

the Music Connection[®]

THE FIRST LOCAL MUSICIANS NEWSPAPER

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A CLOSE LOOK AT STEVE KARMEN, “AMERICA’S NUMBER ONE JINGLE WRITER.”

VIBRATO...PITCH...CONTROL... VOCAL TECHNIQUE: CAN YOU DO WITHOUT IT?

BY ELISABETH HOWARD

Vocal technique. Just what does that mean to you? What pictures come up for you when you think of vocal training? “Your throat is closed, your jaw is tight, you are swallowing your tongue, you are singing flat, dear; where did you get that awful vibrato?” and on and on.

These are descriptions and evaluations of a singer’s faults. But these comments need to be followed up by constructive instructions in the development of a strong, solid, controlled yet relaxed technique. Very often I’ve heard a singer say, “My teacher is good for me, but not good for everybody.” A technique that *works*, works for *everyone*! Students may not always progress at the same rate given the same technique. A singer who has sung or played an instrument all his life will progress at a quicker rate than someone who has never even sung in the shower. An outgoing personality will take to singing more readily than a shy or timid personality. On the other hand, I have seen tremendous personality growth and expansion as the voice develops. In my experience as a teacher, I have witnessed students with a weight problem suddenly, within months, drop ten to seventy pounds.

Singing can be an incredible turn on. It can also be discouraging and depressing, especially if you are studying for one or two years and experience little or no progress. You think, “It must be *me*. I’m not that talented. I don’t have a ‘natural’ voice.” We rarely consider that perhaps the technique we are working on is not being presented clearly; or even that the technique does not work, period. (continued on page 18)

GIG GUIDE
MUSIC PERSONALS
FREE CLASSIFIED



STEVE KARMEN

By Ron S. Heinzl

When Procter & Gamble discovered a few years ago that the “sweet young mother” cuddling a baby on the front of its Ivory Snow soap boxes was none other than porno movie star Marilyn Chambers, the company declined to renew her modeling contract.

Anheuser-Bush Inc. may not know it, but the “Symphony conductor” appearing in its new Michelob beer television commercials is ex-porno movie star Steve Karmen.

“Actually, it was more of a nudie movie than a porno film,” Karmen says of “Jukebox Racket,” a 1959 production filmed in a New Jersey pizzeria. “And I wasn’t in any on the touchy scenes.”

[Continued On Page 6]

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the Music Connection

THE FIRST LOCAL MUSICIAN'S FORUM

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CORRECTION

In our Orange County News Column (Sept. 7, issue) we printed that I.A.M. Studios video-taped the "Greek Suite." **WRONG.** The show was taped by T.A.V. Studios in Hollywood • Michael Rapp, who was not mentioned in the article, is the composer of "Greek Suite."

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"Local Notes"

Beth Sayko Bloch

GLORIA LYNNE...One of America's foremost popular recording artists for many years is on her way back into the studios. This time it's West Berlin. Miss Lynne is now with the French record company, Cadeau Records. Miss Lynne feels that it's time to broaden her vocal styling and deliver her unique talent to her many fans in Europe as well as the U.S.

BIENVENUE! The **MUSIC CONNECTION** welcomes Penny Breitner to their staff. Having just returned from Europe after a formal education in music, she plans on furthering her career as a flautist and teacher. She is presently working as our production assistant and will be in charge of our Classical Music section. Bon chance, Penny....

WHITE ON: Indy producer, playwright, performer Bonnie White (former staff writer with Warner Brothers Music) and co-writer Pat Livingston have just had their song, "You Don't Have To Say I Love You" recorded by Gladys Knight. Should be a winning combination. Congrats, Ladies!!

BLUE OVER MOON: The music industry will sorely miss WHO member Keith Moon, who died September 7, in London. This writer will particularly miss Keith's entertaining vaudevillian stage antics, an art she much enjoyed....

HAPPIER OC-KERR-ANCES: Richard Kerr, staff writer with Rondor Music, Almo's London affiliate, just had his debut album "Welcome To The Club" released on A&M Records, Sept. 8. The co-writer of "Mandy" and "Looks Like We Made It" is produced by Chris Bond, who also produced Hall and Oates' first album. Seven of the nine songs included were co-written by Will Jennings (also co-writer on "Looks Like We Made It") who has now resigned with Irving Music....

CHANGING AN E FLAT TO A DOLLAR BILL: (Don't you wish you could?) It's not a new form of Alchemy, but the title of noted jazz trombonist Benny Powell's upcoming lecture at the Highland Avenue Holiday Inn here in Hollywood on Friday, Oct 6th, scheduled for 8 P.M., it is part of SRS's ongoing series of programs designed to educate and help the songwriting community. For info. call SRS at 463-7178....

SPEAKING OF SPEAKING...Gelsa Paladino, who has just moved her performance workshop from the A La Carte to the BlaBla Cafe (held there every other Tuesday evening from 6 P.M. to 8P.M.) will be appearing at Chadney's, Sherman Oaks, every Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, 9:30 P.M., where she has an open ended engagement.

NEW MUSIC FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION: Former Fifth Dimension member Danny Miller Beard (who also appeared on Broadway in "Pippin," "The Wiz," and in the original "Bubbling Brown Sugar," brought the entire Roxy audience to its feet on Thursday, Aug. 31, when this writer attended his show. Produced by Danny with Janet Brownlee, the Roxy appearance served to showcase his talents for the attending label personnel. The resulting favorable response is not surprising. It is rare that a performance wipes me out like this one did. With the strong songs of Jim Lange, sounds like another star is being born.

JESSE CUTLER just had his "Give The Little Girl A Chance" recorded by Flower as their single on Private Stock Records.

PLATINUM NOTE AWARD goes to radio station KPFK-FM and Mario Casetta for their new once a week program on Independent Record Labels. Scheduled Friday mornings 10 A.M. to 11 A.M., it features small companies and their products, along with informative Why's and How's of their operations. The much talked about National Association of Independent Record Distributors that many of the labels are joining could prove an invaluable breakthrough for alternative marketing of new product in a presently stagnating Major Record Label distribution system. Onward and upward!

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Wiz On Down The Road

The Original Soundtrack album, "The Wiz," one of the highly-anticipated album releases this year, will be released by MCA Records in September, and comes on the heels of the chart-climbing hit single, "Ease On Down The Road," which features Michael Jackson and Diana Ross. The album also contains two original songs co-written by Quincy Jones with Warner Brothers recording artists Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, and original music by Jones, with lyrics by Charlie Smalls on the tune, "Emerald City Sequence," which coincides with one of the major production numbers in the film.

In all, the soundtrack utilizes 9 singing principals including Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Richard Pryor, Nipsy Russell, Lena Horne, Ted Ross, and Mabel King, who recreates her Broadway role for the film. In addition, some 120 dancers, 6 sound technicians, 3 conductors, 4 contractors, 300 musicians, 105 singers, including 36-strong children's choir, 9 orchestrators, 6 copyists and 5 music editors were employed during its recording in New York.

Martin and Tut Forever Gold

Hey, a really great thing has happened to Steve Martin. "King Tut," his novelty single on Warner Bros. Records which is, in reality, a serious and reverent ode to a fallen sovereign, has sold over 1,000,000 copies (that's a big million to you) and has been duly certified gold by the RIAA in recognition of that fact. You might also want to keep in mind that "King Tut" is not included on Steve's debut album on Warner Bros., "Let's Get Small," which has sold lots more than a million and has been a platinum album for quite some time.

RedRose Hype

Radio listeners are being given an opportunity to have their lips reproduced on giant billboards as part of a contest being sponsored by RCA Records for "Last Kiss," the title of

the current album and single by rock group *Fandango*. Winners will be flown to New York or Hollywood for an all-expense paid weekend to see their lips on a giant billboard. RCA Records has reserved billboard space on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood and Times Square in N.Y.C. to display the winning lips.

RCA Promotes Black Music

In a move that emphasizes its ever increasing commitment to Black Music, RCA Records has effected a major expansion of its Black Music Marketing and Promotion Department. Ray Harris, Director, Rhythm and Blues Promotion and Merchandising, has been appointed to the newly created position of Director, Black Music Marketing.

This addition allows RCA to more progressively and aggressively address themselves to the needs of the Black Music marketplace.

Be Bop Deluxe Disbands

After four years together, Be Bop Deluxe, one of England's most innovative bands, has disbanded.

The decision comes after three years of continuous worldwide touring for the band, broken only by the recording of their internationally acclaimed albums.

Bill Nelson, the band's songwriter, guitarist, and lead vocalist, stressed that there were no musical or personal disputes involved in the decision. According to Nelson, Be Bop Deluxe began as a challenge, the force behind their music being their ever-present freshness. After recording six albums together, Nelson felt that the group was in danger of becoming institutionalized and the time was now right for this change.

Before disbanding, Be Bop Deluxe recorded one last album slated for release on Harvest later this year.

Bill Nelson is now in the process of forming his own band, "Bill Nelson's Red Noise," while Clark, Fox and Tumahai have yet to disclose their future plans.

Peachy Keen Over Ted Nugent



photo by Pamela Shandel

Energy level was high in Hollywood at Peaches Records, Sept. 5, as a crowd of nearly two thousand rockers waited to be with their animal man. The rain didn't interfere with the alive spirit as Ted Nugent's fans waited anxiously to receive an autographed picture, a t-shirt, a kiss, or just a handshake.

Ted entered through the back entrance thirteen minutes late. He was smiling and beaming when he arrived to slaughter his rock&roll lambs with the essence of his very presence.

As I knew he had a tight schedule, my approach was direct and rushed.

"Hi Ted. I'm Jana from the *MUSIC CONNECTION* and I'd like to have you share yourself a bit with our readers."

"Hi Jana, I'm Ted with the Mars Connection and you want me to share myself right here?"

"Yes. Do you have any advice for our up-coming rockers?"

"Yeah, practice their asses off!"

He was then rushed out front to sign photos, shirts, bellies, arms,

pants, skateboards, albums, back packs, etc. He kissed the ladies and charmed them all. He rushed past the guys, giving them little more than a jest or brief handshake. Peaches was filled with his spirit and his music blasted at top volume most of the time. He was always laughing and gave an occasional shout to "turn the music up."

Being re-located by the crowd, the security guards, and the madness I squeezed the questions out when the opportunity presented itself.

"What kind of guitar do you play?"

"A Brydland, it's a Gibson."

"Will you always play rock&roll?"

"That's all there is. Rock&roll is all there is."

"We're looking for some new material. When can we expect to hear some?"

"My new album comes out in November. You can hear it all then."

Adding humor and vulgarity to every approach, he comes off as though he wore a facade of security "How do you pick your musicians?"

"By the size of their ----," he roared, "how do you pick yours?"

He paused and said, "Again, ATTACK, basic attack, rock&roll. If you like rock&roll you're home free with me. If you like rock&roll, you're guaranteed a place with me, but that's the only prerequisite

"I'm aware of the fact that you spend a lot of time in the jungle. What does the jungle have to do with r & r?"

"Nothing, nothing at all, except I need them both."

A sweet young thing stepped up and asked him to sign, "To her, with love."

"You want my love? You want my love?? Come see me tonight, I'll be giving my love to everyone tonight!"

Two punk rockers slithered up in full greaser dress. Ted stepped back, laughed and said, "So you've come to see the master." He reached forward with a swift swing, slapped the hair ends of the closest one, announcing, "That's the way you guys do it, isn't it?" Shaking his head and holding out one of his photos, "Do you want me to sign one of these for you?" The punk indicated his yes with a nod, Ted smiled, "You got it."

Later that evening I viewed his show. All the difficulty that I observed in Ted playing with his fans was gone. He talked to us with his guitar and he made love to all of us with his music.

Jana



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Jingles...

(Continued)

The brewery people shouldn't be too upset about Karmen's short-lived acting career, for Karmen went on to much greater things. And the Michelob commercial represents a coup, of sorts, because it's the first on-camera TV appearance of the man who is known on Madison Avenue as the King of the Jingle Jungle and the Adman's Cole Porter. For, today, Karmen is the most prolific and probably highest paid radio and TV jingle writer in the business.

Karmen declines to disclose his earnings but industry sources say that based on what lesser jingle writers earn, Karmen must be pulling in more than \$1 million a year.

Karmen's tunes are heard and hummed by more people than are the works of most pop song writers. His hits include: "When you say Budweiser, you've said it all," "Sooner or later you'll own Generals," and Northwest Orient Airlines (gong)."

His latest tunes include "J-J-J-Jack in the Box" and "Weekends are made for Michelob," in which he conducts the orchestra on camera.

Karmen traveled a long, circuitous route in show business before he finally found his niche.

A self taught guitar player, Karmen auditioned for the Arthur Godfrey "Talent Scout" program in 1957 as a calypso singer. He lost the competition but Godfrey liked his style and hired Karmen for his morning radio show for five weeks.

"I always seemed to be a step ahead of the trend," Karmen recalls. "Calypso wasn't 'in' yet, so I decided to switch to folk music. Unfortunately, the Italian singers, Sinatra and Tony Bennett were the rage at the time. So I bought a tuxedo and changed my material, but by that time folk music was the big thing."

Karmen decided that maybe he'd better switch to acting, so he attended the American Theatre Wing school in New York and then on to "Jukebox Racket."

"Nudie movies were a lot softer than today's hardcore films," Karmen says. "A typical plot involved a photographer named John who took two girls into the woods and they undressed and posed for him. There was no dialogue, just voice-over and music."

Karmen married and moved to Hollywood where he hoped to become a big star. "But I couldn't get work because I wasn't good enough," he admits. After 10 months, he and his wife headed back to New York.

He heard through the grapevine that the producer of his nudie movie was about to make another film. Karmen had had his fill of acting at the time so he approached the producer and persuaded the man to hire him to score the film. "He didn't recognize me with my clothes on," Karmen says, and he offered me \$500 to do the score."

In the next four years Karmen did the musical score to 30 films, including such unforgettables as "Twisted Sex," "Smorgasbroad" and "Teen-Age Mother."

Karmen says the porno business offered him an opportunity for on-the-job training. "The movies were supercheap, but the great thing was that somebody allowed me to write music and didn't worry much how well it fit. They also allowed me to edit the films. I had four years to learn the trade. And I made some great contacts because most of the young guys working on the films at night worked at ad agencies during the day."

Word got around that he worked cheap, Karmen says, and he received an offer to score his first commercial—an ad for the Girl Scouts.

After a series of minor jobs, Karmen scored his first hit, "You can take Salem out of the country but you can't take the country out of Salem." The success of that cigarette commercial suddenly put him in demand.

Karmen estimates that in the 11 years he has been composing jingles, he has written somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 of them. He now does about 100 jobs a year, "maybe 30 or 40 are new pieces of music and the rest are new arrangements."

Industry sources say Karmen is the highest paid jingle writer in the business today, and he's in the unusual position of owning the copyright on all the tunes he composes. This means that, unlike other jingle writers, he receives residuals on his commercials. And it allows him to put new words to his music and sell the songs to the record industry. But Karmen doubts he will do that.

"There have been attempts to turn a catchy jingle into a commercial song," Karmen says, "but the reason few of them have been hits is that we write tunes to last 30 seconds and you can't take and spread them to 3½ minutes because the music becomes boring. We're the masters of the mini-movie, and Lerner and Lowe couldn't do that."

How does Karmen create a jingle?

"First, I insist on a free hand—most commercials sound like they've been written by a committee. I'll allow an agency to give me an idea or a line, but then I have to sit down and play games."

Karmen says he often spends as little as two hours writing a jingle. "But I often spend several weeks thinking about what I want to write. I ask a client to send me as much research and print material as they have. I want to see where they were (with their old ad campaign) and the reason they want to change.

"Then I try to get a feeling for what they want to say. Next, I go for a long walk at the beach or in the woods and try to come up with a handle to express the key line; after that, the rest builds to the punchline."

"Writing a jingle is like cooking a meal," Karmen says. "Most of your time is spent gathering the ingredients."

Karmen considers his music the most important part of television commercials because, he says, TV is an audio rather than a visual medium. "You can be in the next room with the sound on and still understand what's going on, but if you sit in front of the set with the sound off you lose a great majority of what they're trying to say to you." So he tailors his music to "play" on the media it's designed for. "Some music may sound great when it's played on expensive stereo equipment, but I want to hear what my music sounds like when it comes out of a tiny transistor radio or a 3-inch TV speaker."

But isn't the announcer as important as the music because he's part of the audio message, too? "A commercial has to be catchy to be memorable," Karmen says, "and you can't hum the announcer."

Karmen says he's enamored by the power of television, so he's very careful about what his commercials say: "I'm sure that somewhere, someplace, someone will actually squeeze the Charmin."

Because of this attitude Karmen refuses to do political advertising. He feels that if you do a commercial that gets people to buy a product and the product is no good, people will simply stop buying it. But with a politician the impact can be much more serious and long lasting.

"In politics you can write a song and create an image that might not be the candidate. In 1972 I turned down (Richard M.) Nixon and a lot of money. In 1976 I did the same with (Gerald R.) Ford. I have a responsibility to my daughters, so I don't risk creating a Senator Cola or a President Toothpaste."

Karmen has felt this responsibility more since his wife died four years ago, leaving him with three daughters to raise.

He's become a bit of a loner since her death and more introspective.

"I'm an adult reborn," he says. "I've had to get into the world all over again as a single man. I'm having the same experiences as an 18 year old."

This has moved Karmen to put his experiences and feelings into music. "Right now I'm in the middle of producing a record album. I've written 17 songs over the past two years that express my situation. I expect to release the album this spring. I'm doing it all myself, including financing. As a creator I must be free. I don't want to be beholden to anyone, having some record company executive hanging over my shoulder telling me how to do it."

[continued on page 18]

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Black Music Today . . .

by Kevin A. Smith

Black music has always been a powerful influence in music. Styles as diverse as Rock, MOR and New Wave often had their roots in Black music. R&B (soul) Jazz, Gospel inspirational, and Disco, are the four distinct styles of Black music, although Jazz is the only true Black and American music form. Artists such as the Temptations, Supremes, James Brown and the Miracles, were a few of the best and most popular forerunners of soul. They perfected the following basics of R&B into an artform; funky, furiously paced tempo, smooth often syrupy torch ballads, fancy costumes, textured vocals and intricate choreography. Disco is merely an exaggeration of these qualities.

Today's R&B has for the most part remained unchanged, although extensive choreography and costuming aren't the requirement they once were. What has changed are the arrangements and the artists. The orchestrations are more intense, the lyrics are message oriented, and the big band sound has returned. Pioneered by Philadelphia based producers-writers Gamble-Huff, soul has resulted in increased sales, popularity and a bigger crossover into MOR and pop.

Disco is currently the hottest trend and serves as an example of non-Black artists ripping off Black music, and becoming richer in the process than the Black artists they patterned themselves after. The Bee Gees salvaged a fledgling career with Disco and are now the Kings of Disco and pop. And please don't be fooled, Disco is Black music. A close parallel is early Rock & Roll. Elvis, Buddy Holly and the Beatles have all admitted that they grew up on Black music and that their own sounds were a reflection of that early influence, or as in Presley's case it was a direct rape of Black music.

As a Black musician, I have nothing against anyone performing Black music, or the right to mind it. I do take exception to the fact that a great deal of the money made off Black music is going to non-Black artist. It can't be that Black artist aren't out there, or that the audience is too small. Only the record companies know for sure. Odd as it may seem, most recording firms are run by lawyers and accountants, so this may be a contributing factor to our current stock of talent. In theory these firm heads have a sense of the public's needs and wants, but I don't know whose theory it is or who proves it.

Jazz is running a close second to Disco in popularity and Jazz is where the biggest changes in Black music have occurred. Jazz is no longer limited to avant-garde be-bop, whose artists bordered on being cult phenomenae. Now the Jazz field is open and often incorporated rock elements (fusion), Funk and Disco (Dazz), and is probably the most respected popular music art form today. In Jazz there can be no color line; the only thing that matters is how talented you are, not always the case in other fields. The talent around now is probably the best since the days when Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane and Charlie Parker, to name a few, were at their peak.

I'd like to see Black musicians begin to receive the credit or at least the money due them, since Black music is so prominent nowadays. If not, then maybe Natalie Cole, the Commodores and Al Jarreau should be doing Punk Rock...but that's a lot like Barry Manilow doing Dico.

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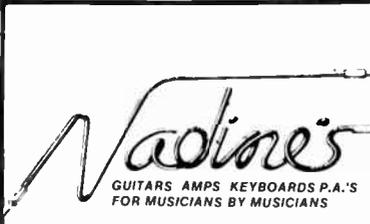
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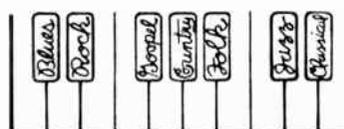
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DRUMMERS 13

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JINGLES... (Continued)

Several jingle writers have gone on to become big-name composers and recording stars, including Barry Manilow, Paul Williams, Melissa Manchester and Brook Benton.

But even if Karmen's album becomes a smash hit, he has no intention of turning his back on the jingle business to compose for the record industry.

"My friend Joe Brooks produced (the hit record) "You Light Up My Life," made a movie and is delighted to be out of the advertising business. But I don't want to be out- it's my home base and my most challenging job because the trend is always changing."

What does Karmen think is his best composition?
"I haven't written it yet."

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Vocal Technique... (Continued)

In order for a technique to work as a whole, it must be broken down in parts. The singer then learns to coordinate the parts. Using a very simplistic example, you can not support a musical phrase without first taking a breath to prepare for it. There is a definite balance between *pitch* (higher or lower), *air pressure* (controlled by the diaphragm), *focus* (space or opening between the vocal cords), *placement* (resonators), and the use of vibrato. The singer makes these choices, controlling the balance as he "feels" the lyric and music.

Concerning vibrato. Many singers sing *only* with a throat vibrato. This is done by fluctuating the throat muscles at the desired speed of vibrato. Some singers have no control over the speed of their vibrato. They are at the mercy of a "machine gun" vibrato or a bleating sound or a slow wobble. Very often the tension caused by using the throat muscles causes the tongue, jaw, and even the head to shake in rhythm with the vibrato.

The diaphragmatic vibrato, however, is connected with the support mechanism. The speed, width and choice of where and when to use vibrato are controlled by the diaphragm. Throat vibrato may be used in certain types of music such as jazz, folk, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern music. As long as the singer supports properly and is aware that the throat muscles are being used, he or she can avoid overworking or tightening. Overworking may lead to hoarseness. Tightening closes off the head and chest resonances. The effect may sound thin or "pinched."

Vibrato is a very important factor in interpretation and development of a style. Can you hold a tone for fifteen seconds without any vibrato whatsoever? This is a good test. Does your vibrato come in automatically? Is it even or does it flutter? Can you sing a straight tone (no vibrato) into a slow relaxed even vibrato? Can you speed it up at will? A good singer in control of his or her instrument should be able to do any of the above and more.

Concerning support. Pulling the abdominal muscles in and up give the *impression* of support, but are in fact, the opposite of good support. Notice the next time you sneeze or cough. You take a breath first and *bear out* and *down* as you expel a quick breath to rid yourself of that which is blocking or tickling your nose or throat. In singing the process is much slower and more flowing with the exception of a shout. Note that over-supporting or pushing too much air through the vocal cords upsets the "balance," causing friction and strain. The result is first an overabundance of phlegm and then hoarseness. The cords produce phlegm to help soothe the irritation.

[Continued on page 22]

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M.C. REVIEWS

Sanfilip

NUBOP ENSEMBLE NATURAL FUDGE CO.

Material: Flavorful
Performance: Modest

Los Angeles is a town of surprises.

One pleasant surprise fell into earshot of this reviewer in the shape of a young jazz group called "The NuBop Ensemble."

The group composed of Kurt Festinger on sax and percussion, Tony Jones on drums, Mark Levy on guitar, John Eisen on piano and Mart Buttwinick on bass shows loads of exciting potential.

Their music is strictly jazz in the lines of John Coltrane and Charley Parker. They do well-textured renditions of such compositions as *NIUMA* and *GIANT STEPS* by Coltrane, and Charley Parker's *DEWEY SQUARE*. The arrangements here were thoughtfully constructed bringing out the best dimensions of the music.

Their originals, written by Kurt Festinger were similarly interesting. They showed the group was capable of producing a flavorful mood themselves.

Of the originals, aside from *P.S.* and *TUESDAY AT TWO*, both contemplative, rhythmic, but lacking strong melodic definition, it was *SOOTHSAYER* that best encapsulated all of their talents.

Its modulation of keys and Latin influence served to shape the composition that offered a distinctive mood. Although needing a tighter arrangement to grade the highs and lows, it was by far their own property.

The only drawback "The NuBop Ensemble" may be up against is time since it's what they need to grow.

Occasionally one instrument vies to supersede over another. They can afford to examine more subtleties in their music rather than drive. But they respect music.

How the "NuBop Ensemble" will achieve its best balance will surely be the subject of another story.

SEAN RAMUNO

The Blind Pig

Material: Pleasant MOR
Performance: Needs fire

The single artist/composer is a special breed. Frankly, they must be carefully treated. With this in mind, reviewing the songs of Sean Ramuno will be easier.

First, there is great sincerity here and a solid understanding of song lyrics. Sean Ramuno applies a simple approach musically, and manages to blend the two in a rather identifiable easily digestible form.

His sound combines folk and country in sincere, simple fashion. However, although capable of constructing a song with a ready hook, there is something lacking that perhaps (to use an old cliché) time will solve.

There are two very commercial songs in his repertoire, *PLAYED THE FOOL AGAIN* and *SUNDAY MORNING SONG*. Both reflect a certain melancholic emotion; lost love, questioned love. There are others too, *CASUAL AFFAIR*, *FOOL FOR LOVE* and *SHE'S MY LADY*. Are you starting to form a picture?

There certainly is enough requited (and unrequited) love in Sean Ramuno's music, which is fine. Unfortunately, this makes his music a shade monotonous when it needn't be. With various arrangements, rhythms, and a fresh approach to the composition, I believe there might be a future for Sean Ramuno's music...as a composer, not as a performer primarily.

This is not to say Sean Ramuno is no performer. He simply must develop more spontaneity, looseness, even a touch of vulgarity. The music that reflects all purest love sentiment begins to drag, and I know as a Romantic myself.

This is why I believe in Sean Ramuno's potential. With some hard, relentless criticism he will see for himself. Also in less rigid musical format his music will work, for he is sincere. That compensates much for any performer.

Thanks to The Blind Pig, a very nice atmospheric club, one of the few places in Hollywood that is real and unpretentious.

Silberman

ZEN BOOGIE

Solari Theatre, Beverly Hills

Material: Uplifting pop
Performance: Tireless

What is a theatre critic doing in *MC Reviews*? For one, it's a musical, the music composed by a former member of the *Blues Magoos*, and the music was performed by a rock ensemble, logically dubbed the *Zen Boogie* band.

Zen Boogie is an entertaining, if not really memorable comedy, composed of a series of vignettes that satirize the burgeoning cult of self-help mental programs. Transcendental Meditation, EST, Mind Awareness, "I'm OK, You're OK" all took a good natured kidding from the large, talented cast. The skits varied in comedic quality from the clever use and misuse of one's "rights," to the analysis of Dick and Jane's marital problems, which could best be described as cute, to the repetitive word play of an Indian guru's wise old sayings, which were considerably less funny the second time around.

The mostly lightweight humor drew plenty of laughs during the performance, but the material had little comic tension to make the jokes memorable afterward. A string of comic bits are difficult to properly pace, that the laughs don't multiply or increase in intensity as the play wears on. Rather, the successful skits drew laughs and the others simply didn't.

As much as *Zen Boogie* satirizes the various ways to achieve mental well-being, it doesn't offer any concrete alternatives or solutions. The basic optimistic theme, just finding your own happiness, reflects the naive relevance of the entire production.

Easily the strong points of the play lie in the excellent acting and singing. Every member of the cast had a strong voice, each well suited to a particular style. Alexander had a loud, rock screamer voice. Carl Anderson was magic on stage with his funky attitude and gritty singing. Kay Cole handled the bittersweet melodies with a tender ease.

The music was a nice mesh of pop styles. "You've Got the Power" was a lively blend of gospel/revival and rock. "I'll Survive" was a pretty ballad not unlike some Carole King. The only song that didn't impress me was "Hello-Goodbye," which was too much of a Beatle rip-off to lend any originality to the song. The songs all had nice melodic hooks, though the dynamics weren't used as effectively as possible, due to the fact that it was played under the lyrics.

The *Zen Boogie* band: Doug Katsaros, conductor, keyboards, Lance Ong-keyboards, Billy Anstatt, guitars, Billy Lindner, drums, and Bob Manzer, bass. They were most effective when they were seen at the rousing finale, "Rise and Shine."

Peppy Castro, *Zen Boogie's* composer, performed on the Broadway version of *Hair*, and similarities between the two seem inevitable. Both musical scores are bright, enthusiastic, with a "do your own thing" attitude. Yet *Hair* contained some commentary, as superficial as it may have been. *Zen Boogie's* commentary is merely superficial.

If you choose to be reviewed, simply send us a letter stating the name of your group, when and where you will be performing, and include a short bio. One of our reviewers will make every effort to attend your performance. Mail info. to:

MC REVIEWS
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THEORETICALLY SPEAKING... with David "Cat" Cohen

Do you ever get the feeling that all your music is starting to sound the same? Musicians, like anybody else, can get themselves in a rut, getting stuck in the same old chord progressions and cliché riffs. I have found that one of the best things I can do when I'm at a creative impasse is to learn some new musical idea like a different melodic structure, a new chord voicing, or sometimes a new scale premise. Let's look at a scale that may be new to many of you, the dorian mode, and see how it can help change your musical perspective.

First, a brief history of this scale. The dorian mode was one of the seven ancient Greek modes. Being centuries old, the scale has been used in a variety of musical styles including ancient Hebrew and Arabic religious music, the gregorian chants of the Catholic mass, and classical Indian music where dorian is one of the important Indian ragas. In addition, the scale is common in many kinds of folk music including Irish, Scottish, Appalachian, and bluegrass music. In classical music, the French composer Eric Satie rediscovered the modal scales during his mystic "Rosicrucian" period, and he helped to influence his more famous colleagues, Debussy and Ravel, to incorporate dorian passages into their music. Jazz musicians such as Charlie Mingus and John Coltrane borrowed many of their sounds from classical sources finding the scale a perfect vehicle for original sounding improvisation. Folk and folk-rock musicians like Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel, used many dorian melodies and chord progressions in their music (e.g. "Scarborough Fair") and groups like the Beatles and Jethro Tull popularized many dorian compositions. Lending itself to both jazz and rock, the scale in popular is the new "Fusion" sound.

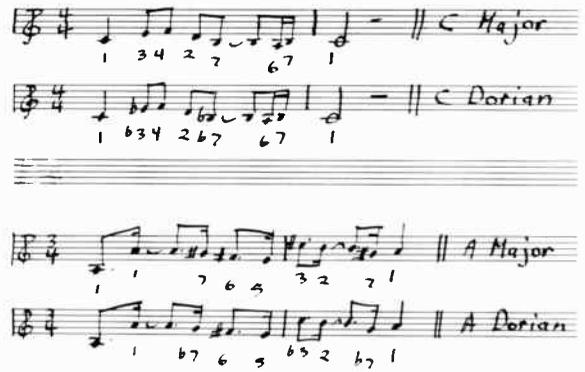
What is dorian mode? It is simply a major scale with the third and seventh tones of the scale lowered a half-step:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1
(C)	C	D	E \flat	F	G	A	B \flat	C
(A)	A	B	C	D	E	F \sharp	G	A

Several important changes happen when we lower these two scale tones. First of all, the "7" tone of the major scale is known as the leading tone, and usually resolves up to the "1" or tonic tone. This is the basis of textbook or "legit" music. Using the b7 tone instead frees the melody from this fixed orientation, and allows a more flexible use of the tone in improvisation. Lowering the third tone (b3) gives the scale a darker deeper more minor sound. However, because the "6" tone is not lowered, we do not get a minor scale, but rather a different sound, bittersweet, or "sweet and sour". As you begin to see, changing just one tone of a scale can fundamentally change its sound, its emotion, and the resulting musical styles.

Let's take a look at a few melodic passages that might be ordinary in a major scale and see how different they sound in dorian. In the examples below, see how the chromatic tones E \flat and B \flat change the character of the melodic lines. Play them or sing them and you will begin to hear the distinctive dorian tonal color. Then try going up and down the scale at random until you are facile enough to start improvising with it. The unusual combination of tones may be just what you need to give your music that different sound you've been looking for.

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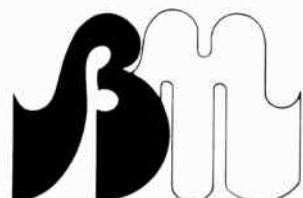
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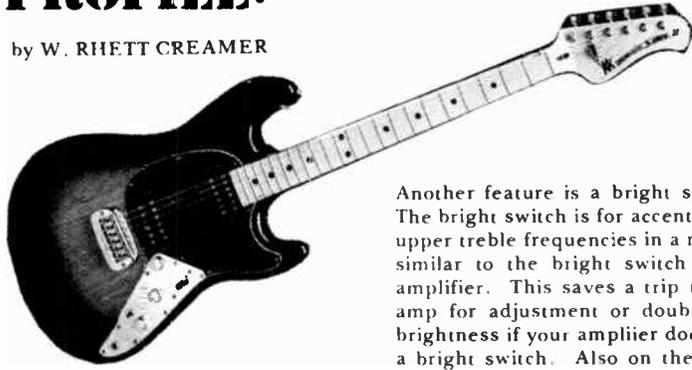
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Visiting his warehouse you can see him personally designing, experimenting and testing new products. One of the newest items from "Music Man" is the SABRE II six string, solid body electric guitar. The SABRE II is a finely crafted, versatile guitar with excellent action. It comes equipped with a lot of extra features. Made of ash with a maple neck, the SABRE II is much like a Stratocaster in feel. The neck design is quite similar to a Stratocaster but other than that, the electronics of the SABRE sets them worlds apart. It comes with all Music Man products, including two dual-humbucking pickups. The SABRE II also has some really unique features. One, the guitar contains an internal active pre-amplifier, powered by a standard 9-volt battery. The pre-amplifier improves the guitar sound in several ways, such as providing separate tone control. This way you can change from a mellow bass sound to an extra bright treble sound without going to the amplifier. The pre-amplifier also provides low impedance out-put that enables you to play long chords without losing a treble response. Because of the pre-amplifier, the SABRE II's out-put level is double that of guitars without a pre-amp.

The SABRE II also comes with a Phase Reveal Switch. Unlike most guitars today the SABRE will respond with a phase sound regardless of where the pick-up switch is as soon as it is turned on. Whereas before, the pick-up switch had to be in the middle (both pick-ups on) position before the phase could be enacted.

Another feature is a bright switch. The bright switch is for accenting the upper treble frequencies in a manner similar to the bright switch on an amplifier. This saves a trip to your amp for adjustment or doubles the brightness if your amplifier does have a bright switch. Also on the guitar are bass and treble controls.

Like most guitars on the market today, the SABRE II has individual pick-up adjustment and individual string height and length adjustment. The SABRE II also has a neck tilt adjustment as well as truss rod adjustment for precise action setting.

The retail price of the SABRE II is \$595.00 without case and is available at most local dealers.

BUSINESS NEVER

By Doug Thiele

As a songwriter, your major source of income will be from Mechanical Royalties; the writer's share of proceeds primarily from the sale of records and tapes. There is another major source of income for you as a writer, and that's Performance royalties. This is the money you should receive each time your song is performed on radio or television, in live shows and, since January 1, 1978, on juke boxes.

Fortunately, you don't have to be there each time your song is performed; there are organizations set up for checking things out for you.

These are the performing rights Societies, ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC.

These Societies collect money from nightclubs, radio stations, television stations and others, and they monitor music being played from these sources in order to pay publishers and writers their songs' proportion of the monies collected. There's no way of you collecting your rightful performance royalties on a well-played song without the services of one of these Societies, and when you have a released tune, you must join one of these Societies. And though it's possible for two or more writers to belong to different Societies and collaborate on one song (and collect royalties on that song), you can only be a member of one Society at a time.

ASCAP (The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) was formed in 1914 as an exclusive non-profit membership organization. From the start, ASCAP limited its members to major writers in major cities. It was hard for a writer of little credential to join and collect royalties. These were, in part, the days of speakeasys, and some ASCAP collection officials had to be pretty tough. It was impossible for a non-ASCAP writer to collect all her

just performance royalties, and many writers and publishers, as well as the burgeoning radio broadcasting Industry were feeling the financial sting.

BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) was formed in 1939 by broadcasters and some writers, largely as an answer to the still-exclusive membership policies of ASCAP. At that time, BMI sold non-dividend stock to its supporters at \$5 per share. BMI maintained its underdog image long after the two Societies had become relative equals.

SESAC is the third performing rights Society, and in recent years has attempted to enter the Performing Rights arena, though they still do less business than ASCAP or BMI. SESAC has recently initiated some incentive plans for writers, including the offer to help pitch member-writers' songs. They show some strength in Gospel music, Classical, and some Country music areas. They are up-and-coming, and you might want to investigate their present situation, though this article will only cover ASCAP and BMI.

Both Societies collect performance monies when your song is performed. They collect a percentage of the radio and television sponsor's receipts, plus a sustaining fee from these organizations and from clubs and juke box users, as well as special situations.

Their system of monitoring and disbursement of royalties is different, however. ASCAP conducts a survey sample of thousands of hours of radio programming, and also examines cue sheets and logs from Television Stations. As a backup, ASCAP tapes selected TV programming as their own checks-and-balances system.

BMI on the other hand, takes a cross-section log of radio stations, logging selected stations for one week and then multiplying the results they find to give them an idea of nationwide programming.

As you might suspect, there's still a bit of partisan rhetoric coming from both ASCAP and BMI on the advantages of their system and the shortcomings of the other's. BMI claims that they are more efficient and accurate because they log six times as much actual programming as ASCAP. ASCAP contends that their tape monitoring system is more accurate and gives them a truer picture of programming nationwide. To this point, ASCAP says that because of their system's completeness, they can tell a BMI writer how much he would have made as an ASCAP writer. And the words continue to fly.

In reality, the two systems are generally equal. BMI hears a tune more often, but might miss a regional hit because one station is logged only once every four-teen months on the average. ASCAP's logging by ear may make mistakes a problem due to unclear titles (like "Betcha By Golly Wow") or lack of author identification on tunes with similar titles.

Distribution is generally similar, but there are some interesting differences: BMI uses a bonus system for writers of very strong songs, making double collection of royalties possible. ASCAP has also established an alternative payment system for its

writers which allows some writers of standards or long-term writers to collect performance royalties based on a much longer period of time. There is a danger of a writer becoming locked into this system by potentially losing royalties in switching to BMI but the four-fund system seems to favor writers with a long track record.

There are a few other differences between the Societies; both pay advances to writers, but BMI is purported to pay a bit more on occasion. Also, BMI does not pay performance royalties on Commercials, and ASCAP will under some circumstances.

Some say that if you're a steady but small royalty earner or a new writer with lots of album cuts, you might have an edge with BMI, and others say that if you have heavy credentials or plan to write major pop hits, or if you write for television, ASCAP can put a little more in your pocket from performances. But one thing is certain; both organizations have come a long way from their early days, and your choice of Performing Rights Societies has to be an individual one. Make yourself an expert in the workings of each and you'll make the right decision when it comes time to join.

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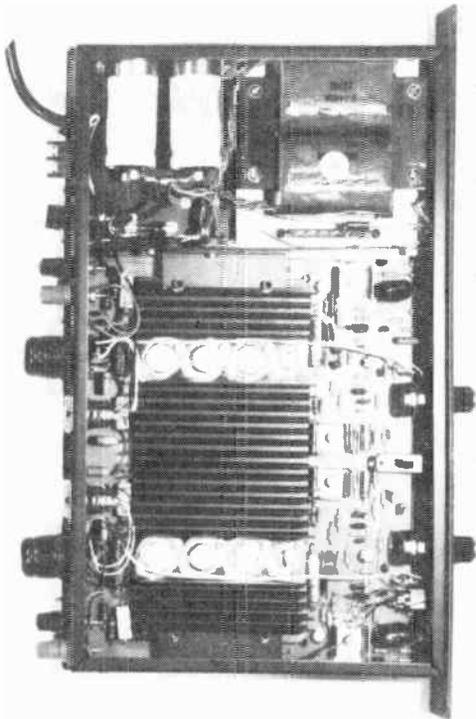
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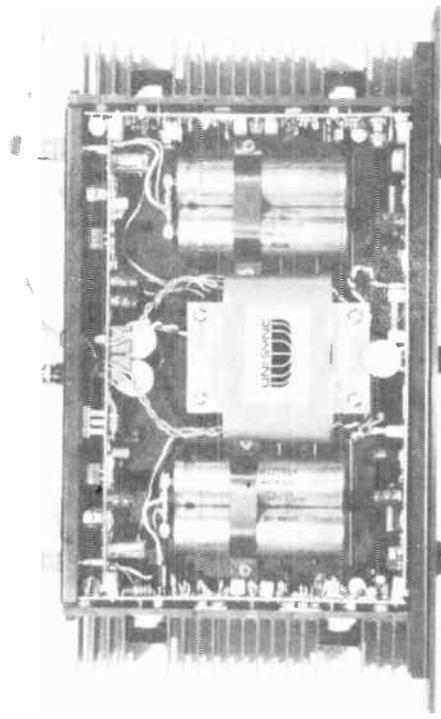
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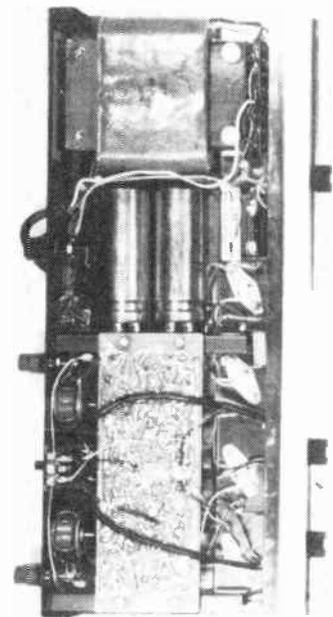
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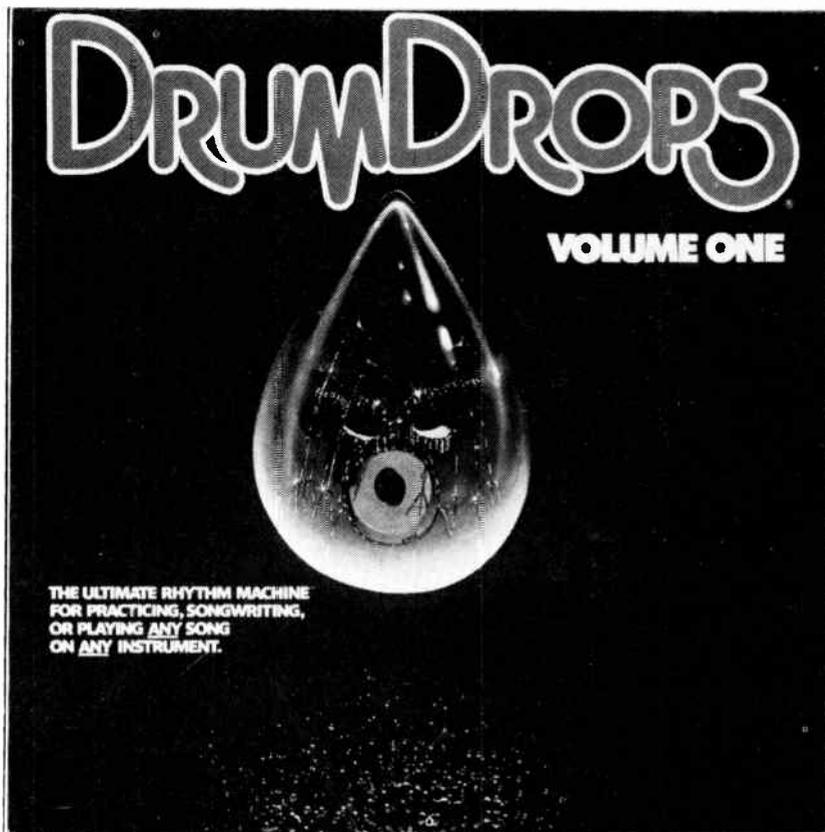
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