—J.D. Considine



CINDERELLA

Heartbreak Station
(Mercury)

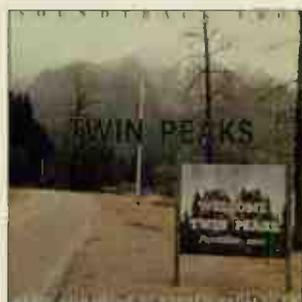
HOW PHONY IS TOO PHONY? OPINIONS vary on the value of sincerity in rock, but something's clearly amiss when the only genuine thing about a band is the lust for fame and fortune. Cinderella front-dude Tom Keifer agrees: The quartet's third album betrays a yearning to speak from the heart, man, to make sounds with an emotional resonance more enduring than the latest flashy video. But their influences are often so second-rate, the temptation to turn out witless commercial junk so strong, *Heartbreak Station* becomes a battleground for opposing forces. You can practically see poor Keifer, angel on one shoulder, devil on the other, struggling to do the right thing.

Who among us wouldn't be tempted, seeing the marginally talented prosper from hollow arena rockers and noxious power ballads? Grabbing the easy bucks with their awful '86 debut *Night Thoughts*, the 'drellas have since tried to inject grit and substance

without losing the platinum touch. Confusion can erupt: "The More Things Change" combines cool, stinging slide guitar with an idiotic pop chorus, while "Sick for the Cure" boogies nicely, only to succumb to the busy production. In their desire to seem bluesy, the boys employ armies of axes and lots of cowbell, apparently meant to denote soulfulness. And for the ultimate in excess, don't miss the frantic competition between barking guitar and the Memphis Horns in the sub-funky "Love's Got Me Doin' Time."

Despite the attempts to get real, the shameful truth is that Cinderella still excels at catchy garbage. The ferocious "Love Gone Bad" could give Bon Jovi a run for the money; "Electric Love" captures the full dramatic power of Keifer's generic yowl. They finally get it right on "One for Rock and Roll," a jaunty salute to the big beat highlighted by mandolin and pedal-steel. It figures that *Heartbreak Station's* best track celebrates their craft, because Keifer and company really, really want to be artists—when they're not doing Satan's bidding, anyway.

—Jon Young



ANGELO BADALAMENTI

Twin Peaks Soundtrack
(Warner Bros.)

Industrial Symphony No. 1
(*dream of the broken hearted*)
(Warner Bros. video)

WITHIN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, DAVID Lynch has become a *cause célèbre* to a degree that normally makes discerning cult fans shrink away in horror. How can anything so popular be worthwhile? And why does that damned "Twin Peaks" theme stick to the memory so doggedly?

Not to be lost in the hype is the working relationship of Lynch and his musical better half, Angelo Badalamenti, the veteran who has been writing with and for Lynch since being called in as a vocal coach for Isabella Rossellini in *Blue Velvet*. Now, you can hear

the bizarre fruits of their labors in multiple formats. It began with their production of the dreamboat pop album by the unabashedly white singer Julee Cruise earlier this year. The *Wild at Heart* soundtrack features mostly unusual stuff from Richard Strauss to Powermad to Chris Isaak, along with bits of Badalamenti's incidental music.

The "Twin Peaks" soundtrack album, on the other hand, is a mesmerizing curio that holds up well under non-visual scrutiny. Badalamenti's music is central to what makes the show work. Full of stylistic change-ups, the music slips from soap operatic themes to ethereal atmospheric to cocktail-lounge-back-alley swing (replete with cool-daddy walking bass lines and snapping fingers).

The magic is all in the arrangemental blend. Tremolo'd and twanged-up guitar parts throw the otherwise sweet theme music askew. The ever-popular "Laura Palmer's Theme" moves from an ominous low drone, laid out in haunting synth tones, to the sappiest sort of melody etched in "As the World Turns"—brand piano octaves; nightmare vision gets confused with Hallmark card aesthetics. When the piece is reshuffled for the later "Love Theme," the synth and woodwind textures echo Philip Glass of *Glassworks* period.

"Dance of the Dream Man" finds a lazy sax solo over finger-snapping rhythm, interrupted by eerie vibes paraphrasing "Last Tango in Paris." Much more than a companion piece to the TV show, the "Twin Peaks" album works like new age music for those who hate the stilted earnestness of new age: The music bubbles at the fringes of a modernite's consciousness, not exactly a gag, but not straight-faced, either. Here is music for those who give not a damn who killed Laura Palmer, but love the very process of mystery.

As for *Industrial Symphony No. 1 (dream of the broken hearted)*, you really had to be there. The opening event for last year's New Music America at Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lynch and Badalamenti fitted a series of their songs with surreal 3-D images and called it a show. Searchlights scoured the stage, and figures sliced through dry ice smoke on a war zone-like post-industrial set. Pity poor Julee Cruise, all dolled up with uncomfortable places to go—i.e. singing from the trunk of a car or suspended high above the stage from guy wires.

In a case of crafty recycling, the musical

elements are snatched from the various Lynch/Badalamenti projects (which, last November, were still fresh to public ears). Michael Anderson, the sagely dwarf from the now-infamous backward-masked dream scene in "Twin Peaks," cavorts about the stage and narrates a scene from *Wild at Heart*. Thus, we are served leftovers before-the-fact, albeit from fine meals.

What's lacking in this crudely-filmed stage show, of course, is the subversive sense of polish that defines David Lynch work—however depraved the subject matter. But as part of the anatomy of a fertile collaboration, *Industrial Symphony No. 1* is a worthy footnote in the growing body of collectible Lynchworks.—Josef Woodard



SOUNDTRACK

The Hot Spot
(Antilles)

MILES DAVIS SOUNDTRACK IS NEWS. Miles playing with blues patriarch John Lee Hooker, and in the company of Taj Mahal, is a surprise. Rounding out this quintet are Hooker's producer and slide guitar great Roy Rogers, and the eminent New Orleans drummer Earl Palmer. From this gathering emerge some intriguing aural textures—blues 'n' boogie meets jazz cool. But textures alone rarely make for compelling music. In other words, don't expect anything like Davis' celebrated improvisations on *Elevator to the Gallows* (the 1957 film score he did for Louis Malle). *The Hot Spot* is more like a bunch of formidable guys sitting around doodling.

What went wrong here? Start with the leader, or lack of one. With his own groups, of course, Davis often selects musicians whose personal style and sound reflect his musical direction, then lets them play with relative freedom. Such a tactic might have worked here. But Davis isn't in charge of this date, and musical supervisor Jack Nitzsche provides little in [cont'd on page 95]

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empathetic, while Rosnes, using scraps of her melodies or lines suggested by the compositions, structures everything. She's also smart enough to record Joe Henderson—she works with him occasionally—and while it's odd to have him as a sideman, it's better than no Joe Henderson on record at all.

GERMAN ROSARIO

German Rosario [Ansonia]

It takes about two bars to get the point: Rosario, a Puerto Rican hill country singer and guitarist, has arranged a small masterpiece of a record. Using a handful of stringed instruments, clarinet, bass and assorted percussion instruments, he tears through a set of tunes that at times sound Andalusian or European, and at others, Caribbean. There's a deep melancholy to the songs, emphasized by the stately rhythms of the string instruments, but denied by the African rhythms percolating in the percussion section. (750 Paterson Ave., East Rutherford, NJ 07073)

MUSIC REVELATION ENSEMBLE

Elec. Jazz [DIW]

The ensemble, for those of you who weren't around in the early 1980s, consists of David Murray on tenor saxophone, Blood Ulmer on guitar and the rocking Amin Ali and Cornell Rochester on bass and drums. Way back then it seemed as if punk/funk/jazz or some mixture thereof might just make it as more than a trend. Wrong again. But it doesn't mean that its main ideologues aren't capable of getting it on; *Elec. Jazz* is a late-period gem, full of great tunes (five to be exact, but who's counting) and inspired playing in the harmolodic mold.

LES CHAMPIONS DU ZAIRE

Hommage à Franco O.K. Jazz [espera]

What's the band to do when the boss kicks off? Make a record in his honor, obviously. After Franco, Zaire's biggest pop star, died, his band went into the studio and cut a chillingly hot record. Using synth drums and layers of overdubbed guitars, they've come close to making an art-pop album. One cut, "Bon Retour," has a Philip Glass-like section, where about 30 guitars slowly permute a figure over 10 minutes, chiming and clanging and just being gorgeous for the hell of it. (Stern's African Record Store, 598 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

THE PIANO BLUES

Paranmount Volume 1, 1928-1932 [Magpie]

The 15 or so pianists on the album have nothing much in common except their lack of a profile, and the ability to record extraordinary blues pieces, usually greased by an almost scary sense of swing. The more famous names on the compilation—Little Brother Montgomery, Skip James—do as well as the rest, people like Blind Leroy Garnett, whose "Chain 'em Down," recorded in 1929, has elements of ragtime and syncopations that sound a bit like Professor Longhair. The Magpie piano series has been legendary for some time now; this and a Leroy Carr reissue are the first of the CD versions.

WYNTON MARSALIS

Soundtrack from Tune in Tomorrow [Columbia]

Each new Marsalis album brings something new. Clearly indebted to Ellington's composing and arranging from

the late 1950s on, this soundtrack resonates with Jimmy Hamilton-styled clarinet and Ellingtonian small-group-arranging textures and ideas. Interspersed are organ pieces and songs by the great New Orleans singer Johnny Adams and by Shirley Horn. While this is all impressive, it's a bit scholarly, sounding like an exercise—his last album, remember, managed an idiosyncratic mixture of Ellington, New Orleans and Coltrane. And here's a comparison—brought up by the material, not by spite: Ellington and Strayhorn knew how to write melodies, which Marsalis hasn't learned to do yet. Which reminds me: Where are all the great late Ellington records on CBS? Why haven't they been reissued?

BOBBY PREVITE

Empty Suits [Gramavision]

Previte's slowly staking a claim to compositional territory undiscovered by other composers. Mixing Ennio Morricone, rock, funk, ethnic stuff and jazz all together, he's come up with an evocative and airy sound that's loaded with the ramifications of each style without actual imitation. This time around he's working with roughly the same group of people he always has, but his sound has expanded, with large swells of music hovering, fog-like, over his bounding percussion. The rapprochement between the pop textures of the electronic ensemble and the art impulse makes this music appealing: in its reworking of references, it disturbs memories.

BENNY CARTER

PHIL WOODS

My Man Benny, My Man Phil [Musicmasters]

Jazz is so dependent on the construction of musical personalities that a purely formal idea like pairing two alto saxophonists together in front of a rhythm section to play melodies, improvise some, then repeat melodies, actually works. Depending on the personalities: In Benny Carter we have one of the founding fathers of American improvisation. In Phil Woods we have a bebop machine, whose obvious intricacies balance Carter's subtle harmonic manipulations. Without pretense, a brilliant album.



THE ORDINAIRES

The Ordinaires [Bar/None]

The chi-chi Zep update was good for media coverage, but this classical/improv/jazz/pop mishigas will be their longterm claim to fame. Still, Zep covers get you in the door, and that's something other porto-orchestras—the Microscopic Septet, say—don't understand yet. With hummable tunes that are long on verve, the Ordinaires roll their dissonances in digestible tablets—you can swallow them without water. And if you think that the Stones appropriation is due to a lack of in-house melodic know-how, just live with the fuel-injected thematic

material of "Grace" for a while, or pat them on the back for inverting the pomp of "Ramayana" into a poor man's anthem. Crucial for anyone who wants to understand the parameters of '80s fringe music.

—Jim Macnic

HAPPY THE MAN 3RD

Better Late... [Wayside Music Archive Series]

For a brief moment in the '70s, once the Brits had pretty much said all there was to say in the field of art rock, Happy the Man made its statement. Led by keyboardist Kit Watkins, the group recorded two alternately profound and ponderous albums for Arista that displayed deft instrumental teamwork and ears tuned to unorthodox (and sometimes rewarding) improvisations. The band was dropped from Arista in the late '70s, then made one final demo, in February of '79, before dissolving. Though *Better Late...* is rough (and flecked with distortion that betrays its live-in-the-primitive-home-studio nature), it does capture what was good and not-so-good about the band. On the plus side: the gliding melodies, the decidedly non-orchestral texture of guitars atop electric piano atop keyboards, the assertive and intelligent drumming of Coco Rousset. On the minus: guitarist Stanley Whitaker's mewling, accusatory voice ("Who's in Charge Here" sounds like the work of a high school anarchist who refused to grow up), and Watkins' overuse of Genesis signature syncopations and hemiolas. (Box 6517, Wheaton, MD 20906)

—Tom Moon

ANDY SUMMERS

Charming Snakes [Private Music]

With this album, Summers takes a big step away from the new-age noodlings of *Mysterious Barricades* and *The Golden Wire*. With some great tunes (the intelligent ballad "Charis," the majestic "Rainmaker"), some good ol' space improv and some rippin' solos à la Beck (or the Police), it's bound to gratify old fans. There's plenty of famous guests, including one Gordon Sumner on the pseudo-reggae title track. Though Herbie Hancock and saxist Bill Evans are all over this stuff, when Andy lets the killer distortion fly on "Innocence Falls Prey," you know who's running the show. Welcome back.

—Mac Randall

JOE HIGGS

WITH THE WAILERS

Blackman Know Yourself [Shanachie]

Joe Higgs is a legendary reggae figure whose following in the United States has never approached that earned by his many protégés, among them Bob Marley, Bunny Wailer and Jimmy Cliff. Higgs has quietly recorded several forthright, sturdy records (including 1985's *Triumph* and 1988's *Family*) that are too concentrated and direct to be dismissed as the autumnal work of an aging pioneer. *Blackman Know Yourself* is perhaps the most consistent of his recent recordings: It offers some strong new Higgs compositions, as well as an ominous new take of "Steppin' Razor," a Higgs song that, in the '70s, became a trademark of Peter Tosh, and songs associated with Marley. Higgs' band, led by bassist Aston "Family Man" Barrett, sounds in awe of its leader, but Higgs doesn't need them to push him. He has his own agenda, and all else be damned.

—Jimmy Guterman

RECORDINGS

[cont'd from page 91] the way of musical composition or concept. Though he's credited with writing the film score (which, among other things, has an unmistakably Delta sonance, though the movie is supposedly set in Texas), this soundtrack comes across as little more than a series of atmospheric fragments. Nitzsche has an awe-inspiring resume of credits from rock to Hollywood, but with artists of this caliber, who needs a company writer?

There are a few pleasures, notably the delicate, eerie "Gloria's Story," on which Bradford Ellis' synclavier fleshes out one of Nitzsche's few stabs at a melody. But overall, this is the kind of recording people will use as background music when their friends come over. It's Bluzak. —**Celestine Ware**

PINK FLOYD

[cont'd from page 51] stantly—at Number One. And so the Pink Floyd, willy nilly, became pop stars.

There was at least one bad omen. David Gilmour, back from Europe to buy replacements for Jokers Wild's stolen equipment, dropped by Sound Techniques to visit Syd during the "Emily" sessions. He was thoroughly nonplussed when his old chum "just looked straight through me, barely acknowledged that I was there. Very weird...."

THE FIRST PINK FLOYD LP WAS COMPLETED IN July 1967 and released in early August. Over 20 years and some dozen albums later, Rick Wright still cites it as one of his two or three favorite Floyd records (as does David Gilmour—who wasn't even on it). "I love listening to it, just to listen to Syd's songs," says Wright. "It's sad in a way as well, because it reminds me of what might have been. I think he could have easily been one of the finest songwriters today."

The Piper at the Gates of Dawn was a remarkable achievement. It is also the work on which Syd's mythic reputation is almost entirely based, and one that provided the blueprints for albums his colleagues were subsequently to make in his absence.

Piper was, as June Bolan says, "very much Syd's baby—and such a wonderful baby." Throughout the making of the album, according to Andrew King, Barrett "was very hard on himself. He wouldn't do anything unless he thought he was doing it in an artistic way." His distinctive flair extended even to

the then normally humdrum mixing process, when Syd "would throw the levers on the boards up and down apparently at random, making pretty pictures with his hands."

Even stripped of such gimmickry, Syd's playing is highly innovative and expressive. Melodic solos abruptly give way to harsh dissonance, and Dylanesque strumming to improvisation wherein key and time signatures are all but forgotten. Barrett was among the first rock guitarists to experiment with the wah-wah pedal and echo box, and transformed slide guitar into a fixture of the Floyd's thoroughly English dreamscapes.

Unlike his later work, *Piper* captures Barrett in full command of his creative powers. Only "Bike" seems to teeter on the edge of psychosis:

*I've got a cloak, it's a bit of a joke,
There's a tear up the front, it's red and black.*

*I've had it for months,
If you think it could look good,
then I guess it should....*

At the end, the listener is invited into Syd's "other room"—and all hell breaks loose. His collage—barrage!—of clockwork sound effects bears no discernible relation to the rest of the song's content, and thus sounds all the more diabolical and demented.

As much of *Piper* demonstrates, the Floyd got maximum mileage out of limited studio facilities. "Astronomy Dominé" (on which Jenner can be heard reeling off the names of stars and galaxies through a megaphone) shows the band using studio effects such as echo virtually as another instrument. Much of the credit is due Norman Smith—and, indirectly, George Martin and the Beatles, for whom Smith had engineered every album up to *Rubber Soul*. *Piper* abounds with studio wizardry borrowed from the Fab Four, notably the double-tracking of the vocals, which was applied to Barrett's even more liberally than it had been to Lennon's and McCartney's, and which contributed in no small measure to their otherworldly textures. Smith also coaxed the same distinctive thud from Mason's drums that he and Martin had with Ringo Starr's—by the same method of covering them with tea towels.

The two camps were formally introduced towards the end of April, when Barry Miles was hanging out with Paul McCartney at Abbey Road during one of the final *Pepper* sessions. Told by an engineer that Pink Floyd was working in the next studio, Miles mentioned it to Paul—who proposed that

they stop by to say hello. George Harrison and Ringo also lagged along.

"Paul was patting them on the back, saying they were great and were going to do fine," Miles recalls. "He wasn't being patronizing; it was almost like the Beatles passing on the mantle—at least some of it—and acknowledging the existence of a new generation of music. In my discussions with him, McCartney had always been convinced that there would be a new synthesis of electronic music and studio techniques and rock 'n' roll. He didn't see the Beatles as being quite the vehicle for that. But the Pink Floyd, he thought, were the very stuff that we'd been talking about."

"I'm sure the Beatles were copying what we were doing," adds Peter Jenner. "Just as we were copying what we were hearing down the corridor!"

For Pink Floyd, however, the party that much of the rest of the turned-on tuned-in world would remember as the Summer of Love was apparently doomed to end almost before it had begun. The night after *Sgt. Pepper's* release—on June 2—the Floyd returned to Joe Boyd's club UFO for the first time in months.

The club was as packed as it had ever been, with the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend and a flock of Yardbirds and Animals joining a mob of eager new fans, would-be hippies and plain old tourists. Yet the Floyd were obliged to use the same entrance as everyone else, before fighting their way to their dressing room.

On their way in they passed Joe Boyd, who later told Barry Miles, "It was very crushed, so it was like faces two inches from your nose. They all came by—'Hi, Joe!' 'How are you?' 'Great!' I greeted them all as they came through, and the last one was Syd.

"And the great thing with Syd was that he had a twinkle in his eye; he was a real eye-twinkler. He had this impish look about him, this mischievous grin. He came by, and I said, 'Hi, Syd!' And he just looked at me. I looked right in his eye and there was no twinkle. No glint. It was like somebody had pulled the blinds—you know, *nobody home*."

The next issue of *IT* charged that the Floyd "played like bums" that night. Only in retrospect did it become apparent that Syd Barrett was beginning to crack. ☛

Next month in Musician: Syd Barrett's public crack-up and Roger Waters' takeover split Pink Floyd down the middle, as the Summer of Love gives way to the Winter of Madness.

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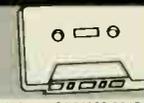
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DEVELOPMENTS

[cont'd from page 86] eight tracks on cassette, a 12-input mixer (eight mono ins, two stereo), two effects sends and the absolute certainty that you'll never have to ask, "Gee, can I still receive Controller 04 if I'm in Multi Mode A?" The 424, the company's latest version of the four-track Portastudio, is also a value at \$549. But if you want four-track cassette recording for even less, check out the new \$529 Porta 05 Ministudio.

One of the big high-tech buzzes at NAMM will probably be hard disk recording, particularly when linked to MIDI sequencing. We recently saw a simply topping British system for the Atari ST and Mac SE called the **Plasmec Stereo Hard Disk Recorder (SHDR)**. The ST has always been the affordable music computer; and at a projected U.S. price of \$1199 (\$1099 for the Mac version), the Plasmec is pretty affordable too. "Hard disk recording for under two thousand!" the Plasmecians enthuse. Because the system itself does most of the digital audio data-crunching, the host-computer's RAM is left free for other things—like sequencing.

Meanwhile **Digidesign**—the company that pioneered this hard disk + sequencing gag—is coming out with its own hard disk drive. It's a 660 megabyte, high-speed SCSI called the Pro Store. It comes in a 19" rack-mount format, goes for \$3995 and is one of the few drives, says Digidesign, that can format enough memory capacity to master an entire album or CD.

Finally, can harmonica players really French-kiss better? Only if they have an

exceptional mouth organ like the new **Hohner Amadeus**. It's a 12-hole chromatic harp with a solid plexiglas body and a gold-plated mouthpiece and chromatic button. The reeds are a new, flexible alloy that Hohner says allows them to make 'em louder, more responsive and better able to stay in tune, even if you turn notes like Little Walter on a lethal dose of White Lightning. Find out why early folkies really called the Harmonica the French Harp.

SHURE VP88

[cont'd from page 86] um and a small amount on Low. The High setting yields a spacious, dramatic field which is excellent for sampling. But for multitrack applications, where the MS tracks are to be mixed in with other tracks, you may find yourself going for Medium or Low. In all settings, localization of sound sources within the field is extremely accurate.

Finally, you can switch the VP88 to roll off low frequencies (12 dB per octave below 80 kHz), which is handy for eliminating low-end rumbles and hums in field recordings. In all, the VP88 is a great mike for drums, percussion ensembles and stringed instruments. If you're worried that your home studio doesn't have enough tape tracks to support the luxury of recording things in stereo, consider this: A live stereo recording of three or four instruments in a room can often be a lot more effective than overdubbing each of those instruments on a separate track. If you've been looking for a way to save tracks, and get those home recordings to "breathe," this just may be the solution.

— Alan di Perna

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10 WAYS TO NAME YOUR BAND

1. B-MOVIES. Among the cult and camp classics that have been appropriated, often in altered form, are *All the Fine Young Cannibals*, *2000 Maniacs*, *Plan 9 from Outer Space* and a George C. Scott film entitled *They Might Be Giants*. Duran Duran christened themselves after a character from the Jane Fonda sci-fi fantasy *Barbarella*. The Searchers took their name from a John Wayne western. Heaven 17 was the name of a fictional group mentioned in *A Clockwork Orange*. And then there's the Liverpool group who took theirs from a poster advertising Sinatra's film debut: "Frankie goes to Hollywood."

2. THE BLUES. For reasons still poorly understood by sociologists, during the '60s young white British men commonly suffered from the delusion that they were aged blacks from the Mississippi Delta. Consequently they were prone to forming bands named after old blues songs, like Muddy Waters' "Rollin' Stone Blues." Bo Diddley's "Pretty Things" and Slim Harpo's "Moody Blue." Syd Barrett renamed his band, initially called the Architectural Abdabs, after Georgia bluesmen Pink Anderson and Floyd Council. Reginald Dwight took his stage name by combining those of saxophonist Elton Dean and singer Long John Baldry. And back in the colonies, Jorma Kaukonen's dog, and later his band, was named after a nonexistent blues singer called Blind Thomas Jefferson Airplane.

3. PEOPLE. Another possibility is to name your band after someone you know. It might be the piano tuner who owns your rehearsal hall (Marshall Tucker) or the gym teacher who harassed you for your long hair (Leonard Skinner). Famous folks are also fair game. Among those so honored are the inventor of the seed drill (Jethro Tull), billionaire Howard Hughes (via '70s one-hit wonders the Hues Corporation, who gave us "Rock the Boat") and adolescent porn queen Traci Lords (the band changed its name to Lord Tracy to avoid legal difficulties). And don't forget Hatchet Molly, the Southern prostitute who, according to legend, had a nasty habit of castrating clients.

Of course, those of a more self-centered nature will want to name their band after themselves. You could simply give the group your own name, as everyone from Carlos Santana to Jon Bongiovi has done, or use the law firm approach, à la Crosby, Stills & Nash or Emerson, Lake & Palmer. But it's far more creative to combine your group members' first initials (Abba) or the rhythm section's surnames, as Mick Fleetwood and John McVie did. In a similar vein are the wonderfully self-descriptive Band of Susans and Three Johns.

4. FOREIGN LANGUAGES. Raiding other tongues, you can make a potentially offensive name more palatable to the public. It's unlikely that "Saturday Night Live" would have booked a

group called "Kiss My Ass," but a shortened version of the Gaelic equivalent, Pogue Mahone, proved to be acceptable. Names which seem boring in English, like the Wolves or Power Station, sound far more interesting translated as Los Lobos and Kraftwerk. Procol Harum is garbled Latin for "beyond these things." Hüsker Dü, Swedish for "do you remember," was also the name of a board game in the '50s. The Cruzados derived their name from a Spanish slang word for heroin. Spanish outfielders chasing pop flies yell Yo La Tengo, "I have it!" Scritti Politti is a bastardized version of the Italian term for "political magazine." In Tua Nua is the Gaelic translation of "in a new kingdom," and Black Uhuru named themselves after the Swahili word for "freedom."

5. WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS. The writings of Burroughs have inspired the names of at least four bands: Soft Machine, Naked Lunch, Dead Fingers Talk and Steely Dan, the last a nickname for a dildo. No band has ever taken its name from a Danielle Steele novel.

6. PARODIES. Where did Chubby Checker and the Celibate Rifles get their names? Fats Domino and the Sex Pistols.

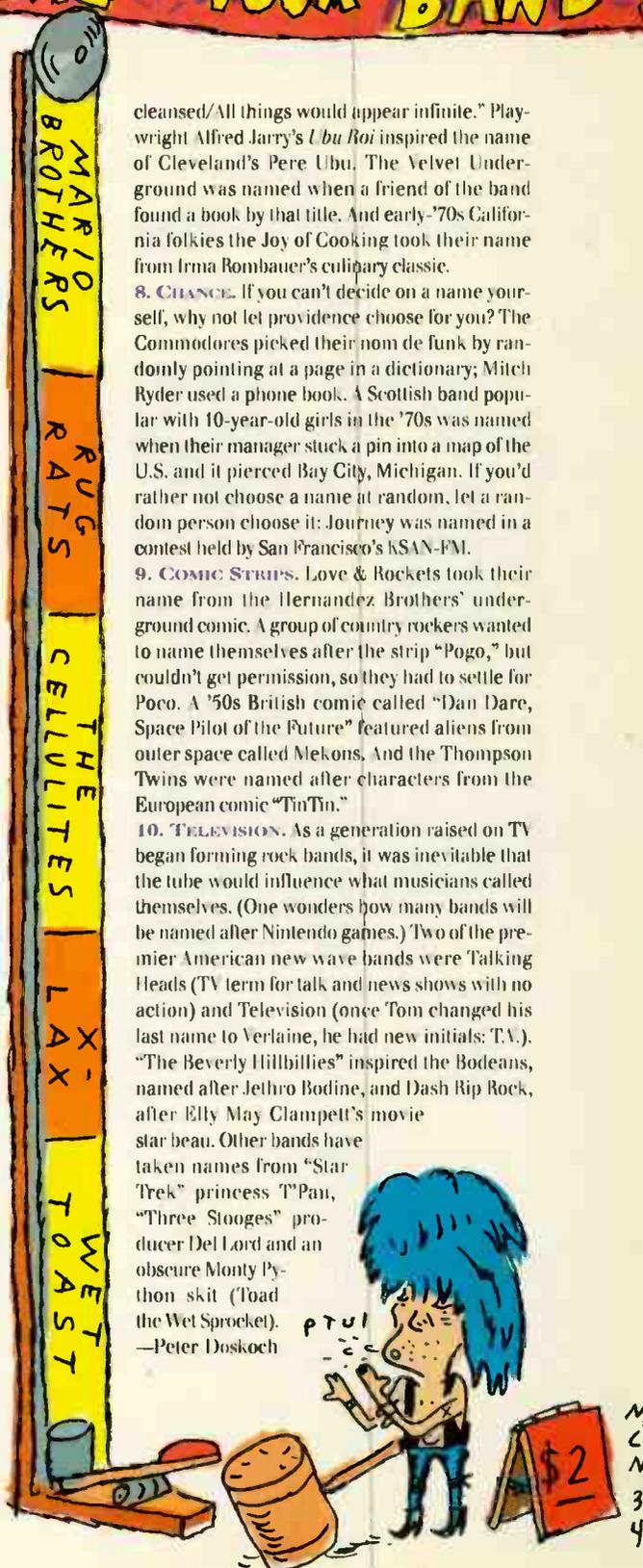
7. AUTHORS OTHER THAN WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS. Why not name your group after a favorite novel? Note, however, that the following have already been used: John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*, Hermann Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf*, Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912), Willard Manus' *Moll the Hoople* (1849) and W.H. Davies' *The Autobiography of a Super-tramp*. Uriah Heep was the name of a poor Dickens character before it became the name of a poor British metal band. Poets have also left their mark on rock nomenclature: His Bobness named himself after Dylan Thomas, Tom Verlaine after the French poet and the name of Jim Morrison's band was derived from William Blake: "If the doors of perception were

cleansed/All things would appear infinite." Playwright Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* inspired the name of Cleveland's Pere Ubu. The Velvet Underground was named when a friend of the band found a book by that title. And early-'70s California folkies the Joy of Cooking took their name from Irma Rombauer's culinary classic.

8. CHANCE. If you can't decide on a name yourself, why not let providence choose for you? The Commodores picked their nom de funk by randomly pointing at a page in a dictionary; Mitch Ryder used a phone book. A Scottish band popular with 10-year-old girls in the '70s was named when their manager stuck a pin into a map of the U.S. and it pierced Bay City, Michigan. If you'd rather not choose a name at random, let a random person choose it: Journey was named in a contest held by San Francisco's KSN-FM.

9. COMIC STRIPS. Love & Rockets took their name from the Hernandez Brothers' underground comic. A group of country rockers wanted to name themselves after the strip "Pogo," but couldn't get permission, so they had to settle for Poco. A '50s British comic called "Dan Dare, Space Pilot of the Future" featured aliens from outer space called Mekons. And the Thompson Twins were named after characters from the European comic "TinTin."

10. TELEVISION. As a generation raised on TV began forming rock bands, it was inevitable that the tube would influence what musicians called themselves. (One wonders how many bands will be named after Nintendo games.) Two of the premier American new wave bands were Talking Heads (TV term for talk and news shows with no action) and Television (once Tom changed his last name to Verlaine, he had new initials: T.V.). "The Beverly Hillbillies" inspired the Bodeans, named after Jethro Bodine, and Dash Rip Rock, after Elly May Clampett's movie star beau. Other bands have taken names from "Star Trek" princess T'Pol, "Three Stooges" producer Del Lord and an obscure Monty Python skit (Toad the Wet Sprocket).
—Peter Doskoch



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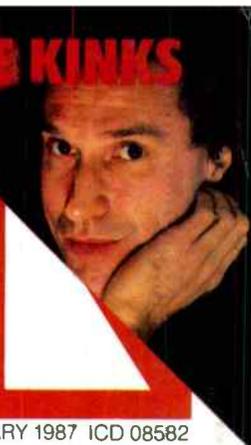
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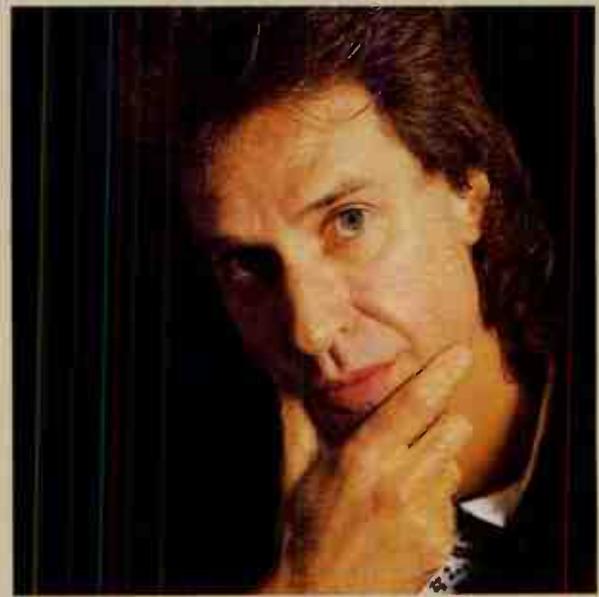
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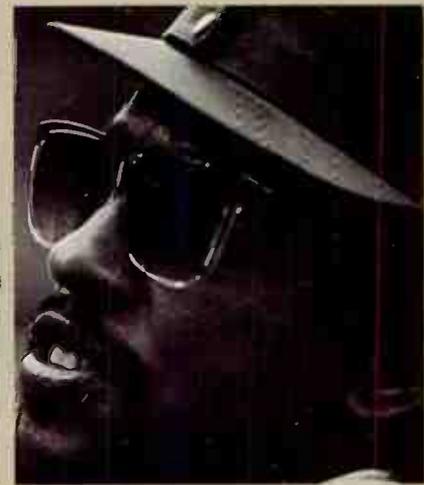
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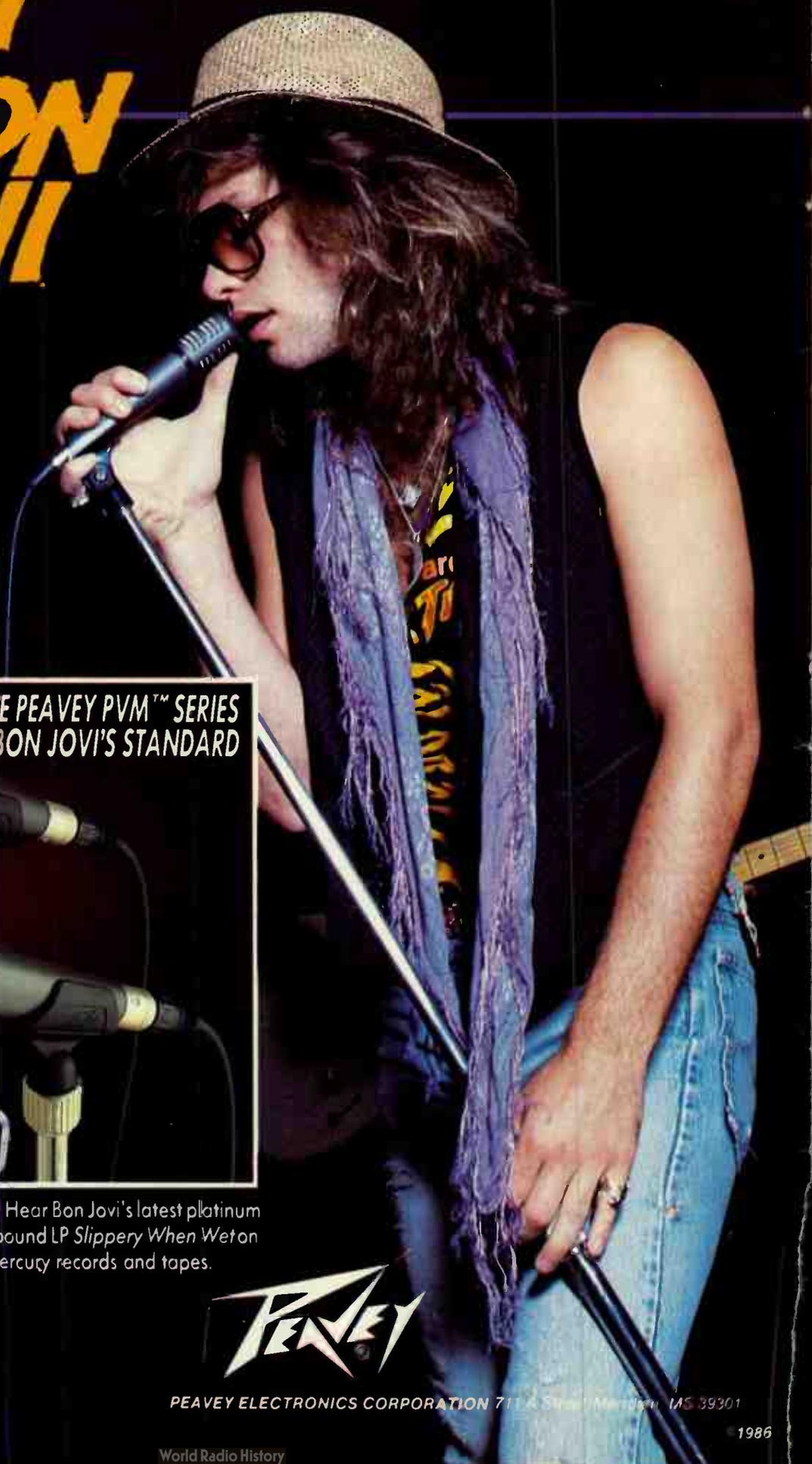
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1986

GEORGIA SATELLITES

BY BILL REPSHER

TRUE LOVE & SIN:
INNOCENCE IS THEIR
ONLY CRIME

What made Rick Price decide to play rock 'n' roll? "Poosy," the bassist answers, and the rest of his band erupts into a contagious fit of laughter. Then again, that's his answer to damn near every question asked. The Georgia Satellites don't smirk—they howl.

Blitzkrieg honkytonk. Those are the only words for the Georgia Satellites. They've got a hillbilly twang, but somebody stomped on it with a leather boot. Other bands have played the blues, and even more have rocked with a breath-taking urgency. Not many have combined the two like this bunch.

"But you don't want to write about us," drummer Mauro Magellan says, pausing to lower the punch line. "We only know three chords." Magellan and the band are upstairs at the Ritz in New York waiting for a soundcheck. The Satellites have just released their self-titled debut album on Elektra Records, and it's guaranteed, as the Satellites say, to knock your dick in the dirt.

"The New York shows are going great," Magellan continues, "but the audience reaction is much better back home in Atlanta. The drinks are a whole lot cheaper down there." The Georgia Satellites are an honest-to-god bar band; their boyish demeanor is that of perfect Southern gentlemen who put in a few hot summer nights behind the barn.

Onstage that night, nothing changes. From guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Dan Baird's black, hi-top Converse to Price's cigarette impaled Keith-style on the stub of a bass string, the band bears a certain animal grace. Their long, frizzy hair and straining faces look butt-ugly under the spotlights, and that's a compliment. Guitarist/vocalist Rick Richards and Baird trade chainsaw rhythms and leads that crunch, not jangle, while Magellan and Price lay down a beat you'd

want by your side in a dark alley. But it's their innocence that matters most; it's the way their eyes catch and light up during an adrenal "Great Balls Of Fire." Their cheekbones must ache from grinning so much.

"We got that way from *mandancing*," Baird says in his Georgian drawl. "Mandancing is when you put on *Sticky Fingers* and everybody stands in front of the speakers going 'Yeahhh!' while playing air guitar. No women allowed—mandancing only. It's like a bunch of guys hunching around the floor doing all kinds of weird crap."

It's a long way from Baird's first mandance to the Ritz. The band all agrees that seeing the Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan Show* provided the initial kick in the ass, but, Baird reminisces, "It all started to happen when me and my little brother used to put on *Beggars Banquet*. By the first three minutes of 'Street Fighting Man' we were beating each other up."

From there it was an endless series of bands until Baird met Richards in the late 70s. "I was working in a guitar store in Atlanta," Richards says, "and one day Dan came in and played 'Peggy Sue Got Married,' so I figured he was okay. One of the first nights we really jammed together was the night John Lennon died. We were feeling pretty bad about it, so we got together and played."

"Around that time," Baird adds, "I was in a band that was a little more poppy than we are now. I saw Rick one night in a band called the Desperate Angels, and

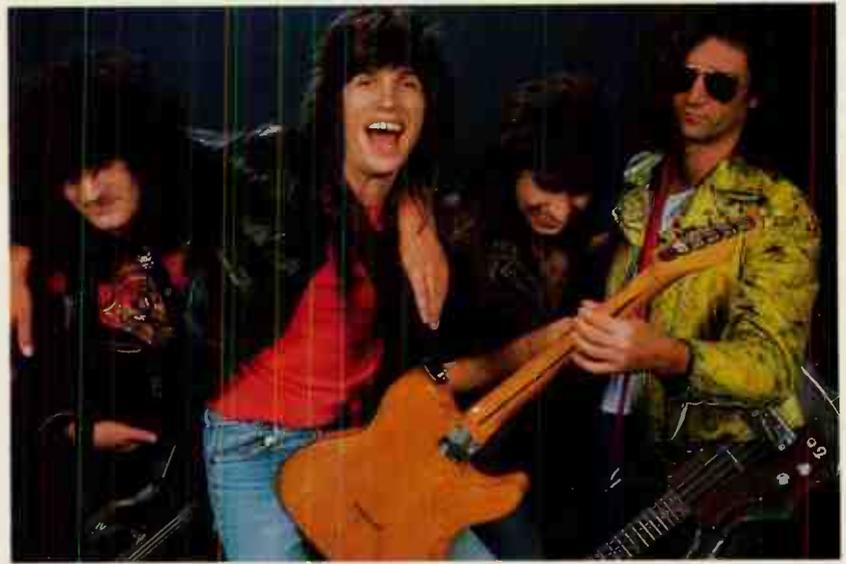
I was knocked out. Rick came and saw us, and he liked our songs. My band broke up, so I asked Rick if he wanted to do anything. He said, 'Wayull, Ah got some things goin' raht nowuh, maybe someday.'

"But we eventually got together. We jammed in a place that used to be a plumbing company. It was underneath a barbeque joint. I swear to god—it looked a lot like CBGBs. In Atlanta, that's hard to do. But it was great. We'd jam from midnight to four in the morning, and I'd look at my watch and go, 'Crap, I gotta go to work.' It was like being thirteen again, doing all that teenage crap and being completely unembarrassed."

Baird and Richards formed the Georgia Satellites in 1980; by 1983 they'd forged a strong Atlanta audience. The rhythm section constantly changed, with one hectic week seeing four different bass players. ("No reason why," Baird shrugs, "you just had to be there.") The band had recorded demo tapes with producer Jeff Glixman (Saxxon, Kansas), but they couldn't grab any record company's attention.

That's when the band broke up. Baird joined the Woodpeckers in North Carolina; Richards joined the Hell Hounds, whose rhythm section of Price and Magellan had been in the Brains (Tom Gray's Atlanta-based band who did the original "Money Changes Everything").

But it wasn't over yet. The Satellites' road manager took the demo tapes to England, where Making Waves, a small



Mandancing with Price, Baird, Magellan and Richards.



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JOHN LURIE

BY SCOTT ISLER

THE LOUNGE LIZARDS' PHOTOGENIC SAXMAN PLAYS IT FOR REAL

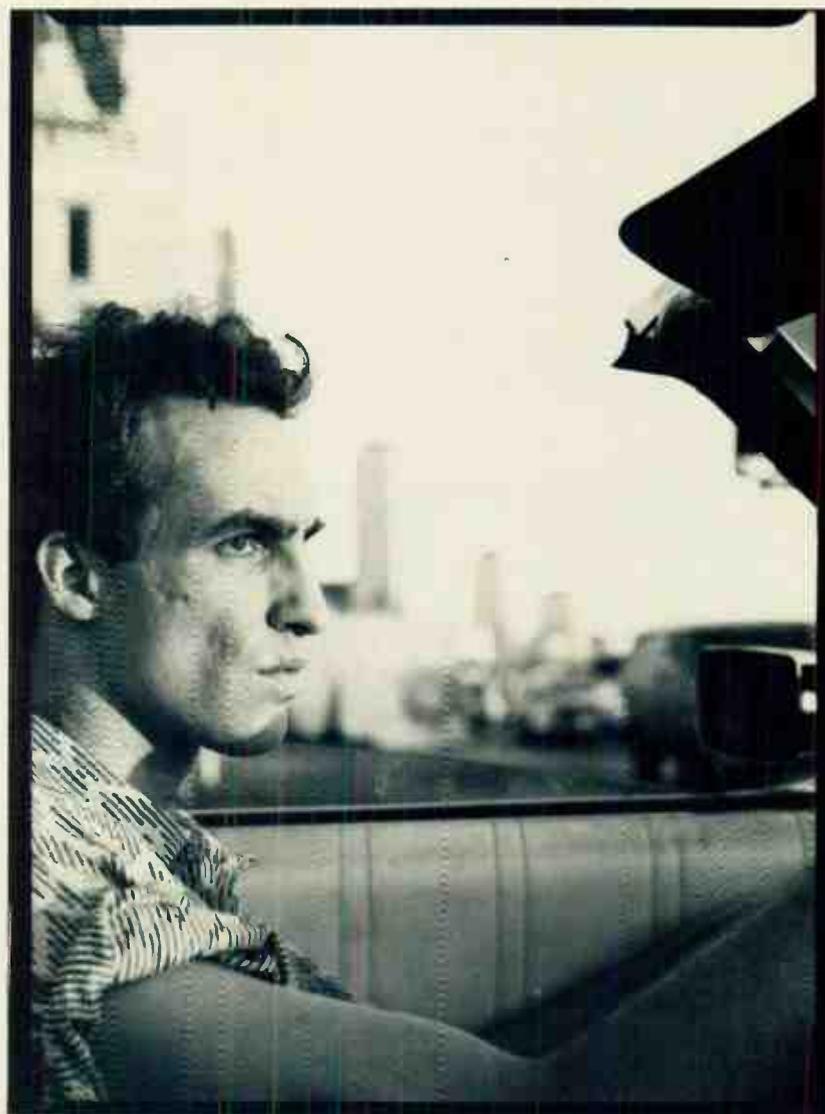
Maybe it's that distinctive face: the broad forehead, the arching eyebrows, the aggressive nose, the pursed lips, the jawbone that looks like it could stop a truck (or at least cause a dent). Maybe it's the way his baggy trousers and 1940s jackets hang on his hulking frame. But something about John Lurie gives the impression that this guy should not be viewed by daylight, let alone beyond the confines of New York's sub-bohemian lower east side.

Yet here he is—not only wide awake at two in the afternoon, but the proud renter of a brownstone garden duplex on one of the most chi-chi blocks in Greenwich Village. Lurie can't quite believe it himself. "People here think I'm ruining the neighborhood," he jokes in a gravelly voice paved by cigarettes. "I come home at ten in the morning, drunk. Scare their children."

[Anecdote] Lurie now lives exactly a block away from another renowned musical figure, the Cars' Ric Ocasek. But a summit meeting seems unlikely. Told of his new neighbor, Lurie shows no sign of recognition. "Who's that? I don't know who he is," he says matter-of-factly. He's not kidding. [End of anecdote]

You can take the musician out of the lower east side, but you can't take etc. etc. Lurie's three-weeks-old living quarters probably don't look like his neighbors' either. The large living room is completely bare except for a chair, a bicycle and a saxophone case. Recessed shelves hold a sound system, a modest jazz record collection and some books. Mixed in with Waugh and Naipaul are titles like *Japanese In Three Weeks*, *Parlons Français* and an English-Italian *Dizionario*.

John Lurie is going places, metaphorically as well as geographically. In the last two years this thirty-four-year-old adopted New Yorker has become a cult



Profile of a bohemian: fake jazz for real life.

celebrity for his roles in two Jim Jarmusch films, *Stranger Than Paradise* and *Down By Law*. He relishes the fame ("I love seeing myself on TV, it's such a gas!") though he's leery of being typecast by the two similar parts. "People see me as this incompetent pimp in real life," he says incredulously. "I mean, that's like a disaster!"

At the same time he's continued to lead the Lounge Lizards, whose idiosyncratic instrumentals delight some people, enrage others and confuse the rest. Lurie has always juggled media. He created the Lounge Lizards to provide a soundtrack for a potential film, and has directed some super-8 shorts. He says he can balance his careers, though he wishes others would see it that way.

"I was really bugged, like August, September," Lurie fast-raps. "I got an album out and people only wanted to talk to me about my new movie. It was getting on my nerves quite a bit. 'Cause the music was *happening*."

The music's been happening for Lurie at least since 1979, when the Lounge Lizards had their public unveiling. The original quintet interspersed free-for-all jams with moody themes that could have come from B-movies. The lead voices were Lurie's plaintive alto sax and Arto Lindsay's guitar, which alternately sounded like a strangling chicken and a Ford Model A trying to start in cold weather. Lurie coined the term "fake jazz" to describe the group. He regretted it later, when critics took the phrase

more seriously than he did.

The Lizards, Lurie now insists, "can't be seen conceptually as being a parody of anything. There's a lot of stuff that's silly or that's a parody, but it's only one line." That probably extends to Lurie's flip titles for his original tunes, and the band's penchant for skinny ties and 50s suits. The effect can veer dangerously close to camp.

"'Fake jazz' became for jazz people like, 'They can't be playing.' We desperately wanted to be with our heroes. We'd play jazz festivals. Europeans would think we were the new modern-jazz geniuses. But at the hotel where all the musicians were staying, it was like, 'Oh,

those guys with leprosy over there.'"

The Lounge Lizards attracted attention, though, and took their place in New York's musical circus. Lurie wielded his alto in a television jeans commercial featuring Blondie's Debbie Harry. With the money he received for that appearance he rented Carnegie Recital Hall for a solo performance. Not bad for a self-taught saxophonist who hadn't yet learned to read or write music.

But the band was on a rocky course. Lindsay left to concentrate on his own group. Drummer Anton Fier (Lurie: "He hated everybody") had *his* other group. The Lounge Lizards disbanded in 1981, shortly after their debut album came out.

They've gone through a couple of incarnations since, with only Lurie's younger brother Evan on keyboards remaining from the original band. "It's kinda like, what is it, the Reserves?" Lurie asks.

The current version, together two years, may be the strongest edition of the group. Fellow reedman Roy Nathanson and trombonist Curtis Fowlkes fill out the front line. Drummer Douglas Bowne is more proficient than Fier. Lurie raves about Marc Ribot, in the difficult position of Lounge Lizards guitarist; "the guitar player in this band is always the person who's out on the gangplank.

"These guys all kind of 'get it,'" Lurie says, explaining his pleasure with his present unit. "It's really hard to find musicians who 'get it.' I would take a musician one-tenth the caliber technically, as far as somebody who under-

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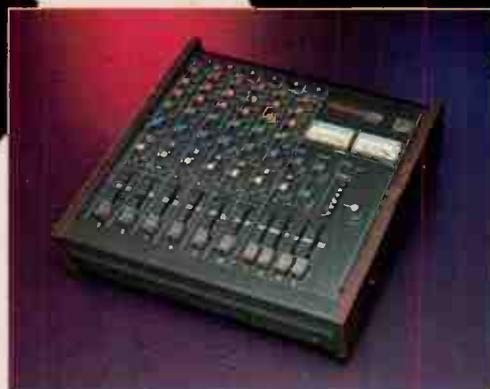
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LURID DETAILS

John Lurie's first saxophone, a Selmer Mark 6 alto, got stolen. He replaced it with a Mark 7 that had a high F# "that I got very used to." So he made sure his current alto, a Selmer Balanced Action with a Beechler mouthpiece, had the same reach. Lurie dates the instrument from 1949 or '50; "it belonged to some famous classical guy. You gotta have an old horn," he adds. "New horns just don't sound the same." Reeds? "Man, that's forever a problem." He switches between Vandorens and Rico Royals, and tries not to be obsessive on the subject. "It's kinda like having sex. If you don't think about it you can do quite well. But if you're thinking about it, god knows what's gonna happen." He also has an old Conn soprano sax, heard on the *Down By Law* soundtrack. Lurie doesn't feel his "oboesque" tone on soprano fits in with the Lounge Lizards. Moreover, "I hate carrying two horns on tour."

Fellow sax Lizard **Roy Nathanson** plays a Selmer tenor and alto, Yanagisawa soprano and Buffet clarinet. Mouthpieces are by Dukoff (tenor) and a Frank Zahn handmade Babbitt (alto). He uses Rico and LaVoz medium-hard reeds. Trombonist **Curtis Fowlkes** blows a King 3B. **Evan Lurie** prefers Steinway pianos. Guitarist **Marc Ribot** has an ESP Tele-Strat hybrid plugged into a Fender Super Reverb. **Erik Sanko's** five-string fretless bass was custom-made by Barry Kulick. Sanko plays through a Carlsboro amp. **Dougie Bowne** ("Douglas" only on *Live In Tokyo's* album cover) plays Pearl drums and Zildjian and Sabian cymbals. Newest Lizard **E.J. Rodriguez** handles percussion with L.P. congas, bongos and timbales, Sabian and Huwhan cymbals, Boss Dr. P electronic pads, and assorted toys.

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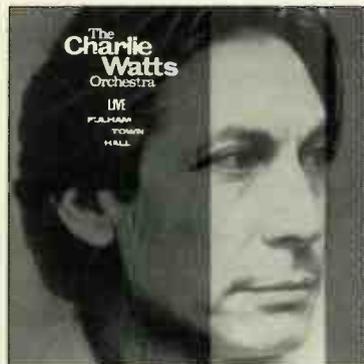
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stood what the direction was." But the Lizards do have chops as well as a sense of humor.

For that reason Lurie dreads the possibility of losing Bowne to the drummer's co-existing rock group. "I heard tapes," Lurie sniffs. "You can't even tell it's him! It's stupid for him to leave this band."

If the Lizards are unstable, Lurie has only himself to blame. "It's hard to keep 'em together," he says, "cause I'm doing so many other projects. They don't make enough money with the band that they can afford to take off two months."

Right now, though, the Lounge Lizards are wasting no time. *Live In Tokyo—Big Heart* ("In Japanese it's like calling a record *Big Liver*") has just come out. The band is days away from embarking on another tour of Japan. But first they have to wind up recording a new studio album. On top of that, Lurie's been putting the finishing touches on a Lounge Lizards video for the title cut of *Big Heart*. No wonder he's up during the day; Lurie claims he's been existing on three hours of sleep a night, and that he's lost ten pounds in the last month: "I can't play romantic leads!"

This next record will be the band's first studio album since its debut. Lurie cites finances as one reason for the Lounge Lizards' preference for live recording. "This band is very difficult to do in the studio," he adds, "cause everything has to happen live. So you have to have a perfect take for eight people all the way through; you don't do basic drum tracks. It's not impossible. But what's expected now is a record with no mistakes. You start to play and the attitude is 'I've gotta get this right,' so instead of playing it's like you're at a typewriter trying not to make any mistakes. I don't mind the mistakes."

Still, Lurie says the Lizards brought it off, to the amazement of the engineers. Unlike *Live In Tokyo's* material, drawn from the last three years, "most of the stuff on the [new] album we wrote in a cab on the way to the studio! We wrote something the day before we went in."

A propos of writing—Lurie composes most of the Lounge Lizards' originals—he suddenly announces, "I'm getting really good at just getting off the plane, unpacking, taking out my horn and jotting something down. Then it starts to come. I don't work well if I sit down for five hours and try to write. I have to play for twenty-five minutes, figure something out, and let it stir around in my head."

continued on page 97

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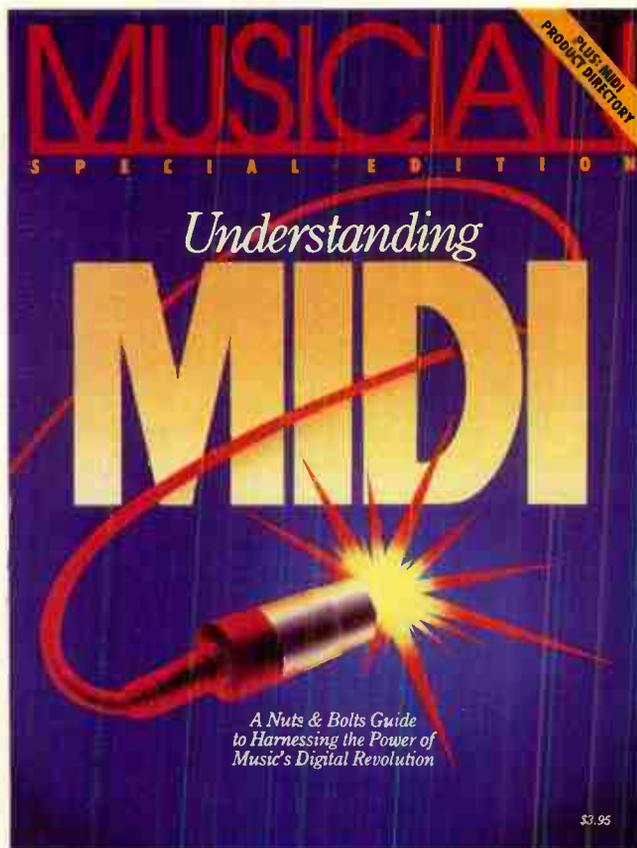
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DAVID & DAVID

Songs of Innocence and Experience

The Los Angeles duo David & David is riddled with contradictions, both forced and unforced. For starters, their debut album, *Boomtown*, emphasizes long pieces locking into smooth grooves that lure the listener like a beckoning finger. But atop this sprightly, seductive music are themes of loneliness and alienation—shattered dreams and seedy scenes peopled with characters like the Cleanup Kid,

Handsome Kevin and Ms. Cristina.

When asked about the casting of these characters, singer-lyricist **David Baerwald** replies: “A lot of it is that I wanted me out of the songs. I don’t think I achieved that actually. I was trying to nullify myself as a protagonist. And in doing so, I found myself even more of one!”

The LP, with “Welcome To The Boomtown” as its radio and video calling card, has ascended the charts with surprising velocity—surprising, that is, to nearly everyone but David & David. “Well, it’s hard to be surprised if you

don’t know what you’re in for,” observes composer and multi-instrumentalist **David Ricketts**.

“Yeah, we really didn’t know what to expect,” Baerwald agrees. This wide-eyed posture seems distinctly at odds with *Boomtown*’s worldly, jaded view. Moreover, the Davids’ professed innocence about the workings of the “music biz” doesn’t jibe with their considerable experience in various bands before teaming up two years ago.

They do claim that their previous (and separate) dissatisfaction with the band for-

mat was a big factor in recording as a twosome. But in the David & David operation, exception *is* the rule. So their anti-band stance hasn’t prevented them from assembling a live unit for a tour that started in November.

How will it be to return to band work?

“I think it’ll change things, it’ll loosen us up,” Ricketts responds. “But I realize how protective I am about getting into that stuff. ‘Cause I never got satisfaction that way.”

All things considered, one suspects David & David will get satisfaction *this* time.

— *Duncan Strauss*

BAD BRAINS

Speed-Rock With a Heart

Talking influences with the Bad Brains? Prepare to get some curves thrown at you. “You know, Black Sabbath, Budgie, stuff like that,” says the band’s bassist **Darryl Jenifer**. Budgie?! “Yeah man,” he chuckles. “They were *hard*.”

So are the Brains. They have been since 1977, when



they were just Washington, D.C. kids playing tunes and trying to get away from all the “negativity” they saw around them. They even dabbled a bit in jazz fusion. “Sure,” Jenifer confirms, “we got into McLaughlin and stuff like that.”

But ever since the Brains flushed the fusion, they’ve been known as the most potent of all the hardcore bands, sidestepping the cartoonish hate slogans and nihilistic mantras of the Pacific skinheads. Their music is charged with Rasta-tinged lyrics calling for ye olde one-world brotherhood.

FACES

"That was our whole motivation to do the thing," Jenifer continues. "We had our concept of what we wanted to be and we stuck to it."

After an EP and a ROIR cassette showed them to have the power, the Ric Ocasek-produced *Rock For Light* proved they had a shot at hardcore glory. The LP paralleled the full-bore onslaught of a live show. Mayhem, yes, but control too. A Brains show is a well-rehearsed ballet that strives to unite the ferocious in-the-moment possibilities of randomness and the lasting beauty of design. Speed-rock to end it all.

"That's what we do," Jenifer laughs, "go straight and bust it out. You shouldn't be thinking of nothin' except executin' and comin' off with your heart."

Back together after a slight breakup, the Brains have switched gears again. The new *I Against I* finds them amending their attack by (slightly) metalizing their sound. The slick but steely Ron St. Germain production celebrates the band's chops as well.

"We didn't *decide* to slow it down," the bassist claims. "Some songs just call for that. We've changed, we're going forward."

The Brains were weird individualists when they rose to the top in the predominantly white-kid genre of hardcore. Now they're crossing paths with that other bastion of white males, metal. And Jenifer reminds that unlike *I Against I*, their live show will still contain a dose of overt reggae tunes.

"We get tired, we slow it down. We're old ladies, man." Old ladies who love Budgie. — *Jim Macnie*



KURTIS BLOW

Old School, New Classes

Back to the old school." That's how innovative rap stylist and first-generation survivor Kurtis Blow describes his new *Kingdom Blow* album, an eight-song collage of scratching and snippets of other songs. But it's not dated. Today, he says, "a lot of the beats we used to rap to in the beginning are being combined with new production touches like Roland 808s. I'm just giving the history from then to now." No wonder the rapping on "Street Rock," a grinding collaboration with Bob Dylan ("he's a legend and—to a certain extent—I will be"), struts non-stop like Grandmaster Flash's "The Message." And "The Bronx" emerges a busy, hardcore dedication to places such as the legendary Club 371, one

of the hangouts rap calls

To advance rap from there, Blow says he created a formula that legitimized the genre. Before his landmark "The Breaks," he notes, "all that was going on was ego-tripping. 'The Breaks' had the first meaningful lyric—a story." As a result, radio programmers, record magazines, singers, musicians and others not involved in the street scene took notice. "The Breaks," Blow adds, "changed the whole image of rap music."

Ditto for Blow's 1980 recording of Bachman-Turner Overdrive's "Taking Care Of Business" on *Kurtis Blow*, and *The Deuce*'s "You'll Be Rockin'," which became a crowd favorite live. Blow claims, "The producers of Run-DMC got the idea of doing rock 'n' roll rap from me." True or not, Run-DMC has been considerably more successful. But Blow is philosophical; "Others may

Black Flag Furls It Up

Hardcore fans might already have guessed it, but just to make it official: Black Flag is no more. After a hyperactive 1986—they toured for nine months and released a live LP—the band decided to take a year off. The sabbatical became permanent when guitarist Greg Ginn realized he was fed up with rabid audiences and heavy touring expenses; he was bored with the band in general. Ginn also has his own band, Gone, to keep him occupied. Vocalist Henry Rollins, meanwhile, has recorded a solo LP; unlike his previous spoken-word efforts, this one has music.

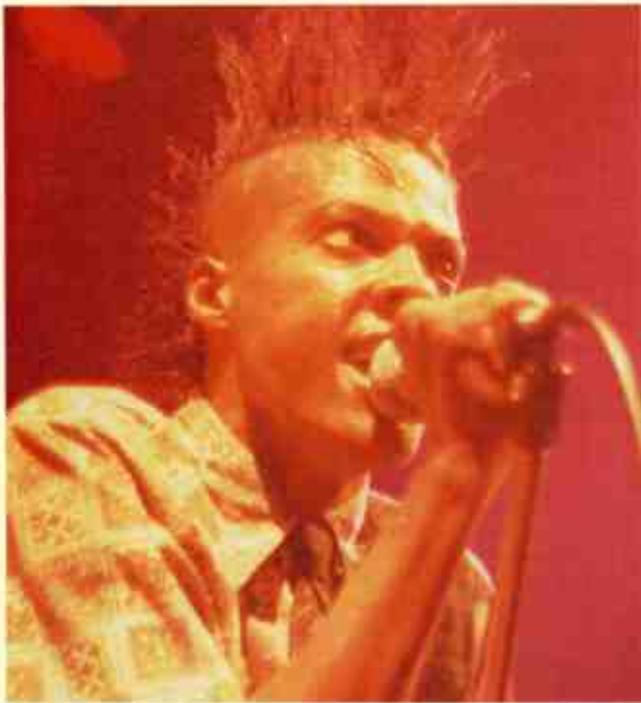
be kings but I was their teacher."

Another Blow first is his combining New York rap with Washington, D.C. go go. "It was 1980," he recalls. "Even with my \$50,000 worth of new equipment, this opening band named Trouble Funk kicked my butt." Figuring "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em," Blow recorded "Party Time" with E.U. in 1982; this year Trouble Funk contributed tracks to "I'm Chillin'," *Kingdom Blow*'s initial single. In the interval, L.L. Cool J, Doug E. Fresh and a slew of other MC's have exploited Chocolate City poly-rhythms—all the way to heaven.

Is Blow still influential? He thinks so. On the new album's "Reasons For Wanting You," he eschews gangster posturing for sensitivity. "I think B-Boys are growing up now."

Articulate and business-like, he sure has.

— *Havelock Nelson*



FISHBONE

Hanging on to Eclecticism

It's not a lot of one thing, like the first record was," Fishbone guitarist **Kendall Jones** says, comparing the L.A. band's self-titled debut EP with its new *In Your Face* LP. "I'm not saying [the EP] was bad. It just didn't have enough songs that really showed the full gamut of what Fishbone's about."

This observation may surprise those who remember last year's EP as a crazy quilt of funk, ska, psychedelia, thrash and edgy modern pop—stitched together with more enthusiasm than chops or focus. But Jones is right about *In Your Face*: It is pretty eclectic, as well as a far more tuneful and assured work. The often-wry lyrics cover nearly as much ground as the music, scooting from rallying cries for peace and unity to randy mutterings that earned the LP an "Explicit Lyrics—Parental Advisory" tag.

The record suggests a quantum leap in composing

and playing skills for the young sextet. Some of the credit may belong to producer David Kahne, who has a reputation for significantly altering songs—even bands—in the studio. Did Kahne play a big role in the creation of *In Your Face*? "Yes, he did," Jones replies. "He's like the seventh member."

No kidding. Kahne helped write half of the album's tunes and played "additional keyboards and guitars." But it's apparent that Fishbone's growth is the real McCoy, not just the product of studio hocus-pocus. Catch the group live (the current tour's dubbed "Bone in the U.S.A.") and the highly animated show confirms that the new, improved Fishbone benefited from Kahne's input while retaining its delightfully odd, broad vision.

"We've never limited ourselves to one groove or trying to play up to people, because you never last that way," Jones asserts. "All the bands that mean something now—that aren't just blatant corporate puppets—are bands that stuck it out and hung on to their own sound."

— *Duncan Strauss*

LOVE AND ROCKETS

Out of the Darkness

One dip in the trippy currents of Love and Rockets tunes like "Kundalini Express" and "Yin And Yang The Flower Pot Man," and the word "psychedelic" naturally springs to mind. However, singer/guitarist **Daniel Ash** cringes at the description. "There's nothing wrong with the word itself," he observes solemnly, "but it's often taken to mean the 60s and hippies. All we're concerned about is feeling truly free." Singer/bassist **David J (Jay)** adds, "'Transcendental' is a better word," prompting Ash to exclaim, "We want to fly!"

Which in itself is big news for anyone who remembers Ash, Jay and drummer Kevin Haskins from their late 70s/early 80s days in Bauhaus, the British cult quartet whose taste ran to songs like "Kick In The Eye," "Bela Lugosi's Dead" and "Exquisite Corpse." "Bauhaus tended toward the shadows," J notes. "Love and Rockets is

the lunar end of the spectrum."

When Bauhaus scattered to the winds in 1983, Ash and Haskins played in Tones on Tail, Jay worked with the Jazz Butcher, and singer Peter Murphy forged a solo career, among other projects. Minus Murphy, they reassembled in early 1985 and became Love and Rockets, borrowing the name (without permission) from the Hernandez brothers' popular comic books.

Where Bauhaus seemed geared to a rabid minority, Love and Rockets wants hits. Thus the trio's first U.S. LP, *Express*, features a reworked version of the Temptations' "Ball Of Confusion" that's tailored for maximum chart action. In fact, Ash says he and his pals were never satisfied with the comforts of cult-dom. "That wasn't our attitude, even back in '79," he insists. "Some bands want to be obscure, and I can't comprehend that."

So these three skinny English boys have no fear of big-time success? Ash smiles and says softly, "Not much."

— *Jon Young*



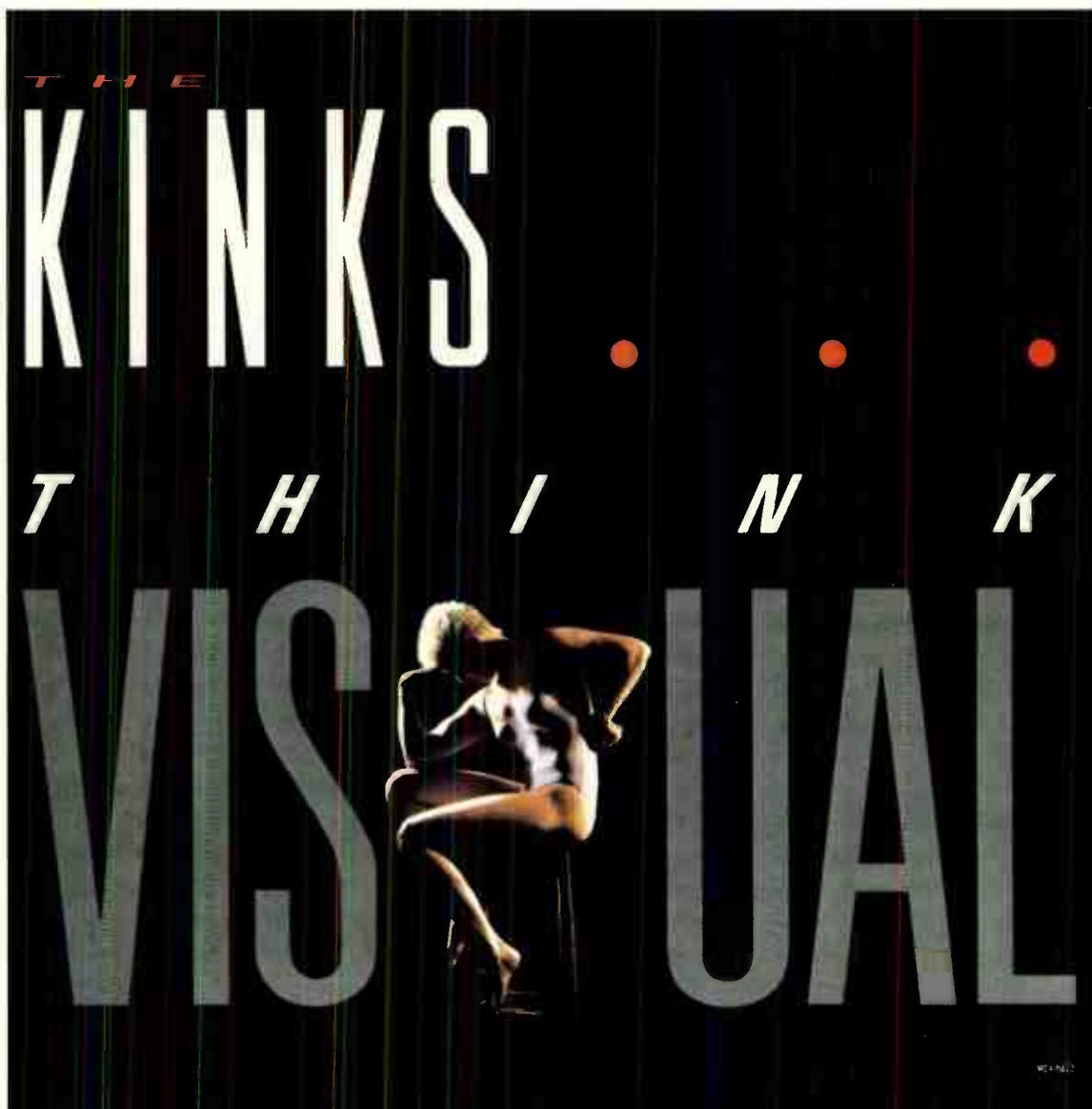
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Tom Scholz makes records slowly. Very slowly. He once estimated he had been working on his first one for seven years before it came out as *Boston*. The second Boston album took a mere two years, but Scholz insists only the first side was really done. His third and most recent album appeared eight years after his second. There are a

number of reasons why Scholz needs this much time, but the simplest is that the man is a compulsive—some would say neurotic—perfectionist. He wants it done Right. This means that, with a few key exceptions, he Does It Himself.

"It's hard for somebody to put down music the way I want to put it down," he explains. "I listen to exactly how every note is played, not just the pitch, the volume or the sound, but the attack, the intonation, and all the little nuances. And if it's not the way I think it should be, then I want to get it done over again and have it done right. When it comes to recording, I'm one of the only people I know that can put up with me."

Among those who've had a hard time putting up with Scholz is CBS Records, who have a three-year lawsuit against him for failure to deliver Boston's third album anywhere near schedule. After a few years of waiting and begging and threatening, CBS cut Scholz's royalties

and sued his ass off. When he finally completed the new album—*Third Stage*—this year, Scholz gave it to MCA Records. It went straight to number one.

Also on the outs with Scholz are Fran Sheehan, Barry Goudreau and Sib Hashian, three of the four other members (now ex-members) of Boston. Fran, Sib and Barry all split with Tom during the long, long wait for LP number three. The fourth Boston, singer Brad Delp, is still in the Scholz camp. Fran and Sib are, like CBS, battling Scholz in court over who broke promises to whom. (Barry sued and settled early.)

But hey—don't let that give you the idea Tom Scholz is hard to work with! Okay, maybe he's a little bit of a Felix Ungar. Maybe he's just a little too...picky? "It isn't pickiness, the way people would think," Scholz insists. "If you use a word like picky, people think of some guy who has no tomato spots on his shirt and his hair is combed just right. Obviously I'm not a picky guy—anybody that's seen my car, or me, or



anything about the way I live would see that. The only thing I'm picky about is something I'm making. I don't know, something happens to me. I have to get into it. I'm driven to not let something go that I think I can do a little better."

Now in a mellow, democratic culture like ours, this is considered uptight, dictatorial behavior, especially when you are a member of a five-piece band. But consider this: Tom Scholz has never made an album that sold less than four million copies. His first one just broke nine million, and *Third Stage* is averaging 600,000 copies a week. Call the guy half the names in a psychology textbook, but don't say he doesn't know how to make a record. And don't, *don't* try to hurry him along. CBS's lawsuit precipitated a savage legal war that may alter entertainment law history, but failed to get him moving a whit faster.

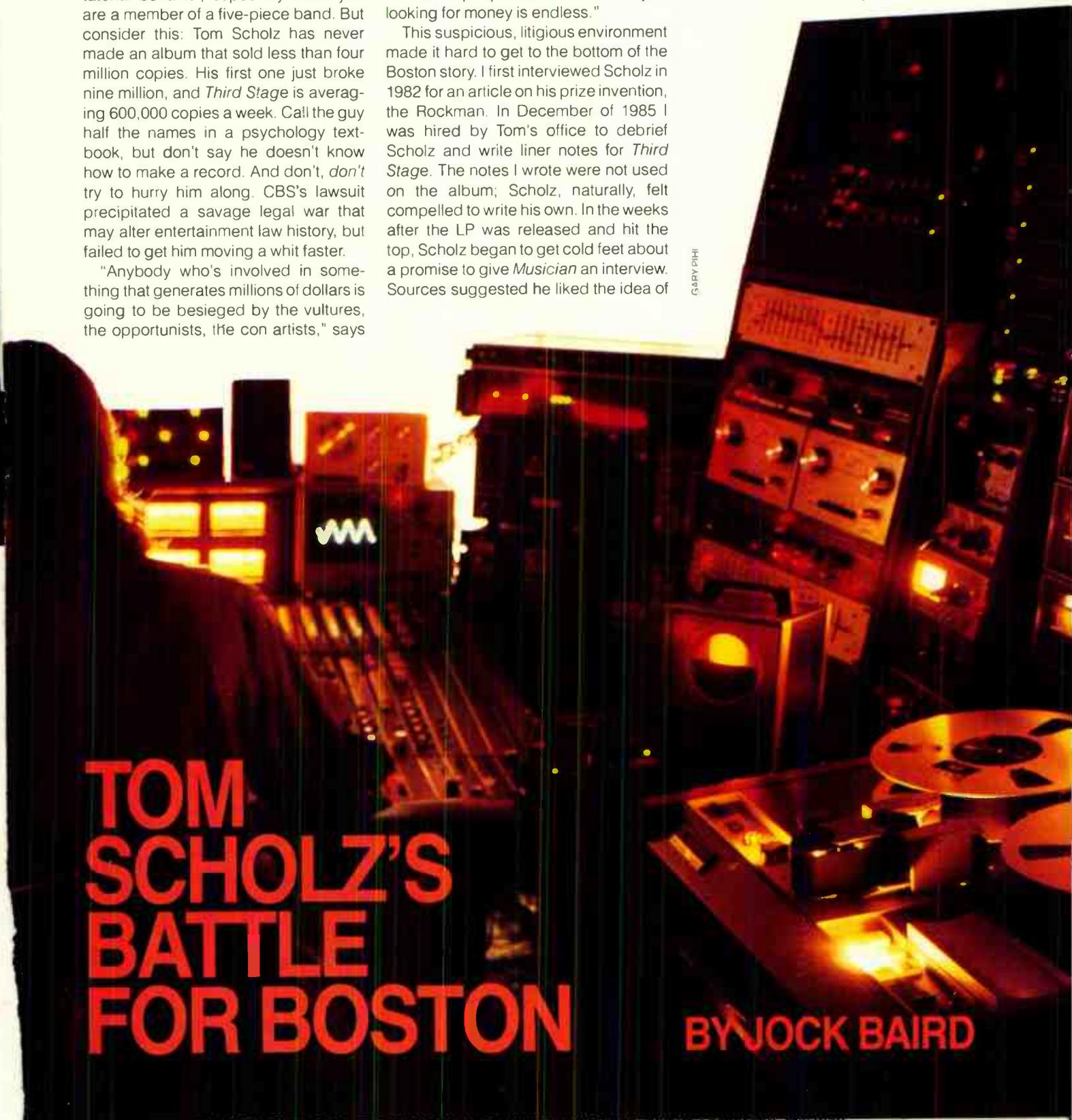
"Anybody who's involved in something that generates millions of dollars is going to be besieged by the vultures, the opportunists, the con artists," says

Scholz. "I've watched people do that around me—like early in Boston's career—and I made a mental commitment to myself that I was going to be absolutely a brick wall. And I stuck to that. My intention was always to be the one guy they couldn't bully around. I was going to stand up to it. And so far it's worked. The line of people out there who are just looking for money is endless."

This suspicious, litigious environment made it hard to get to the bottom of the Boston story. I first interviewed Scholz in 1982 for an article on his prize invention, the Rockman. In December of 1985 I was hired by Tom's office to debrief Scholz and write liner notes for *Third Stage*. The notes I wrote were not used on the album; Scholz, naturally, felt compelled to write his own. In the weeks after the LP was released and hit the top, Scholz began to get cold feet about a promise to give *Musician* an interview. Sources suggested he liked the idea of

creating a mystique around Boston, of having no videos and no articles longer than daily newspaper features.

Scholz's office got wind *Musician* was planning to run a Boston story anyway, and got nervous that we'd use information from my liner-notes interview. (Hard to say what worried them—possibly some less than flattering characteriza-



TOM SCHOLZ'S BATTLE FOR BOSTON

BY JOCK BAIRD

The days of world tours, multiple encores and insomnia. Delp, Scholz, Goudreau, Hashian

guitars on the early demos were done by Goudreau. On that score Goudreau himself cryptically notes, "I will say that Tom had not been playing guitar very long when we began playing together." Scholz admits that Goudreau was present on some of the earliest demos, but that "those didn't work out too well. I later decided to just stick with Jim and me getting the music together. I wish I hadn't had to do all the instruments myself, it was never my intention to form a band and be the central figure and have to do it all. All I wanted was to play guitar. I don't know whether I just didn't run into the right musicians along the road, or what happened. My only other choice would've been to accept other people's interpretations of the songs I was writing and I guess over the years I didn't hear a lot of interpretations that I liked."

Sheehan says he had input in the demo days, too: "I was working with them once in a while. They would keep asking me to join the band permanently, but they weren't playing out. All they were was another band doing demo tapes in Boston. So I'd go and work with them, doing different things, coming up with bass lines, singing vocal backups, stuff like that. And Sib was in the band for a while too. We all contributed ideas about what was good, what wasn't, how this was better, how the mix sounded..."

Sheehan and Hashian have begun litigation over their respective rights to Boston income, so their accounts of the formative days—like Scholz's—have to be taken in that legal light. Certainly Sheehan's consistent use of "they" implies two circles, an inner circle close to Scholz and an outer circle of pick-up musicians that the inner circle bounced ideas off.

When the demos landed a management deal in late 1975 and a band had to be assembled, a major blow was dealt to the inner circle when Jim Masdea was not included. At issue was the chops factor. Sheehan points out: "Masdea just wasn't cutting it. He had just kind of stopped playing drums and wasn't in very good practice or anything. He wasn't really even interested in the drums anymore—he wanted to play keyboards. So I was in

charge of getting a drummer, and I went out and got a guy by the name of Dave Currier, who was the best young drummer in the city of Boston back then. But Currier quit, after we had gotten the CBS contract! His exact words were, 'Something doesn't feel right in this band. There's something drastically wrong here.' We all kind of knew what it was, but it was just a thing of, either we act grown-up about the thing and just roll along with it—and let whoever's going to act weird act weird and the rest of us go about our work like professionals—or it wouldn't have happened. At all."

The original Boston management deal with Paul Ahern and Charles McKenzie only signed Scholz and Brad Delp, as did the record deal Ahern Associates negotiated with CBS. Only a few months later were the other three Boston members written in for equal shares in the LP's performance royalties and tour income. Scholz also received half of a separate producer's royalty and most of the publishing income. Sources in the Scholz camp say that the partnership was expanded because Scholz wanted a collegial atmosphere, despite the fact that when Boston finally went in to cut their debut in 1976, Scholz recorded ninety percent of the LP's instrumental tracks. Sib Hashian's recent suit against Scholz claims an oral partnership that dates back a year, to 1975. (That appears to contradict Sheehan's statement that Hashian joined only after Currier quit in early 1976.) Sheehan, too, says there were oral agreements making the three hired hands part of Boston, but assigns to Scholz a different motivation than the pure benevolence with which Scholz's own people credit him:

"When it finally came time for a band," Sheehan says, "Tom really had to get the best musicians he could, and he couldn't get them because...he's a little tough to work with, let's say. Plus, they couldn't make any money playing out, and it's tough to get really good musicians to play with you unless you're gonna make some money or something. So when we all joined the band, before we got the CBS deal, it was an all-equal thing. He was going to get the kinds of guys he wanted."

tions of ex-Boston members and of a CBS executive.) They offered *Musician* a deal: a new interview with Scholz in exchange for a written promise to not use any of the material from the liner notes session. We agreed and did a second interview with Tom at his company's Waltham, Massachusetts offices. A few days after that I interviewed Scholz's lawyer, who got wind that we had copies of the court documents from the CBS vs. Boston case. The next day I got a call from Scholz saying he felt maybe the last interview had not gone so well—I should come to his home studio for yet another session. By the end of that interview, Scholz seemed to have opened up a lot.

Fran Sheehan, the deposed Boston bassist, said this about the general state of paranoia: "The lawsuit thing has gotten so heavy that it's not so much being afraid of saying something as the fear of having to spend five years in court trying to explain trivial situations that might have arisen even through the article I'm talking to you about. I'm just trying to be fair about everything that happened...but I'm doing just what my lawyer told me not to do: another interview!"

The members of Boston were 60s kids, and the group's transformation from aspiring musicians to legal combatants reminds Sheehan of "a pendulum swinging from high ideals to a system of conflicting values." Maybe it's all part of the Woodstock generation growing up?

"I don't know whether we're growing out or growing up or growing down," Sheehan says. "Whether this is a phase of a generation—or a degeneration."

Tom Scholz was raised in Toledo, Ohio. Although he had an early enthusiasm for classical music ("for its brute force power"), he discovered rock in his teens: "I liked Iron Butterfly, the Kinks, the Yardbirds, that fired-up stuff. I got into rock 'n' roll because they finally got some power into it. Up until that point I couldn't stand pop music, except for a couple of vocal groups like the Byrds and the Hollies."

Admittedly "not outgoing," young Scholz exhibited parallel penchants for basketball and the sciences, and went to MIT around 1966 to study engineering. He stayed on in the Boston area to work for Polaroid. After hours, Scholz was recording

Still, as Scholz oversaw cover art and liner photos in preparation for the release of his music, one thing rankled: the sacrifice of his old pal Masdea, which Scholz says he was unable to prevent. Scholz drew from that an important lesson about control: "Frankly, I thought the whole thing was completely unfair. He had worked on my music for years, did a great job, in my opinion, and got pushed out of the band. He got little credit and no royalties at all. At that point, I was powerless to stop it, but eventually I said, 'I'm not going to let that happen. Nobody is going to do that again.'"

"Hindsight is 20/20," notes Fran Sheehan, but ten years after its release, it's easy to see how *Boston* achieved its colossal sales. There's not an original musical idea on the record, but it's assembled with a wonderful ingenuity and hardly a parsec of dead air. A constant parade of scene changes, stunts and segues accompanies Brad Delp's passionate invocations of love, peace and understanding, groovy rock 'n' roll bands and the joys of picking up foxy ladies. The opener, "More Than A Feeling," became a top five single and a certified FM classic. Overall, the record seemed a tribute to one of Scholz's central working principles: "I listen to these songs thousands of times, which would make you sick of most songs. My rule is that if I'm working on something and I really don't want to hear it again, if it gets going through my mind and I can't stand it, I throw that song out. Not one song on the albums has failed that test."

Success hit Scholz, Delp and company like a firestorm. Accountants told them they were rich, although they noticed there wasn't that much money around. Scholz bought a modest

Scholz: "Jim Masdea got pushed out of the band...I was powerless to stop it. I said, 'I'm not going to let that happen again.'"

home in the western suburbs of Boston and moved his recording gear into the basement to create Hydaway Studios, where he's recorded everything since. As the royalties poured in, the band's tax accountants set up a deferred payment arrangement for some of their album royalties: CBS would invest the money they'd already earned and pay each band member a fixed yearly income. A second so-called "Deferral Agreement" was established after the second album as well. These agreements later play important roles in our story.

The band embarked on a series of well-executed tours and press blitzes. The fiction that Boston was a real band was carefully nurtured at all times. "It would always be that for the benefit of the band, you'd have to lie about things to the press," recalls Sheehan, who handled most of the publicity efforts. "Tom would say, 'You can't say this, this can't go this way, you have to tell an untruth.'" For the most part, these untruths involved minimizing Scholz's musical primacy. Sources in the current Scholz camp suggest he felt the Boston audience would not accept the idea the music was over-dubbed, and because he feared embarrassing the other players.

There is some evidence that Scholz did not take well to touring—the perfectionist in him found the small compromises required in playing live too onerous. Says Sheehan, "It's tough, even for guys who had been full-time musicians playing out on good days and bad days. Tom wasn't really at that advantage. I'd gone through a four-month slump, playing in front of people when my head wasn't together and still kept my confidence through it. But for Tom it was real tough, because all of a sudden the thing had accelerated beyond what any of us had gone through. He didn't have much experience to fall back on."

A source who was with Boston around this time gave this

club players. Scholz himself says, "Everybody who's ever picked up an instrument has a time in his life when he's worried about being accepted as a musician for what he's playing. It was hard to do—is he going to be accepted by the band he's trying to get into? There certainly was a time for me."

Fran Sheehan agrees that Scholz had a lingering insecurity about his instrumental abilities but feels it was completely unfounded: "Tom used to underrate his own guitar playing more than the rest of us did. He'd get down on himself about his playing a lot and I'd go, 'Man, you are one of the finest melodic players in the country! You've got the ability to do anything.' Half the speed merchants out there like Eddie Van Halen, maybe once a month wake up with the melodic ideas that he has going in his head."

Scholz maintains to this day a mistrust of musicianship for its own sake, and even uses it as a cornerstone for his insistence on playing most instruments himself: "I'm not a fanatical guitar player, I'm not gonna do something amazing in a physical sense. The important thing is to know how your playing is going to fit the song. You are not a good judge of what you are doing while you are playing. Quite often I'll do something that I think might be a real impressive lick and I'll play it back and it has nothing to do with the song, doesn't take it any place. Even though it makes me sound like a hot-shot guitar player, it gets erased. I don't like to argue about whether someone should get to play more here."

Among the visiting veterans that made up Scholz's shifting studio band, no one caused as much of a stir as Brad Delp, a bearded Beatles fan from Danvers who had worked with Sheehan. "I showed him the part and he started in," Scholz recalls. "Right then and there I thought, 'This is a guy I have to hang on to.' It wasn't the same close relationship that I had with Jim, not collaboration in the sense of two people working in the same room, trying things. Normally he would come up with some part on his own and I would do another part and the two would fit together. But the nice thing about Brad was his incredible ability in the studio. He was a master at controlling his voice—he could do things over and over, changing one note and doing everything else the same. He's a natural overdubber, he can perfectly match what's already on tape, he can sing her

picture of Scholz on the road: "He's an eccentric genius. The guy has a very difficult time sleeping, he's always thinking ahead of himself, and he ends up in a semi-paranoid state. Unless he has a bunch of people around him going 'Yeah Tom, yeah Tom, yeah Tom,' things aren't very comfortable."

A few months after the tours subsided, Scholz started in on a second album, working in much the same way as he had recorded the debut. But now there was more pressure to accommodate other band members' ideas. Several sources insist the title cut of the next LP, "Don't Look Back," was written by the full band, and a greater attempt than before was made to find little solo spots for each member. But one witness to the process felt Scholz was unreceptive to musical input, calling his attitude one of "How dare you give me an idea?" "Close. It was close to that," sighs Sheehan. "He had a hard time hearing other people's ideas, other than something he could use for himself. He would take each idea and go over it. If it didn't really catch, it went in the wastebasket."

Epic Records began looking for the follow-up LP about a year after the first, and as the months ticked into 1978 and the band sat around waiting for Scholz to finish it up, a general anxiety settled in. Actually, by his standards, Scholz had done pretty well—a whole side in about eighteen months. And it was not a bad half-record, more musically adventurous than the first album, and less prone to repeating ideas. And it sold as well as the first half of *Boston* did, four million.

The second side dropped off a cliff. It was a Boston recording about two drafts before we usually see it. "Don't Look Back" was questionably received because it wasn't complete," says Scholz now. "That album had one side finished and it was virtually forced out of my hands." A subsequent Scholz legal memorandum claimed he "succumbed to pressure from [manager Paul] Ahern and CBS." Having delivered the second Boston album in July of 1978, the band hit the road again, adding a European leg. "The group was on tour for more than a year," continues the memorandum, "ending about November of 1979, at which time the group was 'burned out.'" But the real fires were only beginning.

Scholz was becoming embroiled in a legal tussle with manager Ahern; some legal papers allude to the fact that Ahern owned a piece of every song Scholz would write, which made Scholz less than eager to write songs. Sources in the Scholz camp admit that in 1979 Scholz called a meeting of the band and told them to work on any solo project they wanted during the next year, because the suit with Paul Ahern would delay the album. Later Scholz said he felt that encouragement had created a "Frankenstein monster." It came at a time of growing resentment within the band over songwriting. A particular sore point was Scholz's decision to try a couple of songs by outside writers, bypassing the band members' ideas.

"That was a touchy thing," notes Sheehan. "We worked for hours and hours rewriting these other people's material, and some of the guys were a little unhappy. They had songs themselves." Barry Goudreau finally announced he would be doing a solo album. "The only reason Barry's album was done," Sheehan relates, "was out of frustration."

Meanwhile, Scholz decided to change the way he had been trying to create music for the previous three years. After all, he felt his most productive time had been back when he had a day job and did music on the side. So Tom Scholz got himself a day job. "Yeah, that was the main reason for starting Scholz Research & Design," laughs Scholz. "I definitely needed a job. I didn't like this thing of trying to go to a studio in the morning and write songs because that was your job. In 1976, the day after I quit Polaroid, I thought music was a great job. But it's lousy. It's a terrible job and a terrible way to try to create. How

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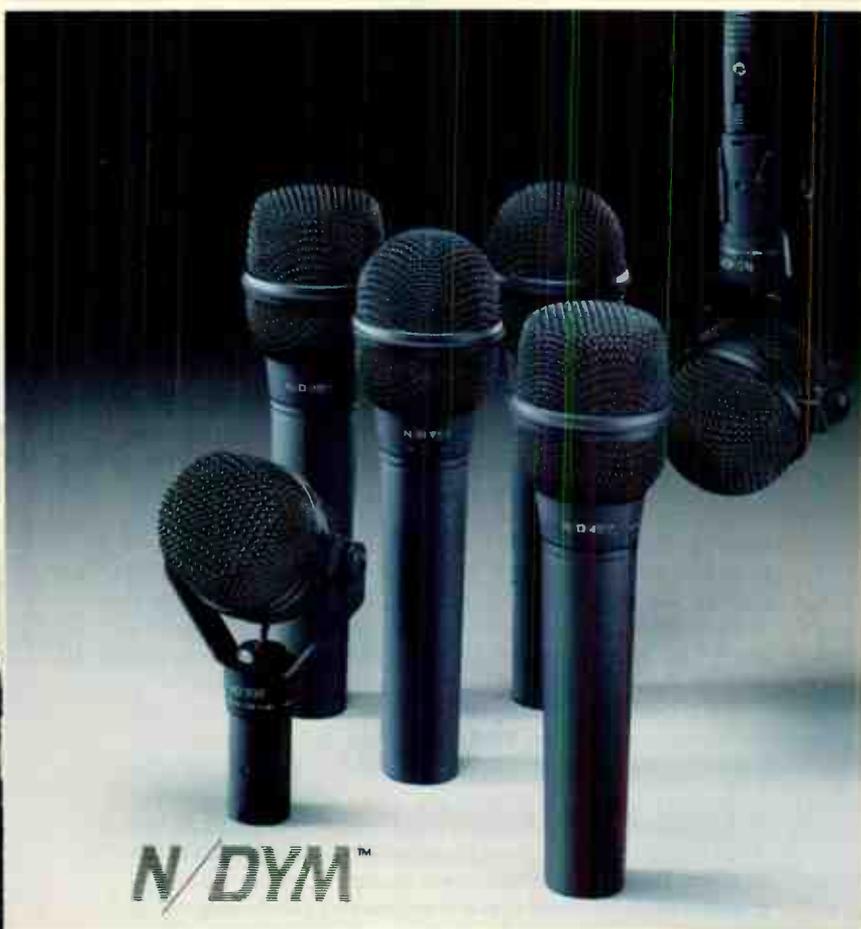
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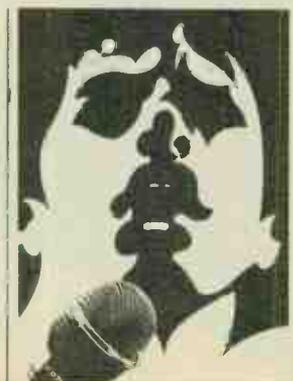
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LEE RITENOUR

goal was to set out on his own, his father tried to steer him into the role of studio player. The elder Ritenour thought this situation might be steady, allow for a normal home life, and not require much travel. "What he didn't know," muses Lee, "is that being a musician—period—is not sane."

Drawing from various early influences, including Howard Roberts (Lee's "idol"), Dennis Budimir, Tedesco, Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel, Ritenour actually played on his first session at age fifteen. He was part of a band called the Afro-Blues Quintet produced by the

Mamas & Papas' John Phillips. Rit recalls the session: "I was fifteen because I didn't drive and my dad had to take me. It was in Bel Air at John's house and what I didn't know at the time was a band member was supplying drugs to John. And that's why he started to produce us."

Though Phillips' interest in the band may have been non-musical, he did manage to turn an ear to this underage wonder, and later referred Ritenour for a session with drummer Ed Greene (for a Phillips solo album which was never released). The word soon got out and for

the next five years there was rarely an album released by a solo artist or a band not totally self-contained which didn't feature his name on it. While one might have expected him to choose a Barbra Streisand or Frank Sinatra or Pink Floyd session as one of his most memorable, it was the early dates with Barry White that come to mind.

"Believe it or not! We'd have these great five-man guitar teams with me, Jay Graydon, David T. Walker, Carlton, and Ray Parker. But you couldn't hear it on record because it was buried with strings and vocals. And he put these horrible tunes over the tracks."

On those early dates, Lee played live with the rhythm section or the band. But as studio time grew increasingly more expensive and the recording process became terribly secularized, he was brought in strictly for overdubs and many times never even saw the artist he was working for. Added to this was the frustration of not having a (musical) voice, and in order to offset this growing restlessness, he recorded an album of his own in 1976. Titled *First Course* and produced by pal Dave Grusin, it drew heavily on his jazz/fusion influences, especially players like Larry Coryell (Lee cites Coryell's *Duster* album as a sort of blueprint for his debut record) and John McLaughlin.

But it was a difficult album to make. Lee's stock-in-trade was as a sideman, supporter, and in so being he shied away from the role of centerpiece. "I was so proud to be part of a rhythm section that added all the right colors and sounds. And that was a problem with my early records because I wasn't enough of a lead voice. There was even a period when I thought the album was so weak I couldn't listen to it."

He admits the playing was a bit "safer" than what he does now and the sound was weaker. But his guitar personality was present, and in the two years following the release of his debut he further developed the style, as heard on *Captain Fingers* and *The Captain's Journey*. His love of fusion-styled music was the antithetical expression of the type of guitar he was forced to play while in the studios: simple pop and R&B. ("A lot of it's not good music.") Returning home at eleven in the evening after a day's worth of fretting, he would stay up until early morning working on various pieces (one of which would eventually turn into "Captain Fingers"). The flirtation with fusion ended with *Feel The Night*, and in a reverse backlash Lee entered a period of pop composition with his *Rit* album,



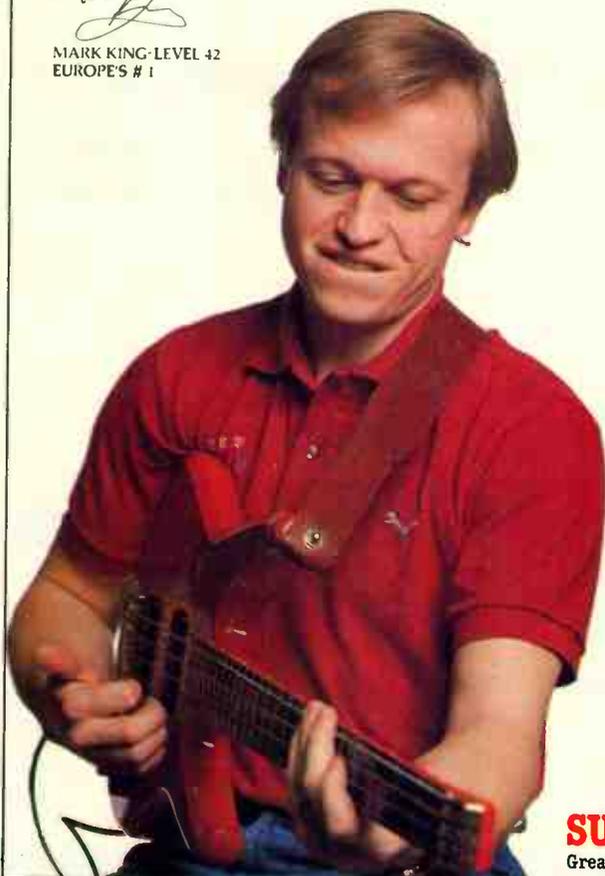
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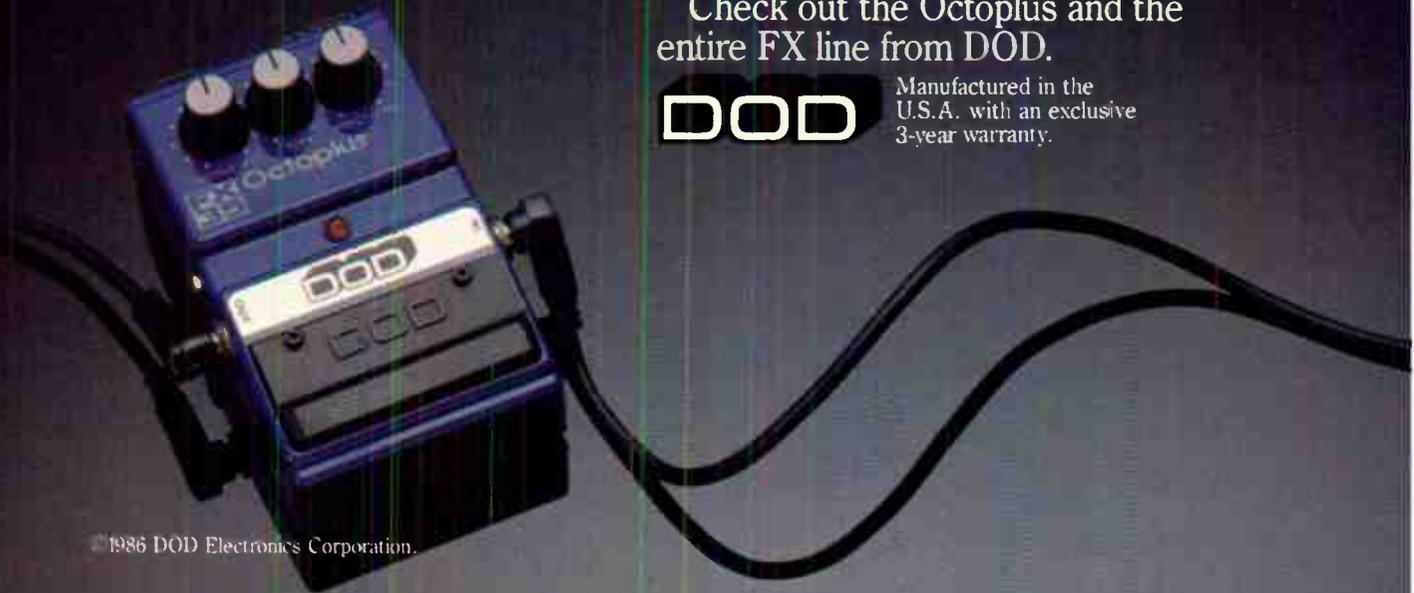
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his first to feature vocals.

"One of the main reasons I went towards pop was that I missed it because I wasn't playing it in the studios. Most people don't know that." Ritenour brought in Texan Eric Tagg to help him with lyrics and later gave in to the desire of making a vocal record. "I thought, 'Well, shit maybe I'll try this.'" It worked. *Rit* yielded a top fifteen hit in "Is It You?" though he admits, "A lot of my audience hated it."

During this period, Ritenour's record company (Elektra) was experiencing internal problems; *Rit 2*, an even more pop-oriented record than its predecessor, suffered the slings and arrows of politicking and went unnoticed. Lee decided his next record should not lie halfway between vocal and instrumental and he made *Banded Together*, a pop/progressive collection of songs centering on Eric Tagg vocals, guitar sounds, and a more diverse use of studio technology (drum machines, et al). Even Phil Collins turned up on a track ("Mandela"). But Elektra had virtually forgotten about Lee, and after a seven-year relationship they parted ways. If Lee's venture into pop hybrid with *Rit* signaled a dangerous change of course, *Banded Together* might have been career-halting.

"People don't look at it a lot, but for the area I'm generally in, that album was destined to get killed. First of all, it didn't get promotion. And it was destined to be slashed by the critics. For me to do that kind of music in their eyes was unbelievable. And on the other hand, the jazzers were ready to slash it for all the obvious reasons. I knew going in I was going to get ripped apart and that takes balls."

Even if the album had met with huzzahs and acclaim, Lee maintains he would not have continued in that direction. Admitting, "I don't see myself as a George Benson and I can't because I don't sing," he could have gone the route of Michael Walden ("Especially if I had stuck with a major label").

"Deep down my personality is in the guitar and I was supposed to balance it off with making more guitar-oriented records. I like anything that's different; I like to stretch my playing. So to do rock 'n' roll solos on *Banded Together* was definitely part of the package. And that's why I might do an album like *Rit* which is all acoustic."

Ritenour's *Harlequin* album, recorded with Dave Grusin, included pieces of his acoustic side and acted as a warmup to his most recent and perhaps most encompassing compilation ever. *Earth*

continued on page 52

TRUE RIT

Ritenour was weaned on the Gibson 335, but he's since replaced it with a variety of more tonally expansive guitars, including a custom-made Valley Arts with EMG pickups and Floyd Rose tremolo; a 1954 Fender Stratocaster; a Paul Reed Smith the guitarist brought into the studios towards the end of the recording of *Earth Run*; and an Ibanez I.R.-10.

On the acoustic end, Lee strums a Yamaha classical (heard on the *Harlequin* and *Earth Run* albums) fitted with a Gibson pickup; Adamas six- and twelve-string acoustics; and a Savarez electric/acoustic. His main acoustic/electric, however, is a Gibson Chet Atkins with an ebony fretboard. Reworked by San Francisco luthier John Gilbert, it now sports realigned frets (to combat intonation problems), and a new position for the pickup. "This guitar gives me that 'word' sound."

Lee plugs his guitars into either a Seymour Duncan or MESA/Boogie amplifier (he prefers the latter for recording because of its ability to blend channels). Live, however, he opts for the Duncan because it has two separate channels to allow for a clean and a distorted setting. For several tracks on *Earth Run* (including "The Sauce") he plugged into the new Scholz Rockman modules. Most of the rhythm tracks are recorded direct (as well as some of the leads): the acoustics are always recorded direct.

Obsessed with the sound of his records, Lee has gone through a multitude of pedals in that search for the perfect tone. Currently, his home studio is fitted with Lexicon Prime Time, an AM2 Stereo Simulator, a PCM 70 (and 200), DBX limiters, and a field of effects which are constantly changing. Live, he brings the Prime Time, AM2 Simulator, the PCM70, and the Yamaha SPX90 multi-effects unit. Other effects include a Boss CE-2 chorus (a device used to color the Chet Atkins guitar) and a TC distortion unit.

"My sound has grown up and it's a big side sound. At times it's very pretty and at times funky. But it's always very rhythmic and even when I'm using distortion, it's still a clean, controlled sound."

To more fully realize his guitar sound, Lee built a home studio which sports Studer 24- and 2-track machines, a Trident Series 80 board (a clean machine), 3/4-inch video with Q-lock synchronizer for his soundtrack work which has recently covered the love themes in *An Officer And A Gentleman*, *American Flyer* and an upcoming television series slated for January, 1987, titled *Houston Nights*. "I think this is an area where compositionally I can do a lot better than a lot of other people."

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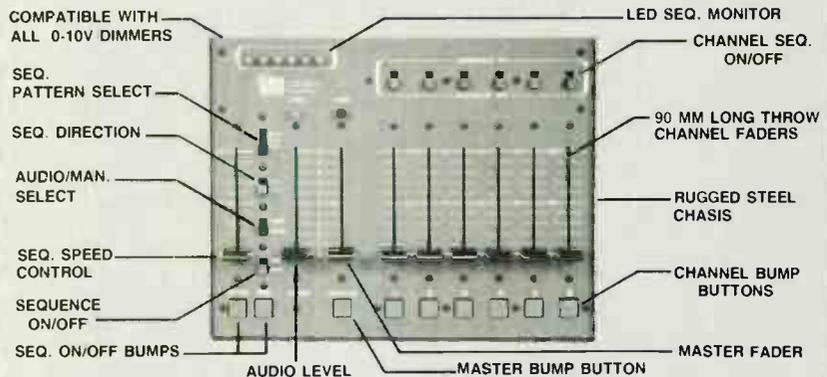
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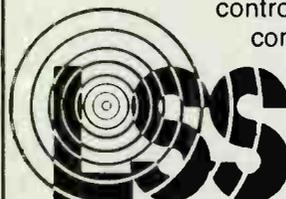
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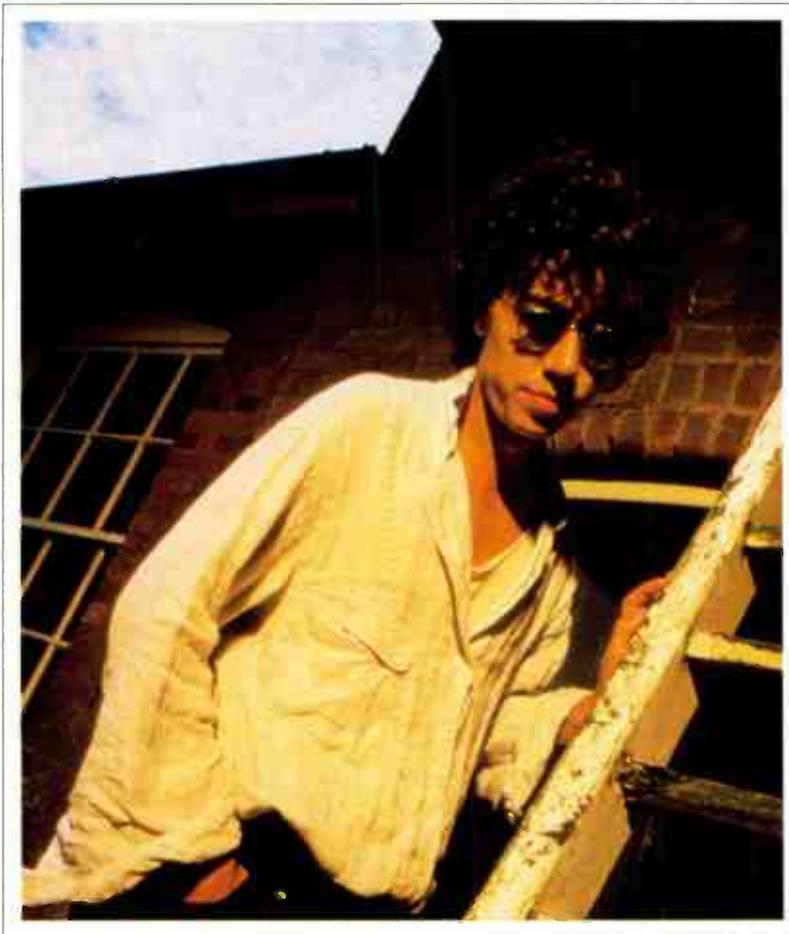
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WORLD PARTY

Karl Wallinger, one-time Waterboy, releases a dark-horse delight of a home-studio LP.

By Richard Buskin

"WHEN I JUST SET SOME INSTRUMENTS up and start playing the type of music that I want to hear; when it starts to build up and is really sounding good; when I'm just lost in that process for an entire night, and then when morning comes I open the curtains, look out, and listen to what I've done, alone, without any need to talk or get myself together for the phone...that's the best time."



"I try not to write the songs first and then record them; I just have a notebook and a drum machine, and actually write things as I'm overdubbing and playing through."

What Karl Wallinger does with that "best time" has recently appeared on a charming little one-man album under the banner of World Party, and it's enough to give him a fair claim to the title of Home Recordist of the Year. The sound is generally melodic R&B pop with a good shot of 60s jangle, produced and arranged in a rough-hewn, freewheeling production style that is endearingly anachronistic in today's super-techno environment. Wallin-

ger's Jaggeresque voice, strong, versatile and of fair range, dashes through a mixed bag of genres, ranging from the Princeisms of the LP's rubbery title cut, "Private Revolution," to the hilarious *Highway 61*-era Dylan tribute, "The Ballad Of The Little Man." Home production works best when it relies on good songs, spare but imaginative adornment, and consistency of intention; *Private Revolution* succeeds on all three counts.

The Man: Twenty-nine-year-old Karl Wallinger has indulged in music since his first piano lessons at the age of nine in his native town by the sea in northern Wales. Pop, rock 'n' roll and soul were major influences on him during his teen years, when he gained considerable experience playing in various bands prior to upping roots and moving to London in 1977. The next five years were spent on forming his own bands, independent record releases, sessions playing a barroom piano and even a spell as musical director of the Rocky Horror Show.

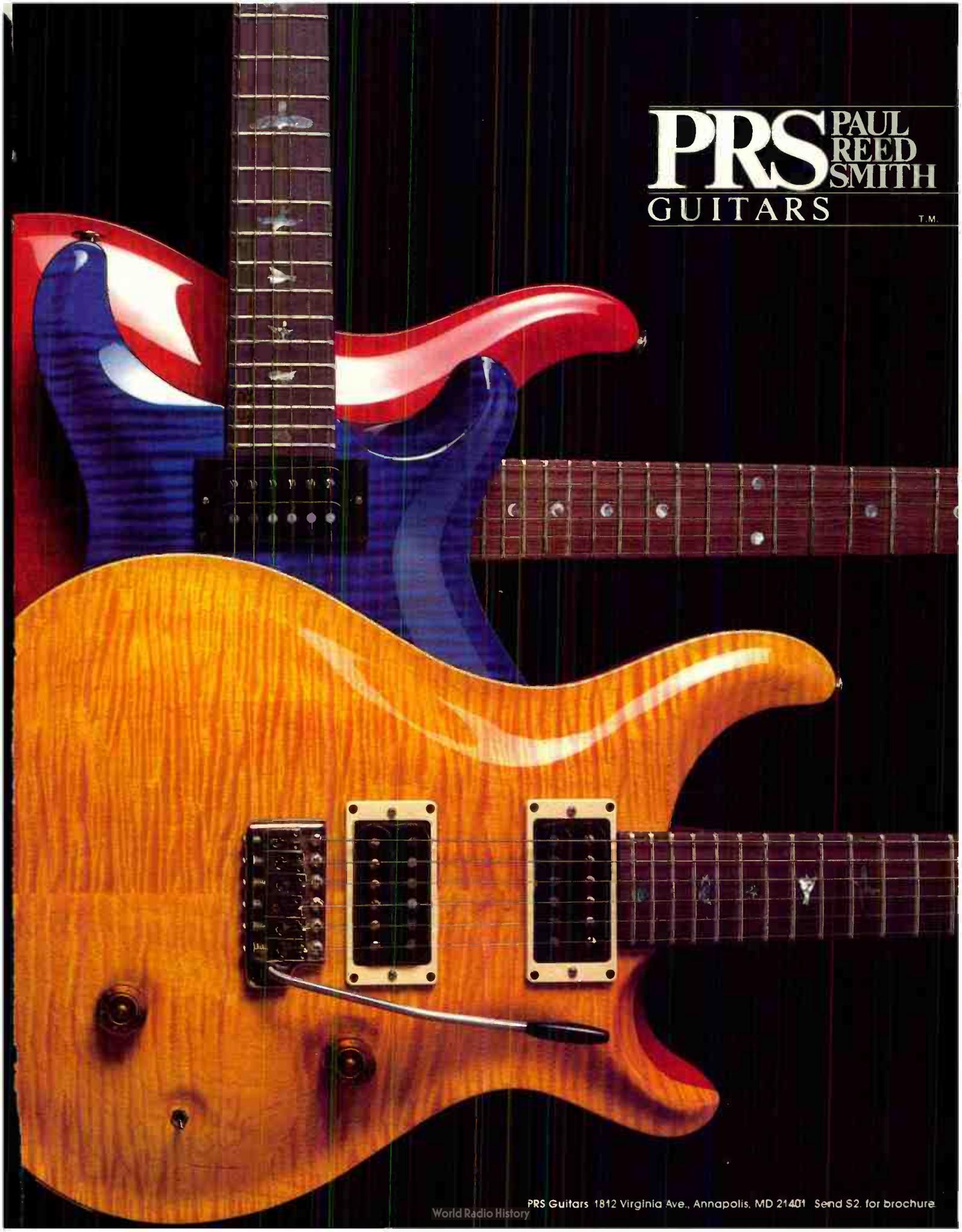
In 1982 he joined funk band Out as lead vocalist, and the following year he switched his attention and his time to the Waterboys, for whom he played keyboards on the *Pagan Place* album before acting as vocalist, instrumentalist, co-composer, producer, engineer and arranger for their next LP, *This Is The Sea*.

This self-sufficiency led to his own contract as a solo artist and his departure from the Waterboys. World Party was "formed," and the first album, *Private Revolution*, consists almost entirely of Wallinger's own work, apart from some saxophone, violin and backing vocals, culled from two-and-a-half hours of material recorded at his home studio.

The Look: The sort of result that you would expect had it been possible to mate Lennon with Dylan: Granny glasses, tousled hair and overcoat 'n' sloppy pants appeal. Admittedly, the fact that when I met Karl he was hungover on the morning after the night before could have explained the reason for his hair: being more tousled than in his photographs, and the dark shades fitted over the front of his glasses.

The Motive: music in the blood, a message for the world to hear, or a burning desire to be successful? "Music definitely seems to be in my blood whether I like it or not. As for 'a message that the world wants to hear,' I always get very worried, getting sweaty palms and going very red when there's no one else around! Being successful, on the other hand, has never

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seemed important to me in the past, and I don't think that will change! Of course there's a part of me that thinks, 'Well, that would be nice,' but I don't think I'm one of those people for whom it's a huge motivating force, treading on people and doing anything to get to the top!

"I've always been making music and I think I'm better at it now than I used to be, but you've got to be realistic about how things can turn out. It's like reading a book; you just turn the page and see what the hell's happening tomorrow! I get through it like that; I haven't got a big wall-chart with everything lined up on it! I'm not blinkered in any way as to the na-

ture of the business that I'm in, and I know how to survive hopefully. I think that's important. I don't think you can be unrealistic to the extent that 'I couldn't have done this if I didn't get a record deal, I couldn't have done this if I didn't have a home studio....' I believe in the practicalities of the situation, and I like exploring the technology; a new box of tricks is quite inspiring, so to get that you have to be aware of compromise. You can't kid yourself!"

The Inspiration: "The Beatles—especially Lennon—early Stones, Neil Young, Talking Heads, Prince. I'm pretty eclectic."

"The thing about John Lennon was the life-guide. He always seemed to me to be a pretty regular guy, when confronted with all of these mad situations all his life, like being in vans being shaken by thousands of screaming girls, meeting heads of state, or having people burn his records simply for being misunderstood! He'd always walk around normal in the middle of this insanity, saying things like 'It's dead crazy being alive!' He always seemed to be like this big school kid with scratched knees, and I just liked the way he always hung on to being very direct and didn't let go of what he wanted to say. 'Nobody told me there'd be days like these....' I always liked that directness."

"I don't mind what the inspiration for my music is or where it comes from, as long as it seems like the right thing at the time for whatever song I'm doing. I try, however, not to write the songs first and then record them; I just sort of have a notebook and a drum machine, and actually write things as I'm overdubbing and playing through. So by the end I've got all the music and the lyrics as well, and then I'm ready to do the vocals. It would be more difficult to write the songs completely before recording, and I've no inclination to try that...too much of a headache! No, seriously, I don't like getting in the way. I find that when I don't think about something it comes out better than when I do think about it and try and make it something, and sort of make it fit. It's like the difference between silk and man's imitations of it. You can also get disciplined to the point where you can eventually write whole songs by just picking up a guitar and playing the rhythm. You can actually write a song there and then, and you can develop that just like some martial arts person develops a ridiculous kick that you didn't think was possible to do. There is a way of thinking about words all the time, like Dylan used to say, 'I use words like other people use numbers.' That whole kind of juggling thing; you got the impression on some of his records, like 'All I Really Want To Do' [which Wallinger covers on the LP], that he wrote them as he was playing them. The gaps in between the verses are like him thinking of the words for the next verse, and I think that's quite something! You can sit down and think about something—and for some things you have to—but it occurs to me it's just as great to sit at the piano and write another song that comes from I don't know where."

"I can do that at the moment only on a level where I might not want anyone else to be around when I'm doing it, so I'm

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part way there! I think it's a discipline that one can build up to, and I think anyone can develop that. It's just like building up your muscles; even if you're like me there's still hope!"

The Studio: Wallinger's home has had no amendments made to the interior structure or design, in order to house equipment which includes a 16-track Soundtracks desk, Beta digital mastering, Akai and Ensoniq Mirage sampling keyboards, Yamaha SPX90 digital reverbs, Revox monitors, Electro-Voice speakers, a Bel delay and AKG and Shure microphones.

"I try to use electronic drums as much as possible. I've got the Akai sampler and I play amalgamations. I haven't got a good room to do everything in, so there's the bathroom...."

"The Soundtracks desk has harsh eq—three settings of about 50, 800 and 8000 Hz—and although I would prefer more divisions down the frequency range this at least encourages decisiveness and less fussing around. I don't really need more than sixteen tracks for my recordings, as I've said it all in that amount. There are normally four or five tracks of drums, one of bass and a few Mirage overdubs, and not much else.

"The Beta digital mastering is great

because I was getting really depressed about having to do all these line-ups that you see people doing in 'real' studios, and I just wanted something whereby the sound was captured somewhere on the tape digitally, no matter what the levels were.

"I need technology to be quite user-friendly. I feel quite at home in an SSL studio when I'm in it on my own, but that's not easy to achieve. Eventually I hope to have my own. It's not just a case of others interfering, but also that the way they've got the desk wired up isn't necessarily the way you want it, so you're having to work to someone else's system. So it's nice to own an SSL and do it your own way, to be able to buy the best paints and canvas to paint your picture. At the moment my pictures may be alright but I'm doing them on hardboard. I'm still enjoying it, however!"

The Message: Save the world! (Change it.) The lyrics pinpoint many personal and global problems, but suggestions as to how to overcome them are thin on the ground. Perhaps the next album will fill this gap....

"It's very much what we all read, see and hear, tempered with any attitudes that I hold in the first place. It wasn't a case for me of recording an album, but

just recording songs from which an album came about. It was just like having a notebook, writing and recording things as I went along. Hopefully they are things that people will sing and be able to hum; I think that's really important. Something that seems to be made up of the same thread as a current book, or a statement by a politician. It must make sense to people now, and it'll also be a way of shedding some light on what was happening both musically and otherwise in 1986 when looking back in the future."

The Future: Karl Wallinger intends to take time preparing and recording the second World Party album, and for both this and the tours which he intends to undertake in Europe and the U.S. in 1987 he has joined up with five musician friends. The first record has afforded him the time to set up this new band, with himself leading it.

"That's the way things are at the moment. Whichever way it grows is to be seen, but it'll have its own life once it gets under way. It's very early days, but one thing's for sure: World Party is World Party, Karl Wallinger isn't World Party, and the second album will be the best record made over a period of time, whether or not it ends up just being me on my own or with a band!"



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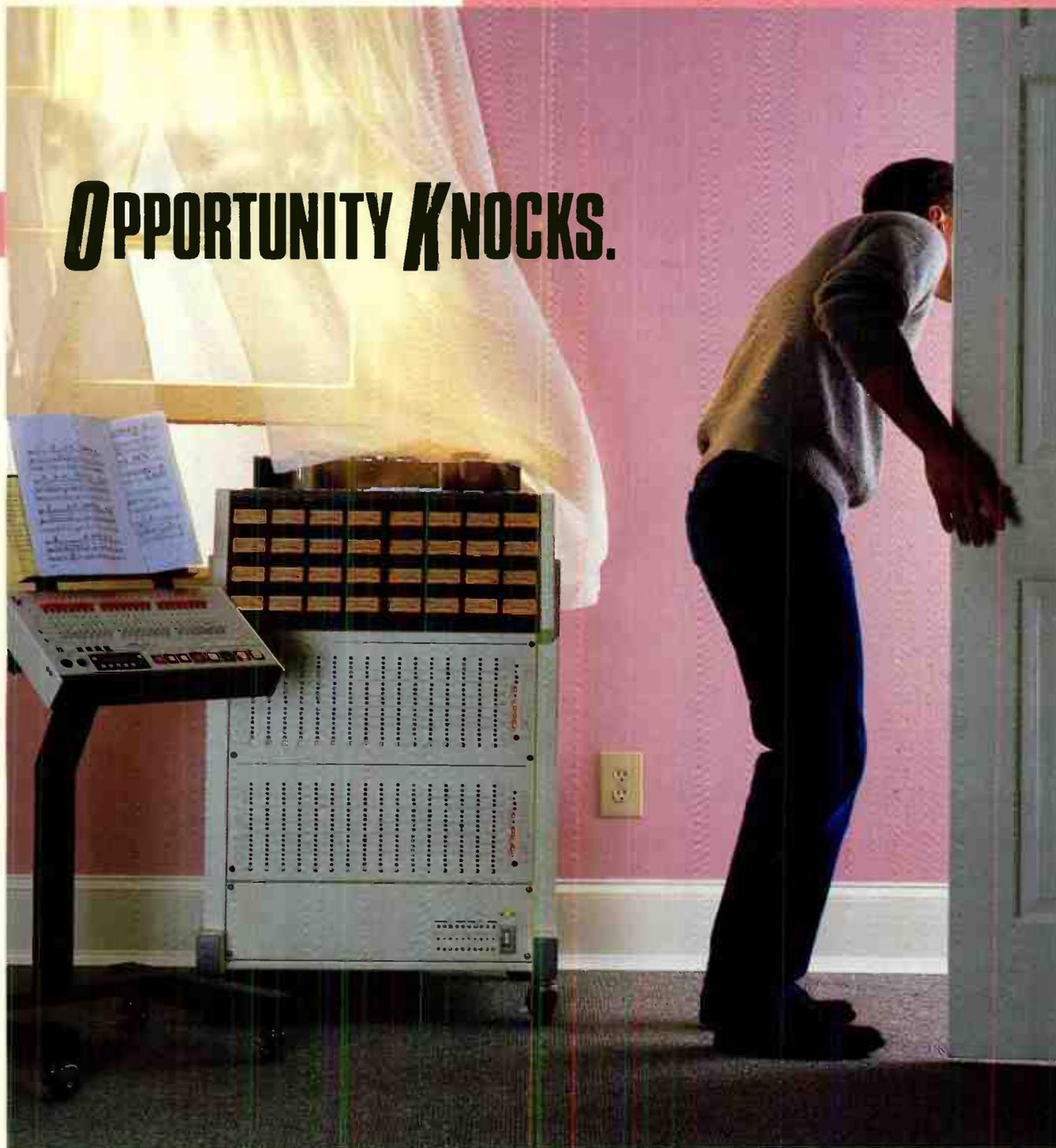
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OTARI

DEVELOPMENTS

Good stuff cheap! A new DX expander unit you can't refuse, plus other steals and deals

By Jock Baird

SOME READERS OF THIS COLUMN DETECT a certain preoccupation with price. Hell, I admit it, I *do* tend to ask what something costs in the same sentence that I ask what it does. And it's true, once the tag goes over ten grand, a certain glaze will creep across my eyes. But bear with me one more month, because here's a product for which my preoccupation with price has become an obsession, where "What

For three hundred and fifty dollars. No, it's not a misprint. \$350. This is beyond cheap. This is ridiculous.

This is only the most spectacular of Yamaha's recent lower-price-range assault. They recently discontinued the QX7 sequencer and replaced it with the QX21, which does more and costs less—\$315. The QX21 is only a 2-track touch-sensitive sequencer, but it retains its sixteen channel assignments even when the tracks are merged. If you have trouble with real-time recording, there's a step mode; there's also chaining functions, great resolution (96 ppqn), dumping to cassette, and a fairly straightforward operating system. Yamaha uses the QX21 as one element in its new cassette studio based around the \$565 MT1X 4-track mixer/recorder. But this all pales behind the rumor that Yamaha is planning to unveil a below-\$1000 synth guitar with on-board DX voices. Okay, everybody into the bomb shelters!

The drive of DX synthesis to domination of the Earth and neighboring planets has made stars of several programmers, especially **Bo Tomlyn**, whose **Key Clique** company has been churning out DX voice cartridges for years. But just like orange juice isn't just for breakfast anymore, Tomlyn & Co. have gone beyond the DX. For starters, they've got Sys/Ex, a new universal system exclusive software program for Apple II, C-64, IBM-PC and Atari ST that lets you save and load data for more than sixty MIDI machines, including Oberheim, Sequential, Roland, Korg, Kawai, J.L. Cooper, and of course, Yamaha. Another computer program is the Roland Super Jupiter Secretary, a librarian for Apple II that gives you 256 voices. Key Clique is also putting its whole DX library on floppy disks for all computers, using Sys/Ex on the same disk. What else? Datacassettes for 4-operator DX synths and Roland Super Jupiter; the TX Secretary, an Apple II librarian/utility; sample disks for the E-mu SP-12; and even a new Apple II program, the Film Music Tool Kit, that calculates time clock or SMPTE code locations for editing film scores. Egads, will this mean a feature film role for Bo? Only his press agent knows for sure.

Other activity in the burgeoning DX universe includes a voice storage expansion system based around a separate rack-mount unit MIDI'd to up to four Yamaha TX or TF modules. It's from **Harmony Systems** and is aptly

continued on page 98



No 6-op snobbery, please: this \$350 4-operator FB-01 has 640 presets and 96 user-programmable patches.

does it cost?" becomes "It costs *what?*!" Of course, I'm talking about the **Yamaha FB-01**, a \$350 rack-mount 4-operator DX synth expander module that blows the floor out of the pro digital synth marketplace.

"Pro?," you may observe sarcastically. A mere 4-operator DX? Ah, you must be one of those 6-op snobs I keep reading about, people who figure if all six FM operators ain't playing, you don't have a hockey team. Well, excuse me for breathing, but 4-operator jobs like the DX9, 21 and 27 sound plenty good to me. Now take a 4-op module that's velocity-sensitive and multi-timbral, give it eight voices and split-keyboard capabilities, then pile on 640 presets (five banks of 48) and 96 user-programmable patches (you will need a new computer DX voicing program to edit the sounds, but they'll soon be available for all computers, not just Yamaha's own CX5M). Now what do you say, Mr./Ms. 6-op snob? There are other features to keep you from condescending: for example, the ability to speed up the attack of a patch depending on how hard you hit the key, a low-frequency oscillator that's so fast it doubles as noise generator, independent on-board memory for complex multi-channel voice splits and assignments ("configurations"), full stereo and absolutely up-to-date MIDI implementation.

465 watts 10 pounds.*

*8 ohms: 465 watts RMS per channel, 10 lbs., 12 oz.

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RITENOUR from page 42

Run, his sixteenth, combines the acoustic/electric elements of *Harlequin*; the compositional maturity on a track like "Soaring"; and his overall growth as an artist and producer. But perhaps the most important facet of this composite-like album is his application of the Synth-Axe. Though he has been entertaining guitar synthesizers since 1977 (with the *Captain Fingers* album and the 360 Systems "bastard"), he still has trouble coping with the SynthAxe. While the instrument plays like a guitar, he is swift in noting that it is *not*, and that if he ever was infected with the notion of recording an album entirely on synth the instrument would have to be "pretty unbelievable."

The Synthaxe is the only real digital guitar synthesizer in that it does not convert the guitar sound from pitch to voltage but works through a fret-switched digital processed controller. Lee finds that bends, slides, vibrato, damping (with right hand), and short and long notes at any velocity are capable of sensitive reproduction on this *Star Wars*-looking piece of equipment. "I feel that my personality still comes out on the

solos even though it's synthesized."

But it still remains very much a production/composition tool, and for the true colors, "I still keep my guitars, the electrics and acoustics in the forefront."

This pioneer of humility is not totally self-effacing. There is a bit of the *enfant terrible* and it has been this constant butting of heads that has balanced the Lee Ritenour makeup for so many years.

"I was always cocky from the point of view that I was more versatile and more for real in each field than anybody I might run into. I never professed to be the best but I'd say, 'Try and beat me at playing in every field.' As far as being *the* rock guitar hero with my guitar down to my knees and saying, 'Check this out,' I never really got into that. I know where those people are coming from and they're probably not the types of guys I'd like to hang out with and have as friends. Their egos are so out of reach and usually they're really limited as musicians because they spend so much time thinking the guitar is their cock. It seems like they don't spend enough time with music. Those kinds of guys want to be in rock 'n' roll bands to get girls—and there's nothing wrong with that." ❑

SATELLITES from page 12

Paul Westerberg "simply the best songwriter around."

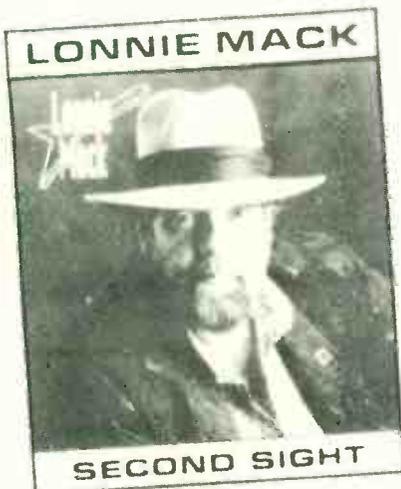
The rest of the band goes downstairs for the soundcheck, but Baird hangs back to talk some more. Ideas seem to fly out of nowhere and smack him in the head, making him jabber "yeah, yeah, yeah" while tugging on his hi-tops.

"Rock 'n' roll makes room where there is none. It's what I'm supposed to do. When I write, I just strum along to an old Hank Williams song, and something happens. All that crap going through my brain becomes 'found items.' The best stuff comes when I'm completely exhausted and my censors are down. But I don't know where it comes from. Some people are born with special demons," he whispers as though his fingers are on a Ouija board.

"Rick Price may go 'poosy' a lot, but I trust him totally onstage. This band has a hoot, but we are all totally aware of our instincts. Knowledge is a great thing, but it won't get you through problems. Johnny Rotten, Lou Reed, Little Richard—they all got instinct. That's what makes us work." ❑

ROCK YOUR HOUSE IN '87!

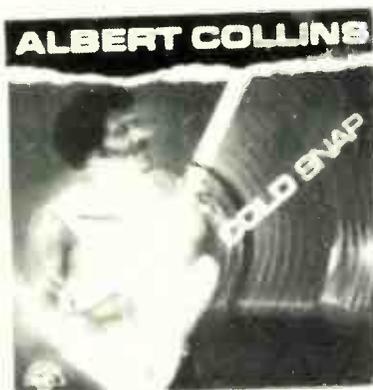
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Real 12-bit Sampling

Based on Sequential's proprietary sampling technology, each of the Studio 440's eight voices delivers the superb clarity and transparent high-end which is the hallmark of true twelve-bit digital resolution. Additionally, the Studio 440 provides the user with *all* of the features required to produce professional audio products. Features like:

- Selectable sampling rates of up to 41.667 kHz so you can optimize memory and achieve full bandwidth on playback.
- Computer-assisted looping functions (including cross-fade looping) so that you can easily produce your own library of custom sounds.
- Multiple sample locations for storing up to 32 different samples in memory at one time.

- True stereo outputs (2) plus separate audio outputs per voice (8) for individual processing of each.
- 32 levels of programmable panning per voice.
- Separate analog and digital controls per voice, including fully sweepable filters and VCAs for modifying any sample.
- Lots of on-board memory (768K bytes) with instant access to hard disks or CD-ROMs via the built-in Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI).
- A 3½ inch double-sided disk drive for storing all work quickly and reliably.
- *Real-time sample monitoring.* You hear exactly how your sample sounds at different sampling rates both prior to and during the actual sampling process.

The Studio 440 is an amazingly fully-featured sampler. We urge you to compare its sound quality with samplers priced to \$15,000. We think you'll agree that the STUDIO 440 is in a class all by itself.

The Master of Controllers

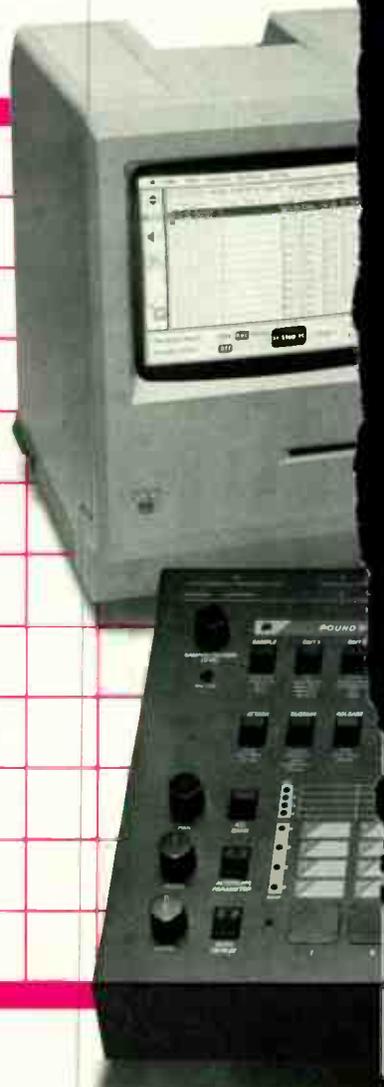
MIDI Sequencing

The STUDIO 440 sequencer controls parallel the transport controls of a typical multi-track tape recorder, emphasizing ease of use. It operates in MIDI Modes 1, 3, and Multi-mode (an enhanced Mode 4), and records up to 50,000 notes with as many as 999 measures per sequence, 99 sequences, a song build function, manual tap or programmable tempo control, single-step and real-time recording. Its two independent MIDI outputs can control up to 32 channels of external MIDI equipment. Each of the sequencer's

eight tracks can hold any combination of internal sound events and external MIDI events. And for ease of editing, all MIDI channel information is retained per track.

SMPTE Time Code

The STUDIO 440's audio-for-visual features are impressive, both as a master controller and as an audio slave. It reads and writes all four types of SMPTE time code, and can synchronize to five different sources: 1) internal clock, 2) slave to external SMPTE, 3) external MIDI clock, 4) external MIDI Time Code, and 5) external clicks of 96, 48, or 24 ppqn.



Production Machine



MIDI Time Code

In addition, the Studio 440 is the first sampler or sequencer to incorporate the new MIDI Time Code, a protocol that encodes SMPTE and sends it over MIDI for use in cue or event lists. Now it is possible to cue punch-in/punch-out recording by bar number, or with sub-frame resolution by programming to SMPTE Time Code. You can even selectively pre-trigger external synthesizers to compensate for their internal timing delays. The Studio 440's capabilities will be further enhanced when used in conjunction with forthcoming librarian, editing, and post-production software packages by companies such as Digidesign,

Hybrid Arts, Dr. T's Music Software, and Opcode.

The Ultimate Drum Machine

If you combine a high quality digital sampler featuring individual outputs with a 50,000 note SMPTE/MIDI-based sequencer, all you need to create a superior drum machine is velocity and pressure-sensitive pads. The 440 has eight, organizing its 32 sound samples into four kits and four banks over these eight sound pads. In addition, every sound has two sets of sound parameters that include sample play-

back direction, pitch-bend envelope, loop types, loop points, start-point modulation, and the familiar VCA/VCF controls.

The four programmable kits allow for infinite variations of the same sound by editing only the performance parameters. Performance parameters can be assigned to any pad and include sound number, pan, pitch, volume, and a choice of one of the two sound parameter sets. These performance parameters are easily edited in real-time, and settings for all eight pads can be stored and recalled instantaneously from any one of the kits. And since the alternate parameters can have individual start/end points for each sound, there are actually up to 64 "different sounds" available at one time.

Sequential's factory library includes over 300 sounds, and is immediately available. In addition, any Prophet 2000 or 2002 sample can be loaded directly into the 440, so the actual number of sounds now available is too numerous to list. The STUDIO 440 is the *ultimate* drum machine.

The Best Value

The STUDIO 440 is a complete, four-in-one professional audio production machine that is small enough to fit under an airline seat, light enough to carry under your arm, yet big enough for any job. The STUDIO 440 is now available through selected Authorized Sequential Dealers. Insist on a demonstration in stereo.

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HENRY THREADGILL

ON BASEBALL, COBBLER AND THE MEANING OF ART
BY JOSEF WOODARD

IT'S BLUE SKIES FOR HENRY THREADGILL. You can pick it up in his jaunty, second-line gait and tour-guide patter as we walk his new Brooklyn neighborhood in search of the perfect lunch. Perhaps it has something to do with the citywide afterglow the day following the Mets victory in the third game of the Series. Or maybe it has something to do with Threadgill's own return to the majors—major labels, that is—with the signing of his Sextet to RCA.

The only ruffle of this fine afternoon occurs when the waitress at a favored Threadgill eatery announces that they've stopped making their famed peach cobbler. "That's a shame," says Henry, "that's some of the best peach cobbler I had in my life. I consider myself a connoisseur. The crust was incredible. I was telling everybody in Brooklyn—Cecil Taylor, Joseph Jarman, Anthony Davis—to try this peach cobbler. I even called up my mother in Chicago."

Cobbler shortage in the avant-garde jazz community is apparently a dilemma on the order of absinthe depletion in turn-of-the-century Paris. Artists must be granted their vices and spices. A tradition is at stake—and Threadgill, a key player in the 60s Chicago avant-garde, an arranger whose mid-70s trio, Air, constructed delightful interpolations of tunes by Jelly Roll Morton and Scott Joplin, and a composer whose current Sextet mixes rootsy truths with a more intellectual European heritage, is no stranger to tradition.

Of course Henry Threadgill is more typically associated with the music's progressive wing. There's even a bit of irony involved in the title of the new sextet release, *You Know The Number*. No one *does* quite have the number when it comes to Threadgill's original vision (there's at least seven people in the sextet,

for one thing). As he did with less grand strokes in Air, Threadgill is redefining the modern jazz ethos, incorporating facets of New Orleans, gutbucket heat, free jazz, and modern classical strategies. He's interlacing the chamber ensemble, the pit band and the after-hours jam more convincingly than any single figure in music.

Major label or no, Threadgill probably won't be joining people named Davis or Marsalis at the commercial free throw line. From his earliest days in Chicago, playing in Muhal Richard Abrams' experimental band, Threadgill has traveled the road less taken. Air received lavish critical acclaim even as it languished in cut-out bins. The Sextet is regarded by cognoscenti as one of the musical highlights of this confounding decade. To everyone else, however, he's still very much "Henry who?"

"Popular, traditional music has gone backwards," Threadgill observes. "In my professional lifetime, this is the first time I've seen this happen. I'm still considered part of the progressive element, and I'm forty-two years old. How long can you go on trying to resist being called the avant-garde? They'll be calling me that for the next ten years."

Does it bother him?

"Not personally, but it bothers my ideal of what I think I'm a part of. I'd like to see someone younger than me doing something different, even if I *don't* like it. Miles was on the television the other night and he was saying he'd have a heart attack if he had to go back and play what he was playing before. You can criticize what Miles is doing now. But I know one thing: He feels good about not doing what he was doing before. That's very clear."

DAVID STEWART



"Art leaves something to the listener;
that's what separates art from craft."

Threadgill's development over a decade and a half of vinyl output suggests a steady growth, and his working credo reflects the title of last year's Sextet record: *Subject To Change*. "I like to be in a state of change," he agrees. "I don't mean change for the sake of novelty, but evolutionary, progressive change—I wouldn't leave something until I'm through dealing with it. This [new] record's got a panoramic view of things I've done over the years that most people don't know about."

We go back to the apartment Threadgill shares with his wife, the singer and songwriter Cassandra Wilson, and their young daughter, to sample the evidence. These are clearly musician's digs; the grand piano takes up the lion's share of space in the living room, and its lid serves as filing space for piles of well-used manuscript paper. True to Henry's independent spirit, even the telephone is a multi-colored affair. The Threadgill school of fashion cool includes a wardrobe of primary color threads that suggest West African dress. But he's also a man who clings to an Emersonian code of resourcefulness and self-determination—books his own tours, writes, arranges and plays, and chooses his gigs carefully. The auteur theory has come to Brooklyn, bearing an alto and an angular haircut.

You Know The Number turns out to be the perfect Threadgill primer. The spry "Theme From Thomas Cole" documents Threadgill the theater composer, part of his score to an eccentric and funny parody of art history. He throws Stax/Volt-like brass exchanges to the band on the atypically straight "Bermuda Blues," then exhibits childlike innocence on "Good Times" (imagine Mr. Rogers as a Blood). Threadgill the signature alto player sculpts a pained ballad on "Silver And Gold, Baby, Silver And Gold." More voltage crackles through the elegant polyphony of the closing "Those Who Eat Cookies," as Threadgill the structural explorer takes the Z train, two stops past Mingus and one beyond Ornette's harmolodicland.

Threadgill is openly excited about the Sextet, which pits some of the most respected names in contemporary music within an ensemble setting that allows its leader unusual textural freedom: Two drum kits (Pheeroan Ak Laff and Reggie Nicholson), cello (Deirdre Murray), bass (Fred Hopkins), sax (Threadgill), trumpet (Rasul Siddik) and trombone (Frank Lacy) making music that's blood and gut, savvy and high theater, and with an indefinable nucleus of swing. Who could ask for anything more?

"I've got just enough room to get across a lot of ideas and materials and to blow things up," Threadgill enthuses. "I can make that band sound as big as a traditional big band—I can write music to blow a big band off the stage. It's all in the instrumental techniques and orchestrations. Instrumentation is very important to me—it's like a painter who picks colors to get the range of what he wants to do. Traditional instrumentation, I just can't get excited about that. I don't hear anything."

Part of the rationale for his eclecticism is strategic; the

chance to bring buried material into the open. There's also a matter of logistics: "We didn't have a chance to do much live performance. I like to perform and then record. It's like a tune-up fight for a boxer. Practice is one thing, but you need someone to pop you upside the head to get you ready," he snickers. "Music does that."

Threadgill has learned to roll with the sundry punches—fiscal and stylistic—of the jazz ring. A resilient disposition helps; so does a thirst for diversity. Growing up in a Chicago ghetto, music became his early escape valve. He studied tenor sax, flute and piano, and took naturally to composition: "I was writing before I could effectively play," he remembers. Although he paid some jazz dues, Threadgill's sights were wide; he studied classical theory in several colleges and found employment in odd gigs.

"I couldn't get work with tune bands—they didn't think I could play. So I played with blues bands, marching bands, and Puerto Rican bands, plus theater. My first wife was an actress, and she introduced me to that crowd. I started analyzing the 'happenings' of the 60s, stuff that I'd heard about but hadn't looked into."

Threadgill's persistence and vision can also be traced to his time with Chicago's AACM; his mix of structure, free spirit and loopy humor finds some parallels with the Art Ensemble of Chicago's inner-city medicine show. Besides chops and imagination, the AACM helped inculcate a healthy measure of self-reliance: the organization was committed to controlling one's destiny outside mainstream music channels. "We learned right on a grassroots level," he says. "We had to go out and find a place to perform, get money, draw up a contract. We bought a machine to print up our flyers, and then we had to learn how to change the oil and the ink in the machine."

As news of AACM's efforts spread, similar groups sprang up, notably BAG (Black Artists Group) in St. Louis. Threadgill points proudly to AACM's continued existence ("They're determined people. Up and down that river, people had a different kind of drive"), pointing out that in New York, "the machinery is already set up—you buy your Gucci stuff right off the rack."

"Where we were coming from was kind of backwoods," he goes on. "Chicago had this traditional jazz thing happening, and they weren't going to hire us because we were going to play this original music. That was the whole issue. So you have to believe in what you're doing when you decide to get into *your* music, because you put yourself on the spot. That takes a lot of nerve and endurance."

"But, as a result, it builds good character." He lets out a hearty laugh. "It's marine training. When Lester Bowie was president, we'd even talk about training young musicians and sending them over to a part of Europe where nobody had been before with only a one-way ticket and their instruments. We

continued on page 70

"If you go back to the roots of jazz, it
was all about collective improvisation."

STEVE REICH

The release of "the dancing, hypnotically involving" (*N.Y. Times*) *Sextet* and *Six Marimbas* marks Steve Reich's first compositions for percussion ensemble since the classic *Music for 18 Musicians*. Nonesuch (79138)

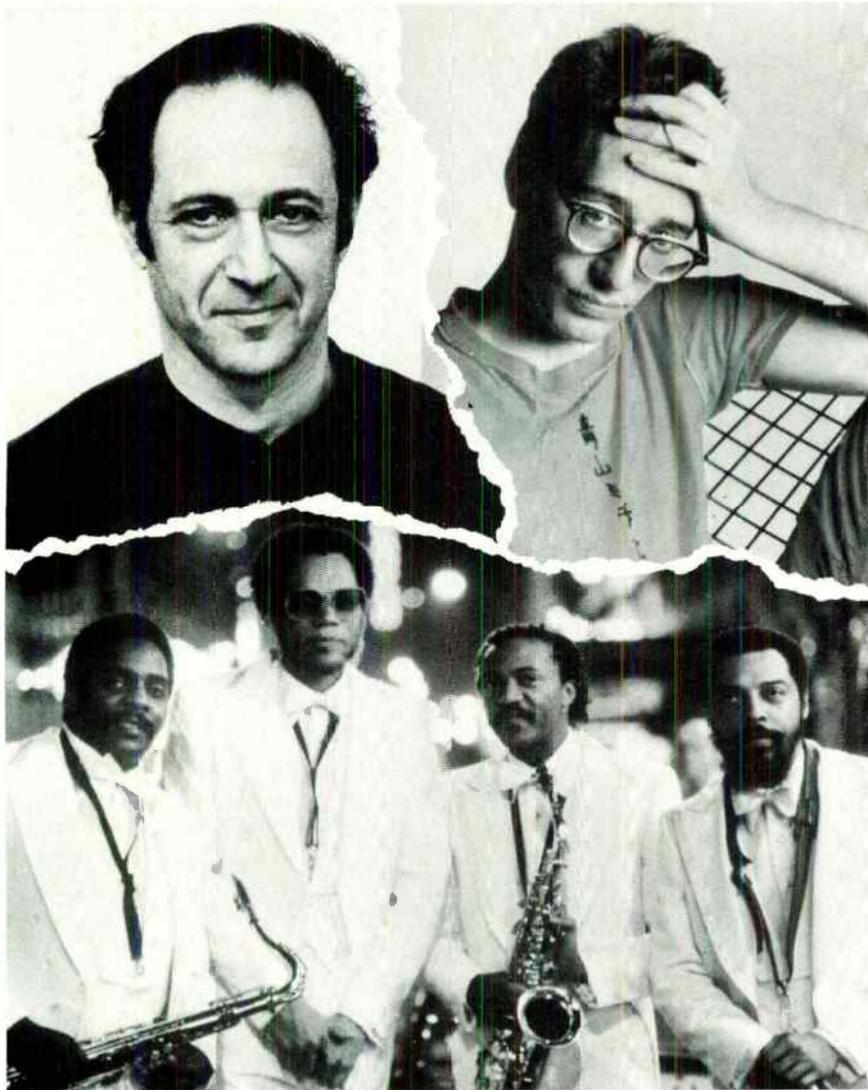


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JOHN ZORN

On *THE BIG GUNDOWN*, "the Lower East Side's reigning musical thinker" (*Vogue*) reworks the music of Italian film composer Ennio Morricone (*The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*, *Once Upon A Time in the West*). "Like Bernard Herrmann's work for Alfred Hitchcock, Nino Rota's for Fellini, or John Barry's for the James Bond movies, Morricone's writing for Sergio Leone marks one of the pre-eminent composer-director collaborations... Zorn's foxy, intrepid arrangements latch onto the soundtracks only to crack them open." (from the liner notes) Nonesuch/Icon (79139)

WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET PLAYS DUKE ELLINGTON

The first American recording from one of the most acclaimed jazz ensembles of the decade. They "breathe life into the entire jazz saxophone tradition." (Robert Palmer, *N.Y. Times*) Nonesuch (79137)



NONESUCH RECORDS.
STANDING APART FROM THE SLAGHEAP OF GUTLESS CONFORMITY.*

(*Chicago Tribune, 1/16/83)

SUN

The afternoon sun burns down on the Providence, Rhode Island Temple of Music, an ajaxed alabaster that sets the nearly neon sky in bold relief. No less colorful are the troupe of musicians now climbing its stage dressed in ceremonial gold and silver. Their leader, slow and squat, is identifiable by his advanced age, an unmistakably majestic bearing and, not incidentally, a thick black cape (rough garb in the summer heat) dotted with more stars than a Wisconsin sky in late November. The crowd follows his ascent with dutiful reverence. All, that is, save for one middle-aged mom sitting in the front row, an obvious novice who can no longer witness this procession without rising to voice her startling revelation:

"The guy in the middle has a coat hanger on his head!"

"No ma'am," she is patiently corrected by a younger, more knowing companion: "That's an interstellar communication device. It's a clear day for transmissions."

They're both right of course, but such are the seeming paradoxes which surround Sun Ra—a resolute jazz innovator as well as the last of the great big-band leaders—and his fabulous Space Arkestra, a group that mixes musical explorations and vaudevillian traditions. And if audience reactions are any barometer, it's a dialectic Sun Ra has had few problems resolving: By the climax of this typically momentous performance, both the aforementioned mom and her adept have joined the Arkestra's snaking conga line on the Temple lawn, echoing the rapturous congregation as they vow to "travel the spaceways, from planet to planet." Leading the call-and-response cadences, while swaying at the helm of this train, is the now surprisingly agile bandleader, a



smile creasing his gentle face.

Chalk up another victory against complacency for Sun Ra, the greatest of all composer/keyboardsist/Svengali/philosopher/bandleaders who swing mercilessly *and* claim they're from Saturn. While most musicians in their seventies rest on reputations made eons ago, Sun Ra and company still test themselves on the bandstand. Though their pear-shaped leader claims he's maintained "low visibility" in recent years, a glance at the global jazz calendar reveals tours through Asia and Europe in addition to a fairly brisk stateside schedule. Given his apparent stamina, Ra may well burn into the next decade; for as is the case with so many artists from outer space, he's imbued with a sense of mission.

"I want to make people happy," he explains serenely, "and if we have been working more lately, that's because the earth is in deep trouble. You've got a lot of intelligent people on this planet, the churches, scholars—but it's not doing any good. Some forces, call them God or whatever, gave me the keys to what to do about the planet. Not being a minister, I try to help musically."

Make no mistake: For all his comic trappings, Sun Ra's ministrations are seriously musical. "With music you can express any emotion," he observes, "you can paint pictures; people can see what a musician feels about outer space. The vibrations will put them over on the sound, and the sound will become a spaceship and lift them out there. People ask me about my philosophy all the time, but it's not a philosophy, it's an equation. It has to do with the survival of humanity. If I don't help people survive, I won't have any audience."

That wily mix of pragmatism and cosmic brouhaha has made Ra one of the most laughed at, laughed with, scorned and revered artists on the, uh, planet.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERI BLOOM

RA

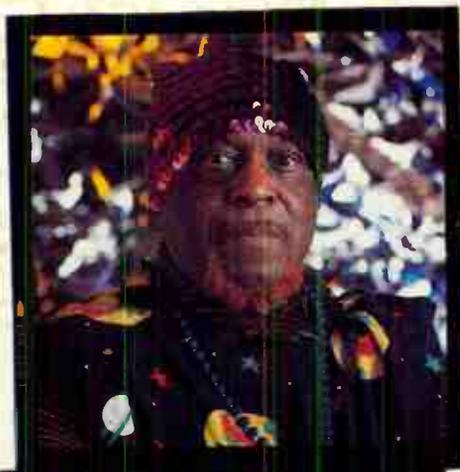
IS THE HEAVIEST MAN IN THIS GALAXY...

"I'm famous and infamous, cussed and discussed," he quips. On this day he's dressed casually in a Travoltish shirt decorated with satellites, and a matching pith helmet which partially obscures Cyndi Lauper-tinged hair. Never one to stand on formality—this is after all his offstage attire—Ra readily expounds on a galaxy of subjects. Ask him a question and he'll take a deep breath and ramble for hours. It's much the same way he's run his career.

Though he insists he wasn't born on earth ("the woman who raised me I call 'other mama,'" he explains), he seems to have made his initial appearance here about seventy-four years ago, growing up in Birmingham, Alabama under the name Herman Blount. He first garnered professional notice during the late 30s in a band of Fletcher Henderson's, the great bandleader and arranger whose charts had turned a bespectacled clarinetist named Benny Goodman into the King of Swing. And despite his own forward-looking innova-

...BUT HE'S JUST PASSING THROUGH

BY JIM MACNIE



tions over the last three decades, it is still Henderson whom Ra credits as his primary influence.

"I was writing and arranging at the Club DeLisa in Chicago when I first got with him," he recalls. "One night the (regular) arranger was sleeping in the car, so they sent for me. I'd never met Fletcher, but he'd seen me rehearsing at the shows. He was my favorite—he's an influence on everyone concerned with big band music—so when he gave me my first chance I was quite pleased."

Ra has made the most of it, in the process pushing musical and theatrical concepts of jazz to the limits of outrageousness. He's been assisted in this endeavor by talented musicians, many of whom have forsaken promising individual careers in favor of Ra's domain. And a domain it surely is: The Arkestra lives communally at a house in Philadelphia, while on the road their leader has final say on everything from who solos when to which hotel rooms are right for which musicians, to what time band members may go to the bathroom. Discipline is a key concept in the Ra omniverse, and he admits his methods aren't always appreciated.

"Many players have come through the band," he acknowledges, "and I don't like to babysit. A few I've had to, though. They might be good, but they usually need to be refined—find out what *not* to play. There are a lot of voodoo rhythms out there, and some of them are deadly. Or if they go outside a club with a whisky bottle in their hand, I have to watch that, because that's not good for a long life. If they can stand the fire, they stay. But sometimes the fire falls," he intones soberly, "and when it does, it's worse than Satan."

The Arkestra's core—tenor saxophonist John Gilmore, altoists Marshall Allen and Pat Patrick, baritone Danny Thompson and singer June Tyson—have stood the fire for decades. In the 50s they helped Ra beguile listeners with hard-bop arrangements that showcased his seductive, off-kilter melodies and relentless swing. By the mid-60s the band was probing sonic frontiers in keeping with their "space" themes, and the aural turf began to encompass electronic keyboard storms, frazzled horn explosions, and the chanting of interstellar incantations. Such "outside" explorations were hardly rare during the 60s, of course, but a Sun Ra concert was just as likely to include fire dancers, light shows and even movies (a favored clip shows Ra marching toward the pyramids) in the midst of his musical journeys. To some observers the result suggests a deft update of black minstrel and theatre tradition; to others it's akin to a Ringling Brothers circus from Mars. In any event, this cosmic cabaret helps listeners warm up for Ra's more challenging musical forays.

"Most of the time the avant-garde looks so serious," Ra moans. "They don't look like they're really having fun. People don't want to see that. I *want* people to laugh at the costumes I have on. Why do the astronauts wear what they wear? Why do soldiers? Because it makes people notice them more. The musicians have a perfect right to join the crowd and say, 'We're going to wear this; this is how we feel.'"

Later in the evening, Ra shows he's got the stuff to back up his style. Supported only by Arkestra drummer Marvin "Boogaloo" Smith, he stomps his way through a bouncy, bluesy stride piano, an approach that suggests equal parts Count Basie and Albert Ammons. His facial expression turns serious, sweat drips onto his overly mascaraed moustache, his foot grinds along with the beat. It's get-down time.

Fighting for a better view, I lodge next to the piano, and as Ra shifts rhythms, in jumps a staggered boogie-woogie bass riff. There's only one hitch: The bass player is drinking a glass of water. The intermittent bass notes get funkier, while Ra's

right hand trills out the blues. Where is this bottom coming from? Only the piano player knows for sure.

"I stay active in my room twenty-four hours a day," he says later, by way of explanation, "and I've got my DX7 by my bed most of the time. I'm still interested in different sound effects; I've got about 700 of them now. The way you play must fit the song though," he cautions. "It's like speaking in a foreign language; if you pick the wrong sound, most people won't understand it."

"What I want to do is totally impossible," he goes on, "but I've been ordered to do it, and I'm used to being obedient. When I first started arranging, a trumpet player said to me, 'Write this song off the record.' The piece was [Noble Sissle's] 'Yeah Man'—not an easy one to write. And I didn't know anything about transposing for horns. But I wound up doing it, because I didn't know any better. If you're obedient, you can do miracles."

Ra employs the same theory on the Arkestra; during one rehearsal he suggests a drill sergeant who commands with his eyes. "What I'm doing is so profound it's simple," he says, "so simple that sometimes listeners catch it before the musicians. Most players start off on rock 'n' roll now, and then come to this band to get acquainted with the masters. If they can handle the discipline, they stay; if not, they go. If they make one wrong note, they might get talked about for a month. But if you can't take criticism, you can't grow."

Lately, Ra's been exhibiting his own sort of humility, at least in concert; despite a prolific career as a composer (he's recorded between seventy and a hundred albums), he admits that "I haven't been playing very many of my own compositions lately. I'm doing Ellington, Henderson, Waller, Hines, Armstrong. I'm going to cover the whole gamut, because teenagers today don't know enough about it. How can I expect to be respected if I forget the masters that came before? The songs these composers left behind are little tokens of happiness. And the way the world is today, there's much more unhappiness. So I play things by musicians who weren't discouraged, who had hope. Right now we're rehearsing 'S'Wonderful'—that's a beautiful word. Or we might do 'On A Clear Day You Can See Forever,' because that's a nice sentiment. But we arrange these onto another palette—the melodies are going to be there, but the harmonies will be celestial, and the poly-rhythms will be fantastic."

Throughout this tour, the band drives home Ra's point. Punchy set pieces like "Yeah Man" and Horace Henderson's "Big John's Special" are intertwined with pop standards from the 40s and 50s. John Gilmore climbs into an unfamiliar role as vocalist awkwardly at first, but carries off "East Of The Sun West Of The Moon" with aplomb, while James Jackson offers an on-target Satchmo imitation on "Mack The Knife." Ra himself shuffles through a laconic, breezy "I Dream Too Much" in his best Anthony Newley (his friends call him Tony) croon. Wafting his hands while directing the band, Ra (*his* friends call him Sunny) breaks hearts as he warbles the lyric and the group oozes through the ballad's changes.

In the past Ra has invited listeners to follow him to a new world of discipline and enlightenment, sidestepping the issue of social responsibility here. But lately his chants have assumed a more didactic tone. "If the people of the earth don't start to care / trouble's gonna make a nest in their hair" goes one catchy chorus. Another points out, "They're trying to put the White House on the moon / they plan to put the Kremlin on a satellite"—as deft an analysis of Star Wars as any put to music. On "Nuclear War" ("we've been getting a lot of re-

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BOSTON from page 37

signed the original record contract) and all five members of Boston (the suit was thus called *CBS vs. Ahern*). The war was on. For a brief moment in December of 1983, a compromise flickered, then died. Seven subpoenas went out and seven different answers came back. (A large surge in the employment rate for lawyers dates from that time.) Within a few weeks, Scholz and Don Engel stitched together a rough outline of their defense and countersuit and filed it in the New York City court of ex-police commissioner Judge Vincent Broderick.

Scholz was determined to keep working on *Third Stage*. He renewed his attempts to repair the second side, fortified by his hunger for legal vindication: "Initially, the first year, it was a big drive. I would get depressed or uninspired and think, 'Boy, why am I doing this?' Then I'd think about somebody over at CBS who was trying to give me a hard time, and go back down to the studio! I knew I had to finish it, and whenever I forgot, my wife reminded me I had to finish it. I mean, it was finally coming out the way I wanted it, musically. I really liked it, in spite of the fact that I had heard it thousands of times."

While Scholz continued to assemble and dismantle his music, the wheels of justice moved steadily. In the second week of February 1984, Scholz was deposed at great length. "He was good," notes Engel. "He had a good memory." The deal called for CBS to produce Yetnikoff, and on the 10th of February he appeared for one of the most dramatic days of the case. In his "Dear Walter" letter and in his own depositions, Scholz had maintained that Yetnikoff promised to accept a late album and not cut off royalties. If there was in fact such a promise and Scholz had relied on it, CBS had modified the original contract. Engel's job was to get Yetnikoff to admit it. It would become the Clash of the Titans.

Engel had worked with Yetnikoff on another case and heard him say to someone else the very same thing he'd told Scholz about *not needing it in writing*. Engel began by asking Yetnikoff if he remembered Scholz. Yetnikoff said he did not. Engel calmly asked how many other acts he had that sold eight million records their first time out. None. How many sold four? Three? Rather than wait for the follow-up, Yetnikoff admitted he remembered Scholz. Working against a steady stream of "I don't remember"s and "not that I recall"s, Engel quoted Scholz's testimony of Yetnikoff's words. Looking straight into the eyes of a lawyer who'd heard him say the same words, Yetnikoff admitted he "might have said that. In fact, counselor, I might have even said it to you."

Trying to get more out of Walter Yetnikoff made for a grueling morning. Yetnikoff seemed to tire by the fourth hour, admitting he was "getting a little upset." CBS' attorney David Eizenman interrupted frequently with objections and remarks. The mood got ugly by the end, with Engel asking Yetnikoff if he ever considered he was committing a crime by withholding Boston's deferred royalties. "Do you ever consider it?" snapped Eizenman. "Yes, very seriously," replied Engel.

Engel would need every advantage to counter CBS' anger about a new development: Scholz had begun talking to other labels about bringing out *Third Stage*. According to a 1985 Scholz motion, CBS warned the other five major labels—in writing—not to touch it. Then CBS let it be known that if another major wanted Boston's contract, CBS would settle for \$900,000 and \$.25 an album. When Irving Azoff's MCA label decided to take on the album, CBS brought a new case against Scholz and MCA, asking for a preliminary injunction to freeze the deal. The CBS demand for an injunction to stop *Third Stage* took only nine pages. "They put in very simple papers," says Engel. "The tactic was, hey, it's a simple matter, give us the

injunction." Engel responded with a densely argued, well-organized seventy-three-page brief. The judge had to accept one to three of Engel's eight points to kill the injunction: Engel won six. *Third Stage* belonged to MCA. Judge Broderick also made special mention of the deferred royalties: "I don't find anything that makes this money, which was being held in a special account by CBS, as being subject to withholding on the grounds of some grievance CBS may think it has with respect to performance under the basic contract."

This last was crucial to the issue of the breached contract. If CBS unreasonably withheld the royalties, it was they who had broken the contract. Only if they had executed their half of the deal could they argue that the deal was still in force. Engel maintained that by continuing to work on the album, however slowly, Scholz had kept his part of the bargain. "I didn't understand the legal complications involved," Scholz says, "but it was going to have to come out that I was simply trying to make this record, period. I wasn't giving up and I was working on it as hard as I could. Basically you're not going to get burned if you're trying to do the right thing." The case is expected to go to a jury trial early in 1987, but don't hold your breath.

In 1985, Scholz says, he "began to see light at the end of the tunnel." One reason was Gary Pihl, a guitarist with Sammy Hagar who helped Scholz rough out some tapes of the LP's final song, "I Think I Like It," on which Pihl is heard trading solos with Scholz. Yes, Tom Scholz was actually delegating work. "Gary was a big help going through the daily grind work of rehearsing Jim, trying ideas I would show him, and making crude demos of them. There aren't many people I could delegate that to; Gary's an exceptional individual—he knows how to play guitar and lots of other instruments, he listens to songs, and is extremely organized. I can't think of any other person I've ever met who I would've entrusted this work to."

Another new aspect in Scholz's work was a unified lyrical theme. No one will ever say Scholz has Elvis Costello's gift for words, but he was aware of wanting to make a personal statement about the "Third Stage after youth and adulthood." "I had the message embedded in the songs that I wanted," Scholz explains. "And that's the first time I'd ever consciously done that. They may go undiscovered forever, but they're in there. For me it has a very exact meaning. I wrote an essay on what every song says and how it fits in. I actually did that, just for myself as I was putting the pieces together."

"There isn't anything on this record that isn't straight from the heart. It's not autobiographical, but it's close. Like on 'I Think I Like It.' What does the guy like? Change. People don't like change, something immensely different that alters your whole life. Like, let's say you go through a terrible lawsuit and come out the other end. There are good parts and bad parts. Some changes may appear bad, but in the end have a silver lining that's better than what existed before. That's what that song is about, a person realizing he's been made to change, and discovering he likes it. He didn't like it, but he does now."

Perhaps the fullest statement of Scholz's theme comes on the LP's closer, "Holly Ann," which Tom grappled with for almost all of the six years spent on the project. It's a tribute to the Woodstock era, halcyon days of youthful idealism: "In my mind I can see reminders of a past decayed / So far behind, like the shadows linger at the close of day." Viewed from his 80s world of lawyers, accountants and sharks, the song has a special poignancy, an innocence he can never regain. "It is a tribute to an exceptional time, having gone through it myself," Scholz nods. "A lot of people never realize that they've gone through it when something is over and they've finished. See, that's the key: Maybe acceptance of the passing of something is the *end-stage* of the third stage."

soda pop



1986 was feeding time for hucksters, hacks, and hip-ocrites

by charles m. young

"I specifically refuse to do commercials and I don't think an actor should."

Ronald Reagan during grand jury testimony in 1961, quoted in *Dark Victory: Ronald Reagan, MCA and the Mob* (Viking) by Dan Moldea

You got your usual small pile of excellent albums, usual small pile of wretched albums, and usual inundation of mediocre albums that there is no rational reason to like or dislike unless you are somebody's mother or a critic looking to jump on a bandwagon early. So your year in music that was 1986 was pretty usual. Any genre you pick—pop, funk, punk, shameless Madonna imitations, shameless Springsteen imitations, balding wimps from En-

gland, haircut wimps from England, technically accomplished hustlers with nothing to say, incompetent youngsters with high ideals—it was usual in the usual proportions.

Nonetheless 1986 was a watershed year as years in music go. It wasn't a year in music, future historians are going to discover. It was a year in jingles. For thirty years, the integrity of rock 'n' roll has been enforced from the outside. It has been for the most part impossible for a rock musician to sell out other than by recording a song he didn't believe in because he thought it would appeal to a certain element of the public. No corpora-

tion interested in respectability was willing to associate with rock stars. Thus it was easy for them to resist temptation that wasn't being offered. In 1986, despite the best efforts of the PMRC to bring back villainy to popular music, corporations lined up to sign up.

That's the good news: Tipper Gore and the other defenders of decency failed to follow through with the massive hysteria they were hoping to generate in 1986. And the bad news is that they failed not because rock 'n' roll stood up to them in any serious way but because rock 'n' roll was so obviously harmless, respectable and flaccid. If the public were really worried that rock was turning Junior to Satan, Madison Avenue wouldn't be using it to sell raisin bran.

Glenn Frey made a similar point on

MTV recently. He was narrating a Pepsi-sponsored history of Pepsi, and these executives were bragging about co-opting the youth culture ever since it was discovered at the end of World War II. Pepsi, Frey asked us to recall, has always been for those who think young, but it has been only in the past couple of years that the company dared to use rock 'n' roll in commercials, lest Mom associate it with subversion and leave it on the supermarket shelf. Rock 'n' roll was now *the* form of music for everyone under forty in this country, was the soundtrack for most movies and military recruitment ads, dominated radio in its various genres. Pepsi wanted a piece of the action.

The climax of the show was the famous spot for which Frey and Don Johnson received a million dollars apiece. The two swinging bachelors drive through a steamy night in a sports car and end up in a club where all the other swinging bachelors and bachelorettes are drinking Pepsi. I'd never paid any attention to the spot before. It is shot so darkly that there is nothing to grab your mind. By the time the half-attentive viewer figures out he is looking at Johnson and Frey (does Frey have face recognition even among music fans?), the plot is unintelligible. A shockingly ineffective spot for the money, I would think. Yet watching closely for the first time, I noted Frey singing in the background, "We got freedom, we got soul / We got Pepsi and rock 'n' roll."

That got my attention. In a literal sense, the line is true, although of the four items mentioned, only Pepsi is currently enjoying a growth market. We who live in the U.S.A. do possess certain freedoms, some of us have soul, all of us have access to rock 'n' roll, and anyone with 50-75¢ is allowed to drink a can of Pepsi. My guess is that Pepsi did not pay Frey and Johnson all that money to make this point. My guess is that Pepsi wants you to think you're drinking Otis Redding, the Beatles and the Bill of Rights when you're drinking brown carbonated sugarwater with flavoring.

So my guess is that Glenn Frey and Don Johnson lie for money. Time was, Glenn Frey was too proud to associate with the rabble of the music biz and refused to pick up his own Grammy that the Eagles won for *Hotel California*. Now he isn't selling quite so many records, so he hawks soda pop. Well, what's wrong with that? Everybody lies for money. The boss says, "The sky is green," and you have to agree or lose your job. Ethics are often a luxury only the rich can afford. But there are excep-

tions. And let us remember that rock stars are usually rich.

Of the three basic relationships an artist can have with an advertiser—that is, (1) none (the artist claims moral purity and refuses any and all endorsement opportunities); (2) craft (the artist sells his craft to an advertiser, as Randy Newman did in writing a jingle for Dr. Pepper in the late 70s); (3) reputation (either in the form of an artist standing there and saying, "This product is good," or allowing an identifiable song to be used as a soundtrack)—1986 found an unnerving number of musicians all too willing to sell in the name of commerce body, soul and what's left of their reputations. Regarding those reputations, by the way, most discussions of direct product endorsements center on two questions: "Will it hurt his career?" and "Will people still believe him?"

Well, the evidence is in on that one, and it doesn't hurt. Look at Bill Cosby, who is, according to the latest opinion polls, the most respected man in America. I could puke on a plate and for a few bucks that guy would call it pudding on national television. Look at Genesis, who recently played five nights at Madison Square Garden while Phil Collins' "In The Air Tonight" was backing a Mich-elob commercial. None of his fans were offended that he sold this deeply personal song about his divorce, this courageous exploration of his most intimate feelings (so he had us believe in interviews) to promote beer. Elton John had no trouble selling tickets on his tour after selling "Sad Songs" to Sasson Jeans while it was still on the charts. Clearly rock stars, like incumbent congressmen, can do *anything* without alienating their constituency so long as they remain likable.

Which brings us to the crux of the problem confronting rock 'n' roll in the Year of the Jingle (and beyond): Is such use of one's name and art moral? And if the answer is yes, what does that say about rock 'n' roll in 1986 (and beyond)? We live in a society that lies to itself so much that economy is reduced to a vast exercise in disinformation. Rock 'n' roll at its best has fought that trend. Rock 'n' roll at its best has served the truth. Certainly when I was growing up in the 60s, I looked to it for information—emotional and political—as much as for fun. When I talk to teenagers now, they seem to need rock 'n' roll in the same way, probably more so as our indoctrination has grown tighter and more sophisticated. Kids trust musicians as they would an idolized older brother, which is precisely why corporations want their endorsements. It is unethical to take that trust

and manipulate it to sell them beer or breakfast cereal or anything else. Rock 'n' roll musicians should be held to a higher standard than the Smurfs.

Look at Lou Reed, for another example. Here's a guy with unquestioned credentials. He's explored the deepest, darkest, dankest depths of the human unconscious, seen stuff that the rest of us don't want to know ever happened, and he came back with a number of brilliant songs, among them "A Walk On The Wild Side." Now he would have us believe that he has explored the deepest, darkest, dankest depths of the human unconscious and come back with a Honda motorscooter. The ad is powerful and effective and commensurate with Reed's image. When you buy a motorscooter now, you're going to get a little piece of the Wild Side. And when you hear that noble song on the radio, you're going to think what Honda wants you to think: Where you were in the early 70s when it came out, and what a grand role motorscooters played in it all.

I asked Reed about this once during a short interview for MTV and he said, as I recall, "Better us than them," and then rather insistently changed the subject. That is—no sarcasm—a good argument. Rock 'n' roll has concentrated a lot of money in relatively young, relatively liberal hands and often a portion of that money will go to a worthy cause. Better Lou Reed gets those bucks than some old fogey. But there is an artistic consideration that goes beyond political and age differences. If rock 'n' roll exists just as a ploy to get people to part with a few dollars for a record, then there is no moral difference between releasing an album and endorsing a motorscooter. Lou Reed and every other musician I ever talked to, however, would argue that rock 'n' roll is not just product, and that they deserve to be taken seriously as artists. They certainly expect to be taken seriously as artists, or they wouldn't get so mad when critics like me dump on them. If a musician has created an expectation in his audience that he is serious, that he is going to express the truth about some emotion or experience from his unique point of view, he is asking that audience to drop their skepticism and allow him into their minds and together they can come up with new truths. Throwing a motor-scooter into the bargain is cheating, unless you wish your artistry to be taken on the same level as Ed McMahon's.

For a final example, consider the Long Ryders. These guys have no credentials except for a mild rep among critics due entirely to their skill at manipulating the

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A TRIBUTE AND A CALL TO ARMS

"Say You, Say Me," "That's What Friends Are For," "How Will I Know," "Kyrie," "Sara," "The Greatest Love Of All," "On My Own," "There'll Be Sad Songs"—whew, whatta year for rock 'n' roll! And just look at *Billboard's* number-one albums during 1986: Sade, Barbra Streisand, Whitney Houston, Lionel Richie, Huey Lewis, Boston...No wonder they want to take the music away from us!

But are we gonna let 'em? No way! What keeps rock 'n' roll exciting and dangerous is that it's *our* music created by *our* peers. If you can't relate to Bob Seger or the KBC Band, kiddies, why don't you just go back to business school and *stay* there until you're ready for it? This isn't Romper Room; this is *rock*.

Now that we got rid of those eavesdropping sissies, let's get serious. This year was a troubling one for us music fans. Some pigheaded artists are holding out on compact disc releases; there's still talk of a blank-tape tax or anti-duping chip for tape recorders; digital sampling is a legal gray area; and record companies don't want us to have our DAT (digital audio tape). What can we do (besides renewing our subscriptions to *Musician*)? Have our secretaries write letters, that's what! Let's tell our congressional representatives who's paying their salaries! Warn record company execs to lay off the parallel-import question! Withhold our kids' allowances until the powers that be see things our way!

So the next time you're out jogging with the Boss on the personal stereo, reflect a little on our precious rock 'n' roll heritage. We didn't get where we are now by time-shifting our priorities. We changed the world once; we can do it again.

Merits and Demerits

Artist of the Year

Not all artists are celebrities; in the recording world, many talented people



don't even get near a microphone. Sooner or later, though, the giants of any profession get their just recognition. This year saw the sudden emergence of a music-industry figure normally content to work outside the spotlight: the independent promo person. Although a shy, retiring type, the promo person—who convinces radio programmers of the merits of particular recordings—has more to do with your musical taste than you realize.

The "indie" promo people, unaffiliated with any one label, are the top practitioners of this noble calling. Even among this elite, though, a couple of names stand out. This year *Musician* breaks with our usual practice of honoring players to honor instead two independent promo men without whom we wouldn't know who to like: **Fred DiSipio** and **Joe Isgro**. (The award would be presented in person, but we couldn't find them.)

Musician of the Year

If just being prolific earned greatness, Elvis "Declan McManus" Costello would be no greater than Elton John. But it's hard to think of anyone since the mid-60s Bob Dylan who poured out such valuable material so quickly. It was enough that Costello made *King Of America*, a back-to-basics gem with T-Bone Burnett and the best American musicians in several genres. But he sealed up this year's award with *Blood And Chocolate*, a dense electric return to form with Nick Lowe and the Attractions.

As a multi-media bonus he appeared in a terrific British movie called *No Surrender*, and went to Spain to act in Alex Cox's upcoming *Straight To Hell*. There were new singles to tide us over the summer, and then in the fall the wildest tour of all: multiple-night stands in a series of U.S. cities with a different show every night. History buffs loved the concerts with James Burton, Jerry Scheff and Jim Keltner; everyone else went wild over the Spinning Songbook, a giant game-show set on which contestants



from the audience spun a wheel to pick the songs Elvis and the Attractions played. Along the way Elvis performed with Tom Petty, Tom Waits, the Bangles and other new partners, and added "Pop Life" and an acoustic "Pretty In Pink," among others, to his enormous repertoire.

And even when all that activity is forgotten, music lovers will hear "I'll Wear It Proudly" or "I Want You" or "American Without Tears" and say, boy, was that ever a good year for Costello.

Albums of the Year

Picking the "Best Album" leads the *Musician* staff into bribery, vanity and unnatural concern with musical complexity, lyrical depth, political conscience and artistic ambition. So this year we decided to just list the records the editors actually *played* the most:

Jock Baird: INXS (complete works)
Bill Flanagan: Richard Lloyd, *Field Of Fire*; the Replacements, *Tim*
Scott Isler: Jesus and Mary Chain, *Psychocandy*
Mark Rowland: Various artists, *The Indestructible Beat Of Soweto*
J.D. Considine: Pretenders, *Get Close*
Charles M. Young, The Butthole Surfers, *Rembrandt Pussyhorse*
Timothy White: Peter Gabriel, *So*;
Steve Winwood, *Back In The High Life*
Peter Watrous: Various artists, *The Complete Keynote Collection*

A Frequent-Flyer Bonus Bomb

to Prince, Starship and Manhattan Transfer, who canceled mid-year European tours because of terrorist activity

The Mike Love Integrity Plaque (the industry's highest honor)

to Arista Records president Clive Davis, who attacked pop radio at the Music Business Symposium: "There is no shortage of exciting new rock...Rock radio, to its shame, is never at the cutting edge...It's time for revolt again." This year Arista released albums by Alan Parsons, GTR, Air Supply, the Monkees, Billy Ocean and Kenny G.



Athens, Georgia Chamber of Commerce Bowl

to R.E.M. for importing an endless stream of rock critics to write articles about the boys at home. We suspect that Michael Stipe and company all really live in Hollywood and commute to Georgia to meet journalists.

A Gilt Teapot with a Tempest Inside

to the rock press for holding meetings, taking out ads and forming committees after a TV evangelist criticized rock magazines

The Steve Allen Middlebrow-in-Mixed-Media Award

David Byrne

The Morrissey Bronzed Condom for Abstinence

to *Musician* magazine, for not mentioning Sting or Robert Fripp all year (so far).

Extremists

Best New Songwriting Team

Bob Dylan and Sam Shepard

Worst New Songwriting Team

Bob Dylan and Carole Bayer Sager

Corporate Rip-Off of the Year

Record labels pay artists half royalties on CDs while charging customers through the nose. How long before they get rid of LPs altogether?

Most Promising New Supergroup

Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young and Springsteen at the Bridge School benefit

Drug of the Year

Hyperbaric oxygen tanks. Michael Jackson's people said he was climbing into his air tank 'cause it'd make him immortal (like Walt Disney?). But according to hyperbaric-breather Ronnie Lane (whose ARMS concerts were to raise funds to buy such tanks for MS victims), those test tubes make you high as a kite.

Favorite Ongoing Lawsuit

The Beatles vs. Capitol Records

Rumor of the Year

After living in Keith Richards' house and preparing a video and album with the



Rollingstone, Chuck Berry punched him out. Just his way of being friendly?

Recommended Reading (This Is Serious!)

Sweet Soul Music, Peter Guralnick

Most Slavish Prince Rip-Off

"Oh Sheila," Ready For The World

Best Jackson Family Imitations (in order of faithfulness)

The Jets, Debarge, New Edition, 5 Star, Talking Heads

Best 60s Artists of 1986

Bangles, Smithereens, Fabulous Thunderbirds, Bob Dylan

Most Preposterous 60s Reruns

Chicago updates "25 Or 6 To 4"—and has a hit

Aretha Franklin records "Jumpin' Jack Flash"

Beatles return to charts with "Twist And Shout"

Grateful Dead are summer's top concert attraction

Monkees reunion

The PMRC's Top Rock Artists of 1986

Thompson Twins (shlock as idealism)

Lone Justice (shlock as rebellion)

Ashford & Simpson (shlock as romance)

Stryper (shlock as religion)

Lionel Richie (shlock)

News of the Year, Real and Imagined

Rock 'n' Roll Heaven

Cliff Burton (Metallica), Max (Mark) Dinning, Kelly Isley, Phil Lynott, Richard Manuel, Rick Nelson

Rock 'n' Roll Purgatory

Albert Grossman

The Politics of Entertainment

Manager Ken Kragen resigned (not resigned) Lionel Richie's account, citing his involvement with Hands Across America, and promptly fired over one-third of his staff. A week after accepting Kragen's resignation, Richie rejoined his once and present manager. The ex-Kragen personnel did not.



Whatever Happened To...?

Baltimora, Boys Don't Cry, Nu Shooz

Comebacks

Ginger Baker, Charles Brown, James Brown, Bubble Puppy, ESG, Patti LaBelle, Richard Lloyd, Paul Simon

Semi-Comebacks

Peter Frampton, Alvin Lee

Gobacks

Bad Company, Frankie Goes To Hollywood

Hypes

Monkees, house music, Sigue Sigue Sputnik

Cover Versions

"Immigrant Song," Minimal Compact

"Rollin' Dany," the Fall

"Stormy Weather," Fats Comet

"Will The Wolf Survive," Waylon Jennings

Life's Hard at the Top (I)

Prince's film directorial debut, *Under the Cherry Moon*, was no *Purple Rain* at the box office—and his *Parade* album stiffed with a mere million sold.

Strange but True: New Blood!

BoDeans, Crowded House, David and David, Fine Young Cannibals, Full Force, LL Cool J, Miami Sound Machine, Simply Red, Woodentops, Soundtrack

We Couldn't Have Said It Better

"Most dance numbers are content to go 'thump-thump-thump,' but [Niles] Rodgers' arrangements are more likely to go 'thumpity-bip-bop-boom.'"

— Geoffrey Himes, *Washington Post*

It's a Baby-Boomer World

The *New York Times* (appropriately self-deemed "the newspaper of record") ran an editorial lamenting that "the day of the 45 is just about over": "A stack of 45s on a chubby spindle," the august *Times* reminisced, "evokes a time of... blue lights in the basement or Japanese lanterns around the carport." What do you mean, *what carport?*!

Words To Ponder

"If Eddie Cochran was eighteen today he'd have a Fender Strat Jap copy and he'd be up in front of a heavy metal band

CHRIS CUFFARO, HUGO GLENDININGSIN, STEVE MARSEL, LARRY BUSACCA/REINA, UHRIS CUFFARO

SUN RA from page 62

quests lately for that one") Ra gets more explicit still, pointing out that annihilation is "a motherfucker," and that "when the big one hits, you can kiss your ass goodbye (goodbye, ass!)" Perhaps the shoulder-shaking realities of "The Message" and similar rap songs have goaded the freebop patriarch into more politically-minded missives?

"The next thing I'm going to do will shake up the whole planet," Sun Ra promises. "When I get back to Philadelphia, I'm going to a lawyer and have him prepare eviction papers for everybody on this world. I'll take it to the U.S. and the White House and say, 'If you can't handle the anarchists and terrorists, and you aren't capable of taking care of the property of the creator of the universe, then we'll take over.' The earth belongs to someone, but that someone is not man. People might pray to the lord, but the landlord will evict them. He's never spoken before, but now he's saying, 'You haven't paid no taxes on the wind, and no taxes on the sun....'"

And why would a prophet who sings "I Dream Too Much," who claims to have invented punk rock, who says he's written "two to three billion" songs, and who still talks about when the Pacific Ocean got mad at him, expect anyone to go along with his plans for global eviction?

"Over the years I've worked on a shoestring," Sun Ra observes, "but the point is, I'm sincere. I don't have to compromise. Because the world is getting ready to change over, and to deal with the people who are sincere." ■

SODA POP from page 65

accoutrements of integrity. They play primitive guitar-based rock, their lyrics have a bogus Bob Dylan/Gram Parsons feel (like the Alarm or America) and one of them has a beard like Solzhenitsyn. I don't know anyone—from committed music fan to casual TV watcher—who doesn't hold these guys in contempt. They come right out and talk about the "integrity" of their music in their Miller Beer ad and then drop the utterly stunning line: "You don't have to be the best musicians in the world, you just have to mean it," as if they'd be singing the praises of Miller without being paid great piles of money.

I read an interview with the Long Ryders in which they defended themselves on the grounds that a) Merle Haggard and Pete Seeger did it first, and b) they needed the money. To which I say: Fuck

Merle Haggard and Pete Seeger. As for needing the money, I can identify with that. I'm writing this essay for money. And I couldn't promise you that I wouldn't endorse Miller Beer if I were faced with eviction. But I hope I'd be the first to say fuck me for doing it. I wouldn't care if Jesus Christ needed cash for the Second Coming. If He used the Sermon on the Mount to endorse chewing tobacco, He wouldn't have much of a claim over Beelzebub.

In defense of the Long Ryders, they didn't betray a trust with their audience. No one cared what they had to say in the first place, and they are such puds they probably enjoy putting agency vice presidents on the guest list. This was probably their only chance to make money and they took it. If Glenn Frey needed the money, he should hire a new accountant to search for that mountain of moolah the Eagles generated.

One other image sticks in my mind from this Year of the Rock Jingle: The Grand Finale to the Statue of Liberty celebration this summer was a salute to American music in Giants Stadium. The three singers selected to represent rock 'n' roll were Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Bobby Rydell, classic ersatz rockers in the worst Dick Clark tradition, sorta the Long Ryders of their day. It was my favorite show of the year. The thugs and liars who run this country wouldn't let real rock 'n' roll anywhere near the Statue of Liberty. There must be some truth left in this aging art form. And as long as there is, Pepsi is not freedom. ■

THREADGILL from page 58

used to do stuff like forty-eight-hour marathons where everybody brought their sleeping bags. I don't mean benefits to raise money, this was..."

To raise consciousness?

"Right."

So which comes first, the ideals of the individual artist or that of the collective? Threadgill claims the former: "That was the direction I was moving in, that's the only reason I was there. The AACM was the perfect place for me, because I wasn't trying to fashion those A/B/A songs based on show business. I didn't know how successful I was going to be, but I knew *where* I was supposed to be."

Where it led was Air, Threadgill's mid-70s chordless trio based on enlightened economy and geodesic beauty. Whether recasting Scott Joplin or Jelly Roll Morton in their own image or fleshing out

Threadgill's sly compositions, Air carved a unique jazz niche. But for a long time record magnates were too busy checking out the latest fusion hombies.

"The critics demanded that we get recorded," Henry declares. "We dominated the [jazz] polls for a number of years before that." A Japanese company finally heeded the call. Arista/Novus followed with two U.S. releases.

In the post-Ornette era, pianoless bands were no longer raising eyebrows, and the legitimacy of "free jazz" was finally accepted. But contrary to popular assumption, Air rarely improvised. "That was highly composed music," Threadgill explains. "Saxophone, bass and drums: How many times can you listen to that? We knew we weren't going to last unless we could solve this idea of sounding very broad and different. Even if you come up with new songs, you've got to somehow change the timbre."

"If you go back to the roots of jazz, to the folks who came up the river from the beginning—King Oliver and all of those bands—you'll see that it was all about collective improvisation. And that's the approach I'm still basically involved in. You hear what I said? *Collective* improvisation. That don't mean that everybody gets up and solos by themselves. A lot of people say the music I'm doing is not jazz, but I'm dealing with the basis of this music, music that got passed on to Bird and to Duke Ellington. Bird's bands played collective improvisation. They phased together; not every solo, but there would be parts where everyone hit."

Air's eerie poise hinged on such interplay; compositions, however sturdy, gave way to spontaneous solos. But Threadgill still felt constrained by the limitations of the trio format. To compensate he put together X-75, a band that featured four basses. "It created a physical space problem," he admits, and so after one album X-75 gave way to the Sextet. Their vinyl debut, *When Was That*, surfaced in 1982 on the About Time label and quickly set New York's jazz community on its, uh, ear. The title cut was manic, revisionist parade music for a hyped-up march band. "Soft Suicide At The Baths" languished in squirming, loose-limbed agony. To fans of the ethereal Air, Threadgill's latest bag seemed radically different, at once hand-dog melancholy and boisterously life-affirming.

Threadgill, of course, couldn't agree less. "I used to think of Air as an orchestra," he points out, noting that or-

continued on page 91

The one (and two) you've been waiting for... Billy Joel The Video Album.

VOLUME I
Piano Man
All For Leyna
Tell Her About It
Honesty
Sometimes A Fantasy
The Night Is Still Young
Pressure
Stiletto/My Life
Keepin' The Faith
A Matter Of Trust

VOLUME II
You're Only Human
(SECOND WIND)
Everybody Loves You Now
Uptown Girl
You May Be Right
Big Shot
The Longest Time
Allentown
Los Angelenos
It's Still Rock N'Roll To Me
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World Radio History

Nothing's as bad as Ray Davies thinks

—
By John Hutchinson

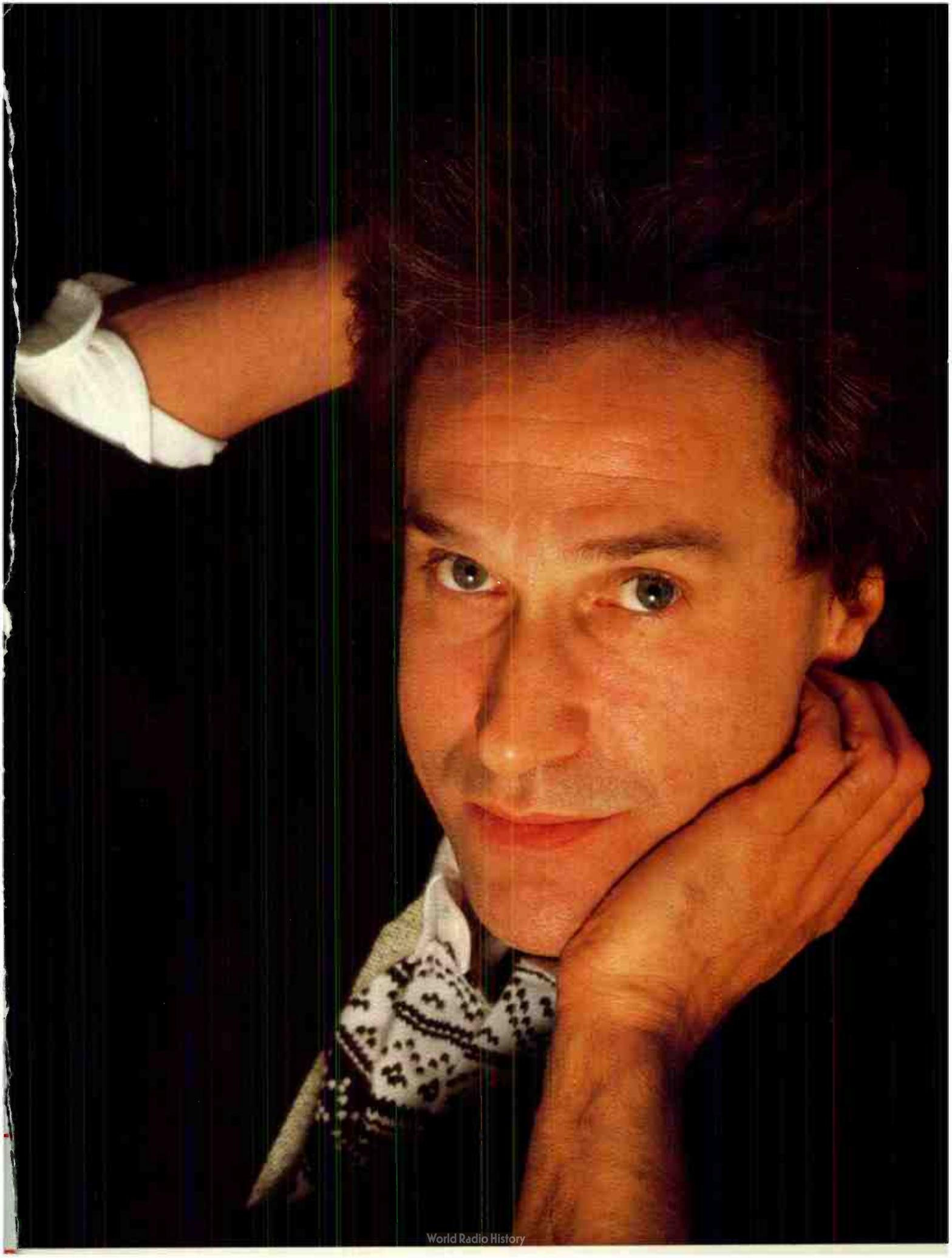
Ray Davies, we've always been told, is quintessentially English. The classic Kinks songs of the 60s—"Dedicated Follower Of Fashion," "Sunny Afternoon," "Waterloo Sunset"—were finely-judged vignettes of British life, full of cheeky optimism and tempered by bitersweet melancholy. You could almost imagine Ray, dressed up in cricket whites and a blazer, playing a role in a Noel Coward musical farce—almost, but not quite, because Ray Davies doesn't really fit in anywhere. He seems destined to be a permanent outsider, never a committed participant in the game of life. By nature he's detached and withdrawn. At first he comes across as a mildly eccentric Englishman, but simmering under the facade is something else. He has a rich sense of humor and a love of the ludicrous; he can be irascible and belligerent, and he's no stranger to the black dog of depression. Ray is not as "English" as you might think.

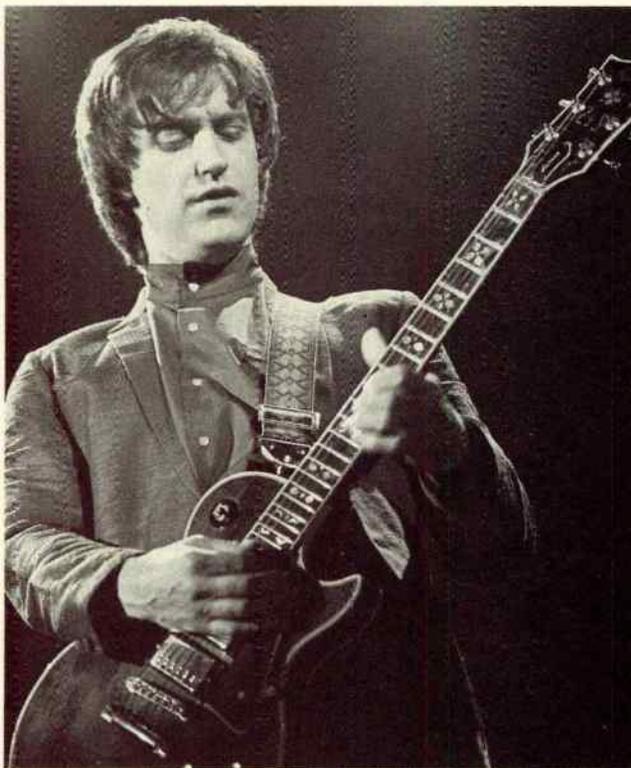
He certainly looked gloomy enough when I met him at his flat in central London. I was greeted by his Irish wife Pat, a charming and gentle dancer with an elfin face. Then a tall, slightly stooping figure in a black raincoat came out of the shadows of the dimly-lit hall. Ray

shook me by the hand, and quickly led me into the living-room to start the interview. He seemed distant, a mite distracted. I'd been warned that he could be difficult to talk to, that he was liable to get bored or irritated, and that he has been known to walk out of interviews without warning. As it turned out, though, Ray couldn't have been easier to work with. What appeared to be spondence was only fatigue, brought on by hours spent editing the videos of the two forthcoming Kinks singles—his own "How Are You" for the British market, and brother Dave's "Rock & Roll Cities" for U.S. release. He was wary at first, but ready to talk, and he made a concerted effort to shake off his weariness. Davies seemed to be taking the interview as an opportunity to formulate new thoughts about his attitudes to his own aspirations and those of the Kinks. At one moment all I'd be conscious of was a pair of piercing eyes looking out from behind a passive mask, then, all of a sudden, his rigidity would crumple, and the old Ray Davies crooked grin would crease his face, his eyes twinkling mischievously. The next morning, at our second meeting, Ray was refreshed by a good night's sleep and was almost jaunty.

The Kinks have signed up with a new record company, MCA, and delivered a new single and album that both have an above-average chance of establishing themselves in the upper reaches of the U.S. charts. Ray is happy with them, and

Photograph by Davies & Starr





Dave Davies: Tension keeps the strings in tune.

They came over, listened to the rough mixes, and discussed them. Actually I'm more open now than I've ever been to other people's comments.

MUSICIAN: *Is that because you feel more secure in yourself, or because you want to be sure of the mood of the marketplace?*

DAVIES: Perhaps I criticize what I do too much. My philosophy for this record was "Nothing is as bad as I think it is." That's what pulled me through it. I had to make a new Kinks record, whatever that is, and although I wasn't really working to a market strategy, I knew it had to have driving music on it. Personally, if I buy a record or book by someone I like, I'm disappointed if I don't find ingredients of what drew me to him in the first place. I also want the author or musician to take his ideas further on to somewhere new. I think that's what this record does. It's a rebirth album, I think—there's good confidence on it, both on the part of the players and myself. We did it quite quickly for us; it was started on June 1, and we finished at the beginning of September, and we didn't put in incredible hours either. This was the first time, actually, that the band has known the songs when we went in to record them—we even worked with lyric sheets. It all sounds very organized, doesn't it? Perhaps it came from my experience with *Return To Waterloo*, where I had to work from a script. But we did try to retain some of the spontaneity that you've got to have in rock 'n' roll, when you go for the early take.

MUSICIAN: *In retrospect, what do you think of the last Kinks' album, *Word Of Mouth*?*

DAVIES: Maybe it wasn't brilliantly executed. It was a confused album—the last one we did for Arista. We didn't have much time for it, as we had to go off on a tour that had already been booked. So perhaps it was incomplete.

MUSICIAN: *The titles of the Arista LPs (*Misfits*, *Low Budget*, *Give The People What They Want*, *State Of Confusion*) seemed*

to be very revealing, expressive of the band's state of mind.

DAVIES: They were all true at the time. *State Of Confusion*, for example, was a reflection of the band at that point—even the sleeve showed us all moving in different directions. They were all truthful titles. After all, when it comes down to it, you don't like to see your work cheapened in any way. I was going to call *State Of Confusion* "Yuk."

MUSICIAN: *But the record company wouldn't go for it!*

DAVIES: No! And I wanted to call *Sleepwalker* "Poseur," but they didn't know what it meant.

MUSICIAN: *Some of the late-70s Kinks' music bordered on heavy metal. Do you actually like HM?*

DAVIES: Heavy metal is too jock-strappy for me, but it's fun, and I get a lot of laughs from heavy metal bands. If there's humor, that's all that matters.

MUSICIAN: *Do you really think they're deliberately humorous? The kids seem to treat it as deadly serious!*

DAVIES: [Laughing broadly] Oh no, come on—the really clued-in kids know what's going on! But it also reflects life. If you work on a factory assembly line, you'll probably relate to heavy metal rhythms. If you're living in Cleveland, and you're working on a sledgehammer all day, that's what you're going to relate to in your music. I can understand that—when I want my mind to be dead, I'll read science fiction comics in the middle of the night.

MUSICIAN: *Did you find the 70s a bit of a drag?*

DAVIES: I think things were probably pretty boring, musically. And there was no way we could be marketed, which was frustrating, and it turned into a drag. That's why I wrote something like "Ducks On The Wall" on *Soap Opera*. There are some wonderful lines on that, and they're set to a Status Quo or ZZ Top type of rhythm, which was quite funny. I thought that the music industry deserved no respect whatsoever, because limos and drugs were becoming a kind of payola. Then the punks came and saved things a bit, until some of them sold out.

MUSICIAN: *Do you see the early Kinks as a prototype punk or garage band?*

DAVIES: We were a garage band, and still are, in many ways. But like Groucho Marx, I wouldn't belong to a club that would have me as a member. If a punk band were to come up to me and say "We love you," I'd tell them to bug off.

MUSICIAN: *At about the time you changed labels to Arista, the Kinks gave up theatrical stage shows, and became a straight rock 'n' roll band. Was that a strategy dreamed up by Clive Davis?*

DAVIES: I think Clive wanted us to play stadiums and more MOR music. We had to reestablish ourselves as a rock band. We were presenting ourselves as a "good time" band, so we had to go out on the road. And it was such a relief for me to go onstage and not have to worry about the next cue. It was a release—I could just enjoy the singing. The *Low Budget* tour had no frills at all: we had a dowdy stage set with tatty drapes, and we just played the music. When the record company saw what we were doing, it became a marketing exercise.

MUSICIAN: *Why do you think you are so much more popular in the States than in Britain?*

DAVIES: We concentrated on America. We toured, and people saw us live.

MUSICIAN: *Does your stage persona extend to your personality?*

DAVIES: Well, when I have an audience I turn into a performer. When I get deeper and deeper into what I'm doing by myself, I end up writing something like "Hey Joe," it's Samuel Beckett time. But when I experience an audience, when I bounce off people, it brings out an entirely different part of my personality. Entertainers, using the term broadly, tend to have strong extrovert and introvert aspects to their characters. When I'm

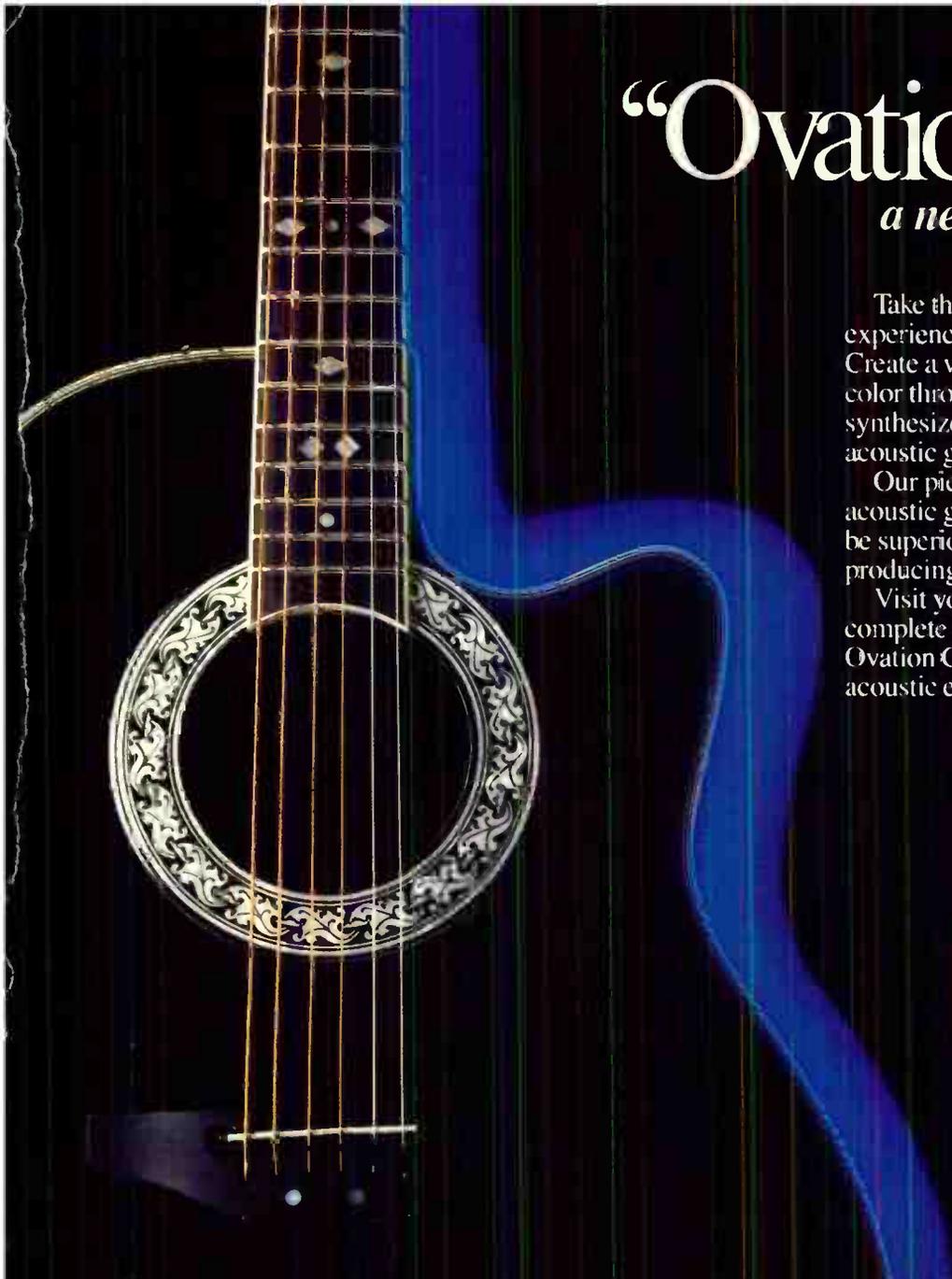
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writing or recording I become an extrovert, and I get tremendous surges of energy. I'm a very energetic writer—I can't just do it intellectually, I have to *feel* what I'm doing.

MUSICIAN: *I'd like to ask you about your "camp" stage acts in the past. The critic Susan Sontag once defined camp as "the sensibility of failed seriousness." Would you agree with that?*

DAVIES: Perhaps being *aware* of failed seriousness is part of being camp. If you're not aware of it, it is really just innocence.

MUSICIAN: *Let me relate it directly to you. My guess is that one of the reasons you spent a lot of energy camping it up was because you were frustrated—you wanted to do a tight theatrical rock show, but found yourself thwarted at every turn.*

DAVIES: Are you detaching the word from its sexual overtones?

MUSICIAN: *To some extent, yes. The sexual side is one aspect of a general flaunting of outrageous attitudes.*

DAVIES: Perhaps I'm a flauntist rather than a campist!

MUSICIAN: *Is your camp persona optimistic or pessimistic?*

DAVIES: You're touching on areas that baffle me! Let me try to put it another way. It all depends on the context. Somebody can achieve greatness in public, pack out Madison Square Garden, and then go back to a lonely hotel room. We don't normally want to look at pessimism or loneliness: we just want the optimism. That's what heavy metal does. They don't want the world to see how lonely they are—they want Wagnerian heroism. To me, that's funny, it has humor.

MUSICIAN: *Were those shows in the vaudeville tradition?*

DAVIES: I don't like the word "vaudeville" attached to what I do, although it might apply to *Soap Opera*. My English heritage may explain the fact that some of my songs—like "Sunny Afternoon"—could have been done by a vaudevillian performer, but I wouldn't like someone's introduction to vaudeville to be through the Kinks. If there's a direct influence, I wasn't conscious of it. I'm not much of an authority on vaudeville.

MUSICIAN: *Did those crazy shows include an element of condescension to the audience?*

DAVIES: No. I was laughing at myself. I once heard something about Jack Benny, to the effect that all his jokes ended up backfiring. If a comedian sends up somebody else, that's cynicism. All the great comedians end up with egg on their faces.

MUSICIAN: *So, in a way, "Death Of A Clown" might be more appropriate to you—*

DAVIES: Than to Dave? Yes, but he wrote the song, and he sang it. In fact it *was* more suited to Dave. It was about Dave's giving up a raver's life-style, and paying the price.

MUSICIAN: *Barry Fantoni, who knew you well in the early days, once said that your sense of alienation was due to a loss of working-class roots. True?*

DAVIES: Barry's said a lot of things! No, I think he's totally wrong—I don't think I'll ever lose those roots. I had them when I bought my first big house, and you carry them with you wherever you go. If that's your being, you can't lie to yourself, and it's impossible to be creative if you do. At the time he said that—and it was so long ago—that may have been the conclusion he drew from the situation. But I certainly haven't lost my awareness of class and my Englishness. There's something particularly English in my music and the way I look at things.

MUSICIAN: *How do you see yourself in class terms? Has the situation changed?*

DAVIES: I see myself as classless, but I suppose if you press the issue, I'll say that I'm working class. When people approach me, I notice that they don't know quite how to place me. England has become more cosmopolitan in its thinking these days, but there's a very deep awareness of class distinctions here. The 60s were different in a way, but I didn't much like things

then, and I didn't mix much either. The 70s were years of stupidity, a period of post-optimism; the 80s are the years of realization. The 90s, I think, will be the years when ideas are put into operation—a time of application.

MUSICIAN: *Do you feel nostalgic about the past?*

DAVIES: No. I like the past more than I used to, but on the whole I think that it's better now than it was. It's more frightening, but it's more alive. A couple of years ago someone asked me, "What do you feel?" I said, "I feel everything." Then he asked, "Are you afraid of feminists?" I told him that I was afraid of *everybody*. Happiness all the time is like a painkiller.

MUSICIAN: *Perhaps you're less afraid of admitting these things than you used to be?*

DAVIES: Maybe. I'm much more aware of each moment, and that's the only way I can approach life. I don't know what I'll be doing in two months' time. And I'm not going to make a statement saying that I still pick up the beat of the street, because I don't think I ever did, I *do* see something in the street—I see beauty there. I don't know *why* I do—perhaps I don't see what's really there, and I just see what I see. "Waterloo Sunset" was never there. I imagined it. I saw it for a moment; I'm not saying that's the way it actually *looks*.

MUSICIAN: *Is beauty more important to you than truth?*

DAVIES: No. The past is beautiful because it's true. I'm struck more by ugliness than by beauty. I went to see the Dada exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London some years ago, and I was so enthralled by it that when I got on the train afterwards, everyone looked distorted, as though they had come out of a Max Beckmann painting.

MUSICIAN: *So you react strongly to what you see around you?*

DAVIES: Yes. I'm quick to react to what people say and do. I believe that you've got to question everything—I don't want to take at face value what someone tells me is the truth. I don't think there is any one truth—everything is true. There is a mathematical truth, there are mechanical truths, which you can't argue with, but I'm talking about ways of living. For example, there is a chemistry in this room, between you and me. If someone else comes in, a totally different chemistry will be set up. Everyone's reactions will change. All I'm saying is that truth changes as the situation or environment changes. I'm not making any earth-shattering statements.

MUSICIAN: *Do you have strong political beliefs?*

DAVIES: I'm opposed to anything that threatens individual be-

LIFE ON THE ROAD

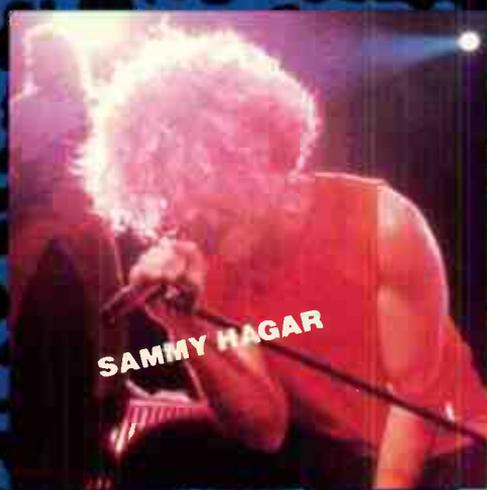
Ray Davies plays a Les Paul Sunburst, a blue Gibson Explorer, a red Gibson Explorer, and white and maple Ovation. He uses Ernie Ball medium light strings on the electrics, and Ball medium bronze strings on the acoustics. He plugs into a Marshall 100-watt amp and Marshall cabinets.

Dave Davies uses two Fender Telecasters (black and sunburst) and two Gibson Artisans. He sends his mighty power chords through an ADA signal processor into two 120-watt Boogie amp heads atop four Roland speaker cabinets. Dave's strings? GHS .008 gauge on all guitars.

Jim Rodford plays a Fender Mustang bass through Trace Elliott pre-amps, power amps and cabinets—except when he's beating the low notes on a Status bass, through a Hi-Watt 100-watt amp and cabinet. Whichever he chooses, you can bet he's fingering GHS heavy-gauge strings.

Bob Henrit uses black Pearl drums with eleven assorted Zildjian cymbals and one Pearl Jeff Porcaro drum rack.

Ian Gibbons tickles a Kawai electric grand piano, a Korg Trident synthesizer, and a Korg BX3 through a Dynacord Leslie effect, a Dynacord 12-channel mixer amp, and Dynacord speaker cabinets.



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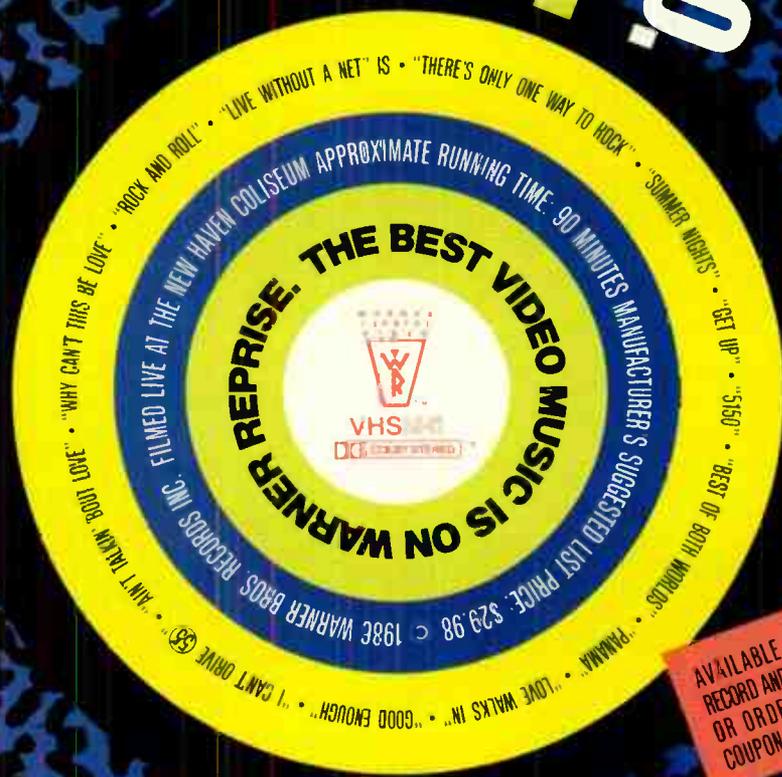
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lief. I hold to moderation in all things, including moderation. I'm not affiliated to any political party. Optimism went as far as it could in the 60s, when everyone was so happy, but people did deals then that we're paying for now. The 60s were a lie, an illusion, and people were blindfolded. It was wonderful in a way; people were searching, and for the first time all sorts of barriers were broken down, and besides, there was some great music! But I was never optimistic. I always knew that there would be bad tomorrow, so when tomorrow turns out to be good after all, it comes as a relief. Young kids these days seem to be being trained not to be optimistic, to accept their lot, and the possibility that they might never get a job.

MUSICIAN: *But you think that there's a truthfulness about the 80s that wasn't evident twenty years ago?*

DAVIES: Yes. It's almost a religious state of mind. I'm not formally religious myself, but I went into a church recently and said a prayer. It could have been any church, anywhere. I believe in something, somewhere, but ultimately you've got to find it within yourself.

MUSICIAN: *Unlike your brother Dave, you've never really talked about your childhood. Are you uncomfortable remembering it?*

DAVIES: I knew what was going to happen from early on, I absolutely did. There was no other choice for me. I wasn't aware of what exactly was going to happen, because I didn't have the knowledge, but I had an instinct. I knew I'd be creative.

MUSICIAN: *Were you happy at home?*

DAVIES: No. I would go for weeks without speaking. I just didn't feel that I had anything to say. I can still do that. People say that when you're successful you don't *have* to speak, and you'll be accepted anyway. I deplore small talk, possibly because I haven't got the art of it. I'm learning, though.

MUSICIAN: *It's been said that one of the reasons for the longevity*

of the Kinks is the relationship between you and Dave.

DAVIES: It's a very strange relationship. I don't think it's been anything other than difficult. But I have to do what I have to do creatively, and I can't let anyone else lead their own creative life through me. It's not right. And I could never write with him. But he defines what I was after on this record, and he's an important part of it. It's a very hard relationship, and I don't know how long it can go on professionally. We'll just have to take each step as it comes. In this book that I'm trying to write, I go into it in more detail.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think much about your pre-Kinks days?*

DAVIES: Yes, I have recently. I've written a film treatment about a band I was in before the Kinks—a blues band, with ska and West Indian elements. It was during a time when traditional musicians were finding it hard to get work, so we had a brass section, a West Indian singer, and I was the guitar player. I think about that a lot, because I feel the time is right for that sort of band now.

MUSICIAN: *What are the best stories you've ever told?*

DAVIES: "Dedicated Follower Of Fashion"—that was quite a cute idea, although it said more to other people than it did to me. It was very subconscious as far as I was concerned. It was a vicious song in a way, but people picked up on its humor. As I've already said, humor is something I always want to retain—I want to be funny, to make people realize that every situation is ludicrous. "Waterloo Sunset"—that worked. "Pressure" is fun too, "Low Budget" was a state that I realized I was in, and there was humor in that, thankfully. And "Come Dancing." I'm happy with the way I sang certain lines in the song, like "My sister's grown up and lives on an estate." Its impact is in the delivery, and when I do it onstage and get a laugh from the band, the humor will translate to the audience. Even people in

All the Rage with Queensryche

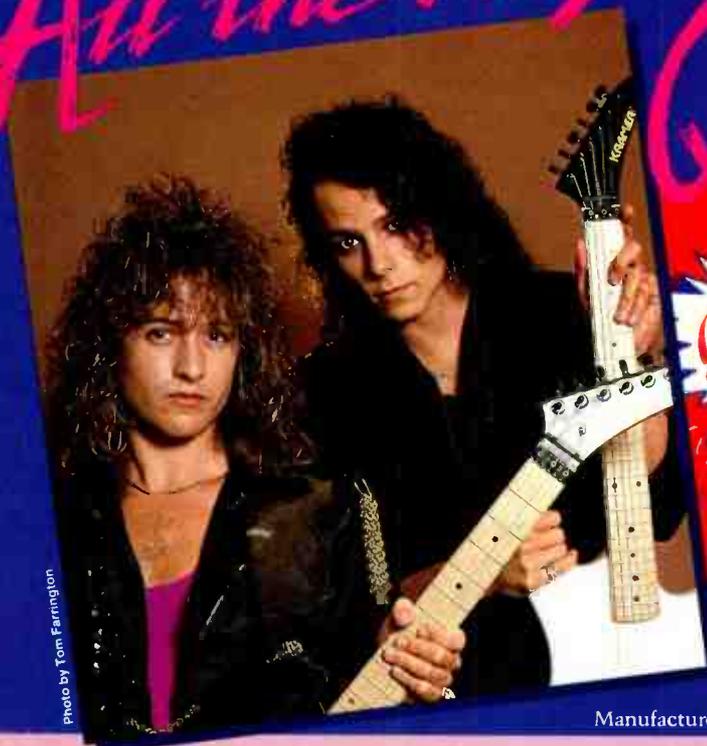


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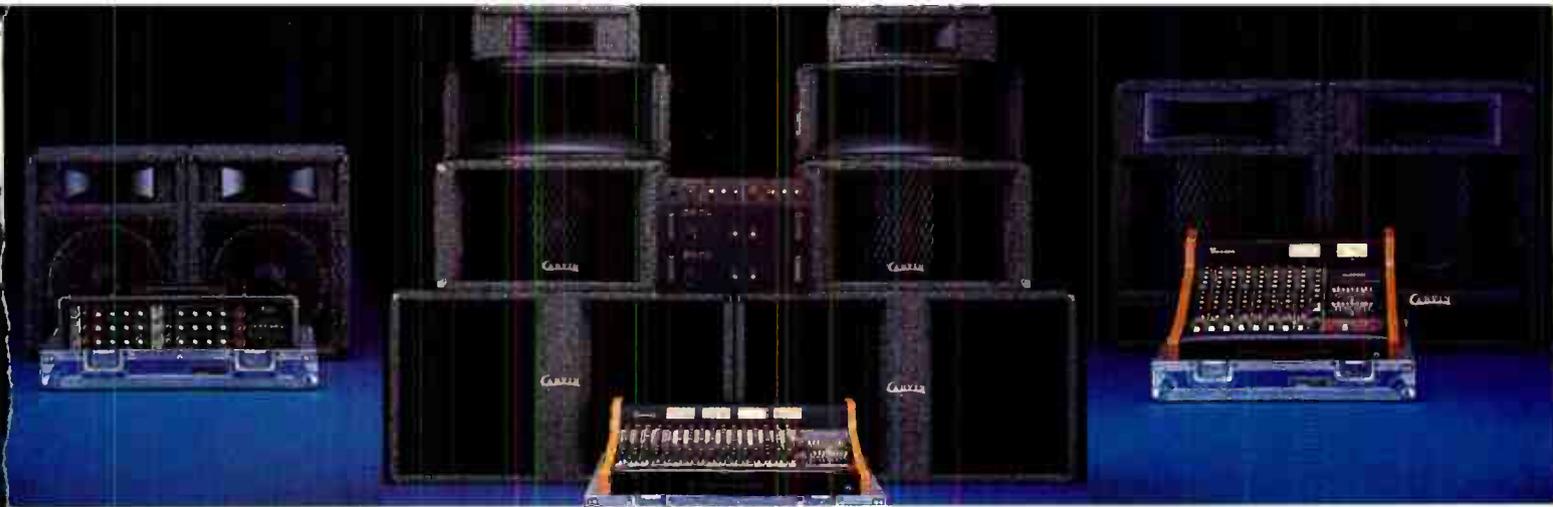
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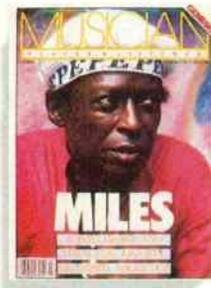
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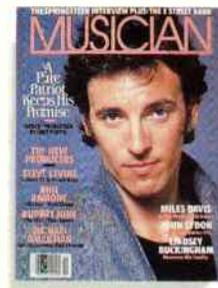
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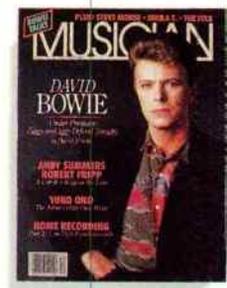
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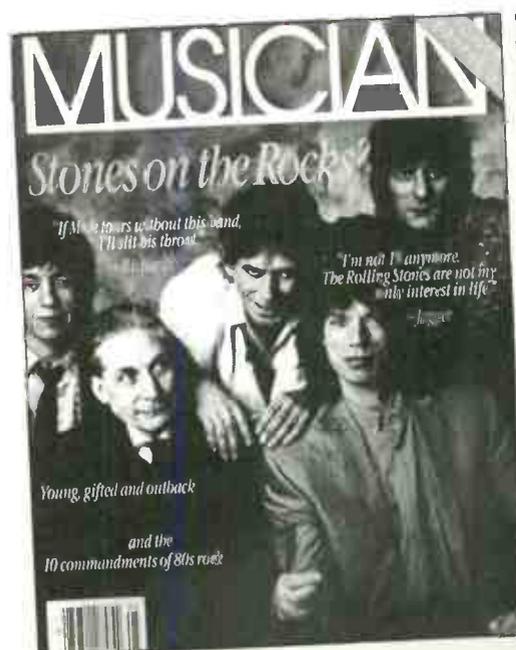
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Japan and America could relate to a story about a dancehall in England, and that was a good test.

MUSICIAN: *Do you consider going solo?*

DAVIES: Well, I've a few plans that are a little difficult, and I don't want to compromise the band in any way. Dave has done three solo albums after all, and *Return To Waterloo* wasn't exactly a solo effort, because the band was on it—it just didn't have Dave Davies playing on it. He didn't want to be involved in that project at all. He's got a mental block about those songs, and he refuses to play them onstage. In fact, there are a couple of other songs we've recorded that he hasn't felt able to play live: "Killer's Eyes" and "Property." I would love to go into little theatres to play, and at the moment I can't do that because it would appear as though the Kinks weren't able to fill bigger halls. If it were me alone, things might be different. It would be unfair to ask the band to do that sort of thing.

MUSICIAN: *Are you a hard taskmaster?*

DAVIES: I think I'm a bit hard on myself, anyway! I've been more reasonable with the band on this album, and I tried not to keep them hanging around. When you're in a rock band you turn up whether or not you're doing anything on the day, so if the vocals are being put down, the guys will play snooker or something. On this album, if I was doing something I could handle by myself, I'd tell them not to come in if they didn't want to.

MUSICIAN: *The Johnny Rogan biography of the Kinks gives the impression that you are sometimes impossible to work with!*

DAVIES: How did he find that out? He never even talked to me!

MUSICIAN: *He talked to people who worked in or with the band. He quoted Andy Pyle, for instance—*

DAVIES: When he joined, Andy asked me where he stood with the band, and I facetiously said, "Behind the drummer." He was with the band for six very destructive months, in between

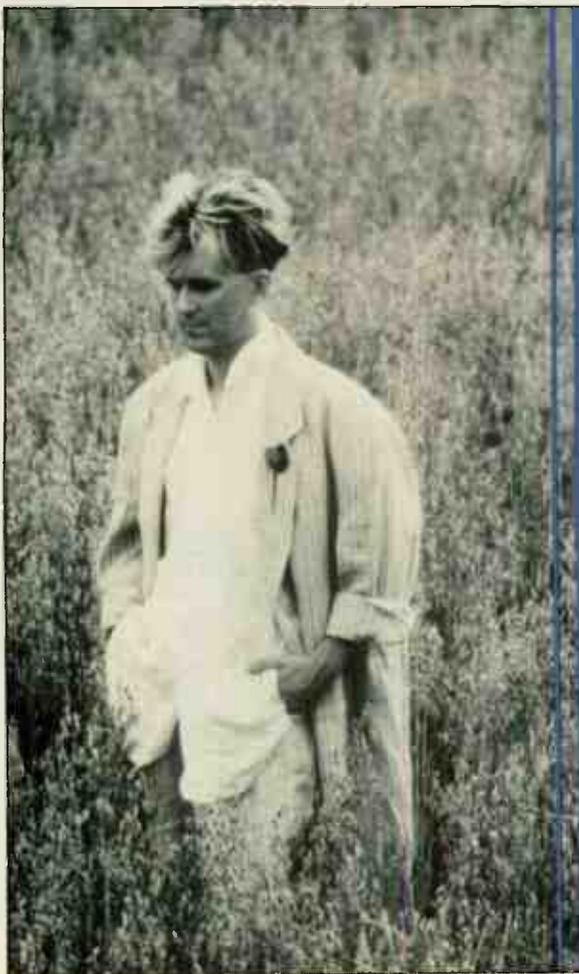
John Dalton leaving and us finding Jim Rodford. I must say that Andy did some nice work on some of the recordings, but I couldn't tolerate his attitude. We had a tour planned, which was due to take place in three weeks' time, and he walked out. So I don't think there's any love lost there.

MUSICIAN: *Why is it that so many of your songs are about sexual and social ambiguity?*

DAVIES: Basically I don't know what I am; I don't know what I want to be as a person. I just know the directions I want to take from a creative point of view. As an individual, I try to grab hold of the times when I can be happy, and I look forward to them. I've no idea what I am, or what I represent, so I find it difficult to attach myself to any thing, or any authority. I've formed a new company, which is called Play Right, and that's what I really want to do. I want to play right. I don't want my daily life to be influenced by any doctrine, or by any manifesto. That way I know I'll be true to myself, and that's hard enough. I don't see why I should have to influence other people. I guess I'd like to be a better person, but then I wouldn't do the things that I do. Everyone has his flaws!

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever feel like withdrawing from the whole music business?*

DAVIES: Yes, but even when I was in Ireland, away from it all, I started writing. I have to earn my daily bread—intellectually. Even if it's only one line, I have to do something creative during the day. Sometimes I wonder if I've anything left to say, but I believe that everyone sees things in a different way, and as long as I think that people want to know how I see things, I'll keep at it. But it's also therapeutic for me. The other day I spent twelve or eighteen hours working, and then went straight home to bed, exhausted. When I woke up the next day, I wrote a song. ☐

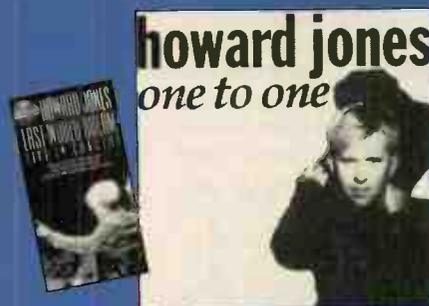


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THREADGILL from page 91

music, or that you would get married and have a family and have to move around the world and support them and all of that. Your youthful enthusiasm has just swept you away.

"But if you could actually see what it was going to be like... Well, it's like that game last night," he decides. "You put some cats up under that much pressure, with their back against the wall, and then they rise to the occasion and come up to a whole 'nother level. I think *that's* what it is. That's what makes a good musician. I mean, a lot of the people who I thought were great as kids—who were supposed

to have exceptional talent—they dropped out. All of the ones who were child prodigies and geniuses, who won all the contests and got all the awards, they didn't last.

"Because the race is not given to the swift. It's the tortoise and the hare. That's what art is about. You can't win it unless you're in it. You've got to stay." ❏

DEVELOPMENTS from page 50

dubbed the **Voice Vault Series**. The two available vaults are not cheap—\$500 for a 512-voice model—but include two MIDI Ins (which can merge), four MIDI Outs, front panel switches to communi-

cate with your synths, and full MIDI program-change and 16-channel capability.... A small Michigan firm called **Valhalla Music** (313-548-9360) is selling a 757-voice library disk for all DXs—it runs on a C-64 and costs only \$100. We auditioned some of the Valhalla voices and they sounded great—at thirteen cents apiece, can you afford to pass this deal up?... And in case you are among the vast majority of chronically confused would-be DX programmers, the ubiquitous **Freff** is finishing up a book for **Music Sales** that will Explain All.

Are you one of those guitarists who uses a MIDI floor pedal and can't do the Program Change Boogaloo? That's when you have to step faster than Fred Astaire just to call up patch 97 on your DDL because there's only three buttons on your MIDI foot controller. Well, unless you enjoy doing the Program Change Boogaloo, may we suggest a controller from **ADA** with *ten* numeric buttons (ah, one for each digit—brilliant!). It's called the MC-1, goes for a reasonable \$200, accesses up to 128 programs, also has a bank select button, and sends on all MIDI channels. Naturally **ADA** hopes you'll use the MC-1 on some of their cool new MIDI signal processing boxes, but it works with everybody else's gear as well.

SHORT CIRCUITS; A big autumn for **Kawai** includes a rack-mount expander version of their **K3 Digital Wave Memory** synth. The K3M has six voices with front-panel programming, does splits, layers and windows, and costs \$850. But how about their new R-100 digital drum machine. For \$800 it's touch-sensitive, tunable, panable, and even has MIDI song position pointer.... **Roland** has made a bold commitment to buyers of its S-50 and S-10 samplers: free sounds for life, which you collect from an updated bank at your dealer. It's a smart way to get around the head start other samplers may have in library size.... **Fostex** has done a luxury version of its famed \$500 X-15 cassette four-track; for only \$200 more the Model 160 lets you roll faster at 3¾ ips, use Dolby C, sync on track 4, and patch more easily, all with a nice new mixer layout.

Apologies to **Laurie Spiegel** for misspelling her name two different ways and for overestimating by \$20 the price of her sensational **Music Mouse** composition program for the Mac; it's really only \$60 (212-925-7049)... A Los Angeles-area group of **Synthesized Music Enthusiasts** is forming—write to **SMELA**, 12702 Emelita St., North Hollywood, CA 91607 for details. ❏

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(615) 321-5526

STUDIO MANAGER Kelly Sharber McBryde **CONSOLE** Trident A-Range 40x24x24 **RECORDERS** Otari MTR-90 24-track, Studer B-67 2-track **INSTRUMENTS** Steinway 7' Grand Piano with MIDI, Fairlight Series III **OUTBOARD** LA-2A, DBX-160's, Lexicon PCM-70, Kexep II and Drawmer gates, Lexicon delays

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1710 Roy Acuff Place, Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 254-5925

CONTACT Carolyn Thompson **DESCRIPTION** Main room and separate mix room **EQUIPMENT** 2 Trident TSM consoles, 2 Mitsubishi X-850's, JVC Digital, Studer A-800, MK III, A-80 ½", B-67 ¼" **OUTBOARD** EMT 250, 224-XL, EMT Plates, Lexicon Prime Time, Eventide Harmonizer, Kexep II and more. Full line of microphones. **RECENT PROJECTS** Alabama, Lionel Richie, Louise Mandrell, Charly McClain, Earl Thomas Conley and Anita Pointer, Dobie Gray, Glen Campbell

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MUSICIAN

#25 NO. 87 JANUARY 1986

ICD 08582

ZZ TOP

**HOW THREE
BAD BOYS
BECAME THE
KINGPINS
OF CACTUS
CRUNCH**

**BY
TIMOTHY
WHITE**

**KATE BUSH GETS
HER HEAD SHRUNK
YNGWIE MALMSTEEN
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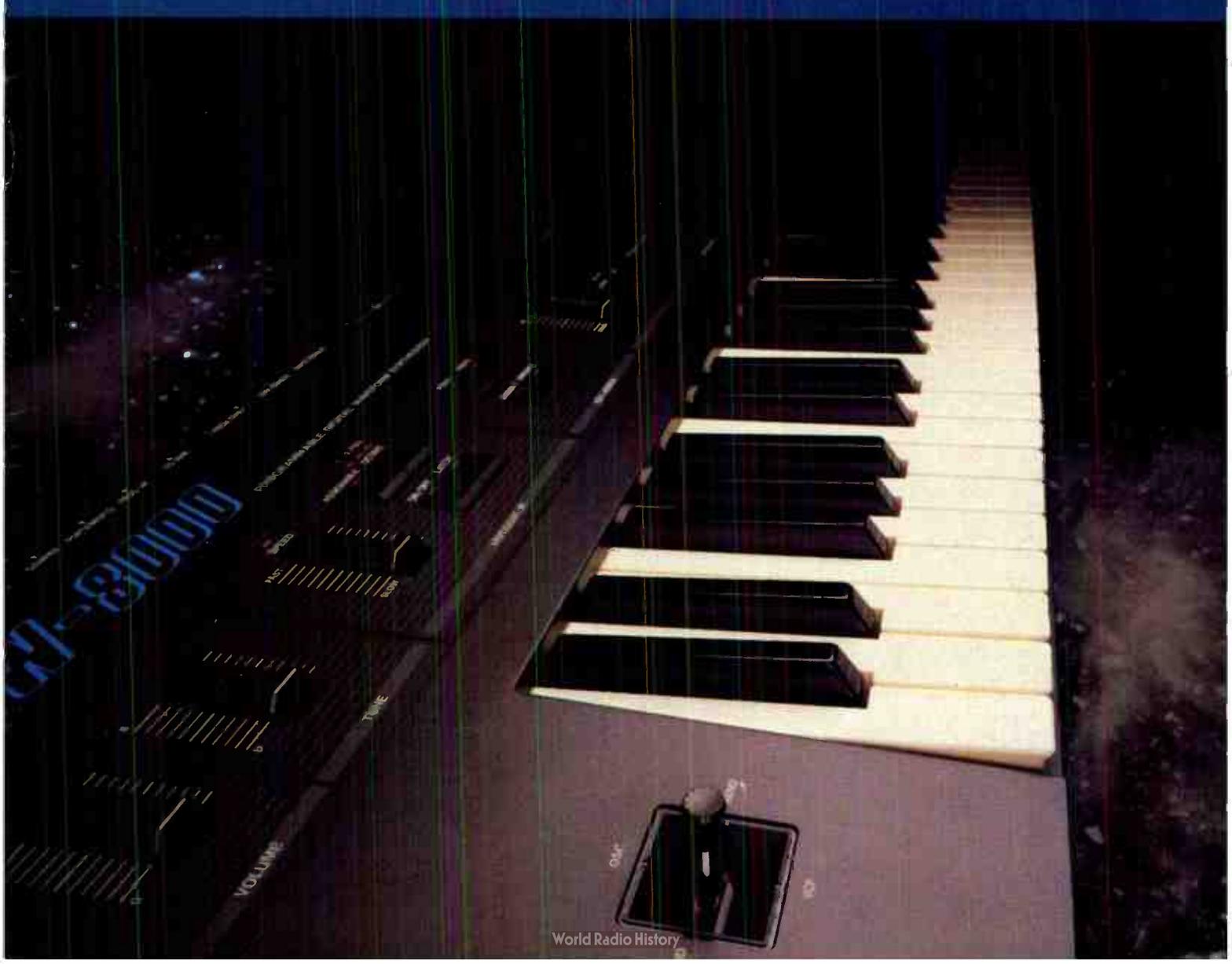
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5	6	7	8

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POWER

DDR-30

Roland Makes It Happen!

ZZ Top

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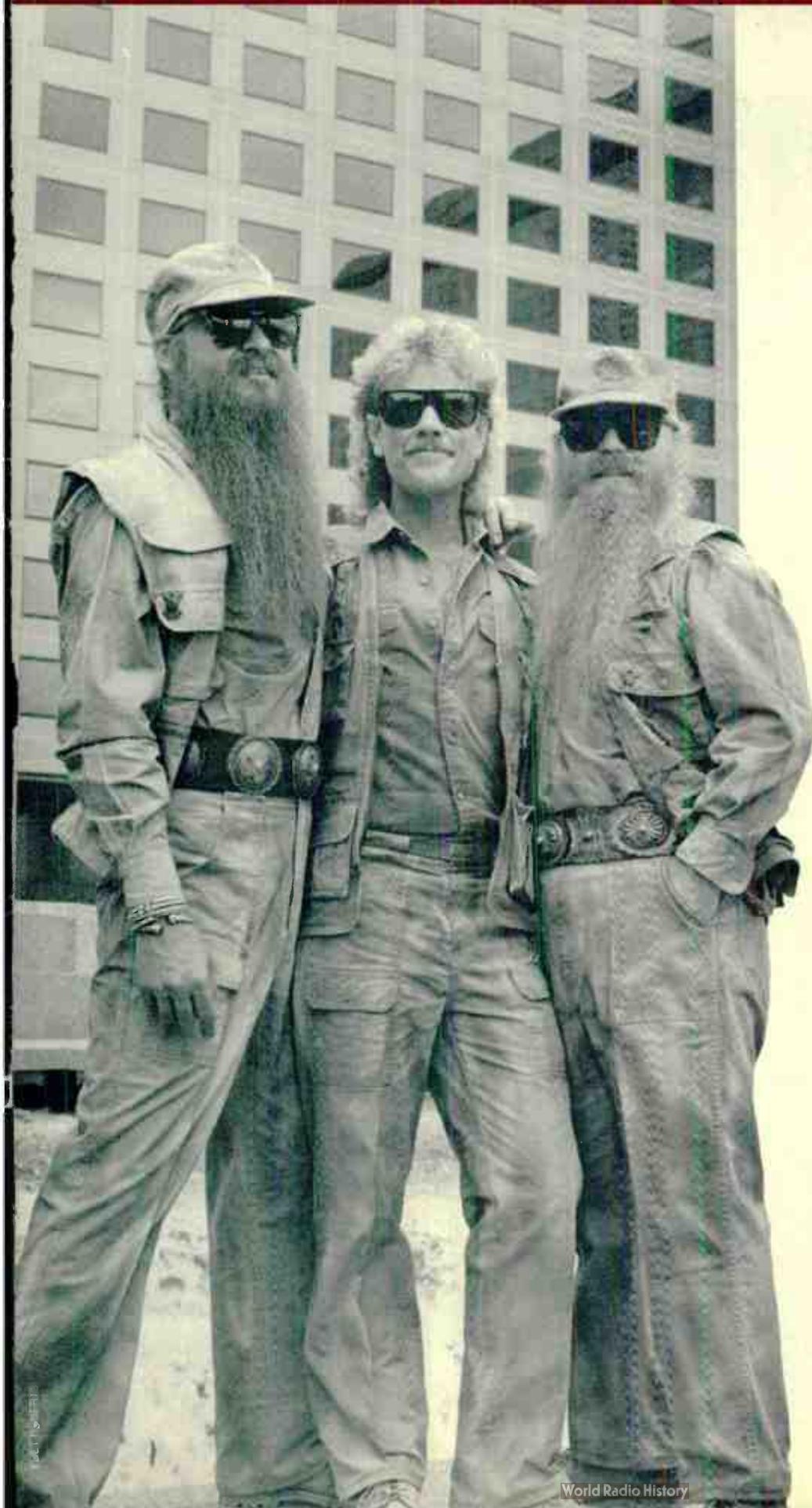
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Cougarrants

Every once in a while when I finish reading an article about a musician I think to myself, "As a musician, that's the attitude I want to have." That is the way I feel after reading your October interview with John Mellencamp. Thank you *Musician* and thank you John Cougar for your great rock 'n' roll.

Thomas B. Morgan
Dearborn, MI



Although I recently enjoyed the well-written article on John Cougar Mellencamp, his inappropriate remarks concerning the supergroup Yes made it quite difficult for me to do so. The day Mr. Mellencamp matures beyond his trademark I-IV-V progression, then I will take into consideration his criticisms of one of the superior forces in rock music.

Marc Lionetti
Middlesex, NJ

You really outdid yourself in the John Cougar Mellencamp interview. He's one of my heroes because I've been hanging out for the past couple of years trying to make the pieces fit, much like he did when he was my age. Now maybe if I show the interview to my parents, they'll stop worrying about me. I also loved the photographs—Steve Marsel did an excellent job.

Harlan C. Fredenberg
Kalispell, MT

Who is John Cougar Mellencamp's fashion consultant, Peter Buck? Buck's been wearing a Future Farmers of America jacket for years, and on the covers of his records too. Not that Mellencamp can't wear anything he pleases, but his lack of individuality is showing up in his

wardrobe as well as his records.

Julie Boyles

Review of the Native

Thanks to Bob Giusti for his excellent interview with Stewart Copeland. If Sting is the heart of the Police (like many people believe), then Stewart has to be its soul. My only regret is the interview wasn't longer. Next time more Stewart and a lot less John Cougar.

Jim Creasy
Louisville, KY

Concerning Michael Shore's scathing review of the "Rhythmatist" videotape: Does this man have a sense of humor at all? It is clear from the beginning of the tape that this is a spoof on documentaries, with Mr. Copeland poking fun at time-honored documentary clichés, as well as himself. As for Mr. Copeland's alleged "elephantine ego," who wouldn't want a little ego massage after sitting through Sting-mania for so long? Stewart Copeland is a talented musician who receives little enough credit without the remarks of thesaurus-pounding critics like Mr. Shore. If you don't like Mr. Copeland's arrogance, you can suck my socks. I dare you to print this.

Melinda Higgins

[At least you didn't dare me to suck your socks — Ed.]

Tips Talk

Some months ago I read Freff's *101 Recording Tips* and have since used a few. The tip on using specific eq cut/gain combinations for voice, synth and bass has yielded clarity in my demo projects. Of special note is the use of headroom specs when noise reduction is not in use. This tip has helped make drum transients and horn passages much hotter and defined. De-emphasizing low frequencies when recording bass tracks helps a great deal in keeping kick

drum/bass combinations clean and audible; before the two frequencies added up to a rumble the E train could not equal! I think you should give him more frequent similar columns and a raise!

Glen Namain
Passaic, NJ

Take that, mister

Why does a magazine that features extensive quality journalism on such innovative and little-known artists as Brian Eno, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Keith Jarrett, Van Dyke Parks, and Laurie Anderson consistently sell out by putting mega-pop-stars (e.g., Paul McCartney, John Cougar, Ray Davies, and Phil Collins) on its cover? My guess is that next month's cover will feature Tina Turner or Madonna.

Scott A. Ronan
Columbus, Ohio

[Oh, we get it: If Ray Davies were unpopular his music would be better. And if Van Dyke Parks becomes popular it means his music is worse. And here we thought quality wasn't related to sales! Thanks for setting us straight, pal. And a Tina cover sounds like a great idea. — Ed].

Pino Plug

I was glad to see Rob Tannenbaum's article on Pino Palladino—it's always great to read about a bassist who really plays the bass. Just one thing, though. Amid all the hoopla about Henley, Paul Young, etc., Pino's nifty playing on David Gilmour's *About Face*, particularly "Murder," is not so much as mentioned. Wha' happen?

Jonathan Aul
Thousand Oaks, CA

Stevens Redux

Steve Stevens' recent quote (July '85) about jazz having no heritage received some harsh criticism from some of your readers [*Letters*, October '85]. It appears that this quote was interpreted slightly out of context. Of

course jazz has a heritage. But Stevens was comparing jazz to classical guitar which certainly has much deeper roots than does jazz. There is a history that can be found in classical guitar which could never be found in jazz because it is too young. The same can be said of rock.

Mabusha Masekela: With Stevens' background in music, he is anything but uninformed and ignorant about music history. Learn a little more about the guy before you condemn him.

Nola Wilson
Gainesville, FL

Ferry Annoyed

I enjoyed Timothy White's revealing interview with Bryan Ferry. But does Mr. Ferry really believe that England is an island? If so, he does a grave injustice to his many Scottish and Welsh fans. I would like to believe Mr. Ferry's statement was a mere slip of the tongue and not another example of the arrogance of the English.

June Sawyers
Chicago, IL



What Do They Win, Don Pardo?

Congratulations to the Pat Sheedy Project, winners of round two in the *Musician!* JBL "Best Unsigned Band" contest, and over \$6500 worth of JBL sound equipment; and to Joe Gambesica, Tracey Price and Stephen St. Pierre, winners of our Sony CD giveaway. Prizes that all sound as good as they sound!

Erratum

Due to an editing error, John Oates was mistakenly identified as a former member of the Magnificent Men in our December issue. Oates was in fact in the Masters.

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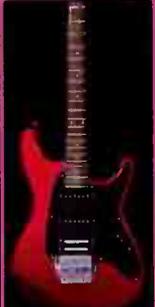
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10,000 MANIACS

BY BILL FLANAGAN

FOLK ROCKERS SAY GOODBYE TO THE OL' HOMETOWN

Jamestown, New York is nine hours northwest of Manhattan, on Lake Chautauqua between Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Buffalo. In March it was still snowing up there. The farms and vineyards along the road looked like they'd been barren for a century.

Dennis Drew, keyboard player with 10,000 Maniacs and a hometown boy, navigated the icy roads in his father's car and pointed out landmarks. "That's the village of Lillydale," Dennis said, gesturing to a cluster of white wooden buildings. "It has the country's greatest

concentration of psychic phenomena."

Who can disprove a statistic like that?

Dennis drove down a red brick street, past an enormous cemetery, to Natalie Merchant's mother's house. ("There are more people in that cemetery," noted bassist Steve Gustafson, "than there are in the town.") At Merchant's house, Natalie, the Maniacs' lead singer and lyricist, got into the car distraught. She'd heard that a Comfort Inn was going to be erected across from the graveyard. "The cemetery," Natalie said, "is my favorite place. I go there and sit for hours."

For three years 10,000 Maniacs have been playing to hip rock crowds in New York, London and Atlanta, and then returning to another world. No wonder their music is such a strange mixture of youth and age. No wonder their songs sound like tunes taught to children by ghosts.

Natalie Merchant fits no rock 'n' roll cliché. In a world full of third generation Jagers and second class Springsteens, there's no obvious precedent for her haunted romanticism. Though her love for Sandy Denny comes through in live performance, Natalie is possessed of that rarest of virtues, an original voice.

That voice was first apparent on "Tension," the one song on both the Maniacs' self-made EP (*Human Conflict Number Five*), self-made LP (*Secrets Of The I Ching*), and new major label album (*The Wishing Chair*). In "Tension" Natalie spoke in the voice of an old woman, used to the losses that accumulate as life nears its end but not reconciled to them. After ticking off markers along the years ("dress lengths, assassinations, fractured family ties, christenings") with a stiff upper lip, the singer delivered this zinger:

*The early hope for permanence
The words, the rings, consistency...
Local posts will list your friends
In order of disappearance
Lawn scattered tins feed birds
The portion baked for absent guests.*

10,000 Maniacs are not an ordinary rock band in style or sensibility. Despite their hard-core name, the group's eclectic style has evolved from vaguely new wave/reggae to folk-rock of the sort Denny's Fairport Convention made popular fifteen years ago. Guitarist John Lombardo notes, "We're as close to the Band as we are to Blondie."

Natalie Merchant and fellow Maniacs: precocious children taught by grown-up ghosts.



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take the songs apart and study them. By the time *The Wishing Chair* was finished the band was playing as a solid unit; the acoustic tunes were airy, the rockers solid and, on the anthemic "Scorpio Rising," downright ass-kicking.

Natalie's lyrics, often incomprehensible on the independent records, were now clear. Dennis Drew once joked that the reason 10,000 Maniacs were so often compared to R.E.M. was that you couldn't understand what the singer in either group was saying. Producer Boyd admonished Natalie that he wanted to be able to make out every word on the demos, and damned if the new articulation didn't pay off six months later, when *The Wishing Chair* proved accessible at first listen.

Returning to their hometown, their parents' houses and a child's way of living had an unexpected effect on the Maniacs' new songs: They are filled with an adolescent's sensitivity to change, a precocious nostalgia for lost childhood combined with anticipation of endless new possibilities.

In "Can't Ignore The Train" a young girl delights in private fantasies and dreams of escaping the teasing of little boys. In "Back O' The Moon" grown-up Natalie implores a little girl to sneak out in the moonlight, play some games and enjoy being a child while she can. There's a dark side, too—a political comment just below the surface. The song implies that the best part of childhood is being killed by the fear that today's kids won't live to grow up:

*Yes that was a sigh
But not meant to envy you
When your age was mine
Some things were sworn to
Morning would come
A calendar page had a new printed
season on the opposite side.*

"I wrote that song for a little girl in my neighborhood," Natalie explained. "I was trying to interest her in these wonderful books with gorgeous illustrations that were printed in the twenties. She just wanted to watch *Dukes Of Hazard*. I'd say, 'Let's jump rope, let's play hopscotch.' She'd say no. I'd get so frustrated. I started out the song trying to say, 'Oh, Jenny and I have so much fun together.' But I realized we *don't* have fun. One time we were looking at the moon, and I was telling her about the sandman, the man in the moon, and she said, 'Are they going to put guns on the moon and point them down at us? I heard that on the radio.' Sort of takes the fun out of it."

On the last night of winter it was snowing. Jerry came over to the cabin to break down his drums for the passage to London. Dennis and Steven went into

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World Radio History

town to hit Jamestown's one rock club, where a top forty band was slugging through "Dancing With Myself." The cover charge was a dollar. A local yokel eyed the Maniacs suspiciously and said to the doorman, "Punk bands should have to pay double."

When the Maniacs made their first independent record Natalie approached the disc jockey at this club and asked if he'd play it. He told her to "fuck off."

That night Dennis got bounced out of the bar for attacking the DJ. Jamestown's a beautiful place, but it's easy to see how a winter there could drive someone of an uncoordinated sensibility around the bend.

Steve the bassist woke in the cabin at 11:15 the next morning, just as winter became spring. The snow was gone, the temperature was high, and the weather on the lake was beautiful. Steve had to get to the bank and get his money out for England. Natalie was leaving the next day, and the rest of the band three days later. Steve took Rob's car and, on an impulse, snuck into the Chautauqua Institute, an old fundamentalist retreat/summer resort.

The fenced-in village was right out of *The Twilight Zone*. Streets were lined with perfectly preserved nineteenth-century houses, interrupted by an occasional Greek temple. It was as if a giant child had constructed a play town with mismatched toy buildings. Along the lake shore the land had been molded into a miniature reconstruction of the Holy Land, complete with scale-model Bethlehem, Jerusalem and other an-

continued on page 30

Tools from the Asylum

Rob Buck plays a Gibson Sonex Artist through Roland's SDE 1000 and Super Distortion Feedbacker, and an MXR limiter, graphic equalizer and envelope filter. He keeps a foot on all that sonic affectation with his Ernie Ball volume pedal. His amps are a Fender Deluxe Reverb and a Roland JC 120. Rob's mandolin is custom made. **John Lombardo**, on the other hand, plays a Fender Telecaster through a Jazz Chorus-120, and an Ovation 12-string. **Steve Gustafson** plays a Rickenbacker 4001 bass, through an Ampeg SVT head and two 15-inch JBLs. **Dennis Drew** plugs a Korg CX3 into yet another JC-120 (must've been a warehouse close-out). **Jerry Augustyniak's** drums are new Sonors, but his cymbals are old Zildjians, except for one crash which is a mysterious Ufip, from Italy.

When recording in the woods the Maniacs' tape recorders were run through a Fostex graphic equalizer and a model 350 mixer. They put the drums through the Roland digital delay from Rob's effects rack. They used two JBLs as monitors, a Crown D-75 amp, and ran off proof of their progress for the record company on a Technics cassette deck.

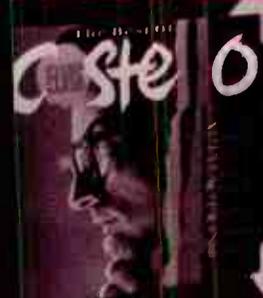
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*Compact Disc contains three additional tracks: (The Ampex Woman) When My Love Comes A-Gonna Roll For The Rumbaut and Man Out Of Time
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 World Radio History

MARSHALL CRENSHAW

BY SCOTT ISLER

A SINGLES MAN FINDS HIMSELF ON A ROCKIER ROAD

Marshall Crenshaw? A songwriter's songwriter. Ask anyone—except Crenshaw himself. "I'm a musician first, and a songwriter eighth," he modestly insists. "I think of myself as a practitioner of pop music. I just write songs to perpetuate that."

Bette Midler, the Dirt Band and Robert Gordon would disagree. They're among the growing crowd who have recorded one or more Crenshaw compositions. Since his own recording debut four years ago, the thirty-two-year-old pop fiend from a Detroit suburb has attracted plenty of critical attention. His songs typically look back to the 50s and 60s for a rustproof chassis underpinning airflow melodies, V8 propulsion and power (guitar) breaks. His lyrics don't shy away from the more complex problems of the love-tossed. He's even had a top forty single—once. Which might explain why Crenshaw is now in Austin, Texas, opening a show for Howard Jones.

"We've been really excited about coming to Austin," Crenshaw deadpans after opening with "Someday, Someway," his lone hit. "We're dying to entertain you." The audience, mostly of high-school age, may or may not catch the humor. But they give Crenshaw and band a more than tolerant response. Some are even familiar with his songs.

The singer/guitarist is on the road with Jones to promote a new album, *Downtown*. "From a pragmatic point of view it made a lot of sense," Crenshaw says of his opening-act status. Crenshaw is a pragmatist. Yet he can't help but be ambivalent about the turns his career has taken since he signed with Warner Bros. Records in 1981.

Crenshaw's first, self-titled album included "Someday, Someway" and sold over 200,000 copies, according to manager Richard Sarbin. It's a stunning debut, full of memorable phrases (verbal and musical) and rhythmic byplay. Crenshaw's band consisted of bassist Chris Donato and brother Robert Cren-



"True love is a great topic; there'll never be enough songs about it."

shaw on drums. "I listen to it now," Marshall says in his Austin hotel room, "and it just sounds like guys who are scared to death trying to make a record. I remember how impossible it was for me to get a guitar sound, how upset it made me, and how under pressure Chris Donato felt. The only thing about it that didn't make me happy was that it didn't go platinum."

He got a ruder shock the following year when his second album, *Field Day*, didn't do as well as the first. Producer Steve Lillywhite was roundly criticized for the record's overblown sound; a single, "Whenever You're On My Mind," never charted at all.

"Let's be honest—I was shook up

about it," Crenshaw admits. "I never really figured it out. The only disappointment that still lingers is that the single never went anywhere. All I ever really cared about was that we had hit singles. I don't really care about reviews." He blames a "political thing" at Warners for hurting the single's chances.

Field Day was issued in spring, 1983. *Downtown* didn't appear until well over two years later. "I wasn't doing much of anything" in 1984, Crenshaw says. "I was taking a rest. When our first album came out we were already on the road, and we stayed out there for about a year. Then we stopped and made another album. Then we went back out again, and stayed out for another year.



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When it got to be time to start thinking about another record, I found I had just no idea what was going on. I felt really disoriented and exhausted, spiritually and physically. So I decided to hang it up for a while—give up show business. You gotta pace yourself, otherwise you're dead."

A self-confessed homebody, Crenshaw "hung around the house." (He married his high-school sweetheart eight years ago.) The year wasn't totally lost; he did a session with producer Mitch Easter that yielded "Blues Is King" on *Downtown*. But when he got serious about the album last winter, there were changes made—starting with the band.

Crenshaw first thought about expanding his trio two years ago. "It's really a matter of practicality. The stuff on this album, I don't think there's any way the three of us could play it and pull it off. We had a bit of a time doing stuff on *Field Day* too; it was really difficult for us to execute the songs in concert. I didn't think I was cuttin' it anymore as a guitar player in a three-piece band. It was too much of a load on my shoulders."

To relieve that load, Crenshaw and *Downtown* co-producer T-Bone Burnett recruited some acquaintances: Crenshaw knew guitarist G.E. Smith and drummer Mickey Curry, of Hall & Oates'

band, from touring with them. NRBQ's rhythm section is on "Yvonne," Crenshaw's first recorded twelve-bar. Burnett asked keyboard player Mitchell Froom, bassist David Miner and drummer Jerry Marotta. Robert Crenshaw drums on two tracks. Donato isn't on the album at all, and he doesn't mind telling you how he feels about it.

"Well," Crenshaw draws, "they felt probably how you would imagine they felt. It's kind of a crummy subject. But it just became absolutely necessary in order to have the record come to exist. We hadn't played together in a long time. We were out of touch with one another. We tried some stuff and it just was impossible to get anything done. I had to kind of break that habit."

On tour, though, Crenshaw is reunited with his brother and Donato—plus guitarists Tom Teeley and Graham Maby. Teeley is a friend of Crenshaw's since they toured together in a *Beatlemania* road show in the late 70s. Maby, Joe Jackson's longtime bassist, met Crenshaw on a Jackson tour. Crenshaw picked them as much for their singing as instrumental abilities; the expanded group's vocal harmonies are in evidence as they run through "Cathy's Clown" at a sound check. "We took our thing as far as we could as a three-piece group," Crenshaw says. "I think we have one of the best rock 'n' roll bands out there right now. I'd like to get this band into a studio as soon as possible."

When Crenshaw says "rock 'n' roll," he doesn't mean Led Zeppelin. "More or less, I hated all contemporary rock music from about 1970 to about '78," he states. His favorite guitarists are Bo Diddley and Duane Eddy. He's recorded songs originally done by Gene Vincent, the Jive Five and Buddy Holly. Holly used to be a favorite critical comparison, although the resemblance stops at the fact that both wear glasses. Indeed, despite his love of 50s sounds, Crenshaw is no copycat revivalist. He accomplishes the much harder task of writing contemporary music rooted in the values of past craftsmanship.

"I find a really good technique is just to pick up a guitar and start beating on it and give it absolutely no thought beforehand. You start with the germ of an idea and just sorta build it up from there. The best ideas are the ones that materialize out of nowhere. Those are the ones I try to capture and develop. All over my house I have work tapes of me humming in front of a cassette machine. The idea behind songwriting and making records seems to be that you have to really labor at something in order to make it sound spontaneous."

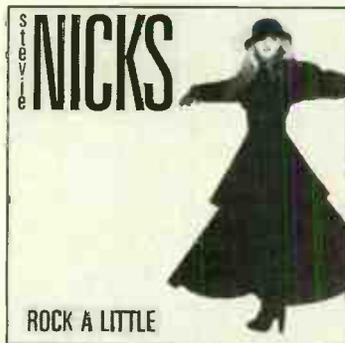
He doesn't have a fixed m.o. "I'll start something and not finish it for two or three years. Or I might throw something



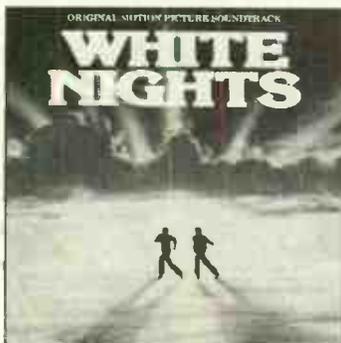
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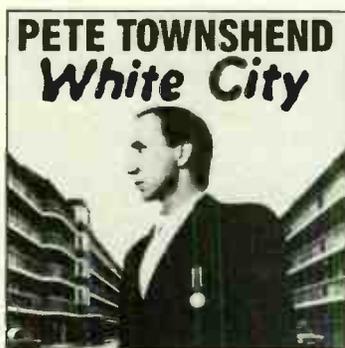
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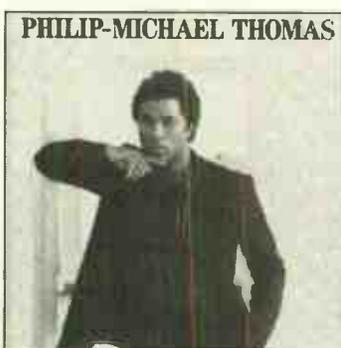
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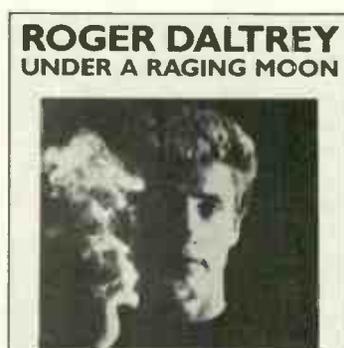
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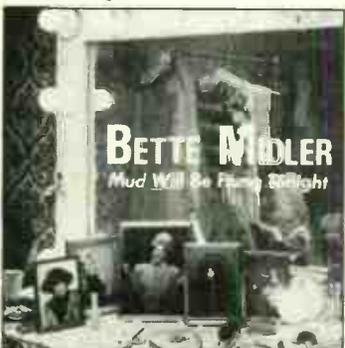
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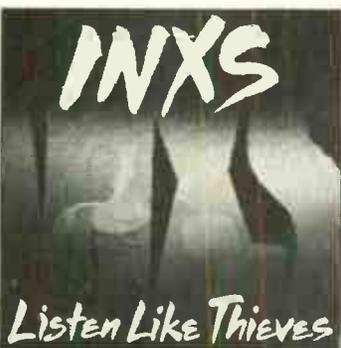
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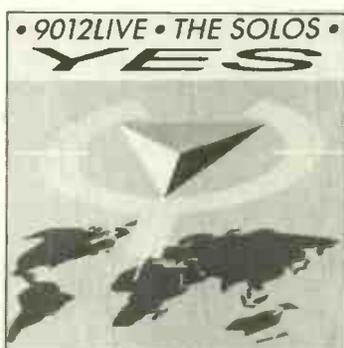
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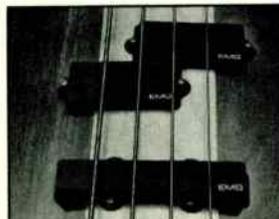
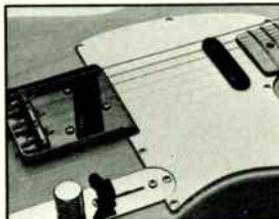
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together in half an hour." He claims "Someday, Someway" took five minutes. On the other hand, "sometimes I'll find I'm editing and fooling around with something even after it's on a record. I'm still changing the lyrics to 'Our Town' [on *Field Day*]."

Surprisingly, Crenshaw began songwriting in earnest only two years before his first album. At first, "I was really concerned about making every song as short as possible. I thought if I could get 'em down to four seconds that would probably be a good thing. I don't even remember why anymore. I guess it was just in emulation of 60s rock. Finally one day I realized my brain was turning inside out. Now I can be more objective about what I'm doing. I don't use a formula anymore...I just sit down and try to come up with something that moves me."

That almost always means a love song. "True love is a great topic for songs. I don't think there ever will be enough songs written about it. True love is probably the only thing in the world that isn't corrupt. It's not all there is, but what else is there?" he laughs.

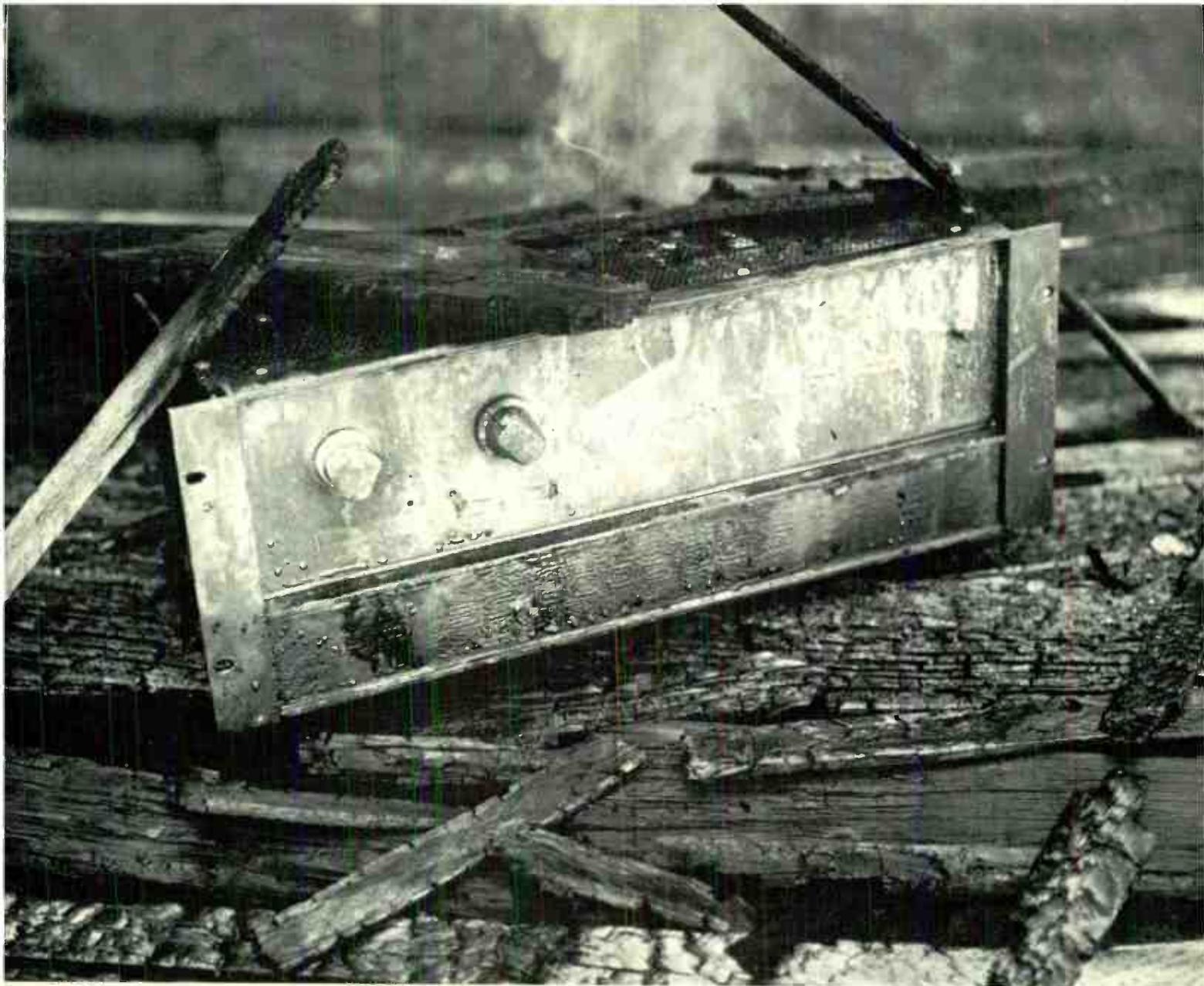
Still, the music comes first. Instead of "songwriter," Crenshaw prefers the term "manipulator of musical sounds." "As far as words go, I feel I'm just groping along, trying to finish the songs. Music is a much more powerful form of communication than language. There are hundreds of songs I love, and I don't know what the lyrics are.

"I was listening to a song today: 'Who'll Stop The Rain,' by Creedence Clearwater Revival. It's a beautiful song, I love it, but I don't know what the hell he's saying. You just get your own impression, and that's cool with me." He regrets the printed lyrics on *Field Day's* inner sleeve. "It's a rotten way to listen to a record."

For Crenshaw, music is a language—one he's been familiar with almost as long as he's known English. From a musically inclined family, young Marshall played with his father's guitar until he got his own, at age six. His childhood taste in pop veered toward rockabilly. It wasn't until 1963 that, inspired by "Wild Weekend" and "Louie Louie," Crenshaw got serious about making his own music. Even now, he says it's a tie between listening to music and playing guitar for his favorite activity.

After high school Crenshaw played in a bar band, an oldies band, a country band, a Hawaiian band, and even accompanied authentic, transplanted rockabillys like Jack Earls. "Mostly in the 70s I was listening to Chuck Berry and Phil Spector, Les Paul—anything but Uriah Heep."

A trip to Los Angeles in 1976 didn't pan out. Two years later Crenshaw had



In the early morning hours of November 15, 1984 tragedy struck the Bethany Lutheran Church of Cherry Hills, Colorado. A faulty electric organ was blamed for a multiple alarm fire that claimed much of the structure. Thankfully no one was injured in the blaze that caused over one million dollars in damage.

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better luck auditioning for a John Lennon role in *Beatlemania*. After eighteen months of the Beatles, however, he was ready to make some music of his own. Reunited in New York with his brother Robert—they had played together in the Detroit oldies group—Crenshaw found a bassist (eventually Donato) and began gigging in clubs.

At the same time he was shopping demos of his tunes to anyone who'd listen. One who did was producer Richard Gottetzer—who liked what he heard enough to have Robert Grodon, whom he was producing, cut five Crenshaw compositions. Gordon liked Crenshaw enough to record another three of his songs, after Gordon and Gottetzer split up, for the album that finally came out. (One was "Someday, Someway," a single for Gordon a year before Crenshaw's version.)

A 1981 single on the Shake label increased Crenshaw's audibility. Warners came calling, and even agreed to let him produce his major-label debut. Crenshaw was familiar with four-track equipment from a Detroit studio he owned with his early-70s band. But the driver's seat wasn't for him, and Gottetzer took over. *Downtown* lists Crenshaw as co-producer with Burnett and engineer Larry Hirsch. "I wanted to produce this album," he recalls, "and it was

almost a replay of what happened with the first album. Let's just say I'm completely cured of wanting to produce my own records."

The new record maintains Crenshaw's melodic flair on both uptempo rockers ("Little Wild One"—the current single that's going nowhere—and "Yvonne") and pensive slower tunes ("Blues Is King," "The Distance Between," the countryish "Like A Vague Memory"). This album's Everly Brothers

tribute, "Lesson Number One," was even submitted to the Everlys for possible use on their *EB84* album. "I wanted more than anything for them to cover one of my songs," Crenshaw sighs; "Run With Me," also tailored for the duo, was recorded by the Dirt Band instead.

With the Bellamy Brothers, no less, recording "You're My Favorite Waste Of Time," Crenshaw's future may lie within the unlikely skyline of Nashville. Man-

continued on page 30

Hold the Keyboards!

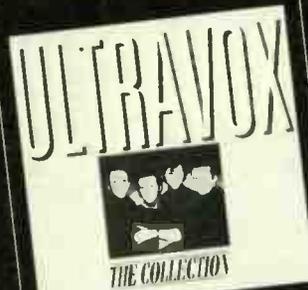
Marshall Crenshaw, a self-confessed guitar lover, keeps a harem of thirty instruments. On the road this fall, though, he narrowed it down to three Mosrites: a 60s-era twelve-string, and two new six-strings (one blue, one sunburst). He uses Dean Markley custom light-gauge strings (.009 to .046), and plugs into a Vox 'AC30 amplifier. "The sound has a real character to it I can't find in any other amplifier," Crenshaw states. "Plus I like the way they look." An MXR DDL box provides echo.

Tom Teeley plays a 1964 Fender Stratocaster with D'Arco Ten strings (.010 to .046). He too has an MXR digital delay, and MXR Dynacomp, going into a volume pedal and Vox AC30. His acoustic guitar is a Guild, his flat picks heavy-gauge. **Graham Maby** also strums a Guild acoustic, with medium-gauge strings (high G tuning) and a bridge pick-up. His own guitar is a blue Ovation special edition.

On a couple of numbers Maby switches to a Fender VI six-string bass, or plays the band's Samson wireless.

Left-handed bassist **Chris Donato** plays a 1969 Fender Jazz, and a Precision with a redone neck and Seymour Duncan pickups and pots. Strings are medium-gauge GHS Boomers. Donato plugs into an old SVT tube amp and two Music Man cabinets, front-loaded with four twelve-inch Electro-Voice speakers in each. **Robert Crenshaw** has a twenty-inch Gretsch drum kit, with twelve- and thirteen-inch rack toms, and a fourteen-inch floor tom. Heads are white Ambassadors. Yamaha hardware includes the tom-tom mount and bass-drum legs. Aside from a sixteen-inch Paiste pang (special effects) cymbal, Crenshaw has Zildjians: a sixteen-, eighteen- and twenty-inch ride. He uses a LinnDrum triggered by the kick drum and rack tom, and Promark 5B sticks.

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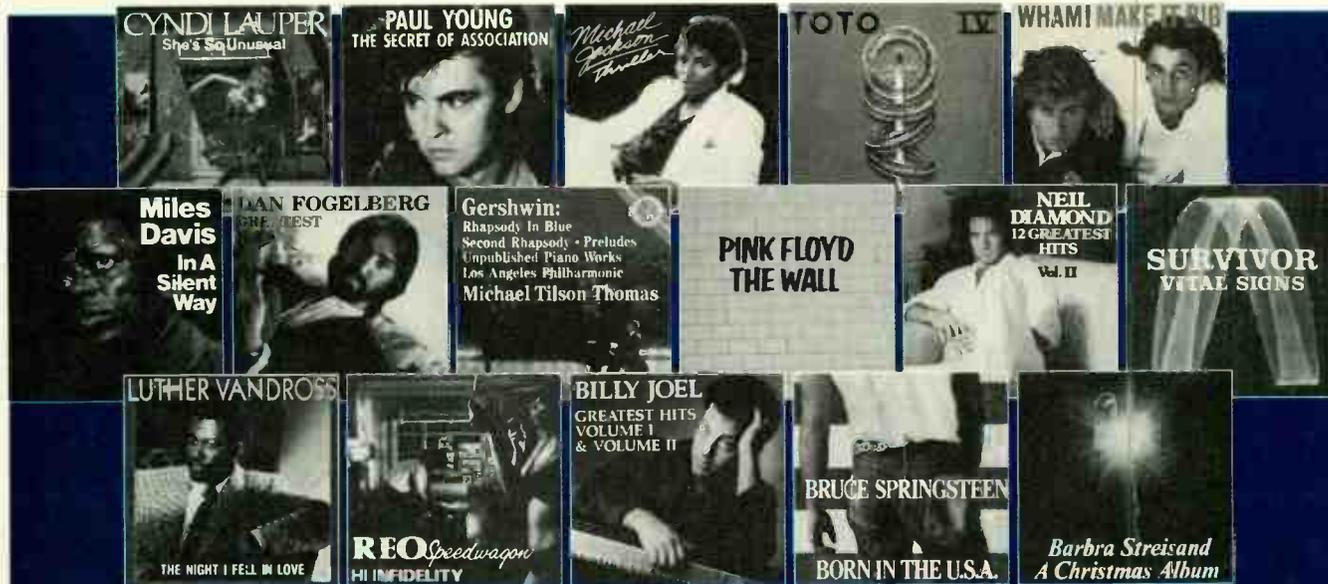
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DIGITAL AUDIO

HOW TO BUY A CD PLAYER

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

HARDWARE HINTS: THEY DON'T ALL SOUND THE SAME

Almost everyone who fancies him- or herself an audiophile has a favorite story about buying a CD player. One of my favorites has to do with the computer genius who ran out to buy a CD player the minute he found out about them. No sooner did he plug the player into his megasystem than he fished up his first CD—the Telarc recording of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*—and cranked the volume to await audio nirvana.

Oh, the sound was wonderful, so realistic that when the first cannon went off, he almost swore he smelled smoke. Unfortunately, by the next big boom he realized that he was actually sniffing the scent of fried woofer. According to legend, first he swore at having crippled his speakers, then leapt for joy that his new player so easily humbled his high-end equipment.

Another story you might have heard had to do with the nationally-known consumer magazine that filled six pages with test results on CD players, only to conclude that there were no significant sonic differences between them, and therefore they should be bought on the basis of price and features.

That first story probably didn't happen, but it should have; the second ought to be true, but unfortunately isn't. Sure, a consumer magazine actually printed that, but in fact there are audible differences between CD players. The real question to consider when shopping for such a machine is the extent to which you'll notice that variance.

Granted, we're dealing with musical minutiae here, stuff that can't be easily quantified. You can quibble justifiably over a lack of detail in extreme high frequencies; it's when you get to the notion of "musicality" that you wind up in bar fights. Just as one man's meat is another's excuse for vegetarianism, so too does one listener's ideal sound often seem colored or inaccurate to somebody else's golden ears. This, we

should remember, is how God keeps equipment manufacturers in business.

It might be that you won't hear any difference between CD players; or you may hear it on the system at the hi-fi shop, but not on your own aging stereo. Nor should you preclude the possibility that what you hear might not strike you as being \$300 worth of difference. What you're going to need is some background, and a battle plan.

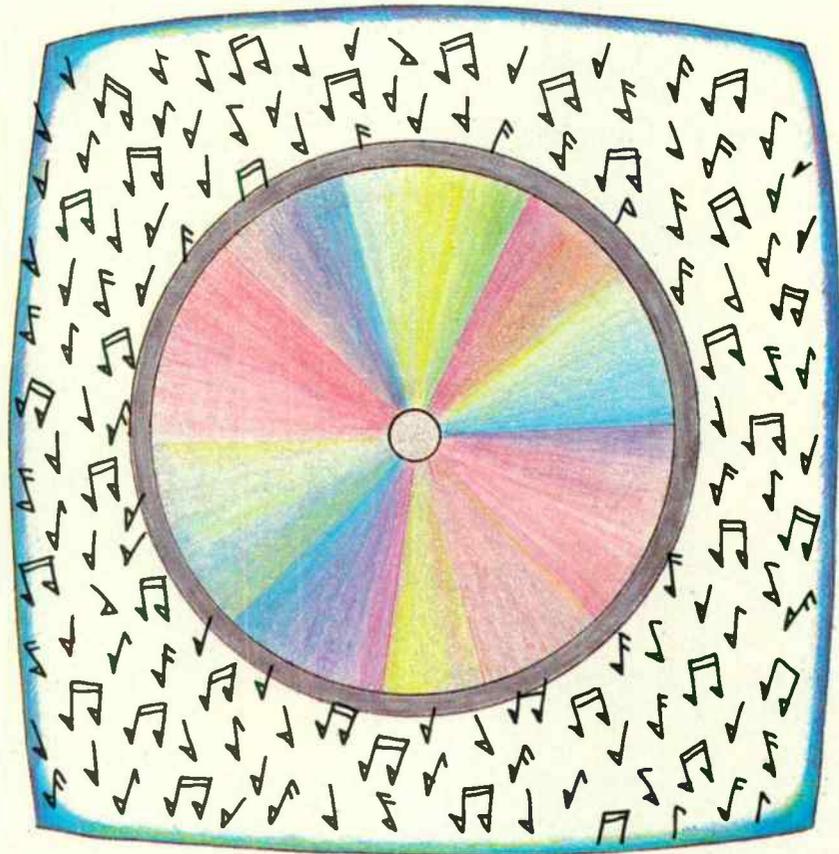
HOW THEY WORK, AND WHY THAT DOESN'T MATTER

Digital audio is about as basic an idea as you'll find in hi-fi. True, almost any electrical engineer can explain it in terms guaranteed to make your head ache, but only masochists or other engineers need subject themselves to that kind of torture. Reduced to its basic elements, the digital process simply takes sound "samples" and converts them to

being particularly bright, doesn't recognize those things—give it pits, or leave it alone—so it gives an error reading.

This is where the trouble begins, so an error-correction system was designed. Mainly the work of Sony, the error-correction uses a sort of computer buffer to hold the last good piece of information, and drop it in the hole left by an error. Happening as this does in a microsecond, the substitution goes by unnoticed, so the player can skip over dust and smudges. Peanut butter, however, remains a problem.

As usual, some engineers weren't content with mere error-correction, so a secondary system, over-sampling, was devised. This strategy, which first turned up in a Yamaha player, had not one beam but *three* scanning the disc. The idea, essentially, was to compare input on a best-of-three basis, figuring that would drastically reduce the possibility of bum sound. (This is no Yamaha



binary code, which can then be stored for playback later.

How it manages that playback, though, is not so simple. The binary data is stored on the compact discs as a series of microscopic pits that are read by a laser. So far, so good. But, like most readers, the laser sometimes makes mistakes. Maybe there's dust on the disc, or a smudge, or part of your peanut butter sandwich. The laser, not

exclusive; Sony's CDP-302, among others, also has triple beam tracking.

Once the disc has been read, though, the player has to do something with all the binary code—namely, convert it to the analog signal the CD player feeds into your amplifier. But the conversion process is not without waste by-products, and something must be done to sift the sonic trash out of the signal. Filtering is the answer, but some

machines use digital filters while others use analog filters.

Which is better?

Beats the hell out of me. Perhaps the most amazing thing about CD technology is that any one of the competing methods can be applied to generate excellent sound. There are perfectly wonderful CD players using single-beam systems and analog filters (the Luxman D-03 immediately springs to mind). Where the three-beam system and digital filtering have an edge is in delivering sonic refinement cheaply; the Yamaha CDX-3, for example, offers a sound nearly as vivid as the Meridian at less than half the price.

One persistent failing in CD players that particularly annoys hard-core audiophiles is the lack of a realistic "soundstage." In other words, when you sit in the "sweet-spot" between the two speakers, can you hear a realistic representation of depth?

There are at least two machines that go out of their way to correct that. One is the Meridian, an English-built machine that essentially refines the circuitry of the Philips CD player (which itself is sold as a Magnavox over here); the other is the Carver CD player, which adds a switchable "digital time lens" circuit to a Yamaha CD-2. Despite their similar intentions, the two sound quite

different. The Meridian is tremendously detailed, and succeeds largely through precision. The Carver, by contrast, exaggerates a bit, giving greater depth at both left and right, but at the cost of imaging in the center.

But the most telling aspect of the Carver circuit is the way it alters the CD's sound. The idea was to take a bit of the edge off the highs and add some oomph to the lows, but what it really does is lend the CD some of the warmth of vinyl. Those who have grown fond of the extreme dryness of "digital sound" find that warmth off-putting in orchestral recordings, but recordings like Yo-Yo Ma's *Bach Solo Suites And Partitas* (CBS) sound more realistic with the circuit on than with it off.

If you like talking tech, you can doubtless get several years of good arguments out of the Carver circuit or whether dual digital-to-analog converters are a necessity or a redundancy. Otherwise, simply remember that triple-beam tracking and digital filters are more likely to give you better sound for less money, and you'll be able to ignore the rest of the high-tech hoodoo that stereo salespeople throw at you. After all, what you'll really want to do is *listen*.

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WHY YOU SHOULD BUY THE DISCS FIRST

It's very easy to be bowled over the first time you hear a CD player, which is exactly why you shouldn't just walk into a stereo store and ask to hear a CD player. *Of course* it's going to sound better than almost any turntable you've ever heard—that's why people make the damned things. What you need to do is get familiar enough with the way they sound to be able to make an informed choice.

The first step is to consider what you're going to be listening to, and go out and buy some CDs. This may seem like buying gas before shopping for a car, but you'll want to have reference points for listening, and shouldn't depend on the dealer to have your favorite discs.

Think about your listening habits, though. Although it will be tempting to go for digitally recorded and mastered CDs, unless you listen to a lot of classical, your choices will be limited. Try to pick well-recorded albums you know very well, and re-listen to them before you go shopping. Recommended pop digital CDs: Madonna's *Like A Virgin* (Warner Bros.); Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms* (Warner Bros.); Peter Gabriel's *Security* (Geffen); Charlie Haden's *Ballad Of The Fallen* (ECM); and Archie Shepp's *Ballads For Trane* (Denon).

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the sound of acoustic instruments. An electric guitar, after all, can be made to sound like a lot of things, but a piano is a piano is a piano. Trevor Pinnock's harpsichord anthology *The Harmonious Blacksmith* (Archiv) is an excellent tool, because the brittle attack and piercing harmonies of the harpsichord will quickly show the weaknesses, if any, in a player.

Next, go out and look around. Don't waste the salesperson's time; just explain that you're shopping for a CD player, but aren't ready to buy yet. If you can manage to do this during slack sales times (mid-day, mid-week), that shouldn't earn you icy looks. Be sure to take notes as you listen, though; not only will it help you remember specifics, but it will reassure the sales staff as to your seriousness.

Once you've narrowed the field to a

few favorites, try to arrange a listening session with the dealer. Ideally, you should be able to hear A/B comparisons between players over a system identical or close to yours, but if that's impossible, always compromise *up*. What you don't hear can hurt you.

Try hard to hear differences between the players; play 'em soft, play 'em loud, play 'em *hard*. Bump the table while it's playing, and see if it causes the laser to mistrack (it probably won't, but like kicking the tires on a used car, the act is tremendously fulfilling). Get the sales clerk to demonstrate all the features. And listen as critically as you can.

In a way, those who don't hear the difference between machines have it easier than the rest of us, because they can pick and choose purely on the basis of gimmickry. Remote control is fairly common, as is programmability,

fast-forward and reverse, but there are variables. Almost any player will let you skip tracks—if you hate hearing Andy Summers moan "Mother" every time you play *Synchronicity*, this is the feature for you—but some restrict the way the tracks can be ordered. Be sure to ask first.

Another common feature is the repeat, whereby you can repeat either the whole disc, or just a portion of it. Imagine, for instance, the ease of being able to "loop" a guitar solo, so you can practice along. (While we're on the subject, here's a suggestion for the industry: Since pitch is not a function of playing speed for CDs, as it is for albums and tapes, how about a feature that *slows the music down* to half and/or quarter speed? That would make learning licks off records so easy, you'll make a fortune off the cover band circuit



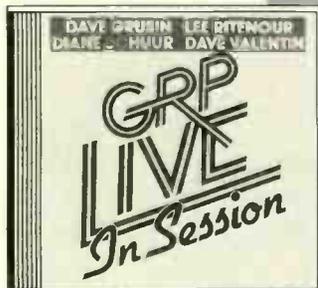
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CD from previous page

alone.)

Then there are the arcane items, like Sony's CD-5, a Walkman-sized CD player, Toshiba's twin-drawer XR-V22, or Magnavox's CD boom box, the CD-555. The utility of these players is a bit dubious—are you really that desperate to play *The River* without having to get up and change discs? And, following in the footsteps of the Pioneer CLD-900, which plays not only CDs but video laser discs, expect to find more multi-purpose options.

A final word, though. Once you've bought a CD player, you run the risk of contracting CD fever, an ongoing madness that makes it impossible to hear the words "Compact Disc Sale" without being overwhelmed by the urge to buy. As the demand for CDs outstrips the supply, there may be nasty moments in the browser-bins as crazed customers clamor for the last remaining copy of *The Best Of Bread*.

Remember, you've been warned. ☐

10,000 Maniacs from page 15

cient meccas.

A couple of Amish workers were the only people around. Steve approached the amphitheater where he and Dennis graduated high school. It's used by the Institute for concerts, too. A rule says that all operas performed there must be sung in English. Natalie had better keep working on her pronunciation.

"I'm just taking a good look now," Natalie said the day before she left. "Because it's not going to be here later." ☐

Crenshaw from page 22

ager Sarbin is pleased about wrapping up a publishing deal recently with Screen Gems: "When it comes to getting songs with Dolly Parton or George Jones or Eddie Rabbit, you just need a larger company."

Regardless of his career's unpredictability, Crenshaw is unperturbed. "The really odd thing to me about us," he reflects, "is, when I started doing this I imagined that we would be a singles band. I still think of us as a singles band, even though we've only had one single that got in the top forty. My impression was that we would be like Abba or Creedence Clearwater. It just hasn't fallen that way, and I'm at a loss to understand why. But life goes on, and I'm still more than happy to be doing things the way I'm doing them. This is a really weird business, a heartbreaking business. I wanted to make records all my life, so I'm not complaining." ☐

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RENE & ANGELA

Happy Together... And Apart

Singing together" used to mean just that. The song of the moment was simply a romantic showcase for pairing two exquisite voices. It would be unfair and inaccurate to say that Rene Moore and Angela Winbush can't sing, but it is worth noting that their singing seems less the star of the show than it might have been with some of the duo's 60s

and 70s counterparts. Here, singing competes with stalking synthesizers, relentless hooks and—in the smash hit "Save Your Love (For #1)"—a propulsive rap courtesy of Kurtis Blow. Rene & Angela sing against one another as often as *with* one another.

Angela agrees that the music she makes with Rene could be somewhat jarring to folks who think of male-female duets only as frilly little two-part harmonies. "I think what we've done is blended two different flavors and chemistries together,

and then we try to show those in all capacities," she says. "We sing together, then we can sing apart. We play together, we can play apart, and we play off that onstage and in our records."

Rene & Angela are cousins, although they didn't find it out until after they teamed up in late 1977. Angela is a St. Louis native whose roots run deep in gospel. She has also done live and studio session work with the likes of Lenny Williams, Jean Carn and Dolly Parton. Rene, the "serious" musician of the team, is a graduate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's minority training program and has performed with the likes of Leon Russell, Ella Fitzgerald, John Denver and Billy Eckstine.

The pair started recording on Capitol in 1980 under the tutelage of Rufus bassist Bobby Watson. Their records didn't take off until they joined PolyGram and released the *Street Named Desire* LP. Through Watson's urging, the twosome hired engineer Bruce Swedien to polish up their semi-finished product. Why not just hire him to work on the songs from the beginning? "Caviar work on a beer budget," Angela explains. Rene is happy simply to have Swedien on the team: "Bruce is...like trying to get God to come to dinner."

With "I'll Be Good" skirting the top forty, Rene & Angela expect to be able to hire Swedien on a more regular basis. Regardless, they will no doubt continue to redefine the male-female duo of the 80s. "We don't agree all the time," Rene acknowledges, "but on certain musical ideas we agree. She has hers, I have mine, we agree on the best one and that's the direction we go in."

— Leonard Pitts, Jr.

Stevie's Plagial Cadence?

Lee Garrett just called Stevie Wonder to say "I'm suing your ass!" Garrett and fellow songwriter Lloyd Chiate filed suit against Wonder in October, claiming he plagiarized "I Just Called To Say I Love You" from them. For starters, they want \$10 million in damages.

Garrett is no stranger to Wonder. Both blind, they have known each other since they were teenagers. Wonder even reportedly saved



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT LOVE

Garrett from suicide once. The two co-wrote "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours," among other 70s Wonderecordings.

The lawsuit charges that Garrett and Chiate wrote a song called "I Just Called," which they demoed for Wonder in 1978; they registered the tune for clearance with BMI a year later. Wonder copyrighted his song in 1984. His recording, used in Orion Pictures' *The Lady In Red*, won an Academy Award, and was then picked up for GTE Sprint Communications commercials. Orion and GTE are also named as defendants in the suit. If Wonder establishes that his "I Just Called To Say I Love You" preceded Garrett and Chiate's "I Just Called," he stands to lose his Oscar; an Academy Award-winning song has to be written for a movie. Depositions for the case begin in December.



PAUL COX

SHRIEKBACK

They Live For Chaos



Shriekback's permanent state of mind is complete panic," Barry Andrews says. In light of recent events, it's hard to disagree. The British band fired producer Hans Zimmer halfway through sessions for *Oil And Gold*, their fourth album; singer/keyboard player Andrews finished the "harrowing" job. Then they unexpectedly parted company with guitarist Carl Mash on the eve of a major U.S. tour. Andrews, Dave Allen (bass) and Martyn Baker (drums) hurriedly drafted a replacement, but sacked him after just four dates. With four days in New York to reconstitute the group, they added Eve Moon and Ivan Julian. Along with keyboard-

ist Steve Halliwell and backup singers Wendy and Sara Partridge, Shriekback was ready to meet America. To create Shriekback material, Andrews says, "You start with the rhythm. You draw out all the implications that are in that rhythm until you end up with a song." Inherent in those rhythms are songs like the morbid "Nemesis," with references

to "priests and cannibals/prehistoric animals" and a rhyme with "parthenogenesis." Its author says the song concerns moral perversity; "Nemesis" is a British comic-book alien (portrayed under license in the video). Live, the Shrieks burn with a rising level of volume and mania. Andrews' brilliant playing prods the chaos into a diabolically captivating

roar. The rhythm section provides an ominous anchor, while Julian adds wild, Belew-like noises. The band's combination of analytical intelligence, rampant imagination and unrestrained rhythmic fury makes for a mind-altering experience. Behind Shriekback's simple melodies and chord structures are deep and disturbing ideas and emotions.

— Ira Robbins

CRUZADOS

If at First You Don't Succeed...



ito Larriva remembers when it seemed like every L.A. band but his was getting signed to a label deal. X, the Blasters, the Go-Go's—one by one they went down the road to renown. But the Plugz, singer/songwriter Larriva's Chicano punk outfit, could only wave from the sidelines.

By 1983, the Plugz had had enough. Larriva and drummer Chalo (Charlie) Quintana formed a new band with guitarist Steven Hufsteter and bassist Tony Marsico, rechristened themselves the Cruzados (Spanish for "crusaders"), and soon found themselves recording an album for EMI.

Legal hassles sank that project, but this time the gods were on their side. A re-recorded version of that LP bowed on Arista in September, quickly landing on playlists around the country. "The kind of stuff we wrote for the Plugz," Quintana says, "was real heavy and simple, like a punch in the face. Now we put a lot more

thought into the music. Cruzados songs are more emotionally mature." Album aside, the industrious quartet has scored several movie soundtracks, including the cult fave *Repo Man*. Marsico and Quintana backed Bob Dylan on his David Letterman TV show appearance, and recently finished sessions for Joe

Ely's latest LP. And Larriva's just wrapped up an acting role in *True Stories*. David Byrne's directorial debut. "I play Ramón," Larriva says, "a character in the computer plant, who plays organ in the local Tex-Mex band—as well as at Sunday Baptist services. He's always flirting with all the girls." — Moira McCormick

GLENN PHILLIPS

A Different Kind of Success

Our music isn't that complicated or intellectual," guitar ace Glenn Phillips says, "but it is different. I've never heard another group sound like us, which may just be because

nobody else wants to!"

Or it may be that few can straddle styles as adeptly as the Glenn Phillips Band. As heard on their new *Live* LP, they display the fluidity of fusion without the self-indulgence, and the immediacy of rock without the boorishness. "I tend to describe us as an instrumental rock band," Phillips notes. "When you say 'jazz' today, it often means Muzak. Fifteen years ago, when I listened to a lot of Mingus and Coltrane, I wouldn't have been so squeamish about a jazz con-

notation."

Fifteen years ago, the sky was the limit for Phillips and the other members of the Hampton Grease Band (not to be confused with Joe Cocker's Grease Band). A gonzo aggregation that crossbred blues grit and avant-garde weirdness in the same vein as Captain Beefheart's Magic Band, the Atlanta-based quintet debuted on Columbia Records in 1970 with an ambitious two-disc project, *Music To Eat*, and waited for fame. But label and management has-

sles sapped the group's vitality, leading to their demise in 1973. After that "devastating" experience, Phillips struck out on his own. "My goal was to capture the exhilaration of rock 'n' roll, even though I played a different kind of music," he recalls. "What disgusted me about ninety percent of the instrumental stuff I heard was the elitism. I wanted to relate to people on a gut level."

Phillips has done just fine, thank you, over the last dozen years, touring steadily and making LPs without major-label support. "I've had offers from record companies from time to time, but they've always told me to add a vocalist, which means they want the group to become more like a heavy metal band with a flash guitarist. I've resisted that; if you're doing something a little different, you should stick with it.

"People say to me, 'Don't you want to make it?'—as if the band was a flop. We've been together over ten years, we still love playing, and people seem to be affected by what they hear. To me, that's success."

—Jon Young



Record Ratings: The Vinyl Solution

After weeks of negotiations and one canceled press conference, on November 1 the Parents' Music Resource Center, national PTA and Recording Industry Association of America announced an agreement on the controversial subject of identifying recordings with "explicit lyric content."

An RIAA statement says "member recording companies will identify future releases of their recordings with lyric content relating to explicit sex, explicit violence, or explicit substance abuse. Such recordings, where contractually permissible, will be identified with a packaging inscription that will state: 'Explicit Lyrics—Parental Advisory'...or such recordings will display printed

lyrics." For LPs, the inscription is to be placed on the lower quarter of album back covers. There are no placement guidelines for singles or cassettes. When an album displays printed lyrics, either as a back cover or on a sheet inserted under the plastic wrap, the cassette version will bear the imprint, "See LP For Lyrics." For their part, the PMRC and PTA plan to point out the good within the recording industry, reserving future criticism for recordings that don't observe the RIAA guidelines. They intend to assess the RIAA policy in a year's time.

The agreement would seem to defuse the implicit threat of government intervention (courtesy of the PMRC's strategically placed husbands) the group of Washington wives has held over the record industry's collective head. It appears that in this no-win situation

the RIAA essentially stood its ground while the PMRC/PTA coalition backed down from its insistence on a scarier warning label than "Parental Guidance: Explicit Lyrics" (the RIAA's original wording). The PMRC wanted a one-time panel to set criteria for "explicit lyrics"; the agreement allows individual recording companies to determine which releases qualify, and provides a sizable loophole with the phrase "where contractually permissible." In agreeing to provide printed lyrics—but only for those albums deemed "explicit"—the RIAA met the PMRC one-third of the way, after first protesting that song publishers, not record companies, owned lyric copyrights.

Among the twenty recording companies to accept the RIAA policy statement are MCA and A&M Records, who earlier refused to sticker

their product. "Personally, I think it's a mistake to compromise at all with these people," says Danny Goldberg, whose Musical Majority has led the counter-attack against the PMRC, but "none of the artists object to people reading their lyrics." As for the "explicit lyrics" inscription, "We don't feel any record company has the right or wisdom to interpret lyrics."

Meanwhile, the September 19 senate committee hearing on record labeling has inspired at least two recordings of its own. "Explicit Lyrics" by the (Scott)Blackwell Project sets various voices, some taken from the hearing, to a boom-box beat. The ubiquitous Frank Zappa uses senators' comments from the same hearing on "Porn Wars," the single from his new album, *Frank Zappa Meets The Mothers Of Prevention*.



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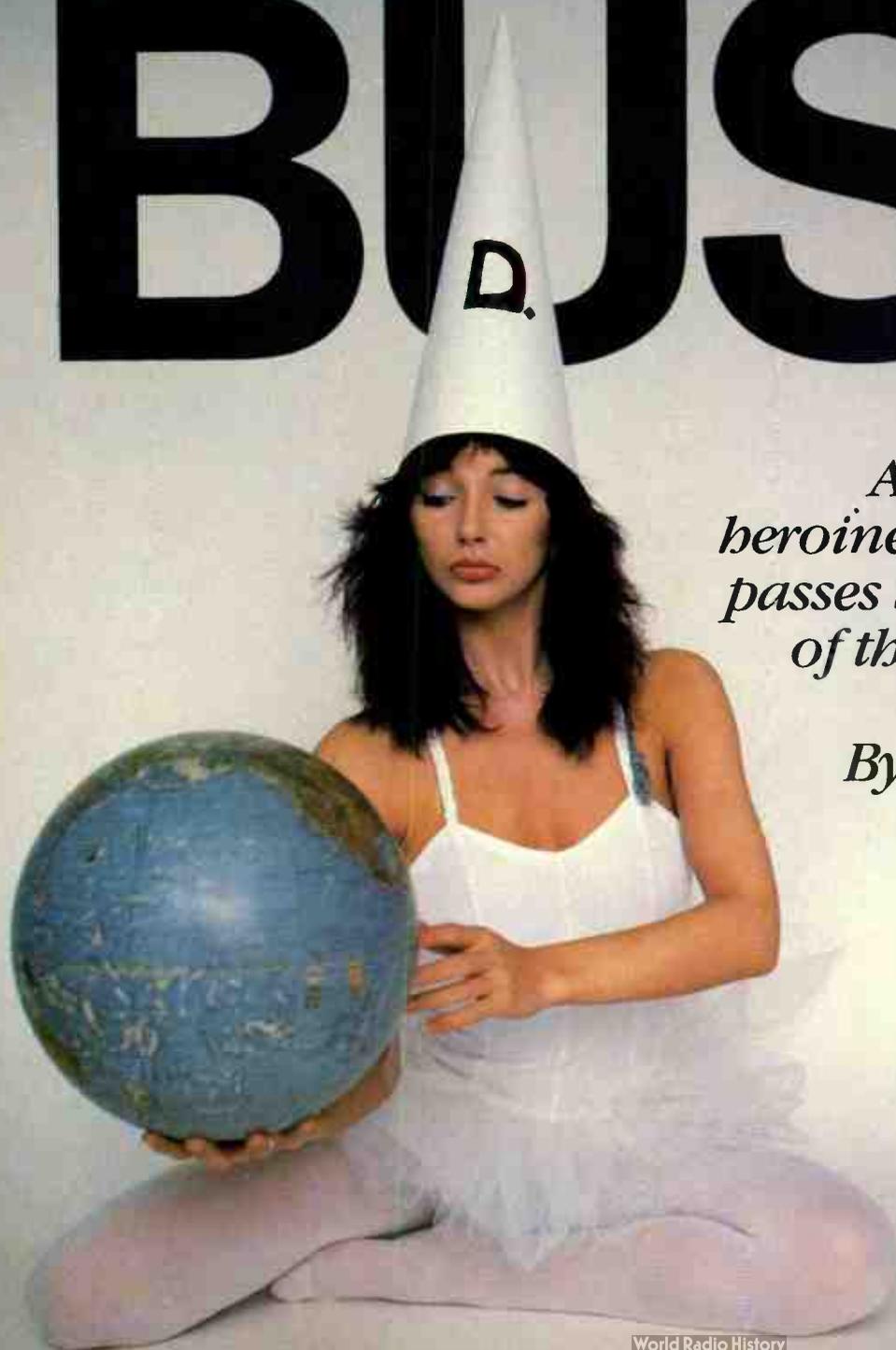
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KATE BUSH



*A British cult
heroine-turned-superstar
passes through the realm
of the subconscious*

By Peter Swales

After playing with Kate Bush for nearly a decade, bassist Del Palmer still recalls their first meeting: "I'd heard about Kate from her brother Paddy, whom I'd known for some time, but I'd had this impression that she was older, more mature.

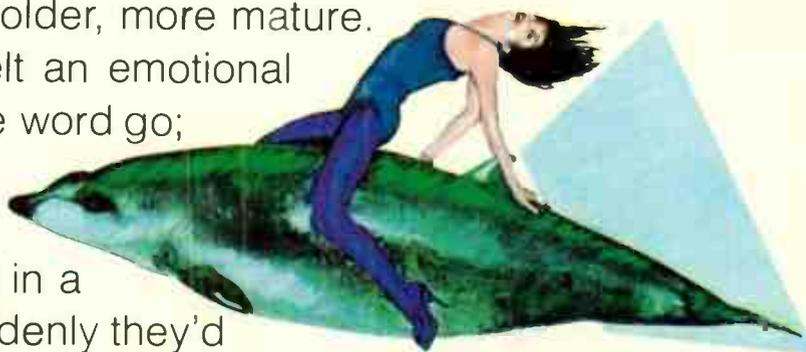
At our first rehearsal I felt an emotional involvement right from the word go; but I also thought, 'Shit, this girl is like *eighteen*.'

Her songs all started off in a familiar way, but then suddenly they'd leap somewhere completely different and you'd think, 'How could you think of going *there*?'

"It was a phenomenon completely different from what anyone else was doing," Palmer declares. "I've never had any desire to work with anyone else since."

He's not alone; though Kate Bush remains an acquired pop taste, she certainly seems to satisfy the musical appetites of those who've acquired it. Since her recording debut in 1977, when Kate was all of eighteen, her unique amalgam of impressionistic, frequently mystical imagery, a piercing four-octave soprano, and densely atmospheric instrumental arrangements has captivated a large and notably resolute international following. In Canada her fans hold conventions and publish a Kate Bush magazine; in England her newest LP, *Hounds Of Love* (EMI) recently debuted on the charts at number one. And though she's never toured or enjoyed much radio support in the United States, Kate's appeal is apparently infectious; upon its release, her video "Running Up That Hill" moved quickly into steady MTV rotation, while critical response to her previous records, notably *The Dreaming*, has been little short of rhapsodic.

If Kate Bush inspires extreme reactions, it may be because her own compositions are themselves unusually ambitious. Even on her first album, *The Kick Inside*—in most respects a conventional collection of piano-based ballads—Bush's unusual narrative fantasies, in which she bespoke intimacy with characters ranging



from Heathcliff to Jesse James to Beelzebub and Zeus, suggested grand designs. After failing to realize any of them on the studio-slick *Lionheart*, she took matters into her own hands: *Never For Ever*, her transition LP, signaled the arrival of Kate Bush the producer and shaper of elaborate pop constructs, surprisingly cohesive musical tapestries that mixed synthesizers with esoteric folk instrumentation.

Her songs deepened as well. Early records had focused on various angles of love and lust, but *Never For Ever* plumbed subjects as diverse as Freudian psychology ("All We Ever Look For"), nuclear annihilation ("Breathing") and Lewis Carroll-styled child infatuation ("The Infant Kiss") with eerie familiarity; the overall effect was like being taken on a tour through exotic realms of the unconscious. That, coupled with Bush's elaborate stage shows and her own striking physical presence, helped create a persona as much mythical as musical. So perhaps it was inevitable that she should follow that with an LP entitled *The Dreaming*, a knotty but ultimately rewarding musical tour de force. Like her compatriot Peter Gabriel, with whom Bush is often compared (she sang on his third album), Kate's bent for theatricality and rococo musical textures can be as off-putting to non-fans as they are enveloping for her legions. But like the aboriginal concept of dreamtime on which *The Dreaming* is based, Kate Bush's music deliberately conjures a world apart from the mainstream.

Three years had passed since *The Dreaming* when I interviewed Kate Bush at her home studio in the British countryside. Spurred by occasional reminiscences by her brother and long-time musical cohort Paddy Bush, Kate spoke with candor about her upbringing, musical development, theatrical ambitions and of course *Hounds Of Love*, not only her most sophisticated and commercially appealing album to date but one whose spirit is as uplifting as *The Dreaming's* was macabre. "I felt I wanted to write songs that had a very positive energy this time," she explained. "It's important that each album be different—otherwise you're not exploring but staying in a rut. And now that it's all done," she sighs happily, "I can sit here and enjoy it."

MUSICIAN: Do your songs just burst out of you like so many Athenas out of the head of Zeus or do they cost you a lot of suffering and effort to construct them as finished-art pieces?

BUSH: It's different every time. With the *Never For Ever* album, I had to work hard—it would take me weeks and weeks just to get a chorus or the words. But when we went into the studio, it was spontaneous and very quick. Whereas with *The Dreaming*, I just sat down at the piano, got a rhythm, and literally wrote the songs. I couldn't believe it! The words probably weren't there, but the idea was, and all the tunes. That was the first time I'd actually demo'd the songs while writing them—I put the piano down, put a voice down, put backing vocals down, and I had a song! And apart from "Houdini," which nearly killed me, the rest were so easy it was frightening. But then, as soon as I hit the studio, all that speed and spontaneity seemed to evaporate and turn into something completely different. The recording became really, really hard work, and it was very intense.

With the new *Hounds Of Love* album, the songs took quite a lot of time and effort to come out. Now that I've got my own studio, a lot of the writing process is very much the recording process so, rather than going in with a finished song, I write the song in the studio.

MUSICIAN: Is there a lot of stuff which you begin recording but which you dump half way through?

BUSH: That's not happened much. There's only been stuff dumped on *Lionheart* and *Never For Ever*—and I prefer to think of that stuff as *resting* rather than being "dumped." On the new album, there was actually a lot that didn't get on.

But it was in a very embryonic stage, or else I felt it too ordinary. The hardest thing was making one song flow into the other, 'coz creating dynamics in one song is very different from building it between seven. You have to pace it very differently and yet hopefully keep interest. By the second stage, when things had already begun to be sort of sprinkled on the tracks, I realized certain songs weren't working. [Laughter] So I had to totally rethink the thing and say like okay, look, this song has got to go. But maybe it can be used sometime in the future.

MUSICIAN: So it's not as if you're so abundantly creative that we're being deprived of a whole wealth of songs that never get onto disc?

BUSH: I wish I was! Usually with every album I'm in a situation where I scrape together the songs. The first album was the only one where that wasn't so—then I had literally hundreds of songs to choose from as I'd been writing from about the age of eleven. But I think the longer I'm around the harder it is for me to find something convincing in my art. There are all kinds of subject matters which I think I could probably have enjoyed at an earlier time but which now I find trivial. You can't really control what comes out, other than rejecting or accepting things and putting them into different bits of order. It's not something that you actually own. Really it's the lyrics that take me a long time—the lyrics are like a big process that keeps on happening right from the word go 'til I've done the last lead vocal. Still then I'm playing with little bits here and there that maybe weren't quite right....

MUSICIAN: Does that account for the three-year gap between *The Dreaming* and *Hounds Of Love*?

BUSH: Yes. Also it takes me a long while to come out of the wake of one album and into the energy of a new one. It would be wrong, I think, to be in the same frame of mind. You've got to get some new inspiration in between. But another big reason why the new album took so long is side two, "The Ninth Wave"—it was incredibly difficult to be brave enough to go for it. I knew that, if it didn't work out, then I'd have wasted all that effort for nothing.

MUSICIAN: I miss that very young and enchanting, almost ecstatic voice on the early albums. You don't often sing in that high register these days but rather an octave or so lower.

BUSH: Albums are really very autobiographical, and at that time I was writing and experimenting to try to push my voice higher and into different areas. I'm not really sure why, but at that time I felt my voice was strongest at that pitch. When she was really young Joni Mitchell used to sing very high, though now she's very low and jazzy. I think when it's lower you tend to listen more to the words and a little less to the voice as an instrument.

MUSICIAN: You've got so many different voices and a four octave range, but how do you keep it in shape? It's not like you're getting practice doing performances.

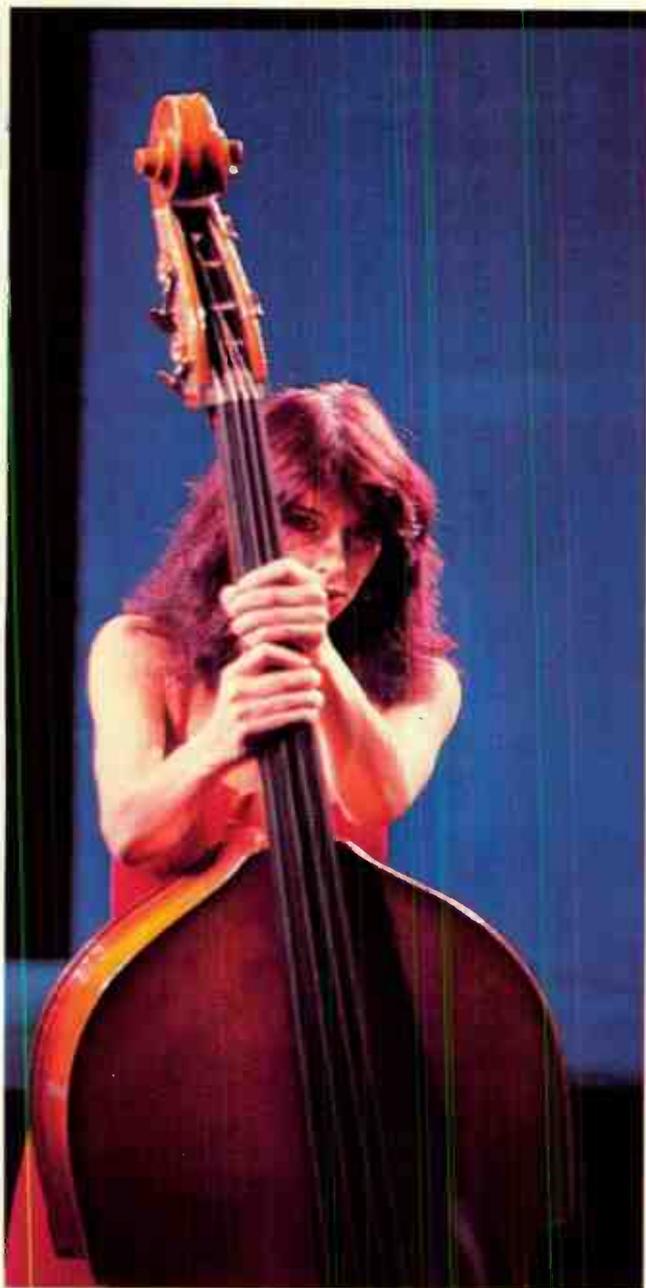
BUSH: No, no, that's right. Well, the hardest thing is to do the vocal with the right emotional feeling. And the hardest thing for me is to be able to feel relaxed enough to be uninhibited. So sometimes I do get a little drunk.

MUSICIAN: So can I assume you're pissed out of your head on "Big Sky" on the new album?

BUSH: Yes, I might be getting drunk on that one—the ad-libs on the end, that was where I had to get drunk. And definitely on "Waking The Witch"—I was very drunk doing that!

MUSICIAN: Despite basic rock instrumentation, your music doesn't owe much to American sources. You're one of a few popular artists to have evolved a uniquely British kind of music.

BUSH: Yes, I think most of the stuff I have liked has been English. With the majority of other people—well, they were listening to Elvis and people like that and most of their heroes were American. The artists I liked, such as Roxy Music and



But the longer I'm around, the harder it is to find something convincing in my art. There are all kinds of subject matters which I could have enjoyed at an earlier time that I now find trivial."

I think the way people distort their attitudes is the most fascinating thing to write about. I like finding an area of the personality that is slightly exaggerated and, if I can identify with it, to perfectly cast a person with that particular character trait."



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David Bowie, were all singing in English accents and, in fact, were among the few in England who were actually doing so at that time. I mean, Elton John, Robert Palmer and Robert Plant sound American when they sing.

MUSICIAN: *Paddy, when did you become aware not simply that Kate was musically gifted but that she was also a force to be reckoned with?*

PADDY: She was about ten years old at the time.

MUSICIAN: *And did you attempt to cultivate this gift?*

PADDY: Oh no, no—it cultivated itself. To cultivate music you have to spend a lot of time *by yourself* making a lot of very strange sounds over and over again. It's not the sort of thing you go hammering into others. When there's a family all in one house and you're getting your music together, normally the others in the family close the doors and try to keep the sounds out. And when you've got several people playing instruments in the same house—well, things can get a bit complicated! I remember having things thrown at me during the early days because I was playing the same tune for six months. It would get people down! And when Kate began working on the piano, she'd go and lock herself away and wind up spending five or six hours, seven days a week—just playing the piano.

MUSICIAN: *And did this begin to assume almost pathological proportions and start alarming the family?*

BUSH: Pathological!

PADDY: Yeah! But *no!* Because of the heavy Irish tradition in the family, I think it was escapism on her part. Our mother is Irish and I think Kate maybe felt that there was a slight obligation to learn something to appease the Irish spirit. And somewhere out of my mother's imagination came the idea that Kate should learn the violin. It seems to be a tradition that the violin is *forced* upon people—I mean, there are few who take it up of their own volition! And Kate was certainly one of those who took it up only under pressure. So the piano was a way of exploring music in dimensions diametrically opposite to what the violin must have represented—pure escapism! The command would be, "Go and practice on that violin Kate"—but the piano music came out instead! I think perhaps we Bushes are a bit like that....

MUSICIAN: *Who are some of your more direct piano and voice influences?*

BUSH: When I was about twelve, I was a big fan of Elton John. I think he was my first musical hero. I was just starting to write songs and he was the only guy I'd ever seen who wrote songs and accompanied himself on the piano. And his playing was brilliant—and still today I think so.

I thought Bryan Ferry was brilliant, the most exciting singer that I'd heard. His voice had limitations but what he managed to do with it was beautiful—I mean, b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l. For me it covered the whole emotional spectrum and I just couldn't get enough of it.

MUSICIAN: *But your music has a depth and complexity, and a certain opulence, which aren't easily attributable to pop music. Is there a different set of aesthetic values that you've assimilated somewhere along the way, perhaps deriving from classical music or opera?*

BUSH: In a way classical music is a superior form because it has so much space for the listener to move around in. As soon as you have words in a song it's somewhat restricting for the listener. I really love listening to classical music—I find it quite inspiring for my work. So maybe because I love those things so much, they rub off on me. When I hear something really beautiful I think God!, wouldn't it be great if I could write something even just a little bit like that. It's not really copying, but rather wanting to produce that same vibe.

MUSICIAN: *Did you have much formal musical education?*

BUSH: I do know what chords are, but I've not really had classical training. My knowledge of theory comes from when

I learned the violin when I was little—and that's about it.

PADDY: Our roots are in the oral tradition. That's the way music is carried on in our family.

BUSH: I think there are an awful lot of major influences deriving from traditional music, especially English and Irish folk music. When I was very little my brothers were devoted to traditional music and it's something I've always loved. Especially Irish music. I think I was always impressed by the words in folk songs. They're always stories, each song is a story—not like the lyrics of most pop songs.

MUSICIAN: *On different album tracks you've featured not only Irish musicians but also an array of other ethnic sounds. Does this betray a lot of your own listening?*

BUSH: There was a period when I used to listen to certain ethnic music. But I don't think I was ever really an avid listener. Paddy is much more of an avid listener to ethnic stuff—he listens to it nearly all the time.

PADDY: It's very, very hard to give any sort of adequate description of what folk music can *mean* to you if you're not completely involved in it. It's a way of life. It's like swimming—once you've learned the art you can't go and forget how to do it. You know, somebody goes "dum-dee-diddle-dee-dum-dee-da" [*Paddy breaks into an Irish jig*] and you're off! It instantly makes sense! If you're born into a tradition of playing some particular kind of music, you can branch out into all kinds of other music. But the tradition is something that's always there and just never, never falls apart.

MUSICIAN: *And is it then you who's responsible when you add one of those instruments to one of Kate's tracks....*

PADDY: Yes, when it comes to unusual and ethnic instruments. I come in with the suggestion, Kate then listens to it in the context of the track—if she likes it, it stays; if she doesn't, I try and find something different.

MUSICIAN: *Is your production a benevolent dictatorship where what you say goes?*

BUSH: [*trying not to laugh*] Well, quite honestly, I think it is sometimes. But in most cases, I really do know what I want....

MUSICIAN: *You must command the respect which induces all these fellows to willingly subordinate their own egos....*

BUSH: [*laughter*] Well, there are never really any serious problems 'cause the fellows I work with are great and I think they just find amusing all of the things that I like and ask them to do. I mean, I've never really been able to communicate properly like those producers you see sitting there talking about A flats, "Now take it from the A-coda," and all that. I don't find that comfortable at all because, for a start, there might be one of the band (like me!) who doesn't know what you're saying. So I talk in really basic language. Obviously I have to identify chords and things like that. But the most important thing for me is to convey the *atmosphere* of the song, the *feeling* that I want them to produce. So rather than saying to each of them "You do this" or "You do that," I spend a lot of time trying to explain the story and the atmosphere.

MUSICIAN: *You don't have staves with whole lines of music written out?*

BUSH: No—the only time I did that was for the cello parts in "Hounds Of Love." I stayed up all night to do it and wasn't sure if I could. But I worked them out on the Emulator and wrote out the chords that I played in the treble clef. Then the cellist Jonathan Williams helped me out by working it an octave lower.

MUSICIAN: *So often you exploit the technological possibilities of the studio, such as the Fairlight, yet your music tends to sound natural and organic.*

BUSH: Well although the Fairlight is called a synthesizer, so many of its sounds are actually of natural source. I think there's perhaps not such a great gap between the Fairlight and natural music as there is between synthesizers and acoustic music. Like what you thought might be a koto near the start of "Cloudbusting" was actually a banjo which I

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played on the Fairlight. And, as an album, *Hounds Of Love* is really quite different because the Fairlight was very involved—rather than, as on the last albums, all the tracks being written at the piano. But “Waking The Witch” I actually wrote through a guitarist, Alan Murphy, because it needed to be written from a guitarist’s point of view—a piano was wrong for that one.

MUSICIAN: *Certain of the new songs, like “Dream Of Sheep” and “Hello Earth,” strike me rather like Hollywood show tunes—they’re cinematic.*

BUSH: I think in a way they’re probably the most visual songs I’ve written in that, when I was writing them, I had in mind what potentially might be done with them, visually—which isn’t normally the way you go about writing a song. It’ll be interesting if we can ever actually turn it into a film, which is what I’d like to do.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think in your writing you’ve gradually departed structurally from the standard pop-song formula?*

BUSH: I don’t know! I suppose I have in some ways. The constant rhythm with fewer breaks is more in evidence on the new album. Though the music is changing, the rhythm keeps on going, and in a way I think that actually makes it a little more commercial.

MUSICIAN: *It seems to me that perhaps Hounds Of Love doesn’t cohere so organically in terms of texture and emotion as The Dreaming.*

BUSH: I think the problem with side two, “The Ninth Wave,” is that it is an overall concept, and ideally I would have liked two sides of an album to develop it. I wouldn’t like to feel that the album was just lots of little cameos put together, but rather that it flows. It’s true—the first side is made up of separate songs. But it’s interesting what you say because so many people have had just the opposite reaction in that they found *The Dreaming* terribly difficult. I just don’t think they could understand it.

MUSICIAN: *In America it got a lot more attention and acclaim than anything you’d ever done.*

BUSH: The media in America reacted so differently from the media in Britain. There was such positivity and acceptance towards what I was doing on that last album from America. Whereas all the earlier albums, which I’d have said were far more easily listenable and commercial, had no response from that country. And that seemed to me completely contradictory to what I’d been told about the American record market—you know, it’s said that Americans are terribly conservative in their tastes and that they like things which fit easily on the radio. Yet, they really did like it....

MUSICIAN: *In one or two of the American reviews of The Dreaming, your music was described as “schizophrenic”—and it seems to me that, in a manner of speaking, your music does represent a virtual compendium of psychopathology, alternately hysterical, melancholic, psychotic, paranoid, obsessional, and so on.*

BUSH: [Laughter] I think that is the most fascinating thing to write about—the way that people distort their attitudes. And it’s really fun for me if I can find an area of the personality that is slightly exaggerated or distorted and, if I feel I can identify with it enough, to try to cast a person as perfectly as I can in terms of that particular character trait.

Take anger for instance—it’s really fun to write from that point of view. Like in “Get Out Of My House” on the last album. Because I very rarely show anger, although obviously I sometimes feel it. The same with “Waking The Witch” on the new album: What fascinated me was the idea of a witch-hunter hiding behind the priesthood, as a guise, and coming to get this woman who isn’t a witch. The girl closes her eyes to get away and goes to a church where it’s safe and secure—you know, churches are supposed to be places of sanctuary and their doors are never shut, even perhaps for people

being chased by the Devil—but the priest himself turns out to be the witchhunter. I didn’t really have any heavy experiences like that. It’s based on other people’s imagery of Roman Catholicism—you know, the kind of oppression, even madness, it can create. My school was Roman Catholic so there was a big emphasis on religion but it wasn’t incredibly strict and I didn’t go to church an awful lot.

MUSICIAN: *But does this ever backfire on you? Do the forces which you unleash or the identities which you assume begin taking you over?*

BUSH: Obviously there must be a bit of me in them or I simply wouldn’t be able to come up with them, but I don’t think they actually take me over. I think I was affected by “Breathing”; and, when I was making the last album, I was very affected by “Houdini.” It was really sad trying to be Houdini’s lady: He must have been an amazing person, someone trying to escape not only throughout his life but also in death.

MUSICIAN: *Before Houdini died, he promised he would send back from beyond the grave some signal of his continuing existence if it proved supernaturally possible to do so. And so you have incorporated that moment in your song when you have him finally speak to his lady from the spirit world—I’ve got the right interpretation?*

BUSH: Absolutely, yes....

MUSICIAN: *Well, are people clued in enough to pick up on these subtleties and allusions in your songs? Do they show a good understanding of the concepts?*

BUSH: I think that the majority of people do. Because, if they bother to listen, then after about three or four times they start putting the words or the ideas together. We did a video of “Breathing” and the idea was of being in this huge inflatable; and I was at this conference somewhere and there were all these women in their forties and fifties, real

Monty Python sort of women, and they all came up and said [Kate affects a strong London accent, which requires merely an exaggeration of her normal one]: “Oh, we loved your video!” And then one of them says: “But listen, you must tell me, I had this, you know, this argument with my daughter; you were meant to be in a womb, weren’t you? I mean, that is what it was meant to be, wasn’t it?” And I said yeah!

MUSICIAN: *You mean she got it?*

BUSH: Yeah, she got it! And she said: “There you are—didn’t I tell you it was a womb.” And I thought yeah, that’s fantastic! I wouldn’t have even expected her to sit and watch it....

MUSICIAN: *I must confess, I find it difficult to watch your performances. It seems to me so much of your music flows right out from essence, so to speak, whereas all the acting, all the theatrics, by their very nature they’re artificial and contrived. Also, because there’s often a flagrant sexual element to your performance, the viewer is automatically thrust into the position of being a voyeur.*

BUSH: Wow, yeah—that’s h-e-a-v-y. But I have only consciously projected the sexual element in a couple of characters and if that’s present for you in every performance—well, that is worrying for me. It’s not intentional.

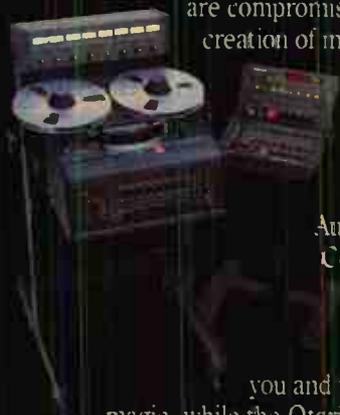
MUSICIAN: *I wonder if these theatrics might not detract from your potential for being taken seriously as a musician.*

BUSH: It’s a big problem. I don’t think I’ve been completely happy with any visual performance that I’ve done except for “Army Dreamers” and perhaps “Running Up That Hill.” But they were videos which took a lot of time and work and control. Usually the problems are lack of time or money. If anything, though, I think my performances help audiences understand the music better—especially the lyrical aspect—and the tour of Europe definitely caused a change in attitude both among the public and the media. Many people began to take me seriously as a musician for the first time. The audiences could see me there singing and dancing, leading

continued on page 67

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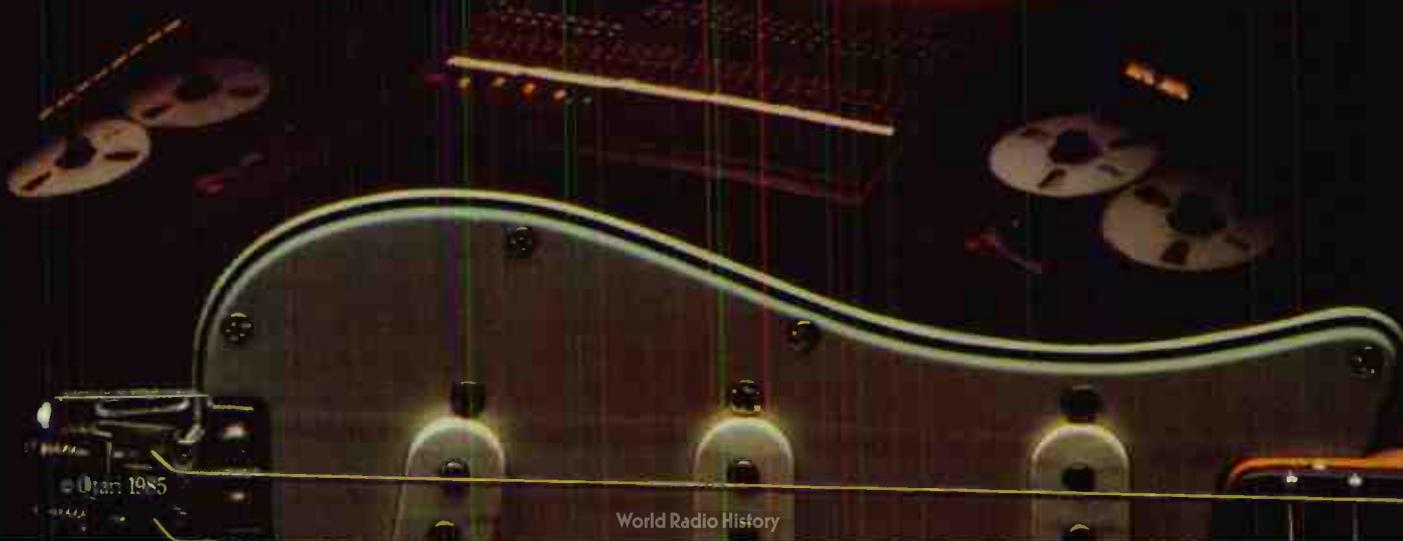


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Rubén Blades wants to be the first Latin-American artist to exert a vital influence on mainstream pop music. Also, he would like to become the president of his native Panama. Neither ambition seems beyond his grasp. Since arriving in the United States ten years ago to play with salsa stars Ray Barretto and Willie Colon, Blades has carved an indelible niche in Latin music; his *Siembre* LP with Colon outsold every other title in the famed Fania catalog (which includes top names like Tito Puente and Johnny Ventura, among others), while "Pedro Navaja," an imaginative barrio reworking of "Mack The Knife," has become the greatest salsa hit of all time.

Blades' musical talents are complemented by a sturdy political idealism rare for any musician, a vision exemplified by songs like those found on his two recent Elektra LPs (*Buscando America* and *Escenas*), his efforts to improve the working conditions of his fellow Latin musicians, and most recently by his star turn in the critically acclaimed film *Crossover Dreams*. On screen Rubén portrays a musician who receives a sobering comeuppance when he sells out his music and his friends while chasing the chimera of commercial success. The real Rubén figures he can chart such success on his own terms, and his recent triumph at Carnegie Hall, which drew sizable proportions of both English and Spanish speaking fans, supporters from Bronx barrios along with more well-heeled followers like Lou Reed and Robert DeNiro, would seem to support that notion. He is convinced that the power of his music, his message (and perhaps, his spirit) will topple the barriers of language and rhythm which have so far ghettoized Latin music. To fulfill his own ambitions, which include a return to Panama and an active engagement in

By Enrique Fernandez

Photographs by Teri Bloom



political life, he knows that it must.

"In Latin America we still evaluate our local production in terms of its international accomplishments," he explains. "If I don't go back to Panama with an aura of power and fame earned here, no one would pay me any mind. They would say, 'Yes, the guy's good, but he can't compete with those people.' You have to make good here before you can go back there and be heard."

Rubén Blades is thirty-seven years old. His heritage is multicultural (blacks, whites, Americans, West Indians, Cubans, Colombians). His parents, themselves once musicians, initially discouraged his desire to become a singer and composer of popular music, so Rubén effected a typically ambitious compromise: He earned a law degree at home, then moved to New York to ply his musical talents (he's since received his master's in international law from Harvard). Through the 70s he made his reputation turning out hits for Fania, the Motown of salsa, but inevitably locked horns with the company when he attempted to fight what he regarded as corporate exploitation of the city's Latin musicians. Two years ago he left that label, incurring a lengthy litigation in the process.

More happily, his visibility in *Crossover Dreams* alerted Elektra to the possibilities of a musical crossover as well. Blades' 1984 debut, *Buscando America*, offered unabashedly politicized vignettes of modern Latin American life—the morning routine of a state police officer, the assassination of a progressive priest, the plight of the "disappeared." *Escenas* takes a more personal tack, but its narratives are no less forceful, while its musical innovations are, if anything, more radical. Instead of salsa's normal brass configuration, for example, *Escenas* features synthesizers, a startling departure from salsa's conservative musical traditions. And Blades' beat, while still grounded in that tradition, ignores salsa's strict rhythmic codes. "Silencios," a slow duet with Linda Ronstadt, takes the form of a pop ballad instead of a bolero. "Muevete," the album's hottest dance track, typifies Blades' merging of musical and political concerns—not because the tune comes from socialist Cuba, but because the *songo* beat is the progressive sound of the Spanish Caribbean, salsa's musical "left."

That shouldn't surprise either, for Blades is one pop artist who always knows not only what he's doing, but why. Imbued with a strong sense of purpose and social responsibility, he's more than willing to articulate it, which helps explain the attentions he's suddenly receiving from the U.S. establishment press (*Newsweek*, the *New York Times*). Of course, his timing is impeccable: Here is a Central American who is becoming a pop star just as his part of the world seems targeted for a U.S. invasion, and a composer whose music is reaching all corners of the Spanish speaking community even though it originates, not in Latin America, but in the U.S. Finally, the man himself intrigues—good-looking, charismatic, quick-witted, cultured and, as the following interview suggests, aggressive, self-confident, and driven to excel.

MUSICIAN: *The Latin record industry has grown a lot, particularly with the entrance of major companies into the Latin market. However, the kind of music they make is not your music, it's not Caribbean music, it's not roots music. It's much more orchestrated, romantic music, ballads, the Julio Iglesias sound. Where do you fit in in all this?*

BLADES: Well, what I'm indicating through my work for Elektra is that there's a wider range of tastes in Latin America and a greater possibility of expressing Latin cultural reality than what the format of these romantic ballads allows. One reason why these companies have backed this kind of music is that it presents no problems. Basically, it's music that doesn't sweat, that has no smell. Well, perhaps it has an aroma.

MUSICIAN: *Julio Iglesias has come out with a fragrance.*

BLADES: It's called "Hey" [*the name of an Iglesias hit song*].

MUSICIAN: *That's also the name of his dog.*

BLADES: Well, maybe that's how it smells. Julio Iglesias sells a lot of records as a balladeer and the companies say "This is what the people want to hear." In this party only people with coat and tie are allowed. What they're trying to do is pretend that Latin America is just that, a grouping of rooms where the residents wear coat and tie, talk about winters and autumns, and drink beverages internationally recognized for their sophistication. In my opinion, it's nothing but a reflection of certain social classes that are finally disappearing, the ones who've been in command politically and economically, and who have caused the disaster we are living today in Latin America. That image is obsolete and indefensible. Perhaps there was a time when they could not be opposed for practical reasons, because we were resigned to it: The lord up on the hill and we down here eating *caca* but happy because our life is the right one and will take us to heaven. But that's over. Those who pretend to find a musical reflection of those old realities are in complete ignorance of the history of Latin America, and most importantly, are ignoring the *future* of Latin America, which is going to be the rise of an integrated Latin American society.

MUSICIAN: *The music fan who doesn't know Latin music may hear a lot of rhythm and something very hot but has no idea how this music is structured and how it evolved. How would you explain it?*

BLADES: Basically it's a music of African origins, complemented by the Spanish experience—which isn't hard to understand since Spain already had a lot of African influence, from the days of the Moors. A *guaganco*, [a traditional Afro-Cuban dance beat] for example, has on the one hand the African drum and on the other the voices of Andalusia in southern Spain, gypsy voices: *Aeeé, eeé, eeé*. Cuba is where these influences came together, that's why we call the music "Afro-Cuban." There's a tremendous variety of rhythms, but basically within a structure of three and two beats, the *clave*, a way of encompassing African accents within a rational, European beat.

Later on, this music was called "salsa" because it was impossible for many people to know the enormous variety of rhythms. I've never liked the term *salsa*. It merely points to the festive nature of this music without taking in consideration the lyric content. But as society becomes more complex, as the *barrio* becomes part of what's happening nationally and internationally, the music begins to assume another shape, influenced by jazz or music from south of the Caribbean. The structure and the presentation of this music changes. And the lyrics are not just about the ghetto, but about the city and the world. The day is coming when this music will have a more contemporary designation, leaving the "Afrocuban" adjective to identify the point of departure.

MUSICIAN: *In Panama salsa has been "popular" music, in the Latin American use of the term: people's music, of the working class, the peasants, the poor. And salsa caught on more than Panamanian music.*

BLADES: Originally, yes. Since Cuba was one of the first Latin American countries to make its own records, Cuban music began to arrive in a big way in the 30s and 40s. The people didn't have enough money to buy records, but they did listen to the radio. Figures like Beny Moré, Celia Cruz, La Sonora Matancera, Casino de la Playa, were all identified and accepted. And local bands began to follow these models. Afrocuban music took over. The *tamborito* and the *cumbia*, the cultural heritage we had inherited from Colombia [Panama was once part of Colombia] was only heard during national holidays. It was said that Panamanian music was for hicks. Afrocuban music was foreign and thus it had a certain air



“When I came to New York, full of hope, I realized my songs meant nothing here. In Puerto Rico they did, but not here. And I found that the musicians were being kept ignorant of the impact they were having outside New York. We’re a minority, but we have a *majority* outside. That’s where the schizophrenia begins.”

of sophistication, while our national music was for peasants and for moments of patriotic effervescence.

And in Panama what was always present was American music. Afro-Cuban music presented an alternative, not only to celebrate but to create a popular voice through music.

MUSICIAN: *What did Panamanians listen to when you were coming up?*

BLADES: The whole American big band sound, and singers like Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Perry Como, Mel Tormé. Plus Beny Moré, La Sonora Matancera, Daniel Santos, Billo’s Caracas Boys. When rock ‘n’ roll came in it had a tremendous impact on young people. I started out with rock, singing and trying to play the guitar. The movies *Rock Rock Rock* and *Rock Around The Clock* were decisive. It was the first time we saw kids like us making music, singing and having fun.

MUSICIAN: *When you switched to salsa and moved to New York, what did you find?*

BLADES: In Panama we were very impressed by the degree of sophistication of New York salsa: the tremendous variety of arrangers and musicians. We believed that here in New York there was a cultural movement, a grand design, not only to use music as entertainment, but as a means of estab-

lishing a cultural identity within a country that wasn’t ours. Which led us to believe, erroneously, that there was total compatibility between American Latins and Latin Americans.

When I came here I realized this was not the case at all—that to many, music was exclusively a business, that record companies only thought of making money, that there was very little information here about Latin America. And it was no coincidence that the song lyrics did not have a Latin American tone. The connection with Latin America was exclusively through the music’s Afro-Cuban origins.

Paradoxically, since one expected New York to be in the vanguard, there had been a group in Puerto Rico to point the way: Rafael Cortijo with Ismael Rivera. Cortijo, may he rest in peace, was a man in love with his country, with its traditions, its culture. Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena* [two traditional Puerto Rican dance forms] came into Panama like a hurricane. The songs didn’t have that folkloric tone of the old Afro-Cuban lyrics. All of a sudden, there are other beats, other intentions. Mon Rivera starts singing about how the strike is coming, that there’s no work at the shop. He starts presenting social conflicts and transforming the music into a medium not just for dance, but also for reflection. He would

create these little chronicles about Puerto Rican characters that could be easily recognized in Panama. And his songs offered solutions, positions. Like he would criticize the non-sense of not using our own language and would urge us to avoid substituting one culture for another.

MUSICIAN: *When did you first come to the U.S.?*

BLADES: In 1970. In Panama the movement of Cortijo and Mon Rivera had lost momentum and there were other elements in the scene: Eddie Palmieri, Willie Colon, Joe Cuba—whose singer, Cheo Feliciano, along with Ismael Rivera, had the greatest influence on me. And Ricardo Rey, a classical pianist who took traditional music and changed its tone, utilizing jazz harmonies.

MUSICIAN: *On your last LP, Escenas, there are some departures from your previous work—more synthesizer, for instance, and no vibraphone. Why?*

BLADES: Two reasons. One, we can travel a lot better. The vibraphone is extremely difficult to transport; it's very big and very fragile. The other is that the vibes made us sound like a second Joe Cuba sextet so we had to find something with a different sound.

Basically, we wanted to find a way out of the Afro-Cuban brass configuration—the American big band format that has so influenced salsa. Why not present the sound of today? We no longer dress the same, nor think the same, nor act the same as forty years ago. We want to present our culture and our music using a contemporary language.

MUSICIAN: *Since you separated from Willie Colon, you've chosen a small group. That has practical reasons; it's easier to travel with them than with a big band. But why these specific musicians? None of them is a big salsa name, like the Fania All-Stars.*

BLADES: One: musical talent. Second: their attitude. They're guys who want to work, who want to exercise their art under different conditions than the usual ones, and this makes them accept my way of being. Third: They don't have the problems that usually wear out the superstars, problems with drugs or with being irresponsible in their work. Their character is in many ways like mine. They are also extremely versatile.

It's a band that can go in very many different directions. And it saves me a lot of the headaches of a big band. You know, you become the psychiatrist, father, mother, social director, friend, enemy, tyrant, everything. And it allows us to travel to places where it would be economically unfeasible to take a big band.

MUSICIAN: *You've made the film Crossover Dreams, and there's been a lot of talk about you crossing over. That usually means a Latin or black who wants to cross to the mainstream American market, which may not necessarily be bigger, but provides more money and prestige.*

BLADES: There's definitely an economic situation. The markets within which the U.S. Latin artist subsists are very limited because we're a minority that has not yet been taken seriously; the Latin musician wants to leave this economic ghetto and look for the broad market.

But what's even more of a determinant is the search for a cultural blessing, which is something that exists whenever one group has been subjugated to another. One looks for a recognition of one's worth by a boss figure—in this case the Anglo public. We look for an approval that we are like you, that we can do it like you do.

Right now I'm doing everything I can to be understood by people who have traditionally ignored Latin America. And as a musician who's eventually going to return to Panama, I know the power of the media: I too need that cultural blessing. But I'm not going to dye my hair blond nor stop speaking Spanish nor stop writing and performing in Spanish because now everything has to be in English.

MUSICIAN: *However, you've been criticized for living in the*

U.S. and not in Panama, for not living in a Latin neighborhood but on gentrified Columbus Avenue, in a comfortable apartment, living a comfortable life.

BLADES: Look, whoever thinks I moved here from Panama to improve economically is crazy. I was a lawyer in Panama. I would've been the youngest lawyer in Panama's foreign service when in '74 I was interviewed by the Panamanian ambassador for the job of legal counsel to the embassy. I turned it down while I was making \$73 a week working with Ray Barretto. I left Panama motivated by artistic, not economic reasons. I left because Panama did not have the recording technology, nor the international record distribution, nor all those musicians I admired and I was going to learn from.

As far as how I live, brother, I came out of a one-room apartment, my father out of one that was even smaller, and my mother from a household of twenty-two people—you can imagine what that was like. I come from a family of working people where one always tries to improve the lot of those who come after you and where there is one constant: honesty. I've never believed that one has to vulgarize oneself under subhuman conditions in order to have the right to express a popular feeling. That's a story the ruling classes made up in order to keep everyone else at that level. That is, be poor because the poor are happier than the rich. That's fiction. Money corrupts: False. Money unmasks. Whoever is corrupt can be corrupt without any money. Power corrupts: False. It also unmasks. It only gives whoever is evil the power to do evil at a larger level than when he didn't have a penny in his pocket.

Where does one live? One lives where one can have the greatest assurance of living in peace. I've been living in this neighborhood for eleven years and I've stayed because I like it. I know where I can buy plantains, I have credit at the La Caridad diner. But if I could afford to move upstate to a place with lots of land, a beautiful house, a pool, sure I'd go. Everyone wants to live better than they did before.

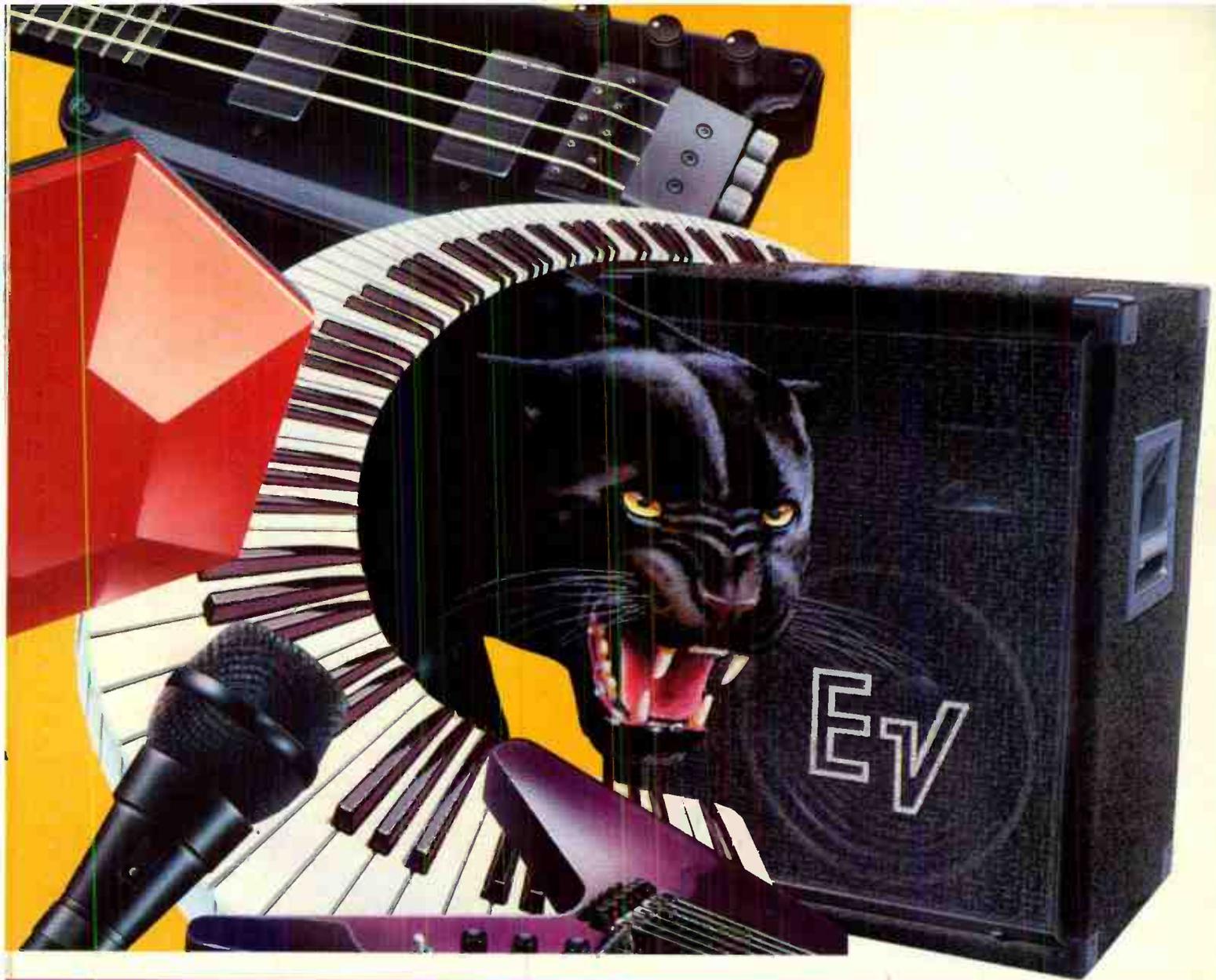
MUSICIAN: *But doesn't that mean that you're more and more among Americans and among the jet set. Aren't you isolated from your own people?*

BLADES: No. Becoming a lawyer in Panama put me in contact with people who were much better off than me. But what I learned then is that one can physically live in a ghetto but mentally one doesn't have to. And I've never lived in a mental ghetto; I've always read, I've always been convinced of what I can do, I can talk on a first-name basis with anyone. And something else I know, my background has allowed me to get here and the moment I abandon it I'd go down, not only artistically, but as a person.

MUSICIAN: *In Crossover Dreams your character Rudy is very naive, which is why he swallows the whole world of glamour and hype. Do you think that people who see Crossover Dreams and don't know you will think that this is the Ruben Blades story?*

BLADES: People will make the association. I have gone through the same situations. The difference between Rudy and me is that Rudy did not create enough alternatives for himself. I created them through study and thanks to a background that was much more protected. In my neighborhood people didn't drop dead from an overdose of heroin or get murdered in the streets with a gun.

It was a tough neighborhood; you could get beaten up or have someone break a stick or a bottle over your head. But some things were not done. You got in a fight with another guy and you would punch it out in the street. All by hand. That relative peace gave me a chance to think and correct my errors along the way. Although the problems with record companies, with promoters and managers, the problems of musicians who make no more than forty, thirty, twenty bucks per night, I went through all that.



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MUSICIAN: *Has that situation changed since you started out?*

BLADES: I believe it's still going on. Probably because there are no associations, outside of Local 802, that protect the interests of Latin musicians in this city—even though I and other musicians tried to create one. There are many musicians here who are in the same situation as Rudy, or myself back in '74.

MUSICIAN: *You've had a very problematic relationship with the Fania label. Through them you became an international figure. Yet you've been involved in litigation with them, even after leaving the company.*

BLADES: The relationship between the Latin musician and the record company in this city is a feudal relationship, one in which there is a master and a serf, where the serf is allowed just enough of the crop to feed himself and his family so they can stay strong enough to keep serving the master. Once a promoter told me that without the record company I could not exist. And I told him that I can have a phone at home to handle my own calls, I can make my own contract, I can make my own work arrangements—but you can't sing. So please reevaluate the situation. That was basically the problem I had with Fania. If you asked for foreign royalties they told you they hadn't arrived, and it's not that they didn't arrive one year, they never arrived. They gave you the checks after a thousand threats. Musicians were not encouraged to get legal representation. And the people who ran the company lived extremely well. While we musicians have to put up a collection whenever one of us dies.

Within this framework, I never allowed them to treat me like a racehorse. And even though initially I had to sign a contract where the company took the lion's share, because it was a take-it-or-leave-it situation, I was very clear about what I was doing and who they were: simple administrators of a talent pool without which they could not live. When they sued me for money they said I owed them, they were trying to make me see the power of the company. It was settled out of court and I wound up recovering all my publishing rights, plus \$10,000 they owed me. It was the first time an artist from Fania recovered his music.

MUSICIAN: *What's next?*

BLADES: The first English-language numbers, for the Gamboa Road Gang project. The idea is to communicate and to play places where we never played before, in places where Latin bands never perform. Los Lobos have done it to a certain extent, but I don't see them having a Latin American projection. Now, Gamboa Road Gang will have nothing to do with my present band,

Los Seis del Solar. When I'm playing with Los Seis del Solar I won't sing in English. I'm not going to get people confused nor send an alarm that Ruben is going over to the other side: We're losing another one.

MUSICIAN: *And the musicalization of Marquez's stories? You met with him recently. What will be his contribution?*

BLADES: Well, his first contribution is to let me do this kind of work. Though from a strictly legal point of view I didn't need his permission; I'm not making a faithful adaptation of his stories into song. What I asked for was a kind of blessing. When I tried to talk to him about the stories he said no because then I would never finish them, he would give me suggestions and he knew, as a writer, that this would delay the project. What he did say is that now he was going to sing through me; he always wanted to sing. Right now I'm trying to convince him to appear on the cover with me. I don't know if this will be possible, because Gabriel is extremely cautious about people taking advantage of him. But it's important because it will indicate at an international level that there is a collaboration between two characters who are popular, each one in his field, and who form part of that same Latin American condition and the same popular background. We can end that notion that intellectuals and popular musicians are like oil and water.

MUSICIAN: *In Escenas you have a song about cocaine, "La Caina." You have an anti-drug reputation in the Latin music world, where, just like in American music, there's a lot of drug consumption, perhaps because coke gives you an artificial, chemical machismo. Do you think people are going to hear your song and reconsider?*

BLADES: The song is directed at those who haven't used it yet or who need another type of reinforcement to not get into it. The drug problem in Latin America is not the use, but the abuse. Everybody drinks coffee and that's a drug; it riles you up chemically. The problem is not drinking coffee, but drinking ten, twenty, thirty, cups of coffee and not being able to function.

I think that those who party and snort around will keep on doing so. I don't think they're going to hear my song and say, "How badly I've been acting." Maybe some who do it by imitation will hear this and reconsider if they think that the artist needs to take drugs to be an artist. For the record, never in my life have I had a hit of cocaine. Not even to find out what it's like. I'm not interested in drugs, I don't take pills even if I'm in pain. I don't like them. Man, I'm so set on assuming control of my life, so totally obsessed with always being

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ZZ TOP

The grandmotherly desk clerk at the HoJo's Motor Lodge across the street from Get Down Brown's Bar in Beaumont, Texas presses the door buzzer with grave reluctance, admitting the sunglassesed man with the pennant-length whiskers and his slick-looking entourage. Beside the narrow highway, the teeming ginmill's large gravel entryway is a study in raucous shadowplay, as shifting headlights catch fragmented glimpses of intoxication, sexual horseplay and the wages of rock 'n' roll.

"Would you look at that mangy bunch go at it," says the mysterious bearded man in the blue serge suit, momentarily lowering his Ray-Bans to better appraise the inky frolics in the opposite parking lot as he signs the motel's guest register. His sudden smile shows two rows of aristocratically even pearly

**BY
TIMOTHY WHITE**

THE ONGOING LEGEND OF TEXAN ROCK'S ROUGH BOYS

PHOTOGRAPH BY World Radio History RAPOPORT

whites as he adds, "There'll be nothing but flat-out beer drinkers and hell raisers at Brown's for *this* soiree."

Inside the spacious tavern, there are plenty of strapping young men and long-legged women pressed hip-to-hip at the beer taps and chest-to-chest before the smoke-beclouded bandstand. It's an older crowd, ranging in age from mid-twenties to triple that, most of them attired in Urban Cowboy mufti—jeans with gleaming oval belt buckles, Tony Lamas boots, cotton plaid shirts—and most are agreeably shit-faced. The Cotton-Eyed Joe, Texas Two-Step and a host of other post-midnight mating dances are getting under way.

Beaumont is an often-sinister city that's been manufacturing its share of dashed hopes and delusionary windfalls since the discovery in 1910 of limitless oil deposits at Spindletop; most of the rewards from these oil strikes went to investors and speculators in far-flung locales, while the defeated hands who worked the rigs sedated themselves in honkytonks. Around such mundane sorrows there grew up a network of dives and strip joints between Beaumont and Port Arthur (four miles down the coast), featuring country & western, Tex-Mex, blues and R&B performers, and, in the 60s, an electrified, agitated brand of white man's combo blues that borrowed heavily from the Linden, Texas-reared heart of Aaron "T-Bone" Walker. Late in the decade, the raw-boned rock 'n' roll of the region merged with all of the above and a double-dose of psychedelics to addle the timing of a new and otherwise bored-to-the-bone generation of bar bands: Fever Tree, Thursday's Children, the Clique, the Countdown Five, Horace & the Snakes, and Moving Sidewalks.

The ride was a wild one while it lasted, leaving a lot of sordid police blotter dispatches and half-inch obits in its wake. Several talented participants actually crossed over into some corner of the motley underground media corona that was the rock big time of that period, bringing their colorful excesses along with them. The most ravenous, like Port Arthur's Janis Joplin, succumbed. Others burned out and returned to day jobs. But a very few bit the bullet and bided their time until another decade's worth of wild rides began....

"Oh my Gawd!" yelps the head barkeep. "ZZ TOP JUST WALKED IN!"

Sure enough, palming his HoJo's room key with one hand and the wire waist of a comely, raven-haired lady named Debbie with the other as he strides into the heart of the fray is Billy Gibbons himself. The lead guitarist for That Little Ol' Band from Texas strokes his beard in the eye of the tumult, shoots an idle glance in the direction of the loudmouth tending to the thirsty patrons and then moves onward, guiding his guests through a maze of beaming well-wishers.

Although there was no mention of it in this month's installment of *Texas Monthly's* hip "Around The State" entertainment guide, tonight marks the reunion of the Boogie Kings, among the hottest white soul bands in the South in the late-

"This Egyptian kid comes over to beg money, stops, stares, and then whips out a cassette of *El Loco*."

60s/early-70s. Billy and company have made a sentimental sojourn all the way down from Houston to catch the ten-piece Kings, a Beaumont legend led by singer-trumpeter G.G. Shinn and Jerry "the Count" LaCroix. The former gent, who boasts a five-octave vocal range, is a onetime member of the jazz-rock trumpet band Chase, while the latter is one of several Kings who are alumni of Edgar Winter's White Trash. Indeed, Winter was born and raised in Beaumont (his and Johnny's parents still live off Thomas Road) and as Billy Gibbons makes his way through the throng, old cronies and drinking partners shout out anecdotes about the local exploits of Billy and the Winter brothers during the heyday

(1968-72) of the Beaumont club scene.

"Mind you, these folks are mighty, mighty ripe for a blow-out," warns a gleeful Gibbons, talking out of the side of his mouth as broad-shouldered buddy Jimmy Hammond runs interference to wedge Billy's party into a row of tables beside the dance floor. "See that bald-headed fella over yonder?" Gibbons asks, tipping his crumpled khaki golf hat in the direction of a grayling bespectacled codger with a drink in each hand. "That guy's Al Caldwell, a deejay at KAYC in Beaumont. When ZZ Top was getting started down here, he used to introduce us at the Knights of Columbus dances! This was our primary territory, a town where we could always draw when no one else would have us, and just about everybody in this place caught our act in one or another Beaumont hall or hole. Before that, I had my psychedelic band, the Moving Sidewalks, and we had a straight R&B and rock act with no horns—which was unheard of in Beaumont then!"

"That's the truth," says Jimmy Hammond, who was the bassist in such rival bands as Horace & the Snakes and Sage. "They had a row to hoe when I met Billy on his birthday [December 16] in 1967 during a Sidewalks gig at the Crown Room at the King Edward Hotel, because a soul horn section was an absolute must if you wanted to avoid trouble. They had two singles out [on the Wand label], '99th Floor,' which was Billy's response to what the 13th Floor Elevators were doing with songs like 'You're Gonna Miss Me,' and another tune he wrote called 'Need Me.' They were hippie weirdos but they were tolerated because they were known."

"It was a re-recorded version of '99th Floor' that got us on a cool 1968 tour with Jimi Hendrix and the Soft Machine," says Gibbons. "We were trying to go the 13th Floor Elevator thing one better with a blues edge, and we topped the Houston charts. We tried to do everything the English guys were doing, with Carnaby Street striped suits and epaulets, but the Elevators were the most freaked-out act Texas had seen, and you didn't dare say you disliked them. They were a bunch of nuts from some tourist trap in Central Texas and the word was they drank Listerine all the time. Every band was in a race to be crazier."

"We all used to hang out at the old Get Down Brown's which eventually burned down, and then we'd move on to Our Place, a real shitkicker's bar," Hammond continues. "One Christmas Eve Billy and Johnny Winter swung into Our Place and the usual brawl between rednecks and longhairs broke out—only that night things got outta hand and Our Place burned down too!"

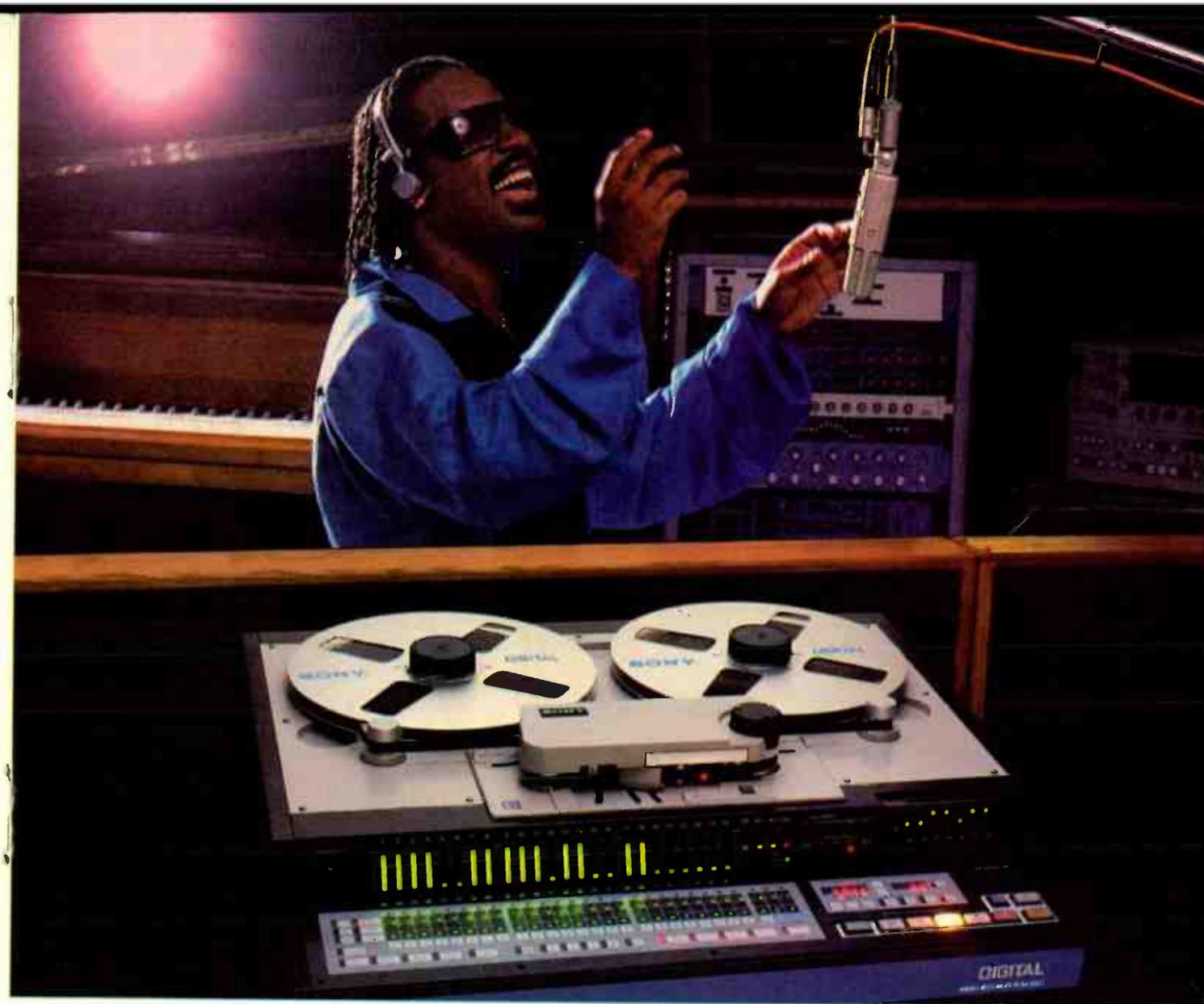
"ZZ Top clicked from the git-go though," he says, "cause of the nasty sound of the guitars. I knew Billy had gotten it down right, same as when I first saw Merle Haggard at Port Neches in 1963."

The reminiscences are interrupted by two barmaids who bring no less than 32 brimming cans of beer for a party of six.

"Good Lord," says Billy, strikingly slim after a strict diet that enabled him to shed thirty pounds, "we've got our hands full 'n then some!"

"Everybody wanted to buy you a round, honey," says one of the buxom, micro-mini-skirted waitresses with a slow wink.

"Oooh boy, this reminds me of when Billy owned a saloon in Durango, Mexico in the mid-70s," says Jimmy. "It was called the El Dorado Bar—there's pictures of it in the inside sleeve of *Tres Hombres*—and John Wayne and all these other actors used to drink Tecati and tequila there and check out the house *norteño* band when they made western movies in the area."



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Dusty Hill and Billy Gibbons: "Mind you, these folks are mighty, mighty ripe for a blow-out."

"Good times," says Billy, nodding and patting his luxuriant chin-warmer, "good times. Why I—"

Gibbons is interrupted by the Boogie Kings, fresh from their first break of the night and eager to exchange bearhugs. At length, a frail, snow-haired grandmother of one of the band members is eased to the head of the line and introduced to the guest of honor.

"Billy my darlin', I got a personal question I have to ask you in front of your girl," she says solemnly.

The crowd around the table is hushed.

"Do you sleep with your beard *under* the covers or *over* the covers?"

ZZ Top is currently one of the biggest bands on the planet and unquestionably among the most beloved. Domestically, the Texas trio has sold nearly six million copies of *Eliminator*, released in March 1983, with overseas numbers at four million. The LP has once again begun climbing up the *Billboard* survey as their tenth installment, the incendiary *Afterburner*, blitzes both the record charts and, across the board, the formats of national radio, where five to six of its tracks are being added to playlists. And since Warner Bros., ZZ Top's label since 1978, has acquired the group's 1970-77 London Records catalogue (*Z.Z. Top's First Album*, *Rio Grande Mud*, *Tres Hombres*, *Fandango!*, *Tejas*, *The Best Of ZZ Top*), there is every possibility that sales of the fabled old product and the subsequent Warners albums (including *De-guello* and *El Loco*) will also be reactivated.

Nobody doesn't like ZZ Top, from yuppies who admire their renegade marketing (there are over forty items in the band's merchandise catalog—"All of them created as a result of specific letter campaign-type demands from fans," according to Lone Wolf Productions Minister of Information J.W. Williams, "and we'll do a half-million in the keychains alone with *Afterburner*") to hippie holdouts, heavy metal helots,

techy connoisseurs of exquisite rock guitar invention, and any observers who get a vicarious rise out of the Ghosts of Christmas Present persona they evoke on their ongoing *Keys-to-the-Eliminator* video series.

What prevents ZZ Top from disintegrating into mere comic book familiarity are the artful self-deprecation and coy wit with which they invest their ferocious musicality, the elusive nature of the men themselves, and the treacherous Texas rock 'n' boogie brazos from which they emerged.

Their appeal is as universal as the thrust of their message: It's all in fun, pardner—'cept for the music.

"Dusty and me, we just got back from a vacation in Cairo," says Billy Gibbons one sunny Houston afternoon, he and his cohorts arranging themselves on sofas and stools in the living room of a friend's house.

"Billy and I zoomed over there to relieve the tension after we finished the record, but we couldn't find any Cleopatras with headphones and shades," Joe "Dusty" Hill chimes in with a toothy chuckle. The beefy blond bassist is referring to the sexy Egyptian collage art on the sleeve of "Sleeping Bag," the *Afterburner* single that exhorts listeners to "sleep beside the Pharoahs in the shifting sands."

"I couldn't make the trip," says the muscular, clean-shaven Frank Beard with a Jack Nicholson leer, "'cause I had myself a prior commitment that wuz just as ancient."

"We'd been planning the visit for quite a while," says Gibbons, smoothing out the wrinkles in one of the loose-fitting, expensive European suits he enjoys lounging in when off-duty. "After doing Bobby 'Blue' Bland stuff forever, we figured it was high time we checked out the *original* Memphis, the tomb of the Boy King and the Great Pyramid at Giza, because we'd always been fascinated by the general fascination others have with these things. The morning we hit the G.P. on camels, this young Egyptian kid comes over to beg some money, stops, stares, and whips out this bag with a cassette

of *El Loco* in it. He even had a Walkman! But the local stuff the boy played us lacked, we thought, a heavy backbeat and was a bit nasal—" All three men abruptly lapse into a unison, four-second whining drone that resembles a fakir's pipes.

"Yeah, it wasn't awfully commercial," a redfaced Gibbons deadpans, his eyes gleaming with suppressed laughter, "so they were anxious for a helping of our moving groovin' beat. They're not really keen on dancing, that kind of social activity being taboo, yet they were curious about our latest material. But I don't see Egypt as a place where a heavy backbeat fits in; time is irrelevant over there, particularly in light of the fact that the Islamic faith dictates that prayers to Allah occur at midnight and then again at 4 a.m., in addition to three other times during the day. They've got these cheap exponential loudspeaker bullhorns mounted on roving vehicles that remind you it's time to drop to your knees and pay homage. Man, it's jarring."

"Screwed onto the dressers in the hotels are these metal discs with a welded arrow on them pointing East," says Dusty intently. "That's to remind you where Mecca is at. The morning we were leaving Cairo it was just before sunrise, and as I was packing my gear the whole city started to wail, a huge portion of the city's twelve million chanting until it became a weird wash of sound. It was the strangest chord I ever heard."

"We had a guide named Sahib—we called him Sam—who was worn out one afternoon and depressed with a sick headache. He took his shoes and socks off, washed his hands and feet, went off and did a prayer wail and came back completely rejuvenated. Looked years younger; it was amazing."

"That routine could come in handy for you after some of those long nights in downtown Houston," cracks Frank Beard. "Texas has its own funky deserts and rejuvenating wails."

"No *shee-it*," Dusty nods, twirling his wispy golden moustache around a stubby index finger. "After all I've learned 'tween here and Dallas over the last twenty years about the art of reviving myself, I could go on back to Cairo tonight and be the next King Farouk!"

Dusty Hill was born on May 19, 1949 in East Dallas, the son of James Ernest Hill, a truck driver who divorced Dusty's mother when the boy was eight. He was raised by his mother, "a Kate Smith-type singer with big bands before I was born," and stepfather T.C. "Top Cat" Allen, an assembly-line worker in the local Ford plant. One of five kids by both fathers, Dusty had an independent bent and at thirteen was a familiar paleface at the all-black Ascot Ballroom on Hall Street, sitting in with Freddie King, the Gilmer, Texas electric blues great. Dusty had already taken up a Harmony solidbody (boasting but three strings for an extended period) to earn a slot in the Deadbeats, a combo formed by his guitarist brother Rocky, but within the year he was spending as much time backing bluesmen.

"There was an after-hours club in Dallas called the Kay-Jon that got going after the beer joints closed," says Dusty, "and I started frequenting it because you could meet the main black musicians there. I got to know Freddie King and his wife pretty well and I'd go over to have dinner with them and their fifteen-odd kids in South Dallas."

"At the time, I was going to Woodrow Wilson High, which was in a nice area called Lakewood," says Dusty. "But I didn't fit in. I was up every night at 1 a.m. listening to blues and Tex-Mex stuff from this Mexican station down in Del Rio. There were no regulations or restrictions on stations south of the border and the show was incredibly raunchy with commercials advertising goat gland operations to restore your sex life. The next day after school I'd go from Sampley's, the old general store where the East Dallas kids hung out, to Harold's, a drugstore and soda fountain in a shopping center in Lakewood where you could corner cheerleaders."

"But these kids would be talking about some stupid pop singer and their virginity when I'd been up to no good the previous evening until Kay-Jon shut down. It was bullshit, it made no sense. My mother, who was a waitress in some of the beer joints I played in, would say, 'You gotta get an education!' but I took care of the school problem in tenth grade and my free time expanded."

Dusty promptly filled his newfound unstructured hours by joining up with Frank Beard, a native of the Dallas suburb of Irving (birthplace of Jimmy and Stevie Ray Vaughan) and the son of the office manager of a Ford dealership. Frank had been the quarterback for the Irving Tigers, but at fifteen he was barred from all extra-curricular activities after school administrators learned of his shotgun marriage to a classmate; his pregnant wife was expelled. It was the summer of 1964 and he had just gotten himself a \$200 set of blue pearl Lyra drums from Montgomery Ward, a move inspired by the sight of Ringo Starr's casual rimshots on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

"I knew the marriage wasn't gonna last that long," says Frank, another devilish Nicholson grin growing on his thin lips, "and I was looking for a new way to get pussy. I thought, 'These Beatle guys get a lot of pussy, I'm gonna take this up.' I was going to school half-a-day, and then working in the sporting goods department of a K-Mart kinda chain called International Super Stores from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. for \$100 a week. Within six months from the time I got that set of drums, I was working in Fort Worth at a strip joint called the Cellar for \$15 a night. Things started dropping out of my life, school first, then the sporting goods job, and finally my marriage."

These involvements were replaced by drinking problems, a drug habit (that would later lead to years of heroin addiction), and Dusty and Rocky Hill. Frank blew in the Cellar one night in 1967 and caught the Warlocks, a band fronted by Dusty and Rocky that had issued two singles "Splash Day"/"Life's A Mystery" and "If You Really Want Me To Stay"/"Good Time Trippin'" on the Paradise and Ara labels, respectively. "Another Year"/"Poor Kid," another Ara 45, which aped the British rock of the era with the help of an English siren named Lady Wilde, caused a small stir in the area.

Beard was impressed with the Warlocks and signed on when their drummer left to tie the knot. After the band lost its limey singer it reformed as a hard rock outfit, American Blues, and opened at a quasi-sister club, the Cellar Door, up in Houston. A band member named Phil Vickery suggested they dye their hair blue as a gimmick and everyone but the keyboardist, who opted for a wig, acceded.

"We didn't mind that the keyboard guy, whose name was Sharkey, wouldn't go along with the dye job," says Frank, "since he was good in a grocery store when it came to stealing steaks. As for the rest of us, we were all blonds and we had to bleach our hair white before this Roux No. 10 would take hold. I had to do seventeen bleaches, and it burned like hell."

The Cellar Door proved a source of steady work, and a curious twilight lifestyle evolved as American Blues took up residence in the Wilby Hotel, a fleabag hostel located four blocks from the gig.

"Depending on finances and fiancées, we rented rooms by the day or the week," says Dusty, a blissful expression blossoming on his broad face, "and so we changed rooms a lot. The blue dye in our hair would wash out but it stained anything our heads touched, so it rubbed off on the pillowcases and the hotel tried to make us pay for the damages. Then they'd go, 'Wait a minute, there's only five of you guys. How come we found dye in fifteen beds last night?'"

"It was because all the waitresses in the club lived there too, and we were aces at hopping up and down the hallways," Frank explains, popping another can of the diet soda he sips incessantly since he swore off alcohol.

"Before long, we got bounced from the Wilby," says Dusty,



Got Them Under Pressure

After much deliberation, soul-searching, late-night telephone entreaties, take-out Mexican food and bitter-cold *cerveza* in Lone Wolf Productions' war room, Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard agreed to convene in a secluded loft on East 13th Street in Houston's lowrider sector on the afternoon prior to the national release of *Afterburner* for an exclusive and unprecedented on-the-spot unveiling/self-assessment. They arrived solemn-faced, in separate Mercedes, bearing a metal Dolby cassette and several gifts: a set of Billy Gibbons' Lone Star Slims guitar strings ("Used by the great and the near great"); a set of Dusty Hill's Majestics bass strings ("The string with that Dallas tone!"); a pair of Pro-Mark hickory Frank Beard Tub Whacker drum sticks; one 10 oz. Low Down 'n' Funky Java Mug with salmon print; and a 1/24th scale unassembled Monogram Eliminator model car kit (glue not included). Word was that both Dusty and Frank had firearms on hand, but tucked away where the sun don't shine.

As the cassette was cued on the loft's tapedeck the trio seemed nervous, sipping distractedly at Miller Lite and Tab, but as the first humming thuds of "Sleeping Bag" invaded the room, Billy smirked, Dusty began polishing his huge rings and Frank whistled low and murmured a protracted "FAAAAAAHNNN" that resembled a Goodyear radial singing along a curbstone. The symposium boasted that antic charm of an old Beatles press conference and the wry roadhouse banter of a row of unseemly mental stool sages.

The gifts were withheld until all comment on the album had been completed, all refreshments consumed, all hands shaken with fierce conviction. With the bat of an eye, Tres Hombres vanished into a sudden, dusky Texas drizzle, taking their precious tape with them, but leaving one last memento twinkling on a tabletop: One chrome-plated three-inch by one-inch ZZ Top key chain, laid across a sepia souvenir 1915 Pancho Villa recruitment poster ("El Liberator of Mexico offers weekly payments in gold to dynamiters, machine gunners and railroaders!") courtesy Leo's Mexican Restaurant at 2203 South Shepherd. There was the merest spot of 'mole sauce in the lower left hand corner.

"and wound up on the North Side on Airline Drive in the Northline Drive Hotel, which was *whoa*—three dollars a night and grossly overpriced. The Cellar Door, which was one shaky place, started getting to us too.

"Like in a lotta Texas clubs, the stripping and topless dancing were an impromptu thing. The waitresses at that time were *rilly* risqué; they just wore panties and a bra, and my eyes usta pop. You couldn't get liquor by the drink in Houston, so you had to buy a bottle and the house provided the mixers, and the crowd would sit there and get fuck-faced as the night wore on. Funny thing was, they dug the music, but not without the stripping.

"Sometimes we didn't go on until 12 p.m., so we'd ride thirty miles down to Dallas to do a quick gig and then turn

"Sleeping Bag"

Dusty: "Well, that's kind of an all-purpose romance rocker with a little local Egyptian color and Land of the Pharaoh's scenery thrown in. Some people say that Napoleon had an out-of-the-body experience when he slept in the Great Pyramid at Giza, but for a little guy who slept around a lot, I figure he had a lot of those."

"Stages"

Billy: "The track was written in the studio, and the tempo and melody retained the same initial bounce we started out with. The hook line was 'Phases keep on changing/Stages rearranging/Love.' We tried a hundred words instead of 'love' but nothing fit as tight and sweet. The hook of the tune comes off the C suspended 9th chord in 'Legs,' that slender honey of a turnaround chord. Catchy, eh?"

"Woke Up With Wood"

Frank: "It's a philosophical traveling song with a basketball reference. I woke up one morning, pogo-sticked to the bathroom and had a vision."

Dusty: "We've always been into cabinet-making, wood-working and comfortable furniture for car, home or office."

"Rough Boys"

Billy: "For 'Rough Boys,' we had a fairly pretty track and it was really *hard* for ZZ Top to do a ballad, so we had to come up with extra-tough words and an earthy, deep-bluesy guitar solo to counteract the music, otherwise nobody, no way, would buy it from ZZ Top."

"Can't Stop Rockin'"

Dusty: "That's a favorite a' mine 'cause I sing it. Lyrically there's nothing there at all, but it's a nice, muscular kick-ass reflection of the stuff we put on our earliest albums. You can hear the Roland guitar synthesizer a little on this and a lot of the other tracks; we got a nice charge out of it. Guess that's almost a musical critique, huh?"

"Planet Of Women"

Billy: "Ohhh, boy. That's where the ZZ Girls, thousands of them, come from. It's as far out in the solar system as you wanna get."

"I Got The Message"

Dusty: "On the streets, your so-called friends, they can tell you, 'That woman, she don't dig you,' but you wanna hear it straight from her, right? Well, this track is the same way, 'cept you don't get the groove until you aim your head at the *source*.'"

"Velcro Fly"

Dusty: "It's an amazing material for zippers and other parts of clothing. Plus, it's a great dance you can do at home."

Frank: "The drums in 'Velcro Fly' were done in a local racquet ball court, which makes a poetic sort of sense."

"Dipping Down In The Lap Of Luxury"

Billy: "I hope this song isn't too obscure to grasp. You either discover the theme of it the first time out, or you never do. It's in the eyes, ears and arms of the beholder."

"Delirious"

Frank: "I use my *sneaky* drums on this track, those quick-shift switches I like to slip in. The fact that we're a three-piece doesn't allow me to get off and do a lot of big rolls, and anytime I try, things tend to grow slack, lose their crucial tension, and sag apart.

"So I jes' continue to develop hand and sticking tastes off the cymbal bells, and other devices that constitute stops without actually stopping the time-signature and the straight-ahead beat. The tricks create necessary space and an elastic quality that pulls the listener on into the heart of the music."

"Gee, boys, I hope we ain't giving away too damn much!"

around. One night we got back and everybody in the bar was plowed, especially the girls. Frank had gotten hisself a new set of drums and as we started playing a fat girl jumped up on the bandstand and started to wiggle. He leaned over to me and hissed, 'If she falls on these drums, I'll waste her.'

"Sure enough," says Dusty triumphantly, "she lost her footing, went backward, and drums and cymbals flew everywhere out of the path of her enormous ass."

"I whupped her," Frank recalls. "But I did it more for her being ugly than anything else. It's bad enough doing thirty-nine choruses of 'Walking The Dog,' without dealing with a huge ugly tush in your face, half of it sticking out of a giant hole in a sad pair of bloomers. *Shee-it!*"

American Blues put out a single in 1978 on the Karma

label, a cover of Tim Hardin's "If I Were A Carpenter," which KLIF, the key Dallas top forty station, spun a few times. *American Blues Is Here*, an album on Karma, drew the interest of Uni Records, then doing well with a psychedelic pop act from California called the Strawberry Alarm Clock ("Incense And Peppermints"). An attempt was made to recast American Blues in the beads-and-Indian-kaftans mold of the Clock, and Uni floated a single, "Melted Like Snow" as well as an album, *American Blues Do Their Thing*.

The highpoint of the whole hopeless exercise came when the group landed a guest spot on KTRK-TV's *Larry Kane Show*, a popular Saturday teen program in Houston. They had done three post-Witching Hour sets at the Cellar Door the night before and then scattered, Dusty awaking that afternoon in the arms of a female acquaintance who lived

Before long, he was picking out the Wayne Bennett leads on Bobby "Blue" Bland songs like "Ain't Doing Too Bad" and "Blind Man."

Both those mid-1960's Bland singles were issued on the Duke label, a Memphis-based record company owned by a hard case named Don Robey. On Christmas Eve 1954, while backstage at the Houston City Auditorium, twenty-four-year-old Duke star Johnny Ace reportedly drew the losing slug in a game of Russian roulette and died the next day.

Gibbons, who later had contact with the imposing Robey while leading such green bands as the Saints, Billy G. & the Ten Blue Flames, and the Coachmen (who cut the first version of "99th Floor"), does not hold with the usual account of the demise of Johnny Ace.

"I heard it wasn't Russian roulette that kicked [Ace] and

"Lyrically there's nothing there at all, but it's a nice, muscular, kick-ass reflection of our early stuff."

outside the central city. Naked and terminally hungover, he lurched over to the TV set and clicked on Channel 13 to see the happy host boasting that American Blues would be on right after the next commercial. Despite having no idea where the TV studio was located, Dusty and his pre-dawn sweetheart somehow dashed over just in time for the assembled membership to deliver an abysmal performance.

After an uneven stint at the Fillmore West, backing up Freddie King on a ten-day split bill with the Electric Flag, Blue Cheer, Buddy Guy and the Ike and Tina Turner Review, American Blues disbanded, all personnel flying off in separate trajectories. Dusty landed the most memorable employment, supporting Jimmy Reed for a series of dates between Houston and Galveston. Because Reed liked to suck up the sauce and then tumble keister-over-harmonica clamp into Dusty's bass amp, club owners adopted a word of mouth policy of no booze for the gravel-voiced Mississippi blues harpist/guitarist.

"I always used to carry a little bottle in my guitar case," says Dusty, "and when Jimmy walked into my makeshift dressing room on the third night of the roadtrip and saw that whiskey, it was 'Dusty ol' buddy o' mine, com'eer boy!' From then on, I played bass, carried the bottle, and answered the hotel room door when the manager screamed about the drunken all-hours jammin'."

"Although," Dusty adds, "a coupla nights when these backroads Texas innkeepers peered in and saw that it was Jimmy holding court, they actually said, 'You just go on the way you been, Mr. Reed. I'll throw the res' of the goddamn lodgers out if they complain again!'"

While all this was transpiring, Billy Gibbons was coming of age in an upper middle class family in suburban Houston. Father Freddy Gibbons was a pianist and orchestra leader who had relocated to Texas from his native New York because of his wife's failing health. His father graduated from bar mitzvahs to society galas and conducting the Houston Philharmonic, and Billy and his sister Pam often found themselves in the presence of Hollywood royalty, from Dick Powell to Humphrey Bogart. Billy's mom revived and went on to become a member of President Johnson's Texas staff. Billy himself got a leg up on the Christmas morning in 1963 when his pop presented him with a Gibson Melody Maker and Fender Champ amp.

The family maid, nineteen-year-old Stella Matthews, steered the lad in the direction of Little Richard, whose all-Houston band was pounding out "Bama Lama Bama Loo" in a Fourth Ward hooch parlor two blocks from her house. Billy tuned in to soul station KYOK and never looked back.

that that was just a version that got trumped up later," he counsels, discussing an alternate scenario widely accepted in Houston inner circles. Namely, that Johnny Ace, riding high with the success of "The Clock" in 1953 and "Please Forgive Me" the following year, had informed Robey just before he was due to take the City Auditorium stage that he was quitting Duke and going to New York to secure a deal with Atlantic. Robey reportedly decried such ambitions and produced a pistol, which he pressed against Ace's temple. With his girlfriend Evelyn still seated on Johnny's lap, Robey splattered the singer's pipedreams across the dressing room wall.

"I'll tell you this," says Gibbons of Robey, who ran Duke until two years before his death in 1975. "He was a tall *mean* albino. You'd take your demo tapes over to his nothing-much studio off Erastus Street, where he'd cut stuff with Gatemouth Brown, and he'd bark: 'Show me your damned song!'"

Houston was still a wide open town record biz-wise in the 50s and 60s, and if you didn't watch your step somebody else would do it for you. Eager to keep his own head low, Gibbons hooked up with booking agent Bill Ham shortly after Moving Sidewalks' 1969 *Flash* LP fell by the wayside. Ham was handling an appealing but less than flashy singer from Lubbock named Jay Boy Adams, and when Vietnam ensnared several of the Sidewalks, Ham and Gibbons hatched the idea of a new group, built around Billy, Sidewalks' drummer Don Mitchell and keyboard player Billy Ethridge. They knocked out two tracks, "Salt Lick" b/w "Miller's Farm" for Ham's Scat label. After more auditions, in which Ethridge recommended Dusty Hill, who in turn tapped Frank Beard, ZZ Top (a nonsense name reflecting such blues appellations as B.B. King) was pared down to the current threesome. Late in 1969, Ham took the boys to London Records, proclaiming, "I've got the next Rolling Stones for you."

London gave them a contract, pressed "Salt Lick" and provided some seed money that the group used to purchase a pair of Marshall Super Lead stacks, model 1959. They swept through Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and California, getting louder and prouder with each tick of the odometer. Their first sizable hit came in 1973 with *Tres Hombres'* "La Grange," an ode to the brothel off Rt. 95 between Austin and Houston later immortalized in the stage show and film, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

By 1974, they were drawing 80,000 rowdy fans in Austin (and getting themselves banned for another eight years). By 1975, they were breaking Rolling Stones' attendance records at arenas in the Deep South with the help of the unsuitable "Tush" off the live *Fandango!* More odes to nooky, lowriders and dipsomania ensued: "Nasty Dogs And Funky Kings,"

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World Radio History

"Mexican Blackbird," "Arrested For Driving While Blind." Come 1976, Ham devised a ZZ Top World Tour featuring a menagerie consisting of a live buffalo, a longhorn steer, buzzards and sidewinders that grossed \$11.5 million, outselling Elvis, Led Zeppelin, et. al.

When extricating themselves from the modest London Records contract became problematic, ZZ Top went on sabbatical for three years. Dusty did some fishing in Mexico. Billy traveled around North Africa and Western Europe, pausing in Paris to assist a group called *Artiste Contemporaine* in composing ambient electronic music for a show of Xerox art. Frank sought to improve his personal life.

The group reemerged on Warner Bros. in 1979 with *Dequello*, scoring a hit with "Cheap Sunglasses" and dominating FM radio with "I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide," and then "Pearl Necklace" (yes, a sharp-dressed man's euphemism for a blow job; from *El Loco*). But it was MTV that raised ZZ Top to their current august profile.

Gibbons and Hill had been hazy on the concept of a 24-hour rock channel, but Frank Beard was initiated into the phenomenon as he and his third wife Debbie were home tucking themselves in for the evening:

"It was a Friday night and we'd just gotten into bed. I was flipping the dial and saw a music video. We thought that was cool, and then another came on. And another. An hour went by, and we wondered how long the show was. Four hours went by. We looked at each other and said, 'When in the hell is something like this gonna be on again?!' We kept on watching. The sun was coming up and videos were still coming and we were freaking out. It was like a telethon—except nobody was giving us a number to call!"

MTV was less than a year and a half old when Ham and company went out to Burbank, California a few weeks later to screen the output of leading video directors. They settled on Tim Newman (Randy's cousin) to illuminate *Eliminator's* "Gimme All Your Lovin'" and thus inaugurated what would be the music network's nearest answer to a quality sit-com. At about the same time, the gods acquired their chariot, the 1933 Ford three-window coupe with the Cadillac-dynasty-red enamel paint job....

As a boy, Billy Gibbons had been obsessed with automobile culture, building scale models of designer Ed "Big Daddy" Roth's Monster dragsters and devouring issues of *Rod & Custom*, *Car Craft* and *Hot Rod*.

"It was in 1978 during the layoff period," says Gibbons, pattering around his half-million dollar townhouse in a swank enclave of Houston, "that I realized that I could finally afford the toy I'd always wished for."

He sits down before a coffee table in his living room on which is laid a just-completed goldleaf scale model of the Robert E. Lee paddle wheeler. Scattered around his digs, a two-story habitat dominated by a stone and wood-paneled atrium, are various other gewgaws ranging from an antique shotgun mounted on the mantelpiece to a surfeit of western memorabilia. In the foyer stand two lifesize mannequins in meticulous mummy wrappings, one holding a skull in its outstretched hand. Taken together, the tableau seems like a best-forgotten sub-basement at Neiman-Marcus.

"So what I did," says Gibbons, pushing his slippery red-framed tinted shades back up the bridge of his long nose, "was fly out to Los Angeles with a friend for the LA Roadsters' Father's Day Show with the intentions of buying a hot rod and driving it back to Houston. A guy on the grounds of the fair directed us to Don Thelan of Buffalo Motor Cars of Paramount, California and I told him I wanted a facsimile of a car I'd seen on television, Peter Campouris' famous California Kid. Thelan talked me into keeping the project totally original and he promised me a finished car fashioned from scratch within six months.

"Four-and-a-half years later," he says with a sigh, "the cost

was up to \$100,000 with no end in sight, and it was too late to turn back. At the same time, a fella contacted us about writing music for a hot rod movie he'd done and it was then that we thought of naming the car and the next album after a drag racing term. The month before the record was to be released, Thelan phoned to say the coupe was done. We wanted to use the car in a photo shoot for the album cover, but because we still owed Don money, it had to stay where it was, and we settled for a drawing of it on the jacket. By the time we took possession of the coupe it had become our 'Top Eliminator,' our 'Top Icon' and our top priority."

Back in 1978, Houston, Texas was at the top of its game—tops in the oil boom sparked by the OPEC scam, with the price of a barrel of crude soaring to \$36; tops in real estate peddling, with farmers north and west of the city getting \$100,000 an acre as sleazy Mexican politicians sought to stash fortunes in pilfered government treasury funds in the security of high-rise hotels and condos.

Now, Houston is tops in home foreclosures, with 3,000 posted in Harris County during the week that *Afterburner* hits the stores. Crime is up, unemployment too, and Gibbons concedes that, "Unfortunately, it wouldn't be wise or even possible to take the Eliminator out on Highway 610 for a zip around central Houston." Indeed, James A. Michener's bestseller *Texas* is rife with telling exchanges about the fear-some state of the frontier metropolis' thoroughfares:

"Six-ten is a jungle, worst highway in America. You know that during the rush hour the police won't even enter it to check on ordinary fender-benders. They got beat up too often by enraged motorists, sometimes shot and killed."

Realizing that he couldn't take his prize toy out for joy rides, Gibbons bought himself a '66 Chevy Impala lowrider with a remote control riser. He'd head out onto 610 with his pals, gun the engine and drop the skid plate so that roostertail sparks shot out the back to lengths of twenty feet. But just a short spell ago, some troopers witnessed the whole elaborate display and nailed him. Seeing that both his registration and his out-of-the-state plates had been expired for five years, the patrolmen were about to haul Billy off to the lockup when one of them recognized him and offered a proposition.

"It was late at night, they had a newly promoted sergeant down from Chicago that they hated," says Gibbons, "and they wanted to bust his balls. So they called into headquarters and said they might have a highly suspicious stolen lowrider on their hands and needed his assistance."

Gibbons and friends were stowed in the trooper's patrol car, along with the remote control button, and when the boss pulled up the cops suggested he take off his spanking new sergeant's hat, place it on the road, and check under the chassis to see if it held any contraband. After he had done so, he was rising to his feet when the trooper gave the signal to Billy, who pushed the riser button, the car crushing the good officer's expensive chapeau into the asphalt.

As the hatless and choleric sergeant drove off, the troopers and Gibbon shared a hearty guffaw before they let him off—but not without delivering a stern admonishment to assure him that the hardass character of East Texas endured intact: "Y'all better head straight down to Westheimer Road from here and use this heap to harass some queers, or you can bet we'll be comin' to get you."

As the sun sets on another unsettling year in the Lone Star State, its car radios simmer with the sensuous strains of "Sleeping Bag," as well as news bulletins that two former friends from greater Houston are battling in court over the \$10,000 reward posted by loved ones seeking information leading to the arrest of the murderers of a local folksinger and his girlfriend, who were shot and slashed to death in the house where they ran a large-scale drug operation.

The 15th anniversary of ZZ Top is drawing to a close, the band having outdistanced or overcome every demon and



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obstacle time and Texas could hurl at it. Heading out to Japan on the first leg of yet another world tour, they are content and satisfied with the path before them. Dusty Hill has recovered beautifully from the intestinal damage he suffered last December when, as girlfriend Jane Ellen Henderson was pulling his boot off, the .38 caliber Derringer he kept in it hit the floor, and a bullet pierced his abdomen wall. Frank Beard, blissful father of a four-week-old infant, has recently been reunited with two daughters from whom he was long estranged, and is at the peak of his golf game. Billy Gibbons is determined to stay slim, is mulling over some independent producing prospects, and is looking at a film property for the group.

But what is most heartening to the boys is that the *Afterburner* liner notes divulge no more about the way ZZ Top renders its singular sound in the studio than did the enticingly oblique prologue on the otherwise furtive *Z.Z. Top's First Album*: "In this day of homogenized rock, synthesized music, retakes, overdubs, multi, multi-tracking, an honest recording by accomplished musicians is a rewarding pleasure."

"You know," says Billy Gibbons, stretching out on the couch in his living room, the lazy Buffalo Bayou River eddying past the back patio over his shoulder. "I gotta hand it to that Mark Knopfler for the 'Money For Nothing' number on that last Dire Straits album. That guy must have called me three or four times to find out what I did with my guitar so that he could copy it for that song."

He pushes the brim back on his golf cap and smiles, the flawless pearly whites gleaming.

"He didn't do a half-bad job, either, considering that I never told him a goddamned thing." ☐

A Battle-Dressed Band

On tour, **Frank Beard** parks his tush in front of an 11-piece custom-built Tama kit that features an *Afterburner* flame motif ("Airbrushed in oranges, yellows and reds by Houston's finest graphic artists," according to longtime assistant production manager Don Stuart) All hardware has an anodized black finish.

The set includes five rack toms: 8-, 10-, 12-, 13-, 14-inch; three floor tomtoms: 14-, 16-, 18-inch; two bass drums: 18- and 20-inch; and an 8-inch wooden snare. Cymbals are black Paistes: one 16-, two 18-, four 20- and one 22-inch, with two 14-inch cymbals on the high-hat.

He also uses a Tama electronic synth drum.

Dusty complements the live beer drinking and hell raising with a spanking new array of custom made basses whose necks conform to the specs of a vintage Fender Precision. Besides a new *Afterburner* flame guitar, his fresh lineup will also sport a "Sleeping Bag" Mummy model with a Sony Watchman built into the body.

Billy gives you all his lovin' via an army of new *Afterburner*, Mummy-Watchman and assorted other models of custom guitars, whose necks conform to the exact dimensions of a '58 Les Paul.

Both Billy and Dusty play through different combinations of the ten tube-type 120-watt Rio Grande amplifiers Billy bought in the mid-70s from a now-defunct establishment on the Gulf Coast called Jake's Bait and Amp Shop. These amps are then aligned with sundry Peavey Max bass amps and Marshalls as the mood swings. Nonetheless, "nothing blows harder than the Rio Grandes," assures veteran production manager Jimmy Emerson. Gibbons also practices through a Scholz Rockman.

Lastly, Billy and Dusty use no guitar pedals, so y'all jes' keep on a-guessin' 'bout the secret ZZ Top sonic recipe!

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Kate Bush from page 42

the band and in control of the whole act. And that's quite different from the kind of controlled, far-away image that one gets through the media....

MUSICIAN: *Do you not feel that you could tour America just with your band and play more or less straightforwardly, without a big show and expensive props?*

BUSH: No, no—I would feel that that was such a cop-out. I don't think I'd have any effort or sense of challenge left in me. I don't feel that happy doing something unless I've really pushed myself to the limit. When we do videos, I don't feel right unless we're all filthy and exhausted by the end of the day. Otherwise it doesn't feel like you've put enough effort into it. When you hear an album you listen to the music but when you go and see a show, you're going there to see that person or that band come alive and hopefully give you everything that they've got. If I was just going to stand up there, what is the audience getting apart from seeing me that they can't get on an album? On the albums, they get much better arrangements, much better vocals that are in tune.

MUSICIAN: *Well, artists can give a straightforward performance and still invest it with something special.*

BUSH: You see, I don't want to be up there on the stage being *me*. I don't think that I'm that interesting. What I want to do is to be the person that's in the song. If I can be the character in the song, then suddenly there's all this strength and energy in me which I wouldn't normally have. Whereas if it was just me, I don't think I could walk on the stage with confidence. It's very hard for me to be *me* on a stage—I just stand there and twiddle my fingers.

MUSICIAN: *It seems to me that all those in the States who've taken Kate Bush so deeply to heart—they love that so much of your music is so deeply personal.*

BUSH: Well, that's great. But I can't help but feel it's very important to give people something visual. And I don't think, by any means, that the tour which we did some years ago was perfect. But I think we did explore new territory, visually speaking, and the reaction was so positive—I think that probably opened up more people to listening to my stuff than the records themselves ever did. Partly, I think, because people didn't expect me to be quite like that and they all enjoyed it. Had they not enjoyed it, then that would be different. But I've had an extraordinary amount of encouragement from people not just on the musical side but also on the visual side—maybe even more so! And when eventually I get the time and money to do another show, I hope we'll continue combining music with dance and with theater. I think that's a very untouched area in rock and it has great potential.

MUSICIAN: *Are there any such role-playings on the new album?*

BUSH: I think "Cloudbusting" was quite like that. God, it must have been nearly ten years ago, when I used to go up to the Dance Center in London, that I went into Watkins' [occult] bookshop for a look, and found *A Book Of Dreams* by Peter Reich. I'd never heard of his father, Wilhelm Reich, but I just thought it was going "Hello, Hello," so I picked up the book and read it. It was so inspirational, very magical. So when I wrote and recorded the song, although this was about nine years later I was nevertheless psyched up by the book—the image of the boy's father being taken away and locked up by the government just for building a machine to try to make rain. It was such a beautiful book!

MUSICIAN: *Is reading a passion of yours? Sometimes I describe Kate Bush as being the Doris Lessing of rock.*

BUSH: Doris who?—[she stifles a laugh]. I'm sorry, I don't know the author. When I was about eight or nine, for about three years I got through dozens and dozens of books, mostly fiction. But as soon as I began writing poems at school—basically, as soon as I started getting into writing songs—everything else seemed to go out the window. When I'd sit down and read a book I'd think how I could be writing a song. ☐

MUSICIAN WORKING

Pop Rock

Thompson Twins 68

They became what they reviled: the circuitous road and simple triumphs of a pop music juggernaut.

Chops Rock

Yngwie Malmsteen 76

Heavy metal's latest six-string hero unleashes a viking assault with some beef.

Jeff Berlin 80

Former Dreg T Lavitz talks to the man bassists are calling the four-string champ.

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THOMPSON



TWINNS BY ROB TANNENBAUM

In Ireland, the *Late, Late Show* is so popular it nearly crippled the country's economy, its Saturday night time slot leaving pubs emptier than a Mormon whorehouse. After pub owners staged a modernized Whiskey Rebellion, the weekly variety show was changed to Friday. It's a program the whole family can watch, with just a taste of controversy—Carson with a brogue. Silver-haired host Gay Byrne interviewed two lesbian nuns this summer, and all of Ireland was talking about it by the next morning. By tonight's early October broadcast, lesbian nuns have been supplanted by mobile icons—all of a sudden, dozens of people throughout Ireland have seen religious statues moving. Byrne is amusing the audience during a commercial break, milking the icon story and spicing it with jokes about Bob Geldof and lesbian nuns.

Backstage, the Thompson Twins wander around, munching on fruit and nuts and fighting boredom. Black Twin Joe Leeway is trying to avoid Blonde Twin Alannah Currie, who is choosing outfits for drummer Steve Goulding and bassist Mark Heyward-Chaplin, and demanding that Leeway shave before the band goes onstage. And Red Twin Tom Bailey is considering the unpleasant task of miming to a song in front of television cameras: "There are plenty of stupid, idiotic, facile things you do in the name of progressing your career. Lip-synching is one of them." For the Twins it's now as easy as sneezing. They'll consider it a good night if the host doesn't make some joke about how they're not *really* Thompsons and not *really* twins. ■

They became what they reviled:

four years ago, punks

Joe Leeway, Alannah Currie
and Tom Bailey

wouldn't be caught dead

doing mom & pop TV.

Now they're global
village megastars.

What happened?

Finally, after a stale comedian and a song about fifes and green hills and roving, the Thompsons squeeze onto a tiny stage, painted glossy white with strips of gold leaf. During the commercial, Bailey strums the jittery riff to Chic's "Good Times." Then Byrne introduces them: "They call themselves Twins, but they're three. And they used to be seven!" The audience titters and a tape of "Doctor! Doctor!" begins; Bailey breaks a guitar string, but it keeps on playing. By the middle of the second chorus, Byrne is waving a pencil to the beat and singing along. This happens wherever the Thompson Twins go: The band plays and people hum along or smile or dance or throw flowers. Their status as one of the world's most accomplished pop bands—and their ample catalog of CHR hits—will be further augmented by the new Nile Rodgers-produced *Here's To Future Days*, which adds a more aggressive edge to their expert melodicism.

When the Twins saw a four-year-old concert video from their days as a seven-piece recently, it was like watching a



Bailey: "Tom's the cornerstone. He's our musician."

different band. "I thought we all looked so healthy," says Bailey. "I had a tutu on," says Currie. "I could not relate to it," says Leeway. Back then, the group was motivated by the punk proposition that all bands are created equal. Playing on a television show would have been out of the question. So what if foresight were as easy as hindsight, and the Twins of four years ago could have watched tonight's program?

"In the innocence and naivete of those days, we'd have slagged it off as being too commercial, or something silly like that," Bailey replies. "We are now, in many ways, the thing that the punk revolution sought to get rid of."

During the British Invasion of 1981, the pop charts were dominated by Anglo bands, a number of whom have demonstrated as much staying power as the Knickerbockers did in an earlier British Invasion. ABC, Soft Cell, A Flock Of Seagulls, Haircut 100—none matched the success of their first single. Meanwhile, the Thompson Twins have proven to be reliable, if unrevolutionary hit-makers, the Dave Clark Five of England's second wave.

So why the Twins and not Kajagoo? The difference, it's been suggested before, is the presence of Tom Bailey. The singer/composer/producer/multi-instrumentalist is typically blunt about the matter. "There's something going around that I'm particularly *clever* musically"—Bailey pronounces "clever" the way Reagan pronounces "communism"—"and the other two aren't, so why don't I just go off and do a solo album. But it's a chemistry. A common name provides a channel for three very disparate approaches."

What if the Twins were a pair, and one of the trio left? How would the band differ? Bailey: "Without Alannah, it would be internationally successful and there would be a trouble-free environment." "The off-the-wallness wouldn't be there," suggests Leeway. "And the words wouldn't be there, for a

bloody start," Currie adds.

"Without Leeway," she continues, "there would be fewer good bass lines and vocal arrangements, and the set design wouldn't be as interesting."

And if Bailey was gone? "Tom is the cornerstone, and if he wasn't there, a lot of our confidence would be gone," she says. "If you're from *Musician*, well, Tom's our musician."

Tom Bailey's parents have never seen the Thompson Twins live. When he was born, twenty-nine years ago in Sheffield, England, the Bailey household was unsullied by a television, and pop music "was pretty effectively banned. I missed early period Beatles; the first I remember is *Magical Mystery Tour*." But there was a piano in the house, and Bailey began banging on it at age two, "or so I'm told." His father, a doctor, spent much of his free time building lutes and restoring old harpsichords and church organs. Once Tom had started school, he also began piano lessons, followed by guitar and clarinet lessons, church choir and school orchestra.

Somewhere in the midst of the classical training, Bailey brought home a second-hand Kinks' 45, and was soon playing in a rock band. Looking for a new challenge, he went to India. "I wanted to study the sitar, but I found it very difficult to get anyone to take me seriously there because it's a lifetime job. It's not like pop culture at all, where you've got to be young and happening and it's all over in five years." Bailey did learn to play tabla but he also contracted three different types of amoebic dysentery. Using whatever money and energy he had left, he returned to England.

He earned a music-teaching certificate at Cheshire College in the west of England, where he met Joe Leeway. Leeway, born to a biracial couple in London and raised by foster parents in Kent, was studying acting, but left Cheshire to join the Young Vic theater ensemble in London. When Bailey returned to Sheffield in 1977 to teach, he found a few friends who "had been inspired by all the recent anyone-can-do-it opportunities" of punk tempest, and they formed the original Thompson Twins, named after a pair of inept cartoon detectives. "I remember us agreeing that we'd never do gigs or become a real band," Bailey recalls with a laugh. When they realized the band "was more exciting and satisfying" than their day jobs, the Twins packed for London.

"Everybody was warning me against it," Bailey explains. "You've got a career, you've got security, money. But when I came back from India, after going so far and chickening out at the last minute, I felt like I really shortchanged my courage. After all was said and done, I'd ended up in a teaching job which I didn't enjoy. I had failed my original rebelliousness. So when it came to the choice between teaching and the band, I said, "You fucked up before, don't do it this time. Go with what you feel is right. Even if you have to live in a squat with no food."

It's still early after the *Late, Late Show*, so the band loads into a van and heads out to Newtownmountkennedy, a small village about twenty miles outside of Dublin where they've rented a big house until their European tour begins. The town's youth club has a dance every Friday night, and the Twins have gotten in the habit of visiting the kids.

"We did it partly for selfish reasons, at first," Bailey confesses as the van leaves Dublin. "We figured that if we got on the kids' good side, they wouldn't come hassle us. It was a p.r. exercise, really. Then we got to be good friends. They're a lot cooler than the city kids you meet in the street."

Nonetheless, a mild hysteria reigns at the Newtownmountkennedy youth dance. The local DJ plays a copy of "Don't Mess With Doctor Dream," an anti-heroin parable the Twins wrote after a gang of eight- and nine-year-olds in Dublin offered them drugs. As the wildest vocal intro since Blue Swede's "Hooked On A Feeling" rattles the walls, keyboardist/guitarist Felicia Collins tries to dance despite the circle of kids closing in on her like a taut lasso. Tom Bailey is

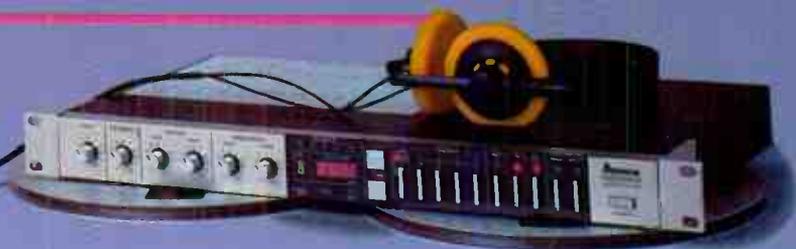
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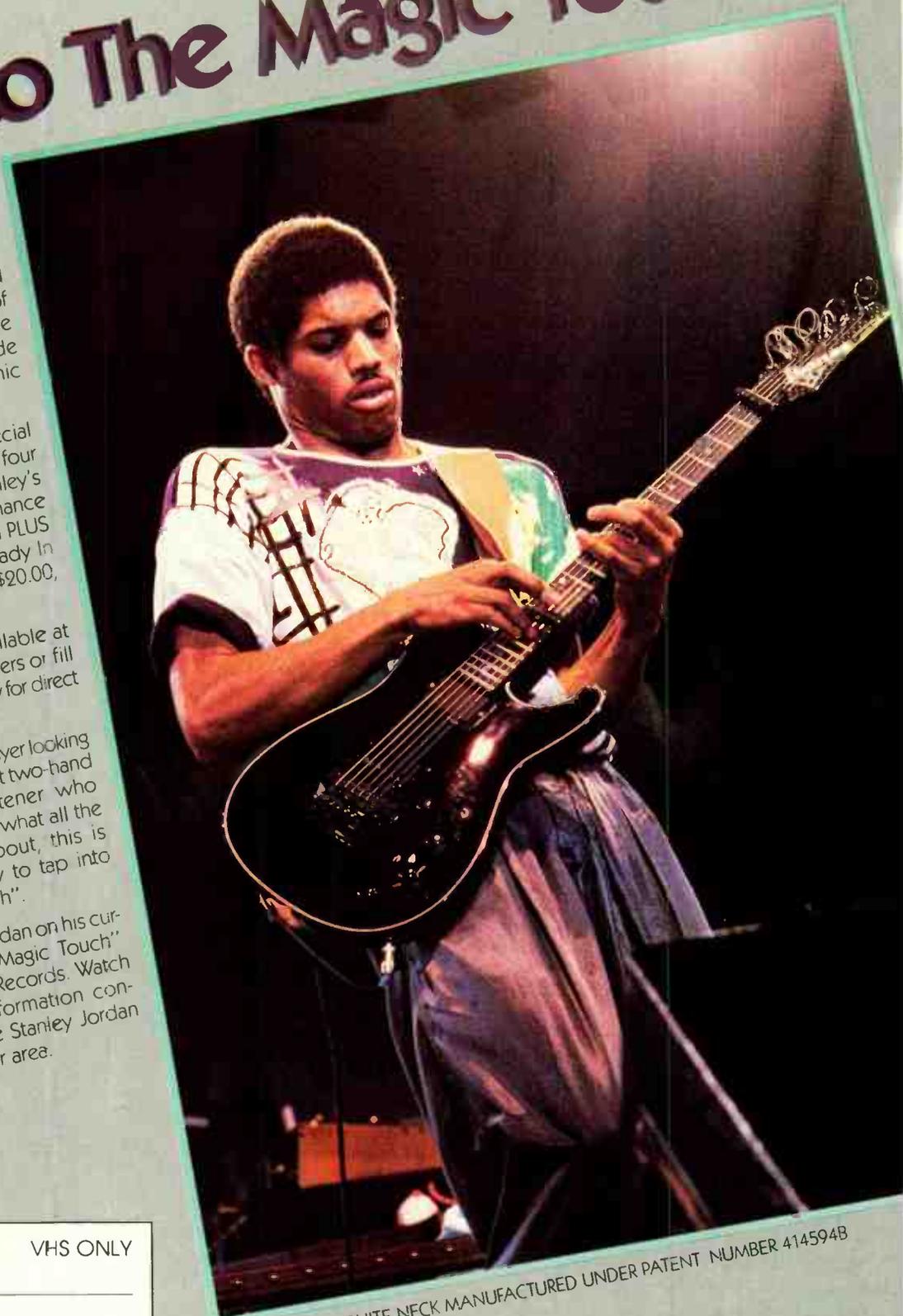
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smothered with kisses, and is in continual danger of having his earrings nicked as souvenirs. And Alannah visits the town's token punk.

"Since pop culture has become really big in the media, it's really had a condescending attitude towards places like this," says Bailey later. "The media has forced areas like this to lose their innocence. The kids grow up feeling that where they are is an absolute handicap to their development. Everything they hear about is coming from America or England, so it's difficult to be comfortable where they are."

"You're making too much of it," interrupts Alannah. "Some people like staying where they are, some people have itchy hands. That's all. If you want to move to the city, you do it."

Currie grew up near Auckland, on the north island of New Zealand, where "everybody had cows and a quarter acre of land. I was a writer. I used to play my brother's bongos in the back of the garden, but I also got thrown out of the school choir for talking too much." Ever since childhood, she's had itchy hands. "I wanted to leave when I was five years old, because I saw a picture of the hanging gardens of Babylon and I knew it was in the northern hemisphere and I was in the southern hemisphere. I hate the suburbs. I still have nightmares about being suffocated by wall-to-wall carpeting." After stints as a factory worker and a tobacco picker, Currie went into radio journalism "to please my mum." But Lou Reed threw her tape recorder across a room one day, and soon she was headed for London with \$300 and a friend's address.

She discovered the squatter's paradise of south London, where anyone with a sturdy axe could knock a door down and have his or her very own dilapidated, unheated apartment. Currie ended up on the same street as both Leeway and Bailey. "It was full of bands that were eventually to become relatively notorious," Bailey says. "The Slits lived right next to Alannah. The Pop Group lived there too, and half of Thunderclap Newman. We even had an imaginary football team, called the Clapping Pop Stars."

Currie caught punk fever, but had trouble going to gigs because she had no money. So she got by for a while by hopping over Tube turnstiles, talking her way into clubs and shoplifting when she needed clothes. She saved up enough money to buy a saxophone from a secondhand shop and began to make "vicious, horrible sounds on it. At that time in my life, I was extremely angry" Currie explains, "because of the constant harassment of being a woman out at night in London, of not being able to get jobs because I was from New Zealand and had an accent, of being poor. I found a channel for the anger, through the saxophone. That's why I wasn't interested in playing pretty melodies."

Along with a few girlfriends who were also squatters, she formed a band—the Unfuckables. "It was a group of young women who were squatters, and because we didn't have money for cabs, we'd have to walk home late at night and get harassed. So we started playing together and going out together, having a good time *without men*. That was what the Unfuckables were about: 'We will not be fucked over.' Not literally fucked. 'We will do as we please, *when we please*, and fuck to you.' The Unfuckables were total punks: They didn't announce or publicize their shows, wouldn't play on a stage, didn't rehearse and didn't even play proper songs. "Chasing the ultimate radical image," Bailey suggests. "The band that wasn't a band."

It was this same stubbornness that inspired Currie to learn percussion, perhaps the most male-dominated instrument there is. "I had a couple of lessons with a friend of Joe's, who gave me a lecture on how there are no solid women percussionists. 'Sorry, you may as well forget it. But I'll give you a few pointers.' That whole patriarchal attitude started right from the beginning."

Meanwhile, the five Thompson Twins were making a go

of it: Bailey, guitarists John Roog and Peter Dodd, drummer Chris Bell and saxophonist Jane Shorter. When Joe Leeway met up with his old school friend Bailey, he joined as a roadie. The Twins were more structured than the Unfuckables, but their first London shows were often anarchic, featuring a shifting line-up that often included audience members on spontaneous percussion. They went out on tour with the Teardrop Explodes, and one night Leeway slipped out onto the stage next to Dodd and became a real Twin. "I think it was in Aberdeen," he recalls. "Teardrop were all tripping."

They recorded a debut album, not released in the States, and although the song credits were group compositions, it's obvious (especially on the Indian-influenced "Make Believe") that Bailey was doing most of the writing. Next they began their assault on professionalism by acquiring bassist Matthew Seligman, a former member of the Soft Boys, balancing his skills by letting Alannah Currie join as well. And Steve Lillywhite was assigned to produce a second album, which would be their first American release.

Toward the end of the session, they still needed one more song. One night, after the other four had left (Shorter was an ex-Twin by then), Bailey, Leeway and Currie wrote a perky dance chant called "In The Name Of Love." The threesome had already appeared together as the Black Arabs, doing dub and rap songs in local clubs. Their first studio collaboration, a number one dance hit, made them realize that they didn't really need the other band members.

Bailey is uncharacteristically circumspect about seceding from the others, some of whom were great friends. "The world is littered with great musicians who never make it because they don't confront the other important sides of the job necessary to musical success. It's sometimes embarrassing to see such talent busking on the streets. But they won't get off their butts. You've got to do without your hometown mentality."



Currie: "Bailey sucks and his hair isn't real at all."

They had all sworn never to be in a "real band," but three of them changed their minds. "I just got so depressed by the dirty-raincoat brigade," Bailey says. "After six months, you get bored and learn how to play," Currie adds. Explains Leeway: "I saw the Adverts down at the Marquee in London, and Gay Advert said, 'If you don't stop gobbin' on me, I'm not comin' back.' And she went off. Before that the more you were covered in green gobs, the better it was. It just turned."

Since it was practically a new band, they considered a new name. "At the time, scams were the big thing in England. Instead of saying why we broke up, we went to a little cottage in Norfolk with a mobile studio. We were going to escape from the rest of the band," says Leeway, "by taking a boat to Cuba and not coming back. They'd send out a search party and find us with our clothes all torn off. And we'd change the name to..."

"Don't, it's embarrassing," Currie moans.

"...to Bermuda Triangle. So we wrote 'Lies' about that."

"Lies" was released during the first month of MTV. Along with "Love On Your Side" and the rest of *Side Kicks*, it made the band big in the U.S. Next came a world tour, then another album with three hit singles and another world tour, then another album which would have been finished sooner if Tom Bailey's nervous system hadn't exploded in early 1985 like an overloaded electrical socket.

Alannah Currie dislikes touring as much as Bailey dislikes doing television shows. "Everything's planned out beforehand in rehearsals, so once you set up and play, it's not a particularly creative thing." In a huge theater in Dublin, the Twins are working things out beforehand. Their world tour begins in exactly a week, and the set Joe Leeway has designed is still being built. It's got a Bauhaus mood about it, with lots of indifferent grays. On an elevated tier, Bailey sits behind a piano and begins the melody of "Hold Me Now." Currie doubles the motif on xylophone, and Leeway beats a simple pattern on congas. It sounds harder than the record, probably because of the four extra musicians they're touring with: Goulding, formerly of the Rumour and Gang of Four, on drums; bassist Heywood-Chaplin, who's played with Thomas Dolby and Lene Lovich; Felicia Collins, a friend of Nile Rodgers who had an indie club hit of her own this summer; and keyboardist Jan Pulsford, a session veteran in London. The two women are in the band at Alannah's insistence, because Currie finds a mixed band "much more balanced. When men get into groups, no matter how 'new man' they are, they revert to pathetically childish behavior. All these men's bands get so precious about their bloody music," she snorts. Currie gets her post-punk revenge by "writing 'Bailey sucks and his hair isn't real at all' on women's toilet walls."

Bailey hums through the lyrics, saving his voice for the long tour. As the song ends, a half dozen round white pods inflate over the stage. Bailey, Leeway and Collins pick up guitars, and suddenly the Twins look like Molly Hatchet. They slash into "Revolution," the John Lennon song they recorded on the new album and also played at Live Aid.

"If we chose to, I'm sure we could out-Ramone the Ramones," Bailey says later over a vegetarian dinner. None of the three eats meat, and only Currie drinks or smokes. In between rehearsing, they relax by playing indoor badminton. Thompson tours have little in common with Led Zeppelin tours.

After his collapse while recording in Paris, Bailey is taking it especially easy. "We'd never had a setback in the development of our careers," he says. "But it gave me a chance to realize that I wasn't enjoying anything other than being a Thompson Twin. I was in Paris, and I wasn't seeing anything except the view of the Eiffel Tower from my apartment."

Fortunately for the band, Nile Rodgers wanted to finish producing the album. "He flattered us," Currie says. "We were all depressed and feeling sorry for ourselves, Tom was gasping, and Nile was full of enthusiasm. 'These songs are great!' Bailey recuperated in Barbados, in the company of Sting and Eddy Grant, then the Twins finished recording in New York with Rodgers. The City gave them a fresh inspiration. "We decided to make it a really positive album. Our friends in London were saying, 'Oh, the bombs are gonna go off.' But if you channel your energy into a vision, you're creating something tangible to aim for," Currie exclaims.

In their native England, the album was savaged. "The dependable old Thompson Twins reshuffle their pack of mouldering ideas," sneered one review. Was anyone this nasty to the Dave Clark Five? "They don't listen to the music," sighs Leeway, "they review us as Yuppie millionaires." There's been particular objection to the cover of "Revolution," which they played, quite badly, at Live Aid, with Madonna on backing vocals. "When we came offstage, I thought our careers were over," Bailey admits. But he offers no apologies for recording the song: "We thought the Beatles did it really badly and we

could do a better version ourselves."

If, as Leeway suggests, the Twins are viewed by many as careerist Yuppies, the Harvard Business School entry in the pop race, maybe it's because of Bailey's bluntness about his professional aspirations. "Did your life flash before your eyes?" a magazine asked him soon after the collapse. "No, my career did," he answered. "We don't see any point in releasing a 45 that we know isn't going to be a hit," he told another interviewer.

"I'm wary of placing too much importance upon music as the solution to the world's problems because in one very important sense, it's just entertainment. It's what people do when they're not working. Pop music embraces an entire spectrum, which includes absolute disposability. You can't say it's so important that it must never be corrupted by something as facile as a TV show. Especially in the pop world, you can't be a closet communicator. The Clash are basically a spent force because they won't do that stuff."

Bailey recounts, without shame, hearing the Twins dismissed as a "limey, fag-rock band." He recognizes the irony of having been inspired by punk, only to grow into everything punk hated, but it doesn't prevent him from declaring, "We're a fucking pop band, and anyone who says otherwise is just crawling up his own ass." He can discuss North German classical harmony and the orchestral origins of the marimba and the xylophone, but he also likes the Carpenters and Foreigner. Bailey is a Twin by choice rather than by necessity: "If I wanted to play Bach, or form an experimental jazz band, I'd do it. But we've gotten into international pop music."

"People say, if you write love songs, does it really make any difference to somebody who's just had their house knocked down by an earthquake? The answer is yes. People survive catastrophes by the love letters between them that strengthen the personal bonds. At that point, politics makes no difference."

Currie insists that the Thompson Twins' symbolic integration of black and white, male and female is a statement in itself. Paul Weller has denounced the band as the ultimate in pop worthlessness, but Currie finds his didactic approach equally distasteful: "Why doesn't he just sit and write essays?"

"With 'Doctor Dream,'" Bailey interjects, "we didn't want to go [*sings*], 'Heroin is bad for you! Ooo-ooo-ooo.'"

"You can't change the world with a fucking pop song," Currie continues. "If you make it fun, people will listen. Maybe they'll get it, maybe they won't. But they'll enjoy it."

The sunrise the next morning is pastel pink and baby blue, real Mists of Avalon stuff. On their way to a TV appearance in England, the band drops me off in the center of Dublin, where I get a cab to the airport. The middle-aged cabbie figures out that I'm American, and starts talking about some American journalists he saw on last night's *Late, Late Show*. I ask if he saw the Twins' song.

"Aye," he answers. "They're not quite my age group, mind. But they looked good and they had a nice sound." ☒

Twins' Toys

Tom Bailey uses a Fairlight CMI, an Oberheim OB-Xa, a Movement MCS-2 drum computer, a Yamaha DX7 and CP7, a Casio CZ-101 and CZ-5000, an ESP Eclipse guitar, and an ESP Pocket Studio.

Joe Leeway uses an Emulator II, a Linn 9000, an ESP Mirage guitar, an ESP Pocket Studio, a Z-bass and hand-made congas.

Alannah Currie plays Remo toms, Tama Octobans, Rhythm-tech tambourines, Paiste percussion frame, Latin Percussion timbales, Joppa cowbells and Bergerault marimbas through a DGS MIDI Scan. All three use Nady wireless units and Roland JC-120 amps.

Felicia Collins plays ESP guitars through a Music Man 112 and Roland JC-120 amps. **Mark Heyward-Chaplin** plays fretted and unfretted Music Man Stingray basses through a Trace-Elliott amp.

Steve Goulding plays a Simmons SDS 7 drum kit, SDS pads through a Syncologic PSP, Gretsch and Slingerland snares, and Zildjian cymbals. **Jan Pulsford** plays an Oberheim OB-Xa, Yamaha DX7 and Casio CZ-5000 keyboards through a Roland DDL.

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YNGWIE MALMSTEEN'S VIKING ATTACK

From Paganini to Power Chords, a Rising Guitar Gladiator

By Josef Woodard

Parents, lock your doors and windows, get the kids to bed early, stock up on the holy water...the Bach Choral Society is coming to your town. In fact, the damage may already have been done. Tonight in Phoenix, Arizona, the supposedly innocuous B.C.S.—better known as Yngwie Malmsteen's Rising Force—is continuing its blitzkrieg across America open-

ing up for AC/DC, trampling the grapes of sonic wrath.

This is a tour to separate the wheat from the chaff, what with heavy metal under the pall of the PMRC's Orwellian influence and AC/DC tainted by the affections of L.A.'s alleged Night Stalker. But heavy metal eats controversy for breakfast (preferably at about one in the afternoon), and despite an irate city council and a major venue shift, tonight's Phoenix show has become "the concert that couldn't be stopped." Nonetheless, the Malmsteen entourage, fearing for its hotel reservations, retains its Bach moniker.

In Malmsteen's case, the baroque connection is not at all inappropriate. Johann Sebastian himself appears right after Jimi Hendrix and Ritchie Black-

more on his short list of pivotal influences. And after Bach comes Niccolò Paganini, a particular weakness whose tape of virtuosic violin capricci Malmsteen listens to at volumes usually reserved for, say, AC/DC; says he with a bent sneer, "Paganini makes me dangerous in traffic."

Lest the reader suspect highbrow name-dropping, check this guy out; over his credible mold of art-rock and standard alloy metal music, Malmsteen solos with a strikingly pristine harmonic code and, most obviously, a furious dexterity—fingers of voltage-controlled lightning. But with this delirium of speed come less typical fixations like control and perfection.

All this in a twenty-two-year-old Swede, a heavy metal wunderkind? It's true. Malmsteen is here to give the genre the shot of credibility it sorely needs. On vinyl, his first, largely instrumental *Rising Force* LP established his instrumental prowess, while the recent *Marching Out* (now with a band he calls Rising Force) is a more calculated attempt at commercial metal, with echoes of progressive rock and stock-in-trade vocals. Such themes as "Disciples Of Hell" and "I Am A Viking" simmer in their quasi-gothic regalia. Proceed directly to the guitar playing, do pass the lyrics.

Live, as he goes through his wild gymnastics onstage, trotting his wireless Strat all about, tossing it in the air, throwing it over his neck 360 degrees and still executing those 32nd-note flourishes through several teetering Marshall stacks...the scent of New Heroism is in the air. If Eddie Van Halen delivers the whirligig equivalent to his bounding Yankee grin, Malmsteen is a whiz kid of the stiff upper lip school. Rock 'n' roll is not all fun and games. It must be right. It must be supreme. It must be, well, musical.

For Malmsteen, even the party aspect of heavy metal business is a cog in the musical process. "I find that the best way to do it is to OD on everything that's bad, and let your willpower take over," he says in the Phoenix hotel room of his road manager, Count de Monet (an alias, of course). Nursing a bottle of Bailey's and occasionally fielding a kiss from his fetching girlfriend Greta, Malmsteen is, surprisingly, open and talkative. Not surprisingly, his intensity is right there, all over his sleeve.

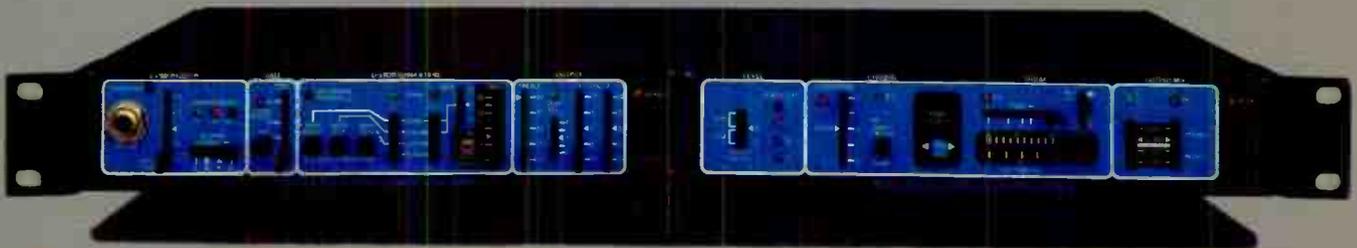
"If I criticize myself harder, and tell myself I'm not allowed to make mistakes—even though what I'm doing is improvising—I do one mistake and it



Whiz kid of the stiff-upper-lip school: Hegel meets Van Halen.

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pisses me off, makes me cold and I begin to work on autopilot. That's why I play better if I'm fucked up," he laughs nervously. It's not good to be too clean, because it's boring."

Of all Malmsteen's most primal instincts, the flight from boredom tops the list. "I'm into extremes in every sort of way," he claims. "I want to not only be a creative, sensitive artist, but also an entertainer. I want to have a meaningful statement, but at the same time, have something that a fourteen-year-old can relate to. As much as I am a classically-influenced musician, I still love rock 'n' roll for the rawness. I love to kick stacks, run around and smash my guitars up.

"But then rock 'n' roll became so limiting and guitar players sounded like all the others, because each guitar player listened to another guitar player and it became, you know..." Incestuous?

"Yeah. I was going to say that, but it sounded too harsh." He lets out a grin.

Born into a musical family in Stockholm, young Yngwie leaned more towards draftsmanship and a love of the macabre, drawing skeletons in glorious detail. He bucked attempts by his mother to teach him piano, trumpet and/or the guitar. Until, that is, he saw a Hendrix special on the telly at the ripe age of seven.

"He wasn't playing fucking accord-

ion, you know. He wasn't like some old nerd playing trumpet on TV, in an old 30s movie. He projected such an impact as a personality that I could look up to. That's what made me take the guitar off the wall. From then on, I was possessed with music."

Malmsteen quickly turned his attentions away from the psychedelic mojo of Hendrix and Cream to the classically-tinged bands of the day—ELP, Deep Purple, Genesis and Yes, which led to pure classical models, notably the more formalist rigors prior to the winds of Romanticism and Modernism: Malmsteen, had he his druthers, would have lived in the Rhineland, pre-1840.

In many ways, Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) was a rock star before his time, and a paradigm for someone of Malmsteen's inklings. A virtuoso violinist, Paganini was an enigmatic long-hair who caused the ladies to swoon and dazzled audiences with his rich, innovative techniques. He also composed some of the instrument's most challenging repertoire, as well as some lesser-known guitar works. Yet there was a dark side to his psyche; some suggested that he made a Faustian pact with Lucifer for his unearthly talent, thus making him—in Rising Force parlance—a "disciple of hell."

Malmsteen claims that he has been almost entirely self-taught, the result of intensive fretting behind closed doors during his formative years. "I got fascinated with just musical dexterity. I found

continued on page 106

MIND OVER MIDI

The editors of *MUSICIAN* are proud to introduce *UNDERSTANDING MIDI*, the first publication designed for all players interested in the applications and availability of today's MIDI products. This "user-friendly" reference includes practical MIDI articles from the monthly pages of *MUSICIAN*, updates on the latest technology, how to get the most out of the new software, plus the only available *complete* MIDI Buyers' Guide. So whether you currently use MIDI or would like to begin, *UNDERSTANDING MIDI* could be the most important musical investment you make.



Yngwie's Maelstrom

Malmsteen swears by the metal orthodoxy of a Strat pumped through a floating number of Marshall stacks, but he's realistic about the foibles of both classics. Of the Marshalls, he likes their "weird combination of a warm but biting, metallic, heavy-but-still-crisp tone. Quality-wise, they're shitty, but the sound you get when they work is absolutely incredible. Same thing with Strats. They're not a 'good guitar;' Gibsons are better made, I suppose. But I wouldn't play anything else." His numerous Strats are equipped with Floyd Rose systems, but without the clamping nut. Pickups are custom from Larry DiMarzio; he helped design Aegis 3, a double coil, stacked model.

Strings are from Ernie Ball, gauged from .008 to .048, and he uses Fender extra heavy picks, which he tends to throw by the handful to the crowd any given show. Though he normally sends a straight signal, he is routed through an old Roland echo unit, a Korg SDD-1000 and a Boss Octaver. He also uses a set of Moog Taurus bass pedals.

For acoustic work, Malmsteen has a variety of axes at his disposal, but tends to like the steel-string Ovation acoustic-electric and a special Gibson solid-body nylon-string model.



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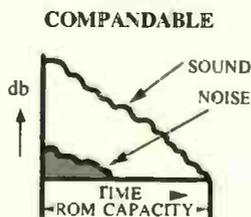
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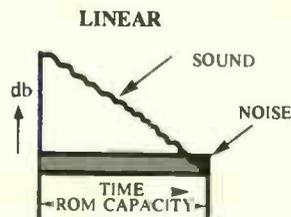
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should I have to change merely because I have a wider span between half-steps on the frets and thicker strings. Which got me in all kinds of hot water back then, 'cause nobody'd really thought about doing it. It took me a long time before I began to get successful at it—for the longest time I was awful, but at least I was growing and developing. I don't believe most musicians in their mid-twenties are mature enough at what they do. A few people are—Stanley Clarke was very together when he was eighteen—but I know I wasn't.

Lavitz: You played in bands around Long Island. What else—lessons?

Berlin: I had a teacher out in the Bronx named Clyde Lombardi, he's actually a real famous jazz bass player. I used to be a baker....

Lavitz: You look kinda like a baker....

Berlin: When you see me, you want to have pumpernickel, I understand. Sure, I baked for two years. Friday afternoon I worked from 3 till 6 o'clock at the bakery in a shop called the Bagel Hut. I would bring Clyde bagels on the weekend. I couldn't pay him dough, so I would pay him dough. The next morning I'd be up at 6:30, working from seven in the morning till seven at night. Then I'd go to New York, and play singles dances and parties, and get home

by 2:30, get up at 4:30 to be at work at 5 a.m. At three in the afternoon I'd close the shop, go to study with Clyde in the Bronx and then come home. The next day in school my Social Studies teacher would say, "Hey Berlin, you got your homework?" I would say, "Hell no, I was busy this weekend, my dog ate it," you know. So I didn't really do so well in high school. The only way I got through was 'cause I maintained my school orchestra position as a violinist and all my A's in that balanced my other lousy grades.

Lavitz: Then you went to Berklee?

Berlin: No, then I was hired to go on the road with a New York Broadway show. I went to Berklee afterwards and there I began probably the greatest tenure in my life towards the study of music.

Lavitz: But you left before graduating. Why?

Berlin: There is an unyielding attitude towards the students there that if you don't sound like Ron Carter for example, you'll never make it. Don't get me wrong, I'm straight out of that school. When I got to Boston, it was jazz, jazz, jazz. Bebop and that was it. I even picked up an upright bass. I didn't want to play no damn upright bass! They said, "Hey Berlin, if you really want to get into learning some time, then you'd better pick up the upright bass." So I

like a jerk went out and bought a god-damn upright bass! I'm sitting at home for like two or three months man like playing this stupid upright bass!

Lavitz: Was Jaco a big influence?

Berlin: Jaco is an original. He just had a personal voice. When he came out it was so amazing, I was sure that I was never going to be able to find a voice for myself. I was getting known as a "chops" bass player, and he was so fantastic that I got a fretless bass. I imitated him until I went "wait a minute, red light," this is totally wrong and I can't do this because frankly I don't really dig the fretless bass anyway. I decided that it was stupid what I did. I said, "If I'm ever going to make my own sound in music, I've got to do it my way and nobody else's." For that reason, I never play harmonics. It's not mine, it's somebody else's. What I did is, I edited out the styles of other musicians.

Lavitz: Here's the plug-the-new-product section of the article. The big news for you is your debut solo album, Champion, with your own group, Vox Humana, that's out on Passport jazz.

Berlin: Right, the jazz part of it being slightly misleading, since I don't think of it as a jazz album at all.

Lavitz: Did you write the music with a certain type of player in mind, or write a bunch of music and then pick your

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favorite tunes?

Berlin: The hardest thing for me to do is writing. I just don't know how musicians can sit there and write two or three tunes a day. I slave over every note and bar I've ever written. Vox Humana slayed the people every time. One concert drew interest and I got signed. When it came down to doing a record I wanted to find musicians that were voices on their own. For yourself, as an example, as far as I'm concerned, you are one of the most visible pianists in a rock/jazz idiom. When I told people that we would be playing together, they got really excited. I also had Clare Fischer play some keyboards—what he's forgotten about music, I haven't learned.

One of the things I did *not* wish to do on the record was to make a bass album. I'm very concerned about hearing a record when a bass player or drummer gets a deal. It's probably the biggest bombardment of sound on a listener's ears when they pump licks, bass grooves and fast tom-tom fills on a listener. It's just a personal thing of mine and I decided I'm not going to be guilty of it, 'cause I got such... I got you, I had Neil Peart, Steve Smith, Neal Schon, so why am I going to dominate when I got you guys? I just wanted to showcase everybody in a compositional aspect.

Lavitz: *Champion is now your most definitive recorded statement. What was your favorite recording prior to it.*

Berlin: I've played in so many bands, I'd have to think about it. Gigs just come and go. I've never really been in a band other than Bill Bruford's and Allan Holdsworth's. I've played with everybody for a day and a half, from Van Halen and Rush and Journey to Mike Stern and Dave Liebman and Pat Metheny. People seem to like *One Of A Kind* by Bruford, but I personally like *Gradually Going Tornado* a lot better. It seemed to groove harder. Bill on that record seemed to suddenly grasp the real importance of a groove, for me.

Lavitz: *Does your playing change when you work with a simpler, groove-oriented drummer?*

Berlin: Sure. If I get a drummer with a strong, solid sense of time, I feel compelled to be as percolating as a coffee pot. I can't stand still because what goes on between bass and drums is so exciting! Vinnie Colaiuta and I used to do things together that were phenomenal. I don't think I've shared that kind of rapport with another drummer.

But I also really like drummers who explode, whose concept includes not only time but also sound and melody, a Bruford or a Neil Peart. But you can't classify Neil. He really surprised the hell

out of me on my record, because he came in and laid down a real authentic rock groove on his two tracks and I thought he just smoked them! He could only stay for one day, so it was a matter of first takes. It was an incredible rush job. [The editors disclaim any responsibility for this awful pun]

Lavitz: *Now for the "investigate-Jeff-Berlin-closely" section of the article. You're often accused of being on a big ego trip. What do you say to that?*

Berlin: Okay. A guy will come in and say, "Oh, are you Jeff Berlin? I think you're the greatest bass player in the world. I love your playing, I love your records"—but they are polite and enthused. I'm
continued on page 98

The Champ's Gloves

Jeff Berlin plays a blond lacquered Fender Precision body with a rosewood-on-maple neck from his disassembled black '62 Jazz bass. Jeff swears by Badass bridges, Bartolini pickups (his is a custom job), and especially Carl Thompson bass strings (gauges are .040, .060, .080 and .100.) He also used a Tobias bass on the LP and calls the Kubicki "a very nice instrument." His amp and effects are Yamahas ("top-of-the-line stuff"): a PB-1 preamp, PB2200 power amp, 2x15 cabinets, and three E1010 analog delays. He also has two small 12-inch Electro-Voice cabinets he adds for high end.

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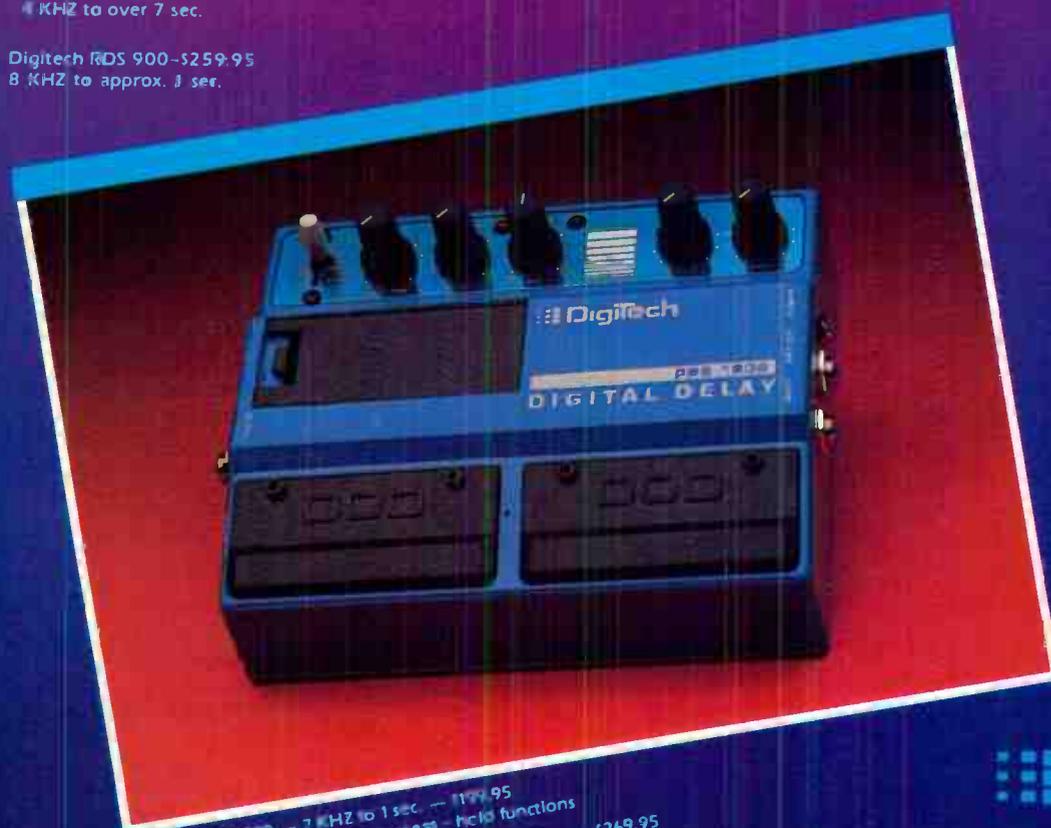
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SOFTWARE CITY

By Freff

After considerable waffling, I finally did it. I went and bought a Macintosh. Cue fanfare and lots of nifty programs, including the two I'm going to cover in brief right now: **Total Music**, from Southworth Music Systems, and **Sound Designer**, from Digidesign. Be warned before you start drooling: neither of these is for the faint of wallet.

Total Music is a program aimed directly at the musical equivalent of the corporate computer "power user." It's meant to be a Maserati, not a VW, and—for the most part—it succeeds.

What is it? A single hardware/software package for the Mac that serves as sequencer, editor, transcriber, DX7/TX816 librarian...take your pick. That's where the "Total" part of the program's title comes in. It's also where some of the difficulties come in, because each of those tasks is a complex problem, and the program isn't equally adept at handling all of them.

Distinctly in **Total Music's** favor: its MIDI interface has two MIDI IN ports, so you can record duets live in a single pass (nothing else available can do this); it translates from recorded tracks to notation more smoothly than I have ever seen on a microcomputer, with a resolution up to 32nd-note triplets; you can edit any MIDI information except for System Exclusive data; you can adjust for all manner of MIDI and synth deficiencies (especially those related to timing accuracy and "data clogging") with its filter, channel split, and track sliding features; and its 179-page manual is direct, well-ordered, comprehensive, and more than a little pithy. Kudos to author Paul Lehrman.

Distinctly not in Total Music's favor: it *only* works with its own hardware interface, and not those available from Assimilation, Opcode, or Musicworks (this was done to give the program hardware-locked copy protection, and a part of me sees the need, but it's a pain for those who already bought another interface); screen updating is, at times, slow; and certain functions involve lots of disk drive activity...which runs from reasonable (on a 512K Mac with internal hard disk) to sloooow (on a 512K Mac without) to absolutely impossible to tolerate (on a 128K Mac; avoid these like the plague).

In sum, at \$500 **Total Music** is a ton of power, perhaps the best of its kind on the Mac. But there is still room for improvement, especially in the use of

the Mac's screen and the editing procedures; and learning to use the program to any worthwhile extent will take a solid investment of time and practice.

Sound Designer, at \$1000 a shot, is the most expensive piece of consumer software I'm aware of. It's worth it.

Take one Mac with Sound Designer. Add an Emulator II (you've got to have that particular sampling instrument, and no other). Add a Hyperdrive internal disk for the Mac (optional but highly recommended). Total pricetag for all these components is maybe \$11-12,000 if you shop intelligently, which is pretty expensive...but put them together and presto, instant \$40,000 digital synth.

You want power? Brothers and sisters, this is POWER. We're talking easy-as-a-breeze editing of digitally sampled sounds, all the way down to fiddling with *individual samples* (when you consider that the Emulator packs over 27,000 samples into each second of recorded sound, you get a sense of the program's scope). Sixteen-bit editing resolution. Being able to listen to edits through the Mac's audio if the Emulator II isn't around. Merging two or more sounds together or fading from one to another (your choice, smooth or abrupt). Perfect looping. Cut, copy, paste, and gain adjustment routines that make for previously-impossible high-quality sampling. Visual access of up to three waveforms at a time, with up to ten movable (plus *nameable!*) markers in each. Extensive frequency spectrum analysis. A Karplus-Strong digital synthesis algorithm, with more algorithms promised in future. Total control of all Emulator II functions, making that instrument even easier to deal with than it already was.

I could rave for hours about **Sound Designer**. In fact, there are only three "negative" things about it I can think of.

First, you really need a Hyperdrive hard disk in your Mac. The Emulator II has seventeen seconds of sample memory, enough to fill two 400K floppy disks, so editing even short sounds on disk is slow and aggravating. Second, the program is copy protected in a fashion that doesn't let you make working backups. At the price, and considering the "built-in" hardware protection (the Emulator II and the special interface cable), that inconvenience is unreasonable. And third...

...third, now I'm going to have to go buy an Emulator II to keep me and my Mac happy. It never stops, you know?

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DEVELOPMENTS

By Jock Baird

The week before this fall's **Audio Engineering Society** show in New York, I went out and played every state lottery number with an even square root. I wasn't looking for millions, mind you, but a couple of days looking at the latest in pro audio technology can make you feel like you're only wearing



Mirage Multi-Sampler

a barrel. This time, though, I wandered AES' aisles and hotel corridors with a secret smirk, counting my imminent winnings and viewing the instruments of its rapid disposal. What a difference a bet makes!

For example, in my previous poverty, would I get all worked up over **Lexicon's** brand-new PCM-70 digital multi effects processor? I think not. But this time, my heartbeat quickened. The night before, the Lexicon PCM-60 digital reverb had won a *Mix* magazine reader's poll on the best product in recording technology, beating out equipment costing well over ten times its \$1,500 price. Now here was a delay, reverb and miscellaneous effects line, with full MIDI capability, at a more than reasonable price of \$2,295, from a company with superb high-end technology. After listening to a twenty minutes of different sound programs, I got even more worked up, and took note of Lexicon's address and phone number: 60 Turner St., Waltham, MA 02154; (617) 891-6790.

Naturally I would need a new mixing board—my Heathkit's becoming an embarrassment around town. AES had some compelling new under-\$10,000 models that got my attention. There was the Series 65 from **Trident**, a major-league British firm of proven reputation. The 65s, which start at \$7,900 for a 16/4/2 version with 8-track monitoring, boast enhanced bussing and "group assign" capabilities and plenty of eq and auxiliary sends on each channel. If my bets yield a bit less return, there's the T-Series from another fine U.K. company, **Soundtracs**, which start at \$3,800 and have plug-in expansion modules. Nice cosmetics, a readily accessible patch

bay on a slanted top panel, and plenty of control make the T-Series a potent home studio contender.

Then there's the **AHB CMC Series**, a 16-track version of which lists for \$4,300. The CMC uses a Computer Aiding Routing System (CARS) to put all your patching and muting under the control of an on-board computer system that can be interfaced with a Commodore 64. It's not exactly Necam, but it's a long way into automated mixdown for that kind of money. A **Seck** series of portable consoles from **Connectronics** caught my eager eye as well, especially their ultra-thin look and nice flexible layout; an 18-input 1882 model goes for an even four grand. **Electro-Voice** surprised me with their 8400 Series of pro mixers, intended primarily for reinforcement and therefore extremely road-worthy, but also endowed with lots of studio-friendly qualities. A 16-track model goes for \$4,185. Of course, as a hedge if none of my numbers win, I took a good look at a new Electro-Voice 4-input ELX-1 mike/line mixer with more controls packed on its little 1.75 inches of rack space than medals on an Air Force general. Between built-in limiters and power supply, color coding, headphone plug and a transformer-coupled outlet that will hold open phone lines for news hounds like myself, there's a lot packed in here.

Roland caught my expanded wallet's attention with a new 40,000-note sequencer, the MC-500 with pin-point punch in/out on four tracks. It also sports a disk drive, song chaining, a



**MESA/Boogie
Mark III**

20-character, 2-line dot LCD display and full MIDI implementation. Roland also showed a new piano synth module with truly impressive, warm sound quality courtesy of their Structured Adaptive Synthesis sampling technology, which was devised especially for acoustic and electric piano patches. Then there's



Roland MC-500

their inexpensive TR-505 rhythm machine with sixteen drum sounds and memory for 48 programmable patterns. Of course it's MIDI'ed. Roland also beefed up its software offensive with an IBM-PC-based voice editing system for their MKS-80 Super Jupiter synth module that boasts 1280 patches. Prices were still not available at press time, but if you have to ask...

Speaking of MIDI, three new products have been creating a bit of conversation. One has been around almost a year, **360 Systems'** MIDI Bass unit, a controller-less synth module with four primo (and, from a burgeoning chip library, interchangeable) bass sounds, but because of the recent MIDI acceleration it has only now come into the limelight. Viva specialization! Another is **Kawai's** success in building MIDI into a top-of-the-line electric grand piano, the EP-308M. It allows two independent channel assignments in either Dual or Split mode, and is velocity-sensitive. Oh yeah, it's also a damn nice electric grand piano (an upright's also available). And **Ensoniq** put its Mirage 8-voice polyphonic sampler with disk drive into an expander module (and threw in a sequencer) for those who already have a fave keyboard controller. Best of all, the price: \$1,400.

And while I'm at it, I need a new guitar amp. I think I'll go with an updated classic, the **MESA/Boogie** Mark III. It incorporates foot-switching between three sounds: clean rhythm, crunch rhythm and lead—and when a Boogie says "lead," better tie down loose objects onstage. Sure I may be conservative, but give me those basic Boogie values, like their high-tech preamp, state-of-the-art cooling system, voltage surge protector, constant voltage effects loop and "sus-4" shock mount in the combo model in case I have a little too much to drink at the party celebrating my winnings and drop the amp off a tailgate. Now that I'm a man of means, of course, I'll insist on options like the 100/60-watt switch, Simulclass modification, reverb, graphic eq and a dovetailed wood cabinet.

So, you ask, did I hit on any numbers? No, but somehow it didn't bother me that much once I got home. After all, with N.A.M.M. around the corner, I can still dream, can't I?

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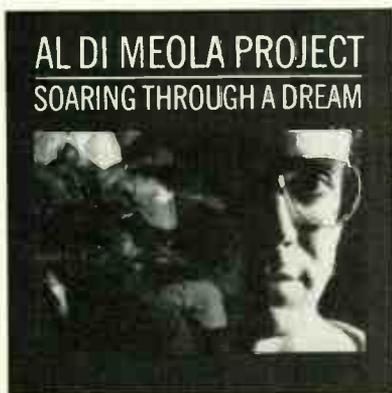
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Soaring Through a Dream," the debut album from the "Al Di Meola Project," carries you away to dizzying new heights of electric fusion. Powered by Al Di Meola's virtuoso guitar work, it includes outstanding performances by Airtio on percussion and vocals, Danny Gottlieb on drums, Phil Markowitz on keyboards and Chip Jackson on bass.

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OUT OF THE ASHES:
JOE STRUMMER ROCKS,
MICK JONES SWINGS



THE CLASH

Cut The Crap
(Epic)

BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE

This Is Big Audio Dynamite
(Columbia)

Mick and Joe couldn't have planned it any better if they'd hired Don King as promoter. Two years after the Clash's bitter split, brothers-turned-foes Joe Strummer and Mick Jones are back in action and headed for a showdown. Who will survive the confrontation? Will Strummer's Clash, boasting a hard left,

fell the challenger, or will Jones' Big Audio Dynamite dethrone the aging warhorse through fancy footwork and surprise strategies?

On the basis of sheer energy, *Cut The Crap* makes Joe's boys the victors. Joined by old buddy Paul Simonon, (bass) and three able, anonymous recruits, Strummer clings to the old ways, his garbled HEY YOU! vocals dominating the attack. Familiar tales too, though after the brutal buzzsaw boogie of "Dirty Punk," you may wonder if Strummer really has something to say, or just enjoys a commotion for its own sake. In either case, *Cut The Crap* is a lively show that recreates the hurlyburly feel of the Clash's youth without resorting to slavish imitation. Producer Jose Unidos (hmmm...) has fashioned more of an homage to their early punk sound than an exact replica; compared to such Clash classics as "1977" and "London's Burning," nouveau anthems like "Cool Under Heat" and "Movers And Shakers" seem almost restrained.

But this isn't just a nostalgia trip. Despite a retreat from the risk-taking of *Sandinista!* or even *Combat Rock*, the band incorporates synths, acoustic and wah-wah guitars, and other relatively daring items into grungy funk ("Fingerpoppin'"), reggae ("Three Card Trick"), and an affecting ballad ("North And South"). And if the lilting "This Is England" finds Strummer becoming a distinguished middle-aged eminence in the mold of Ian Hunter, so be it.

Big Audio Dynamite (a.k.a. BAD) couldn't be a less apt moniker for Mick Jones' new band. Where Strummer favors a full-frontal assault, this gang makes its points with finesse and understatement. Gone are the harsh gestures of Mick's Clash days, replaced by light, jangly guitars and crisp rhythms that bounce and skip instead of rock. Jones' scrawny if likable voice shouldn't have to carry an entire LP, and Don Letts' pervasive effects, ranging from scratching to bits of movie dialogue to gunfire sounds, make an odd substitute for traditional lead guitar. Yet the group swings so skillfully it's hard to resist 'em.

The tunes on *This Is Big Audio Dynamite* tend to run together, underscoring a style so distinctive it deserves its own descriptive catchphrase. (Maybe MTV could hold one of their contests.) The real kicker, though, is Jones' pointed lyrics, which survey concerns from AIDS to South Africa to Reaganomics minus the sensationalism of his ex-partner. "Sudden Impact," for example, offers this succinct putdown: "Listening to a metal music prank/ That leads straight to the bank/ Each grunt and groan took literally/ Some tired old rock star's fantasy." BAD is *bad*, and that means good.

And the new champion is? Both combatants maintain their dignity, so let's wimp out and call it a draw. The real winner, of course, is the listener. Maybe the Clash should have ruptured sooner. — Jon Young



CHRISTOPHER "CHIP" TURNER



ZZ TOP

Afterburner
(Warner Bros.)

ZZ Top represents the optimum balance between gonads and technoglitz. All musicians everywhere should steal their secrets, which they are apparently loath to disclose (see cover story). Nonetheless, having studied *Afterburner* closely in the day and a half since I was asked to review it, I am going to reveal several of their secrets as a public service so that in the future there will be *no* excuse for bad rock 'n' roll bands.

ZZ TOP SECRET NUMBER ONE: Have the Correct Attitude Toward Your Dick. Lots of ZZ Top songs are about sex, a not unprecedented subject of rock 'n' roll scrutiny. But ZZ Top is distinguished by the artfulness of their boners. I had to listen to "Woke Up With Wood" three or four times before finally asking Timothy White, "Hey, is this song about waking up with a rod?" It is. The words are also slurred enough so Tipper Gore can't prove a thing.

ZZ TOP SECRET NUMBER TWO: Relate New Social Phenomena To Your Dick. Last week I tried on this pair of shorts and they made this horrible ripping sound. I discovered it was a velcro fly, my first experience with a development that is apparently smiting the zipper industry. But only after hearing "Velcro Fly" on *Afterburner* did the ramifications become clear: Velcro flies have "just enough of that sticky stuff" to hold your wood in, but come apart real fast if you want it out.

ZZ TOP SECRET NUMBER THREE: Have Frank Beard As A Drummer. This guy kicks massive ass, more ass than anyone since John Bonham. And Frank Beard is about half Bonham's size. He compensates with technoglitz (compressors and sundry formations of electronic drums) and amazing taste. The music being blues-based electric boogie, he has less opportunity to show off. Yet every time he gets a chance for a little fill between verses, or to set the beat for ten seconds at the start of a song ("Sleeping Bag"), he clobbers it with a minimum number of maximum

thuds, so you think you know what's going on. Meanwhile, he's dropping in some strange rhythmic twist, so you don't know what's going on at all.

ZZ TOP SECRET NUMBER FOUR: Have Dusty Hill Play Bass. Such a minimalist he makes Dee Dee Ramone sound like Stanley Clarke, Hill does almost nothing except pulse. If the drums are going to be a second lead instrument, *something's* got to pulse.

ZZ TOP SECRET NUMBER FIVE: Have Billy Gibbons Play Guitar. Unlike AC/DC, who play the same old stuff the same old way every time (which is okay if you like that same old stuff a whole lot), Gibbons recycles old stuff and semi-new stuff with new noises without ever losing sight of his ultimate purpose of caving your head in. Best song on the album is "Can't Stop Rockin'," a title that in other hands (say Loverboy's) would be instant nap time. Here it's the best encore since "Good Night Irene."

The mental image I get of Gibbons' guitar playing is that of a sixty-foot wave breaking over my head. Dusty Hill's bass is my heart thumping right out of my chest, and Frank Beard's drums are the great white sharks snapping at my toes over the edge of a surfboard. What more can you ask of an album? And with their secrets exposed, what excuse can you now offer for not sounding exactly like ZZ Top yourself?

—Charles M. Young



BILLIE HOLIDAY

Billie Holiday on Verve 1946-1959
(Verve)

There are jazz singers, there are pop singers, and there is Billie Holiday. Twenty-five years after her death, her music presents an irrefutable challenge to those who would champion technique before emotion. Even in youth, before drugs and an urban gothic lifestyle tore away what vestiges of range and timbre she originally possessed, her vocal prowess wouldn't have intimidated your average glee club. Yet Billie sang with such clarity of feeling that she made most of her rivals sound like they should

have stayed in one. Sarah was sassier, and Dinah brassier, but rarely have they elevated these jazz and pop standards beyond the realm of elegant confection. When Billie sang, standards became matters of love and death.

Maybe this sounds a bit heavy to those listeners familiar with only the early Holiday, the ingenue whose lilting romantic paeans sweetened the swing of the Basie, Goodman and Teddy Wilson bands. This ten-record Verve collection, effectively chronicling her last decade, tells a different story. Mostly she's working with small, sympathetic jazz ensembles here, re-investing favorites like "Lover Man" and "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" with dimensions of irony and longing, and mirroring, as on "What's New," her own increasingly tragic circumstances. Her voice, frayed at the edges, plumbs the deepest pools of emotion, though a few sides reveal more than traces of her ultimate disintegration. Hearing them is painful, unless of course one enjoys pondering how America's greatest singer happened to die a broken junkie.

The vast majority of these performances (135 in all) are transcendently soulful, thanks in part to the sensitive assistance of pros like Benny Carter, Sweets Edison and especially Jimmy Rowles. Pressed on Japanese vinyl, their sonic quality is superb. Beauty, wrote Milan Kundera, is a rebellion against time; decades pass, while Billie Holiday's music remains as lovely and as fragile as a freshly-cut gardenia.

—Mark Rowland



SKEETER DAVIS AND NRBQ

She Sings, They Play
(Rounder)

Well hey, if this isn't a match made in heaven, what is? Skeeter Davis owns the most ingenuous set of pipes this side of the flying nun. Even when she sings a song about being a whore in love with daddy, she sounds like a good girl. And despite NRBQ's multiple musical personas, they're sentimental country boys at heart. Put 'em together and

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Skeeter wrote some of these tunes and sings on all, while pure country musicians Larry Packer and Buddy Ammons sit in on fiddle and pedal steel; still, elements of NRBQ's patented power-of-non-sequitrial-thinking manage to creep in. These ain't no simple lovin' country songs; though Davis sings her parts straight, the band provides plenty of colorful variegations. On a typically pathos-laden lament called "Everybody's Clown," for instance, Terry Adams unleashes one of the corniest baseball-and-franks organ solos heard in these here United States (and that's corny). And in a fit of gentle perversion sure to cause more of Miles Davis' hair to fall out, the band has also concocted a 2/4 country version of "Someday My Prince Will Come," with a great bop pedal steel solo and Davis (Skeeter, that is) rapping country-style over the last few bars. Other upstanding croonings include "Heart To Heart," wherein Davis and criminally underrated singer Al Anderson trade sentiments. (Davis: "I like puppies." Anderson: "I like machines." Together: "We disagree about a lot of things/ But we're in love"), and "Temporarily Out Of Order," ("She's temporarily out of order/ Since he told her/ They were permanently through"). An obscure Hank Williams song called "May You Never Be Alone" provides a nice closing touch.

Not all the tunes on *She Sings, They Play* are memorable, and some are too coy for cute. But if Skeeter And The Boys seem like the looniest combination to come down the pike since an RC Cola met a moon pie, the music they make here is every bit as tasty.

— Peter Watrous



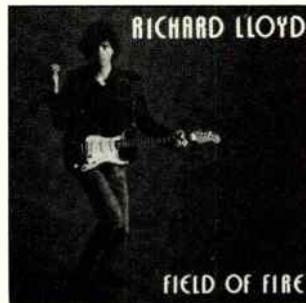
AL GREEN

He Is The Light
(A&M)

Al Green's gospel recordings never really turned on his pop following, in part due to their uneven quality, but also because hosannas, no matter how heartfelt, do not make for the kind of

party music "Here I Am (Come And Take Me)" or "Sha La La (Make Me Happy)" provided. In that regard, *He Is The Light* is a troublesome triumph. Musically it's Green's best work since *Belle*, cannily encapsulating the best of the Hi sound while at the same time making the most of his current strengths. On the other hand, it is adamantly a gospel album, and the inclusion of the semi-secular "You Brought The Sunshine" (which fit the Clark Sisters far better than it does Green) hardly lessens the blow. To be blunt, those who don't like to hear Jesus songs are not doing to be seduced either by Green's singing or Willie Mitchell's production.

But that's their loss, because Al Green sings sweetly enough to make a convert out of anyone. True, he and Mitchell play a little heavily on past pop successes—"True Love," for instance, cops hooks from "Look What You Done For Me"—but that recognition only intensifies its pleasures. Gospel singing, after all, has as much to do with remembrance as with hope. And to hear Al Green skip across Sam Cooke's "Nearer My God To Thee" is to know a kind of salvation soul music could never promise. — J.D. Considine



RICHARD LLOYD

Field Of Fire
(Mistur import)

Guitarist Richard Lloyd perfected his crystalline tone and rhapsodic phrasing in tandem with Tom Verlaine in Television, the lamentably short-lived punk guitar band that cut two superb albums before cracking up in 1978. While Verlaine has recorded four solo albums since the split, Lloyd has gone virtually unheard: His only venture was a slight, pop-inflected LP for Elektra, *Alchemy*, which did little to show off his improvisational talents.

Six years after that disappointing project, Lloyd is again staking his claim as a soulful and impassioned guitar stylist. The unlikely vehicle is *Field Of Fire*, produced by Lloyd and Stefan Glaumann in Stockholm with a sharp Swedish back-up band. His voice hard-

ened and frayed by age and a well-documented career of excess, Lloyd bites into these hook-studded compositions fervently, taking every opportunity to spin out dizzying, ardently constructed choruses on his Stratocaster. Echoes of Television's tolling, twisting riffs may be heard in such memorable new songs as "Watch Yourself" and the dramatic "Pleading," while a more formal approach braces the keen-edged rockers "Soldier Blue," "Keep On Dancin'," and "Lovin' Man." The record's most profound and exciting moments occur on the title track, an eight-minute centerpiece which, like Television's "Marquee Moon," affords Lloyd a grand canvas to splash his solo strokes. Lloyd does his best singing ever on this statement of personal and artistic rebirth, and his two lengthy guitar excursions rank among his best recorded performances.

After such lengthy obscurity, Richard Lloyd is forging a comeback of astonishing and unexpected force. Certainly his prowess, as displayed here, deserves a larger audience. One hopes a domestic label will eventually offer Lloyd another forum for his staggering six-string feats. — Chris Morris

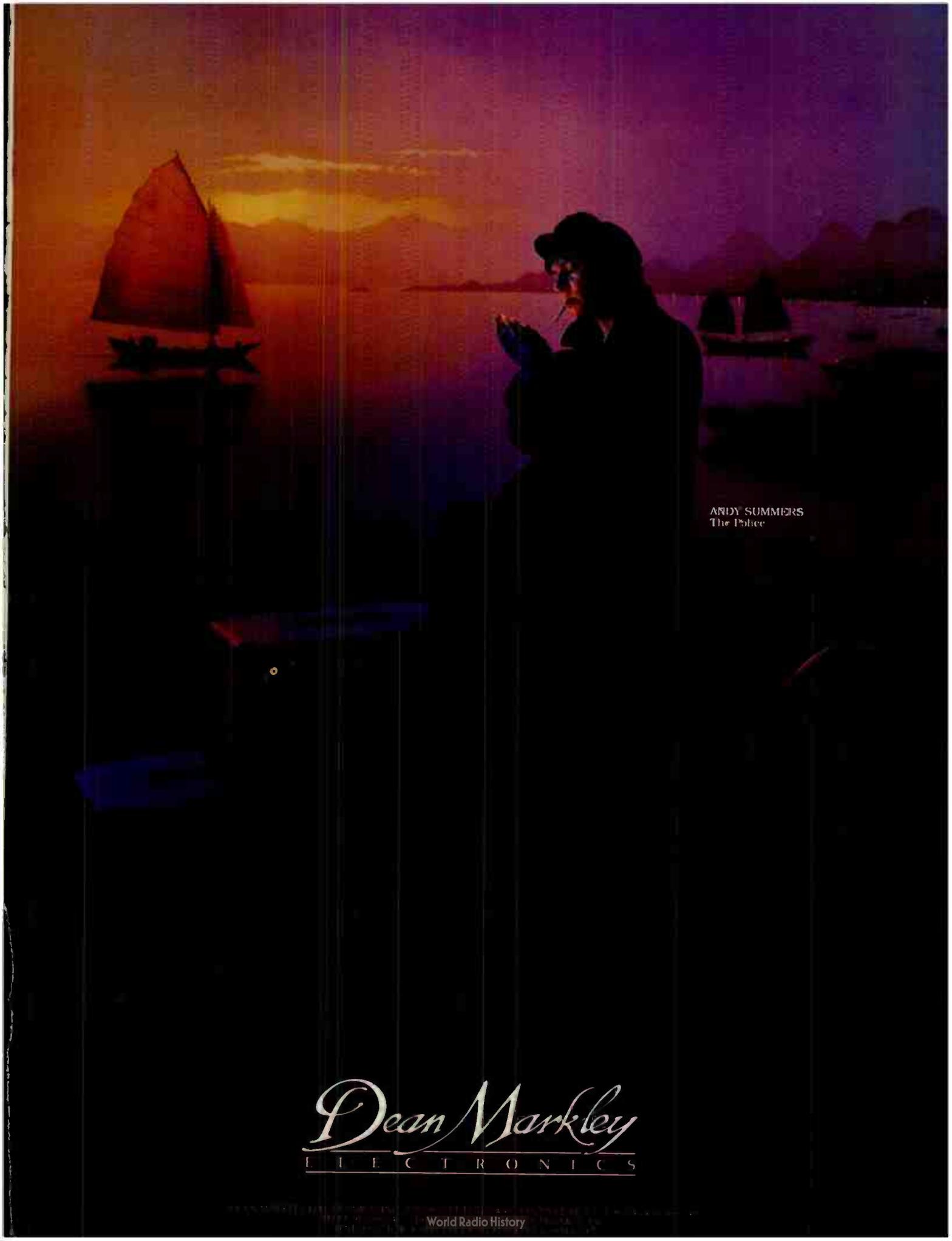


THE REPLACEMENTS

Tim
(Sire)

Unlike most people who write about rock 'n' roll for a living, I do not love the Replacements' three independently-released LPs. Each album has some terrific individual tracks, but they're also all sloppy, amateurish, and ultimately unfinished. *Let It Be*, which garnered near-unanimous raves, seemed fundamentally flawed by what sounded like the band's conscious refusal to think out their material.

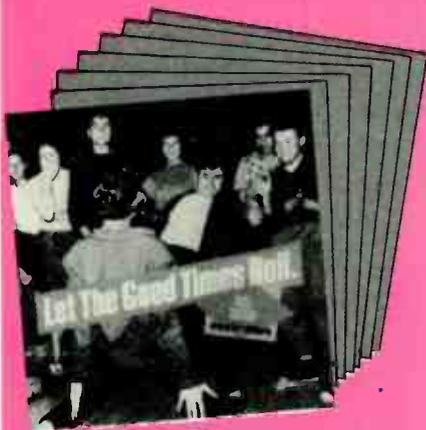
In that context, *Tim*, the Replacements' major label debut, is a shock. The songs are uniformly solid and tersely structured, while Tommy Erdelyi's Ramonesish production replaces the lazy excess of the band's Twin Tone work with a streamlined attack that gives the songs more clarity



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and emotional punch. When Erdelyi throws Paul Westerberg's righteous voice against a wall of guitars on such no-quarter rockers as "Hold My Life" and "Bastards Of Young," they fit together like the old friends they are.

But Erdelyi's production wouldn't matter if the band members hadn't matured. Westerberg has discovered subtlety, and the guitar lines he trades with Bob Stinson reinforce lyrics without overwhelming them. His voice has also developed: On "Swinging Party," he describes the bring-your-own-lampshade event in a tone more mournful than exuberant, while on "Waitress In The Sky," a skiffle rewrite of Johnny Rivers' "Mountain Of Love," he channels his sneer into a striking lament. *Tim* shouldn't be mistaken for *The Replacements Grow Up*, but they have tightened their sound without losing their DIY charm, making music that's more accessible without discarding their punky raunch. It also provides a compelling example that underground bands can broaden and tighten their sound without compromise.

— Jimmy Guterman



DIVINYLS

What A Life!
(Chrysalis)

Some groups you just naturally identify with a time of day. Abba are an eight in the morning band; Springsteen, he's a five p.m. man. Marvin Gaye was always a midnight man. But Divinyls, they're three in the morning.

Part of that mood is lyrical; singer Christina Amphlett places many of the ten songs on *What A Life!* in the long hours before daylight, when memories and hopes are the only alternative to pills and booze. It's also her growly voice, thicker than vegemite, which sounds as though she'd been woken from a deep sleep and forced to sing before she had a chance to brush. Then there's Mark McEntee's brutish guitar chords, the obvious result of an amplifier that's been left on for too many days. The bars of Australia are tough and loud, something like the set of *Mad*

Max, and bands as different as AC/DC and Midnight Oil have come out of that environment with an aggressive edge. On their second album, Divinyls prove they can temper that tempestuousness with a bit of radio gloss and make a grabby album that doesn't sacrifice any of their character.

Amphlett sets the stakes on the first song, "Pleasure And Pain"—(written by Holly Knight, the Aaron Spelling of pop music). If the song's structure and Mike Chapman's production seem customized to meet the Standards For Acceptable Hits, listen to how Amphlett brays "Please don't ask me how I been gettin' off" and tell me that's a sell-out. She's at her brassiest on "Casual Encounter," while "Motion" works as a snarling rip-off of the Stones' "Empty Heart"; on "Don't You Go Walking," McEntee flirts with an acoustic guitar on the bridge before accelerating past Rick Grossman's punkish bass and into a long demolition solo.

Producer Gary Langan, a Trevor Horn protégé, introduces a few weird twists on his tracks, notably "Dear Diary," the surreal dreamscape written by guitarist/keyboardist Bjorne Ohlin which closes the album. Langan constructs a perfect setting with a circus organ, acoustic bass and carnival barker; the song ends with an eerie chant about "struggle and strife," set to the melody of "Three Blind Mice" as McEntee simulates the farmer's wife's carving knife. As a grim hallucination, it's a flip side of the beautiful "Sleeping Beauty," where Amphlett suggests that salvation from physical abuse, rejection, separation and boredom can only come in a dream. Or, she should have mentioned, in a good rock 'n' roll album.

— Rob Tannenbaum

Blades from page 52

on the alert. Besides, my obsessive character would have killed me if I had gotten into drugs. But my talent and spirit are going to take me to something more important than snorting coke in a john. I've found my own way of having fun, reading or playing dominoes, or having a drink on the corner, or hearing stories, or sitting on a park bench watching people go by and hearing them talk. So my direct message to Latin American youth is that whoever is going around snorting let them do so, they must have their reasons, but the idea is to articulate another kind of reason and another kind of attitude so we won't lose our force for renovation, which is our young people. And if a pop figure is worth anything, given the failure of our political institutions, it's to assume a responsible posture; a posture of salvation. ☐

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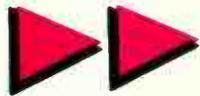
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Berlin from page 84

as flattered as all hell. I can enjoy that. I guess because I speak my mind, some people can't appreciate that. I suppose I've got a rep as a hard case, but I'm not. I love people and our fans.

Lavitz: A lot of people have called you a busy player. How would you reply?

Berlin: Well, I've done about forty records in my life that I can remember. I've done three Bill Bruford albums and one with Allan Holdsworth. My reputation as a musician seems to be based on these records. I would have to say that at the time with Bill, I was feeling my oats and with Allan I was playing more maturely. On these records I played a lot and I played strong. However, I'm conscious of the performance that I have to put in with whom I'm working. I'm a functional section musician. I know that people are going to say, "Oh, there he goes again, ego-ing out," but it's not an ego thing for me at all when I know that I can play funk as good as anybody. I can play jazz as well as or better than almost anybody. That was my decision to pursue it. Now, if I do a thing with somebody, I don't have to be featured. However, if you need 650,000 notes in a two-bar phrase, I'll give them to you.

Lavitz: I've heard people say that you are the greatest bass player in the world. How does that affect you?

Berlin: It's a funny thing, when the greatest seems to come along, 'cause the greatest always seems to go away. Stanley was the greatest, Jaco was the greatest, Jack Bruce was the greatest. Some people think that I'm the greatest. It's a temporary thing to be the greatest. One to two is a long fall, two to one is a great climb, but...I've come up with some real different things that I think I may showcase on our next record. I may play a little more bass on the next record...I appreciate it all, but I absolutely do not live by it.

Lavitz: Who are some of the other greats?

Berlin: The first and foremost bass player that I enjoy is a guy who never solos, [Tower of Power's] Francis Rocco Prestia. I consider him the inventor of the 16th note staccato bass concept. Geddy Lee as a rock bass player is absolutely outstanding. So's Billy Sheehan. And Jack Blades from Night Ranger—he's one of the killerest popping string bass players you'll ever see. Andy West is a great groove bass player. Jack Bruce, because he taught me. To this day I still regard him as the great voice of rock 'n' roll, the greatest instrumentalist of rock 'n' roll, and a great composer and bass player...he's just a breathtaking talent. And McCartney...somebody told me that my name came up in a conversation with him and he said he liked me. That really got to me! To even be mentioned by someone like him....

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Rock

Loudon Wainwright III
I'm Alright (Rounder)

Wainwright's writing boasts the same vituperative sparkle as Roy Blount's best, plus good melodies. This LP has the added attraction of producer Richard Thompson, who deftly parries Wainwright's thrusts with droll arrangements, from a polite parlor-orchestra approach on the caustic "Lost Love" to the daffy Dixieland of "Daddy Take A Nap." Not to be missed. (P.O. Box 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140)

Various Artists
Miami Vice (MCA)

This shoot-'em-up mutation of MTV may make for primo prime-time, but on vinyl, it's just another soundtrack. Granted, Jan Hammer does a decent Lalo Schifrin, but here he's surrounded by songs you already have—"In The Air Tonight," "Better Be Good To Me"—or songs you could do without. Besides, if man were meant to buy TV soundtracks, why would God have created VCRs?

Sheena Easton
Do You (EMI/America)

Easton is the perfect Nile Rodgers production vehicle, a voice of striking anonymity. That's a problem when applied to "Jimmy Mack"—no Vandellas material here—but when left to the semi-Chic grooves of "Do It For Love," Easton does.

Simple Minds
Once Upon A Time (A&M)

Although almost every track is built around the same galloping groove as "Don't You (Forget About Me)," the band never seems monotonous—in part because their rich textures still sparkle, but mostly due to their balance between gospel fervor and art-rock elegance. And though Jim Kerr remains one of rock's most mannered singers, such soulfulness suits him.

James Taylor
That's Why I'm Here (Columbia)

Calling this Taylor's best album in eight years is not saying much—you thought maybe *Flag* was a classic?—so perhaps it would be wiser to stress how fresh this sounds despite its familiarity.

Taylor, after all, has few new tricks to offer, yet everything here is presented with such confidence and grace that he ends up sounding better than ever.

Morris Day
Color Of Success (Warner Bros.)

You gotta figure a guy who'd dream up a dance craze like "Oak Tree" ("Now shake your leaves!") is either a genius or a lunatic. Day is doubtless a bit of both; his handy revamp of the Time sound shows intelligence, even though his laugh makes him sound like he ought to be committed. Still, hits don't grow on trees, and while there are a few other tracks as addictive as his dance craze, Day's *Success* is limited.

The Fall
This Nation's Saving Grace (PVC)

The Fall has never been anybody's idea of a pop act, yet the songs here are surprisingly hook-laden. Granted, the guitar lines invariably dive into dissonance, and Mark Smith's vocalizing is abrasive at best, but there's an underlying melodic sense to the album that recalls PiL's *Metal Box*. (3619 Kennedy Rd., So. Plainfield, NJ 07080)

Rush
Power Windows (Mercury)

Sure, they're intellectually overweening, and from the dubbed-in orchestra to Neil Peart's precious punning this album reeks of overreach. But they have finally figured out how to write pop songs, making this better-than-average radio fodder.

Diana Ross
Eaten Alive (RCA)

Michael Jackson's title song ought to provide plenty of grist for the armchair psychiatrists in the audience, even ignoring the sexual innuendo. But that's as interesting as this one gets, thanks to ho-hum material and Barry Gibb's formulaic production. And will somebody tell this woman to stop wheezing?

INXS
Listen Like Thieves (Atlantic)

These Aussies once seemed prime candidates for Duranhood, and given

the right mousse-and-makeup treatment, they may yet become preteen pin-ups. Here's hoping they don't, because the band's sonic edge is too adult to spoil, even as they're too stylish to resist. It's nice, after all, to hear aggressive guitar over a rhythm bed as slick as the title tracks, or feedback as delicious as on "Kiss The Dirt."

Jerry Goodman
On The Future Of Aviation
(Private Music)

The title is a wry allusion to Goodman's days with the Flock, and though the music is completely contemporary in its electronics, it boasts the same down-home eclecticism of Goodman's pre-Mahavishnu playing. Not to mention the most gorgeously evocative violin tone in pop music. A soaring success. (220 E. 23rd St., New York, NY 10010)

The Waterboys
This Is The Sea (Island)

There's a majesty to Mike Scott's writing that transcends his dense, opulent arrangements. Sure, the sense of "Don't Bang The Drum" never quite lives up to its sound, and "Be My Enemy" is a direct Dylan rip. But the power and passion of "Old England," "The Pan Within" and "Trumpets" more than makes up the difference.

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds
The Firstborn Is Dead (Homestead)

Given the indulgent chaos that marked the Birthday Party, it's almost a shock to discover that Cave is a champion of the delta blues tradition. Not that he's another John Hammond, Jr., mind you. "Tupelo" may allude to John Lee Hooker, but Cave's fire-breathing delivery is in a class by itself, and that gives *The Firstborn* its visceral punch. (P.O. Box 570, Rockville Centre, NY 11571)

The Del Fuegos
Boston, Mass. (Slash/Warner Bros.)

You can dress 'em up, but you can't take the garage out of their sound. Unfortunately, that goes for their writing as well, for as much as the Fuegos love rock roots, they've yet to come up with anything of their own that doesn't sound like a bad cover version.

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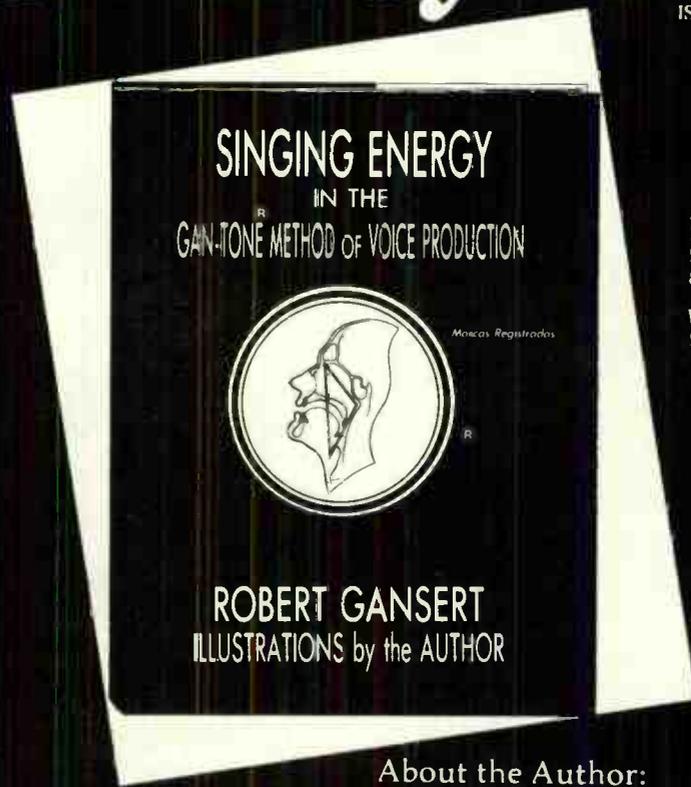
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Robert Gansert has been a performing vocalist for over twenty years, and has been featured in numerous concerts and recordings. His work has been internationally acclaimed. He is currently a noted instructor at the Carnegie Hall studios.



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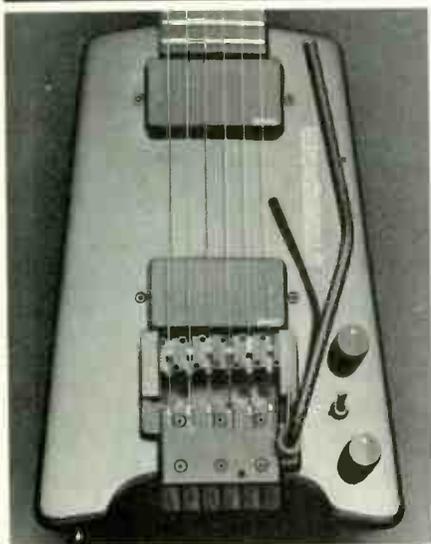
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Yngwie from page 78

out all my musical theory—the relative scales, major to minor, Phrygian mode, harmonic and melodic minor, suspended chords to make smooth transpositions, inverted chords—just by playing. I didn't know what to call it all, I just knew what it sounded like. I had somebody tell me all the names for these things, because I was hungry to know theory. I ended up saying to myself, 'I already knew all this.'

As the teen Swede burrowed into the sanctuary of music, "I was the total black sheep of my whole family, an out-cast from society. People just shook their heads when they talked about me. Nobody believed that I would amount to anything. I screwed off school and work, messed up my relationships. I just practiced in my basement. Two years later, all the big Swedish papers are writing about 'our hero.' Now they're taking pride in the Swede made good."

The good road began essentially by Malmsteen sending a tape to *Guitar Player's* talent scout Mike Varney, who was so wowed that he flew the guitarist to California in 1983. Recording an album with the L.A.-based Steeler, Malmsteen was fast becoming the toast of metal town. The new kid on the block gained in vertiginous ability what he lacked in English syntax.

He was restless, though. A stint with the group Alcatraz yielded two records and broader exposure, but it was a sinking vessel. "It was such a weird combination," Malmsteen recalls none-too-fondly. With his creative urge surfacing and dread boredom underfoot, Malmsteen plunged into his own project.

There's no pretense of democracy in Rising Force: It is, first and foremost, the vehicle for Yngwie Malmsteen, writer, gymnast, master of tonal tumult. "My ideas and ideals are so strong, I don't want to compromise. I don't want to be half-assed. It works," he professes. "Everybody in the band thinks I'm a great guy, because coming in, they knew what to expect. They don't have the right to argue with me. Instead of working at Burger King in Stockholm, they can now play in front of 20,000 people every night." Retreating just a bit, he allows that "I am a very loyal person to my friends, a jolly good fellow, but when it comes to my creation, I'm very demanding."

There are decidedly two sides to the man. On the limo ride to the stadium, he is the giddy twenty-two-year-old star, rattling off excerpts from the *Truly Tasteless Joke Book*. On the plane ride back to Los Angeles, he starts singing quotes from the official tour album of the Bach Choral Society: Frank Zappa's *Overnight Sensation*. Lyrics to songs are printed in the Society's tour itinerary,

and now the powerhouse manager Andy Trueman (alias G.T.B.—Good To Be—King) is giving Yngwie his weekly quiz. Amidst a tidy group of Southwest commuters, Malmsteen is singing out, "moving to Montana soon, going to be a mental toss flycoon." It's a rock 'n' roll fantasy on a plastic platter.

To contrast this side of the guitar marauder, Malmsteen can get downright didactic on the subject of music, mincing no words, sparing no opinion. For instance, on the subject of his evident penchant for high fretboard speeds: "Well, if I play something fast, it would still have musical value if it were played slow, whereas most rock guitarists play good, nice things slow, but as soon as they get fast, they play pull-offs on two strings [*rolls his tongue like a broken Uzi*] and it's totally worthless, musically."

Somehow, it's all too fitting that Malmsteen's star has risen in the same year as the 300th birthday of Bach, the mention of whom sends the plectrist into a rhetorical frenzy. "I could compare the situation to architecture," he winds up. "Today, somebody gets big bucks for building a house that looks like a fucking matchbox. Whereas back then, they would build a church that would make you feel *this* big [*scrunches his thumb and forefinger*]. "That was architecture. That was creating. The knowledge they utilized and what they had to go through to do that is a lot more respectable than what they are doing today."

"The same thing goes for music. Some fucking new wave band goes on to bang out a song with three chords and everybody goes wow. They being musicians, actually play something that people who are not musicians can relate to without using more than two brain cells, which is the key for manipulating people to buy the fucking record. Whereas people who do things that are very involved, like jazz musicians, don't sell anything. But you know the reason why? Because they stand there with their fucking glasses and their half-bald heads and beards, doing their bullshit. If they would do the same thing and be a little more energetic and try to relate to people they'd do better."

"Being a musician who only plays advanced things might as well be sitting there wanking off, you know what I mean? At the same time, the people who don't have any musical ability but who become successful anyway—that's not right either."

"The goal is not to educate an audience. I'm just doing the only thing I can do, creating something and at the same time reaching out, making it a mutual thing between me and the audience." 

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