MUSICIAN

PLAYER & LISTENER

DARYL HALL

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Crisis Time in the Record Biz

Video, Tom Petty, Robert Fripp, Mongolia, N.Y. Jazz

Julius Hemphill's Hard Blues

BOB SEGER

FIFTEEN

YEARS

TO THE TOP

Creativity: Tapping the Source

Expression through time delay.

Time delay has become increasingly important to musicians and engineers as a way to color musical sounds and create spatial illusions. MXR's Flanger/Doubler and Digital Delay have proven to be effective tools for the musically creative professional who requires a wide range of performance possibilities from a precise and cost effective time delay unit.

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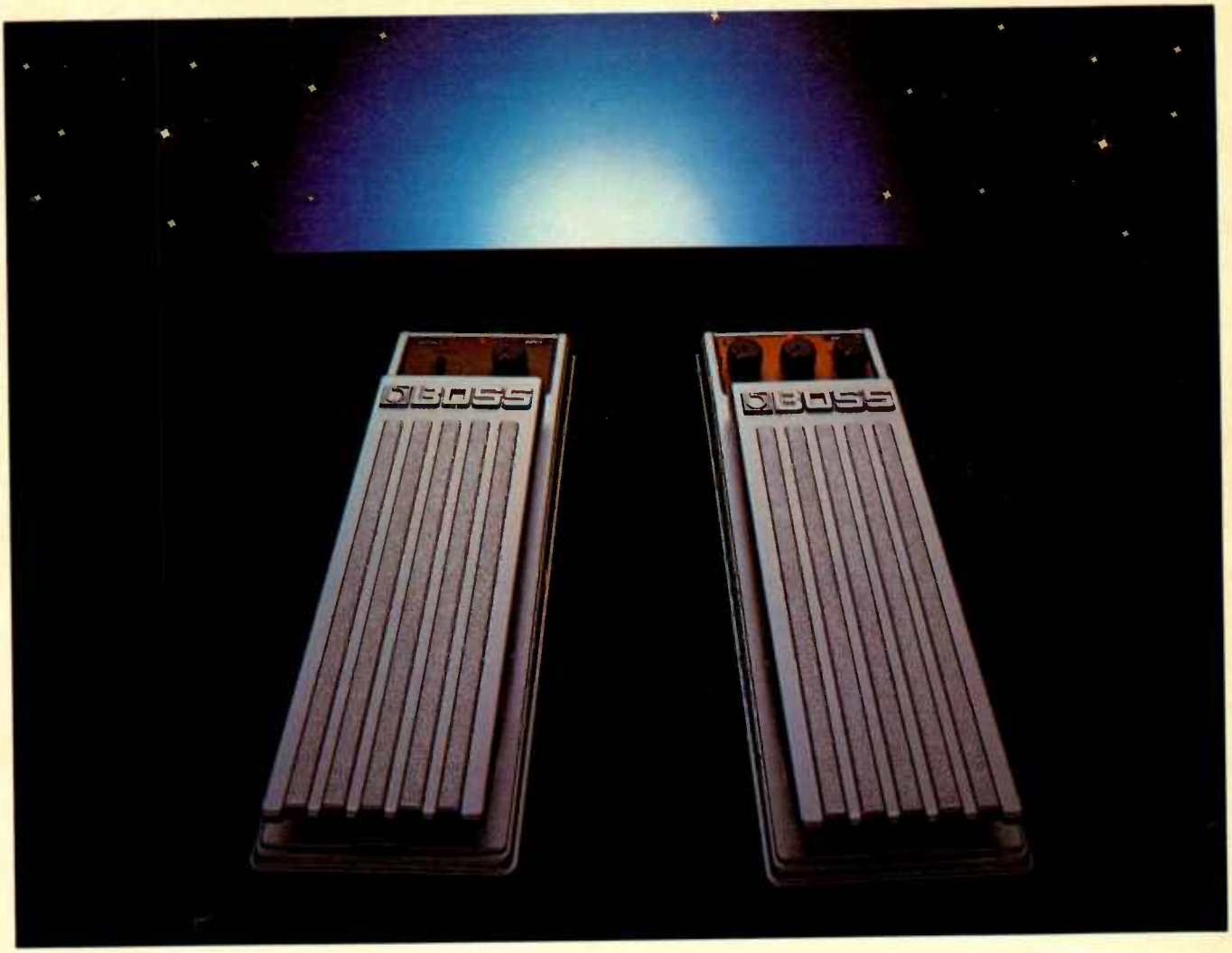

Silence Is Silver

Silver is the color of the BOSS Rocker Series—a dramatic new improvement in effects pedal technology.

Since the beginning of the special effects device a rocker pedal has been found to be the most simple and expressive means of adding the effect to a performance. Unfortunately, it has also been the noisest. Gears, cranks, potentiometers are all prone to mechanical stress, wear, and therefore, noise. The answer to this problem is the BOSS Rocker Series.

When we set out to develop the Rockers we observed that a pedal with mechanical contacts was a pedal that eventually produced noise; and a pedal that produced noise could not wear the BOSS name. For the Rockers, we chose a system called the Hall Effect. The Hall Effect is a magnetic field variable by the action of the pedal itself. There are no physical contacts whatsoever, so there can be no wear, and no noise.

The first of the two Rockers is the Rocker Wah. The Rocker Wah produces the classic Wah effect with clarity and intensity but also offers some new flexibility as well. A three position Range switch selects the center frequency at which the effect occurs, while the Width control varies the pedal's range.

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The Rockers also incorporate all those features you expect from BOSS: silent switching, LED status indicators, skid pads, battery eliminator jacks. But all of that goes without saying...except in our new BOSS catalog. If you'd like a copy send us a dollar and it's yours. The new color of silence is just the beginning.

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BOSS

MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

NO. 25, JUNE-JULY, 1980

NARM: Las Vegas is where the record company biggies meet to discuss the directions of the industry. There was a lot to talk about this year. Record World Editor Sam Sutherland reports in-depth.

Julius Hemphill plays some hard blues and orchestrates and plays some beautiful charts for the World Saxophone Quartet. Special Edition and the Phillip Wilson Band. A saxophonist deserving of wider recognition. Chip Stern expounds.

Bob Seger has been touring and playing powerful, heartfelt rock for 15 years, mostly in the Midwest. His story touches the very roots of what rock is all about. Cris Cioe visits Seger on his sold-out national tour.

Table of Contents

Columns

Features

Studios

Cover Photos by John Waggaman (Yellow) and Richard Aaron (Red)

MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

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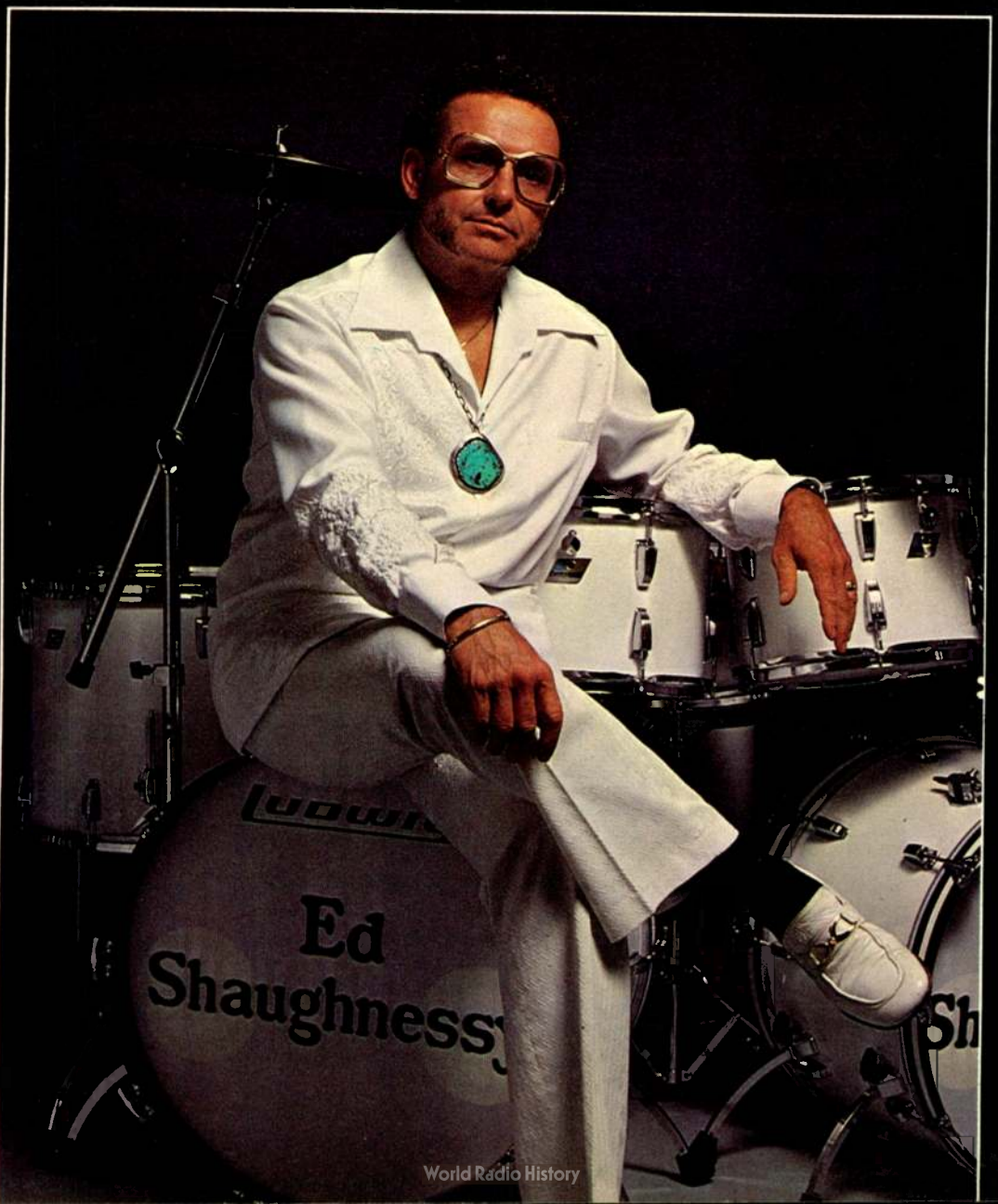
Five nights a week, Ed Shaughnessy is the star drummer on The Tonight Show. He's also the strength behind the Ed Shaughnessy Energy Force Big Band, a 17-man tour-de-for ensemble. A teacher and writer, Ed knows that great drumming has to come from deep inside.

Which is why, like other renowned drummers, Ed chooses Ludwig's unique 6-ply wood shell drums. Here, the forces of nature combine with udwig's famed craftsmanship. nd the result is awesome.

Experience the inimitable sound of Ludwig's 6-ply wood shell drums yourself and learn what great drummers like Ed Shaughnessy know: If you haven't got it on the inside, you haven't got it. LUDWIG

The Star Maker
Ludwig's 6-ply Shell

It's gotta come from the inside.



LETTERS

Letter From the Editor

Every once in awhile we get a letter denouncing some of our articles as having been written by "Egg-Brains" who need massive doses of social relevancy in order to appreciate any music whatsoever. This is overstating the case a bit, but a good question is raised in a letter from Jason Green in Berkeley who says, "I don't need music to be socially worthy, historically important or sociologically insightful — I do like it to be innovative and thought-provoking."

Rather than answer this myself, aside from pointing out that "thought-provoking" to a writer who's usually had untold years of education poured into him quite rightly involves at least *some* passing thoughts on social meaning, historical importance, etc., I'll turn the question over to our columnists. Strangely enough, both Dave Marsh and Lester Bangs addressed some form of this question on their own this month; Dave defending rock against the new wave-angst rock school, while Lester confesses his urban prejudices and discovers a love for Texas boogie lying within his savage breast, if you can believe that. Jazz doesn't escape either as Gary Giddins answers Lester's Punk-Jazz article of last issue and defends Cecil Taylor from another critic's barbs. Something for everybody this month, no matter what you think.

Jason Green's letter does raise a good question though, one I confront daily as the editor, that being: just how deeply into the meaning of the music should we get? How much should it mean outside of how it makes you feel? With the tremendous part that music plays in our generation's life, it's naive to think it means nothing — so what's the answer? Why not write us a letter on the subject, either in specific or generally. We'll devote the Letters page to the debate as they come in. — *Sam Holdsworth.*

IN DEFENSE OF MR. FRIPP

This letter is directed toward Chuck Larrieu, in response to his own letter (April/May issue) criticizing Robert Fripp for marketing his records within the record industry. If Fripp were to work outside the music industry as an independent, as you wish, his efforts, both musical and otherwise, would be largely ignored or forgotten. His die-hard fans would certainly obtain his records in one way or another, no matter how obscure, but the general public would never even have the opportunity to hear him. Furthermore, Fripp's media exposure would be greatly reduced, since most magazines have no desire to work outside the industry of which they are a major part. There is no way that the music industry will outrightly die; it will only change drastically in the future. The sooner this change comes, the better for all of us; it is, in fact, already quite visible. Robert Fripp wants this change to occur, and the more people he can reach, the faster (though one man can only do so much) this change will occur. It is therefore most logical for him to remain within the industry, since it offers him (ironically) the greatest number of opportunities to express himself to a wide audience. And once the industry reaches reasonable proportions and gains some personality, Fripp will be right at home.
David M. Stanton
Essex Fells, N.J.

EGG-BRAINS

I am absolutely fed up with the dislike you hold for fusion jazz. I don't think you egg-brained "critics" know what you're listening to. Recent albums by Bob James, Earl Klugh, Herbie Hancock, George Benson, and others have not only been technically excellent and pleasant to the senses, but they've also widened the entire sphere of jazz by attracting a new audience. These are people who enjoy music for pure entertainment, pure good sounds. You "critics" seem to reject any music that is not considered "progressive". Let me tell you, your "progressive" music is not only garbage, but also disorganized and discordant.
Laurence Chin
San Francisco, CA

LESTER'S PUNK-JAZZ PROOF

What a coincidence! How can this be. I work at a college radio station where I host two truly unique programs; an unsurpassed jazz show and the only authentic new-no-now wave show in the industrial armpit — Akron. Surprise and relief dispensed through my central nervous system when I picked up and read your "Free Jazz Weds Punk Rock" article (*Musician* #24). I found it to be the most relative and informative journalism to appear about the free jazz-punk rock merger which I subconsciously (as well as accidentally) have been doing for the past five months. Also, credit must be given to some fellas San Francisco way courtesy of Ralph Records — The Residents et al.
Mark J. Petracca, WAUP-FM
Akron, Ohio

ZAPPA DEFENDED

Re: March 1980 record review by Michael Shore. Frank Zappa's *Joe's Garage Acts II & III* is one of the finer pieces of music ever recorded. Frank Zappa is one of the most misunderstood musician/composers today. He is an extremely talented person who humorously looks at society while simultaneously delivering a very serious, perhaps ominous message.

Frank's obvious indifference to critical reviews may have been taken personally by Mr. Shore, who uses your column as a vehicle to speak to the artist. Perhaps harboring a personal or professional grudge or dislike of Frank Zappa, he ignores his creative talent.
Christopher J. Johnson
St. Louis, MO.

CHANO POZO

Your article about Chano Pozo is a masterpiece. For years I searched libraries, book stores and record stores that would have anything on Pozo. I am from Los Angeles where much of Pozo's and Dizzy's music is heard on the jazz stations, but never anything about his life. Mr. Salazar, thank you. You have made me and many others very happy.
Silvio Alava
L.A. CA.

NEW DOGS, OLD TRICKS

Every issue just gets better and better. The April-May issue was tops...

I bought my first jazz album in 1967, at the ripe age of fourteen. It was a copy of *Ascension* by John Coltrane, and after I played it once, I put it away and didn't pick it up again for three years. As I was from Detroit, I was heavily under the influence of John Sinclair and the MC-5. Fusion came in, and though I did enjoy much of it, it didn't satisfy my primal needs. New Wave came into being, and my first reaction was "what is this shit?". Then I began to listen. And I heard those same influences that I grew up with. I now believe New Wave to be something that will save Rock from complacency. I can't get enough.

Well, I'm twenty-seven now, I have over a thousand records (12 by Sun Ra, 26 by Coltrane, 14 by Pharoah, a bunch of ESP Discs, and about 70 ECM which really are starting to sound alike ... but listen to the new Nana record, a real trip), and I'm not ashamed to admit that I like New Wave. It's just new dogs doing old tricks. Keep up the good work.
Dana Lawrence, DC
Elmhurst, Ill.

MORE FRIPPERIES

Robert Fripp has got to be pop music's answer to John Cage — great stuff, and so is your mag!
Jay Marciano
Boulder, Col.

How serious are you about an electric guitar?

Your kind of music isn't what it was ten years ago. Neither are our guitars. We asked professional players to evaluate the prototypes. Working musicians who are out there today, playing today's music. We took their comments and went back to the drawing board. New prototypes were evaluated again. And again. The result of all this effort is a guitar like the SG-2000. A serious instrument for a guitarist like you. Here are some specifics.

Electronics: High-output, hum-defeating, fully shielded, tri-mounted pick-ups that are about 1/3 hotter than competitive models. There are separate volume and tone circuits for each pick-up. The volume controls are truly linear. The tone controls gradually roll off the highs, but only into the midrange.

Bridge Assembly: Heavy duty brass saddles with solid brass sustain block.

Tuning Machines: Precise 15:1 ratio with no backlash.

Materials and craftsmanship: Laminated maple and mahogany body. A solid piece of maple runs through the length of the guitar. The neck has mahogany sides with an ebony fingerboard, and pre-curved, adjustable truss rod. And the craftsmanship? Well, we've been making musical instruments for almost a hundred years. It shows.

Playability: The SG-2000 is ready to play, just like the players we asked said it should be. The action is set for ideal height, and the bridge saddles are adjusted for precise intonation.

We don't think we left anything out of the SG-2000. Because when it comes to an electric guitar, we take you seriously. And we take you just as seriously when it comes to an electric bass like the BB-1200. It benefits from the same careful evaluation and development that went into our guitars.

Write Yamaha, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622 for information on the SG-2000 and SA-2000 guitars, and the BB-1200 bass. Or better yet, visit your Yamaha dealer.

Because you're serious.

YAMAHA

music industry news

By Robert Ford and Nelson George

Now It's Getting Better

Regular readers of this column must be tired of reading our monthly reports of disaster in the record business. Well this time around we're happy to report that things haven't gotten any worse! People in the industry have now gotten over the shock that theirs is not really an inflation proof industry and most major labels are making moves to put out better music more efficiently. The recent NARM convention was a signal that the industry seems to be opening up to more input from the retail end and that will most definitely be a plus factor in the future growth of the business. While Utopia is hardly around the corner we have now reached the point where things will probably get better before they get worse.

Gold Standard Down?

There was a time just a few years ago when every act and its groupies were receiving platinum albums for sales exceeding 1,000,000 units. CBS records seemed to have one every week. Gold records were for grandmothers and folks of that ilk. The key reason for this deluge of precious metals was the 'instant gold' policy of the Recording Industry Association of America, the people who give these things out. If an album had 500,000 (gold status) or 1,000,000 (platinum) retail orders prior to its release it became eligible for the RIAA certification as gold or platinum. If a corporation had enough promotional muscle this would happen to an impressive number of their artists. Ah, but there was, of course, a hitch.

Many of these 'instant gold' records would be returned by retailers because the demand for that much product simply wasn't there. Thus yet another industry phrase was coined, "It shipped platinum and came back gold." This obviously cheapened the RIAA's metallic merit badges and so they made a 120 day time limit before any release can be declared gold or platinum.

Ironically, this move was made as the record slump was hitting its stride and the effect was to take more wind out of an already punctured balloon. You actually had to work to get gold now and anybody who went platinum in today's market either has to have a solid album (Michael Jackson, Pink Floyd) or tremendous initial hype.

So RIAA has come to an intelligent compromise. The waiting period has been changed to 60 days. This should mean records will still earn their gold and platinum designations, while also making the RIAA recognition useful as marketing tools while the album is still relatively new.

Old Executives Never Die

They say old soldiers never die, they just fade away. But in the record business label executives never die, they just reappear with a new company and new money. The latest example of this is David Geffen's return to the record business with a new label to be distributed by the WEA combine.

Geffen, the founder of Asylum records, is constructing a company that will immediately be on par with Warners, Atlantic, and Elektra-Asylum in the WEA corporate set-up. This unusual situation is explained by Geffen's presence on the Warner Communications executive committee, the group that oversees WEA's massive distribution network. Since leaving Elektra-Asylum in 1976 Geffen had been working for Warners' film division. Geffen's return is actually good news. During the five years at Elektra-Asylum he built a classy label, both in its organization and in the type of artist he signed. Joni Mitchell, the Eagles, Neil Young, and other of rock's more intelligent performers were signed under his guidance. He is a good administrator and a judge of talent, qualities that'll make his yet unnamed company worth watching.

Arrangers Asking Copyright Share

The usually amiable relationship between songwriters and the arrangers that orchestrate their music may soon be endangered if the American Society of Arrangers has its way. This national organization of chart makers has queried the Copyright Royalty Tribunal in Washington about receiving royalties on the copyrighted music they arrange. Currently, an arranger gets royalties only when a song is in the public domain or if he comes to some agreement with the song's copyright owner. If the ASA has its way royalty money will automatically be sliced to give arrangers a piece of the pie.

This, as one might expect, has not set well with several songwriter organizations and court fights a-plenty seem ahead on this issue. Potentially this could be a major controversy that would pit two groups who need each other, songwriters and arrangers, in opposite corners. We'll keep an eye on it.

Influence Peddling

CBS records, a dominant force in the music industry since the mid 1960's, has thought up a new way to extend its already considerable influence. It is experimenting with the concept of distributing independent labels, but not getting involved in the areas of sales, marketing, and promotion. Usually when a CBS or Warner Brothers distributes an independent label they virtually annex it, making the indie label a part of their overall operation and investing money in its growth.

In this experiment CBS will just distribute the label and nothing else. The guinea pig here is Midsong records, a small New York based label best known as the original recording home of John Travolta, for Silver Convention and one of disco's earliest crossover hits, Carol Douglass's "Doctor's Orders." Hardly heavyweights this crew.

Which is obviously why CBS picked them. It is a small operation that will let the big boys in CBS corporate test the waters with little risk. The idea of using its immense distribution capacities for independent labels appears to

How serious are you about an electric piano?

We know how an acoustic piano should sound and how it should feel. We've been building them for almost a century.

That's why our electric grand pianos sound and feel like our acoustic grands. And our electronic pianos feel like our acoustic pianos while making unique sounds of their own. We wouldn't have it any other way. If you wouldn't have it any other way either, read on.

The Electric Grands. The CP-80 Electric Grand has the sound and feel of a full-size grand, yet it is compact, sturdy, and ready for heavy duty touring.

With no soundboard, and the strings anchored to Yamaha's exclusive Humid-A-Seal Pin Block, tuning stability is excellent.

The treble and middle strings are similar to those used on Yamaha concert grand pianos. Extensive research by Yamaha has produced bass strings that, though shorter, retain all the rich, full-bodied character of an acoustic grand.

There are 88 independent permanently mounted piezoelectric pickups for the entire keyboard. This gives you highly accurate sound, with wide, even frequency response.

Controls include volume, bass, middle, treble, tremolo on/off, tremolo speed, and depth and power on/off.

The CP-70B retains most of the features of the CP-80 and consequently has the same true acoustic feel and sound. Yet its price may make it more attractive for your specific needs.

The Electronic Pianos. The 76-key CP-30 has a wide repertoire of sounds that transcend the usual "one-color" sound of other electronic pianos. Different combinations of voices may be assigned to each of the two channels, giving a true stereo effect.

The CP-30 is velocity-sensitive so when you strike the keys harder, it gets louder. The only moving parts are the keys and the reliable leaf switches they activate.

The CP-20 is a single-channel unit with similar features at a lower price.

Our A4115H self-powered, two-way speaker system is highly recommended for use with all our electric and electronic pianos.

Write Yamaha, Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622 for more complete information. Or, better yet, visit your Yamaha dealer for a demonstration of the keyboards that take true acoustic sound and feel as seriously as you do.

Because you're serious.

YAMAHA

be an enticement to get major independents (such as Motown) and their money flowing into CBS bank accounts. Certainly CBS can offer a more stable atmosphere than can the series of regional distributors that most indies must rely upon, while the indies can still maintain an air of independence. Also this set up might keep labels such as the restless people at Philadelphia International using CBS distribution. That successfully Philly-based operation has been unhappy with CBS's marketing of its R&B performers, but might wish to continue utilizing CBS's distribution network.

This is a very cagey move, though anyone disturbed by the growth of corporate power in American music, and in the country in general, can't be thrilled by this sly strategy.

College Radio Goes Downhill

Not only is college radio a growing source of income for songwriters, but is potentially a place for the exposure of new music broadcast beyond just the interiors of colleges. This has always been one of the things people have praised about college radio, its willingness to play the new and different.

Well, folks we hate to burst bubbles, but even that truism of the early 1970's has been altered by today's economic scene. Where once the record labels chased the young listeners that college radio guaranteed, today they feel it isn't that important anymore. At the 41st Intercollegiate Broadcasting System conference in New York, a yearly gathering of college radio programmers, only 15 labels sent representatives. Among the missing were CBS, A&M, and Polygram. The latter two don't even have college promotion departments anymore.

The major topic of conversation at the conference was the absence of promotional efforts by the labels at the college level. The stations are having trouble getting records and you can't play what you don't have. In defense of the record companies, it should be mentioned that abuses, such as the selling of records intended for air play or the theft of promotional records by station personnel, were big reasons companies shifted away from catering to college radio.

Another more important factor was that most college radio today is simply not as adventurous as it once was. The kids in college radio are not as interested in the music as in landing a job in radio. So AOR rock formats, even flashes of Top 40, rule college radio today.

Spring Chart Action: More Bricks in the Wall

Pink Floyd continues to be the major chart story of the year as the English group's *The Wall* held onto the top spot on all album charts through the early spring despite new releases from Billy Joel, Linda Ronstadt, Bob Seger, the Isley Brothers and Van Halen, all acts with chart-topping potential. Apparently much of adolescent America relates to being just another brick in the wall.

Ronstadt's new album *Mad Love* gets off to a disappointing start, losing its star and moving backwards after only six weeks on the chart. By the time you read this the success or failure of the first single "Hurt So Bad," will have determined if this will be the first stiff after a long series of hits from the almost first lady of California.

The soundtrack album from *American Gigolo* has jumped into the top ten making it the biggest flick disc since *Saturday Night Fever*, thanks to Blondie's number one single, "Call Me." The album was produced by Giorgio Moroder of Donna Summer fame. While Ms. Summer sorts out her affairs with Casablanca Records, Moroder keeps plugging away with his European rock disco sound and the public does not seem to be sick of it yet.

Blondie's contribution to the *American Gigolo* soundtrack, Elvis Costello's slightly disappointing (in chart terms) *Get Happy*, and the emergence of the Pretenders mark the only dent new wave has made in the top 20 this spring. Rock 'n' Roll (Seger, Joel, Tom Petty, Heart, Rush, Eagles) dominates the upper reaches on the chart with progressive R&B, (Isley's, Whispers, Brothers Johnson, Michael Jackson) holding its own.

Syrupy pop seems to be making a comeback with Dan Fogelberg and newcomer Christopher Cross doing well. Cross is riding the crest of his massive single "Ride Like The Wind," which is only one of many mainstream pop records currently doing well. Other records that are obviously commercial and are selling like hot cakes are Billy Preston and Syreeta's *Born Again*, Air Supply's *Lost In Love*, and Dr. Hook's *Sexy Eyes*. A move back to basic pop seems to be the only trend that can be found on the disjointed singles chart.

Disco is not doing too well as only Lipps Inc. and their poppy "Funky Town" is the only true disco song to catch on. Soul dance records like the Whisper's *And The Beat Goes On* and the Brothers Johnson's *Stomp* are doing quite well with pop audiences these days but these records bear little resemblance to the disco sound we all know and hate.

Another major disco/soul story is shaping up with the lack of success of the new Sister Sledge album, *Gotta Love Somebody Today*. Coming on the heels of one of the most successful R&B packages in recent years, *We Are Family*, this new Sledge package looked like a sure-fire winner. But apparently the public has had its fill of the production of Chic's Bernard Edward and Nile Rodgers. Like most good young producers Rodgers and Edwards are going for the big bucks and producing everyone in sight and it looks like it's catching up with them. What a pity, as this is one of the most talented duos to work in the idiom in some time. Well, if the Sledge album does not make it, the boys are ready to spring a new Diana Ross project on the unsuspecting public.

On the country side of the chart the question now seems to be, "How much richer can Kenny Rogers get?" Rogers' string of hits seems to go on forever and he always has at least four albums on the country chart. And if that is not enough, CBS made a TV movie out of his tune "The Gambler," and it was one of the top rated shows of the spring.

GRP Goes Digital

Composer David Grusin and producer Larry Rosen's GRP label made an important step recently in announcing that all its releases will be recorded on a digital system. With a roster of pop-jazz artists such as Angela Bofill, flautist Dave Valentin, and trumpeter Tom Browne, the digital system can bring out the best these performers have to offer.

The only drawback to this GRP plan, and to any other advances in recording, comes at the pressing plant. The sound quality and durability of contemporary records is today determined more by the competence of the people who press and ship records than by the technicians and producers who make them.

Warped, scratched, or otherwise physically impaired records are unfortunately not exceptions to the rule.

Osmonds Go Asian

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CS-15	37	2	2	2	1	N/A
CS-20M	37	2	1	2	1	8
CS-40M	44	4	2	2	2	20

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THE CRITICS VS. TOM PETTY

Some N.Y. critics want to bar Tom Petty from rock heaven; Dave Marsh defends good old rock 'n roll.

By Dave Marsh

Ordinarily, I'm the least mild-mannered of men, whipping out opinions the way that rock and roll doctors administer pills, apologizing only when the chips are down for good. I've been fighting the symptoms of an unaccustomed defensiveness, which ebbs and flows in spurts coinciding precisely with the obsessiveness with which I listen to Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' *Damn the Torpedoes*.

Such fanaticism is so commonplace in my life that it's long since ceased to be troublesome by itself. My taste is built around mainstream rock and roll, a genre that's never chic and hardly ever respectable. (Which is one reason that I dote on it.) But *Damn the Torpedoes* is desperately unhip these days — at least among the denizens of big league, Manhattan rock criticism. It's probably OK to like it, but only as an addendum to an aesthetic which prefers Lene Lovich butchering Tommy James and the Shondells and Joe "King" Carrasco flubbing ? and the Mysterians licks. So it feels embarassingly retrograde to be championing Petty's variations on white, urban R&B when all of my colleagues are wrapped up in the Gang of Four, Pere Ubu and Essential Logic.

Even understanding how adventuresome such avant-gardists must be, (taking my colleagues at their word, I mean) it's still incomprehensible to me how someone could get so awfully excited about that music as rock and roll. (Of course, if Pere Ubu and the like isn't a new and superior kind of rock and roll, you're forced to realize that it might be a rather mechanistic and inferior rendition of licks Ornette Coleman tosses away for sport.) The Gang of Four uses variations on Steve Cropper guitar licks, and uses them fairly creatively — still, this hardly means that Gang of Four plays rock and roll or soul music, any more than Eric Carmen's pilfering of a melody from Rachmaninoff made him a Russian classical composer. If rock and roll is either a kind of music or an historical tradition, this stuff quite simply doesn't fit within it. And if rock is neither of those things, then Johnny Lydon is correct, it's a dead horse and one might as well discard the term and the ideas associated with it.

Which is partly why *Damn the Torpedoes* strikes me as a great rock and roll record — it comes along at just the moment when you'd almost given up on anyone but the old stand-bys doing anything inventive with the form. Petty uses stinging guitars and whiplash organ, a solid backbeat and steady bass and he makes those instruments mesh masterfully, almost as a single instrument, which is a hallmark of most great post-Spector rock and roll.

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

Tom Petty seems something new, a straight-forward, emotionally involved rocker.

Even Petty's singing, dramatic in an age when theatrics are out, fits into the rock tradition better than the more directly R&B derived singing or someone like James Chance-White. And though what Petty is singing apparently strikes some as not terribly meaningful ("...whether he has anything to say remains shrouded in banality," proclaims Robert Christgau, dean of American Art-Rock Ideology), there is not much difference in purpose between a Petty song like "Only the Losers" or "Refugee" and the Clash's "Death or Glory" and "Stay Free."

But *London Calling* is a Critical Big Deal, while *Damn the Torpedoes* is accepted, if at all, as a nice job, a commercial breakthrough by a mere journeyman. Petty isn't taken as seriously as the Clash, as nearly as I can figure out, because his mode of expression (not what he is saying, but how he says it) defies current critical orthodoxy. The Clash, and most punk/new wave performers, are ironic and indirect; Petty, and the best mainstream rockers, pride themselves on being straight-forward and emotionally involved. It's ice vs. fire, with ice, as always, a lot easier to handle — or at least explain. Petty is also erotic in a way that even the most sexually-obsessed new wavers (Elvis Costello, Chrissie Hynde) are incapable of being; it's easier to defend his more narrative music, but I'd also like to throw in some praise for "Here Comes My Girl," a genuine love song in an era without any.

It's interesting to note that Petty was regarded as — almost — a New Wave performer himself, until *Damn the Torpedoes* was played extensively on the radio, and accepted by mainstream listeners. (It will be even more interesting to note how many current Clash fanatics defect if and when *their* music ever goes Top Ten.) Despite their leftist rhetoric, this is only the latest symptom of the unwillingness of most rock critics to be found in the company of what many of them would snobbishly categorize as "the punters."

There's nothing new about this attitude — you don't even have to look at the common Seventies examples (David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen) to find a parallel. Such elitism has been built into every trendy avant-garde rock movement since the psychedelic era. Tom Petty, in fact, is merely the inheritor of the John Fogerty Syndrome. The

continued on next page

achievements of Creedence Clearwater Revival achieve more resonance with each passing year, and the recordings of Fillmore heroes like the Grateful Dead grow more lacklustre. But it would be a mistake to forget that during CCR's actual reign on the Top 40 charts, Fogerty's work was regarded as too simplistic (he made great singles, not concept albums *per se*), and insufficiently experimental (he played rock and roll, four to the bar with very little extended soloing) to merit serious "artistic" consideration.

In fact, the argument for punk-rock's complete demolition of the mainstream rock aesthetic (which is what allows critics like Christgau to dismiss Petty so cavalierly) is itself founded in a maze of contradictions. The new wave aestheticians don't automatically dismiss commercial success as a criterion of lasting importance — that's part of the reason for the excitement over *London Calling*, which made the Clash the first hardcore punk band to make the U.S. Top 40. Nor have the current new wavers completely rejected studio craft and technique — everyone is willing to acknowledge Guy Stevens' contribution to professionalizing the Clash's sound, and although it's harder to admit, no one could readily deny that Nick Lowe's Ball

ALLAN TANNENBAUM

of Gauze is precisely what's prevented Elvis Costello's *Get Happy* from connecting as powerfully as last year's *Armed Forces*. One can hardly claim that Petty has sold out by becoming No. 2 instead of No. 32, and to maintain that Jimmy Iovine's extension of the Spector/Springsteen Wall of Sound is inferior to Stevens' mere competence serves only to reveal the essential ignorance of most critics about what's really involved in contemporary record production. However slick it may seem, Iovine's production style is utterly inconceivable in any genre other than rock and roll.

In the early Seventies, when Lester Bangs and myself, among others, developed the pre-Sex Pistols theory of punk rock, it was designed to challenge critical heterodoxy — our argument was that what occured slightly beneath the surface of the big trends was, in fact, what rock was really about, and that the kind of musical tastefulness and competence then in vogue was aesthetically contradictory to the natal impulses of rock and roll.

So it's especially interesting to me that Bangs defends the current rock avant-garde not as rockers but as "punk jazz" — although not nearly so interesting as it might be to read what a jazz-based critic would have to say about the validity of such music in the jazz tradition. But no one has yet built a case for Pere Ubu as a more logical heir of Elvis Presley than Tom Petty. Recovering my assertiveness, I'd like to challenge someone to try.

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POPSTERS TURN PUNKSTERS

Linda wants to be a Punk Rocker; Billy joins up, too, as popsters turn to punksters all over the map.

By Mark Mehler

The Corvette cruised gently up Topanga Canyon. The brunette in the passenger seat absent-mindedly fingered the silk purse on her lap. As the car rounded a sharp curve, she spotted the billboard, flush against the pale autumn sky. A rodent-looking man she recognized as Elvis Costello was pointing an angry finger. He was dressed in top hat and red, white and blue sports jacket. "The new wave army wants a few good men — and women," said the sign. The brunette thought a moment and squeezed the driver's arm. "Jerry," she said, "take me back to L.A."

Hours later, she was standing over the desk of the recruiting sergeant at Record One Studios. The sergeant's face was tired and sallow, but his eyes were narrow and crafty. "I'm here to enlist in the new wave army, Sgt. Asher," she spat across the desk. The sergeant paused and stopped breathing through his mouth. He surveyed her like a jeweler appraising a stone. "You're a little gray around the gills for new wave," he slurred. "I'm ready to rock & roll," said the brunette, noticing that her nail polish had changed hue in the amber fluorescent light. "Okay," shot back the sergeant. "Be here tomorrow to start recording." He clicked his teeth together and left the room. Outside, the brunette hugged her escort. "Jerry," she cried, "it's good to be living in the U.S.A." The next day she threw away her roller skates forever.

Like the new action Army, of course, the new wave army is yesterday's news wrapped in glossier newsprint. But by creating a faddish layer around rock & roll, the record industry encourages easy access from without. Time was that rock & roll was the sole province of the wimps and punks; the kids who used it to live out their dreams, ennobling themselves without transcending the sublimely ridiculous. Today, there is money to be made in Attitude. Consumer tastes are changing faster than ever, and right now rock & roll's what they're buying. Just as disco was a way to incorporate R&B artists into the commercial mainstream, new wave is a means of including the pop world (Love to market ya, baby.). Attitude, then, must be something you can pick up as quickly as a guitar chord. It must be like going to law school; something you can conquer without it conquering you. (power pop?). There are a lot of people who consider this a perversion of the spirit of 50's and 60's rock, rather than a reaffirmation (as new wave so bills itself). Personally, I can't see how you can learn an attitude, let alone a feeling.

Billy Joel and the aforementioned Linda Ronstadt come to rock & roll late in life, from widely divergent pop backgrounds — Joel from a slick cabaret cynicism, Ronstadt from a C&W/folk vulnerability. Both have had difficult climbs to pop stardom and are understandably concerned about protecting their flanks in the present economy. Neither has had his life saved by rock & roll, but both are desirous of making good in a new mode. Both have been influenced by the back to basics movement.

LYNN GOLDSMITH

Vocals as if she's late for the hairdresser.

Of the two, Linda Ronstadt is pursuing the new wave rock muse far more aggressively, but with considerably less perspective and commercial savvy. Her new LP, *Mad Love*, forsakes craft for a patchwork effect, the way kids in the 60's desecrated new blue jeans for a worn look. Linda and her producer, Peter Asher, often mistake sloppiness and speed for power and grit. Either Linda growls her vocals with Jaggerish insouciance ("Justine") or rattles them off as though she's late for the hairdresser. There is an unspoken equation of sloppiness with sluttishness. Still, nobody is going to compare Ronstadt with Rita Hayworth, despite lines like "I like the way you dance/the way you spin/And how do I make you."

Though her brilliant, low soprano cuts cleanly when not wallowing in vibrato, Linda simply can't find the feeling. It's clear why she has been accused of singing "at a song" instead of inside it. It is almost painful to hear her attack Elvis Costello's "Party Girl" so enthusiastically and yet miss the pathos so completely. It is annoying to listen to her steamroll her way through Costello's

continued on page 75

Billy Joel has a better time rocking, pushing his guitarists more out front.

STEPHANIE CHERNIKOWSKI

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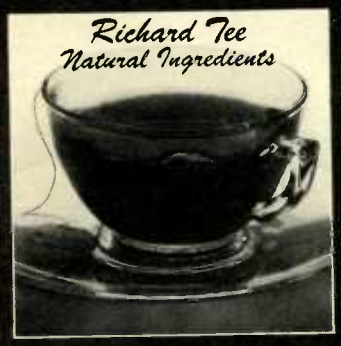

Richard's second album features all the ingredients to make this a very strong date: he's joined by Eric Gale, Ralph MacDonald, Tom Scott, Steve Gadd and Hugh McCracken. The album also marks Richard's singing debut. Produced by Bob James.

Ralph MacDonald appears courtesy of Marlin Records, a division of T.K. Productions, Inc.

"There are many good tunes, honey, left in this old violin," sings Alberta Hunter. And the 85-year-old legend proves, with her new compositions and recordings, there isn't a singer around who is deeper into the blues. Produced by John Hammond.

Freddie loosens up with his lean quintet plus some special guests on an album with a feel Freddie calls "Skagly." The key to the name lies somewhere in the leader's clean attack, smooth soloing, and low, slow fire — and in the late-night lively things they get him into.

Leonard Feather said of Bobby Hutcherson's last album for Columbia, "[It] brings together all the elements necessary...to produce a perfect jazz album." Bobby's new one adds another—guest guitarist John Abercrombie. You can imagine that the interplay gets "Un Poco Loco."

John Abercrombie appears courtesy of ECM Records.

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Flora Purim appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records, Inc.
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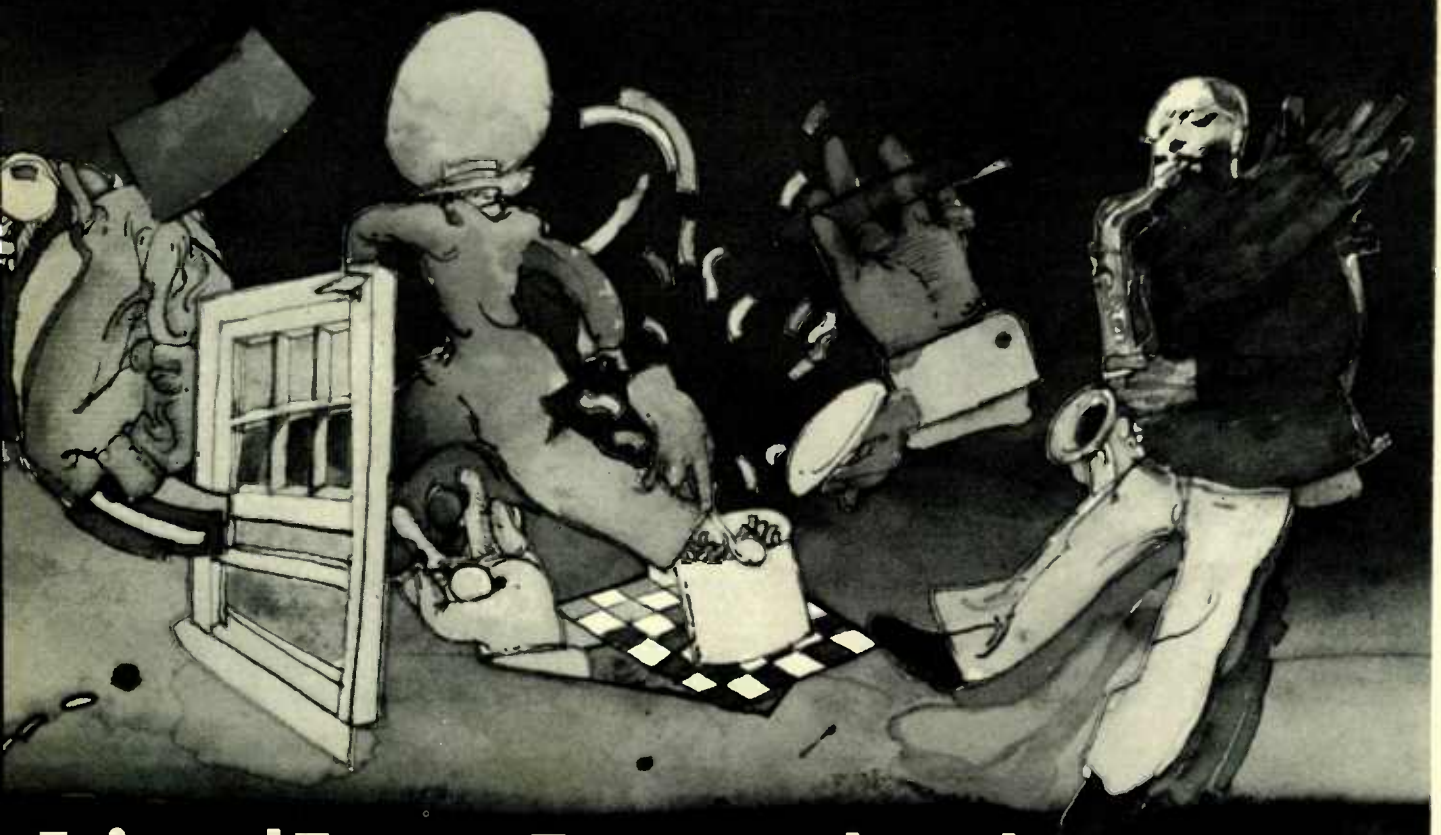
The second album from the astonishing musical group known as Irakere, Cuba's leading progressive band. The group's first U.S. album was a Grammy winner. Their second offering continues the transformation of jazz, salsa and rock into a sound John Storm Roberts described as "like nothing ever attempted here."

An awesome piece for symphony orchestra and jazz soloists that celebrates a uniquely American music. Patrick Williams conducts The London Symphony Orchestra featuring Phil Woods, Dave Grusin, Grady Tate and Chuck Domanico in the composition nominated for a Pulitzer prize.

Dave Grusin appears courtesy of Grusin-Rosen Productions.

The debut recording from the band that's performed with Norman Connors, the well-known drummer and producer. Norman produced "Celestial Sky" with a rich, funky sound that's as deep and intoxicating as night itself.

Norman Connors appears courtesy of Arista Records, Inc.



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I HAVE SEEN THE PAST OF ROCK N' ROLL AND IT IS

ZZ TOP

By Lester "Chili Dog" Bangs

Chances are you think ZZ Top are just another schlocky arena-slotted power trio, grinding out stale boogies for your archetypal toilet-ful of soporonic teenage cretins, a unit more renowned for toting rattlesnakes in plastic cages around the stages of the world with them than the honorifics accruing to their chops, three fuzzy galoots who — face it — might as well be Status Quo in jive li'l cowboy hats.

If that's your take on them, you better clear the snot out of your ears. I have seen rock's past and it is ZZ Top, which hotrods the present good as it wants with snapping carburetors, so who needs the future (which we all know doesn't exist anyway)?

I'll be the first to admit that I was once an unbeliever too. In the five years I was an editor at *Creem*, which bills itself "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine," I never made it to see ZZ Top once, and when their albums came in I routinely assigned them for review and forgot about them. They certainly had nothing to say to my current and ongoing condition of existential despair (even when I *thought* getting laid was The Answer, I didn't want to hear about it in music), and was breaking possibly less than zero new sonic ground. As a guitarist friend of avant-garde bent said to me yesterday while handing back the copy of *Deguello*, ZZ's new album which I'd loaned him: "They're obviously morons."

I think a lot of this snobbery is geographic, but more of it is generic — even when us Northern rock critics and hipster musicians were into heavy metal, we had contempt for that lowest of all forms, the "boogie band." Punk rock was *creatively* cretinous, whereas what had come to be known as "boogie" just seemed mechanical beyond any redeeming crassness.

Meanwhile, ZZ Top just kept releasing gold and then platinum albums and selling out tours, climaxing with the 1976 Worldwide Texas Tour, which made them eleven and a half million dollars, utilizing five semi's weighing a total of 75 tons just to tote around cacti, two sidewinders, a buzzard, a longhorn steer, a genuine American buffalo (all these critters living, though caged) and a 35-ton, 3,000 square foot stage in the shape of the Lone Star State. Add cowboy hats and Nudie suits to this menagerie and you had a band that *had* to be jive.

CHARLYN ZLOTNICK

The three-piece ZZ Top play with a ferocity and cohesion few bands ever achieve.

So far gone was I into this snobbery (which is probably shared by the editors of this publication) [Not true, why, my wife was born in Texas. *Ed.*] that I didn't even notice that ZZ Top disappeared from concert halls for three years and recording studios for almost five. In the meantime, of course, New Wave happened, and one of the side effects of New Wave was that even as it revealed many of the decade's superstar bands for the bloated monstrosities that they were, it also opened you up in a way that was almost perverse to the fact that there was no reason to be stuck up about good music of any kind, that the mainstream and outer space were equally valid and might even be the same place in the end. In rejecting everything that had come *just* before them, New Wavers stumbled upon their own roots, as the Chuck Berry guitar sound of the Sex Pistols and just about any cut on the new Clash album attest. Besides which the snobbery of a lot of these groups pretending to be playing music that was genuinely new while remaining old-fashioned as hell (from Televison to the Police) was enough to drive you back to Glenn Miller.

Into the middle of all this, late last year, came *Deguello*, a scorcher that pulled off that near-miracle of taking those same old blues licks and hurling them back at you with enough intensity and conviction to razor off your lobes. Guitarist Billy Gibbons, bassist Dusty Hill and drummer Frank Beard play with a ferocity and cohesion that few bands ever achieve, and what once seemed like a routine blues-metal linkup now stands revealed as drawing on a richer tradition of American music and experience. This seems partly attributable to the introduction of saxophones the bandmembers taught themselves to play on certain songs, partly to what I would call a deeper extension of their songs' subject matter into *pachuko* / low-rider consciousness, partly to the fact that, as *Dallas Morning News* writer Pete Oppel correctly pointed out, ZZ Top are not so much a blues or boogie band as "a Texas highway band .... ZZ Top understands the blues form, especially the new West highway blues, better than

continued on next page

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any of the heavy metal bands out of the Midwest or Southern California. To these other bands, road songs are tales of backstages and hotel rooms. To ZZ Top, a road song is of being arrested while driving blind, of picking up hitchhikers named Precious and Grace, of spending time on America's roads."

At a recent concert at San Francisco's Cow Palace they played with what can only be called a *friendly* frenzy — the music was blistering and loud as they come, but there was a warmth between the band and their audience, an absolute absence of superstar condescension that gave a rare feeling of concert camaraderie to everyone present. I usually hate power trios and almost always find myself truly uptight in arenas, but ZZ Top put out such a big sound, and Gibbons' solos were so commanding yet economical and un-ego-aggrandizing, that you didn't miss that other guitar;

It was a great show from a band who at this point should have no trouble proving to even the most jaded and skeptical that they *deserve* their position as one of the most popular live acts in the world, and when I met them at the after-gig party I found them to be as friendly, unaffected and conversationally reciprocal a bunch of rockstars as I've ever (rarely, believe me) met in my life. The next morning we sat down over Pina Colada breakfasts for this interview:

BANGS: It seems to me that there are two kinds of musicians: those who believe that rock or anything is a definite form with strict rules that must be followed, and those who ignore the rules and may even break the form, just doing whatever they feel like.

FRANK: We subscribe more to the latter theory: just do what feels right. We may have certain little pieces that are like touchstones to us, but it's fairly unorganized as far as amounts of time, and even changes sometimes, progressions are thrown out. A chord will feel good, we'll come up to a part in the song and one night it might last ten seconds, the next night it might last ten minutes, just depending on how it goes. And that, for us, keeps it interesting night after night. Sometimes the songs are like these suites, these medleys, and sometimes they're just little AM two minute 45 second songs.

DUSTY: I sat in with Lightnin' Hopkins one time, and there are certain rules, or there's supposed to be, when you make the next chord change, and he doesn't subscribe to that. I was sittin' in this club talking to somebody and he was sittin' behind me and I didn't know it, and I said "It's really strange, he doesn't change right." And he tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Lightnin' changes where Lightnin' *wants* to change." He said, "I wrote the song, I can rewrite it ever' night." I said, "Okay," 'cause there was no arguin' with that.

BANGS: How long did you spend on the new album?

DUSTY: Actual recording time, fourteen days. If you don't get it by the third take, you might as well put it on the shelf and come back to it another day, because it's not gonna sound good.

FRANK: If it does sound good you won't know it. The first song we did on this album was "She Don't Love Me, She Love My Automobile," and it more or less set the tone of the record: we set up, plugged in, ran it down once for levels, did the take, went into the control room and our producer said: "That's it; let's go on to number two." It wasn't like, "That's great, but let's try for the better one."

BANGS: So why did you guys take three years off?

FRANK: We just kinda got let loose and took advantage of our situation.

DUSTY: None of us were physically or mentally ill, or too awful drug down by everything. We'd just been tourin' for a lotta years pretty strong and heavy and needed some time off, and one thing led to another.

BANGS: Sometimes I wish the music was a little more psychotic, atonal. Do you have any interest in moving in that direction?

BILLY: Well, we watch with great interest all the new developments: New Wave, No Wave, etc. I got a real nice collection of cover art if nothing else. But it's hard to say what it could mean to ZZ Top. We'll probably get on it after it's...

BANGS: Dead.

BILLY: (Laughter) Right.

BANGS: Like Elmore James.

BILLY: (Laughter) Right, right. Yeah, but if you get on somethin' far enough behind, there's a chance that you might be so far back that you're ahead of the next one. So I don't know if it'll ever come to that, but there's definitely some manic stuff goin' on up there, that the psychosis is pretty valid.

BANGS: Do you find that some people think your music must be lousy because you're so popular?

BILLY: (Laughs) Oh yeah! I've run into that! Also there's a certain faction that really think we're simpletons, you know what I mean?

BANGS: Well, you're from Texas, aren't ya? It's like Lenny Bruce said about L.B.J.: it was his sound: "Folks, ah think new-clear fission —" "Shut up, schmuck, you don't think nothin'!"

FRANK: We have got the typical Texan attitude, though, that anybody from Texas thinks that everybody *else* is out of it!

BANGS: Let's talk about sex. This stockings song, did you ever have the desire to put the things on yourself?

BILLY: I have worn 'em. Ike Turner gave me my first pair of pantyhose.

BANGS: Does he wear 'em too?

continued on page 90

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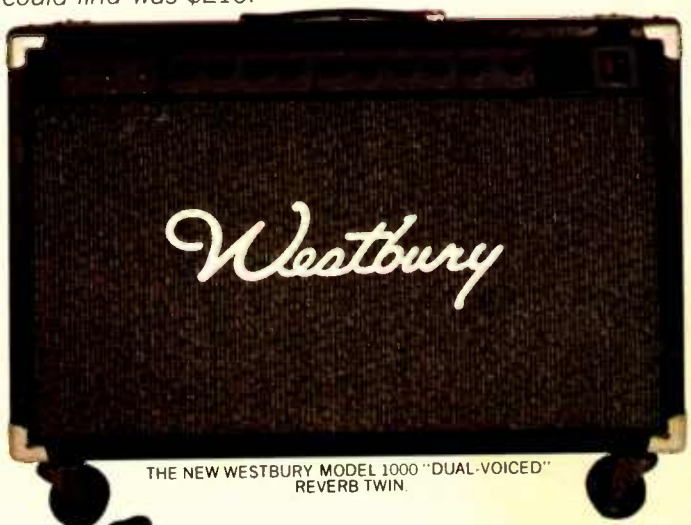

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MONGOLIA: MUSIC FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME

The eternal sounds of the steppes; of wind through empty skulls. There's nothing like the oldest songs.

By Brian Cullman

For Americans, Mongolian music is probably the strangest and most foreign in the world. The Beatles and Ravi Shankar introduced Indian music; Bela Bartok used Hungarian harmonies in his work; much of African, Brazilian, and Cuban music has found its way into jazz; Theodorakis popularized Greek dance music with his score for *Zorba the Greek*; Phillip Glass and Steve Reich borrow the form (without the substance) of Javanese gamelan music (just as every belly dancing joint worthy of a belly borrows the nasal epilepsy that's on the surface of much Middle Eastern music); and on and on. But Mongolian music remains apart, solitary. And it sounds like the oldest music in the world.

More than anything else, it is a music based on listening; on the singer or the player listening to and drawing from the sounds around him, and then opening himself to all of these. An accomplished Mongolian singer is expected to be able to imitate the clear gurgling of streams, leaves falling from trees onto a still pond, "the gentle soughing of the wind in the rushes of the river bank and the mystic echoes of eternity issuing from the invisible interior of the conch." And before building and learning to play the traditional four-stringed violin or two-stringed khuur, he is expected to learn the mysteries of acoustics by studying the sound effects "that the wind could coax from the hollow interiors of human and animal skulls."*

This is not only back-to-basics; it was probably the basis for the first music ever played and sung. As any good Pythagorean or astro-physicist knows, the universe is in a constant hum, with notes and vibrations abounding. And there must have been a time, back in the non-electric world, when one of our fathers, frightened by the moon and frightened when there was no moon, sat wrapped in skins listening to the wind on the water and the waves foaming at the shore and, not knowing who or what he was, without a mirror to tell him he was not wind or water, not knowing that his children in time would be friars and barbers and stockbrokers, and not beaches and planets and clouds, tried to make himself one with the wind and the water by drawing their breath and their sounds out of himself.

Mongolian singers sound like leaves falling, rushes on the river and the invisible echoes inside conch shells.

In the midst of ever-expanding complexities, it's sometimes hard to sort out what the initial impulse was and separate it from all of the confusion and detritus that can surround it. If one day you meet the obscure object of your desire and fall madly in love, your first impulse will probably be to hold them, caress them, and cling to them — not necessarily to go into a limited partnership whereby you jointly own a house in Connecticut, a closet full of Tupperware, five children who like to eat the carpets, relatives from upper New Jersey who spill coffee on your Nakamichi every third Sunday of the month, and a cocker spaniel named Butch. You might wake up one day and wonder what happened.

So in music, in the midst of syn-drums, poly moogs, aural exciters, session guitarists with stratocasters, strato-blasters, phasers, compressors, flangers, power boosts, and that non-stop 4/4 boogie beat, it's sometimes hard to hear that first man sitting alone in the dark struggling to sing the wind and the water. Any anything that can remind us of him, give him back to us, just might be of value.

Mongolian music seems to provide a source back to the first impulses of music. Primarily a vocal music, the various flutes and violins (all with their various names and tonal idiosyncracies) directly imitate the sound of the human voice — a reminder that instruments were originally conceived as extensions of the voice, and that a good player was not necessarily someone who could play particularly fast or with accumulated technique (though some of that was obviously important), but someone who could make their instrument "speak."

The play and invention in the music is sometimes staggering; there is a sense of hearing a people totally unaware of rules and limitations which we take for granted. In Houmii music (sometimes known as Mouth music), Mongolians seem to overcome the natural limitations of the human voice, so that one man is able to sing in two voices at the same time. One of these is a single prolonged droning fundamental tone above which a high flutelike melody spins and curves. The sound is an imitation of the overtones produced by a Jew's harp, but Mongolians create the same effect by a method of tensing their vocal chords and pressing air through them with tremendous force.

With most of the singing done outdoors in the deserts and the plains, the singers turn their bodies into acoustic spaces, making their whole bodies (not just the chest cavities) resonators. This gives an unusual freedom and openness to the sound, somewhat reminiscent of the best R&B and spirituals, both in the sound and in

continued on page 75

NEW YORK NOTEBOOK

Great Critical Controversy, a be-bop tour with some old friends and Blythe's brand new band.

By Gary Giddins

It has always been fashionable to decry the New York Critics, and not least the New York Jazz Critics — as if those whose fate it is to write about jazz in the depressed canyons of this once noble metropolis were an anonymous troop, a fascist cadre that meets every week to decide who should be written about and how. I'm not sure why this prejudice exists, nor which of us are included in the catch-all phrase — the New York Critics — since the first thing a New York critic notices about his colleagues is that there is an awful lot of disagreement. And diversity. But then every critical school has had it share of critics who believe that they alone have stumbled onto the truth and can safely categorize their forebears and contemporaries with offhanded generalizations. It gets pretty tiresome if you believe, as I do, that some of the best music criticism written in this century is about jazz. Well, here I was about to launch this column about jazz in New York — where, as it happens, more jazz is played than anywhere else, hence the preponderance of reviewers — when I felt a draft from the very pages of this magazine.

The April-May issue found the estimable Lester Bangs categorizing decades of jazz criticism in an otherwise insightful article called "Free Jazz Punk Rock." Bangs didn't refer to the New York critics, but to a historic contingent known as "a lot of people." I've been reading jazz criticism assiduously for 17 years, and I don't remember it being as consistently wrongheaded or snobbery-afflicted as Lester reports. He refers to "the old argument (which should never have been an argument in the first place) about who was better, Miles Davis or Dizzy Gillespie." So far as I know, this argument never did take place. I've never encountered it among critics or fans, and only once in print — in a liner note in which Ralph J. Gleason mentioned "some nut" who raised the question at a press conference. Lester not only brings it up, but has an answer: Diz has more chops, but Miles "changed our lives." Who does he mean by "our"? Dizzy certainly changed as many people's lives as Miles — indeed he changed Miles' life; on the other hand, Miles may have lacked Dizzy's speed and range, but he innovated tonal colors beyond Dizzy's reach. Gillespie could no more "wipe the floor" with Davis than Art Tatum could with Thelonious Monk. Bangs went on to say that "a lot of people" didn't like early Miles or early Coltrane (shades of *Lust for Life* and *Moulin Rouge*!), ignoring a lot of people who did.

TOM COPI

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Cecil Taylor (left) is defended from slander while Barry Harris (right) and Clifford Jordan perfectly describe be-bop maturity.

It may be true that "a lot of people into jazz" snooted "imperiously" at R&B, but most didn't, so what's the point? The first serious rock criticism I ever read (1967, I think) was by Martin Williams, and jazz critics — Dan Morgenstern and Stanley Dance among the most prominent — have always tried to pull their readers' coats to R&B. I don't know a single jazz critic who doesn't dig Chuck Berry, and far from deploring Coltrane's walking-the-bar years, jazz fans — unreconstructed liberals for the most part — love to recount his humble roots. The point is this: Lester Bangs' valuable ears should be insured with Lloyds of London, and he doesn't have to simplify or distort the enthusiasms and apprehensions of the jazz audience to justify his own. And it *is* a distortion to remark on Downbeat critics who "regularly slagged off classic albums," without mentioning other critics who were acrobats of hyperbolic advocacy. Anyway, a thoughtful conservatism is not necessarily a greater sin than radicalism in things aesthetic.

Which doesn't mean that the radicals and conservatives shouldn't be at each other's throats. By way of example, and to prove that the New York Critics are not interchangeable, let's advance on the throat of my distinguished colleague at the *New York Post*, Richard Sudhalter, whose review of Cecil Taylor's engagement at Fat Tuesday's — "An Angry Taylor at Fat Tuesday's" — caused much consternation. I encountered it on the last night of the gig, when Werner Uehlinger's Hat Hut records was recording an edition of the Unit that included two drummers (Jerome Cooper and Sunny Murray) as well as Jimmy Lyons, Ramsey Ammeen, and Alan Silva: Taylor was late, but the room was throbbing to a couple of copies of Sudhalter's article, which were passed from table to table.

Combining sociology, psychology, the hint of personal contretemps, and very little musical commment, Sudhalter asserted that Taylor "is an angry man . . . that the rage and scorn vented so freely by American blacks a decade and more ago has become, in Taylor's case, the substance of the man," that Taylor achieved "cult status" by "acting out his hatred," that his music is "sardonic, beyond sincerity, capricious, cruel" and "demeans the historical nobility and aesthetic imperatives of music making by perverting them," and that, therefore, he should be "called to account." Nevertheless, "Cecil Taylor is a compelling, intense creator."

You'd think the club was filled with

continued on page 86

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FACES

STEVE CARAWAY

FRANK ZAPPA

When PSA flight 294 from Sacramento touched down in San Francisco Monday afternoon, March 31, its bewildered passengers stepped off the ramp to discover some twenty members of the U.S. Navy Band, dressed in full regalia, waiting at attention. As the 707's last passenger deboarded, the sailors broke into a spirited arrangement of "Joe's Garage," and the Central Scrutinizer himself, Frank Zappa, took the helm to conduct.

Zappa (whose new single is entitled "I Don't Wanna Get Drafted") was in town to play three shows — two at Berkeley's Community Theater, on April Fool's Day, and one at Stanford University, April 3. Each show was well-attended (Berkeley's second show was a sell-out), meaning that Zappa performed in front of approximately 10,000 fans in all.

For his first American tour in nearly two years Zappa put together a blues-oriented, guitar-dominated sextet consisting of himself, Ike Willis and Ray White (guitars), Tommy Mars (keyboards), Arthur Barrow (bass), and David Logeman (drums). With Willie (from *Joe's Garage*) and White (from the *Zappa In New York* period) singing alone or in unison with Frank, this is perhaps the strongest band, vocally, Zappa's ever had. The first fourteen songs of Zappa's set have either not yet appeared on record — although "Easy Meat," "Bamboozled By Love," and "The Meek Shall Inherit Nothing" all go back a couple of years — or were composed just prior to the tour. Surprisingly, the audience was more than patient with the unfamiliar material; they seemed genuinely interested in hearing what Zappa has been up to lately.

The show's opener, the hysterically redundant "Teenage Wind," sounds like the theme song for a grade B motorcycle movie; Frank's C&W parody, "I'll Be Harder Than Your Husband To Get Along With," is so subtle it could probably make it onto country airwaves; and in "Mud Club" Zappa acknowledges the New Wave which seems to have adopted him as a father figure.

The hour-and-a-half set (with no breaks between numbers) culminated with "I Don't Wanna Get Drafted," "Joe's Garage," and "Why Does It Hurt When I Pee," with Zappa encoring with "Dancing Fool," "Bobby Brown" (both from *Sheik Yerbouti*), and his stunning guitar instrumental, "Black Napkins" (from *Zoot Alures*).

Zappa's guitar playing is one of the invariable pleasant surprises for those who have never seen him perform live. Why he has never been included with the Becks, Pages, and Claptons is one of the great mysteries of rock and roll. The other unexpected pleasure of a Frank Zappa concert is the emergence of Zappa the master of ceremonies. While offstage he has been described with terms like aloof, cynical, occasionally hostile, onstage he's as accomodating as they come — mugging for photographers, shaking hands with anyone who can reach past the monitors, and accepting all variety of gifts (flowers, thrift shop glad rags, even a demo tape).

But whether he's singing, conducting, playing guitar, or just goofing off, Zappa is always in total command. For a so-called freak, he puts on one of the most professional shows in pop music. — *Dan Forte*

EBET ROBERTS

THE PRETENDERS

Chrissie Hynde's got nothing to prove. Her band, the Pretenders, has a debut LP in the top ten, and it's doubtless the only album that high on the charts to boast such odd meters as 27/4 ("The Phone Call") or 15/4 ("Tattooed Love Boys"). Hynde is the brains behind those beats; she's also a sultry voice in front of them, singing tough lyrics without self-consciousness, not giving an inch toward simper or shriek. Onstage at the Olympic-sized Emerald City club in Cherry Hill, N.J., Hynde doesn't pretend to be one of the boys or descend to hip-flipping — she takes herself for granted.

Almost. Without undue fuss, she makes clear that many of her songs are cliche-free cautionary tales about that modern cliche: survival, specifically survival as a woman. Throughout the set, she addresses the (suburban mixed) crowd as "girls"; she dedicates "Brass in Pocket" not to the singles-bar clientele it seems to be aimed at, but to anyone who's worked as a waitress. Before the band plays "Tattooed Love Boys," she asks if there are any bikers in the audience, hears a few shouts, then explains that the song isn't for bikers, but for any girl who's been beaten up by the same man more than once.

The band negotiates the time changes in grand style, so well the crowd doesn't notice that they end up dancing on offbeats. Drummer Martin Chambers has found a post-disco rock approach; reversing rock conventions, the bass drum hits every beat (a la disco) while the rest of the kit is used only for accents. Hynde's voice isn't always on pitch (the fault of the monitors?), but her phrasing and the cool assurance of her presence make up for inaccuracies. In fact, Hynde is so interesting to watch that she upstages guitarist James Honeyman Scott — a teen idol in England — even when she plays backup during his instrumental features. When you're as good as Chrissie Hynde, you don't have to show off. — *Jon Pareles*

TERJE RYPDAL

Terje Rypdal's got a lot of guts to come and play his music in places like the Bottom Line. One of the few fusion players who approaches jazz from a rock standpoint, he's created an emotional and contemplative music that answers almost none of the demands of live performance. There's no beat, so you can't dance to it. There's no room for the heroic posture of the traditional jazz soloist, much less the grosser theatrics of rock. Three men walk on stage, tune up, and begin playing before you know it. Jon Christensen's ransom thumps on the drums blend into an almost-random pulse, then Palle Mikkelborg picks up his amplified wah-wah trumpet for some blips and bleeps that announce "Circles," a piece from the latest ECM album. Rypdal sits on a stool, stares at the floor, and plays as much with his feet and battery of pedals as with his hands and guitar. All those fuzztones, phasers, echoes and wah-wahs tend to magnify every note to the point where any dissonance becomes a Gotterdammerung, any major triad a Hallelujah. But Rypdal uses rock technology with remarkable restraint, punctuating soft organ-like swells with bluesy flashes, bends that begin and end between pitches, and atonal feed-

back effects. He and his partners are too busy listening — to the music, to each other, to what comes next — to relate to the audience. They are casting themselves adrift in the music with only a few chords and a feeling of rightness to guide them and hoping to find a way to order, to bring some kind of organic shape to this near chaos.

Tonight, it's not working. Most of the audience isn't really listening, the sound men are still adjusting the monitors, Rypdal has to stop in the middle of a solo when his vibrato bar pulls the strings out of tune. There's just too much in the way to hear the next phrase, so the band keeps drifting without direction or focus until Mikkelborg abandons his pallid Milesisms for the synthesizer and the three chord theme to "Spiel." Finally, Rypdal can stop trying to accompany his own solo, he begins to relax, leave some space, and get into something, but the set is over. It has sounded like a forty-minute warmup.

Maybe it was. I heard a rumor that the second set was one of the best received jazz performances ever at the Bottom Line. But if you want to see musicians who take chances you have to take a chance yourself. *Descendre*, the album these three men recorded, shows that the isolation of the studio suits Rypdal's music better than a crowded night club. My living room late at night by candlelight suits me better for listening to it anyway. — *Chris Doering*

TOM COPI

JAMES MOODY

James Moody is back in New York playing jazz, and this time he says it's for good. Like the recent return to New York of other master bebop saxophonists, Moody's reappearance after years of virtual hibernation in the Las Vegas Hilton International house band is nothing less than a milestone. Students packed the clubs hoping to glean inspiration and knowledge from the veteran; his contemporaries showed up to welcome him back to the flock; and the more casual listeners simply basked in the music and the atmosphere.

Rising to the occasion, the former Gillespie associate was in excellent form as he played to full houses for a week at Sweet Basil and the following weekend at Gulliver's in West Paterson, N.J. Although he featured the same basic material each performance, his vital flow of ideas and his mixture of jocularity and personal warmth, kept each show fresh. Not to mention the fact the fact than an evening with Moody is a master class in bop.

Setting an aura of adrenalin rush from the start with his tenor on tunes like "Have You Met Miss Jones" and "St. Thomas," he displayed a thoughtful, poised, yet hard-driving bop conception which he punctuated with bluesy, tough tenor licks and screams delivered with gut-grabbing effectiveness. His solos were full of bop material strung together in extremely logical, personal and often surprising ways. At times he even ventured into passages suggesting Coltrane and paid homage to Rollins on "St. Thomas" with a solo replete with Rollinsish sound, phrasing, and thematic development. Throughout all Moody's playing ran an immaculate sense of swing.

Switching to alto for sensitive renditions of ballads like "Moody's Mood For Love," he explored the timbral possibilities of that instrument — going from a pure, delicate tone, to a harder-edged Parker sound, to raspy vocalized effects. As a flutist, Moody has few peers. His sound is rich and full, and his technique simply breathtaking. "Wave" and "Cherokee" (with a half-time introduction) were perfect showcases. His vocal on "Bennie's From Heaven" and his tune about daytime TV, although self-abasing by nature, were both quite good at times.

The rhythm section of pianist Mike Longo (also a Gillespie alumnus), bassist Paul Wess and drummer Wilby Fletcher (with Ben Riley taking over for the Gulliver's gig) was generally very solid. Longo has a light touch which contrasted nicely with Moody's fire, and he is a strong soloist and an imaginative accompanist. Providing unflagging support for the quartet, Wess, proved to be a near-perfect bassist for Moody. For my taste, the veteran Riley suited the genre better than the young Fletcher, but Fletcher is a fine, energetic drummer with a strong future ahead of him.

We should be hearing a lot more from Moody now. Keep your ears open. — *Cliff Tinder*

TETE MONTOLIU

I must admit to having heard Tete Montoliu on records for years without realizing how good his is. He seemed an unusually fluent bop pianist with an uncluttered melodic sense and a stirring touch on the instrument, but somehow I managed not to take sufficient notice. Recently he paid the United States a visit that ended abortively in New York but which included a solo concert in Boston University's Morse Hall and, my curiosity piqued by the promotional zeal of WBUR's Steve Elman, I conveyed my indolent body there and completed a corner of my education.

The blind Spanish pianist (who incidentally bears an astonishing resemblance to Kani Karaca, the blind Turkish singer of the Mevlevi Dervishes) began with a mid-tempo blues, improvised over the chords for a few choruses as if accompanied by rhythm, then switched to walking bass; his right-hand phrasing was pure Charlie Parker, but interesting in the way that Bird's was and very few other boppers' ever became. He followed with "I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry," ballad at beginning and end, stride in the middle. By the third tune, a fast "Have You Met Miss Jones," his hands had loosened up and the concert began in earnest. There were Tatumesque interpolations in the right hand and his in-tempo work was exceptionally fast and clean, but technique was never the point of what he was doing. This was bebop presented as a classical music — as, in fact, piano duos, most of them including Hank Jones, have been successfully presenting it on records recently — but the bird was not stuffed; it was alive. Montoliu followed "Jones" with a suite of Catalan songs, so thoroughly reharmonized they seldom sounded ec*ht*-Spanish, and including a blues section here and there. Whenever the music became very European and intense, Montoliu bopped it, but there was never a sense of dilettantism or "fusion," only invention and natural ease. He finished the set — "And now a lettle bebop, eh?" — with "Hot House." He was not only getting faster but more imaginative.

By the second set, when it was clear that he had already wrapped the audience around his little finger, Montoliu did get a little coy here and there (technical displays, a couple of sight gags), but there was also a great "Confirmation." He ran the obstacle course of "Giant Steps" as if it were the primrose path, and toward the end of the evening played the best thing he would all night, his own "Apartment 512." What did he run? He ran the *gamut*, ladies and gentlemen, of everything you can do on the piano, including the obligatory Cecil Taylor impression, but this was a giant at play, not some eager entertainer out to stun you to death. There was a blues section in the middle that was not an impression of the blues but the *Blues*, something we hardly expect from a European pianist and actually get from few Americans.

If you want to talk about mainstream jazz piano, you must now include this man in your discussion. Hank Jones and Tommy Flanagan, and all the great pianists whom lazy listeners ignore at their peril, have got company in the pantheon. — *V. Gaits*

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

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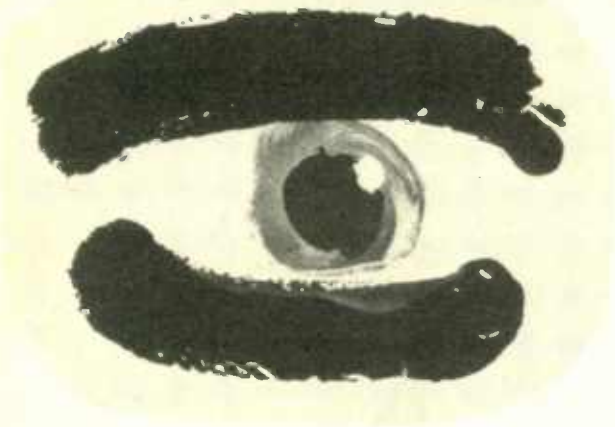


By Robert Fripp

Those magic moments; we all recognize when they strike, but where do they come from? Why some performers or concerts and not others? It's not just chance—energies, attitude, musical discipline and audience awareness are all factors, and we need to work them to make music that truly transcends.

Music can convey a sense of something not quite of this world. Probably any professional musician, and most of the music-going public, will have been touched by music in this sense on more than one occasion. However one would choose to express that experience, it is the kind of thing that keeps a musician working in poor conditions for years in the hope that whatever magic turned a routine gig into a memorable event might one day return. There would seem to be different degrees of magic, analogous to varying degrees of electric current. Given the universality of music, it follows that anyone can plug into that current, with the musician as the current's "conductor", simultaneously at the point of receptivity and transmission. Some particularly talented players achieve a high level of contact, either innately or through a period of training. Anyone touched deeply by music would probably acknowledge that music does at times have an objectivity or, in J. G. Bennett's words, can come from a place more real than life itself. For anyone with this conviction it follows that music of this nature is sacred and that performers with the capacity to turn on the current or, changing the metaphor, to open the door to another level of experiencing are, in effect, of the priesthood.

The proposition that Charlie Parker and Jimi Hendrix, two musicians indisputably in this category, were performers with access to a sacred dimension might to some seem blasphemous or at best absurd, especially given the wide publicity accorded the unrestrained private lives of each; but I would say that the current was too strong for the conductors carrying it, and that the struggle between man and music was too great to bear. In an electrical circuit an overload blows the fuse; in the human circuit an overload produces psychological distortion. In the cases of Parker and Hendrix the struggle killed each of them. Perhaps it would be less polemic to put forward the names of John Coltrane and Pablo Casals, Coltrane as someone who came to terms with the sacredness of his art but still died of the intensity, and Casals as a survivor.

In certain Eastern traditions of musical training, attention is paid to preparing the musician to handle the current. For example, a Sufi musician of my acquaintance who tours with the whirling dervishes of Konya spent the first three years of his training without an instrument he was preparing his personal note. The West has a different tradition that identifies the musician as the originator of music rather than as one who enables music to take place. This subjective approach in Western art has been reinforced by the Romantic notion of the artist starving in his garret, unmoved by coarse manoeuvres of daily circumstance and occasionally delivering new works of tormented genius. An elaborate industry structure underwrites the subjective approach; i.e. that "art" is personal property. The rock industry structure is as likely to confuse the rock musician as the Church's secular workings might confuse the penitent. In the rock world, much energy is expended on giving attention to the performers and acknowledging them as the source of their music. This is agreeable to all parties, since it appeals to the artist's conceit, enables the industry to manipulate any artist locked in a bubble of fatuous imagination and appeals to the industry's conceit to be involved with such a Big Artist. Additional reinforcement comes from the public

To counter this, one needs discipline. In the West, where we lack the tradition of objective art, those touched by the "otherness" of music are groping intuitively to find and express this in terms of our own cultural traditions, such as jazz, rock and electronic music. This seems far from our ingrained notions of sanctity or even political endeavour, yet it is my conviction that music has the capacity to radically change far more of ourselves and "the world" than we ordinarily believe. "Musical innovation is full of danger to the whole state, and ought to be prohibited . . . when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state always change with them" (Plato's *Republic III* 401 B.C.). For those who feel in need of an approach to music through training (and as one who began playing guitar while tone deaf and without a sense of rhythm I include myself), I suggest three disciplines: of the hands, the head and

the heart. Taken together these present the opportunity of becoming a musician, defined as a person who reconciles the problem of bringing music into audible range. The discipline of the hands has nothing at all to do with music: it is concerned with calisthenics. This involves an understanding of the body and how to use it in a relaxed way, breathing and developing a sense of oneself. The discipline of the head involves the vocabulary of music: melody, rhythm and harmony. As a young player I was taught the guitar by reference to musical examples such as "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean". This was very harmful. To develop all fingers equally, specific exercises are needed, and musical examples from earlier generations are rarely likely to offer this. More serious are the possibilities for bias through the musical language: as a beginner I could express myself only in terms of "My Bonnie" and its feeble companions, as this was the only course my hands and head knew. Most people are aware of the subtle conditioning effect of words and their emotional connotations, but the received syntax of music is no less restrictive. The mind should seek to know all the possibilities and so choose impartially the appropriate language for any particular idea to be expressed. With scales, this includes a knowledge of the traditional major and minor scales and modes based upon them, the synthetic scales (many derived from folk music) and their modes, and the harmonies based upon them. This is before one even turns to ragas, rhythm or Harry Partch. By extension this discipline involves an understanding of the mind and how to turn it off, how to program the mental computer with the quality of input it deserves and to get reliable print-out. Most important of all, to exercise the division of attention, without which little of value is possible. The discipline of the heart is the tradition lacking in the West; stated simply, this is how we work to maintain our wish to be musicians. Different musicians committed to this discipline would approach it in different ways. Of all the disciplines this is the most personal and difficult to discuss, but some system of meditation is central.

LYNN GOLDSMITH

In rock music an artist's image can become even more alive than the artist, acquiring a force greater than the music itself, as in Mick Jagger's case. To reach music of a higher order, however, performer and audience must abandon their mutual pretensions and exert themselves actively towards touching each others essence. Below Bob Seger and crowd working.

One school derived from Sufism presents a scheme of four worlds, three of which can be known by us: *alam-i ajsam*, the world of bodies, the *alam-i arvah*, the world of spirits, and the *alam-i imkan*, the world of the possible. In this scheme the fourth world is *lahut*, the unfathomable. One's body is the seat of insight into the *alam-i ajsam* and the discipline of the hands is concerned with this; one's head is the seat of insight into the *alam-i arvah*, the world of the psyche and the essence, and the discipline of the head can provide access to this; the heart is the seat of insight into the *alam-i imkan*, the world of creative existence (what we would generally call the "spiritual" world) and where music has an objective reality: the discipline of the heart can provide access to this. Music of the *alam-i ajsam* is mechanical, music of the *alam-i arvah* is interesting, but music of the *alam-i imkan* can change the course of one's life. Probably the determining characteristic of rock music is its connection with the area below the navel, and the characteristic of rock concerts is the remarkable amount of

ANDY FREEBERG/ENCORE

sexual energy generated. For the rock musician the challenge is to get the sexual energy up the spine (the yoga analogy is kundalini) and in the concert to use the energy in a positive fashion: consummation rather than masturbation.

A main aim of the small, mobile Frippertronics tour of Europe and America during 1979 was to find a different quality of relationship between audience and performer. Having toured extensively since 1969 I have noticed a degeneration in this relationship, particularly during the Autumn of 1971 and the Summer of 1972. This coincided historically with the replacement of the local happy hippy and polythene bag of grass, arriving to turn on the musos, by a slightly more wired character carrying white powder. The change in the musicians' performance was noticeable to me, an abstainer and critic, and from the performers' side the possibility for human contact diminished. That the audiences generally became less receptive I noticed as well. This was probably the result of three main factors: firstly, the increase in the size of the venue; secondly the acceptance of rock music as spectator sport where the performer provides excitement and the listener expects entertainment; thirdly, the vampiric relationship between performer and audience where each sucks up to the pretensions and conceits of the other. The listener also has three disciplines to help transform a rock concert from a mere occurrence into an event. Firstly, to maintain a sense of himself — even if dancing; secondly, to keep an open mind and to abandon the concrete collar of expectation; thirdly, to listen actively, which requires deliberate attention. The performer and listener each accept their roles, which does not imply any qualitative difference between them, only that each fulfills a necessary part of a pattern that enables an action to take place; in the present context what might emerge is music.

That part of the performer which is most accessible to the audience is their "image". In a real sense the artist's image is more alive than the artist: as a symbol it can be in more places at once than the artist, and the more attention given to this symbol the greater the force it acquires; it even lives beyond the artist's death. The confusion of finding that one's image is more real than oneself is a seeming contradiction which I believe has blown the fuses of many successful artists. The objectivity which one needs to cultivate towards this externalisation of oneself is part of the discipline of the head. The stronger the image becomes the greater the importance of earthing oneself, for example with the discipline of the hands. One can even have fun with the image by learning the language of fashion and stressing lawful discontinuities. Once this objectivity is cultivated one can step within this image and, most important, step outside it once the performance has finished. The amount of energy within an image can be quite remarkable and can enable one to do exceptional things while using it which might be impossible outside it. This energy is normally recognized as "charisma" and explains why "stars" are attractive. The greater the objectivity of the image — and by work upon the third discipline (of the heart) the musician can strengthen that objectivity by cleaning up his intentions as to how he will use its energy — the more possible it becomes for listeners to turn to that image for music. Also, according to several traditions, there is the possibility that this image can take on a life of its own which then serves as a channel for music. It is at just this point, with a channel for music open and an audience actively receptive, that something remarkable can happen, particularly in a rock context where a high amount of sexual (by definition creative) energy is raised. Where the performer and audience humor each others' pretensions the relationship does not go beyond the world of personalities; this has happened frequently in my experience. Where the performer and audience exert themselves actively they can touch each others' essence and actually change each other in a real way: this can be a kind of marriage. I have experienced this often and still feel connected in some way to nearly all the musicians with whom I have worked closely, even when I wish that were not so. If the connection is of a high order the musical performance becomes an event and generates a spirit of its own, e.g. Woodstock, which in physical terms was something of a disaster.

Until this point the music may have been mechanical or interesting, perhaps only an excuse to enable an event to take place. But at this point we might sense something of the objectivity of music, which comes and goes as the breeze. We cannot govern the breeze but we can learn how to raise the sail. This I have experienced, but infrequently.

In 1969 I suggested that one could be a rock musician without censoring one's intelligence. At a time when primitivism in rock was fashionable the idea was attacked as pretentious. Were I to suggest in 1980 that through music we have the capacity to realize a qualitative shift in human nature, probably the idea would attract the same hostility.

In silence exist all possibilities. Music is the cup which holds the wine of silence. Sound is that cup, but empty. Noise is that cup, but broken.

Perhaps I should shut up.

The Power That Kills

Musical genius has taken a heavy toll from Mozart to the present day. In the cases of Jimi Hendrix and Charlie

Parker the current was simply too strong for the conductors.

With John Coltrane, who died at 41, it was the sheer intensity of his music that

wore his body down. Pablo Casals lived into his 90's. perhaps because of the nature of classical music.

DARYL HALL

SOLO FLIGHT

Daryl Hall is the Renaissance man of pop, equally adept at handling Philly soul, mainstream pop and avant garde explorations. On his recent solo album* Sacred Songs *he blends them all together with impressive results.

By Roy Trakin

Daryl Hall answered the door to his luxury Christopher Street apartment with a brightly colored macaw perched on his shoulder.

"Say hello to Alice."

Walking into the tastefully decorated living room, I discovered "Alice's" feathered partner "Ralph" stretching his wings by flapping them wildly side to side. Hall carefully placed "Alice" next to "Ralph" on a bar hanging above an open birdcage.

"They like to get out of there every once in a while," explains Daryl. "That's all the exercise they really need."

Just as his macaws crave their occasional dose of freedom, Daryl Hall used his first solo effort, *Sacred Songs* (RCA), to exhibit his own creative urgings. With the help of producer Robert Fripp, *Sacred Songs* is a surprisingly accessible (considering its reputation) fusion of Anglophilic art-rock and blue-eyed Philly soul. After close to three years languishing in the record company vaults, *Sacred Songs* was finally released by a stubborn RCA, who felt the album didn't sound enough like a follow-up to "Rich Girl" to satisfy the vast legions of Hall & Oates fans. Mr. Fripp's patented and lovely Frippertronics are seamlessly integrated into Hall's more pop/rock-oriented sound to produce a unique and marvelous synthesis.

Born in rural Pottstown, Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia, Daryl moved to the city in his teens. As a youngster, he would watch his mother, a vocal teacher and choir director, perform all the time. Often, she dragged the young Hall on-stage to harmonize with her.

On arriving in Philadelphia in the mid-60's, Hall discovered the city's music scene was in a period of transition. The Cameo-Parkway label and Chubby Checker were on the decline while two young cats named Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff were just starting out.

"I met those guys literally on the street corner," reminisces Daryl."The first record I made was with a group called Kenny Gamble and the Romeos — Leon, Kenny and Carl Chambers. A lot of the people who later became MFSB. It was a very integrated scene. It's a little like Memphis in that way. Black and white. I did a lot of session work at Sigma Sound, backing the Stylistics, the Delfonics and Jerry Butler. I'd also back up the groups playing at the Uptown Theater — Temptations, Four Tops, Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Otis Redding, virtually everybody . . . "

Daryl found that he fit right into that fertile Philly stomping ground and he soon went straight from doo-wop into the studio.

"Philadelphia music is a combination of black gospel and colonial white," explains Hall. "If you ever listen, for instance, to Thom Bell's chord changes, they're different from Memphis or Chicago black music. It's more in that kind of gray area . . . a very piano-oriented sound.

"Those classical chord changes are all reinforced by the Philadelphia school system. You find that white, classical tradition sneaking its way into a natural soul feeling.

"Coming from Philadelphia, soul music was very important to me because it touches the center. But it's not really idea music because it's the same thing over and over. Soul music hasn't changed since '65. I like to take soul and then add an idea to it, taking it beyond 'Only The Strong Survive,' though, come to think of it, that was a pretty good concept."

In 1969, Daryl recorded his first pop-rock oriented album for Elektra with a studio outfit called Gulliver consisting of Tim "Rock 'n' Roll Love Letter" Moore, Tom Sellers and Jim Helmar. The LP is now a rare item, selling for upwards of $20 at collector's shops. Hall describes it as "Beatlesque with Philadelphia soul overtones." It marked Daryl's first real split from purist Philadelphia music. It was also the first time he worked with a guitarist named John Oates.

"He was actually a friend, but I had never worked with him before. John played on one track and it was out of that that we decided to get together. We both wanted to play out while Gulliver was just a studio band. We had been writing songs

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

DARYL HALL'S EQUIPMENT

"I don't really care what I use necessarily, but I do stick with certain things. In fact, I invented the instrument that I compose on. It's called a MANDAR, which is a four or eight-stringed guitar-like instrument except it's tuned like a violin or a mandolin or a cello . . . in fifths. I had a few of them made up and I use it whenever I write guitar-type songs and it tends to have a droney effect. It's different than guitar. It's a more open tuning, which means when you play a chord it will be more spread-out note-wise. It's more like the kind of chord inversion that you would hit if you were playing a piano, rather than a guitar. The notes are more bunched together on a guitar. It's a different sound.

I use pretty standard equipment otherwise. A Yamaha Grand Piano and, in the studio, Prophet synthesizers. I use a lot of Yamaha stuff, also a mini-moog. John uses a Fender Strat on-stage.

separately, so we just decided to pool our efforts. We played together, just the two of us for awhile."

The two buddies were sharing an apartment at the time and gigged around Philadelphia for six months before moving to New York in 1971. They played art galleries and small clubs with a song-oriented format which featured Daryl on Wurlitzer piano and John on acoustic guitar. Eventually inking with Atlantic Records, the duo put out three very different albums, leading to a confusion about the group that still exists.

"It seemed impossible to explain everything we wanted to do musically in any one album, so we did three distinct types of records. *Whole Oats* was mostly acoustic, *Abandoned Luncheonette* (with the hit, "She's Gone") was a combination of that soft, mellow sound grafted onto Philadelphia soul while the third LP, *War Babies* (produced by fellow Philadelphian Todd Rundgren) represented the esoteric rock 'n' roll side of us," recalls Hall. "From then on, we put all three aspects together, but those first three albums were almost like a trilogy. There was a lot of confusion about us going from the pop of *Luncheonette* to the raunch of *War Babies*."

The vast popularity of *Luncheonette* had Hall & Oates' fans expecting a commercial, laid-back sound, which the pair disspelled with *War Babies*. Despite their confused public image, Hall & Oates continued to explore a wide variety of moods, expanding their musical horizons with virtually non-stop touring. Although they've lived in New York for close to ten years, Hall & Oates were never really considered a city band. Daryl agrees, with a disclaimer.

"New York groups are probably the most provincial of all because they never leave the city. I think it tends to become a bit incestuous really. We use the city's ideas and influences, but our constant travelling exposes us to other things all over the world, too," explains Daryl.

Doesn't that day in and day out touring dry you up creatively?

"Yeah," admits Hall, "When you start playing the large halls night after night, it does all start looking and sounding the same. You don't have any contact with people. The crowd becomes faceless. Going back to clubs this past year, we rediscovered that interaction and it allowed us to use our personas more. You can use facial expresssions and more subtle gestures. You can sell the song better by creating a more effective mood."

From a club date I saw Hall & Oates do a few months ago in New York, I'd have to agree with Daryl's assessment. The group always gave its fans their money's worth, but the intimate setting really seemed to inspire them. The old chestnuts were now infused with a rollicking energy, while the back-up musicians, especiallly Gilda Radner's new husband, guitarist G. E. Smith, ignited the pair to fresh, extemporaneous performances.

Currently, Hall & Oates are on a nationwide tour of high schools, in a unique contest/promotion sponsored by a gum company. Apparently, the area school which sent in the most gum wrappers won the right to have the concert.

"I think bands are going to have to start discovering alternatives to the problems which have been cropping up in modern touring," cautions Hall. "It's just impossible to sustain large concerts on your own steam or without record company support."

The belated release of *Sacred Songs* has again raised the issue of confusion about the Hall & Oates identity. The group

"Regionalism in music is almost dead. I guess it will now be personal expression which rises to the top. It's not the Philly sound, or Memphis, or Detroit . . . it's sort of a shame really."

has often appeared pigeon-holed by their own success, by fans wanting to hear only the hits like "Sara Smile" and "Rich Girl". How did Daryl manage to combat that feeling of being controlled by his audience without, at the same time, alienating them?

"It's a fine line," he agrees. "It actually requires a lot of inner strength from me and John. People were really insistent about us staying a certain way. But I think that's going to change for everyone. A lot has happened musically in the last two years. A lot of artists are being accepted now at face value for what they do.

"An artistic unit must keep moving forward. When restrictions are put on it, people tend to get strangled. The artist becomes dissatisfied with what he's doing, stops caring and you get less new and fresh ideas. You have to keep evolving. I sense a newness in music now that is allowing people who can rise to change the opportunity to do so."

Which leads us to the present edition of Hall & Oates, a group in serious transition, beginning to scale down its operation as Daryl and John confront their creative futures. The talk of playing smaller halls and making more adventurous music was fine, but what about the well-publicized pressure the guys were under to continue at the sales pace they had established? What about the various members of their organization — managers *and* musicians — who relied on Hall & Oates generating an anticipated income for their own livelihood?

"There is a myth surrounding us that we are very successful," Daryl counters. "For instance, we've never had a platinum album, nor one that's even sold over 700,000. We did have "Rich Girl" and "Sara Smile", but those were aberrations. We've never fit into any categories or molds. We're not locked into anything, so we have nothing to lose.

"I think Hall & Oates are more attuned to the '80's than we

were to the '70's, which I don't think we ever fit into. I think we are about to experience our greatest successes. I feel much more at home with the new music. I never liked '70's music."

I had to agree with him. If Hall & Oates continue in the direction Daryl seems intent on pursuing, they will be fusing sweet Philly soul, now more popular than ever, with cerebral British art-rock, which just happens to be another peaking genre. Just consider the current music trade charts, with the *The Wall* (by Pink Floyd) and *Off The Wall* (by Michael Jackson) running 1-2 for what seems like months.

"We'll always have elements of soul in our music, it's the core of what John and I do. But I don't want to be Earth, Wind & Fire. I have more affinity for the Temptations. I don't relate to that silky modern black music. I'm a direct descendent of the '60's. I can't think of any '70's music I liked, except maybe Al Green.

"Let's face it, regionalism in music is almost dead. Radio sounds the same everywhere now. You're getting a mish-mash, which turns out to be a truer *national* sound than ever. It's a shame, really, that the regional thing we were all brought up on is virtually lost . . . forever."

What will replace it?

"I really don't know," Daryl confesses. "It's going to go through some changes. I guess it will be personal expression which will rise to the top. People who don't quite fit into any category, but have their distinct viewpoint. It's not the Philly sound or the Boss-town sound or the Memphis sound or the Detroit sound any more — it's the Jackson Browne sound, the Daryl Hall sound, the Bob Seger Sound, etc."

As the conversation turned to *Sacred Songs* again, I wondered aloud to Daryl how two such apparently different people as Fripp and himself worked together. Was it similar to his collaborations with Oates or different?

"I like being stimulated by outside forces. I work best in a situation where I can bounce my ideas off a similarly opinionated partner. Both working arrangements are similar in that they are intuitive, but they're completely different in another way."

Did Fripp bring out that personal side of Daryl Hall, which has been, until now, well-hidden behind Hall & Oates' smooth finish?

"Not really," shrugs Hall. "I had written the songs before we got together. Any ideas I had were thought by me beforehand. Which I then brought to Robert. He did help me rediscover the spontaneity in my performance. All the vocals on *Sacred Songs* are first-takes. Just went in and sang 'em. I like to work that way. I hate that California method of recording I was locked into."

What is Daryl's reaction to Frippertronics and the way they've been integrated into the song structures on the album?

"I helped Robert with those. We worked on the method together. He had never really used them until the *Sacred Songs* album. (Though what about Fripp and Eno's *No Pussyfooting* album *four* years before?) Fripp had all these tapes and wasn't sure what he wanted to do with them.

"By themselves, Frippertronics set a really hypnotic, droney, mantra-like mood, which is great. I think, though, without a suggestion or direction along with them, they kind of just lay there. I tried using Frippertronics on *Sacred Songs* to impart ideas rather than to stand by themselves.

"Robert needs someone who doesn't pander to his obtuseness. Fripp and I have talked for a long time about forming a band. Maybe it'll happen some day. Fripp needs somebody like me, somebody who can focus him. For instance the vocal bit David Byrne does on Fripp's new record was just too disjointed and disconnected for what I think Robert wanted. I'm really trying to find the time in mine and Robert's schedule to perform *Sacred Songs* together."

What did Daryl think a typical Hall & Oates follower was like? Was he in touch with the fan-on-the-street?

"I feel we are evolving into establishing a new identity. People are starting to look at us differently. We're not just the sum of our AM hits.

"Our fans are people who like musical diversity, they just don't want to hear a single style or sound. They also go for sensitivity and honesty, which is another theme we always try to display. We seem to tap a source that's the same as the audience's source. We hit a common point.

"*Sacred Songs* deals with that duality where all the power lies. Between the forces in everybody's life. Trying to find the meaning between diverse influences. Between the sensitive and the insensitive. The intuitive and the practical. Between your concept of what you think true love is and what reality is. I think those are all continuing themes in Hall & Oates music."

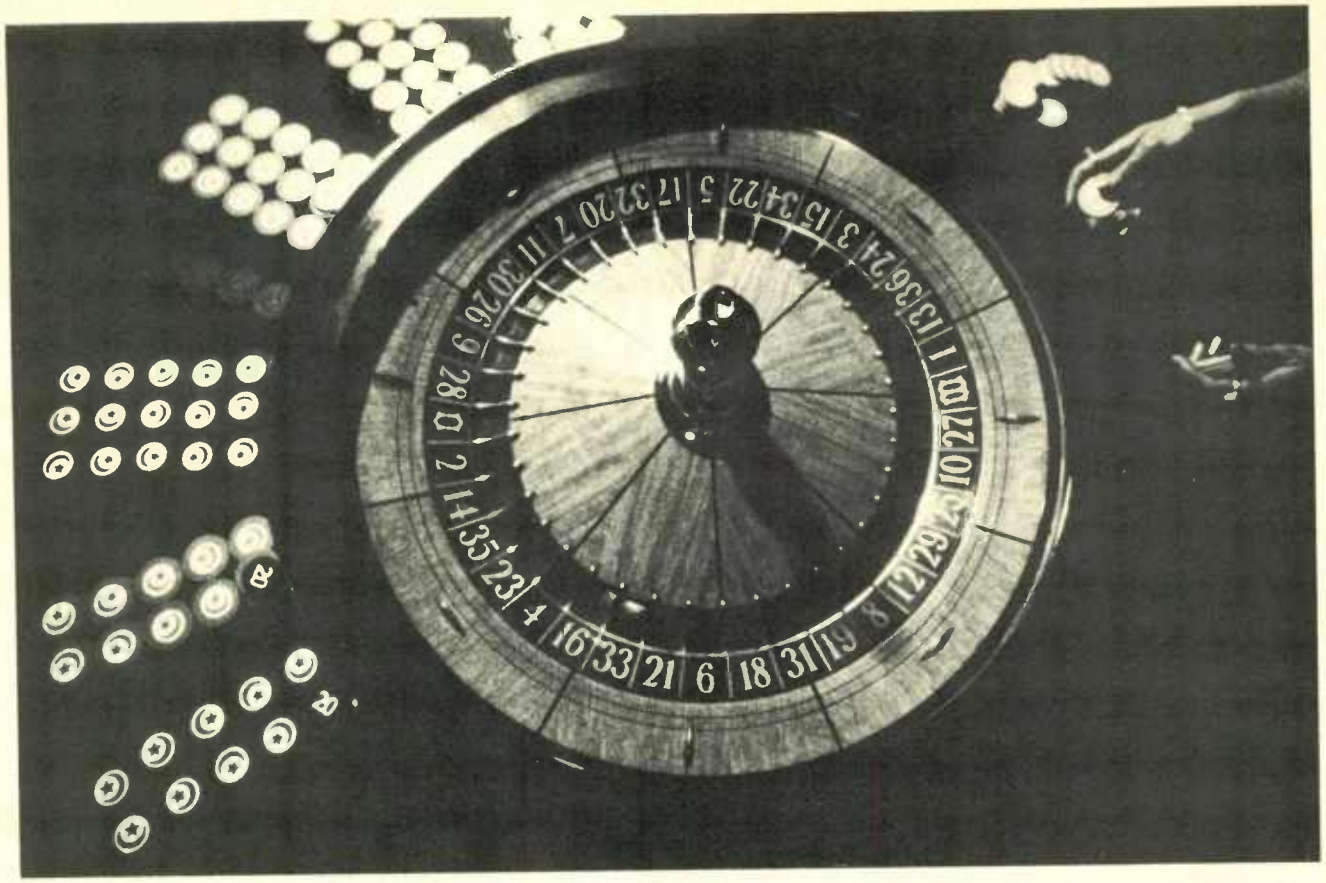
Daryl got up to put the macaws back in their cages. The two birds had been squawking throughout our interview, but fell strangely silent on being placed back in their wire-mesh home. Who is Daryl Hall beneath the glamorous pretty-boy image and blue-eyed croon? As he sings in *Sacred Songs*, he is just a working musician, trying to organize the disparate, often paradoxical impulses which affect him into an integrated, coherent whole,

"Never compromising, never see eye-to-eye
so they turn, with a sigh, Babs and Babs
Have to be together
like the night and the day
so they might as well stay the best of friends."

"Ralph" and "Alice" started cackling again and followed with a low, cooing murmur. M

"Sacred Songs deals with that duality where all the power lies. It's between the forces in everybody's life. Between your concept of what you think true love is and what reality is.

DEBORAH FEINGOLD



NARM: LAS VEGAS

CRISIS TIME IN THE RECORD BIZ

All the bigwigs of the record industry gather once a year to do some mutual back-slapping. This year was decidedly different as the industry looked down the barrel of some major problems. The convention, held somewhat ironically in Las Vegas, provided the perfect microcosm for analyzing the industry moves that will be affecting the music for years to come.

By Sam Sutherland

On a Sunday morning in March, the gate area at Hollywood-Burbank Airport swarms with a crowd atypically homogeneous in its hip camaraderie: neck chains, designer jeans, satin baseball jackets and other articles of the record business faith predominate, and the majority of ticket holders standing in line to board the 10:10 PSA flight to Las Vegas seem to know each other.

They should. This weekend will see nearly every seat on every plane between the Los Angeles area and the gambling capitol booked as airline passenger rolls swell to accommodate a sizeable influx of music industry professionals. Drawing them to Nevada is the 1980 NARM Convention, the U.S. recording industry's largest annual gathering. Record store owners, rack jobbers, distributors and record company executives from across the country are converging on Vegas' MGM Grand Hotel to buy and sell, cajole and compliment, and, not quite incidentally, attend the seminars, speeches and panel discussions that are the convention's official *raison d'etre*.

NARM — acronym for National Associations of Record Merchandisers — is a 22 year-old trade association originally founded by the industry's leading retail and distribution firms, and, like most trade groups, its purpose has traditionally been to promote business more than scrutinize it. During the '70s, that emphasis had been even more bullishly upbeat, buoyed by double-digit corporate growth and a rapidly expanding market, and underscored by an often raucous partying spirit.

The choice of the MGM Grand poses ironies even before the convention formally kicks off. As one of Vegas' flagship hotels, the Grand epitomizes the style and substance of a town where tourism is everything and even the simplest act somehow brings money into its coffers. A monument to prefab show business splendor, the hotel relentlessly hammers home its myth of Hollywood's grand old days. Heralded by the neoclassical sculpture in its fountains, sustained by its dominant interior decorating theme, which seems to be High Metro: its corridors are lined with blowups of MGM's most familiar contract stars, the rooms

are decorated with production paintings from its various films, and the penthouse suites are titled after the studio's biggest box-office hits. Maybe someday there will be a hotel dedicated to the golden days of the record business when platinum rained from the sky and fortunes were made overnight.

To this endless night comes the NARM Convention, its participants already beset by fiscal woes. As if to silently mock the Vegas dazzle, this year the corridors will also be populated by uninvited guests, music industry hopefuls left jobless by the company cutbacks that began early in 1979 and continued through the rest of the year. They will be seen standing expectantly in the lobby, waiting to buttonhole executives as they emerge from seminars or head for their rooms to freshen up before a night of gambling. They will be as welcome as ghosts from a happier past made all the more miserable by the finality of its passing.

This year will be very different. The prosperity that had fueled the trade in past years and led to such riveting convention themes as "Partners + Professionalism = Profits" and "The $3 Billion Figure — Its Future is Now," has been supplanted by anxiety over reduced profits, chronic credit problems, job layoffs and the other symptoms of the trade's much-publicized "Slump of '79." Talk will necessarily turn to more fundamental issues of industry practice and its outlook for the decade ahead.

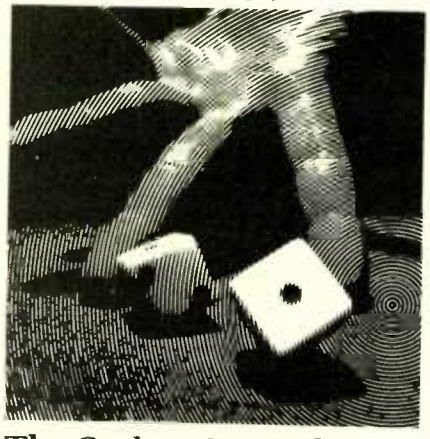
A year earlier, those obstacles were already beginning to emerge, and introduced an undercurrent of frustration at the convention held in Hollywood, Florida. Yet many delegates would still cling to hopes of a rapid recovery, predicting a new blockbuster of "Saturday Night Fever" caliber might salve the wounds inflicted in the final months of '78 and the first quarter of '79.

This year, a mood of self-examination measures the unjustified optimism of that forecast. Sales have returned, but not in the torrential volume that had made 1978 a boom year for record and tape sales. Profits, though, are still feeling the squeeze, despite slight recovery for a few giants when compared to the deepest point of the slump's trough. A basic question thus hovers over the convention like the winking lights on the casino ceiling, a question unlisted on any convention agenda but asked or implied throughout the convention's four days of formal meetings and informal bull sessions: "How much trouble are we really in?" Possible answers, as well as some tentative solutions, would begin surfacing that afternoon, and by the convention's end the following Thursday morning an estimated 2,000 music business professionals would have registered with the convention office and headed for the seminar rooms to mull the varied opinions.

Taken together, they would conclude that the trade was neither as mortally wounded as the most hysterical media reports of '79 suggested, nor as resilient as its staunchest boosters claimed. At the heart of the industry's predicament, as assessed by convention speakers, were cavalier trade practices and unrealistic sales forecasts already undergoing review; the industry would survive, but it would also face a shakedown ordeal that could forever postpone a return to the champagne-and-gravy largesse of its '70s boom years.

The most colorful, if least quantitative, assessment came Sunday afternoon during a "Trailblazers Luncheon," honoring industry old-timers, where former United Artists Records chief Artie Mogull would divide the business world into "fuckers" and "those who are fucked," and conclude that the corporate age, with its high command of managerial executives, had fucked the music industry created by strong-willed entrepreneurs like Atlantic Records' Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler, A&M Records Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss, Elektra's Jac Holzman and Motown's Berry Gordy.

Mogull's blue lexicon made listeners squirm, yet he hit a nerve with his verdict on the aesthetic impact of that changing of the guard. "The deal became more important than the music," said Mogull. "Now the guy in the record company who'll listen to tapes has no authority — and the guy who has the authority won't listen to tapes."



The Stakes Go Higher

An RIAA source tells us that a major company must now sell an incredible 140,000 albums for a release just to break-even. This is bad news for new bands as conservative corporate types will be looking for sure winners with a proven audience. New smaller companies will be the only way for many new artists.

Mogull may have nominated possible villains, but his brief speech didn't attempt to address a more basic aspect of the slump, perhaps the most troubling of all — the prospect, raised during the slump's most acute months last year, that some music fans had stopped buying records. Were the market shrinking, the loss of overall sales volume and a consequent dip in profits would be inevitable; with the general economy lashed by runaway inflation and swinging toward a recession, that scenario argued that higher prices for records and tapes and tighter consumer dollars had to meet head-on.

Monday morning, market research information from Warner Communications, one of the entertainment giants, provided a statistical answer to the contrary. WCI had mounted a comprehensive market survey polling consumer attitudes toward prerecorded music at mid-decade, releasing a bullish summary of key findings at the 1977 NARM Convention. This year, Mickey Kapp, president of WCI's Warner Special Products division, and Dr. Martin Fishbein, a University of Illinois professor responsible for the study's methodology, provided an update based on a research sample taken during the summer of '79 — just when the slump was at its worst.

Their answer wasn't what some delegates expected to hear. In contrast to the anticipated dip in buyers, the study found the percentage of the U.S. population actively involved in record and tape purchases unchanged, accounting for the same 53 percent figure set forth in the original 1977 survey. Factoring in a 1.3 percent increase in the total population, their update argued that an additional 1.25 million buyers had joined the ranks of record and tape purchasers.

As for the consumer's sensitivity to higher prices for the prerecorded music they bought, here, too, the findings rejected the notion of lost customers. Survey respondents characterizing records and tapes as good values for the money rose from the earlier study's 71 percentile mark to 75 percent, an increase further heightened by a drop in the number of buyers sampled who felt prices were too high, now estimated at 52 percent, as compared to 56 percent in the 1977 study.

Even Kapp and Fishbein, the survey's architects, were surprised, and some competing record industry executives were clearly uncomfortable with the results: if, in fact, there was no reduction in the number of buyers, and the total number of records and tapes sold were only marginally below 1978's high point (which industry sales figures, being tal-

lied even as the convention itself was underway, would indicate just days later), why was the business in the toilet? The answer could be nothing less than an indictment of top management and the business practices they had sanctioned in recent years, and several subsequent speakers would imply as much during the convention's remaining days.

That same morning, Neil Bogart, dethroned from his Casablanca Records presidency but reportedly marshalling yet another label venture, would deliver a convention keynote address outlining trade policies amounting to just such an indictment. Bogart's breast-beating address abandoned the cheerleader blush that had often been the constant for such speeches, moving quickly to "attitudes that have become rigid, and business practices that just don't make sense:" the practice of shipping too many records and tapes to retailers, permitted to order on credit and return any and all unsold merchandise, resulting in paper profits based on shipping figures and net losses in the long run; the heated competition between labels and stores alike, resulting in shaved profit margins that ultimately yield too little revenue, too late; the competition between record companies to sign superstars, leading to an auction block fever that prompted profitless "prestige" signings.

Bogart himself had been linked to some of the industry's most flagrant examples of at least several of those practices, especially with respect to overshipping, and he obliquely admitted as much, wondering aloud whether the trade, as a whole, hadn't "been conspirators in a suicide pact."

He also alluded to an industry sore spot that would have been unimaginable as a topic during trade gatherings few years earlier: the epidemic spread of record and tape counterfeiting, virtually a half-billion dollar business on its own. This issue, like most of the other ills cited in Bogart's speech, would figure prominently on the cumulative laundry list of topics assembled by the convention's closing.

In the past, record company executives had seldom highlighted illicit sales in such a context. Counterfeiting itself was hardly new — there had been reports of bootleg and pirate records decades earlier, and indications of counterfeit "million-sellers" from the late '50s forward — but had been tolerated, at least publicly, because legitimate sales were still growing. Moreover, legal deterrents to record and tape pirates had been few and generally ineffective until the early '70s, when the first substantial federal legislation covering piracy was enacted.

At NARM, though, record company personnel were no longer willing to turn

Record Pirates

The figures were sobering: Of the 500 retail record outlets checked by RIAA investigators, 90% were found to be selling counterfeits. Illicit manufacturers are in some cases keeping pace with the majors in terms of duplicating legitimate records and tapes. It was time to retaliate; the recent indictments are a first step. Stronger measures will follow.

the other cheek. FBI estimates of the spread in counterfeit sales had continued to rise, and the most recent figure of $400 million in pirate traffic annually already seemed conservative in the wake of the most recent revelations. Federal indictments against two top executives at the venerable Sam Goody's chain had been handed down just weeks before, and during the convention several executives would deliver the most scathing charges yet.

Stanley Gortikov, a former Capitol Records chief and president of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), set the labels' new, harder line in a self-described "sermon" delivered early in Tuesday's morning session. Normally a reserved, soft-spoken man whose mien is closer to that of a university chancellor than a hot-shot record biz exec, Gortikov surprised listeners with his quiet vehemence. At a convention where record company interests normally wooed record store operators, he was drawing battle lines.

"If you willfully buy or sell counterfeit recordings — even one of them — you are the criminal I address," he said to the hushed audience. "Your crime is against the law. Your crime is just as clearly an offense against this industry — your industry. You steal from artists. You rob musicians and vocalists. You filch from record companies, music publishers and composers. You steal from your peers in this room. You're a gonif . . . a thief."

He supported his rhetoric with some chilling statistics. "Over the past six months, RIAA's eight investigators have been methodically shopping retail outlets in many parts of the nation — chain stores, branches, malls, free-standing shops, big ones, little ones. About 500 such retail locations have been checked out. And open your ears to this appalling finding.

"Out of those 500 outlets, 90 percent were found to be selling counterfeits. Sometimes LPs, sometimes tapes, sometimes both. Sometimes only a few, sometimes stock in depth."

Given such figures, the recent indictments were, he said, "just the beginning" of a retaliatory effort. With recent evidence that even promo records were being counterfeited, and illicit manufacturers generally keeping pace with the majors in terms of duplicating their legitimate records and tapes, concern over the practice had at last reached critical mass.

Counterfeiting may have been the most emotionally charged issue at hand, but the music industry's future was a more pervasive worry. What forecasts were given proved nearly as chilling.

That same morning, a panel of record company chiefs, all former convention keynote speakers, mulled the road ahead, and generally agreed the ride would be bumpy. In addition to Gortikov, the panel included A&M chairman Jerry Moss, CBS Records Group chairman Walter Yetnikoff, Elektra/Asylum Records chairman Joe Smith and Irwin Steinberg, chairman of PolyGram Records Operations — U.S.A. That the dais should be dominated by representatives of the "big six" conglomerates, RCA and MCA being the others, was itself harbinger of an obvious trend at the heart of the group's predictions.

Steinberg, moderator of the session, again ran down the list of imprudent trade practices behind the slump, which he summarized in a comparison to Jerzy Kozinski's "Being There." To Steinberg, the industry "has been functioning as a kind of businessman's insane asylum."

In the days ahead, such insanity would be untenable, and as bottom-line considerations increasingly dominated the industry's operation, a Darwinian imperative would emerge, one that would consolidate the already shrinking structure of the music industry into a handful of giants. "The continuing evolution of this industry into an oligopoly, where a small number of large companies dominate, is a direct result of both the demand for recorded music around the world and, curiously, because of archaic industry practices that exacerbate already difficult economic conditions," said Steinberg. "It's called

survival of the fittest — and the fittest these days are the large, financially strong companies which are able to withstand the inherent volatility of our business, exploding costs and an uncertain economic environment."

Even the fittest face significant hurdles in achieving the necessary economic health. Steinberg reported the results of a recent study made by PolyGram's financial group, in which an economic model for a mythical record company was created to gauge industry profit potential — the major barometer for its investment futures on Wall Street and around the world. PolyGram's model postulated an artist roster of between 50 and 55 artists and a payroll of 165 employees — "a very conservative figure by industry standards," according to Steinberg.

"We discovered that in order for the mythical company to break even domestically, it had to have a net volume of $101 million, and assuming maximum utilization of its product outside the U.S., it could expect to show only about a four percent profit," he reported.

Even amateur investors could compare that figure against the current, double-digit inflation rate and see the ceiling imposed over financial incentives. To Steinberg, the economics behind that scenario would continue to compress the number of healthy firms, at the expense of the smaller, independent operations once synonymous with the introduction of new musical styles and divergent genres.

In short, the record industry will likely follow the scenario seen during the past decade in the motion picture industry, with the major record conglomerates functioning primarily as marketing and distribution organizations, as well as financiers, while creative development is placed in the hands of streamlined production companies. To Steinberg, "The independent creative units will become even more important, not less as many doomsayers have suggested. Our success in the future, I believe, will depend on these symbiotic relationships between the small independent creative units and the large record companies, with their financial strength and international marketing expertise."

If such a forecast suggests Steinberg's "creative units" will be important links in the transmission of music to mass audiences, it does not attempt to evaluate how creative such units can afford to be. His partners on the dais generally supported a sobering set of probabilities, without detailing them. Joe Smith, listing the smaller companies that had been sold to majors or gone out of business during the past few years, summarized their views by saying, "I can't help but think it must ultimately have a negative effect on our industry . . . To some extent, the music must suffer."

Given that their listeners were presumably more concerned about their own profit margins than the philosophical ramifications of their message, it wasn't surprising that these blue-chip moguls should leave it at that. For anyone interested in a more detailed idea of how music, and by inference, musicians might fare in this music biz new age, it was necessary to catch label executives outside the convention rooms.

That in itself wasn't entirely simple. The MGM Grand Hotel, like every other major Vegas resort, is first and foremost a money machine: it was no accident that Jimmy The Greek should be "featured speaker" at one of the luncheons, or that he should note that any visitor to the city losing less than $47 represented a loss of income to the city. So, every night, and most afternoons, and sometimes before breakfast, the industry's beleaguered knights could likely be found patrolling the casino. The big winners took home as much as $30 thousand. The big losers, in most instances, didn't want to dwell on losses. To discuss other matters, you thus had to catch some sources between hands.

Even so, certain features of the talent market could be identified, or at least extrapolated from the statistics to be had. One delegate, reviewing the convention a few weeks later, was a major record company executive and RIAA board member privy to the latest research conducted by the Cambridge Research Institute, which has reportedly developed various fiscal profiles over a period of about 12 years.

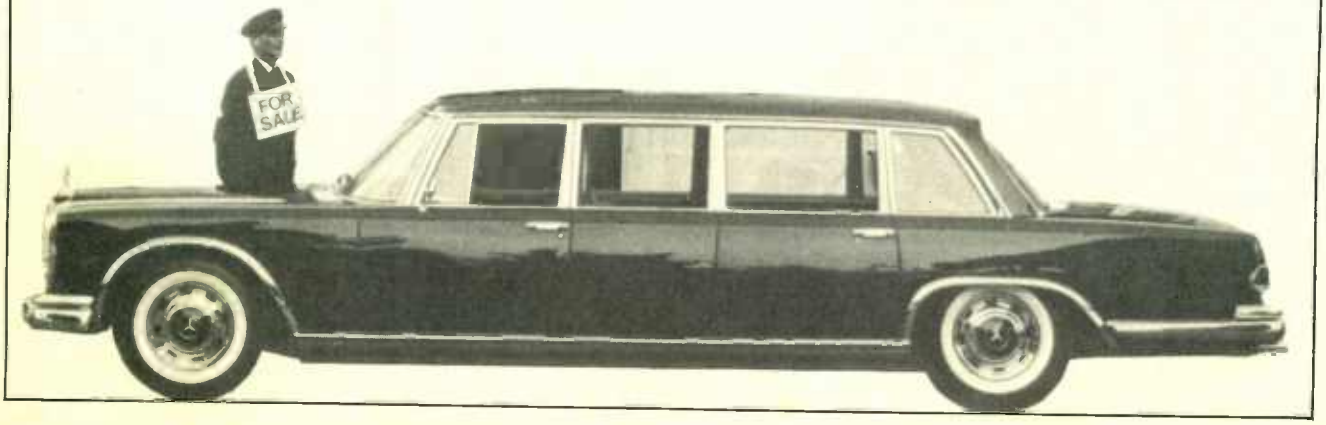
Based on their research, the executive said, the break-even point for mass marketed records and tapes has continued to rise, with the average level now at 140,000 units. In other words, any record selling less than that figure will generally represent a loss, a prospect particularly unsettling when considering the current marketplace. With any number of highly touted new pop contenders eking out under 100,000 on their first album, the chances for a quick return on the company's investment are diminishing. To use our source as an allegory, "the gusher's a much more expensive hole to drill these days, and the driller has to be that much more wary of dry holes."

This means labels are less willing to sign acts in the first place. And once they're committed to an album from a new artist, they will be less likely to hang on for the duration of a long-term contract. "You can still afford to stay with artists you feel have some potential down-range," he explained, "but you simply can't afford to support as many." Most record company A&R depart-

continued on page 98

The Gravy Days are Gone, but . . .

surveys proved that people are buying as many records as ever, yet profits are plummetting. Why? Industry ego trips and loose trade practices leading to that refreshing ride to the cleaners.



THE HARD BLUES OF JULIUS HEMPHILL

Julius Hemphill's musical curiosity has made him an American original. From stunning charts for the World Saxophone Quartet to scorching improvisations with Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, Hemphill is an unforgettable voice of contemporary music.

By Chip Stern

Julius Hemphill is a man of many masks: pathfinder, minstrel, cantor, satirist, urban griot, cheshire cat, home boy tootin' at the dog star; a musical maverick who once asserted, only half in jest, that "I've dedicated my life to *not* playing it right." A virtuoso composer and improviser with an astonishing command of alto, soprano and tenor saxophones, Hemphill's wit and conceptual intelligence animates every ensemble he works with, be it Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, Phillip Wilson's Magic or the World Saxophone Quartet, his critically acclaimed collaboration with fellow reed masters Oliver Lake, David Murray and Hamiet Bluiett.

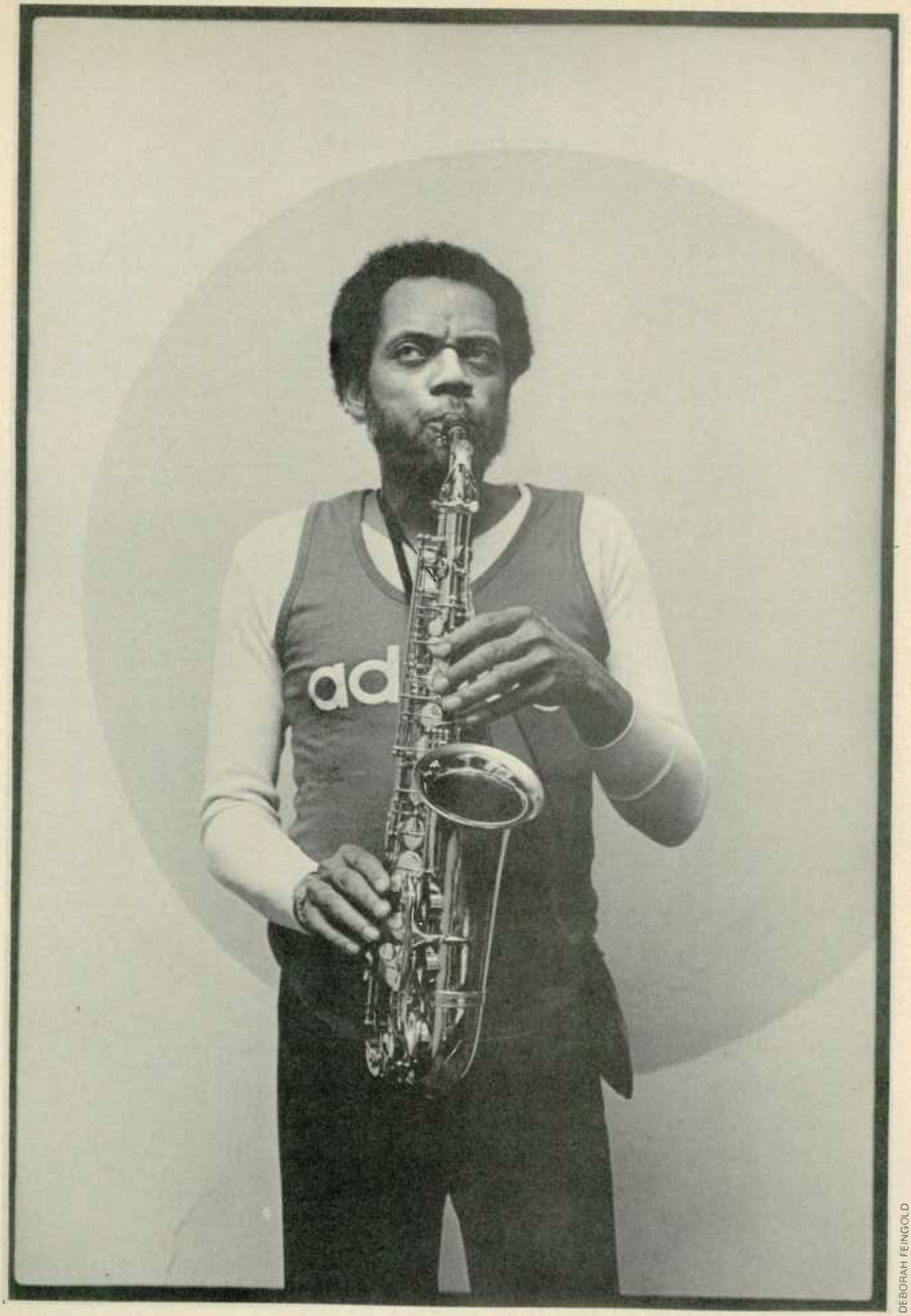
A native of Ft. Worth, Texas, Hemphill is one of the greatest saxophonists I've ever heard. Every note is imbued with the wailing passion and swing of the Southwestern saxophone tradition, which has already given us the likes of Charlie Parker and Ornette Coleman. On Hemphill's remarkable solo album *Blue Boye* (Mbari MPC 1000 X) there's an unaccompanied alto feature called "Kansas City Line;" an homage to Bird's spirit, it combines all of Parker's trademark melodic contours and rhythms (he even squeaks like Bird) with Hemphill's elliptical designs in such a manner that it's never merely idolatrous — a pointed lesson to anyone who doubts Julius Hemphill's deep jazz roots. "The most I've listened to anybody is Charlie Parker. Like I'd hear him and think, 'now how did that motherfucker think to put *that* in there. Only improvisers who were older than him were not influenced by Bird's ideas.' "

"You see, I have a pretty good knowledge of the vocabulary as far as you can pin it down, but did you ever hear that old saying about how 'I'd rather be a poor original than a brilliant copier?' Well, I think I subscribe to that sentiment. Because I wouldn't like to be ... I mean I really don't try and play like anybody. I never was personally satisfied in an enduring way with playing the tunes of the day: the standards, jazz classics, bop tunes and what not. I got a real sense of well being from doing that, but I just had a different kind of curiosity about music."

Several vivid memories of Hemphill's playing come to mind. From stage right at New York's Public Theatre comes a honking, infectious vamp figure that calls forth visions of dancers, blues bands and endless nights walking the bar. The World Saxophone Quartet comes bopping out to a unison step, looking armed and dangerous in their natty tuxedoes. Murray's bass clarinet and Lake's alto sax lay down the funky ostinato to Hemphill's composition "Steppin'," then Hemphill's soprano and Bluiett's flute intone a counter-melody that's so angelic and rhythmically untethered it's like watching mercury float; both themes resolve in a burst of expanding open harmonics and elegant counterpoint,

Then there's a gig with Magic at the Squat Theatre; putting down some hard funk. Did I say hard? Cymbals are flying off their stands and drums keel over in agony; Phillip Wilson is dropping sticks and looking crazy, but he keeps punching out the beat. Every chord that erupts from Jehri Riley's guitar is like a little mardi gras, and the music's getting loud and greasy. Julius takes a few well chosen notes on the bottom of his tenor and pecks around for an opening — there aren't any. So he starts juggling spare rhythm figures, extending them up and down in octaves and barking out recipes for barbecued armadillo. Finally he's hee-hawing and braying away, multiphonic squeals that employ every register of the horn, concluding with a descending vamp that's so in sync with Wilson's bass drum you'd swear the whole solo was written.

With Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition he participates in a historical retrospective/saxophone decathalon (with David



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Murray and Chico Freeman), contributing loving tributes to Ornette, Dolphy and Rollins, as well as providing uncanny arrangements of "The Invisible" and "Forest Flower." It's neck and neck in the qualifying events, but Hemphill goes for the gold on Coltrane's "India" using pear tones and taffy-like long notes he erects sand castles of melody in the alto's middle register, gradually shifting out of the tonal center with rhythms that run against the pulse. Obliterating the sand castles with upper register rants, he bursts into a register I wasn't aware the alto had — tortured arabesques of pure emotion. DeJohnette's cymbals spew steam and lava, and one of my colleagues — a man among men but a dean among rock critics — leans away from the fire, gaping in disbelief as if to say, "Julius can't go on like this!" But Hemphill whistles through three more choruses with enough intensity to undermine the structural integrity of the building. When it's over my friend puts on his jacket and leaves before he wakes up from his dream.

Born on January 24, 1938, Julius Hemphill was exposed to all kinds of music from an early age on. "I lived in an area of Ft. Worth — the 'hot end' we called it — where there were a number of cafes and taverns that had a *wide* variety of music on the jukeboxes, from blues to bebop and big bands; so even though I didn't have all these records at home, I'd get to hear them that way — even *against* each other. There'd be Louis Jordan or Sister Rosetta Thorpe comin' out of one, and some bebop blaring out of another. So I guess I heard everything, but I was coming into jazz looking for something different that didn't necessarily remind me of what I'd been hearing. So I was listening to people like Gerry Mulligan, Lee Konitz and Lennie Tristano."

Dig it. Someone like Tristano was trying to get past playing the chords, looking for a free melodic approach...

"... yeah, and polytonality and a whole lot of things — it was different. *I was into being different*, do you know what I mean? (laughter) Maybe for its own sake, I don't know — everybody was into being cool. I mean, this wasn't no intellectual blah, blah; I wasn't doing no research or musicology. I would just say, 'Oh, that's a little different — that's cool!'

"You know, I always looked upon music as a *magical* thing. I wasn't at all convinced that you could *learn* it. My mother's over 70 years old, she never owned a piano in her whole life — don't know if she ever lived in a house that had a piano — but every Sunday she'd play piano in church. So I was very skeptical when people started talking about scales and chords to me; I couldn't necessarily see how you make music out of this stuff. Eventually I went through the motions of learning the songs and all that. In a way it's like feelings and mathematics: the repetitive structures, the way harmonic materials behave. That wasn't so hard to grasp. After I'd learned all this I ended up going back to the posture I originally was coming from — but now I have the knowledge to back it up. The first really different thing I did was when I went to Chicago and played with Roscoe Mitchell. He did a piece for seven saxophones, and that was kind of different. But at least it showed me that people did other things. I hadn't been anywhere, and everyone in St. Louis was playing modal stuff and Miles Davis. It was kind of like somebody learning to play by ear. I'd never been around people who could do that as a way of organizing. Roscoe's compositional approach had to do with using different kinds of motifs which people were supposed to remember. The approaches of all the people I'd been around, highly skilled as they were, didn't particularly allow for much complexity and interplay. That experience was quite important for me."

Julius had glided through high school, picking up a year of harmony along the way and studying clarinet and saxophone with John Carter. He played baritone and sent away for some of the Gerry Mulligan arrangements (from the pianoless quartet), which he played with a quartet. But music was secondary to football until he graduated, "when I got a brand new alto and that really nailed it. None of my classmates said they were going to California, so I said, cool, I am. None of this prairie view shit for me."

Julius wasn't ready for an integrated school — "there were three high schools within walking distance of my house, but I had to bus ten miles each way to get to a Negro one" — and discovered he was deficient in math and science, so after a semester at Berkeley and another at Oakland Junior College (where he took composition), he transferred to Lincoln University in Nebraska. Here he had a chance to study with David Baker, fresh off the road with Stan Kenton, and played in the school marching band with Ron Shannon Jackson and Lester Bowie. But his disinclination to attend classes and ROTC ("they frowned on that") caused his departure. "When I got home it was a choice of waiting on tables or playing the blues, and I'd waited on enough tables in California, so I got most of my experience on a continuous basis playing the blues."

"I played in some blues bands that were *staggering* when I was in Texas — those were some non-urban situations, to put it mildly. As far as the blues is concerned, within that simple structure — which can be as complicated as you want to make it — there's an unlimited amount of space to make any contribution you want. There's a starkness that can be achieved or a mellowness. Anguish or happiness. Any of these associations are available, sometimes within the space of a single phrase."

"What I'm usually impressed with in music is the attitude of the individuals or the band. *The approach — not the technique*. I knew this guitar player, Hubert P. Wilson from Louisiana, and he didn't know the names of the keys, but he could make the guitar talk, literally — little sentences and phrases. You see, in the blues it's not how much you can particularly do in terms of complexity. It's about making the audience howling happy, dancing or crying. I was among people where that was their whole thing; they weren't searching for anything — they were doing it."

You see, in the blues it's not how much you can do in terms of complexity. It's about making the audience howling happy, dancing or crying–

After bouncing around a few colleges, a lot of blues and a stint in the army, Julius settled in St. Louis in 1966. Inspired by Roscoe Mitchell (who had a similar effect on Henry Threadgill, Anthony Braxton, George Lewis and a whole generation of musicians), Julius organized the Black Artists Group (B.A.G.), which had a slightly different orientation than the AACM. Through a production of Genet's *The Blacks*, he became involved with people like the actor Malinke Robert Elliot, poet Ajulie, dancer Georgia Collins, film-maker Don Falk, painter Emilio Cruz and musicians like J.D. Parran, Bobo Shaw, Richard Martin and Abdul Wadud, as well as Lake and Bluiett. They were able to secure a building, get funding and set up classes and free programs for the neighborhoods based on the Model Cities programs of that time. "We were dealing from a functional mold, but during the course of that I got to write a lot of music and had an in-house group to play it, with actors and painters and dance and film — the works. We'd put on these elaborate revues and multi-media plays, get the stuff on film and video. That gave me something specific to do as far as a personal orientation, and that interaction stimulated my inerest in working with rather unusual ensembles and instrumentation." There's a definite note of longing in Julius's voice when he recalls those furiously creative days. "To be able to have a place where music could be played and where the people were interested..."

Julius Hemphill's singular curiosity makes him an American original — among the most expressionistic, exploratory fig-

MING SMITH

The World Saxophone Quartet, l. to r. David Murray, Julius Hemphill, Oliver Lake and Hamiet Bluiett, produces a powerful, fluid section sound the likes of which hasn't been heard since Harry Carney and the Ellington sax section of the '40s.

ures in contemporary music. Along with Sam Rivers, Henry Threadgill and Ornette Coleman (to name but a few), Hemphill is in the vanguard of those composer-improvisers who are uniting the major streams of world music: the structural breakthroughs of the concert jazz tradition and twentieth century classicism; the swaggering bravado, bluesiness and swing of pre-bop jazz; the open-ended forms and daemonic energy of the post-Parker era; the lineage of dance-oriented musics that emerged from the black church and spawned the big band era, R&B, rock 'n' roll, funk, disco and punk jazz; and the charm, spirituality and earthiness of ethnic musics, with their non-tempered textures and exultant rhythms. But Hemphill, Rivers, Threadgill and Coleman aren't simply archivists dusting off discarded volumes of history — they sense the essential unity of all musics and transform the disparate elements into completely personal statements without being derivative.

Part of what makes the work of these conceptualists so unique is their utter disdain for the shopworn cliche and the pre-conceived notions of right and wrong — a quality they share with the greatest orchestrator of the twentieth century, Duke Ellington. It's not that they aren't conversant in the norms and techniques of all musical idioms; nor should it imply a complete absence of colloquial vocabularies. It's just that they've arrived at their central focus via the heart, not a textbook. As with most of civilization's great leaps forward, the creative process was one of trial and error — a triumph of the instinctual. "For a long time I tried to avoid using particular formulas either for structural purposes or harmonic purposes," Hemphill recalled. "For a long time what I'd been doing hadn't utilized my imagination. I was just sorta scratching my head until I finally realized it wasn't about formulas, especially if you have free reign: you're using all the same materials when you play conventional instruments, so you're dealing with the twelve tonal possibilities; but you can avoid the usual melodic associations and moods and try and get the same sense of familiarity out of disjunct lines and melodic material, arriving at the sense of familiarity the blues scale affords people when they're listening or playing. I don't do so much anymore because I guess it's become ingrained. It was like when I became associated with all these writers, painters, actors and dancers in the Black Artists Group, people who weren't bound up by a lot of formula stuff, I learned a lot from their attitudes — the ways they went about putting things together. It gave me a certain momentum and made me realize I was in a deep rut: I'm not a historian, I have nothing to prove, and there's really nothing I'm compelled to subscribe to."

As a result Hemphill's work can sometimes be opaque as he searches for that which is completely unique, but in the final analysis his is a lucid and orderly approach. His writing and improvising are interchangeable, containing bold, elusive harmonies and a wealth of circuitous melodic motion; occasionally he'll alight upon a familiar shore, but more often than not he's slyly avoiding contact with the regular sea lanes. *Roi Boye & the Gotham Minstrels* (Sackville 3014/3015) is his most unconditional work, a bold, erratic portrait of New York City in which Hemphill uses multi-tracked taped material and poetry as accompaniment to his asymmetrical solo flights. *Roi Boye* is an evocation of Manhattan's human souls and environmental sounds, an audio-drama that "makes use of orchestrated language that proceeds from the rhythmic impulses of the spoken word and does not obey the dictates of meter nor of melody except for the expressive inflections associated with speech in generally colloquial situations." In other words, *slang*. To Hemphill the sounds of Gotham's subway system "merge to form a specific cacophony; the larger stations amount to urban caverns that allow the most minute sound to swell to awesome proportions; footsteps become the voice of a whip barking." Not surprisingly, much of the imagery has to do with anguish — "There are scattered moments of jubilation and festiveness; but there is often an undercurrent of tension in that laughter."

If *Roi Boye* is concerned with suffocated aspirations, then *Blue Boye* — Hemphill's masterpiece — is a sweeping recollection of roots and inner landscapes, with echoes of children's games, wide open spaces, backstreets and the church. By playing all the parts, Hemphill achieves a sense of completion and fulfillment that is sometimes missing in the Sax Quartet. "C.M.E." ranks with the finest spirituals in jazz (Ellington's "Come Sunday" and Coltrane's "A Love Supreme"). His soprano solo is pure love from start to finish, building towards that one note for eleven minutes, concluding with an unforgettable shout.

On Lester Bowie's *Fast Last* (Muse 5055) Hemphill contributes a brooding, passionate arrangement of Coleman's "Lonely Woman" that is notable for his use of deep brass and space, while "Banana Whistle" is a matrix of Afro-Latin and free transitions that elicits excellent solos from this excellent octet. *Buster Bee* (Sackville 3018) is a remarkable duet album with Oliver Lake. Lake's "Vator" is a sublime composition that illustrates his resourceful use of melody, while Hemphill's "Fertility" is notable for the rich contrasts and plaintive elegance he achieves with only two voices; Hemphill's title tune is a freebop excursion into counterpoint that is constantly intertwining, yet never gets knotted up. *Steppin' With the World Saxophone Quartet* (Black Saint BSR0027) is a celebration of the American reed section, and Hemphill's arranging skills have come alive in this demanding format. Using Bluiett's immense baritone sound to anchor his chords, he can achieve brooding Ellingtonian darkness or celebratory swing, as on "Hearts" and "R & B." Hemphill really nails it on "Dream Scheme," a pointillistic pairing of flutes vs. reeds. The twin themes gently unlace into a vibrating color pattern. Their improvised web of contrary motion picks up steam before evaporating into a darting little minuet. The drowsy awakening is all peace and realization. You've got to listen to chamber music the caliber of Bartok or to Beethoven's late quartets (or Cecil Taylor, for that matter), to hear thematic hallucinations like this.

> ***always looked upon music as a magical thing, I wasn't at all convinced you could learn it by studying or anything."***

Julius Hemphill plays everything he's ever lived, and all that he hopes he'll live. As a result there's often a terrible intensity to his music. Hemphill doesn't make music for casual romantics. There's an inherent challenge to his work, but the point is that he's challenged by this energy too. He's trying to break out, but then so are we. We're all hostages.

'Oh, it's some of that dissonant stuff — I don't like that.' If you insist, but at least try and understand that dissonance is not the same as ugliness. We all learn to live with the discordant, the confusing, even that which is beyond our control and understanding; you can even come to dig the irony and audacity of it all. Look at all the off-the-wall shit we're getting used to in the 80s. Tell me then why music without strong resolution points should feel so threatening. On his Arista/Freedom masterpieces *'Coon Bidness* and *Dogon A.D.* (as on the excellent *Raw Materials and Residuals*, Black Saint 0015, which begins with supercharged free bop and ends with Hemphill's prettiest soprano work on record on the delicate ethnic funk of "G Song") he confesses some terrible hard blues, brother — don't it ever make you want to shout like you can't take it any more? On *Dogon A.D.* he and trumpeter Bakida Carroll unwind a seemingly endless melody over the spare tribal backbeat of cellist Abdul Wadud and drummer Phillip

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

EQUIPMENT: THE WILSON BAND

The most fascinating thing about the jazzman's approach to equipment is his obliviousness to details and specifics. Often times they're only vaguely aware of what they're actually playing, so information and shoptalk tends to be very general, and rather surprising. As far as Julius's colleagues in Magic are concerned we can report the following findings. Guitarist Jehri Riley, a real blues player, uses a Fender Twin Reverb and a left-handed Stratocaster played right-handed with the strings running from bass on top to treble on bottom (some guitarists like Otis Rush and Albert King play with the treble strings on top and bass on the bottom). This is essentially what Hendrix did with his left-handed Stratocasters; when you have the treble pickup poles handling the bass strings and the bass poles on the treble strings, this seems to balance out the sound of a Stratocaster — your sound is louder and brighter with more fullness and depth in the highs. Guitarist Larry Simon plays a Les Paul Custom through an Acoustic 134 amp (solid state); electric bassist Stanley Banks gets a rotund funk bottom from his Fender Precision Bass and a solid state Yamaha bass amp — while he's playing bass he's also doing a steady tambourine rhythm with his foot.

Drummer Phillip Wilson's set-up is a real percussive miracle. Most people would be unable to even get a sound from his ancient, beat-up Rogers drums. The tom toms and bass drum are all single headed; his batter heads are Remo Ambassadors (a medium weight drumskin) that have been worn out so that they have no ring at all. "This way the drums don't make the sound," said Wilson, "you do. I like to control the ring so I can get a real deep Cajun sound. I need some new drums, to be sure. I've listened to some new Slingerlands with Ludwig Rockers and that seems to even out the ring in a nice way — they're bright but full at the same time, sort of like the old Gretsch drums. The new Pearl Drums, in either wood shells or fiberglass are a real solid sound without any extra overtones or ring; same with the Sonor drums — their craftsmanship is

Wilson. Then Hemphill confesses some bad luck and blues that is absolutely harrowing, ranging through the overtone series with huge interval leaps and textural horror stories that are always resolute and rhythmically reasoned.

Okay, so he really flips me out. So what. If he's making all these great records, how come he's not getting to record his orchestral music, to translate his synthesis to the visual-theatrical level as well? The entertainment industry can't see the videodisc potential of jazz, and Washington, D.C. is never going to subsidize classic American artists the way they support European classical forms. As Max Roach said, tell them this is not Europe! Why is American music still an affirmative-action case? "Many of the people that profess an interest in these proceedings, like the European cats, are full of shit just like the rest of them. They'll record you but they want you to give the music away. They think you unreasonable or something if you tell them to fuck off — I need some cash buddy, I'm not no good-will ambassador."

Julius Hemphill will keep smiling through his teeth and maintain his cool at all costs, painting pictures of life that suggest the turmoil and beauty beneath the confusion. Jazz will persevere through another depression, and you'll search out these albums if you want to try some truth for a change.

"Coming up with flawed noise, you guys/Can't make my raggidy mind adhere to proper research/Siamese lungs file recycled air, just filling up/Sho' can't send no 'telligent message to them sanctified worms...

"Went to the doctor and the doctor said, 'Who sent you here? That'll be $75.00 — no checks/What's you name? Hello'/Have Mercy!/'The blues, ah ha — colored radiation/You feel awful... need a bath... a poor credit risk/You're in perfect disarray/You're an artist — it's creative/Have a nice day/Next...'"

Julius Hemphill — *Roi Boye & The Gotham Minstrels.*

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

really beautiful. But Pearl has got the hardware — their stands and pedals are the strongest and the easiest to use.

"An airline lost my whole cymbal bag in Europe so that took care of some nice old A. Zildjians and K. Zildjians. That was a bitch man, it upsets me to even talk about that. I've got some medium-heavy A. Zildjian hi-hats and a 16" Formula 602 Thin Crash that is really good as a crash or a light ride: I'm also using a pair of borrowed Paiste 2002s — a 20" Ride that's really a freak because it's so deep — like a K. Zildjian — and a bright, fast crash, an 18" I believe. The thing about Paistes is you've really got to pop them to get them to project. A. Zildjians have more of an immediate sound; A. Zildjian is louder but Paiste is much purer, a more musical pitch, and I like that. They're fantastic instruments, man — you play the cymbal, it never plays you. But basically I can play on anything. I believe in challenging each drum set one on one. That's why I tune my snare drum so slack — I make the sound, not the drum."

I learned a thing or two watching Julius Hemphill and Frank Lowe fool around with reeds. "You spend a thousand dollars on a horn, and your whole sound comes down to how some reeds that cost a few bucks work." This is a typical complaint of all reed players. The main concern voiced by Lowe and Hemphill was the production and control of overtones. Lowe told me that years ago he "heard John Gilmore playing tenor with the Sun Ra Band. The metal in his horn was really thin. So he was able to get the most fantastic harmonic effects, and everything was really clear. So at the time I had this gold-plated horn and I took it over the border to Mexico and had it sand-blasted to remove the extra metal. Which I guess was kind of extreme, but that was the sound I wanted. Now I have a silver-plated Selmer mark 6." For this evening's concert Lowe persuaded Julius to try some softer gauges of reed on his tenor, also a Selmer mark 6. Rico reeds go from soft to hard on scale between 1 to 5. I noticed that when Julius used a number 2 on his tenor the mid-range was warmer but the very high harmonic and overtones just didn't project strongly. "Can't say as how I blame them," Julius agreed. "When you're using something like a number 4 reed it is not a question of will the overtones be there, but am I *ready*. I usually use a medium to medium-heavy reed with a metal mouthpiece that barely opens. I use an Otto Link No. 6 on my alto but it's been customized so it's probably closer to a No. 7. When Julius showed me his old Conn alto and Conn soprano I wondered why all his horns were silver-plated. "Because they're pretty, it was different, no." But he would concede that the silver-plating made for a more brilliant sound.

One night while standing near the bar listening to Julius solo on his Heinekin bottle, another reed player was trying to remember the name of a Texas tenor man who reputedly used popsicle sticks for reeds. "When Charlie Parker played he used to use a No. 5 reed and nobody could figure out how he played," said a bystander. Julius' voice took on a fatherly tone. "It's not *how* he did it, but *what* he did. That's the important thing." M

BOB SEGER: HYMNS

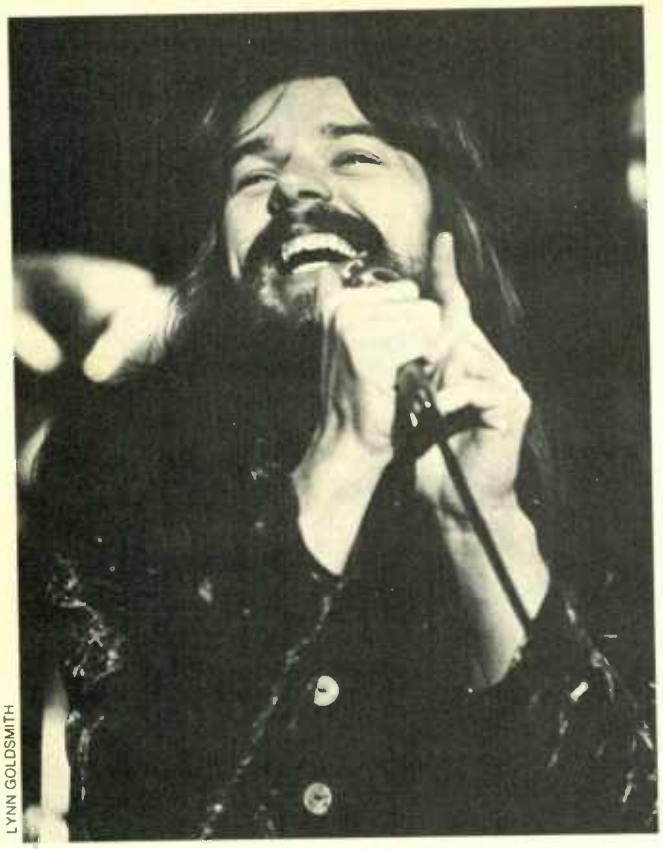
Bob Seger has tapped into the motherlode of American popular culture and shared feelings that only a handful of rock bands have reached. His songs are truly hymns from the heartland – metaphors for the simple, quenchless desires that have always been at the heart of the American dream.

By Cris Cioe

DARYL PITT/ENCORE

The first time I saw Bob Seger perform was the fall of 1966, in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where I was making a stab at being a college freshman. He and his three-piece band, the Last Heard, were playing on the front lawn of a Washtenaw Avenue fraternity house. He'd had one local hit single already called "East Side Story," a violent street-gang saga that sounded like a cross between the influential Van Morrison-Them hit "Gloria" and the Animals' "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place." That afternoon Seger was playing keyboard bass with his left hand, occasionally leaving the piano to stomp around spasmodically in front of the Chi Phi house. He was wearing skin-tight black jeans, a turtleneck, and a blue Beatles-style cap — the quintessential greaser-rocker. Being from Detroit, I was used to either hearing high school bands doing Dave Clark Five and Byrds' cover tunes, or going to hear the Motown Review and such at the Fox Theater. But this guy's voice and presence were something I'd never come across before. The first song I remember hearing him sing was James Brown's "I Feel Good," his voice already a rivetting stylistic mixture of Wilson Pickett, Van Morrison, and something all his own. That afternoon was my first awareness that rock and roll, Detroit-style, meant more to me than the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show or even Elvis Presley in *Jailhouse Rock*. For thousands and thousands of Midwestern kids over the next ten years, Bob Seger went on to establish himself as the premier Detroit rocker who never burnt out, who kept bringing it all back home with a long series of spellbinding regional hit singles and occasional memorable albums. And after 1976 and four years on the road with a band that could finally keep up with him musically, Seger's unique grasp of the essentials won him a worldwide following as one of the two or three greatest R&B-based rockers performing today. How he got to this point is, in its own way, a classic American story

FROM THE HEARTLAND



LYNN GOLDSMITH

Seger's natural voice is truly amazing, with exact and effortless pitch and a high range that breaks through his characteristic whiskey rasp into a deceptively pure tenor.

that touches the very roots of rock and roll.

In his wonderful book *The Sound of The City* (Dell), which is still the most penetrating history of rock 'n' roll ever written, author Charlie Gillet made an important distinction between three decisive musical eras. The first was during the 50s. This "rock 'n' roll" era began roughly in 1952, when disc jockey Alan Freed began to regularly program black R&B artists like Ivory Joe Hunter, saxophonist Red Prysock, and Big Joe Turner on his radio shows in Cleveland and, later, New York. The response from the young white audience was immediate and overwhelming. Until 1958, both white and black rock 'n' roll singers flourished, mostly on smaller independent record labels, with a variety of styles: rockabilly (Elvis Presley); northern band rock 'n' roll (Bill Haley & The Comets); New Orleans dance blues (Fats Domino and Little Richard); Chicago rhythm and blues (Chuck Berry); and vocal group rock 'n' roll (The Penguins, etc.). In part, then, "rock 'n' roll" was merely rhythm and blues aimed at a white audience. By 1958, though, the major labels had moved in on rock 'n' roll's regional roots and began turning out paler versions of the harder stuff (Fabian, the Four Seasons, and earlier, Pat Boone). These dilutions, which Gillet calls "rock and roll," not only softened and homogenized what got on most AM radio stations, but also forced many black singers, except for the rare exception like Sam Cooke or Nat "King" Cole, off the pop charts and playlists completely, deepening the R&B/pop schism that had always existed.

The final era, the "rock" era, began in 1964, with the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, et al, and continues into the 80's. The rock era describes bands and singers who've derived their style, inspiration, and/or feeling from the original "rock 'n' roll" and later R&B idioms. A few have even managed to successfully walk a fine line between utter dedication to these roots and the creation of a believable personal style. A few of those who can walk that line have also had the years of roadhouse, barrelhouse, packed house, and outhouse experience to become great rock performers. And once in a very great while, that man or woman will have a truly amazing voice, like Bob Seger's.

Born and raised in Ann Arbor 35 years ago, Seger's father Stewart was a first aid man at a Ford plant who moonlit playing sax and clarinet in 40s-style swing bands. When Bob was 10, his father left home and never came back. The boy, his older brother George and mother lived in borderline poverty for years. But as early as junior high school, Bob was singing and playing in bands, and had already developed a penchant for raw and gritty R&B. I caught up with Seger and his band last month in Fort Worth, Texas, during their current tour, and in a late-night hotel room conversation, we reminisced about some of those early Midwestern experiences that helped forge a musical outlook.

"My high school friends and I were, let's face it, greasers," chuckled Seger, who is an animated, articulate talker with an especially infectious and cackling laugh that surfaces easily. "Every week we'd go down to a little record shop in Ypsilanti, near Ann Arbor, and buy singles. I fooled around in bands as early as junior high, but my first real one lasted pretty much through high school, called the Decibels. We played frat parties, talent shows and the junior prom. In the beginning I'm sure I sounded terrible, but in all these early groups, they'd say, 'Seger, you sing the black songs and we'll sing the white ones, 'cause you sing black.' Then eventually they'd say, 'You sing 'em all,' and I'd come back with 'Well, OK, but then it's gotta be R&B.' So, we did songs like James Brown's 'Think' and 'I'll Go Crazy,' 'I Found A Love' by Wilson Pickett and the Falcons, Garnett Mimms' 'Cry Baby,' and Otis Redding's first single, 'Shout Bamalama.' We'd also do 'Peggy Sue' and some Elvis stuff. I liked 'Hound Dog' and a few of his things, but not as much as the other guys in the band. I was R&B; I was a dirty white boy. Among me and my friends, the absolute favorite record was *James Brown Live At The Apollo, Vol. 1*. It was like, if you didn't own that album, don't show up."

Right after high school, Seger laid off music entirely for a year because, he told me, "I had to get a real job. My brother went into the Coast Guard, and my mom and I just couldn't live off the money he made from that. So, I worked at a clothing store during the days and in a pizza place at night. But as soon as he got out of the service, I got right back into rock and roll."

At this point Seger hooked up with a major formative influence, a bass player/songwriter named Doug Brown (who's now fronting a band in LA called Fast Fontaine). In those days Brown had been successfully selling tunes to Grand Rapids, Michigan's own claim to rock fame, Del Shannon (remember "Runaway"). Brown encouraged the teenaged and younger Seger to begin writing songs and, the singer claims, "he got me believing in myself. I started playing in bands on and off with Doug, whose father was also a booking agent and kept us working. We'd usually do long runs at pretty tough clubs. One of the first was a joint in Howell, Michigan that was just fistfights and pickup trucks for days. Then I was in a band called the Town Criers, that worked long stretches at a bowling alley in Pontiac and at the Roseland Inn in Jackson, Michigan, a strip joint. We'd back up the strippers for three 15-minute shows a night. But these were also the gigs where I learned to go out and meet the audience between shows, so they'd get to know us and come back: 'How ya doin? How's the wife and kids?' Meanwhile, we were still playing an awful lot of R&B, 'cause it was basically the best thing for dancing."

The next band Seger joined was Doug Brown and the Omens, and during this period he wrote "East Side Story." He offered the song to a local teen club owner named Ed "Punch" Andrews, who also managed a Detroit group named the Underdogs (with whom, ironically, I went to high school)

DARYL PIT/ENCORE

The Silver Bullet Band is almost unbelievably polished, yet still raw and vital. Seger calls the unit a "rock 'n' roll band with the soul staging, lots of stops and jagged starts and smart, fancy endings to tunes."

that had had something of a local hit called "The Man in the Glass." When Punch heard Seger do the song live at one of his clubs, he easily convinced the singer to record it himself for Andrews' own Hideout label (named after his Detroit teen clubs where I first heard live rock and roll). The song made number 3 on the Detroit charts. Brown declined to back up Seger in live performance after that, but he continued to help produce the singles, which had been immediately picked up for national distribution by the New York based independent label, Cameo-Parkway. The next single, "Persecution Smith," was a clever Dylan-circa-Highway 61 soundalike, but by the fourth single, Seger and Brown had hit full stride. "Heavy Music " in 1967 started his string of classic rock singles.

By '68 Seger had formed the Bob Seger System and started playing lead guitar, with drummer Pep Perrine, bassist Dan Honaker, and eventually, Dan Watson on keyboards. He signed a record deal with Capitol and proceeded to have ten consecutive top ten singles in Michigan and nowhere else. By today's recording standards, his first albums sound as if they were made quickly and cheaply. But the voice had matured to a fervent peak that he's never lost since, and many of the songs from those days were destined to become rock standards. Remembering that era, Bob told me that he was "still heavily influenced by James Brown. I went to see him five times at Cobo Hall in Detroit in the days when Dionne Warwick travelled with his show, singing hard soul music. So again, in our live show at that time, we were doing things like 'I Feel Good' and Chuck Jackson's 'Are You Lonely For Me Baby?', as well as English wave stuff. When I started writing, I guess I was a pretty primitive musician — but one way or another the R&B thing always got in there. "Another big vocal influence in those days were the Righteous Brothers, Bobby Hatfield, the one who sang high, was just incredible, and I could've killed to have a range like that. I never did have a falsetto . . . still can't really sing falsetto to this day." Nonetheless, Seger's natural instrument is truly amazing. His higher range breaks through his characteristic whiskey rasp into a deceptively pure tenor that recalls the young James Brown. His pitch is exact and effortless and surpasses even his stylistic peers in contemporary rock, such as Rod Stewart, putting him on an equal footing with the best of original rock 'n' roll shouters such as Little Richard and Lloyd Price.

The first Capitol single was "2 + 2 = ?", a blunt anti-war song Bob wrote after hearing that a close friend had died in Vietnam. It pitted a menacing and insistent guitar riff against Seger's urgent and obviously heartfelt lines: ". . . now he's buried in the mud of a foreign jungle land." The next single, "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man" (1968), actually went top 20 nationally. The song is pure rock anthem, but its irresistible appeal lies in Seger's absolutely straightforward and believable delivery. At the top, drummer Perrine's deadpan intro (which Bachman-Turner Overdrive later copped on "Takin' Care of Business" and which also, believe it or not, prefigures the basic rhythm on the Knack's "My Sharona") and Bob Schultz's rich Hammond organ chords set up another memorable Seger entrance: "I was born lonely, down by the riverside . . . I ain't good lookin', but you know I ain't shy, ain't afraid to look you girl, in the eye." As powerful as Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels had been, they had also left Detroit for New York two years earlier, to become a national act. With "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man," Seger's legend and preeminence as Michigan's #1 rocker were assured. And just as Ryder, the MC5, Frost, Frijid Pink, the Flaming Ember, and other talented Detroit rockers couldn't ultimately sustain their careers nationally, Seger endured by constantly working, growing and refining his approach.

In retrospect, Seger now feels that there were probably several reasons for his long dry spell in "regional purgatory," never producing a follow-up hit nationally for years to come. "First of all," he says, "it was always hard for me to sing and play lead guitar well, because I sing so hard my fingers tend to get all clutched up. So, that was a limitation. Also, my bands were, for a long time, very democratic; I mean, everybody wanted to do their own tunes as well as mine, and I went along

with that idea. But as far as why I couldn't get more hits nationally, I didn't know what to believe. Was it that I was overexposed in Michigan or was it that the songs weren't strong enough? It could have been the record company and lack of promotion, it could have been my manager, it could have been me. Could have been a little of each . . . probably was."

During the early 70s Seger went through a number of bands and even switched to the Warners label for two lp's. Again, his overall direction during this period was sometimes unfocused, but the voice and tunes constantly progressed, as the connection with his roots deepened. And gradually, starting around '72, Seger stopped playing lead guitar and formed the Silver Bullet Band. Guitarist Drew Abbott had led a Detroit rock trio, Third Power. Seger met saxophonist Alto Reed at a Lansing, Michigan studio, was impressed with his playing, and "filed his name away for future reference. After the *Back in 72* album, most of that band basically started working with Eric Clapton, including singer Marcy Levy and drummer Jamie Oldaker. So that's when I formed the Silver Bullet Band, and I had to go back and play small clubs for awhile just to make ends meet." During this period, I was also working in bands around Michigan, playing saxophone, and was in an opening act for two Seger shows. What I remember most was the utter dedication this new band had to Bob. He had decided right from the start to split gig money and record sales earnings evenly among the band members, even against his now-long-time manager Punch Andrews' advice. What Seger got in return was, and is, one of the most dedicated and authentically rocking big-time bands in existence, that was committed to doing Seger's songs exclusively right from the start. The first LP to show this effect was in 1975, entitled *Beautiful Loser* (Seger was now back on Capitol — partially because younger and sympathetic staffers who started working the 60s had now become executives there). His cover of Tina Turner's "Nutbush City Limits" and his own Chuck Berryish "Katmandu" are standout cuts. But the band's next outing, the double-LP *Live Bullet* album, finally broke Seger nationally. It was recorded live at Cobo Hall, in front of what was now an absolutely rabid hometown crowd. Rock fans everywhere were shocked to hear, most of them for the first time, the sheer quality and power of all the hightone Seger oldies. To these ears, it's simply one of the two or three best live rock LP's ever. Opening with an emphatic, "Hey *D*etroit, *the* home of rock and roll," Seger launched right into "Lookin' Back," the most realistically paranoid song to emerge from the 60s experience. The tune begins, "You hit the street, you feel 'em starin', you know they hate you, you can feel their eyes a-glarin' . . ." set against a heavied-up jungle beat that is the perfect rock counterpart to that most eternal R&B rhythm track, Marvin Gaye's "Heard It Through The Grapevine." Song after song on *Live Bullet* testified to the pared-down, incisive purity of Seger's lyrics, outlook, and musical pedigree.

Along with The Silver Bullet Band, the other major component in Seger's mid-70s rise to international rock stardom was a coming-to-grips with his ballad and mid-tempo styles. Songs like the older "Night Moves" and the recent "Fire Lake" off Seger's latest LP, *Against The Wind*, are distillations of Southern-based musical styles including gospel, soul and country. He first came by these roots via the radio. WLAC, in Nashville, has for years had an exceptionally strong nighttime signal, often covering the entire south and midwest. Funky dj's like "Hossman" Allen and "The Spiderman" still broadcast at night, playing everything from B.B. King to Betty Wright to former James Brown sidekick Bobby Byrd. These shows are sponsored by such biggies as Randy's Record Shop or Ernie's Record Mart (". . . send us your po-em, and we will set your po-em to music"). Seger recalls that he "preferred the Stax-Volt and Southern stuff to the repetitive, Motown 'cement-beat' in the 60s, although I know Motown had some great musicians. But me and my friends, like Glenn Frey (of the Eagles, another native Detroiter, who also sang backup on the original 'Ramblin' Gamblin' Man') would send away for these singles, and then it was like 'Listen to this one . . . let *this* one pin your ears back.' Well, years later when I signed with Warners', they sent me down to record in Muscle Shoals with producers Brad Shapiro and Dave Crawford, (who work with Millie Jackson and recently, James Brown). They told Punch,

Seeing Seger live is the ultimate revelation, without appearing forced, staged or contrived, song after song connects with the listener in a highly personal way.

ANDY FREEBERG/ENCORE

'We'll cut him for $1500 a side.' We cut Van Morrison's 'I've Been Working' and two others the first day, and I was sky-high, working with Roger Hawkins, Barry Beckett and all these guys who cut with Aretha and everything. That night, though, Punch came into my hotel room and said, 'They want $1500 a tune, not per album side,' and he had to tell 'em to forget it. I ended up doing the rest of the album pretty much alone with the Muscle Shoals guys, and I thought again, 'file these guys' names away for future reference, because they're something else.' On the next album *Seven*, we went to Nashville and used Kenny Buttrey and Tommy Cogbill on drums and bass, as well as some other fantastic Nashville players like pianist Bobby Woods. On this same album I also started to use the Silver Bullet Band. By now we were opening for big acts like BTO, and we needed screamers, so you can begin to hear both styles: "Need Ya" and "Get Out of Denver," rock hard, while "20 Years From Now" features the great Nashville country-rock flavor that those guys have. Also, that album was the beginning of what we now call 'the real tour.'"

When I caught up with the tour this April at the 25,000 seat Tarrant County Convention Center in Fort Worth, I wasn't really sure what to expect, since I hadn't heard Seger live since 1973, at a divey theater in Lima, Ohio. The show in Fort Worth, as well as the entire American tour through August, was completely sold out. On one level, I was immediately awe-struck by Seger's rapport with his audience, which is comparable only to Bruce Springsteen's. From uptempo rockers to ballads, the kids knew the words and sang along with virtually every tune. After the show, Seger told me, with characteristically self-deflating modesty, "that's just due to radio airplay. The *Stranger In Town* album was second only to the Stones' *Some Girls* in terms of most national FM airplay in 1978." But his own reasoning aside, I came away from that show feeling that there's much more involved here than just hype or knee-jerk hypnotic mass response to radio airplay.

First, the Silver Bullet Band is almost unbelievably polished-yet-raw, virtuosic without being slick. Seger himself calls the unit a "rock and roll band with soul staging, like a lot of stops and jagged starts and smart, fancy endings to tunes. To tell you the truth, before there was all this material we *had* to do, we'd do cover tunes like Albert King's 'Breaking Up Somebody's Home' with stops, signals, and so forth." Onstage, the band now features three powerful backup singers — Shaun Murphy, Kathy Lamb and Colleen Beaton — who are on a riser next to drummer Dave Teegarden. Stage left, keyboardist Craig Frost (ex of Grand Funk) holds forth on a Hammond organ, clavinet and acoustic piano. Stage right, guitarist Abbott cranks out the real thing on a Les Paul Gold Top. Center stage, Seger, Alto Reed and bassist Chris Campbell range across the completely carpeted floor surface as if they were playing in their living room. Both Campbell and Reed have wireless transmitters on their instruments, which means they are free to rockhouse all over the stage at a moment's notice. For instance, on "Betty Lou's Gettin' Out Tonight," a flat-out Little Richard-inspired stomper off the new album, Seger turns to them and says, "What do you think about that, boys?", whereupon bassist and sax player start to carom off each other like billiard balls, with Alto eventually flat on his back, feet kicking up in the air, Jr. Walker-style, still blowing ferociously on his tenor. Abbott's unabashedly rootsy guitar solos and rhythm work, while obviously in the Chuck Berry mold, are surprisingly inventive, given the restrictions of the form. In fact, the whole band derives its power from a willingness to have fun while extending tradition and roots. On the new rocker "Horizontal Bop," which Teegarden locates as a groove "roughly somewhere "between dixie-land, blues, boogie-woogie and something real different," the entire band struts around the stage, freezing each time the song stops, Alto Reed playing Maceo Parker to Seger's James Brown.

On most of the mid-tempo songs and ballads, both Seger and Alto don acoustic guitars, and the band shifts gears instantly from diehard juking to soulful, Stax-influenced groov-

TOM BERT

THE SILVER BULLET BAND ONSTAGE

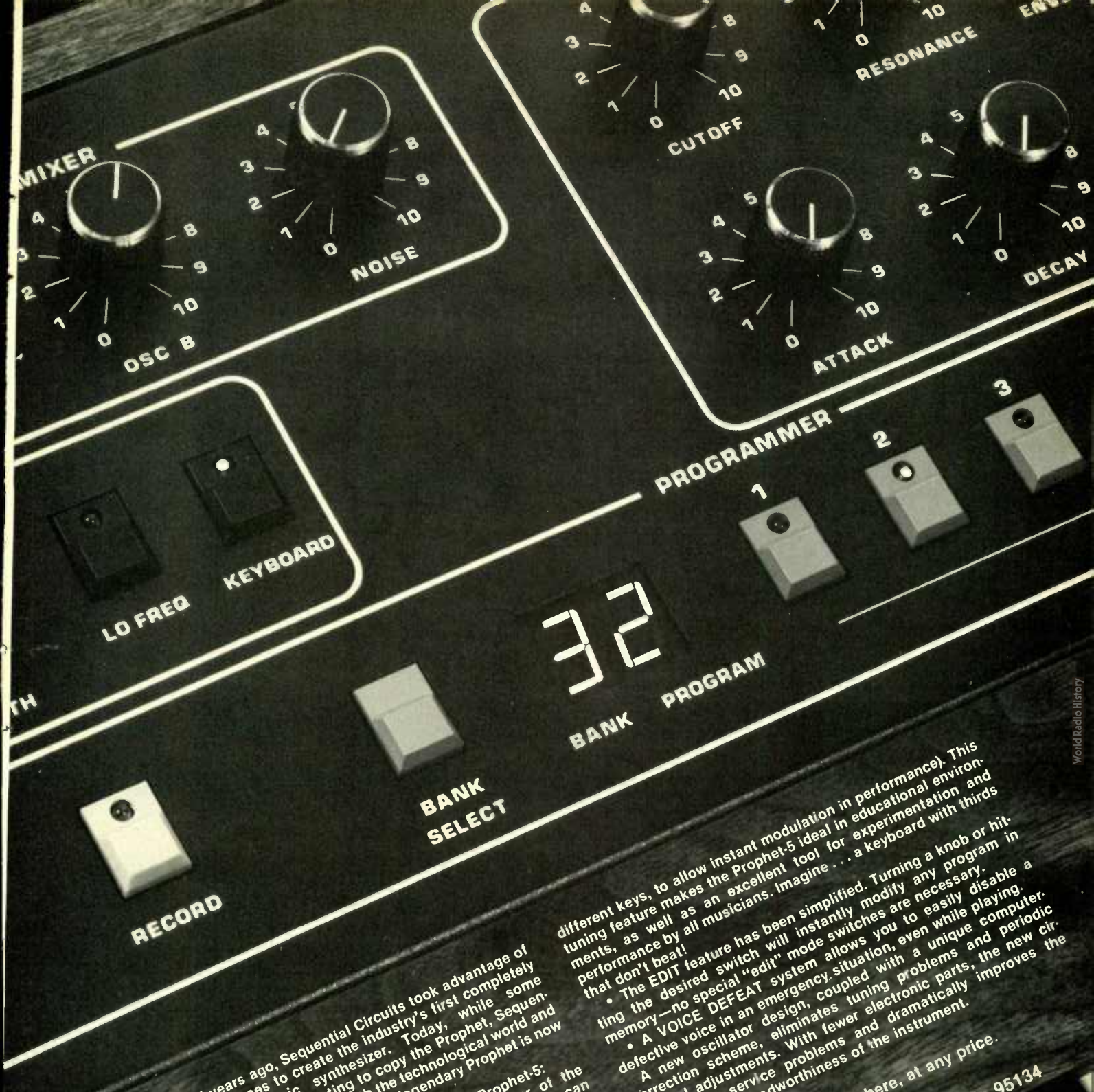
Seger has been playing big venues for years, but he cautions that "if arenas are what you're aiming at, it takes a long time to learn how to play them. Even the 3000-7000 seat theaters are good to you acoustically, but the prefab stages you have to carry with you for really big shows are another thing entirely. You lose the ambience of theaters completely, and there's usually a real heavy low frequency roll happening onstage. It's a little like flying blind, and you have to accept that you're not going to hear every instrument." Nonetheless, the band travels with its own huge PA (sound and system run and owned by Fanfare Audio of Jackson, Michigan) and its own huge stage (by a company called Aztec).

Guitarist Drew Abbott plays a 1964 Gibson Les Paul gold-top through a Mesa-Boogie Amplifier and 2 Marshall bottoms. For effects, he uses an MXR Phase 90 Unit and a Roland 301 Chorus Unit. Bassist Chris Campbell plays a 1964 Fender Precision Bass through a Furman preamp and a BGW Power amp, with custom speakers, and also uses a Schaefer-Vega Wireless Transmitter. David Teegarden's drums are Rodgers, with single bass, 2 rack toms, 2 floor toms and Zildjian cymbals. Craig Frost uses a Hammond B-3 Organ through 2 Leslie speakers, and each Leslie has a Bogen 200 watt power amp. For his Hohner clavinet, he has an Ashley pre-amp with a Crown power amp and 2 West cabinets containing 12" SRO speakers. Frost's other keyboard is a Yamaha C-7 Conservatory Piano with a Helpinsteel pick-up, which feeds into a Tapco Mixer YC-12, a Urei Graphic Equalizer, a DLC Limiter Unit, Crown power amp, and custom-made 3-way speakers. He also uses a Sequential Circuits Prophet Synthesizer and an occasional Arp Omni. He also uses an MXR Aural Exciter Unit. Bob Seger plays a Gibson Les Paul Pro-Model guitar through a Mesa-Boogie Amp with 2 12" speakers, and for his Ovation Adamas acoustic guitar, he uses a Roland Amp and a Roland 301 Chorus Unit. He also has the Schaefer-Vega Wireless Transmitter. Alto Reed plays Selmer Mark VI saxes (tenor, alto and soprano), and has an HME Wireless Transmitter. His signal then runs through a Tangent Mixer Model #801, an MXR Digital Delay Unit, an Even-Tide Harmonizer, a Roland 301 Chorus Unit, and an EXR Exciter. He also plays an Ovation Adamas acoustic guitar. Microphones used onstage by the Silver Bullet Band are Electro-Voice PL-95's.

ing, Seger's vocals floating indelibly over the rich background harmonies on "Night Moves." For the final encore, Alto Reed solos, then disappears offstage while Abbott and Seger rock around for a couple of choruses. Suddenly, the sax is wailing through the speakers again, only this time the spotlights locate Alto at the back of the stadium, spinning out his lush, King Curtisey lines in the middle of a crowd of cheering kids in the back balcony.

Obviously, a show this hot can't be compared to a record; but in a different way Seger's new album has an integrity and state-of-the-art funkiness that stands on its own. Lyrically, the album's concerns may seem mellower than on the previous one, *Stranger In Town*, but the music is, for the most part, just as deep. And that was the ultimate revelation for me, seeing a Bob Seger concert last month. Without appearing forced, staged, or contrived, song after song connects with the listener in a highly personal way. Michiganders, for instance, may know that Seger wrote "Main Street" about that particular avenue in Ann Arbor, but to the rest of the nation, the song's wistful and longing portraiture is just as meaningful. Or for young Seger fans who never heard "2 + 2 = ?", the echoes of its antiwar message are still strong in another decade. "Feel Like A Number" carries an updated and similarly intense message of the alienation everyone has felt in this day and age: ". . . to workers I'm just another drone/To Ma Bell I'm just another phone." Or consider the recent Seger single, "Fire Lake,"which if anything, is a metaphor for the simple, quenchless desire that's always been at the heart of American life, especially in the American heartland, for longer than anyone remembers. It could be about nothing more than the eternal quest for a really wild weekend, but when Bob Seger asks "Who wants to take that long shot gamble/And head out to Fire Lake," with the song's loping groove perfectly tailored to come wafting out of a car radio on a Friday afternoon in June, a lot of people know just what he's talking about.

Bob Seger has tapped into the motherlode of American popular culture and shared feelings that only a handful of "rock" bands and artists have reached, and the list includes few more than the Rolling Stones, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Band and Bruce Springsteen, and sometimes Van Morrison. It's a vein that runs deep, crossing back and forth between black and white origins, usually dealing with the primary instincts, pleasures and pains. American radio stations may have missed Seger the first through tenth times around, but are apparently now atoning for past errors by playing the vinyl off his albums. Seger himself couldn't be happier to be rocking these days. His entire entourage—band, sound crew, security, and business organization—is Michigan-related, to the extent that he jokingly refers to it as "the Michigan Mafia." His new producer, Bill Szymczyk (James Gang, early J. Geils, Eagles), is originally from Muskegon, Michigan, and, as Bob points out, "he's the biggest R&B fanatic I know—he doesn't even listen to album-oriented FM radio." Back in his room after the show with some beers, Bob was ready to talk all night about this ongoing phenomenon, white rhythm and blues, not to mention the many singers who have influenced him: Lorraine Ellison, Ann Peebles (whose "Come To Papa" he covered on *Night Moves*), and on and on. He mentions southern soul singer Otis Clay, especially the 1972 Hi release "Trying To Live My Life Without You," and gives me a sly sidelong glance: "Ever heard 'The Long Run,' by the Eagles?". Then he bursts out in squealing laughter over the remarkable similarity between the musical grooves in both tunes. Without missing a beat, he sings a verse from the Clay tune: "I smoked five packs of cigarets a day, It was the hardest thing to put them away/Drank 4 or 5 bottles of wine, I kept a glass in my hand all the time." Then he leans forward a little and says, "There's Pat Boone roots and there's Little Richard roots—I guess it's just a question of 'which 'tutti frutti' do you want?' "



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DEBORAH FEINGOLD, JANE WINSOR

THE BEAR

CHAPTER V

By Rafi Zabor

Actually, as the Bear would reflect later in jail, his life had had a refreshing solidity to it that night after meeting Iris at Sweet Basil's. As he had looked through the club at the people enjoying his music and, near the back, at a small table beneath a hanging plant, at the smallish figure of a woman who possibly loved him, it seemed to him that the terrible rift that had been driven between him and the rest of the world may finally have been healed, that perhaps he had at last been granted, as if by courier from the king, the imprimatur of reality. He looked at the assortment of friends and lovers in the candlelight and for the first time in his life felt equal to them. Before this, he had always felt either immensely better or immensely worse. The burden of comparison had been lifted.

Though something bothered him still. All this instant fulfillment, didn't it make too simple a creature of him? What possible dignity did he have if all it took was for Iris to walk back into his life for him to feel completed? And wasn't there more than a faintly proprietary air in his attitude towards her, some cheap possessive lie? He watched her from the stage and tried to remind himself, for all his years of loneliness, that she had her own existence and was probably as subtle and elusive as ever. By the time the band had packed up and Jones and Sybil had driven him to Iris' apartment in the van — Iris had gone ahead to straighten the place up — the Bear wasn't sure he really wanted to see her. Why rush things? Why pressure events and fuck them up?

Jones pulled the van up outside Stuyvesant Town on East 20th. "You know the apartment number?" he asked.

"Yup," said the Bear. "You want to go ahead and ring me in?"

"It's three in the morning. It's cool, there won't be anyone around."

"If you insist." The Bear pulled up his coatcollar and lurched uncomfortably out of the back of the van, feeling abandoned by his friend and betrayed into the anonymity of the night. The street was empty but he had the unpleasant feeling that he was being watched. He walked across the black lawn and into the entrance hall, where — my first Skinner box, he thought — he got the buttons figured out and Iris rang him inside. The elevator came up from the basement and when the aluminum doors rolled open a sourfaced woman with dyed red hair and a cigarette stuck in her face stood inside holding a blue plastic basket of laundry. The Bear walked in, pushed fourteen and tried to look inconspicuous. He took a quick glance sideways as the doors shut. The woman was looking directly at him. The cigarette smoke rose into her eyes but she did not blink.

"Just what the fuck are you," she asked him.

"Delivery boy," said the Bear. "How'd your wash come out? You get those whiter whites?"

"What are you, some kind of a joke?"

"That's it," said the Bear. "I'm some kind of a joke."

"Well you don't fool me." She narrowed her eyes at him to demonstrate how difficult she was to fool, slapped at the bank of buttons behind her and the elevator stopped at the next floor. She got out and turned to face him. "I know exactly what you're thinking," she said.

"That's wonderful," he said, and tipped his hat goodnight. Shit, thought the Bear as the doors rolled shut and the elevator resumed its upward journey, if I have that effect on all the girls I'm gonna be fresh out of luck tonight.

Iris was waiting when the doors opened on fourteen. She smiled up at him, her face small, bright and perfect, and he wanted to hug her more or less forever. "Didn't Jones come up with you?" she asked.

"He thinks I should learn to take care of myself."

"Bullshit." She took him by the paw. "This way."

"There was a woman in the elevator on the way up," the Bear explained as Iris led him down the hallway. "With laundry."

"And red hair? She yell at you and try to read your mind?"

"Yeah. She do that to everybody?" asked the Bear.

Iris nodded yes and laughed musically into her free hand. "She's nuts. You thought it was you but you were wrong this time."

"Paranoia," the Bear admitted.

"Vanity," said Iris. "Here we are. I'm afraid the place is still a mess." She let him go in first.

"It's beautiful," said the Bear, spinning around the living

room in a kind of domestic ecstasy. "So spacious, so big and bright."

"It used to belong to my father. I took it over when he moved to Florida. It's bigger than I need but the rent is low."

"You should see the hole Jones and I are living in. This is gorgeous."

"You two used to live pretty well," Iris remembered. "Big stereo, fresh salmon, good champagne..."

"That was a long time ago," said the Bear, "and a lot of water under the bridge." He had stopped beside a coffee table, looking down."*Winnie the Pooh*?" he asked, picking up the book. "You leave this out for me?"

Iris blushed deep red and her eyes shone. "Oh I uh, I was reading it earlier tonight before going down to the club. When I came back I didn't know whether or not to put it away. I put it away twice and finally I left it out."

The Bear sat down on the couch and propped his feet up on the table. They looked enormous. He wiggled his claws. "And do I remind you of Winnie the Pooh?" he asked.

Iris' face was still red. Her facial expression seldom changes much, the Bear remembered. It all comes through her skin, her eyes. A kind of light. "Of course not," she said. "Don't tease me. Would you like a cold beer?"

"Sure." Iris went around a corner into the kitchen and the Bear looked around her living room at the tasteful but worn out furniture, the old stereo and TV and at her paintings on the walls. He had always liked her pictures, the general shape of them, her use of color, their warmth.

"You can stay the night," came her raised voice from the kitchen along with the sound of bottles and glasses, "if it's a hassle going home. I made up the extra bedroom."

"Um," said the Bear, and toyed with a glass ashtray on the table. "I don't think so," he added, but too softly for her to hear.

She came back in carrying two large glasses of beer. The Bear watched her body moving under her dark green dress. "The thing about that copy of *Winnie the Pooh* was that it was one of the few things I took with me when I left my husband." She handed him one of the beers and sat next to him on the couch, curling her legs underneath her. "I used to read it to the kids."

The Bear took a first sip of beer and collected a moustache of white froth on the front of his snout. "How come your husband got custody?"

"He's a shrink. He diddled the court. He can do anything."

"He have you declared crazy?"

Iris nodded. "I'm an unfit mother." Her eyes were very bright.

"Why'd you leave him?"

"I didn't like him any more," she said, as though it were a simple thing to marry someone, have two kids with him and then not like him anymore. The Bear, who had never married but believed in lasting relationships, was unable to come to terms with the casualness of her statement. Iris placed her fingertips lightly on her forehead as if to steady her mind. "The thing about the book is that when I read the stories to the kids I told them Pooh was an old friend of mine from New York. Then they only wanted to hear stories about Pooh and me, later for the stuff in the book." She laughed softly into her lap. "I started telling them about you, growing up crazy, playing the sax, listening to records, beating Jones at chess, telling me stories about your family in Russia. You got to be their favorite character and then, funny thing, they must have picked up on it, they asked me if Pooh was in love with me."

"Pooh was in love with you," the Bear told one of her paintings.

"And they wanted to know why I didn't go away with him."

"You know anyplace we could have gone?"

Iris cleared her throat. "I used to tell them, 'So I could have you guys.' Anyhow, when I left Jeffrey I rented an apartment, packed up everything the night before and put myself and the kids into a cab after he left for the office the next morning. At the last minute I grabbed the book and took it with me."

"He shouldn't have been able to get custody," said the Bear.

"I really was messed up. I was panicky, couldn't handle myself right. He had remarried. It wasn't hard." She paused. "Bear, I'm not what I used to be. I don't have the strength to fight anymore. I got damaged."

"You seem together."

"Oh, I'm good enough at that. I practice. But I just can't do it anymore. I can handle the lab job. Beyond that I manage to cook for myself and get the phone bill paid but in here," she pounded her chest with a small vehement fist, "it's all broken up, it doesn't fit together anymore, I don't have the energy to do anything with it, I'm not anyone at all."

"Oh baby," the Bear said. He couldn't help it, but to him the fact that someone as exquisite as Iris could have gotten damaged was an indictment of the world in general. He felt something in himself, part protectiveness and part desire, move in her direction across the couch.

She may have sensed something of this, because she quickly got up and walked across the room to needlessly check the blinds. "You must be pretty happy now that you're in the open playing music," she said, attempting a change of subject.

"Oh I don't know," said the Bear, resisting a moment before giving in. "I don't know. Maybe it was better the other way. I don't know."

Iris sat down and it was the Bear's turn to walk around the room. "What do you mean you don't know. You know. Tell me about it."

"I don't want to complain," the Bear protested, waving his arms a little.

"You *love* to complain," Iris told him. "You're a terrific complainer. Fate has singled me out, et cetera. You're one of the best."

The Bear cocked an unsporting eye at her. "Oh really?"

"I stepped on a corn, huh. I'm sorry. Go on."

The Bear gradually removed his eye from her and resumed. "I don't know. I mean it's all new to me. I don't like being *seen*. I don't like people thinking they know who I am. Utter strangers, you know? Do they think they know my insides because they've heard me play? Where do they come off, where do they think they get the right? I feel violated. Sometimes I get actual spasms of pain, I double up, can't do anything about it. I can feel their eyes working on me. It hurts."

"But Bear," interrupted Iris, "you always used to talk about how you wanted to get your music heard. There were all these things you wanted to express, to get across, to give."

"Express?" said the Bear. "Give? That must have been a long time ago. I was a kid back when you knew me."

"You were a sweet, romantic bear," Iris said.

"I'm still a sweet, romantic bear," the Bear growled back at her. "I'm the sweetest, most romantic bear in the whole wide world, but life was a lot easier when what I did had nothing to do with who I am."

"You don't really believe that, do you?"

"Everybody's at me all the time. Everybody knows what's good for me, everybody's an authority on me but me, everybody's got a piece of advice, you dig? Like I'm some dink without a brain."

"You're not some dink without a brain," Iris told him.

"And you've got your piece of advice too. I'm," it was very hard for the Bear to say the word, "hurt. Something's getting to me and I can't fix it in the middle of the tour and everything." He pounded at his chest to indicate the location of the problem. "And the one thing I need is privacy, not people peeking in. I'm supposed to make a record in this condition? The race belongs to the swift, not the addled."

"But if that's how it really is," said Iris,"why shouldn't a record be made of it?"

"Uh uh. No way." The Bear shuddered a little. "That way madness lies."

"Bear, I hate to tell you this, but this is what life is like. You go along for awhile until you've had more than you can deal with and then you go the rest of the way in pieces."

"That's not the way it is," said the Bear. "That's the crap that gets in the way. Perfection *exists*. Don't be hustled into partial solutions. This is irrelevant garbage. What pisses me off is that I should be able to handle it, just knock it flat."

"If that's how it's been for you then you've been very lucky."

"Yeah. I'm all over luck... That's what's wrong with you human people. You live too long, you have emotional lives your bodies can't support, you lack the strength to keep things from getting to you so naturally you crap out exhausted halfway through..." The Bear stopped himself, shocked at the casual cruelty of what he had been saying. Iris' mouth had fallen partway open. He had never seen her face like that. "Aw Christ I'm sorry..."

Without changing her position on the couch Iris extended an arm to him. "Bear? Is that you?"

He sat down beside her and they held each other. It felt so good to the Bear, as if he had not touched another living creature in an eternity, as if he were slowly being welcomed back into the warm community of flesh.

"I love you too," she said into his shoulder.

"You love me too?" he asked wonderingly.

"Do you remember way back when, before I met you for the first time, I had dreams about a talking bear for a week and then Jones called me up?"

"Do you remember when we started hearing each other think?"

"The first time I heard your voice out loud in my head," said Iris, "I nearly jumped across the room."

"We belong with each other," said the Bear. "Isn't it obvious?"

"Listen, I know you've got a big drama built up and I'm the next act." Iris pulled away from him so he could have a look at her face. "But I'm not that, I'm not the answer to that, I'm not a function of that. At least, don't jump to any conclusions." She was straightening herself up. "There's something I want to show you." She pulled away from him, but as she walked across the room she kept her face averted. She rummaged in a pile of magazines on top of a bureau and come away with a copy of *Rolling Stone*.

"Oh no," said the Bear, and he held his head in his hands. "Did I get written up in the Stone too? I can't stand it. I feel like I'm being pulled to pieces, being destroyed, like my insides are being pulled out."

"Funny you should say that," said Iris, who had found her page. "And no, you didn't get written up in the Stone. It's a quote from a book review. 'If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.'"

"Heavy shit," said the Bear. "What's it from."

"The Gnostic Gospels."

"So you got God on your side, huh?"

"Doesn't everyone?" Iris replied.

"Aw, you're probably right, kid. I've just become a crumb, that's all. I used to love you so pure and true, now I spend half my time thinking how to seduce you."

"That seems natural enough," said Iris.

"It does?" asked the Bear. "God, I'm such a stranger in this world."

"Well, goodluck," she said.

He walked home alone under the pylons and girders of the FDR Drive, smelling the foetid night and watching the colored lights that shimmered on the black surface of the river. Waiting for Godzilla, like the rest of the city. He had already begun to successfully argue Iris down in his mind. There was too big a pileup in his life. Worse, he had been living with a dumb, unregal automatism, his nose glued to the iron rail of events, stupefied by sequence, rapt, somnambulous, unalert. He had been stupid enough to hope for something from people and events. The gigs, the music, Iris — he had stood in front of all of them like a hungry man at a cafeteria counter, expecting to be fed. It didn't work that way, you didn't walk through the world with your hand out, begging your meaning from whatever came along. A truck rolled past him under the highway, braying on its horn. The only way to live was to be free of what happened to you, and he had lost that, he was stuck. He had lost everything! Tomorrow night's recording session meant nothing. And Iris. More bondage. Vulnerability! Give and take! The whole crock of shit! Letting her tell him that all this garbage was good for him when he knew he was being destroyed!

He got home before first light, went upstairs and despite his agitation fell asleep almost at once. He had a dream that purported to part the veil and reveal to him the perfection of his life. Not only were the events of his life, most of them awful, rendered perfect by the beauty of the overall design, but each event was itself perfect. He was handed a certain flower. In the middle of the dream, the woman with the orange hair and the laundry basket walked laughing up to him and kissed him full on the mouth.

When he woke up it was mid-afternoon and Jones and Sybil had already gone out for lunch. He grumbled around the apartment practicing and wondering whether or not to be nervous about the date. Cummins phoned around sundown to ask how things were going. The Bear told him they were just dynamite. Night came too quickly, and too quickly after it Jones showed up with a vapid, eager expression on his face and the van downstairs. "This is it, eh Bear? The night of nights. You ready for posterity?"

"No," said the Bear. "And I ain't dressed yet, either."

"Don't know which pair of baggy pants to put on? Whether to button the raincoat or belt it? Stage fright? Is that what's troubling you, bucky?"

"Jones," the Bear told him, dusting off the raincoat, "try not to be such a pain in the ass."

They went down the stairs with the Bear in the lead, Jones behind him trying out an Edward G. Robinson impression to the tune of I made you and I can break you so don't double-cross me tonight or you'll be sorry, see? The ride down to the Tin Palace passed too quickly and when the Bear entered the club he knew without possibility of error than nothing was going to work out. Maybe he would lay out a lot and the rhythm section could put out a trio record. They had been playing well... A little while before the first set he telephoned Iris.

"Are you sure you don't want me to come down and watch?" she asked.

"You'd only make me nervous. Or I'd forget about everyone else and only play for you."

Her voice softened. "That's sweet," she said.

"No it's not, it 's stupid and it'll fuck up the music. Look, if a couple of sets go well maybe I'll call you and you can come down."

She made a goodbye kiss into the phone and he hung up the receiver.

The rhythm section showed. Cummins set up the tape machine and the microphones, the Bear worked his way distractedly through a conversation with the bartender about his first dramatic visit to the establishment a few months earlier, and gradually some people started drifting in and assembled themselves over drinks from the bar and dinner from the kitchen in the rear. Too quickly it was time for the first set, and the Bear played it feeling only half present, beginning with a couple of standards and playing perfunctory versions of two of the originals he wanted to record. After the set everyone told him he was doing fine but he could tell they were lying and his inquietude deepened. By the time he went up for the second set he was ready to call it a night. The club had filled rather suddenly but he hardly noticed it. Where was he going to get the music from?

Then, after playing a furious blues he hoped would open him up but didn't, the Bear had a new experience. It came to him, and heavily, so that he was not able to doubt it, that whatever battle it was he had been trying to fight in his life, it was over and he had lost it. Everything he had tried to accomplish was gone, all his efforts shot to hell. A sense of his true desolation

entered him and he waved the band away from the Monk tune he had meant to call and began playing alone. Some distance ahead he would meet up with a dissonant torch ballad he had written the week before, but for now he wanted to play by himself.

I am that city whose soul has left it, he decided. What an empty life I've had. I tried to fill it up but I never really succeeded. It was empty for good now, something had finally given way at the bottom of it, and the music came out of him ordered and dispassionate, according to an unfamiliar principle and feeling less like a language of emotion than one of fact. So this is how I'm going to be for awhile, he thought. I'm not sure I like it but it's obviously not going to go away. He sensed himself as a large dark space in which everything had calmed down and settled into position. He didn't know if it was good or bad but after he had played for ten minutes or so and then taken the band through the torcher he felt that he had gotten some unsuspected portion of himself into music for the first time and that it would have to stand.

He played a fast impromptu thing to blow some of his steam off and although he played fluently and bitterly enough he knew he would do better by the end of the next night. By then there would be enough for a record. Okay, he thought, and allowed himself the smallest and most sardonic of smiles. Okay. He walked up to the microphone to say a few words and announce the next tune.

They had been told to wait for the end of the set, but the youngest cop on the squad must have gotten edgy. "NEW YORK CITY POLICE!" he called out, and jumped to his feet with his revolver held stiffly out in front of him with both hands. "FREEZE!"

The Bear was aware of screams, falling tables and breaking glass as he threw the mikestand and took off for the kitchen doors. He heard a gunshot, presumably fired into the air, and then someone shouted "*Stop in the name of the law.*"

Good Lord, the Bear asked himself as he raced through the kitchen and splintered the back door open with his shoulder, did somebody actually say that? He upended the patrolman who had been waiting for him in the alley, vaulted a low wall, landed on all fours and took off at forty miles an hour. It was too epiphenomenal, too obvious an exteriorization of himself, but now that it had finally happened to him he felt oddly liberated. No more half measures. Let it come down. He climbed a section of cyclone fence, came out on the sidewalk and sprinted for Second Avenue, listening for the sound of pursuit.

A portrait of the artist as a hunted animal: he paused at the edge of the Avenue's brightness to consider his possible strategies. He could look for some indoor place to hole up in or brazen it out among the populace. The latter alternative appealed to his sense of humor, besides which he was only ten minutes' walking distance from his apartment or Iris'. Pulling down on his hat and up on his coatcollar, the Bear raised himself onto his hind legs and prepared to face the music of the Avenue.

Almost immediately he could tell he wasn't going to make it. He'd succeeded in passing through crowds before, but tonight he was seriously out of phase. As soon as he turned the corner people started backing away and making noises. A skinny girl with green and purple hair let out a scream. Several dark mouths dropped open. "It's all right," he told them. "I'm a doctor, let me through." A young couple in down jackets staggered backwards away from him and into the traffic. A taxi swerved to avoid them and a chorus of horns went up; everywhere the Bear detected faces spinning in his direction. Here it is, he told himself, you've defied the laws of gravity long enough.

With a sweat breaking out under his fur and the distinct sensation that he was acting something out that had happened long ago, he dropped again to all fours, aimed himself uptown and took off. He was aware of a gathering tumult some distance behind him and took the first available left into relative darkness. Passing alongside a high brick wall down which rivulets of water ran he found a rusted metal door, broke it in and headed downward through a wilderness of stairs, aware at the same time that he was passing through some hidden landscape of himself. He collided with a number of heavy objects and came at last to a halt. He stood in darkness and listened. A siren dopplered off outside and his nostrils filled with the smell of rusted iron. Someplace nearby, water dripped regularly onto stone.

In a few minutes his perspiration dried and his heart quieted to normal. He groped his way forward and then slowly up the first stairway that presented itself, followed it through a series of precarious and irregular turnings and then had to clamber up onto some kind of shelf. He had the sensation, as he stood, of having to come out into a large open space. When his eyes adjusted themselves he made out, very high above him, a bit of broken ceiling through which faint light filtered slantwise down. He was on a kind of platform, overlooking a landscape of broken timbers and upthrust floors. In fact he was on the stage of an abandoned theatre, and as he retraced his run up the Avenue he understood that he had broken through the side door of the old Fillmore East, descended to its basement and then come slowly upstairs. Fifty years before, Carnovsky had done his famous Yiddish Lear here, and more recently the psychedelic age had blown east to this platform on a sea of purple billows. Now it was his turn, the one and only Bear. "World," he said.

There was a noise from the pit and three powerful flashlights clicked on and shined in his face. "Hello," he told them. "I'm Mr. Ed." A fourth policeman standing behind the first three raised a kind of lantern and the Bear was able to see them all. It may have been the lighting, but they appeared to be wearing red or blue rubber noses. And why not. Wasn't he a bear in a raincoat and a hat? The Bear felt terribly sleepy. His eyes closed; he wanted to lie down.

"I place you under arrest in the name of the Law," the cop without a uniform told him in a faint stage-Irish accent.

"On what charge," the Bear asked him, rising wearily to the humor of the situation.

"Bein' without a cabaret card..." The Bear observed that the officer's accent had broadened. "...committin' music from the wrahng species..."

"I can deal with that," said the Bear.

"...affendin' against the ardor of the universe..."

This is what I get for rising to the bait, he thought. What a goddam sap I've been. Music, a career, love. Can you believe it, ladies and gentlemen? I wanted to live.

"...not to mention fourteen separate violations of the city housing coode..."

"Oh no, not that," said the Bear, beginning to collapse into laughter.

"...and it's to the onimal shelter with ye' forever."

One of the uniformed cops had a question: "How do we get the bear off the stage?"

"You can't," the Bear muttered under his breath. "It's in my blood."

"*What was that*?" the detective asked him sharply.

"To hold his pants up," said the Bear. "To get to the other side of the road. To make time fly."

"One moore witticism out of you and I'll shoot you in a delicate place. Come down slowly now..."

They shot him full of animal tranquilizer and threw him semi-conscious into the back of a truck. He was sped dazed and blinded through half-familiar streets. Later, his body retained the memory of several painful blows from blunt instruments. Then miscellany ensued. His last clear memory was of being thrown heavily into a cell. "That oughta hold you for awhile," a voice told him. His saxophone case was thrown in after him. It hit him full in the face, and just before he spun downward into a brown and uncomforting darkness he became aware of a pair of piercing eyes watching him, apparently from on high.

— to be continued —

No two are alike.

The former drummer, writer and co-producer for George Duke brings all his talents as well as his name to the group that is now known to one and all as Ndugu & The Chocolate Jam Co. "Do I Make You Feel Better?" includes Ndugu's all-star version of the Bee Gee's "Shadow Dancing" featuring The O'Jays and The Jones Girls.

Among the supporting artists on the LP are George Duke, Hubert Laws and Ronnie Laws.*

*Appears courtesy of Liberty/United Records.

Robert Palmer of The New York Times describes Lonnie as "a colorist, weaving his pianos and synthesizers in waves of sound, and a group catalyst, drawing committed performances from his soloists and rhythm section."

On his new album, "Love Is the Answer," Lonnie for the first time brings these qualities to the role of producer as well as performer.

The Heath Brothers' first live album reflects their concern with the jazz repertoire.

In this collection, they offer a Duke Ellington classic, a theme by contemporary Billy Taylor, as well as original compositions. "For the Public," the single, was written especially for the event by Jimmy Heath. It was produced by his son, recording artist Mtume, who has produced Stephanie Mills and Phyllis Hyman.

Joining The Brothers are pianist Stanley Cowell, guitarist Tony Purrone and the group's new percussionist, Akira Tana.

down beat has described Woody Shaw as "one of today's leading contenders for the world's heavyweight trumpet crown."

You'll be just as definite in your praise of Woody's new album, "For Sure!"

Joining him for the first time is vocalist Judi Singh. Listen for her on "Time Is Right" and "Why."

Keyboardist Rodney Franklin has toured and recorded with Freddie Hubbard, Bill Summers, George Duke and Marlena Shaw.

But "You'll Never Know" about the plaintive, rollicking, surprising and witty qualities of his own music unless you purchase his second Columbia album.

Among those joining Rodney as sidemen are bass guitarist Paul Jackson and percussionist Kenneth Nash.

An astounding number of instruments were used in the making of "Monster."

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RECORD REVIEWS

Jimi Hendrix

Kuhn-Jordan

Keith Jarrett

Robert Fripp

Jimi Hendrix
Nine To The Universe Warners HS2299
Eric Clapton
Just One Night RSO R-2-4202

This is not the mythical lost Hendrix album you've been hoping for; neither is it some haphazardly tossed together pastiche of mismatched fragments and indecisive meanderings. Rather, this series of jams from mid-1969 is concerned with works in progress. There are no songs as such, and no vocals: Hendrix simply establishes a rhythm pattern with a riff or phrase and the band jumps in behind him. The band in this case consists of Billy Cox on bass and Mitch Mitchell on drums (Buddy Miles sits in on the title cut, and Roland Robinson handles bass on another). Guitarist Jim McCarty and organist Larry Young appear on one cut each, and while Hendrix offers them plenty of space, it remains Jimi's show all the way.

The advent of New Wave has reawakened us to the value of spontaneity, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised some of the riffs and melodies sound fresher and purer here than on more carefully structured arrangements elsewhere. The title cut is a case in point: the quotations from "Earth Blues" and "Message of Love" shuttle in with a vitality and immediacy not apparent on *Rainbow Bridge* and *Band of Gypsies*. After stating the initial themes, Hendrix launches into a long improv. The pulse is steady but unstrained as he probes and stretches, now cooking just a little ahead of the beat, then dropping behind, relaxed and reveling in the joys of creative play.

Hendrix's extraordinary orchestral approach to the guitar sometimes overshadowed his talents as an improviser, at least on record. His chord inversions, riffs, fills, and song structures were so alive and evolving that, unlike most conventional guitarists, his solos didn't stand out in stark contrast, regardless of how good they were. (Being constantly creative must be a real problem.) In any case, it's nice to hear him stretch out here. Guitarist Jim McCarty treads carefully but acquits himself honorably on "Jimi/Jimmy Jam." Original Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell proves he can play rings around Buddy Miles, but there's something wrong here: Mitchell's floating, jazz-like style simply doesn't mesh with Cox's solid but unimaginative bass riffing. His playing is tentative and unsure; he's obviously an outsider here. Jazz organist Larry Young churns out pungent funk riffs on side two, occasionally rising to echo or challenge a Hendrix phrase.

"Easy Blues" and "Drone Blues", the remaining two cuts, are further excursions by the Hendrix-Cox-Mitchell axis. Incendiary riffs, rhythms, and melodies continue to pour out endlessly, as if from some otherworldly cornucopia. Otherworldly is the word, all right — the man's playing writhes and snaps as if he were plugged into some Con Ed of the spirit, the terminal for some supernatural current. (He probably was. See Fripp's article in this issue for a further elaboration.) He seemed to be unencumbered by the normal perceptual and conceptual limitations that form the boundaries of the world as we generally experience it. With his access to this higher dimension, it's not surprising that he makes most other guitarists sound flat and two dimensional by comparison. Ten years after his death he's still honored as rock's finest instrumentalist, yet it's oddly difficult to pinpoint and define the lines of his influence. The reason is fairly simple: No one before or since has ever played anything like him.

All evidence to the contrary, Eric Clapton did *not* die ten years ago — he merely faded away. Sure, there were some signs of life on 461 Ocean Blvd., but that proved to be the exception to the rule. Eric became a Good Ole Boy — seemingly content (or at least resigned) to warble out Tulsafied ballads and a few tepid blues. ("Lay Down Sally" was catchy, but it weren't no "Crossroads.") After awhile I gave up hope and just lay back and began to enjoy this stuff on its own terms (*Slowhand* in particular has some lovely moments). Now comes *Just One Night*, a double live set recorded in Japan. (Guess where.) The songs form a retrospective covering the period from *461* to the present. Clapton does engage in some sustained soloing on the blues and oldies, but there's clearly something missing: his improvisations are uninspired and cliche ridden. He manages to work up a bit of a sweat of "Blues Power," but his playing lacks tension and commitment. Another problem is purely technical: Clapton's Stratocaster is set up for the chicken scratch rhythms and hollow popping riffs of country music. This, combined with the low volume and distortion levels, makes for minimal sustain and body: particularly on the long, drawn out notes of his bluesier solos. (Either crank it up next time or use a Les Paul.) I'm disappointed, of course, but there's no point in getting upset. The man's still making decent music — not very adventurous — but I suspect he has his heart in it. Everybody claims to be a survivor nowadays, but with Clapton the word carries

some weight when you consider the fate of his contemporaries, like Hendrix, Joplin, and Morrison. If he wants or feels the need to take it easy, that's his prerogative. — *Vic Garbarini*

Robert Fripp
God Save The Queen/Under Heavy Manners, Polydor.
Daryl Hall
Sacred Songs, RCA AFL1-3573.

Robert Fripp's new solo album proves that for a guy who's been talking a lot about a rapidly approaching apocalypse, the importance of rhythms and body music in what's to come, and how wonderful the raw vitality of the New Wave is, he just can't help being cerebral, mysterious and oblique.

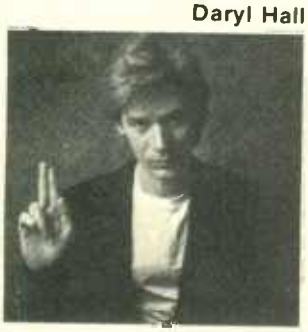
In announcing his "Drive to 1981" last year, Fripp mentioned an album of "Frippertronics" and one of "Discotronics" to be released through 1980 and 1981. Now we have one side of each on this disc: *God Save The Queen* is the Frippertronics side, *Under Heavy Manners* presents the Discotronics. Both have been heard before: the former on the Fripp & Eno *No Pussyfooting* and *Evening Star*, the latter on "Exposure," the title tune of Fripp's first solo LP (also on Peter Gabriel's second solo LP). Frippertronics consists of guitar and tape-loop meditations: Fripp feeds simple melodic lines and fragments from his Les Paul into a loop running continuously between two reel-to-reel decks. Through an admirably ingenious balancing of simplicity and intricacy, stasis and motion, Fripp builds hovering, swaying bodies of textured sound, music that's hypnotic, sensual, evanescent, seductive. The actual physical route of the tape loop itself, along with Fripp's intuitively timed note placements on the loop, makes for a curiously undulating rhythm, and an ambience best described as undersea. While strikingly beautiful, and veering in range from pastoral reticence to crowded virulence, Frippertronics is a flexibly functional music: you can pay attention to it, ignore it, react to it depending on your mood. The three Frippertronic exercises here are all fine examples of the technique. My only complaint is that Fripp's guitar solos on top of the loops were left off: the inspired, incendiary pithiness of a typical Fripp solo would be a welcome addition to almost any kind of music.

Discotronics incorporates a relentlessly metronomic disco pulse into the tape-loop drone, and while one might think this would make the music more forceful and direct, it's actually just as ambient as Frippertronics. Whether Fripp has missed the point of disco or just made it completely his own I can't decide, but this is danceable only in a detached way. Again, reactions can vary: overall I find the mix of the seesawing Frippertronics and inexorable swish/thump rhythm more heady than visceral. The title cut of *Under Heavy Manners* starts with Fripp paraphrasing "Taps," the rhythm kicking in, and an hysterical David Byrne — "Trumpets! I can hear trumpets!" — proceeding to phonetically mangle a series of socio / political / theo / philosophical "isms". Byrne also invokes "Urizel" (Blake's Urizen, the personification of pure intellect?), announces that he can hear bells and declares zombie-like, "I am resplendent in divergence." Yes, it's funny and off-the-wall, but if it's supposed to be a parable of the inevitable decline of Western Rationality or something it'll have to be less inscrutable for most of us to figure that out. And if the apocalypse *is* coming, who's going to have the time? Anyway, the title cut is the less ambient part of Discotronics, due mainly to Byrne's attention-grabbing dementia; the rest of the side is purely instrumental, *more* ambient. Yes, this is an intriguing, enjoyable album. But it's not possessed of the urgency I expected. Maybe it's just not rock 'n' roll.

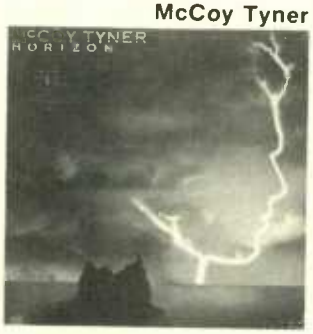
I have no doubts about *Sacred Songs*, the "solo" album by Daryl Hall (of Hall and Oates) that RCA mysteriously held in the can for two and a half years. Though RCA has never come up with a coherent reason for the delay (and there's been no explanation for its sudden release), apparently they felt the album was too experimental, or that association with Fripp's name and tactics would be detrimental to Hall's artistic (read: commercial) development. Bullshit: Hall's material here is the most emotionally profound and resonant I can remember him producing, and his singing is possessed of a raw vitality, yes, an *urgency*, I've never felt so strongly. Gone is the slick soul gloss that always pigeonholed Hall and Oates, replaced by a sound every bit as eclectic and accessible. Yet the album takes many a significant, yet unprepossessing, chance.

Essentially, *Sacred Songs* is a collaboration featuring heavy contributions from Fripp as producer and guitarist. What it all comes down to is a more intense, direct strain of Hall's typical pop which is periodically interrupted, disrupted, complemented and fleshed out by Fripp's otherworldly guitar and Frippertronics. Fripp's numinosity creeps up on Hall's empiricism, then slips away, leaving an indelible mark. It's like *Abbey Road* meets Terry Riley — and it works. No need to go into details, it's a uniformly wonderful album, but I will mention that Fripp takes a couple of overpowering solos, that "NYCNY" may be the best Big Apple-inspired rock song ever, and that the denouement achieved between Fripp's voluptuous tape-loops and Hall's heartrending vocal on "Without Tears" is nothing short of breathtaking. Finally, this is not just another (to me, better) side of Daryl Hall. It also proves that Robert Fripp, one of the most intelligent and important people in rock today, works best when he works with someone else. As Fripp himself has said, "The music of the 80s will be the music of collaboration." Here it is: check it out. — *Michael Shore*

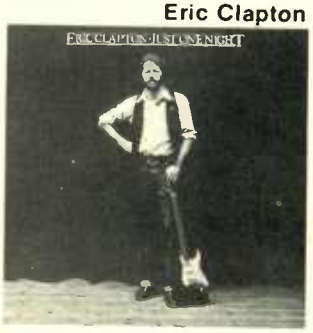
Daryl Hall



McCoy Tyner



Eric Clapton



Heron-Jackson

McCoy Tyner
Horizon, Milestone M-9094.

The rhythmic and harmonic parameters of McCoy Tyner's music have become highly stylized, and if one is a bit put off by the sameness of the structures and resolutions, the celebratory energy and commitment of the pianist's muse always rings through.

It is essential to the growth of Tyner's music that he find new ways of framing his concept. His use of Afro-Latin motifs and modality has given him strong inroads among jazz-rock and progressive audiences; even if you can't quite dance to it, Tyner's music has a technical audacity and a physical impact that is undeniable. But in order to maintain interest, my interest anyway, Tyner needs to employ a wide variety of instrumental and percussive colors, as well as the strongest rhythm sections available. This is just what the pianist has done on *Horizon*, perhaps Tyner's best group (as

opposed to an all-star super-group) album in recent memory.

Bassist Charles Fambrough keys his rumbling ostinatos and modulations to the obsessive drive of Tyner's left hand (which has been known to break pianos apart), as do percussionist Guillermo Franco and drummer Al Foster, a colorful, flexible timekeeper. Somehow their combined efforts on *Horizon* are less dense and frenetic than on past albums, probably due to the freshness and variety of the new compositions by Tyner, Fambrough and violinist John Blake. The title tune is a multi-dimensional suite that seems to offer a slightly different form of encouragement for each soloist, so that despite being almost twelve minutes long, the music doesn't bog down into pyrotechnical displays. Blake is a real comer on violin; his tone is hard and sweet, rising to bold, gypsy-like cries that suggest Stephane Grappelli ,while never making specific references. Blake's swing is exceptional for a violinist and he blends well with horn players Joe Ford and George Adams; another plus in his writing — "Woman Of Tomorrow" and "Motherland" are lyrical yet rhythmically rocking.

Tyner is also writing well. "Just Feelin'" makes wonderful use of gospel and blues elements, his solo slightly more spacious and considered than usual, and his orchestral accompaniment brings out the best in Joe Ford's and George Adams' horn playing; the former is serpentine and elegant, the latter more of a textural firebrand. *Horizon* shows that McCoy Tyner isn't just resting on his laurels, offering hope that his future work will be even more daring and revealing. — *Chip Stern.*

Keith Jarrett

Nude Ants, ECM-2-1171.

The Place: A pie-shaped slice of basement Big Apple, where one can hear the 7th Avenue subway rumble by during the breaks. *The New Yorker* calls its air quality "unacceptable"; the music usually smokes excessively even when the patrons don't. The Village Vanguard is, as the phrase currently goes, In The Tradition. At last check of the globe, it remains far removed from Koln, Oslo, and Japan. Incubator for much captured art, from *Chasin' The Trane* to *Fort Yawuh*, it was sold out all week for this gig.

The Means of Production: A two-track tape recorder, which erases the transparent clarity ECM is famous — or infamous — for, depending on your political aesthetics. This recording, issued instead of a 16-track tape of a Japan concert, is hardly pristine: the mix is soupy, colorful, even a bit rowdy.

The Players: Jarrett's "European" quartet of Jan Garbarek on sax, Palle Danielsson on bass, and Jon Christensen on drums; so labelled on contradistinction to the deceased "American" quartet with Haden, Motian, and Redman. While the latter was a darker, more muscular ensemble, the former has been more explicitly elegant — witness its two meticulously cut and polished gems, *Belonging* and *My Song*. But here the group's music — no doubt bolstered by place and means of production — assumes a physicality, a penetrating sensuality, that is all the more vibrant for its unexpectedness.

The Music: Profoundly generous in breadth, depth, and length: we have here an hour and forty minutes of exuberance and virtuosity. Jarrett writes the tunes and sets the tone for the quartet, which he dominates — but never destroys. The tone is, for the most part, one of joyous struggle; a paradox to only those ignorant of jazz's traditional role as a ritual of affirmation, or confirmation, as Bird blew it.

Not that all things here are bright and beautiful — Jarrett's encyclopedic emotionalism subverts any tendency towards one-note performances — but a sense of unfettered passion, melodic strength, and plain good fun give the record its strongest identity. Danielsson — though regrettably all but solo-less and at times lost in the mix — provides an attractively mobile anchor, and Christensen's nuanced drumming (sometimes choppy, sometimes smooth, on "Chant of the Soil" so subtly fused that it might be called "swing-funk") pushes the group through the up-tempo sections as though every next passage had a gravitational pull. And what got into the suddenly shrike-like Garbarek? New York must have de-iced the wings of his horn because he soars here, attacking the festive "New Dance" (hence *Nude Ants*) with Rollinsesque dash and heat, as if someone in the crowd had cried, "Fjord's Up!"

And Jarrett's playing will surely dismay those who love to gnaw on the flesh (and fat) of his excesses. With scant exception, it's unpretentious and loving and keyed to the context of this group, "Belonging," rather than to any demands of epiphinal drama. His humming-grunting-yelping should only be so good. — *David Breskin*

Pete Townshend

Empty Glass, Atco

Considering the recent flurry of Who filmmaking, recording and touring activities, it would certainly appear that drummer Keith Moon's death had a great deal do to with creatively liberating the other members of the band. Pete Townshend, especially, seems rejuvenated and ready to tackle the built-in contradictions of middle-aged rock. Historically riddled with self-doubts about the band's and his own relevance, Townshend faces those issues head-on

ECM

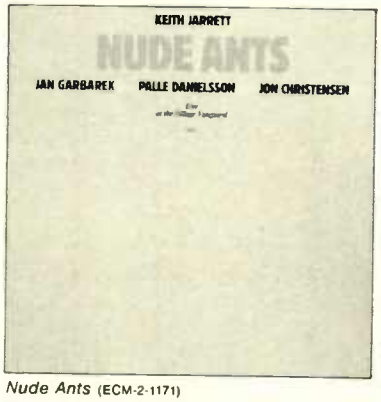
Bill Connors

Bill Connors,
guitars

Swimming With A Hole In My Body (ECM-1-1158)

Keith Jarrett

Keith Jarrett,
piano, timbales, percussion
Jan Garbarek,
saxophones
Palle Danielsson,
bass
Jon Christensen,
drums, percussion



Nude Ants (ECM-2-1171)

Barre Phillips

Barre Phillips,
bass
John Surman,
saxophones, bass clarinet,
synthesizer
Aina Kemanis,
voice

Journal Violone II (ECM-1-1149)

Abercrombie Quartet (ECM-1-1164)

John Abercrombie Quartet

John Abercrombie,
guitars
Richard Beirach,
piano
George Mraz,
bass
Peter Donald,
drums

Playground (ECM-1-1159)

Steve Kuhn/ Sheila Jordan Band

Steve Kuhn,
piano
Sheila Jordan,
voice
Harvie Swartz,
bass
Bob Moses,
drums

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INNER CITY

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in this refreshingly modest, ultimately life-affirming work. Like his first solo effort, *Who Came First*, *Empty Glass* has a supplicatory feel. The love songs ambiguously avoid revealing their object — men, women or Pete's long-time guru, Meher Baba. In other words, there is a lot of "nothing is everything" who-do, even if the loveliness of the melodies frequently avokes the ethereal.

Still, there is a solid dose of gut-bucket rock and roll along with the light melodies. The album opens with "Rough Boys," dedicated simultaneously to the Sex Pistols and Townshend 's two kids, and it is very much like the plunk-baiting songs on *High Numbers*, with an important exception. In place of that album's nasty bitterness is an acceptance of the new groups into the fold, a generous affirmation of rock community. Townshend captures his own ambivalence perfectly, "I Wanna Bite and Kiss You."

Throughout this album, the main difference between *Empty Glass* and a typical Who album is Townshend's human and vulnerable vocals — achingly real and touching in their invocations to a higher reality. Two strange love songs "And I Moved" and "Let My Love Open the Door" point up this difference, with the first a daring homo-erotic ode to filial love and the second a reggaeish tribute to either Baba or his wife. "Jules and Jim," inspired by a pair of English journalists, is an attack on hypocrisy of the written word, an upbeat, loving poke at the punk mentality. Townshend joyously admits "Anyone Can Crash and Thumb" but just as sadly wonders why "They Don't Give a Shit Keith Moon Is Dead." These very contradictions — between rock's urgent necessity to obliterate yet revere its roots, between its agressiveness and need for comfort, between Townshend's own role as godfather and still vital contemporary — are the motivating concerns of *Empty Glass*.

Unlike a Who LP, *Empty Glass* is an album of instrumental and schematic subtlety — fewer power chords, no Daltry bombasts and less of an attempt to conceptually link everything up to past Who history. And, though Townshend's concerns are often leaning towards the cosmic, the lyrics are always couched in gritty reality. High on Baba and cognac, a mystic and a pervert, an old man but a frisky pup, Pete Townshend remains one of rock and roll's most thoughtful and vital spokesmen. — *Roy Trakin*

Steve Kuhn/Sheila Jordan Band
Playground, ECM-1-1159.

Back when I was sixteen years old and had just obtained a fake draft card, Sheila Jordan and the Steve Kuhn trio were one of the first bands I went to see (at a club called the Take Three on Bleecker Street). Since I was a fan then and have been waiting for this record for

seventeen years, it was probably inevitable that it would disappoint me on first hearing. Fortunately, the disc has since recovered, and now hugs my turntable with a tenacity rivalled only by Jack DeJohnette's *Special Edition*.

First time out I thought Kuhn and the trio (Harvie Swartz on bass and Bob Moses on drums) sounded wonderful — in fact this is Kuhn's best recorded work in years, probably the best of his career — but wondered why Jordan was singing with such heavy vibrato and such intimations of high drama where none were called for, but then the music began to work on me, and by now I find myself charmed without really being able to tell you why. What I can tell you is that Kuhn has never had so good a trio before, or been so well recorded, that the songs he writes are quirky, compelling things, and that Jordan is a singer of such emotional power that she cannot be dismissed, ignored or denied. "Poem For No. 15" is "The Saga of Harrison Crabfeathers" heightened and transfigured, "Deep Tango" is, how you say it, unforgettable, and no one can turn a ballad into high dramatic art better than Jordan. She and Kuhn are musicians of such extraordinary sensitivity it's good to see things working so well for their necessarily delicate and perishable art. In closing, one more cheer for Swartz and Moses. In a word, indispensible. In another, unique. — *Rafi Zabor*

Gil Scott-Heron & Brian Jackson ***1980***, Arista AL 9514.

Through the 70s, America turned to the dancer while the soldiers of the 60s were left to fend for themselves. That the soldier in Gil Scott-Heron has survived without giving up the spirit of the struggle to the sellout of the boogie might just be a miracle, and since so few of the major labels' artists even bother to deal with the increasingly apparent socio-political breakdowns around us, Scott-Heron and his partner, heyboardist Brian Jackson, seem ever more singular and important by contrast. While keeping a prophetic eye on the social climate, they have also found the time to increase their musical range, and while *1980* is not as consistent as *Secrets* and *Bridges* it has more than enough to say.

Unquestionably, it is Scott-Heron's capacity to pinpoint social ills that makes his music more than just notes on paper, but it is his growing authority as vocalist and poet that compels you to listen. On "Alien" he delineates the frustrations of Mexican "aliens" whose crime it is to search for a better life north of the border. Dream figures take verbal form on the ironically timed "*Shah Mot* (The Shah is Dead):"*My name is what to do/But we already knew/And now the clouds of when/And how come into view. Shah mot!* These two tracks are powerful because of more than verbal acuity: the background vocal chorus on "Alien" sets off Heron's voice to telling effect and Jackson's percussive acoustic piano adds apt strength to "Shah Mot." The attention paid to all sides of the music evinces a well rounded sense of purpose lacking in most of the instant, and instantly disposable, products of the contemporary biz.

Of course, the album has its shortcomings. Percussionist Barnet Williams' absence all too often leaves the rhythm section dragging between Harvey Mason's drums and the seldom-acceptable keyboard bass. The opening track, "Shut 'Em Down," may be good politics, but as an anti-nuke anthem it hardly lives up to its classic predecessor, "We Almost Lost Detroit." The horn arrangements on that tune and the album's only throwaway cut, "Late Last Night," are predictable and add little, and while "Corners" might represent the most advanced composing (by Brian Jackson) on the album, it also suffers badly from rhythm lag and fails to hit the mark. In sum, you can find the album's problems if you look, but on the whole the music will offer lasting insights long after critical carping is forgotten. Heron might not be a complete master, but he must be considered one of a handful of leaders as the dancers split, the soldiers re-enter, and the artistic community takes a fresh look at the outside world. "Space is the place but you stuck on the ground..." The 80s are upon us and it appears to be for real. — *Peter Giron*

Charlie Haden/Jan Garbarek/Egberto Gismonti — *Magico,* ECM-1-1151. It took me some time to begin to understand this music. After a week or so the form of the compositions emerged, but only later could my ears reconcile Gismonti's restless guitar arpeggios with Haden's deep song on bass and Garbarek's pure, almost vibratoless sax tone. From the first I knew there were no wrong notes on this record, no break in the solos with the inner emotional logic of the diffuse melodies. Listening to it became like gazing at a tree, knowing every leaf and branch is there for a reason, yet unable to trace the whole chain of consequence back to the trunk and the roots. If Pan had a church today this is what they would play there. — *Chris Doering*

Herbie Hancock — *Monster,* Columbia JC 36415. Another gruesome pop disc from Hancock. This one plods on (thump) and on (thump) and on (thwack) with the overproduced gusto of a Disaster Film or beer commercial (one tune features a "Go For It!" chant.) Anyone who sucked down the hype in last month's issue (i.e. "beautiful chords and harmony, semi-atonal right hand lines ... terrific funk chops that groove you to death ... Herbie playing like the Monster whiz kid of old") please take note: here are four vapid disco tracks — alternately

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Gil Scott-Heron
1980

Gil Scott-Heron heralds the arrival of a new decade in his own inimitable style. Infused with Gil's brilliant songwriting and performing, as well as the dynamic musical direction of Brian Jackson; his new album is a compelling, and powerful statement from the most articulate musical spokesman of his generation.

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Latinish, funkish, and rockish but never Latin, funk or rock — and two blissed-out, easy listening floaters. One of them, "Making Love," features a cat named Greg Walker "sensitively" crooning "Riding at a gentle pace/Guide me to your special place/So we can be one." And Herbie, hiding behind sixteen keyboards plays nary a (memorable) lick. All in all, a waste of imported crude. — *David Breskin*

Grover Washington — *Skylarkin'*, Motown M7-933RL. In the namby pamby world of the melt-in-your-mouth saxophonist, Washington has somehow retained some character and individuality. Granted, you've heard him and too many others chart the course before, but let's face it, who does it better? Washington excels most when he has another good soloist to work with, and when Jorge Dalto sits it and cooks on Rahsaan's "Bright Moments," Grover responds by reaching back and firing off his most aggressive solo of the date. Elsewhere on the album, the session players offer the standard professionalism, and Washington badly needs the shot of adrenalin they can't offer. Until such time as he decides to really step out he'll be the king of MOR-jazz saxophone. Which is cool, but is it enough? — *Peter Giron*

Patti Labelle — *Released*, Epic JE 36381. Reunited with Allen Toussaint, who was responsible for the raunchy thrill of "Lady Marmalade," Patti Labelle's latest album is proof positive that she sings sexier than any other (soul) singer around — yeah, including Millie Jackson. Working with a prodigious horn section and a rhythm section that flashes like neon, Labelle lets loose with the full power of her razor-sharp voice on five sizzling disco/r&b tunes, including Toussaint's irresistible "Release (the Tension)," and her own "Ain't That Enough," as insistent as Blondie on "Call Me," but with heart. The three ballads are *really* soulful, and Peter Allen's ersatz blues, "I Don't Go Shopping," (!) is a tour de force for Labelle. — *Jim Feldman*

Gary Lawrence & The Sizzling Syncopators, Columbia Masterworks M 35824. A bunch of young white studio cats and/or unknowns get together to revive 1920s big band swing? Hmmm. Watch out for the looming specter of hokum. There's an ineffable something that elevates such music from corn to timelessness, but the Syncopators haven't got it — not yet, anyway. They are a bit too much on the bland, anonymous side of pleasant. The vocals range from inane novelties ("Aloha From Hawaii") to the dangerously cute ("Varsity Drag"). "Pennsylvania 6-5000" holds up surprisingly well, "You're Never Dressed Without a Smile" and "Honey Pie" are quite nice really, and they take a real chance with "Stayin' Alive," which ain't half bad (though a merger of 20's two-beat and 80's disco it's not). Of the instrumentals, the deathless "St. James Infirmary" and "Copenhagen" sound a-ok, nothing more. Hint to the Syncopators: listen less to Whiteman and more to Fletcher Henderson and Don Redman, whose scores brought true jazz blood to harmonically and rhythmically complex arrangements. — *Michael Shore*

Mal Waldron — *The Call*, JAPO 60001. Outside of punk bands and *Bitches Brew*, you've probably never heard an electric piano sound like this. And atop the distant, Milesish tone colors of Jimmy Jackson's Hammond organ, Waldron's approach to the instrument is downright weird: as echoingly, disaffectingly lethal as the lounge-happy instrument was ever meant to get. Mix into two long tracks stoked by a young Eberhard Weber (on Fender) and drummer Fred Braceful, and you have a 1971 recording that at times sounds like New Wave rock, without the singing: an astonishingly adventurous album, even in the wake of *Brew*, by a bebop expatriate who's always been one step ahead of the crowd — and yet, roundly ignored. — *Michael Rozek*

Johnny Jones with Billy Boy Arnold, Alligator 4717. Recorded live at a Chicago club in 1963 the year before his death, this recording places pianist Jones not in the classic, hard-driving Elmore James band, but in mellower, more reflective solo and duo (with harmonica player Billy Boy Arnold) settings. Cousin to Otis Spann and accomplished student of Big Maceo, Johnny Jones never made a big name for himself outside of Chicago's small club scene. Here is the evidence that with an active solo recording career Jones could have equalled the popularity of his close relative. Song tempos range from medium to slow and some listeners may be impatient for an upbeat rocker but that that would be missing the point: Jones and Arnold shine in subtle, deeply satisfying ways. And, please would someone in the U.S. record Billy Boy Arnold so we can celebrate the living — there are too many dead blues greats. — *George B. Thomas*

Don Pullen, Don Moye, Joseph Jarman — *The Magic Triangle*, Black Saint BSR 0038. A major triad indeed. Jarman and Moye have credentials that only begin with their pioneering work with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and Pullen is one of the premier contemporary pianists. So what happened? I've come to expect more consistency from these musicians than this release offers. They lose focus and momentum on Jarman's rather shallow "Lonely Child" and his clarinet and flute pale in comparison to his saxes. But Pullen's meaty compositions on side two seem to bring the trio's creative energies to a higher level, enabling them to capture some of the expressive power and artistic depths that elude them on side one. That makes this a good album which should have

been an excellent one. — *Cliff Tinder*

Godley & Creme — *Freeze Frame*, Polydor PD-1-6257. The music on *Freeze Frame* reflects all of the studio smarts and pop savvy that made Kevin Godley and Lol Creme's work with 10cc so interesting. Tight arrangements, full of Zappa-esque percussion snippets and sound effects, turn melodies that often sound like themes from cheesy 40's detective movies into little pop symphonies. The cynical lyrics are so perfectly matched to the music that when strangely treated voices ask "Is a sofa as happy in one corner/as it is in another?" during "I Pity Inanimate Objects," you're almost tempted to asked the couch's permission the next time you want to redecorate. This is clever, immaculately produced stuff for people who like their pop to be more than just pleasant schmaltz. — *David Rosenberg*

Spyro Gyra — *Catching the Sun*, MCA 5108. The conventions of funk fusion have become so rigid since Mr. Magic that when Spyro Gyra employs a minimally syncopated backbeat for "Philly" it sounds radical. Except for that brief moment, they stay within those conventions, but their enthusiasm and commitment breathe life into the cliched two and three chord vamps, modulating bridges, and omnipresent disco drums. This is a document of a working band doing what they enjoy, not a collection of bored professionals playing down to a commercial audience. That's why these guys, without sounding different, sound better. — *c.d.*

Oregon — *In Performance*, Elektra 9E-304. At the start of the second disc of this "live" double LP, George Schutz, Oregon's manager, asks the audience, "How do you like it so far?" "Not so much" I remarked to my speakers, and sides three and four did little to change my opinion. The playing here is faultless, yet somehow facile; dreamy, yet somehow indigenously platitudinous: Oregon went a long way toward creating these forms, but they increasingly sound like their own cliches. On the plus side, there are some fine examples of their quirky, chameleon-like, and even humorous free playing. But on the whole, *In Performance* is guilty of the weightlessly lyrical and now-tired romanticism their last studio album, *Roots in The Sky*, so successfully avoided. — *d.b.*

Mi-Sex — *Computer Games*, Epic NJE 36349. With it's hiccupping vocals, man vs. machine lyrics, pinball machine synthesizers, and hyper arrangements, Mi-Sex' "Computer Games" made a great, if not very original single: a perfect example of the fashionable techno-punk/pop sound. Unfortunately, the group's album shows them to be little more than a competent 70's style rock band. Lots of guitars, synthesizer washes and pseudo-socially relevant lyrics . — *d.r.*

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Punksters *cont. from page 18*

"Girl Talk," missing the querulousness, the bitter irony, and the pain. This is artificially inseminated rock & roll, with foundations only as deep as Ronstadt's conceit.

If rock & roll were a hard copy art, Billy Joel would have more in common with Dee Dee Ramone than Paul Simon or Elton John. On paper, Billy has nice rock credentials. His decision to take the road less traveled was rock's loss and pop music's gain.

If Joel has a serious failing as a pop star, it is a case of near-terminal hubris. His grandstanding and pushy New York pose were bound to bring him low one day. *Glass Houses*, his new album, could not come at a better time. Pushing his band out front (notably guitarists David Brown and Russell Javars) allows Joel not only to shelve his ego temporarily, but to have a good time with old-time rock & roll. Though he pays plenty of homage along the way, his considerable skills as a pop hooksmith mitigate against his ever foisting a Knack-hack job on us.

On the neo-N/W "Sometimes A Fantasy," he flattens out and clips his vocals in the style of the Cars' Ben Orr. McCartney's lilt is recalled on "Don't Ask Me Why," Jagger's sneer on "You May Be Right." The Beatlesque "Through The Long Night" indicates that Joel can also shelve his self-pity for the sake of humility.

Overall, *Glass Houses* is remarkably cohesive, as well as light-hearted. The flow of songs is carefuly modulated; there is nothing sloppy about it. After this little fling at hard rock, Joel might well go back to more balladic pop. He is still the piano man, after all, and the market for song stylists is a long way from being dried up. In any case, Joel has proved that back-to-basics rock need not teem with restless, misdirected energy. It can be complete within itself.

Linda Ronstadt, meanwhile, will probably continue to smear the landscape with her grainy pink and black countenance and pallid shots in the dark. In which case, she will have given us our last goosebump. M

Mongolia *cont. from page 27*

the way that the singing appears to be intuited or felt rather than thought out; a few changes here and there notwithstanding, Sam Cooke and Al Green and Aretha Franklin would not be totally out of place in Mongolia.

The songs are primarily epics, encompassing enough to make use of the spaces and the openness of the vocal style. These are songs about lost loves; distance; the moon and the stars; and, most of all, horses, their constant companions through space and time.

If, as the story goes, God made time to keep everything from happening at once, one of the reasons man first made music was to push the curtain of time aside and stand in the midst of the circle, part of eternity. In the West, we have the odd idea that eternity simply means lots of time (time + time + time) instead of freedom from time.

In the East, eternity is thought to exist at right angles to time, like the space between two heartbeats. Mongolian music is filled with these sudden verticals, these sudden spaces that push time aside. Listening to a particular note, you suddenly become aware of an entire octave residing in the note. Listening more closely, you hear the individual notes that comprise the octave, and octaves inside of each individual note. And the endless ladders begin. More than anything I've heard, Mongolian music changes and re-centers hearing.

Mongolian records are not readily or easily available, but then transcendence doesn't always come cheap. The best I've found is a well-documented, excellently recorded boxed two-record set entitled *Mongolian Folk Music*. Released by Hungariton-Unesco, it's next to impossible to find in stores but is available (for $15.00) from Qualiton Records, 3928 Crescent St., Long Island City, NY 11101. Two separate albums, both recently released by Tangent Records, *Vocal Music of Mongolia* and *Instrumental Music of Mongolia* (which, despite its title, includes vocal music) are available from Rounder Records, 186 Willow Ave., Somerville, MA 02144. And *Mongol and Buriat Songs*, on France's Vogue label as part of their Music of Man Collection, can probably be ordered. M

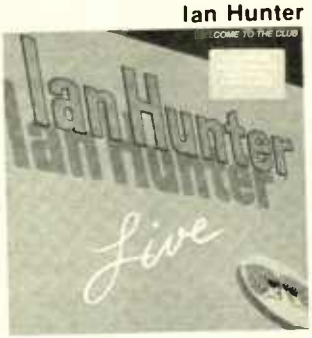
ROCK SHORT TAKES

Heart attacks but the Chieftians rule; the Rockets take off and the cure works; Van Halen steps backwards and Hunter strikes.

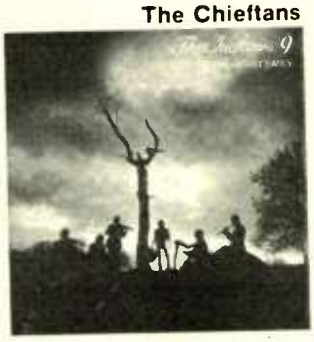
By Vic Garbarini

Beach Boys

Ian Hunter



The Chieftans



The Cure

The Tourists — *Reality Effect* (Epic). Some would have us believe these ersatz future-folkies are the second coming of Fairport Convention; do not be fooled. The New Seekers go New Wave is more like it. (The New New Seekers?) On the plus side: The Dusty Springfield-cloned vocals and Ramonesian arrangement on "I Only Want To Be With You." **The Beach Boys** — *Keeping The Summer Alive* (Caribou). I'm impressed; those classic Beach Boys harmonies have been resurrected, and Brian Wilson's songwriting hasn't been this consistent since at least *Surf's Up*. True, there are no "I Get Around"s or "Don't Worry Baby"s here. But almost anything on side one — even the Randy Bachman collaborations — would sound just fine on your car radio. Considering the poor quality of their recent work (and the fact that these guys ain't no spring chickens), this stuff is not bad. Not bad at all. **Fr. Guido Sarducci** — *Live at St. Douglas' Convent* (Warners). Roll, over, Lenny Bruce. Not very funny on *SNL*; not very funny here. Not even offensive. Maybe this is the New Comedy — *ambient humor?* There's a cult in Idaho that fervently believes that Fr. Guido's appearance on the cover of *Rolling Stone* will herald the End of Days. Better repent now while there's still time. **The Rockets** — *No Ballads* (RSO). These Detroit Wheels vets are mature enough to be both tasteful and tough. Their playing and arrangements are crisp, intelligent, energetic and occasionally a tad funky, as on their Little Featsian cover of Lou Reed's "Sally Can't Dance." They're currently opening concerts for Bob Seger; that sounds about right.

Squeeze — *Argy Bargy* (A&M). These Nouveau Pop/New Wave/Futuristic-music-hall-vaudevillian English-Types are somewhat more subdued here than on last year's *Cool For Cats*. Their charmingly eccentric melodies and bemused Ray Davies-like observations are set in a simpler, stripped down ambience (more guitar and less keyboards). But I miss the verve and lunacy of their earlier efforts; if they're not careful they could wind up as the 80's answer to 10cc. **Rachel Sweet** — *Protect the Innocent* (Stiff/Columbia). The song selection here is an improvement over last year's model — high octane rockers as opposed to flashy pop/oldies. Her voice is such an incredibly dynamic natural instrument that you forgot she's only 17 until her superficial reading of Graham Parker's "Fool's Gold" brings you back to earth. Don't get me wrong — this is an excellent album; Lord willing this kid's going to be a star. But now that fame and fortune are about to descend, it might be a good idea to slip in a little Real Life character building experience in case the star-maker machinery arrives with too much too soon and stunts her growth. I recommend the following program: 1.) Run away from home. 2.) Work in a Burger King for a year. 3.) Join a cover band and do a six month stint in the Akron Holiday Inn. 4.) Re-record "Fool's Gold," this time with feeling. Put some depth behind that power and the world will be your clambake — just ask Springsteen. **The Chieftains** — *9* (Columbia). Like all ethnic musics the Celtic tradition seems to tap some essential wellspring whose source lies beyond the normal parameters of time and space. It's a testament to the strength of that tradition that the Chieftains' ninth album lacks none of the joyous vitality and haunting beauty of their earlier work. If you haven't picked up yet on this incredible Irish string and pipe band, I'd recommend you get on the case immediately; like chastity, missing out on the Chieftains is its own punishment. **Robin Lane and the Chartbusters** (Warners). Patti Smith meets the Byrds: Sure, these are intelligent, impassioned songs, but both Lane's band and the limp arrangements lack dynamic tension and punch. Come on you guys, this is rock and roll, not the Newport Folk Festival; crank it up! **The Jam** — *Setting Sons* (Polydor). Former Who clones continue process of defining their own style begun on *All Mod Cons*. "Eton Rifles" shows that Paul Weller can turn out hooks and melodies as well as rhythms, though these guys are still generally too anal retentive to successfully emulate their heroes. "Heat Wave" shows what they can do when they're given the chance to loosen up. So somebody send them either *The Complete Motown Songbook* or a case of White Shield Worthington. (the stuff with the sediment in the bottle. Try the Cotswold Inn in Cheltenham: Just follow the A-40 out past the Burford roundabout and on through Northleach; can't miss it.)

The Cure — *Boys Don't Cry* (PVC). The Jam *sans* fixations. Amazing how many variations in mood and texture these lads can effect with just three pieces; their deceptively simple pop barely masks the more refined sensibilities hiding just below the surface. Insiduously addictive stuff. **Boz Scaggs** — *Middle Man* (Columbia). *Silk Degrees* was a tasteful merging of Scagg's blues/rock-

continued on page 86

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JAZZ

SHORT TAKES

Time Life/Inc. markets jazz by mail, singers sing, and Sinatra builds a monument to himself.

By Rafi Zabor

Time/Life, Part 1

An old jazz hand like myself does not ordinarily expect great things from Time/Life Inc. in the jazz department — the old Time cover with Thelonious Monk notwithstanding — but as you may already have heard elsewhere, the Time/Life Records series, *The Giants of Jazz*, is something else again. You've seen the ads: for $19.95 a month you can have well packaged and annotated three record sets of, well: Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Bix Biederbecke, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Jelly Roll Morton, Jack Teagarden, Sidney Bechet (in that order; the Benny Carter set is next up and Count Basie, Ben Webster, Lester Young, Django Reinhardt, *et al* are in preparation). Obviously not a hasty or superficial venture, you will notice, nor a quick, faked-up swing-era jazz-is-back miscellany, but the beginnings of a genuine recorded history of the music, and the start of a good basic library. More than that: when you stop to think how hard it is to pick up the comprehensive classic recordings of Morton, Bechet, Teagarden and Hawkins these days you realize these sets are not just intended for the legendary rubes of mid-America. No: in many cases the Time/Life sets are the best you can do. In general I've found them to be well selected, edited, transferred and so forth, and six bucks and change is not all that much to pay per record these days, especially when you consider that in many cases the alternatives are imports. You get a 10 day, free home trial with each set and of course no one would ever dream of taping them.... But let's get down to cases.

The Armstrong, Holiday and Ellington sets are the first three you get (along with a book called *Who's Who In Jazz*, by Alex Chilton, which I haven't read) and because these are probably the three best-documented preboppers (Lester Leaps is fourth) you can do as well or better in a record shop. For example, Armstrong's Hot Fives and Sevens, like his great work with Earl Hines, are available at $5.98 list each on Columbia, so you could buy them for $12 and have 8 left over for the Bluebird 30's double set or something from the Smithsonian, like the Armstrong/Hines collection. Of course, the Time/Life set ain't bad, but there's only one cut with King Oliver, one with Fletcher Henderson, and the wrong one with Bessie Smith ("St. Louis Blues" would have been preferable). After that, it's strong on the Hot Fives (but where's "Struttin' With Some Barbecue"?), short on the Sevens, shorter still on the 1928 dates with Hines, scandalously omitting the superduperclassic duet on "Weather Bird," then follows through with sensible selections from the 30's and early 40's and one last from 1950 (no Macks or Dollies). Well, I would've done it differently but I defy anyone not to be thrilled and amazed to hear Armstrong rise up to state himself in all his growing glory, cracking the music open till it's daybreak forever and the single voice is liberated from the ensemble. It's one of the great demonstrations of bravery in the history of music, and if you can listen to Armstrong's choruses on "Tight Like This" without being moved to the core, give up. The strict chronological sequencing of the tunes makes good sense and heightens the drama, and John S. Wilson's notes inform. On to Billie Holiday. I don't think you could put together a less than excellent set if you tried, particularly if you end it in the 40's, as is done here. It begins with "Mother's Son-in-Law," continues through the sides with Teddy Wilson and Lester Young and then beyond them through some of the earlier Billie-led sessions. It's all thrilling of course, but you can probably buy both volumes of *Billie Holiday: The Golden Years* (Columbia) for twenty bucks and that would be six records, not three. The Ellington set is another story. With the disappearance of Columbia's *The Ellington Era, Volume I*, the Time/Lifer becomes the best one-volume Ellington anthology out there, and definitely the record I would take to that desert-island-with-stereo I've heard so much about. The selections, beginning with "East St. Louis Toodle-Oo" and ending in the mid-40's, are virtually ideal — no easy trick when there is so much great music to choose from — the transfers and pressings are the best I've heard, the excellent booklet is by Stanley Dance and Dan Morgenstern, and if the Ellington miracle does not floor you, I don't know what will. Like only the very greatest art, Ellington's music develops every time you listen to it. There's enough dimension there to last a lifetime, and new wine from the old bottle every time you open it. That Ellington was able to produce stuff of this stature and survive as a popular artist is the greatest stunt since Shakespeare

continued on next page

did the same thing around 1600. Not bad, you know. The records are available from Time/Life Books; 541 N. Fairbanks Court; Chicago, Ill. 60611. Further reports in future issues, and tell 'em Groucho sent you.

Sing, Sing

First time through, **Sarah Vaughan:** *Duke Ellington Songbook One* (Pablo Today 2312-111) was a huge disappointment because it was so unEllingtonian a project — the "songbook" was never the measure of the man, Billy Byers' string and big band charts are stock affairs and even the small band pieces with Jimmy Rowles and other experts lack the Ducal aura — but subsequent listenings revealed it to be another good Vaughan album even though the promise of the premise is never realized. Great tenor obligatoes from Frank Wess and Zoot Sims though, and a great reading of "All Too Soon," but I wish the Ellington sound were there. On *I'm Coming Home Again* (Buddah B2D-6501) the great **Carmen McRae** has worse to contend with. A singer of her stature should not have to cope with 14 minute soft-disco versions of "Mr. Magic," complete with hints of faked orgasms, nor should she have to sing flit like "Everything Must change." Billie sang pop too but she had Teddy Wilson and Lester Young to help her out. McRae manages one fine duet with Buster Williams and an uncanny number of great interpretative moments. If you love Carmen McRae as much as I do, you may be willing to wade through this twofer to find the pearls, but let's all hope Norman Granz signs her to Pablo real soon, where she can join her only peers, Vaughan and **Ella Fitzgerald**, who meets the **Count Basie** band on *A Perfect Match* (Pablo Today 2302). Ella's in fine voice, the band roars, but if it's such a perfect match, how come Basie himself only shows up on the last cut, an impromptu "C Jam Blues"? The live digital recording sounds fine and the meeting, and although Ella skims a few of the tunes, she digs into most of them; the purely orchestral "Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald," with Ellington narrating, is not to be missed. Ladies and gentlemen, a classic set. The best *new* vocal performances belong to **Helen Humes**, without a doubt. *On Helen Humes and the Muse All-Stars* (Muse MR 5217) the great trumpet-voiced big band singer meets up with sympathetic Olympians like Arnett Cobb, Buddy Tate, Cleanhead Vinson and Gerald Wiggins, and the whole things sounds terrific, but on *Let the Good Times Roll* (Inner City CJ 120) Humes is in even better voice. A 1973 date from Paris, and although Tate is not there Cobb is, and Jay McShann, and Milt Buckner; it's one of the finest mainstream jazz albums of the year and the best Humes of the decade.

Speed Record

This magazine runs more record reviews than any other and we still can't cover everything worthwhile. Quickly now: **John Lewis & Hank Jones**, *An Evening with Two Grand Pianos* (Little David 1079), on which Jones is the ruling pianist and Lewis the reigning sensibility and it is proven once again that great dialogues emerge not from a meeting of egos (Chick & Herbie) but from a real love of the music. **Woody Shaw**, *For Sure* (Columbia 36383) sounds like his other Columbia albums, very accomplished but rather cold. Gary Bartz takes the best solo (never mind his fake-funk album on Arista this month) and pianist Larry Willis plays jazz with a vengeance after all those years stuck in B.S.&Tears. I don't mean to knock Shaw; he's terrific but somehow his music ought to add up to more than it does at present. Hard bop is still played best by those who have originated a style (Wayne, Freddie, Jackie McLean). **Jerome Cooper**, *The Unpredictability of Predictability* (About Time 1002) is a unique and striking solo percussion album — Cooper plays melody too, on balaphones and an Eastern double reed over fixed bass-drum and hi-hat figures — on which the one-man-band is revived to new purposes and lines between past and future music, Eastern and Western culture, are convincingly done away with. The 20 minute "Bert the Cat" is a particular success. Adjective city: sensitive, ascetic, vigorous, essential. About time; **The Heath Brothers**, *Live at the Public Theatre* (Columbia FC 36374): I like the Heaths better individually than as a band. The audience seems delighted to the point of hysteria but I find this rather staid, if accomplished modern jazz with the sparks missing. **Stephane Grappelli/Joe Pass/Niels Henning Orsted Pedersen**, *Tivoli Gardens* (Pablo Live 2308 220): A marvelous album completely dominated by Grappelli at his very best. By contrast Pedersen and Pass sound merely expert, but the violinist manages to make the whole album glow. This is, if I'm not mistaken, his best recorded work in years, and it's a delight. Just in time to point out two noteworthy ECMs: **Barre Phillips**, *Journal Violone II* (1149), a European, chamberish outing with first-rate writing by Phillips, reeds by John Surman, voice by Aina Kemanis. His best album, I think, and if you're looking for something in this vein look no farther. **Miroslav Vitous**, *First Meeting* (1145): Why shouldn't it sound like an acoustic Weather Report? **John Coates, Jr.**, *Rainbow Road* (Omnisound 1024): Coates' best since *After the Before*. Side 2, with the standards, does not measure up to Coates' originals, though. There are two mid-50's **Lester Young** sides out — *Mean To Me* (Verve 2538) and *Pres* (Pablo Live 2308-219) — the first of which is a typical Verve allstar date while the second features a pickup band. Yes, Young plays better than he was supposed to in those last years, especially on the uptempos, but it still hurts and the ballads are lugubrious. No such problems on **Ben Webster**, *Soulville* (Verve 2536), which is great all the way through and shows why Webster can have re-emerged as a great influence on tenorists now. Musicians have never stopped listening to him; audiences will have to catch up. Sense and sensibility. And the breath of life.

record's bright red (as is *On the Road*, a pure Basie companion volume, also on Pablo, on which the band sounds fabulous and Basie takes all the best solos) but let's have some truth in advertising. For instance, when Ella sings *The Duke Ellington Songbook* on the reissue Verve-2-2535, the Ellington band is actually there, with Ellington himself, and the results are not only unforgettable but render all these other half-collaborations academic. This is a real

The Closer

Frank Sinatra: *Trilogy* (Reprise 3FS 2300) might as easily have been called *Monument*. One of the strangest issues of recent years, its first disc records anew some of Sinatra's 50's repertoire with Billy May charts, its second explores "contemporary" MOR with Don Costa arrangements and the last contains a bizarre suite written and conducted by Gordon Jenkins. Sinatra is in surprising fine voice throughout. He makes the old magic work on record one, goes all bathetic on record two, as he always does when the material calls for "deep emotion" rather than blithe *savoir faire*, and in the Jenkins suite, on which Sinatra confronts the great universe by taking a tour of the planets and the future, the sheer stupefactious absurdity of the material keeps him from taking it seriously and he sounds fine. If only he had rerecorded "It Was a Very Good Year" with Jenkins instead of this. His voice has thickened, his wind is short, and the bastard is still a great singer. We could stand more.

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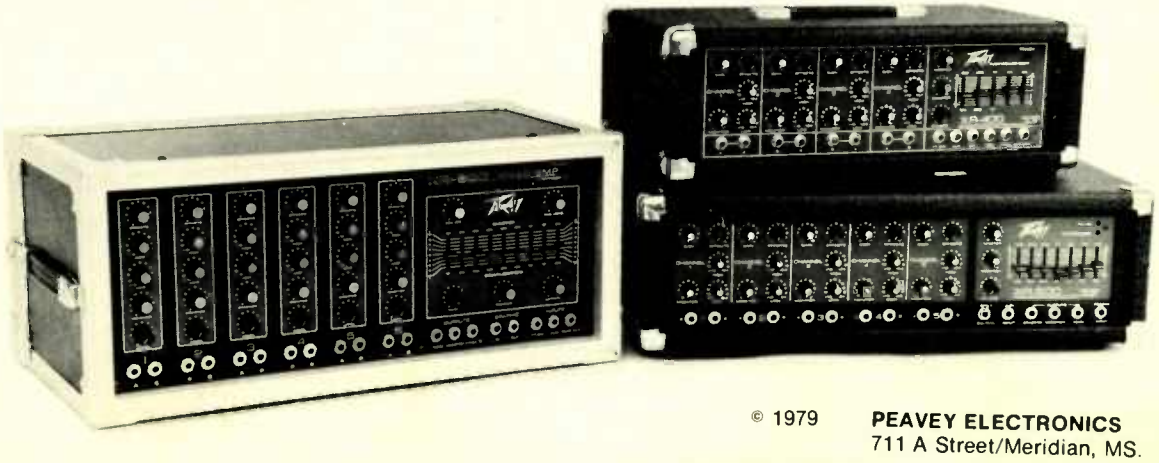

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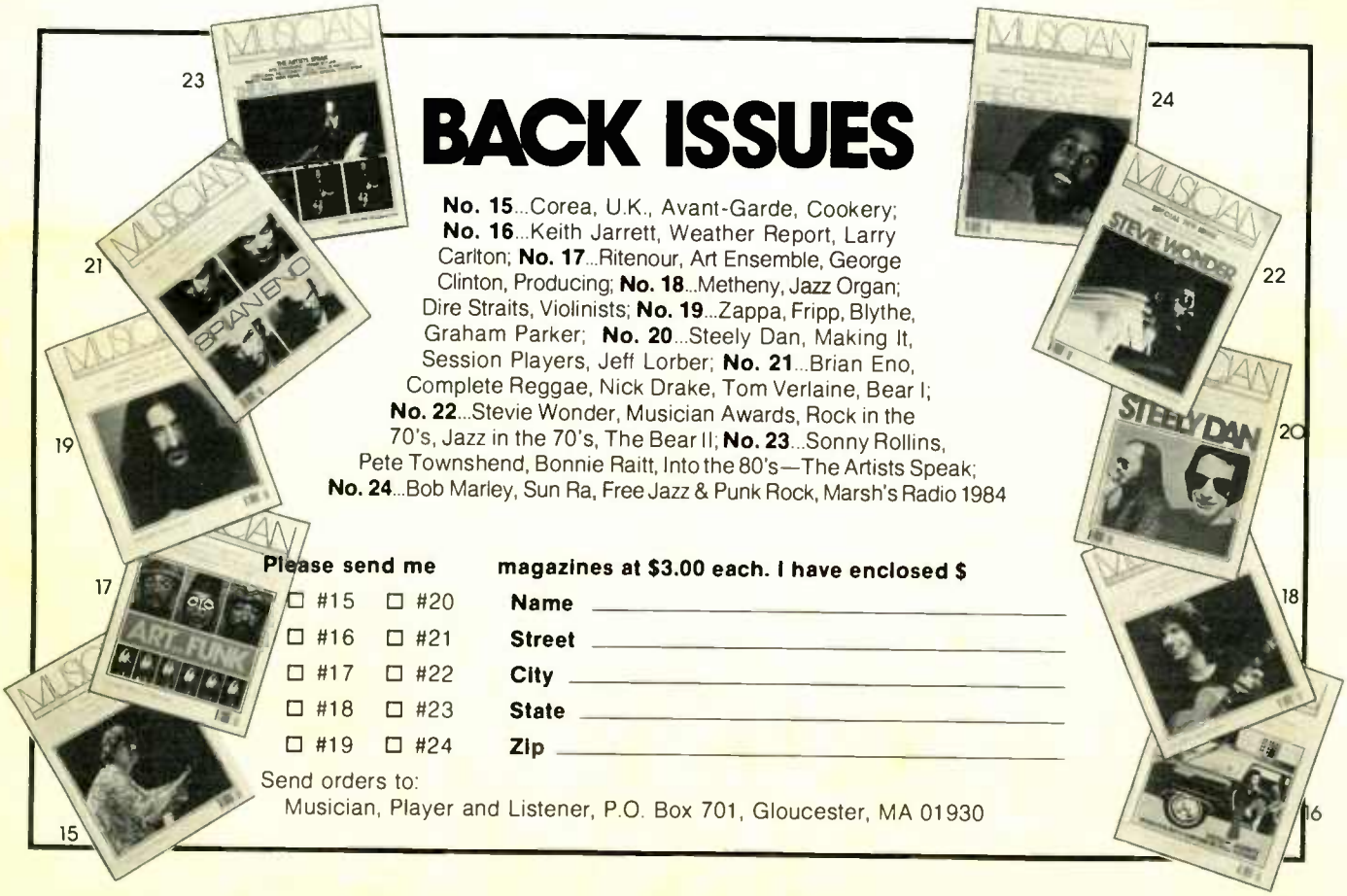

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Short Takes *cont. from page 76*

/cabaret roots with some elegant disco-fied funk. Since then he's leaned too far into slick, stylized Gucci-rock for my taste. Get back, Jo-Jo. **Van Halen** — *Women and Children First* (Warners). *Van Halen* was raunchy rock and roll with a sunny California disposition — heavy metal for surfers. *Van Halen II* saw the further refinement and maturation of their sound, which was still centered around Ed Van Halen's Hendrixian pyrotechnics. Nothing earthshattering, mind you, but a welcome respite from the usual sludge. Unfortunately *Women and Children* represents a firm step backwards: mindless neanderthal riffing and monolithic powerchording rule. Maybe they figure this is what the kids want; what's worse: *they're probably right.* **Off Broadway USA** — *On* (Atlantic). Bright, Beatlesque power-pop with a difference: Lennon on vocals instead of McCartney. Best of its genre since the Raspberries/Badfinger era. **Ian Hunter** — *Welcome To The Club* (Chrysalis). There's a very special chemistry evident between Hunter and Mick Ronson that illuminates this two record live set from start to finish. I'm partial to the classic Mott the Hoople material ("All The Way From Memphis" and "All the Young Dudes"), though Hunter's solo material like "Cleveland Rocks" and "Just Another Night" shine also. And the Richard Rodgers and Sonny Bono covers are wonderful. A magic band, this. **Heart** — *Bebe Le Strange* (Epic). The airy, artsy structures of *Dog and Butterfly* have collapsed like a neutron star into a dense but energetic rock maelstrom. Unfortunately *Even It Up*'s churning guitars and incendiary vocals set a standard that the rest of the material here can't match. Let's hope they don't wind up forfeiting their identity in their rush to sound contemporary; "Crazy On You" and "Straight On" were nothing to be ashamed of. **Link Wray** — *Live at The Paradiso* (Visa). Link plays 'em loud, loose and raunchy on this Amsterdam date. I wouldn't be surprised to hear that he can pack them in all over Europe — meanwhile back home he probably can't draw flies in Jersey City. Shame! This guy can still cut punks less than half his age. Standards like "Rumble" and "Rawhide" retain plenty of kick, but check out "Subway Blues" for some of the best Hendrixian guitar you've heard since *Electric Ladyland.* M

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DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Arthur Blythe's new band is a revelation, perhaps the one straight-ahead jazz band that could have a large audience without compromising a note.

Jazz *cont. from page 28*

remnants of the Symbionese Liberation Army. It's true that Imamu Baraka was present, but he, so help me, was smiling. So was Taylor, who, as Jim Silverman, his manager, pointed out, had particular reason to be jovial — the club was doing good business, he'd just received a couple of interesting offers for the tapes of his recent concert with Max Roach, and the music was going extraordinarily well. If the band was seething with hatred, capricious or otherwise, its members put on a terrific act: Jerome Cooper was jumping in place with a beatific grin, and Ramsey Ammeen was running around asking everyone how they liked it.

Sudhalter is a fine cornetist, a co-author of the definitive Bix Beiderbecke biography, an occasional concert producer, and bandleader, and his reviews have been a welcome addition to the *Post* — a publication which used to ignore jazz altogether. (In the '60s, it syndicated jazz columns from California; *Post* readers didn't know who was at the Vanguard Saturday night, but they were the only New Yorkers who could tell you who was playing the Blackhawk in San Francisco.) Yet this manifestation of conservatism was ill-tempered and presumptuous. It would be illuminating to read an attack on Taylor by someone who's spent as much time investigating his music as those of us who sing his praises, but the *Post*man didn't deliver. Even his one musical reference was misguided: he favorably compared Taylor's introductory notes with what he took to be Duke Ellington's ad lib introductions to "Rockin' in Rhythm." Actually, Ellington's prelude was a separate piece called "Kinda Dukish."

I won't say who heard better, but where Sudhalter heard anger and contempt, I heard euphoria; where he heard "flagellation," I heard two piano solos of almost Debussyan subtlety, restraint, and modulation; where he heard formlessness, I heard painstaking attempts at structure. He neglected even to mention the fascinating interplay between the two drummers — Murray with his broad swashes of color, and Cooper with his meticulous shadow-rhythms. In any case, he surely knows that his rhetoric isn't far removed from the slander that greeted jazz 50 years ago. For all we know, dear Aldous Huxley might have just finished listening to a Bix Beiderbecke record when he wrote of the "barbarism," the "violent and purely physiological stimuli . . . of modern jazz."

Elsewhere, at Fat Tuesday's, Milt Jackson was exercising with an equally precise rhythm section: Cedar Walton, Sam Jones, and Ben Riley. His loosely swinging "Summertime" reminded me of the trio version John Lewis introduced at the club some months ago, where each instrument had a specific part and every note was wrung with conviction. By contrast, Jackson jogged through the changes, burrowing into their darkest crannies, buoyed by sunny rhythmic patterns and the leathery walking bass Sam Jones inherited from Paul Chambers. It occurred to me that Jackson and Lewis would make a peculiarly complementary team, but never mind. Walton's specialty is to wend his way through the chords plucking just those notes, and substituting just those chords, that make for genuine melodic/harmonic variation; this, plus his unmistakeable touch suggests an emotional firmness bordering on rectitude. Perhaps the same could be said of John Lewis, notwithstanding their utterly different attacks. In any case, Walton consistently raised Jackson's temperature: every number, save one, began with a middling Jackson solo, followed by a good Walton solo, followed by a great Jackson solo.

The exception was an altogether lovely "You Go To My Head." On fast numbers, Jackson sometimes runs the changes by remote control, but on ballads he is unfailingly warm, even devoted — the chords are opened like petals, the turnbacks gaily Tatumized, the melodies soulfully scrutinized. Jackson is a great ballad player because he respects craftsmanship; no matter how irreverently he extemporizes, he shows how beautifully the song was put together. In this respect, Jackson, like most of the outstanding musicians of his generation, is a child of Lester Young. Small wonder that he wants to be a singer; on vibes, he is. It's interesting to note how avant gardism in jazz lends itself to elegant restraint with age. We've seen it in the way the '70s laundered the '60s, and in the accompanying metamorphosis of rebellious boppers into benign mainstreamers. Jackson's quartet, with its classic modernist repertoire ("St. Thomas," "Hi-Fly," "Bags' Groove"), hardly seems heir to the scarifying stuff that tore the '40s apart. The cutting edge is where the young, lean, and hungry ought to be, but maturity has its own rewards.

Bebop maturity was also in evidence at the Tin Palace, where Clifford Jordan and Barry Harris led a quartet; Vernel Fournier (a Chicagoan best known for his long stint with Ahmad Jamal) was on drums, and Rufus Reid on bass. In the early '70s, Jordan had a fruitful association with Cedar Walton, resulting in a couple of live recordings at Boomer's and half of Jordan's *The Glass Bead Game*. The high points were usually the originals (both men write distinctive lines) and though they played a lot of jazz standards, they rarely went back farther than Monk and Rollins. During the past couple of years, however, it's rare that a Jordan set hasn't included at least one Charlie Parker theme. He seems to have reaffirmed his identity as a descendant of bop. His tone is as personal as ever, and his melodies as breezy and elusive, but the conception is tougher, surer. This is never more evident than when he works with the bebop professor, Barry Harris, who knew his destiny from the first time he heard Powell and Monk. Harris's beautiful and percussive comping inspire Jordan, and they achieve a unison blend that recalls Monk and Rouse, Walton and Jordan.

The choice of selections was typical and irresistible: Monk's "Off Minor;" a piano chorus of "How High the Moon"

continued on page 92

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VIDEO FUTURES

With the price of touring going through the roof, video and film will be replacing your local concert hall very soon. Vast new musical and theatrical horizons will open up, but the thought of more and more of our art coming in carefully calculated packages is a little chilling.

By Clint Roswell

Out there is mass-cultureland where a greater and greater percentage of the music gets listened to in stadiums and enormous indoor ashtrays designed for sports, a glitzy, possibly glacial future was being concocted for us. But now films and home video cassettes may be well on the way to replacing the concert and the record as the donimant vehicle of musical expresssion.

Video as a medium for sound has the impact of creating a new dimension; a cultural dimension that finally makes man master of the machine. If the Eighties are heading toward art genres with an Orwellian signature, then video and film will be the mass-produced culture that finally delivers the goods.

The days of barnstorming concert tours and huge festivals are numbered as a viable means for both musicians and fans. Remember Cincinnati. Attendance at concerts is on the decline and the record industry is singing the blues trying to dress up the same old formulas. Rising prices due to inflationary expenses and labor costs, plus the stranglehold of a gas-oriented economy heading into uncertain times, have virtualy shut off most outlets other than the 25 major cities.

In many cases, it doesn't make dollars and sense for big-name bands to transport an ever-increasing tonnage of equipment and stage-effects apparatus cross-country, and conversely, the fan has become less willing to travel expensive lengths to support middle-of-the-road acts.

The result of this trend has been a growing reliance on alternative avenues of music presentation. The evolution of music styles in the Eighties will inexorably take a backseat to the sound technology industry, now on the verge of dictating the musical environment. The notion that the music afficionado no longer will be bound to the physical limitations of attending a live performance to witness an uncompromised musical experience is indeed one of the intriguing possibilities of the new decade.

Consider the presumptive evidence:

- Movie production companies are increasingly involved with the music field since the end result of many major concert tours have been stereophonic movies, often generating bigger revenues that record soundtracks and ultimately reach more viewers than the actual live performances.
- Cable television companies are co-producing pop concerts for the exclusive film and video rights of showcasing these musical acts to its expanding home-entertainment audience.
- Musicians are readying new works on digitally encoded picture discs that will supplant concert tours in many markets, since media experts predict that by 1985, 50% of all American homes owning televisions will be equipped with compatible stereo units capable of presenting sophisticated mixed-media telecasts.

With the advent of technological hardware that can reproduce sound with near-perfect clarity, namely the distortion-free dynamics of digital recording, it won't be long until filmed concert performances presented in local moviehouses, clubs, or packaged for home viewing on picture discs or video cassettes will challenge the live concert in terms of technical performance. The future home stereo unit should send shivers down the spine of Ella or Melissa or Mangione if they pose the familiar question, "is it real, or is it . . ."

What's chilling about it is obvious: more art without human contact and more of our experience coming in packages, as artists and artists withdraw into parallel fantasies of technological omnipotence on the one-hand and a kind of thumb-in-mouth, media-stoked solipsism on the other . . . a sci-fi future which nothing real never need intrude until total breakdown comes. The sound technology industry, in case you haven't been listening lately, is the fastest growing industry in the United States.

Marketing experts predict that within two years one out of every five homes with televisions will have picture disc units that not only reproduce sound via laser beam at a dynamic range of 85db and no distortion (as compared with today's state-of-the-art 60-64db and less than 0.5% distortion), but also transmit a picture with 330 horizontal lines of resolution (as compared with today's conventional 260-line range). Magnavox will begin selling its Magnavision player nationally sometime this year for $775. The discs, which a laser beam traverses from left to right at 1800 rpm, will be packaged by MCA at competitive prices to video-cassette machines.

"The record companies are very excited by this," says MCA senior vice-president of programming and marketing, Norman Glenn. "They see it as a new dimension, a new marketable product that can't miss. The artists are even more wildly enthusiastic about it. The first thing they tell me is that they won't have to tour anymore!

The idea is to produce a mini-concert movie of the group performing its new LP synched to the sound. The discs will be released in conjunction with the conventional records, but the appeal of video and the vastly superior dynamics

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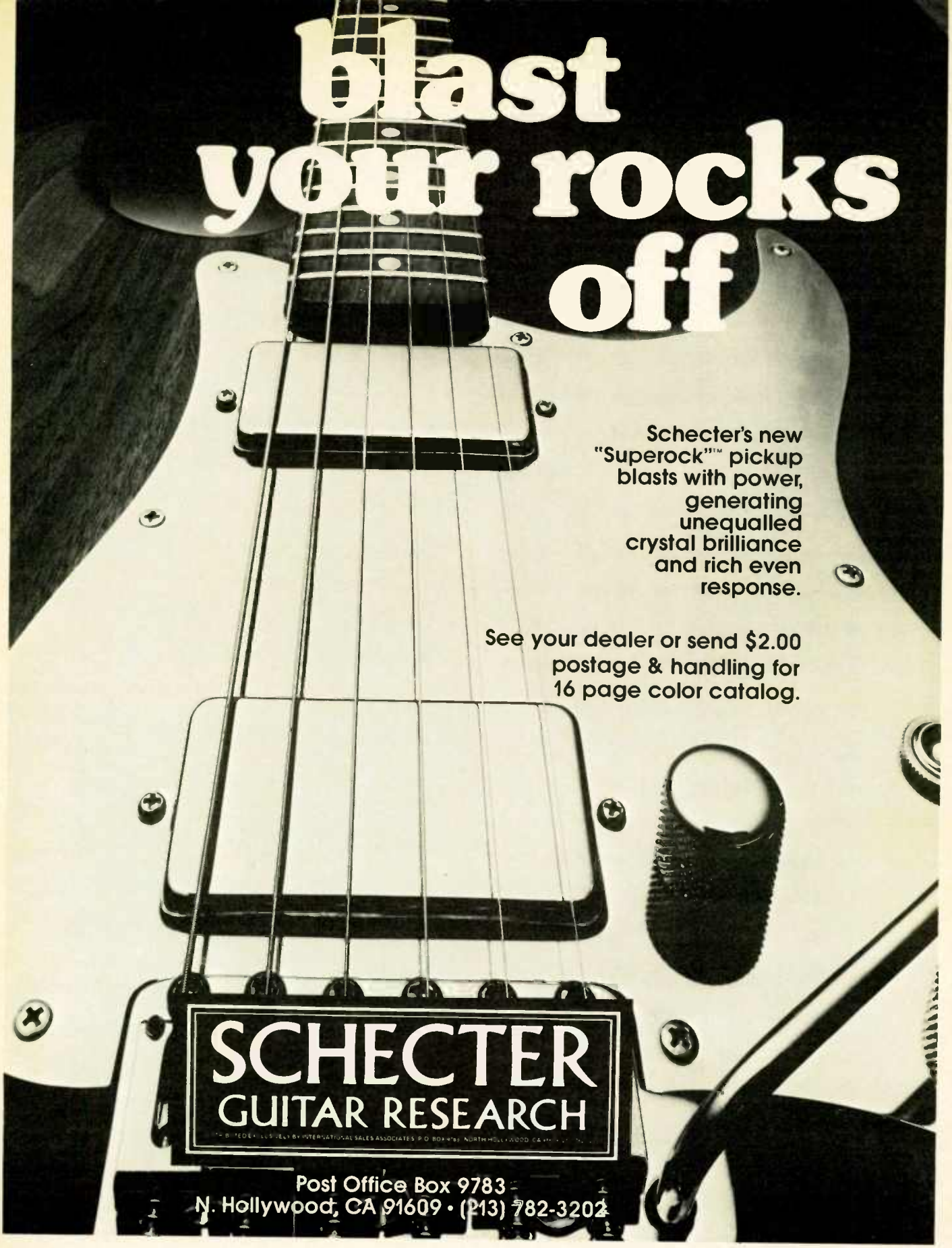

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AUSTRALIA Ram Music Trading Co., 348 Punt Road, South Yarra 3141 Yarra Melbourne, Australia (03) 267-4418. **BeNeLux** Galama Guitar Customizing, Box 594, Groningen, Holland, 050-770-725. **ENGLAND** Chandler Guitars, 199 Sandy Combe Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, 01-940 5874. **FRANCE** Nashville Guitar Workshop, 18 Rue de Doual, 75009 Paris, France, 874-66-13, 285-82-47. **GERMANY** Musik Schell, Postfach 1235, Bleichereistrasse 2, 7336 Uhingen, West Germany (07161) 38566. **JAPAN** Moon Corporation, 1F Yamaguchi, Shoji Building, 24-14 Ebisu 1-Chome, Shibjuya-Ku, Tokyo, 150 Japan. **SWEDEN** Englund Musik AB, Box 610, S-126 06 HAGERSTEN Stockholm, Sweden 08 97 09 20. **SWITZERLAND** Zenker Musikinstrumente En Gros, Ch-4003 Basel Postfach, Feierabendstrasse 14-22, 061-229996 & 229997, Telex 64831.

make the picture disc the stronger competitor for the future. It's like television taking over from radio. Considering that in less than two years the video-cassette industry has redefined the viewing habits of many tube watchers, the quantum leap of stereo technology is an awaited step.

While MCA has a catalog of 160 video titles for 1980 release, it has only one pure music disc, an Elton John concert at Edinburgh. "Once again, it's a case of the chicken and the egg," says Glenn. "We have the hardware, so we're waiting for them to be distributed. Once there are enough outlets, and we expect to reach one-billion dollars in sales by 1982, recording groups will make discs."

The picture disc is not the only music box able to recreate a concert in your living room. Life-Life Inc., which owns Home Box Office, the largest cable television enterprise in the country, is buying up movies and concerts for its pay-TV subscribers. It is also marketing video-cassettes of concert movies. "We're committed to providing home entertainment, we are now co-producing concerts for video-taping," says Sam Zurich, director of Time-Life's video marketing, "We just filmed the Kinks at their concert in Providence, R.I. for a cable special, and we've done Billy Joel. It's a tripartite arrangement with the record company and the artist."

Watching video discs or video cassettes combines the immediacy of television with the power of music. It may not be the real thing. Yet.

ZZ Top *cont. from page 22*

BILLY: Oh yeah, he and his whole band — dig this, we played a show in Atlanta, 15,000 black people, I said "We're gonna play a blues tune now —" YOU GONNA DO A BLUES?! A *WHAT??!!* GO HEAD ON, *DO* IT!!!" It was so funny, but Ike's band was so coldblooded, black velvet hotpants, black pantyhose, kneehigh boots, all of 'em, man, and it was *fine*.

DUSTY: Big band, all movin' —

BILLY: Yeah. Ike moves a quarter of an inch and his band stops. After the show he was admiring one of our guitars, and you know he's got that low, so-cool Beatle haircut, and a blue jumpsuit and says, "Yeah, I like that guitar you got ... but, uh, say, uh, ... you guys need a little spicin' up on y' stage stuff ..." I said, "Why, whudduya mean?" He said, "Come over here." He got this guy that was the coordinator of their wardrobes and said, "Give him some o' them stockin's, willya?" And he came out with these brand new packs of Hanes black pantyhose, says, "Here, take these. So the next night in Memphis we got up, I said, "Oh, I gotta do it —"

DUSTY: You gotta understand that we just had Memphis goin', it took a while for 'em to accept the cowboy hats and the boots, and they were finally goin' for it, and now we come back and Billy's doin' his thing in hotpants and pantyhose ...

BANGS: What was the reaction:

BILLY: It was "Either play your ass off and get through this one or we're dead." We pulled it off. There was some "hey, baby" and whistles.

BANGS: Don't you think a lot of musicians get unduly sidetracked in the technical end at the expense of the feel and soul of the thing?

BILLY: Sure. Jimmy Vaughan [guitarist for the Fabulous Thunderbirds, a great new R&B group out of Austin every reader of this magazine should check out] and I are real close, and one night he broke a string. They're gettin' ready to go off on tour and they're playin' their last big gig in Austin, and he's playin' a Fender Strat, and if you break a string on a Strat the whole thing goes out of tune. I was sayin', "Now how's this gonna work?" and I saw Vaughan look over at the bass player, who's equally as sick, and just had this smile as if to say, "Okay, *now* we can start cooking, gentlemen," and the whole place went nuts from that moment on. Did they stop and change the string? Hell no, they just kept goin'. They burned the place down.

BANGS: Bob Quine says he always does his best stuff when he doesn't know what he's doing.

FRANK: It's that old phrase about somebody comin' up to the piano player and saying, "Do you know how to read music?" "Well, not enough to hurt."

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New York *cont. from page 86*

leading into "Ornithology" (a Parker derivation); "If You Could See Me Now" (Jordan was hesitant on the head, but came fully alive for the improvisation; no one plays Tadd Dameron's tunes with more feeling than Harris); "Jitterbug Waltz" (a tap dancer named David Gilmore was the chief soloist); a piano chorus of "Sweet Georgia Brown" leading into "Hollywood Stampede" (a Hawkins derivation); "Lover Man" (there is a particular bop tempo that Bud Powell probably invented, somewhere between slow and medium slow with a leaning-behind-the-beat drag, of which Harris is now the undisputed master) and "Dance of the Infidels" (vigorous four-bar exchanges). Fournier maintained decisive tempos on the ride cymbal, and Reid walked his counterpoint through all the octaves of the bass; Harris clapped his chords like Zeus; and Jordan slid through them like oil. I've written a lot about the evolution of jazz styles, but after a night of music as good as this I can get sentimental enough to think that bop didn't evolve out of anything or into anything — that it's just a perfect little discrete body of music, and either you can play it or you can't. Few can, so quartets like these fill me with gratitude and awe.

So does the quartet Arthur Blythe leads, called In the Tradition. Their debut appearance at the Village Vanguard, a jazz tradition unto itself, was a revelation. I thought I knew the band's music pretty well, but this gig proved that it's turned a corner since the Columbia album was recorded. Frequent work can do wonders. A few observations: 1) The whole group has developed an engaging stage presence that readily communicates authority and pleasure, 2) The rhythm section — Fred Hopkins and Steve McCall — has evolved a remarkably reflexive tightness, 3) John Hicks is an immensely exciting pianist, whose cascading solos provide perfect foils to Arthur's punctilious inventions, 4) The audience — which was young, attentive, and sizeable — seemed more enthused about Blythe's originals than the standards he played. In sum, I think this is the one contemporary, acoustic, straight-ahead jazz band that could generate a large audience without compromising a note — much as Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis did in the '50s. It needs only the exposure; there is a ready-made audience at colleges just waiting to be tapped.

One of Arthur Blythe's fans, an impeccable source at Columbia records tells me, is Miles Davis, who was talking about using Blythe on his next record. That's the kind of collaboration on which jazz traditions are founded, and by which they are sustained. For one reason or another, Blythe won't be on the session, but a session will take place and a Miles Davis record will appear before the end of the year with Gil Evans and Al Foster among the participants. If Miles is comin' around the mountain, can Monk be far behind? (Probably.)

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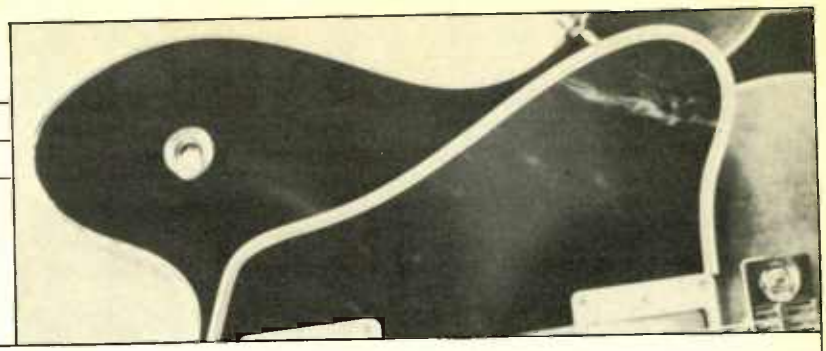


Last month we looked at two important development techniques: Shape Inversions and Superimposed Rhythmic Groupings. This month we'll learn how to create sequential patterns. Sequential patterns add excitement to improvisation, particularly when played with good technique. Many players such as Al DiMeola have "patented" licks based on sequential development. Part of the reason this technique is exciting is that the listener is hung up on the rhythm of the notes you play and wants to see if you can logically develop your idea to completion.

It is a good idea to invent many licks to provide a springboard for creativity. Eventually, you can develop a creative habit, forget your licks and create spontaneously. Don't get the idea that you should play patterns all the time. An exciting player like George Benson might use patterns up to one fourth of the time; he might play pattern-like ideas with development half the time; and he plays what he hears, with conviction 95% of the time.

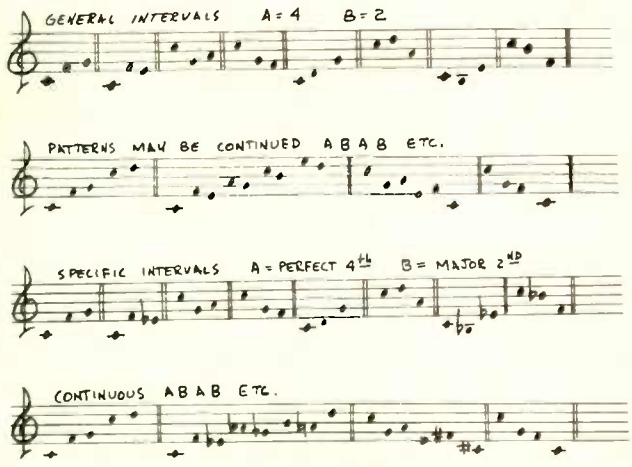
Technique #3: Interval Sequences

Two intervals (A, B) may be combined in eight ways to produce a sequence that will catch the listeners ear:

↑A↑B ↑A↓B ↓A↑B ↓A↓B

↑B↑A ↑B↓A ↓B↑A ↓B↓A

You may fit the sequence generated to a chord scale tonality or stick to two specific intervals, generating a sequence that has a tonality of its own. The patterns generated may be used as thematic material or played through cycles.



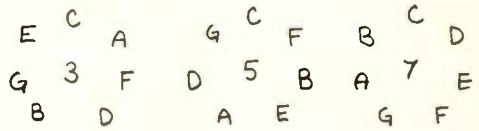
There's not enough room here to show extended applications of this technique. Just go ahead and apply it to the fingerboard, extending the examples above. Repeating interval sequences are pretty easy to see on the guitar. If you need to see longer examples, you can check out my book: *Guitar Jazz-Rock Improvising.*

This technique may be extended to three or four intervals by designating them A, B, C, D, etc.

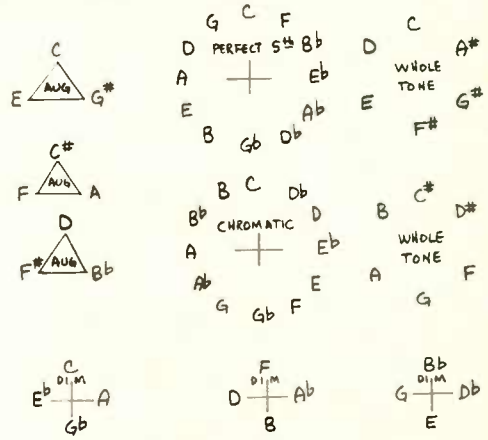
Technique #4: Cyclic Sequences

Ear-catching licks can be created by applying sequential fragments like the ones above to cycles. Cycles are special symmetrical orders of notes that are used in bass lines and melodies.

GENERAL CYCLES (Apply various chord scale tonalities)

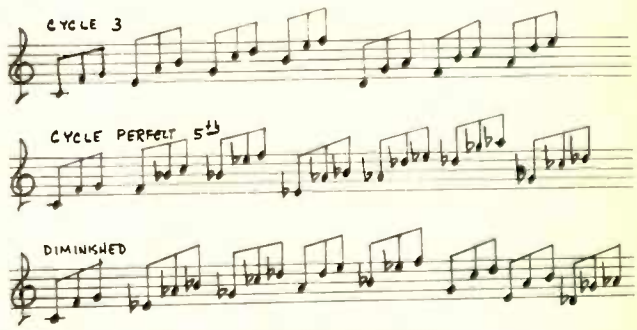


SPECIFIC CYCLES



Memorize the cycles backwards and forwards and as sets of notes. Note similarities between the cycles. Octave transposition is permissable at any time when playing through cycles.

GENERATING SEQUENTIAL LICKS through the use of cycles:



The use of accidentals depends on the chord scale tonality or whether the lick uses general or specific intervals. An important thing that I tell my students at Berklee about sequences is to keep the primary tonality in the back of your mind, no matter how far you may deviate from it with sequential licks.

That's all for now. Keep playing!

Next month: *Fingerpicking*

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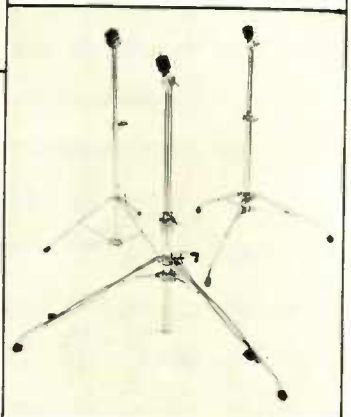
Gibson recently introduced their Equa guitar string for both acoustic and electric guitars. The set is equalized so that when strings are tuned to the proper pitch no string will be overshadowed by the next. This provides consistent feel, tone color and a more balanced signal when playing electric. Gibson Strings, Norlin, 7373 N. Cicero Ave., Lincolnwood, Ill. 60646.

The new **Peavey** Century features 100 watts and tremendous input dynamic range to enable its use with almost any instrument. Peavey has included its unique "Saturation" effect to produce the warm overload and sustain characteristics of vacuum tube amplifiers. The equalization circuit features active "shelving" type high and low equalizers and Peavey's unique "Paramid" equalizer for the vital midrange frequencies. Also included is an "effects loop" consisting of a transient protected preamp out/power amp in system of jacks to enable utilization with external devices such as power amps, effects, devices, etc. Peavey, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301.

Sequential Circuits has redesigned and improved their Prophet-5, the industry's first completely programmable polyphonic synthesizer. Advances include a radically new oscillator design, improved editing, a computer-correction scheme that eliminates tuning problems, a voice defeat system and a built-in cassette interface that allows storage of programs on tape. A special "variable scale" mode allows the tuning of the 12 notes of the octave to different frequencies enabling the musician to use other scales. Sequential Circuits, 3051 N. First St., San Jose, Cal. 95134.

MXR Innovations is deservedly proud of their Pitch Transposer, a high quality signal processor designed to create live instrumental and vocal harmonies and able to withstand the demands of live performance. The Pitch Transposer has four pre-sets which can pre-determine the interval to be processed, anywhere from an octave below to an octave above the original pitch. The chosen interval is then activated by touch controls or by footswitch, with LED indicators displaying which of the four pre-sets has been selected. A microcomputer-based display option lets you read the created harmonic interval in terms of a pitch ratio or a musical interval (in half steps). The unit also includes a Mix control and a Regeneration control for the recirculation of signals, creating even more possibilities. MXR, 740 Driving Park Ave., Rochester, NY 14613.



Remo introduces a new extra heavy-duty tripod stand for RotoToms designed for 3 and 4 drum combinations and heavy playing applications. Designated the Model 106RT, the stand folds to a compact 22¼" to fit into a standard trap case, has a height adjustment lock that "remembers" any setting from 24¼" to 47½", and dismantles into two pieces. List price is $84. Remo, 12804 Raymer St., N. Hollywood, Cal. 91605.

Music Technology, Inc. is offering a new musical accessory called Tubes. Resembling an old MacIntosh, Tubes is a unique device that, when connected to a solid state amp (or even a modern tube amp), actually recreates that classic "old" tubes sound; full, rich harmonic content, natural distortion, greater dynamic range, and much longer sustain. Tubes features a real tube pre-amp, separate bass and treble controls, a power amp, and volume and master controls that combine with a miniature speaker internally to produce every kind of "tube distortion" desirable. Music Technology, Inc., 105 Fifth Ave., Garden City Park, NY 11040.

Roland brings forth the latest offering in its VK Series Organs, the VK-1. This instrument is a compact, electronic, single manual organ, capable of producing the classic tone wheel type of organ sound. Tone generation is controlled by either presets or drawbars. A Chorus-Vibrato section removes that old ball-and-chain necessity for an organist to drag a Leslie speaker around in order to achieve slow chorale or fast rotary speaker effects. The Harmonic Percussion section is controlled by five switches which select either the 2nd, 3rd or 5th harmonics while the other two tabs induce either Fast Decay or Soft Percussion Volume. Rolandcorp US, 2401 Saybrook Ave., L.A., Cal. 90040.

Narm *cont. from page 43*

ments are already bearing out that forecast with fewer new signings and a revival of lower-cost shorter-term deals providing escape valves by basing longer commitments on achievement of specific chart goals on initial product.

Artists determined to snare a contract with a major will thus be faced with a greater pressure to comply with current commercial trends. If he's adamant about taking musical risks, that musician will have to assume more of a financial risk by either a reduction in monetary guarantees as a side effect of long-term deals, or by making a conscious effort to keep production costs as low as possible. As for such prerequisites as large advances and substantial tour-support funding, those will be virtually eliminated in new signings of untested talent.

Ironically, such a chromatic change could well work to the advantage of smaller specialty labels. During NARM, maverick outfits like Rounder Records, Flying Fish and their peers generally reported new clout in the marketplace, stemming partly from the greater loyalty of their distributors, who have lost most of their more mainstream label clients, but also deriving from their emphasis on keeping close tabs on expenses. Since those labels didn't strive for the brass ring of double platinum in the first place, they haven't been as adversely affected as have some of their more monolithic competitors.

To interpret these sobering forecasts as disaster would be premature and misleading. NARM itself has apparently benefitted from the trade's recent travails. Where the association was once primarily involved in planning this annual gathering with little activity for much of the year, the grimmer realities for the industry coupled with the realignment of NARM's pop management has spurred a host of new services to its membership. Once vulnerable to criticism as an organization that did little beyond midwife label finance cocktail parties, NARM now supervises training programs, provides special credit programs for its members, creates educational programming in the research industries and assists the RIAA in its efforts to monitor counterfeiting.

The convention this year was built around the launch of an industry-wide campaign to create advertising and merchandising promoting recorded music as a natural choice for gift-giving. If that seems a specious focal point, the scope of NARM's effort indicated otherwise: From the opening morning forward, delegates were bombarded with such a campaign's potential for butressing sales, and the new slogan ("Give the Gift of Music") and logo developed by NARM indeed suggested the equivalent of the ubiquitous woolmark as a rallying point for record companies and retailers. If NARM's emphasis on minimizing competition and promoting a spirit of cooperation between these forces is carried through it's possible that this cutthroat spirit will be partially mitigated. If such a change in the music industry's *modus operandi* seems unlikely, it's worth underscoring the praise that recurred throughout the convention and which seemed ratified by economic necessity: as A&M's Jerry Marsh among others put it "it's a whole new ballgame," one that will demand tougher rules and more realism for those determined to survive, let alone prosper. M

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Et Cetera

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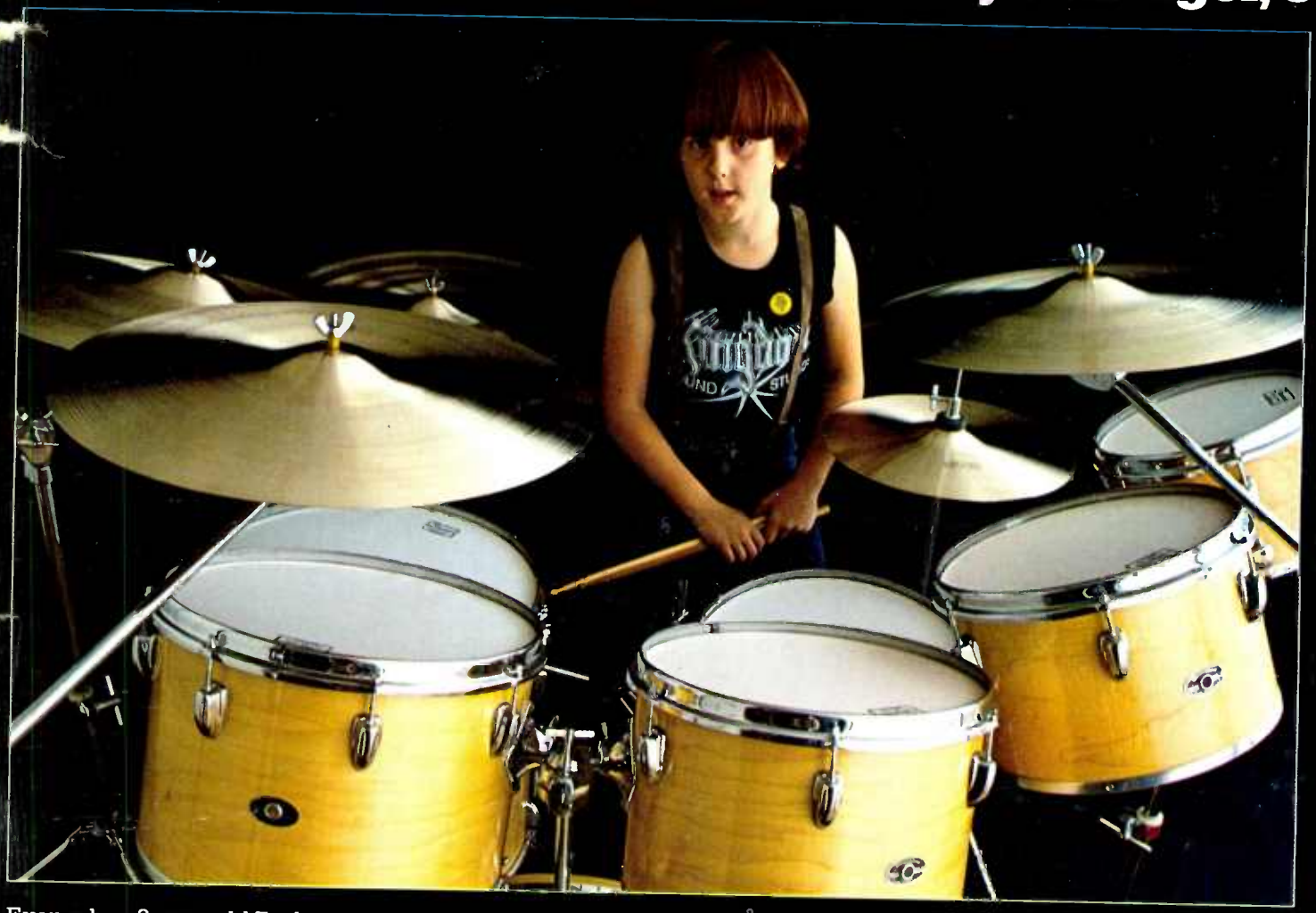
"I've played nothin' but Zildjians since I was a kid." Zachary Danziger, 8



Even when 8-year-old Zachary Danziger was a youngster way back in the old days, he was too serious about drumming to play anything but Zildjians.

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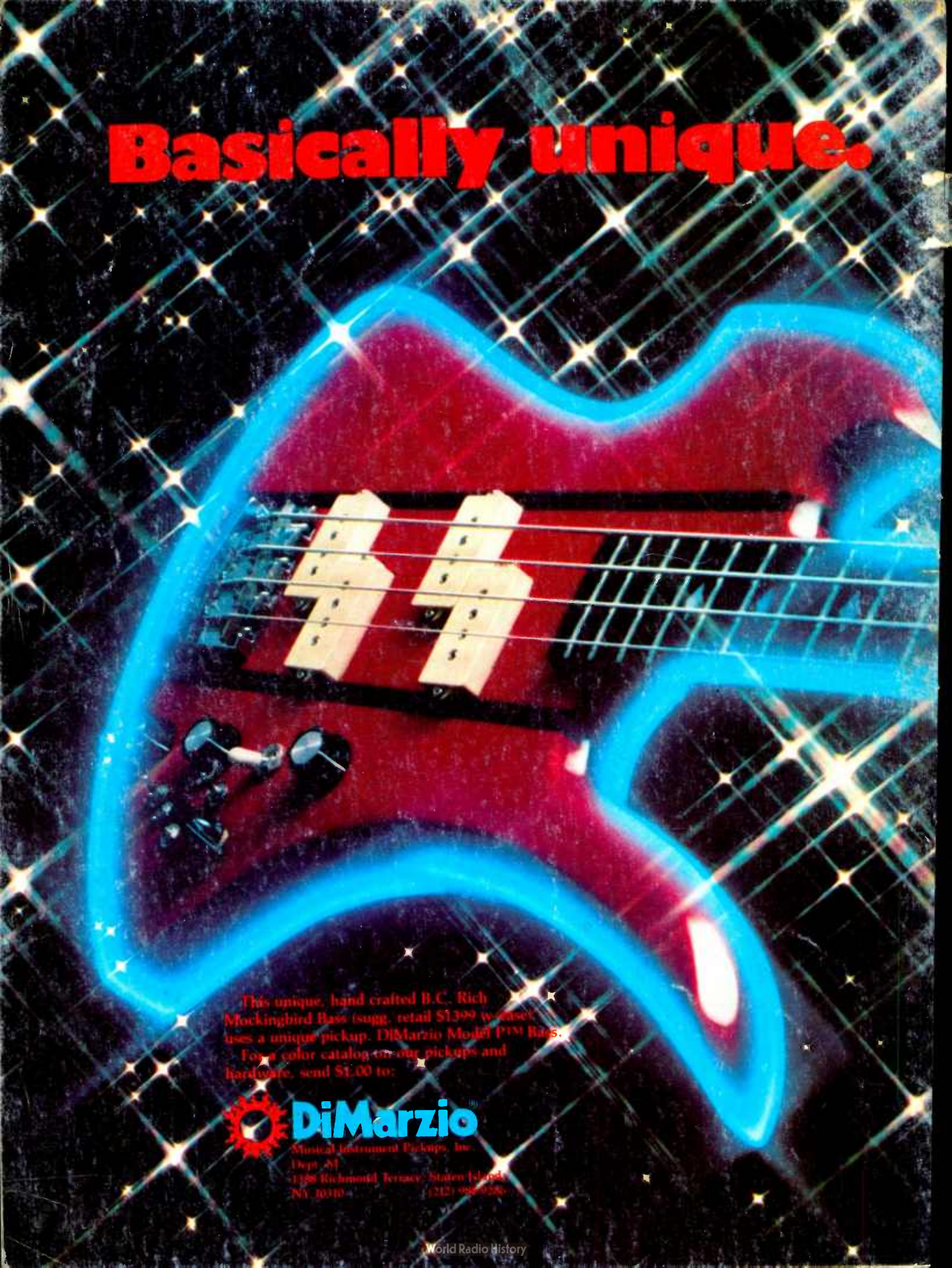

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