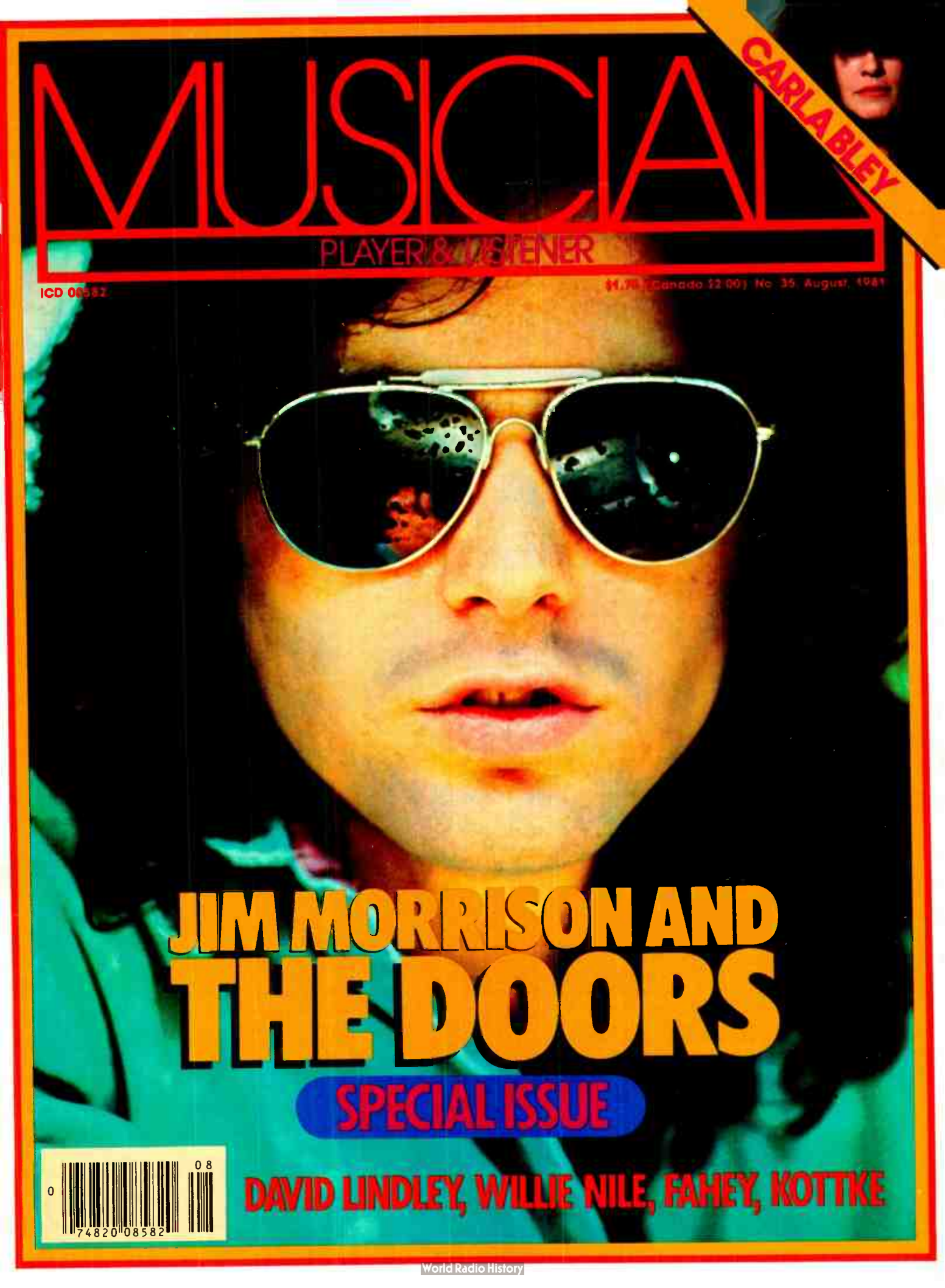

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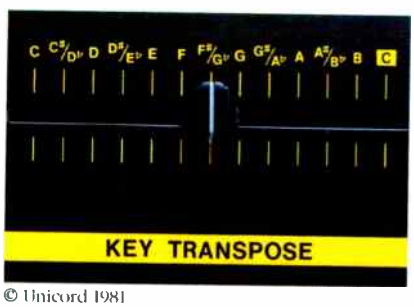

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We Want You to Understand the Future

MUSICIAN
PLAYER & LISTENER

NO. 35, AUGUST, 1981

David Lindley has lurked in the shadows of Jackson Browne's stage for years but his new band looks more to Jamaica for inspiration than to Hollywood Dan Forte visits with the guitarist everyone wants to clone

The Doors ten years later, still retain a chilling relevance and a growing following among a new sub generation Lester Bangs reflects on the irony of Jim Morrison's art, Ray Manzarek remembers how it really was, and Paul Rothschild answers some searching questions questions about the Lizard king's personality and life

Carla Bley has won the best jazz composer poll so many times they may retire her number Rafi Zabor plumbs the comic majesty and thematic opulence of the bizarre woman who's one of the last and best writers for large jazz ensemble

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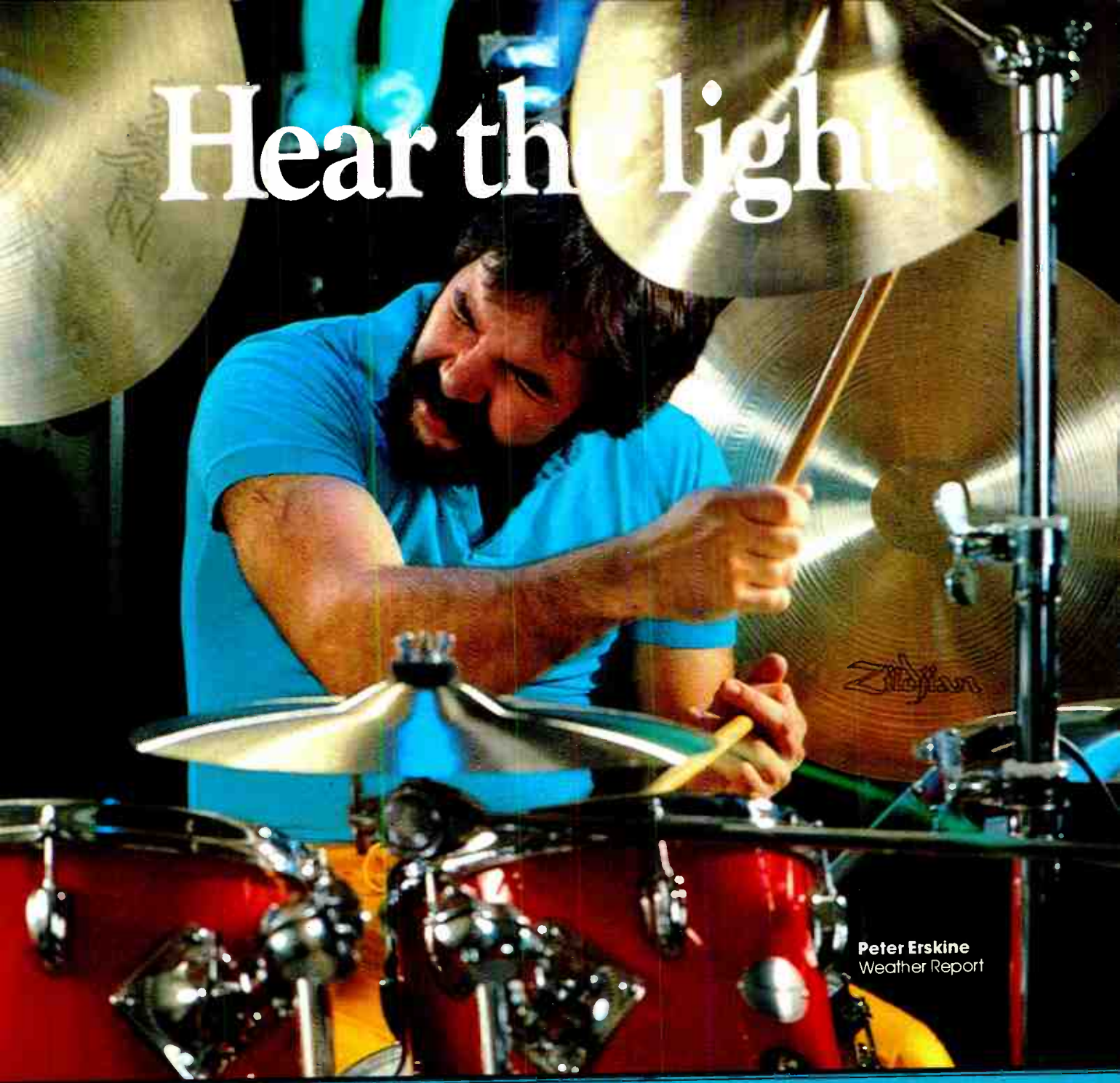

Peter Erskine
Weather Report

You've got this polyrhythmic thing happening, using all four of your limbs constantly in a real melodic way. And as you're playing the flow, with one hand on your drum and the other on your Ride, you suddenly hear all these nice fat thick tones turn to wave after wave of pulsing light.

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LETTERS

PUNK DEVILS

Because their viewpoints were diametrically opposed, we were especially embarrassed to discover we had reversed the bylines on two of the articles on L.A. Punk in issue #34. "Punk Vinyl" was actually written by Ken Tucker while Chris Morris was the author of "Caliphobia Corrected." Our sincere apologies to both writers, letter bombs notwithstanding.

BRAVO BRESKIN

I never thought I'd write a letter to the editor except to complain, but I must give David Breskin a hats off/bombs away/bravo/21 gun salute for his writing and interviews in *Musician*. He is one of the few music journalists who understands that music is not about chord changes but about life, who puts the music into perspective and into our culture. I asume this is why he can go from Steely Dan to European jazz to Talking Heads to Albert Collins without being dilettantish or pretentious. Here's to a humanist view of art, to Breskin and *Musician*.
Clifford Ray
New York, NY

READ, REFLECT, PURCHASE!

Musician is one of the most intelligently written magazines published. I would like to commend you on the interviews, especially Fripp's interview with the Clash. Super. By hearing their opinions on life, we, the public, gained insight into an often misunderstood band, which prompted me to purchase a copy of *Sandinista!* I applaud you, Mick Jones, Joe Strummer, Paul Simenon and Topper Headon. Every home should own a copy and I vote *Sandinista!* the album of the 80s.
Karen Blake
Burlington, WI

SOCIORHYTHMIC ONOMATOPOENO

In issue 32 Brian Eno states music is not "about" skill and dexterity. These skills Eno attempts to negate while he considers the "truth" of music to be major factors in the development of improvisatory techniques. Make no mistake — Parker, Rollins, Coltrane, Hendrix, and the myriad of names and no-names that we call creative are not neophytes. Despite what Eno or Lester Bangs thinks, one cannot produce a body of great music with limited capabilities.

The terse, seemingly enigmatic "honks" and "groans" of artists such as J. Chance are little more than musical onomatopoeia. This fodder is thought-provoking, I'll admit, but is there life after the solo?

Furthermore, what is this "socio-rhythmic interconnectedness" prattle? Does Eno imply that Beethoven made no "timely contributions" to his society because he did not compose by committee?
Mark Pilkanis
San Francisco, CA

WE DIDN'T ASK

I thought I'd write and express my appreciation of the R.S. Jackson article. I'm not much of a jazz listener so I was surprised to get so much enjoyment and some rare inspiration from the piece. Thanks for the terrific Clash photographs (Did Joe Strummer finally get his teeth fixed?) and the illuminating John Martyn article as well.
Dan Butler
Winston-Salem, NC

RONALD SHANNON'S MAGIC

I feel compelled to tell you how very much I enjoy the writing in your magazine and the concept behind it (and vice-versa). I have never gotten such a high about music without actually listening to it — take the Ronald Shannon Jackson article: I was transfixed! What's more, I even think I understand what he's talking about (especially remarkable since I come from a purely literary-visual background). What you do is magic. You people do wonderful thinking between the music and the words you write, and I appreciate it.
Dagny Devine
Westwood, CA

JUST ABOUT ALL OF THEM

For someone like me who enjoys every variety of music mentioned in your articles, your magazine is a real pleasure. Those scantily-dressed-woman-holding-phallic-guitar ads are a drag, though. I mean, what kind of a jerk would check the guitar out just because of the stupid look on her face?
Art Pederson
Seattle, WA

SOUL SUBSTITUTE

I enjoyed your interview with Steely Dan; you did a superb job presenting them. My major disappointment with them (though I was hardly surprised) was their attitude towards performing. I can't agree with Walter Becker's statement that performing is merely a re-creation of something done in the studio. The immediacy of a live performance is far more powerful than the controlled soul of studio recording, regardless of the proficiency with which it is done. Steely Dan's more recent albums have led me to suspect that the flesh and blood saga of "Dr. Wu" and "Bad Sneakers" has been replaced by some form of Dow Chemical substitute.
Lance Tegeder
Williston Park, NY

UFO KUDOS

I'd like to compliment Vic Garbarini on the great interviews he's been doing over the past several months. The most recent one, with Fripp and Joe Strummer is one of the best things I've ever come across in a music magazine. He manages to put an amazing amount of humanity and intelligence into it.

The pieces on Eno and David Byrne in a recent issue were fine, too. But I must say that the photograph of Eno in the striped shirt, standing in front of a bizarre, blue material was a bit much, but nice — looked like he had just stepped off a UFO.
Dee Bruce
New York, NY

JUST WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

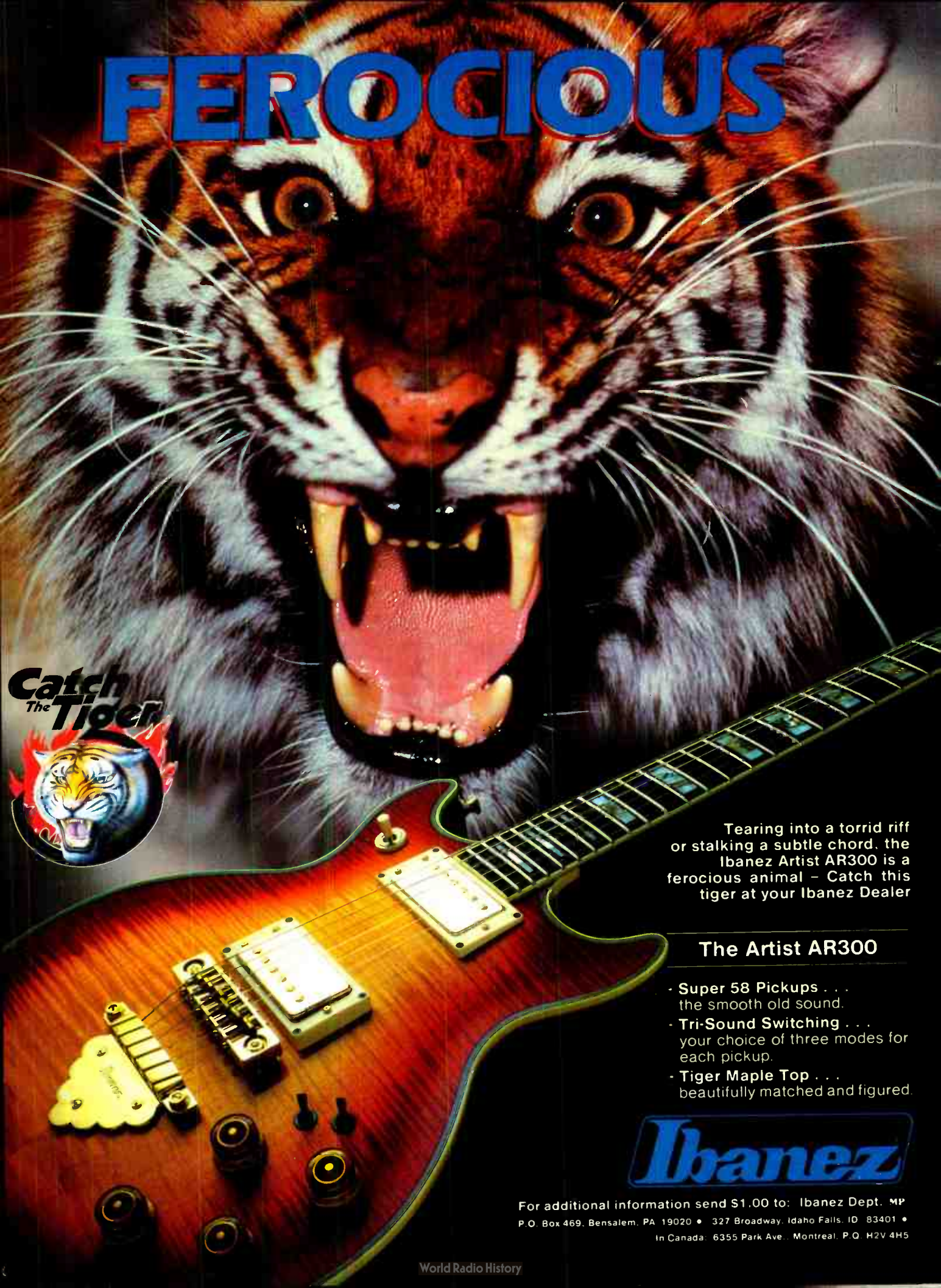
Though I would agree that Eric Clapton has recorded better work in the past than his most recent *Another Ticket*, it is an album far above the standard that is set by such groups as Styx, Journey, or REO Speedwagon. Can we expect artists to continually outdo their previous work? Can Clapton ever make another *Layla*? Can Springsteen continue to live up to the already inflated standards by which the rock press judges him?

I have always felt that a Clapton album recorded in the studio is an injustice in comparison with the power that he portrays in person. Eric Clapton is not a fallen guitarist, but a bored studio musician crying out for the stage. If he can't project the fire that made him a phenomenon in the 60s and 70s in his studio work, can you blame him? Finally, Mr. Fricke, just what *is* a "sleepy sophisto-blues-rock record"?
Damon M. Surgener
Lexington, KY

WE THOUGHT DAVE LIKED HIM

What a disappointment! Your article on John Fogerty could've been a great one but instead proved to be pathetic. We are all witness to sensationalism where mediocrity is elevated beyond all sense of credible proportion, yet here we have the reverse. Artists of the caliber of Fogerty in rock are few and far between. Yet we get an attack on Fogerty: "pessimism, paranoia...offhandedness, terminal inability to communicate" no doubt are symptomatic of the inner Dave Marsh. Fogerty communicated, we heard. What is it, Dave? A brief, last gasp? For you I think the sun has gone down.
Jury S. Klymko
Bramalea, Ontario

FEROCIOUS



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music industry news

Elvis Costello's latest LP, finished in May in Nashville with Billy Sherill producing, will feature covers of some 14 country chestnuts. Among the 25 songs El recorded are Patsy Cline's "He's Got You," Merle Haggard's "Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down," Hank Williams' "Why Don't You Love Me" and Sherill's own "Too Far Gone."

One of the **Clash**'s two-week string of dates at New York's Bond International in early June saw the appearance of a gent who looked like a Guardian Angel, but in fact averred that he was an actual Nicaraguan Sandinista. He delivered some rhetoric on "my people" in rapper's cadence during "Washington Bullets."

Miles Davis, at 57, has completed *The Man With A Horn*, his first studio work in seven years. The LP began as a collaboration with Miles' nephew, Vincent Wellburn, and his band. It includes a vocal from young Chicagoan Randy Hall. Miles has discarded his electronic gadgetry and will be playing pure trumpet when he appears at New York's Kool Jazz Festival, his first live date in five years. **Arthur Blythe**'s new one is being produced by Columbia staffer Jim Fishel.

Iron City Houserockers were in the studio with Steve Cropper producing in June... **Billy Burnette** at Muscle Shoals with Barry Beckett producing... **Nico**'s *Drama In Exile* was slated to include covers of "Heroes" and "Waiting for the Man"... Glen Frey and Jerry Wexler are planning to co-produce a record by country thrush **Lou Ann Barton**... **Boston**'s next studio effort was delayed when Tom Scholz broke a thumb... **Billy Joel** was scheduled to release a live album... **Joni Mitchell** says her next LP will sound "more acoustic" than recent ones.

Jimi Hendrix' life is the subject of a Bantam paperback called *'Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky*, by David Henderson — a revamped version of a work that originally went under the name of *Voodoo Chile of the Aquarian Age*. The paperback company feels they have another big seller in the fashion of the Jim Morrison bio, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*... **John Hiatt** has signed with Geffen Records... **Fleetwood Mac** was finishing recording sessions at Le Chateau outside Paris for a single album, mid-October release.

Carly Simon is planning to record an album of torch songs, suitably entitled *Torch* and including such classics as "Body and Soul," "Hurt," "I Got It Bad," and a new Stephen Sondheim tune, "Not A Day Goes By."

Chart Action

After comparatively very little movement in the album charts for many weeks, a host of new blood is pushing into the top ten. Kim Carnes, flattening the opposition on the AM charts with mega-seller "Betty Davis Eyes," is threatening to do the same with *Mistaken Identity* on the LP charts. Van Halen's *Fair Warning* appeared from nowhere after only two weeks while Tom Petty's *Hard Promises* has had to wait all of three weeks. Blasted out of the top ten by all this were old pros the Who (in and out after only ten weeks) and an astonishing collapse by Eric Clapton's *Another Ticket*, now at #35 after doing several weeks at the top. Possibly the magic of the old names boosted the rapid upward movement but the relative shallowness of the albums made them unable to hold their own, unlike the LPs of REO Speedwagon and Styx which still hold the top two spots. For tenacity, though, Christopher Cross' album is a law unto itself, rising a few places after 69 weeks (!?) An Australian entry, AC/DC's *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*, Stevie Winwood's *Arc* and ex-Genesis member Phil Collins' *Face Value* are all holding strong while Smokey Robinson's *Being With You* and Grover Washington Jr.'s *Winelight* start to relax their grip. Heavy comers include Quincy Jones' new *Dude*, Gino Vanelli's *Nightwalker* and Ray Parker Jr.'s *A Woman Needs Love*. Good bets in the bottom half of the top 100 are Elton John's *The Fox* and a new reunion by the Moody Blues, *Long Distance Voyager*.

On the single charts, the AM audience got an overdose of sugar and retired "Morning Train" and "Angel of the Morning," to the relief of car radio owners everywhere. Kim Carnes' hit is already placed on ten-year sales charts after eleven weeks and EMI is smiling all the way to the board meetings. No one seems sick of Smokey's "Being With You" or Bill Withers and Grover's "Just the Two of Us" yet. Beatle people have put not only a medley of their early hits into #3 but are licking their chops over George Harrison's "All Those Years" which is the closest thing to a Beatles reunion that could be arranged in this time dimension, with three out of the fab four. We were astonished to note that "Sukiyaki," Taste of Honey's retread, was actually written by *George Duke*; he's probably made more off that tune than all his albums put together.

On the C&W charts, Rosanne Cash's *Seven Year Ache* marks a more than auspicious debut for the daughter of a great American jailbird while Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton continue to mine the motherlode of popularity they have justly earned. Both Anne Murray and Ronnie Milsap each have two albums in the top 20, keeping these less well-known artists in chicken-fried steak. Up-and-comers include Alabama, T.G. Shepard and Juice Newton.

On the black charts, Rick James' *Street Songs* leads a big turnover, followed by Raydio, Quincy Jones, and Chaka Khan's *What Cha Gonna Do For Me*, the title cut of which is the top soul single. Other rumblings are made by Atlantic Starr (*Radiant*), Stephanie Mills, The Miracles, and a boffo-funk project by George Duke and Stanley Clarke. Meanwhile, former top dogs The Gap Band, Shalamar, the Isleys, Smokey and Grover give up ground begrudgingly. Stevie's *Hotter Than July* hangs tough after 30 weeks.

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THE HEART OF BLUE-COLLAR ROCK

The voices of the American working class, a gritty chorus of struggle, boredom, and uneasy weekend refuge, are heard in the music of the Iron City Houserockers, Bill Blue and Beaver Brown.

By Geoffrey Himes

In 1965, an autoworker was your best friend's father. You and your friend would sit cross-legged on his bedroom floor, listening to Bob Dylan's "Ballad of a Thin Man" on a Sears stereo, and sneak a cigarette (tobacco back then). When Dylan sang: "Something is happening here, but you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?" you'd snicker that Dylan must be referring to your friend's beer-bellied, crew-cut, Wallace-voting father.

In 1981, the autoworker is your best friend. He drives straight from the assembly line to the basketball arena to join you for the Bruce Springsteen show. When Bruce goes into one of his rambling, theatrical monologues ("There's two kinds of work a person can do; there's the people lucky enough to do work that changes the world, and there's people who just do the work that keeps the world from falling apart."), your friend is nodding with eyes all the way open. When Bruce shouts out defiantly: "Mister, I ain't a boy, no, I'm a man, and I believe in the promised land," your friend has jumped on his chair and is pumping his flannel-shirted arm and clenched fist in the air.

The American rock audience isn't a bunch of school kids anymore; they work for a living, and most of them punch a time clock. American new wave — in sharp contrast to British new wave — has largely been art songs for graduate students, and has had little to say to most of the American audience. Instead the battle for American rock is shaping up with two opposing forces: the suburban escapism of bands like Styx, REO Speedwagon, Van Halen, and the Eagles; and the blue collar realism of writers like Bruce Springsteen, Bob Seger, Tom Petty and (in one of his guises) Neil Young.

Blue collar rock combines the classic traditions of mainstream rock with lyrics about those who work all day for somebody else and who drive all night looking for something to call their own. The music is Chuck Berry guitar and Phil Spector keyboards over a Motown beat with melodies that move like the early Beatles and Rolling Stones. For a traditionless land, this music connects young workers into the one tradition they care about.

Bob Seger sings: "I work my back till it's racked with pain;/The boss can't even remember my name." Yet in the face of this and other frustrations, Seger insists he's "still running against the wind." Blue collar rock is full of these descriptions of frustration and stubborn optimism. In concert many of these performers further strengthen the ties between the real world and songs by introducing numbers with long, theatrical monologues that give the songs a firm context.

LAURA LEVINE

"Have a good time (but get out alive)": The Iron City Houserockers embody the smouldering frustration and stubborn optimism of life in the steel mills of Pittsburgh.

If blue collar rock is to become a real movement in American music, though, it has to extend far beyond the quartet of Springsteen, Seger, Petty and Young. So, for the past two years, I've gone looking for other blue collar rockers with the same style and power. I found some Springsteen associates (Southside Johnny and the Michael Stanley Band) who had the style but not the power. I found some Springsteen imitators (John Cougar and D.L. Byron) who were outright frauds. I noted the obvious British counterparts (the Clash, Graham Parker, Joe Jackson, etc.). I even discovered some Australian equivalents (Cold Chisel and Jo Jo Zep & the Falcons).

Most importantly, I found five American acts with the power to make blue collar rock a thriving genre: Garland Jeffreys, Robin Lane & the Chartbusters, the Iron City Houserockers, the Bill Blue Band and Beaver Brown. Jeffreys and Lane are getting the publicity they need, but the other three acts are among rock's best kept secrets.

Of the three, only Pittsburgh's Iron City Houserockers have major label albums: the 1979 *Love's So Tough* (MCA) and the 1980 *Have a Good Time (But Get Out Alive)* (MCA). Richmond's Bill Blue Band has two independent label albums: the 1979 *Sing Like Thunder* (Adelphi) and the 1980 *Givin' Good Boys a Bad Name* (Adelphi Records/P.O. Box 288/Silver Springs, MD 20907). Despite sell-out club dates up and down the East Coast, Rhode Island's Beaver Brown only has one single out: "Wild Summer Nights" (Coastline Records/1736 Beacon Street/Brookline, MA 02146).

The Iron City Houserockers' lead singer, Joe Grushecky, is tall and gangly. Last year he occupied the stage of Washington's Bayou like a basketball center who's not letting anything get by. As the five musicians behind him simmered the introduction to "Pumping Iron," Grushecky let his guitar dangle at his side and addressed the crowd.

"Pittsburgh's a real good city," he said of the band's hometown. "We got all these steel mills down by the river. When you grow up there, you can do two things. You can work like hell to stay out of those mills or you can spend your life pumping iron."

With that, the sextet exploded into a shuddering rock 'n' roll protest of those

choices. The beat had the loud, metallic crunch of a factory but with a joyful surge that no factory ever had. "Pumping iron," Grushecky sang to that factory beat, "sweatin' steel." Then he pointed at the young D.C. professionals in the crowd and shouted: "You can never understand how I feel!"

Nevertheless, Grushecky and his band worked hard all night to make them understand. Grushecky writes about the details of working lives without the romantic gauze that Springsteen often wraps around the subject. Grushecky describes vegging out in front of the tube, getting locked up for a dumb fight or falling in love with an overweight five-and-ten cashier.

These stories are carried by a tough, blues-based rock 'n' roll. Marc Reisman's huffing harmonica and Art Nardini's bruising bass reveal the band's past as a blues revival band. But Gil "Duke" Britt's lead guitar has the condensed charge of the Rolling Stones. The few covers the band still does run towards Chuck Berry, Sam Cooke and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Part of the band's blue collar pride is its refusal to turn its back on Pittsburgh, the ultimate blue collar town. They've refused to drop "Iron City" from their name; they've refused to move to New York or Los Angeles. "This town's been dying since the day I was born," Grushecky sings, "Shops all boarded up and houses lying in a ruin; We got our backs to the wall, got to find a way to win."

"People from Pittsburgh itself don't believe anyone from Pittsburgh can be any good," says Grushecky, shaking his head between sets. "They say, 'If he's from Pittsburgh, he must just be some dumb honky.'"

As a result, the town was dominated by bands who covered songs from New York and L.A. when the Houserockers formed in 1977. For a while they played old blues classics. "That was going nowhere," Grushecky notes, "it's all been done before and better by the black guys. We decided we wanted to be a modern band. We knew we could rock and we could roll — which are two different things — and I knew I could write songs. We figured if we stuck to it we were bound to get better."

Ironically they got their toehold in The Decade, a bar in Pittsburgh's college section. Eventually the blue collar bars caught on. "Some people think being a bar band has bad connotations," Grushecky remarks, "that it's just people grinding out other people's hits. But we've always played what we wanted to play. Plus you get immediate feedback in a bar. They're right there. We'll take the basic skeleton of a song and play it in bars for two weeks. After two weeks you have a pretty good idea whether the song works or not. If it works there, it's good enough for anyone.

"Pittsburgh is as blue collar a town as there is in the U.S. We've all put in time in shitty jobs; our fathers work in steel mills and coal mines. We live two blocks from the nearest steel mill. Even if we don't work there ourselves, it's all around us. That's the life we lead, so that's what we write about. Basically it's just the truth. If I wrote about California and someone who rode around in a Mercedes like the Eagles do, it would be false, I don't know anything about it.

"Our friends are working class; our parents are working class. The bars we play in are working class. After our first album came out, we got a lot of great reviews, but it didn't really go anywhere. We were back in Pittsburgh doing the same old thing in the same old bars. We were really frustrated, and it all came out in our second album. In a sense we were caught musically just as our friends were in their jobs."

The Iron City Houserockers constantly hear themselves compared to Bruce Springsteen, Southside Johnny and Graham Parker, but they insist it's a case of common backgrounds, not imitation. "We all grew up in the same kind of neighborhoods listening to the same records," argues Grushecky. "I didn't want the comparisons, but now it seems inevitable so I just decided not to be insulted and be flattered. If you're going to be compared, you might as well be compared to the best."

The comparisons are even tougher for Beaver Brown, who are often dismissed as "Springsteen clones." The

continued on pg. 106

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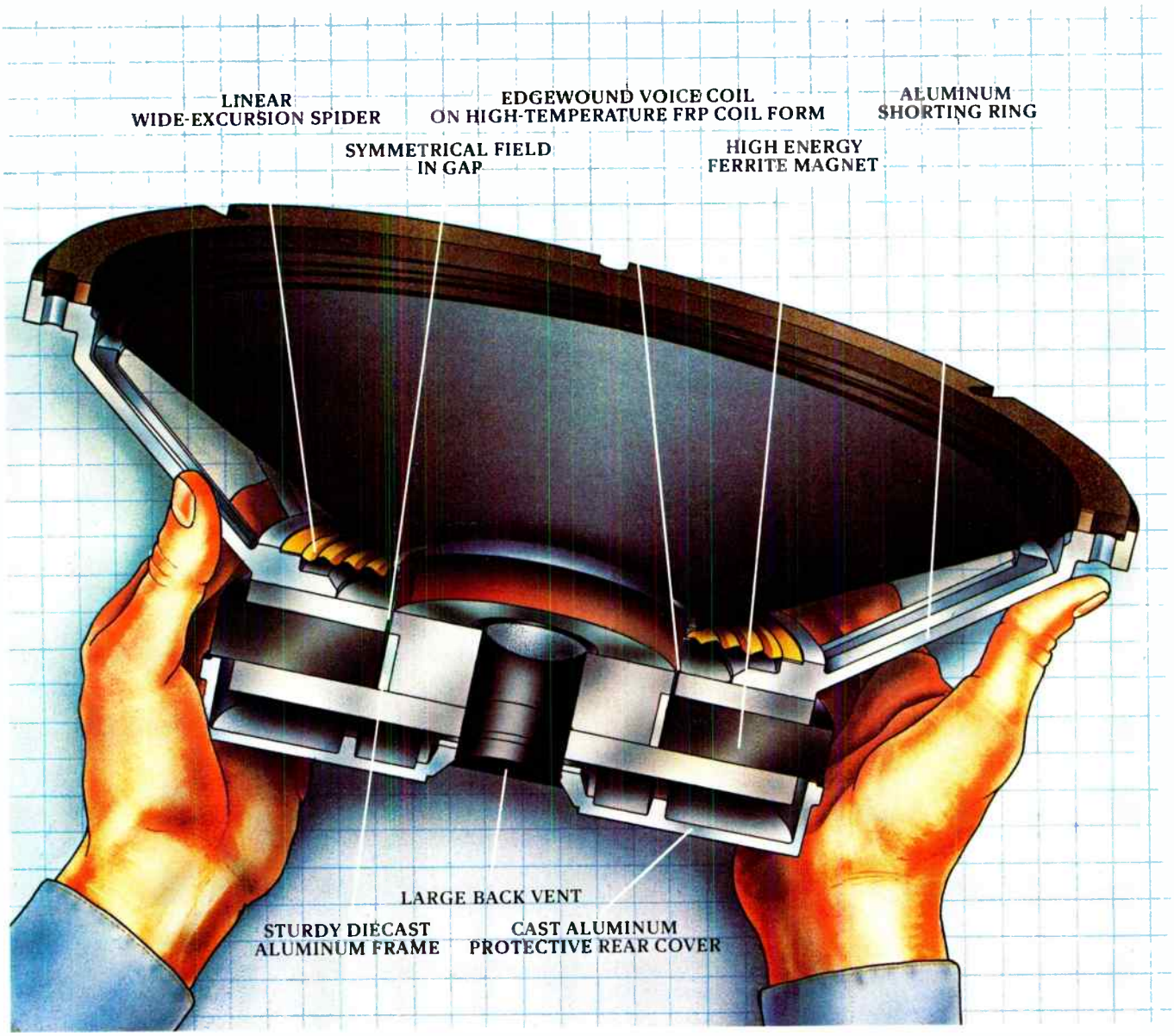

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FAHEY, KOTTKE AND BASHO: SOLO GUITARS

Country blues fanatic John Fahey unearthed and improved a lost American primitive art and passed it on to another generation of guitarists.

By Brian Cullman

At a recent performance in New York, John Fahey performed a brilliant set of unaccompanied guitar music, what he likes to call "American primitive guitar," encompassing the playings of Blind Willie Johnson, Mississippi John Hurt, Charley Patton, and Bukka White (among others), transforming the various styles into something wholly personal and engrossing. At the end of a particularly inspired guitar fantasy, he waited for the applause to finish and then slowly put the guitar down.

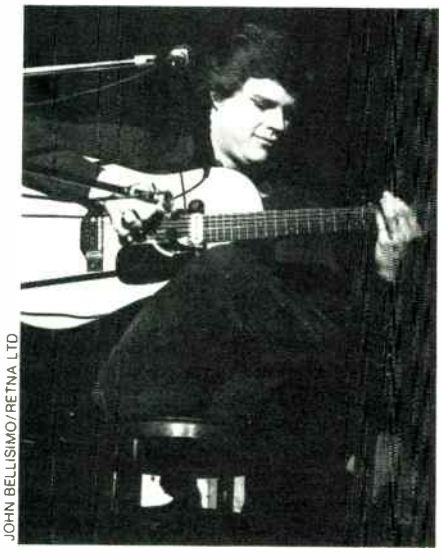
"Well," he said, "that's it." And then he continued to sit and look out at the audience, not at all expectantly or triumphantly. It was not the look of a man who had just performed an hour of transcendent music to a hushed crowd, but more the look of an airline stewardess who has just finished the obligatory explanation about placing the life vest over your head and not inflating it before leaving the aircraft.

The audience, a thoroughly professional and polished group of concertgoers, was confused, and slowly the confusion turned to embarrassment — at first to embarrassment for this man staring blankly down at them, and then to embarrassment for themselves, for this most awkward of concert situations. If he would only leave the stage, they could cheer him back for an encore. Or if he would thank them for their kindness or wave or bow or say goodnight with a self-deprecating shrug or smile, they could applaud him, whistle and clap until he played one more song. But he simply continued to sit, looking patient, if a bit bored, his hands on the knees of his baggy grey slacks. A number of inexperienced concertgoers on the far right hand side, over by the waitress station, began to applaud, but as no one else joined in, they quickly stopped, concealing their humiliation with totally unconvincing coughs and waves of the hand to nearby waitresses, intent on assuring themselves and those around them that they had actually just been trying to get their checks. The room deepened in silence.

"I don't know what you're waiting for," Fahey said. He reached into his pants pocket, produced a small comb, and began disinterestedly re-assembling the strands of hair on his balding forehead. Pocketing the comb, he removed his glasses and polished them on a shirt-tail that had worked its way loose during the performance. This was done quite a bit more lovingly, and when the glasses were thoroughly clean, he stood up, loosened his belt, and began to tuck in the protruding shirt-tails.

"Guess I'll go home," he said. "Maybe have a couple of drinks. See what's on TV." And picking up his guitar, he slouched offstage. Eventually the house lights came on, and the audience exited in silence.

Eccentric echoes of Blind Willie and Mississippi John Hurt: John Fahey, the scholar devotee, and Leo Kottke, recycler & popularizer of lost sense and sound.



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Fahey is, as they say, a little eccentric. More than anything, he seems to be a lost academic, a history or philosophy don who somehow stumbled into whatever club he happens to be appearing at under the misapprehension that it was actually a library or a lecture on psycholinguistics. He was, in fact, a philosophy and religious studies major at American University (where he first began to compose). He went on to get his M.A. at UCLA's Folklore & Mythology department, studying the roots of country blues and writing a monograph on blues legend Charley Patton (published in England by Studio Vista, Blue Star House, Highgate Hill, London N 19).

But his fanaticism and devotion to country blues started long before that. Back in Maryland, in his early teens, Fahey first heard the music of Blind Willie Johnson, and in particular heard a song of his called "Praise God I'm Satisfied."

"The song by Blind Willie kept coming back into my head," he told reporter Frank Macrino. "It sounded like the most beautiful thing I had ever heard. And I started to cry. So then I got interested in the blues and I learned to pick off old records, mostly black artists, and a few white players."

Fahey went off in search of the music, traveling all through Mississippi, Virginia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas, going from door-to-door in search of old blues records and finding stacks of rare and forgotten old 78s in people's attics and basements and garages. It was a thoroughly mythic quest: to track down the roots and the lost sense and sound of country blues and somehow transform it, somehow bring it back alive.

"Like Segovia, who used the guitar techniques of Spain to make arrangements of classical compositions by composers like Bach, I use the techniques of the United States and a few I think I invented myself to play my own songs." — John Fahey, 1971.

In 1959, between graduating from American University and attending UCLA, Fahey borrowed $300 from an Episcopal priest and recorded and pressed his first album, released on his own Takoma Records (named after his hometown, Takoma Park, Maryland). In the years since that first release, Fahey has recorded about twenty other

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records, all but a handful for Takoma. What's remarkable is how little his style and his approach have changed over the years. It hasn't expanded as much as it has simply deepened, grown more self-assured, more direct. His touch, his natural sense of phrasing, and his reliance on space and silence have always been remarkable, always set him apart. Over the years he's pared his playing down, simplifying it even further, avoiding the flashy or the technically astounding for simple, stately, and occasionally whimsical readings of original compositions, old blues songs, bits of Americana ("Bicycle Built for Two," "My Grandfather's Clock"), and a continuing preoccupation with Christian hymns (an album of Christmas carols, *The New Possibility*, remains my favorite).

His newest release, *Live In Tasmania*, is his first concert recording and, as the title suggests, was actually recorded live in Tasmania in response to some private whim.

"I've never been here before, and I don't know anyone else who has ever been here before," he tells a packed house of Tasmanians at Hobart University. "Tasmania is sort of like Timbuktu...Batravia. It has a terribly esoteric connotation in the States. And frankly, I'm a little disappointed. It doesn't seem very esoteric once you get here."

Disappointment aside, the same can be said of John Fahey. He doesn't seem very esoteric once you listen to him. For all his oddness and eccentricity, for all the peculiar titles he gives to his pieces ("The Approaching Of The Disco Void," "The Assassination of Stefan Grossman," "Revolt Of The Dyke Brigade"), his style is warm, direct and overwhelmingly natural, as if the particular notes and phrasings he uses had been sitting around since time immemorial waiting to be played that way.

Fahey not only released his own albums on Takoma, but used the label to record and promote the work of other young self-taught guitarists. Two of these, Leo Kottke and Robbie Basho, have continued their careers, recording for other labels with varying degrees of success. Kottke, in particular, has far outstripped John Fahey in sales and popularity, having recorded a dozen albums for major labels (Capitol and Chrysalis) and written and recorded music for films (most notably *Days Of Heaven*). A technically brilliant performer on six- and twelve-string guitars, he is a handsome, boyish-looking man and a far more extroverted performer than Fahey, interspersing guitar instrumentals with occasional vocals. Although he describes his voice as sounding like "geese farts on a muggy day," he actually has a pleasant if slightly monotonous baritone, something like Tennessee Ernie Ford with a head cold. It's well suited for the lullabies and folkish ballads he chooses for himself, and in at least one instance (a beautiful reworking of Buddy Holly's "Learning The Game") is completely convincing and haunting.

That said, he is also more of a popularizer of Fahey's work than he is an original. Where Fahey's roots lie deep in the ground, in the music and the pain of old country blues, Kottke's roots seem to lie in...well, in John Fahey, as well as in popular folk and pop and classical musics. His newest release, *Guitar Music*, is his first unaccompanied instrumental album since his Takoma record of a dozen years ago and shows that, like Fahey, his style has remained remarkably consistent...so much so that, lacking Fahey's depth, he makes owning more than two or, at most, three of his albums seem painfully redundant. Always tempted by flash and virtuosity over simplicity and restraint, he exercises more caution than usual here (especially on a beautiful bottleneck version of The Sons Of The Pioneers' classic "Tumbling Tumbleweeds"), but still leans heavily on the lush and the sentimental. He emasculates Santo & Johnny's chilling "Sleep Walk," keeping it light and pretty and never allowing the dark, almost nightmarish power of the original to surface. While his albums are never less than polished, professional, and beautiful, they rarely go beyond that, and he remains a gifted guitarist and interpreter with no particular focus.

For all of his failings, Robbie Basho is an original and occasionally inspired player. He's also one of the few artists who makes me truly grateful for the time limitations of record albums. Left to his own devices, with all the time in the world, he seems as if he might be per-

continued on pg. 94

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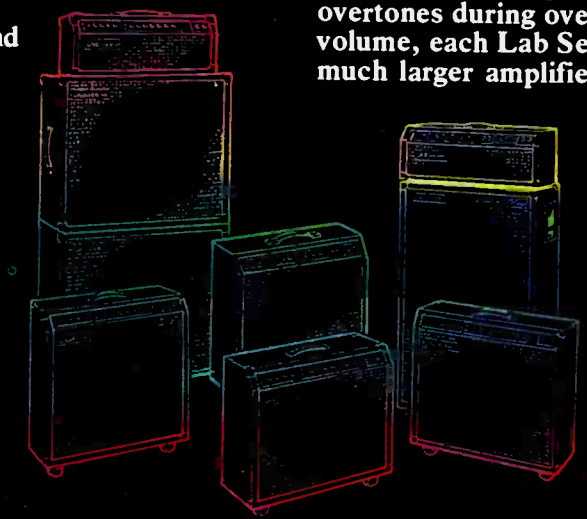

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touchable than that larger-than-life myth. This is a new generation of romantic rock fans who want their own heroes. And Willie Nile cares, in his own humble, unpretentious manner, away from the overblown media hoopla which could have destroyed him before his career was barely underway.

"I'm not trying to do anything that's particularly extraordinary," insists Willie. "I don't write for writers or television people or the Hollywood community."

Unfortunately, the songs on *Golden Down* suffer from just that. Willie's attempt to eschew specificity in favor of a more general, abstract approach, is precisely where Dylan and Springsteen made their own disappointing downswings as songwriters.

"I did that on purpose," insists Nile. "I can be specific to a fault. But I didn't want to. I wanted to be general, archetypal, open. I didn't want to burden it down. I wanted it to have that Zen feeling. I thought about that a lot before I recorded the album. I wanted it archetypal. I'm gonna send a copy to Jung's grave."

The album, complete with its Roy Bittan-like piano flourishes and Springsteenesque choruses, comes across like Nile wanted it to sound good (and get played) on AOR radio, though not in any sort of pre-meditated, calculated way, of course...

"I grew up listening to the radio," says Willie. "I grew up with songs. 'Shine Your Light' is polished, but it's like the Beatles songs I loved because they were so well put together. I like that."

On stage, Willie Nile's music does come to life. His supporting band, especially bassist Fred (ex-Television) Smith and drummer J.D. (ex-Patti Smith Group) Daugheerty, provide a solid framework for Nile's strong suit, melodies. There are hooks aplenty in Willie's songs, more than enough to enliven the hoariest cliche, and that's what good rock 'n' roll is all about, right?

"That's not *all* it's about," cautions Willie. "But that's part of it. Rock 'n' roll is not Haagen Daz ice cream; it's more like Sealtest. To make a lot out of it is a waste of time. Writers are killing any kind of innocence, joy or whatever is left in music, when they analyze it too much.

"I write songs. I like to play the piano. I like music. I'll come up with a riff and piece some music together. Then, put some words to it. And sing it. I'll sing my heart out. Maybe I'll even feel something, otherwise I'll just have fun. And I record some of the songs. How seriously can you take that?"

After the show, Willie's fans came to the classroom to thank him for playing their song. They were obviously taking Willie Nile as seriously as others once took Dylan and Springsteen.

"You're welcome," said Willie. And the kids knew he meant it. M

UP FROM CUBA: PAQUITO D'RIVERA

Abandoning his native country because of his love for "imperialist" jazz music, Paquito explores his personal marriage of Cuban and modern sounds.

By David Peterkin

"In Cuba, jazz is considered almost something like imperialist music. It sounds stupid and silly, but it is like that. The government calls it 'imperialist.' Here, it is not music for rich people. Many people here call jazz 'communist music.' It's incredible."

— Paquito D'Rivera, May 1981

DAVID GAHR

A machete chopping sugar cane: Paquito can take it inside with his tender Desmond-esque tone or outside with the freedom and daring of a Dolphy.

Paquito D'Rivera has a room with a view. From the apartment he shares with his parents in West New York, New Jersey, he looks across the Hudson River. Jabbing his finger toward the island which is his adopted music home, he riffs, "If you want to play Chinese music you go to China; if you want to be a jazz musician you have to come to this city." Aside from three Spanish/English dictionaries, the only English book in his room is Dizzy's autobiography, *To Be or Not To Bop*.

To get this close to the city, Paquito had to flee his native Cuba last year, leaving behind friends, his wife, his son. He also gave up his position as star saxophonist and co-leader of Irakere, Cuba's homegrown answer to Weather Report. Like Zawinul, Shorter & Co., Irakere was a truly syncretic unit; taking liberties with established formulas, combining aspects of American, European, jazz and Latin music to create a new sound for the New World.

Irakere and Paquito came to the attention of the American music world after 1977. In that year, during a thaw in U.S. and Cuban relations, the Jazz Cruise docked in Havana; on board were fans, record producers, critics and musicians such as Earl Hines, Stan Getz, David Amram and Dizzy Gillespie. Irakere's tight blend of rock, jazz and Afro-Cuban styles knocked them out, and led to a recording contract and rave reviews at the Newport and Montreux jazz festivals in 1978.

Their first U.S. album, *Irakere*, lived up to the reputation the band had made in Cuba. If Eddie Palmieri, Stanley Clark and Arthur Blythe ever form a coalition, the result might be an album like *Irakere*. Their second album, *Irakere 2*, was an unexpectedly blatant attempt to attract the disco audience and hardly reflected the talent involved. Still, this indiscretion did little to tarnish Irakere's reputation.

If Paquito doesn't immediately achieve equal stature as a solo artist, his new album on Columbia, *Paquito Blowin'*, shows he's on the way. His alto and soprano work are a revelation: like a machete chopping down sugar cane, Paquito undercuts his sweet, Desmond-esque tone with a willingness to take risks. In the middle of a solo on "Waltz For Moe" the bottom drops out and Paquito reveals he's a descendant of Eric Dolphy — he takes the tune outside without losing his tenderness. Paquito plays the hottest alto I've heard since Arthur Blythe, and like Black Arthur, Paquito moves between modern and traditional idioms with ease.

Since coming to New York on October 24th, 1980, Paquito has played with a number of exceptional musicians: David Amram, McCoy Tyner, Chico Freeman, Hubert Laws, Hilton Ruiz and in Dizzy Gillespie's Dream Band at Avery Fisher Hall. "I love the Dizzy music and feeling — his personality — a warm person and a nice guy. Now my dream comes true."

Gillespie's interest in blending Afro-Cuban music is well known. Paquito is tied to Dizzy by events that predate the young Cuban's birth. Not long after I arrived the D'Rivera's had another visitor. Mario Bauza, at 70 a legendary Cuban musician and a long-time friend of Paquito's father. Seated at the D'Rivera dinner table, drinking Cuban coffee and smoking a cigar, Bauza, who Dizzy calls Padre, pounds the table with his palm, explaining that jazz and modern Cuban music were greatly influenced by each other. He shouts. "They share common African roots. It's the same tree. The same tree but different leaves. Jazz was always popular in Cuba."

After coming to New York in 1930, Bauza played sax with Noble Sissle, and trumpet with Chic Webb, Don Redman, Fletcher Henderson and Cab Calloway. Later he was the director of Machito's Afro-Cubans for 40 years Dizzy became intrigued with Afro-Cuban music while working with Bauza in Calloway's trumpet section. Bauza's influence on Dizzy was tremendous, and in 1947, Bauza introduced him to percussionist/composer Chano Pozo. Dizzy's brief relationship with Chano (Pozo was shot to death in a bar in Harlem the next year) resulted in the first Cubop, a fusion of bebop and Afro-Cuban music. Thirty years later Paquito fused jazz-rock to Afro-Cuban rhythms and changed both cultures again. As completion of a circle, Paquito went to Montreal the week after our conversation and played behind Cab Calloway.

At the age of five Paquito began studying the saxophone with his father, a respected classical tenor saxophone player and arranger, who was an agent of the Selmer Company in Havana. Paquito's first instrument was a curved Selmer soprano, picked because it was small enough for him to handle. Twenty-eight years later Paquito still plays the curved horn. Paquito describes his

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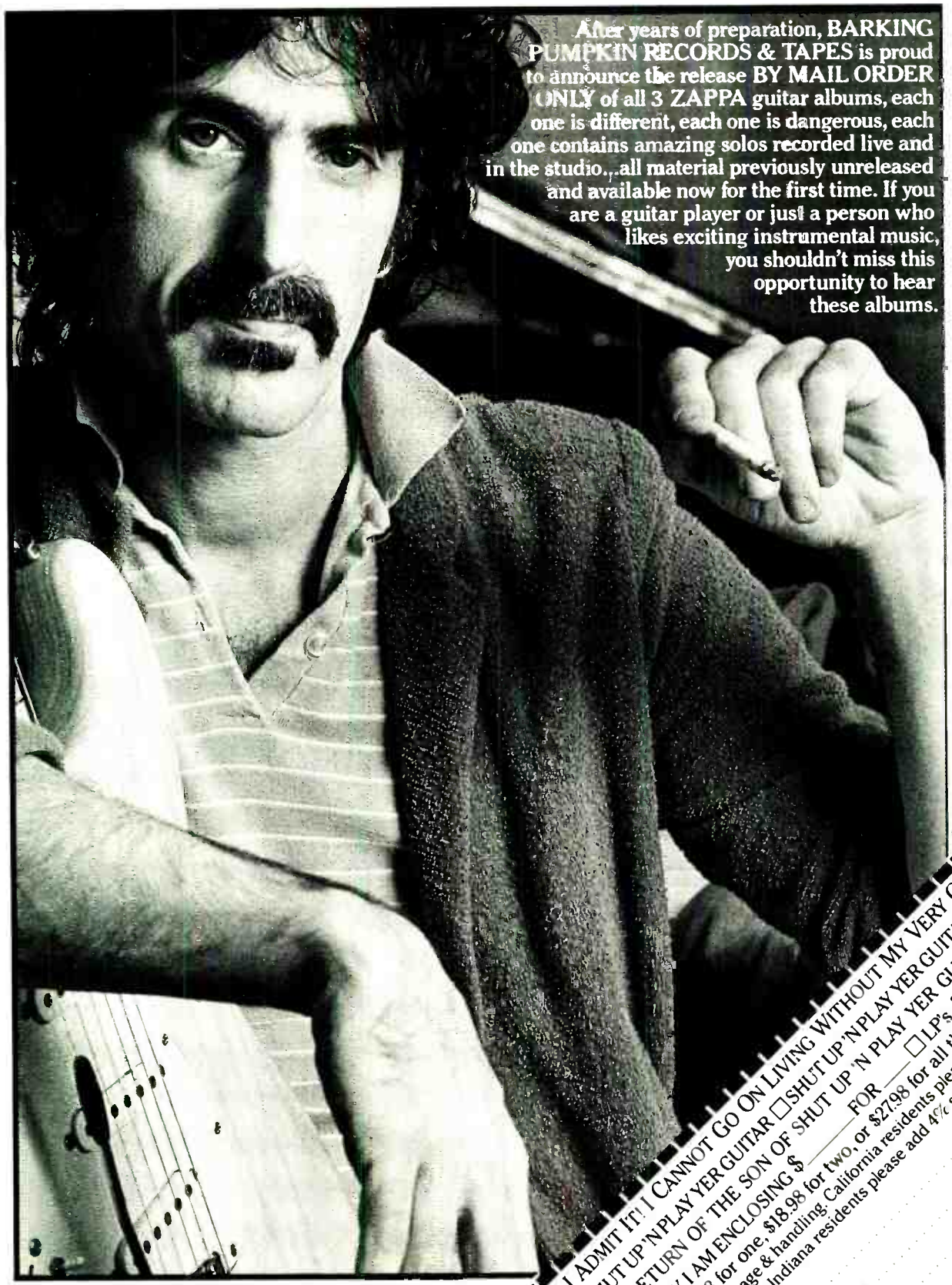

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FACES

SPANDAU BALLET

JOE ELY

Since his recent notices have offered us a new-and-improved Joe Ely, I have to begin by swearing on a stack of ticket stubs: I've been an Ely fan since well before the Clash made him an honorary Sandinista. Now that this West Texan boy has been lionized in England, taken lessons in stagecraft from Joe Strummer, traded his pedal steel player for a sax man, and generally rocked up the whole package, I must admit I liked him better in my heart when the armadillo shit was fresher on his boots.

The most impressive thing about Ely's show at the Bottom Line was its energy. Somebody seems to have fitted him with pistons under each heel. He leaves the mike chest-high in its stand and bends to it, creating an effect of a bull mastiff on a leash dragging the band behind him. This effect is true to the spirit of his current LP, *Must Notta Gotta Lotta*, and Joe boldly commenced his set with four straight tunes from that album. "Hard Livin'," the opener, is a good precis of Ely's most appealing gifts — part of the song is hard rockabilly singing over a train whistle guitar, part is the kind of crooning that smacks of big redneck barrooms like Gilley's.

He followed with Roy Brown's "Good Rockin' Tonight," a number I've previously seen covered by Elvis Presley (Win) and Bruce Springsteen (Place). Joe's band, essentially the same unit as on the album, packed considerable wallop but left most of the body English to their leader. Perhaps their most impressive work came on Jimmie Gilmore's expansive "Dallas," with bassist Michael Robberson, accordionist Ponty Bone and sax player Smokey Joe Miller taking turns getting hot, then stepping back. The breaks didn't seem stagey in the context of the song, which wraps a string of cliches into some effectively bittersweet poesy ("Dallas is a jungle/But Dallas gives a beautiful light").

After pounding deftly through "I Keep Gettin' Paid the Same," they jammed aggressively on back-to-back covers of "Not Fade Away" and "Matchbox," with Joe inciting the audience to hiss like snakes. The set's frenetic pace made the entire event seem less like a romp than a race: you got the idea that Joe and band were thinking they could take on anybody if they could just get through this early show fast and mean. A couple of Ely's signature tunes — "Standin' At A Big Hotel" and "Fingernails" were not quite sufficient sop to this veteran fan. Those who showed up for the later show apparently were treated to ballads like "West Texas Waltz" and "Honky Tonk Masquerade" — stuff that carries a poignancy well suited to Ely's warm singing. He can move down the fast lane better than most; my only carp is that I left that night before Ely's good sense told him to ease up. I think he knows he'll go farther that way. — *Fred Schruers*

JOE ELY

CHARLYN ZLOTNIK

SPANDAU BALLET

It's called the "new romanticism," and it is to England '81 what Two-Tone ska was to England '80; that is, the year's musical craze. Like the punk movement in 1977, the new romanticism began with a few trendsetters, the Blitz kids, named for the trendy London nightspot that started it all. To enter Blitz, one had to dress up. What was played on stage ran a poor second to the real show: each member of the audience trying to dress more outrageously than the next. Seized by the voracious British media and backed with rag trade money, within no time the Blitz kids had spawned their own bands and their own sound, a cross between the romantic desperation of early Roxy Music and the synthesized four-on-the-floor of Eurodisco.

The most commercially successful purveyor of the new romanticism is Spandau Ballet, which thus far has notched three British top ten singles off their debut LP, *Journeys to Glory*.

What exactly is the attitude of the new romantics? Producer Richard Burgess, who flew into New York along with the coterie of fashion designers, hairdressers, and trendsetters who accompanied Spandau Ballet for a single New York appearance and press conference, says that, as with punk, boredom with the prevailing musical climate provided the impetus for the new romantics. "Only this time the reaction was against the negativism of punk and the boredom of going to see a band in general. This was a positive thing, with the kids in the audience providing their own show, with the music there for dancing, but not as the main event of the evening."

Spandau Ballet grew directly out of the Blitz scene, learning to play as they went along, appearing only rarely at unannounced locations, relying on word-of-mouth to provide the audience. Up to this time they have never toured and have played less than 20 shows altogether, yet their New York show (as the first live group to play at a new fashion-oriented night spot, the Underground) revealed far more musical depth and warmth than might have been expected after hearing their album. While basically relying on repeated riffs and the heavy discoized drumbeat (played on a totally synthesized drum kit invented by Burgess and marketed by Simmons, which features touch-sensitive response) Spandau made the most out of both its technology and instruments and at their best were compelling in a manner reminiscent of, again, Roxy Music, although singer Tony Hadley will never match Bryan Ferry in either voice or personality.

Despite the futuristic setting in which the whole movement has been couched, the new romantics with their emphasis on fashion are a throwback to original English mod movement. Then, too, the accent was on the look, the beat American black, and the predominant feeling the kind of disillusionment that breeds narcissism as an answer to the threatening world outside. — *Dave Schulps*

RAPPER'S CONVENTION

Rap has arrived, and this show was going to prove it. The 369th Armory, at 142nd Street in Harlem, holds maybe 15,000 people, and it looked more than half full for a bill with all the rap acts on Sugar Hill Records — the Sugar Hill Gang, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, the Funky Four Plus One, Sequence, Spoonie Gee — and various DJs and rival-label acts, many

D.O.A.

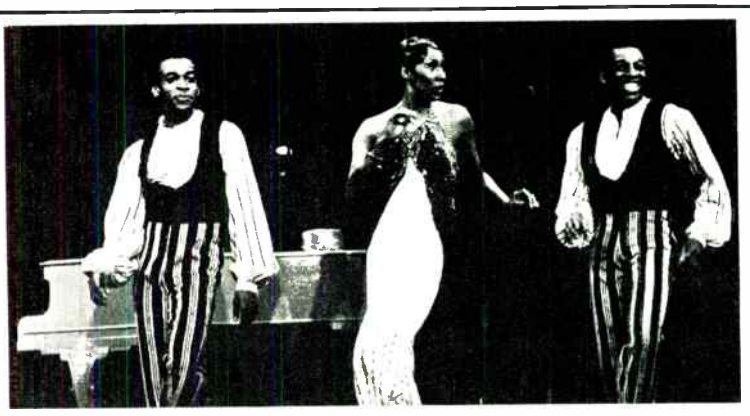
Assholes and ass-kissers, scenemakers and leeches populate Lech Kowalski's *D.O.A.—A Right of Passage*, a cinematic view-from-the-pogo-floor of punk on parade during the Sex Pistols' 1978 American tour. To Kowalski, the snarls and sputterings on stage are nothing compared to the real anarchy of an audience going self-consciously wild for the latest countercultural trend — aping its styles, contorting its intent. Ultimately, the movie is less about punk than the desperate need for some to associate themselves with cultural outlets such as punk; less about rebellion than the horror of hip.

Concert footage of the Pistols' seven-city southern U.S. tour are interspersed with performance clips of Generation X, the Dead Boys, Sham 69 and others; back-stage interviews with groupies, bouncers, and a very sorry Sid (wearing a swastika T-shirt and nodding out) are balanced with the observations of British and American public officials, concert promoters and young toughs as to what punk exactly means. What it seems to mean, on both sides of the Atlantic, is self-pity masked by style.

The film views Terry, a typical London working-class bloke-on-the-dole, channel his much-treasured disgruntlement at a British society that provides him with neither job nor future into playing punk music with his own band, Terry and the Idiots. Kowalski appears sympathetic until he takes us to the big gig at a local pub: the Idiots can't play their instruments and Terry, for all his talk about punk giving rise to free expression, thrashes about the stage in mock-Rotten fashion singing Pistols-derived tunes. Punk is reduced to parody and all that young English moxie rendered studied pose.

The scenes of the American audiences are simply embarrassing. Bearded hippies with pony-tails knock about the dance floor, a half dozen safety pins newly pierced through each nostril. A thousand with-it dudes wear a thousand different styles of sunglasses — none of them right. At the Pistols' final show, in San Francisco, the camera pans the stage from the rear revealing a virtual windstorm of objects flying by. Rotten is the calm spot at its middle — arms folded, looking very much detached. It's as if the chaos on the floor had nothing to do with his original vision; as if the decision to jettison a debauched punk was already clear.

The performances in *D.O.A.* are sloppy but raw — evidence that something of substance existed at the movement's core. But it is trampled by the crowds that flocked to form its outer ranks. Strong words get lost in the foam about the mouth. Revolution loses out to the weird. — *Barry Jacobs*



SOPHISTICATED LADIES

Duke Ellington's first two Broadway musicals were unmitigated disasters. "Beggar's Holiday" went begging after 111 performances in 1946, and "Jump For Joy" withered during its Los Angeles preview five years earlier. "Sophisticated Ladies," a lavish, tony celebration of Ellingtonia, is the Great White Way's latest paean to a Respected Dead Black Jazz Legend. (Eubie Blake, bless him, just refuses to kick.) And while the show isn't bad enough to make Duke turn in his grave, it sure ain't *bad* enough to send him tap dancin' on top of it.

Glitz and glitter, leaps and bounds, endless undifferentiated energy: the 17 performers rip through 36 tunes without pacing or focus. "Sophisticated Ladies" *sprawls* over its two hours, as if three directors and choreographers took a crack at it. Three did. The resulting high-gloss muddle pushes the essence of Ellington behind its elaborate trappings: a neon "Cotton Club" sign flashes, though no attempt is made to reproduce the club's ambience; a first-rate band, the show's most powerful weapon — orchestrated by Al Cohn, directed by Mercer Ellington — sits right on stage, but gets little opportunity to meet the singers and dancers head on; and the relentlessly showy dancing works for effect, not understanding.

Judith Jamison, the Alvin Ailey star dancer and the show's symbol of, you got it, "sophistication," is a fish out of water. As a singer and actress, she proves to be a marvelous dancer. And even her dancing — her whole stage persona — is a bit too royal, too puffy. Jamison's malaise points up the central problem of the show: almost everyone tries to match Ellington's grandness on their own terms, rather than to *complement* it. It's the latter task that should be the true work of an Ellington revue — after all, who's going to outdo Duke — but his music and his world isn't serviced with nearly as much class and understatement as Fats Waller's is in "Ain't Misbehavin'."

But every "hit" show has its savior, and this one has Gregory Hines. Fired (then re-hired) during the show's interminable and troubled previews in D.C., Hines cuts through its overproduced aura with an honesty and heart lacking elsewhere. Integrating song and dance and music, he stands on Duke's shoulders — and above the rest of the cast. Hines is always making music, even when he's dancing. His is an art of *interpretation*, not pizzazz; the stiletto instead of the sledgehammer. It's through him we hear Duke's voice and laughter, see his romance, feel the weight of his seriousness. Hines is a pure soloist, a Johnny Hodges, a Ben Webster, trapped in a night of reckless extravagance. — *Scott Lazarus*

billed as "invited guests" (which apparently meant that they had been sent invitations, nothing more). ABC's *20/20* had sent a crew; the music press had been notified. Another New York phenom was making its bid to go national.

But will it? I'm not so sure. Rapping, or jive-talking over instrumental tracks (often from established hits), rarely works the way pop lyrics do. Most rapping, particularly group rapping, works like drum solos: connoisseurs dig the syncopation and the surprises. Since rappers often use pre-recorded tracks from records, it's difficult to build any drama or tension, although the newest bunch of rappers are becoming turntable virtuosi. And, of course, some rappers hedge their bets by trying to sing, a move that's invariably disastrous.

I arrived after the Mean Machine had rapped in English and Spanish; by the time I'd adjusted to the Armory's echoes, Wayne and Charlie the Rappin' Dummy were taking their bows. After a while the Treacherous Three came on, rap-singing their own lyrics to "I Want You Back" while their DJ spun the Jackson 5's instrumental intro over and over. The Three did all the standard rap shtick — boasting about themselves, introducing each other again and again, invoking the "party" spirit — plus choreography and forced smiles. Unfortunately, they didn't have any script to cover technical difficulties. Except for a triple-time, paradiddling break that roused the crowd, the response was indifferent until the Three did their hit, "Feel the Heartbeat."

The Funky Four Plus One's set was tighter — no technical difficulties, more confident choreography, more interesting vocal syncopations. It helped that they had a center of attention: the flounce-dressed but no-nonsense Plus One, Ms. Sharrock, who calmly turned her back on the audience between breaks. What the Four Plus One had to say was basically the same as the Three, but they had more panache. And their "That's The Joint" was not only the drug of choice, but the slogan of the year.

GRANDMASTER FLASH

I should've guessed Sequence was faking it when the crew started setting up a live band. Sequence, three pudgy women in (yes) cheerleader outfits, turned out to be a girl group — singing group — trying to latch onto a current trend; they rapped a little and, unfortunately, sang a lot. After the lickety-split rapping, their soul ballads seemed almost glacially slow, and their flat high notes would have been grueling in any case.

But Sequence never got to finish their set. All of a sudden, people in the front of the Armory started running for the back; within a few seconds, up to a quarter of the crowd was gone. There was a thud; a hot-dog cart had been overturned. Sequence left the stage, and the houselights came on as a few people filtered back in. Suddenly, more people began to run for the back. When the third wave headed for the exits, I was in it. Reportedly, someone had been waving a gun. — *Jon Parales*

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TASCAM CREATIVE SERIES

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Number One With a Bullet

By Bill Flanagan

Often, small men with a large sense of duty are used by giants to accomplish tasks they may not fully comprehend. But duty can serve more than one master.

LOU CARBONE

All I've ever done is what I was supposed to do. You don't have to like me, or even respect me, but give me that much at least.I gave up my band for college. I gave up my freedom for marriage. I gave up half my earnings for alimony. To be a top executive in an important record company at my age is no small accomplishment, my friend. Whatever you think of me personally, you must admit I've done what I was supposed to do.

When show biz legend Mort Parnel asked me to leave Warners and become his Vice President for Talent Acquisition, my life bloomed. In five years Parnel had built Orpheus Records from a speculation venture to a company that, in 1980, was the sixth most charted label in *Billboard*. Our success came, (aside from the soundtrack albums) from Mort's talent raids on other labels' artists. This practice has not endeared Mort to our competitors, but the success it brought us certainly earned their envy.

So when Mort asked me to shoot James Becket, one of our artists, I'd like to think I agreed out of a personal belief in his vision.

Signing Becket to Orpheus had been my greatest coup. Mort told me to do whatever it took to get him and I got him. I had to mortgage half the company to meet his advance, but I got him. Now, perhaps you are not a music industry insider. Perhaps you don't appreciate the significance of landing that contract. Let me make it simple.

Rock and roll legend James Becket, with over a decade of super-stardom behind him, was more than a monster seller. He was a prestige act. His presence would attract other top artists to our label. Even more significant was Becket's deal with his old record company. When he re-signed with them, years ago, he got a provision saying that two years after he went to a new company, all his old records would be transferred to the new label. In other words, we not only got Becket; in 1983 we'd pick up his whole catalog. And all fifteen of those old albums were still selling.

So there was much excitement in our corporate halls when I closed the Becket deal. Mort gave me a drink in his office.

The first time I met with Becket he asked me, "Do you strive for the sky or cling to the earth?" I could see he was taking his measure of me (you don't move 30 million records by being an air-head, my friend), so I thought fast and answered, "I'll go anywhere if I get an expense account."

Becket betrayed no emotion, but I was sure I had impressed him.

My initial impression of J.B. was that he was startlingly small and frail. His pointed features were delicate, like a woman's, and his untamed ringlets of brown hair had never been fenced by combs. He was dressed in a black shirt, baggy khaki pants and work shoes. I offered him an expensive silk baseball jacket with "Orpheus" embroidered across the back and a little record stitched over the heart. (I wore one just like it.)

Becket accepted the jacket without expression and, when we walked out on the street, handed it to a beggar. I said nothing. I figured he was trying to impress me with his generosity.

The deal we finally struck was unusual. Becket would have no minimum product requirement, but Orpheus would get his next 20 albums as they were recorded. Each album would earn Becket $750,000. He retained his own publishing and commanded a high royalty rate.

Now came the sticky part. Becket was not proud of some of his early records

and wanted the masters returned to him. I finally agreed that once his catalog was transferred to Orpheus, he would get back one of his old albums — in sequence — as each new one was delivered. There was some trepidation in the company about this unprecedented arrangement, but I argued this: "Becket's oldest albums are his weakest sellers, anyway. It is much more important to have his new product. Also, he records so slowly we'll lose maybe one catalog LP every two years. Meanwhile, we'll own the old albums, and it might actually boost their sales if people realize that the discs are going to be slowly disappearing. Each time Becket has a new release, there'll be a rush on the oldest album as it becomes an instant collector's item."

Some of my colleagues still thought it was a bad precedent, but they shut up when Mort came over, put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Yeats has done a lot of work on this. I say we run with it."

I was coming back from an appointment with my barber when the receptionist yelled, "James Becket called! He's sending over a cassette of his new LP!"

A new record already? He hadn't let on! This was wonderful! I called everyone in the executive suite and blurted the good news. Mort Parnel came into my office and sat on my desk.

"Yeats," he said, "you're my right arm."

There were twenty of us — vice presidents, publicists, A&R men, East Coast Artist Development Directors — waiting on the inside of the double doors when the receptionist buzzed through the carrier. Strangely, Becket had not sent the tape by registered messenger. Rather, it arrived in the possession of a dirty-faced little Oriental delivery boy. The child was shocked when he walked into the plush reception lounge and twenty well-dressed strangers lunged at him. But we gave the kid a healthy tip, some promos, and as he left I noticed he was wearing a silk "Orpheus" jacket.

A secretary began to open the package but Mort raised his hand. Everyone stopped moving as he took the parcel from her and handed it to me.

"I think Yeats should open this."

I tore off the wrapper and slid the tape into a cassette player. Silence reigned.

"WOOOOOOO! What's that sign I see shinin' in the sky?"

It was the unmistakable voice of James Becket. Excitement ripped through the room. The song, a two chord acoustic guitar and vocal arrangement, lasted twelve minutes.

"Who's that man with the white beard in the clouds?" Becket sang. "What was that old Bible talkin' about? WOOOOO! What's that sign I see shinin' in the sky?"

When the song was over no one spoke.

Finally someone said, "Wow." Everyone agreed.

"Is that it?"

"That's all for side one."

I turned the tape over and clicked it on. "I guess the more radio-oriented stuff is on side two," I suggested.

The acoustic guitar came banging in again.

"WOOOO! Horses and cows, lambs and lions together/Dogs and cats, foxes and rats together/Someday soon we're *all* gonna be together."

This song lasted only five minutes. It listed all sorts of disparate species who would be united in the millennium.

There were two more tunes, one of which included a piano. Neither was a possible single.

No one knew what to say.

"Sounds like Becket's really getting back to his roots."

"Yes," joined in a publicist. "He's regarding his partnership with Orpheus Records as a creative rebirth and his new album represents some of the purest, most honest music James Becket has ever created. It's Becket as nature intended."

"It'll never get programmed," muttered an A&R man.

Mort Parnel said nothing. He went into his office and closed the door.

The next four weeks were the worst in my life. *Sign In the Sky* shipped platinum. It returned platinum. The critics hated it, the radio programmers hated it, and Becket's fans hated it. Becket gave a series of concerts at which he appeared unaccompanied and refused to sing any of his hits. He said he was born again and fervently devoted to his new vision. He told the audience at one concert, "You people may think you have the answers, but all you really have are empty balloons. One day the floor beneath you is gonna let go and all those empty balloons won't support you for one second. When my floor lets go I know I have my personal savior standing in the basement, holding a trampoline."

I sat in my 43rd floor office, imagining sailing out of the window. The telephone rang and I was summoned to Mort's suite.

Mort was sunk low in his chair.

"Do you know what these are?" he asked, sweeping his hand across a pile of papers. "These are return invoices for James Becket albums. Look at New York distribution alone: Korvettes returned 80 per cent. King Karol returned 92 per cent. Sam Goody returned 120 per cent!"

Mort pulled out a leather satchel and dumped a thick box on his blotter. "Can you imagine what's in *this*?" he glared. I shook my head.

"This is the newly delivered master of James Becket's *next* album!"

I gasped.

"It's *worse*! It's 32 minutes of him singing *covers* of Mahalia Jackson songs!"

I felt my heart crawling out of my chest.

"And do you know what our lawyers discovered?"

I felt my heart moving into my throat.

"WE DON'T HAVE RIGHT OF REFUSAL! YOU ELIMINATED THE STANDARD DISCRETIONARY CLAUSE FROM BECKET'S CONTRACT!"

I was ready to vomit, heart and all. "Mort," I stuttered. "We don't *have* to put it out."

"NO!" he bellowed. "WE DON'T *HAVE* TO PUT IT OUT! BUT WE DO HAVE TO GIVE HIM THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION DOLLARS FOR DELIVERING IT!! HOW COULD YOU AGREE TO SUCH A DEAL?!"

"He insisted," I moaned.

"He insisted! He insisted! Suppose he'd insisted you get down on your knees and..." The phone rang. Mort grabbed it. "WHAT?" Mort's hue faded from crimson to white in thirty seconds.

Mort sank into his chair. "Another Becket album just arrived. He's going to choke us with product. He's going to kill us."

Mort flopped forward and lay across his desk on his face and belly, breathing in fitful gasps. Only the drumming of his fingers assured me he was not stricken.

When he spoke, his eyes were wet and distant though his voice was strong.

"Yeats," he said, "If this goes on, your career — the whole life you've built for yourself — is over." He paused. "If this goes on, I — and this company and all the people who work for this company and the families of those people — are ruined."

Mort looked up and his face took on a resolute vitality. "But it doesn't *have* to be. Thinking sharply, working quickly, we could avert catastrophe."

I stared blankly. How could I influence Becket? How do you bribe a millionaire? How do you argue with God?

"Think," Mort suggested. I tried. "If a murderer were threatening your home, your family, how would you react?"

"I'd call the police," I mumbled.

"There are no police. What do you do?"

"I'd run away," I guessed.

"There's nowhere to run," he shot back.

"I don't know, Mort! I'd fight. I'd try to defend them. I guess I'd get killed."

"Not necessarily!" he cried. "What if you could kill the murderer first?"

"What are you saying, Mort?"

"I'm saying that this company is your home! These employees are your family! And a killer is coming through the night intending to destroy us all!"

"Well, I can't kill James Becket."

"Why not? Isn't he out to kill you? He's intent on murdering your reputation and that's as good as putting a gun to your head!"

continued on pg.62

MARK MANDER

DAVID LINDLEY

The kaleidoscopic Renaissance man deserts his niche in the accompanists hall of fame and stirs ska, chunk, bluebeat and the attack of the insect guitars into Topanga reggae.

By Dan Forte

"David, you gotta see this guitar I just bought! It's this Italian red metal-fleck job called a Diamond Ranger, with a white mother-of-jack-knife fingerboard, three pickups, and more buttons than a Vegematic." That's how conversations between myself and David Lindley usually start off. I tell him about the latest addition to my small but growing collection of mutant guitars, knowing full well that no matter how bizarre, how uncollectible my find, Lindley probably unearthed something twice as strange the day before.

"How much did you pay for it?" he asks.

"Seventy-five bucks. With a cardboard case."

Pause. "You son of a bitch... Well, I just acquired one you'd like. A red Teisco six-string bass. With a wiggle bar."

I first met David Lindley about four years ago, when I owned one electric guitar. I had an old Gibson Les Paul, which I viewed as the ultimate rock 'n' roll machine. Some time between then and now my aesthetic changed a bit, and David Lindley is to be thanked or blamed for that — depending on how one feels about guitars that sound like car horns.

That's the sort of effect Lindley can have on people, especially musicians, and in particular guitar players. Jackson Browne, who's been exposed to Lindley more than anyone, caught the "disease," as David calls it, early on. "After listening to David play on these Nationals, Danelectros and Silvertones," Browne says, "I came to the same conclusion that he apparently had. Now I've got three Hawaiian slide guitars, and I can't tell you how many of these ugly things — two Supros, about three or four Danelectros. I even have two violins."

As his extraordinary versatility as a multi-instrumental-

ist/multi-stylist in rock 'n' roll suggests, David Lindley is, in Jackson Browne's words, "really a Renaissance man. There are many things that he does well besides playing the guitar. He can draw really well, he's a fine painter, and I'm sure someday he'll be an excellent instrument maker. He's influenced major decisions in my life, not because I've consulted him, but by his example. He's also one of the funniest guys I've ever met."

Linda Ronstadt agrees: "To sit down and talk to David is to enrich your life. He just understands the basic idea of music or art or anything you want to talk about. He just understands it, in its most rudimentary form. He's one of those guys that everyone would like to have cloned."

In four years I've had the privilege of having several enriching conversations with David Lindley. He is the sort of person you have to pay attention to at all times, because almost everything that comes out of his mouth is either informative, insightful, or incredibly funny. Four years ago he told me about a Jamaican vocal group called the Pioneers who recorded a reggae version of "Bye Bye Love." An unlikely combination, it would seem, but one of the most beautiful records I've ever heard. Four years later Lindley's own reggae arrangement of the song appears on his debut solo album, *El Rayo-X*.

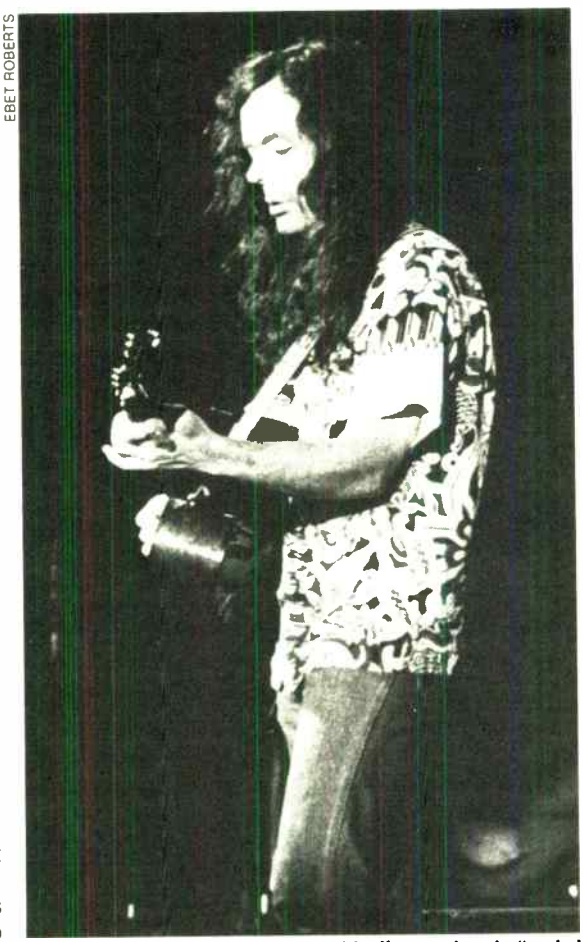
Lindley's "debut" came after some 15 years on the road and in the studio backing such notables as Browne, Rondstadt, James Taylor, David Crosby and Graham Nash, Terry Reid, Warren Zevon, Rod Stewart, and Ry Cooder. Why did Lindley wait until now to release an album under his own name? "These things take time," he says with a half-smile. "I also wanted to get a record deal where I wouldn't have to compromise on stuff. I couldn't have engineered it better if I'd maneuvered and manipulated all over the place."

David's patience definitely seems to have paid off. If anything, the LP surpasses the public's and industry's high expectations, and the album has met with instant unabashed acclaim. When word leaked out that Jackson Browne and Greg Ladanyi were producing the project, no one knew exactly what to expect. Something special, no doubt, but exactly what Lindley would sound like on his own, what direction he would choose to follow, was anybody's guess. Lindley only promised that the LP would "surprise everybody," and that it did.

Although most of his recent notoriety has come from playing country-flavored rock with L.A.'s "mellow mafia," Lindley's solo work is primarily R&B channeled through what he calls his "Topanga Canyon reggae." Actually, R&B was one of David's earliest influences, predating even his folk music career that began in the early sixties. "I had a pre-folk music rock'n'roll period," he states, "but I kind of filed that away for a long time. When that Kingston Trio/coffee house/folk singer/Bud & Travis scene came along, I got into folk music and bluegrass. I used to go down to the beach and 'play beatnik.' During that period the Chambers Brothers were about the only electric music I really liked, because I was into acoustic *everything*. But I used to go to dances and hear that Don & Dewey, El Monte Legion Stadium kind of stuff. Sam the Sham & the Pharoahs, Little Julian Herrera & the Tigers, Thee Midnighters. What incredible bands those were — and nobody ever heard them."

With the folk music boom of the early sixties, Lindley switched from flamenco guitar, which he took up at 14, to banjo and began studying bluegrass and old-timey music. He played with the Mad Mountain Ramblers and the Scat Band (with violinist Richard Greene) and appeared on several five-string banjo anthologies. He won the Topanga Canyon Banjo Contest five years running, beginning when he was 18, before the contest officials respectfully asked him to judge rather than compete.

In the mid-sixties Lindley decided to go electric, and with a strange assortment of players and instruments formed Kaleidoscope, a mainstay on the Fillmore/Avalon Ballroom circuit. The basic idea of the band was to play a little bit of just about every style of music on the planet, and also to meld different styles together in weird combinations. They were originally called the Baghdad Blues Band, which pretty much explains the group's objective. Sometimes the experiments were more successful than other times, but they were obviously a decade or two ahead of their time. Lindley, who played guitar, fiddle, mandolin, harp/guitar, banjo, and various exotic stringed instruments in the group, actually organized the band, although the "front men" were singers Solomon Feldthouse and Chris Darrow (whose sister David later married).



EBET ROBERTS

Baghdad blues, Cajun in Japan: Lindley aspires to "weird combinations" of every style on the planet.

After four albums, which were inconsistent musically and about as uncommercial as one might expect, Kaleidoscope broke up, and Lindley moved to England where he played in Terry Reid's band for two years. It was there that he first hooked up with Jackson Browne, and the two have played together for close to ten years now. With Browne, Lindley developed his trademark lap steel guitar style and sustained, distorted sound. He was inspired to take up the instrument after seeing Freddie Roulette play one with Charlie Musselwhite's blues band in the late sixties, and he and Roulette later played together in Reid's band. "Freddie's steel guitar is truly *the* psychedelic instrument," declares Lindley. "He's one of my favorite musicians."

When Jackson and David first started playing together, Lindley points out, "We thought of it as 'our band' — because when we originally got together it was going to be my band, with Jackson writing songs and playing guitar. As it turned out, I saw what was happening; I could see that Jackson was going to be huge. And when something becomes the real focal point, you don't try and go, 'Me too, me too!' That's really distasteful, and it really detracts from the main thing — which in Jackson's case is the words to the songs. So that role became real easy. I liked that position, because I wasn't really out in front — but I was, in a way, by being back there."

During his tenure with Browne — with diversions along the way to play with Ronstadt, Taylor, Crosby, Nash, Cooder and others — Lindley mastered the art of accompaniment to a greater extent than any rock 'n' roller before or since. "The

demands as an accompanist with those people," he feels, "are as different as the people themselves sound and the way they write. Even within their respective repertoires, there's a lot of diversity. You have to learn the art of musical conversation. With Terry Reid it was, like, guess which chord he's going to change to this time [laughs]."

"He's *very* identifiable," states David's close friend Graham Nash, "but one thing that totally amazes me is that he has such a different approach with each piece of music. You don't get tired of his slide steel or his electric guitar or his acoustic playing, because it's always so different. Lindley has a definite sound of his own, and yet it doesn't get boring. And the great thing about David is that as deep as we feel he is, as great as he is, you know there's like 80% of the man that's not even been approached. There's a lot more to come — a lot more variety, a lot more surprises, a lot more inspirational musicians' music in that man."

The level of musical conversation Lindley achieved with Ry Cooder — on the *Bop Till You Drop* album and *The Long Riders* soundtrack — borders on telepathic. It is difficult even for Cooder and Lindley to listen to those records and remember who was playing what. "We don't think of it like that," says David. "Like the banjo tune on *Long Riders* ["Leaving Missouri"] that I wrote — Ry plays it. He learned it note for note and played it exactly like me. It was like looking into the mirror. A lot of stuff on *Bop Till You Drop*, I don't remember who plays it. 'Is that me or Ry?' It goes both ways. He took a lot of stuff from the same sources where I got a lot of stuff, except that my interpretation was slightly different. If you live in Los Angeles, you have to be exposed to that Vox organ Mexican music. But I learned that stuff from the other approach, the flamenco approach. When I was learning to play guitar, when I was about 18, I used to hang around this place called Bernardo's Guitar Shop on Brooklyn Avenue in East L.A. All the good Latino guitar players would have their guitars repaired there; I heard some of the most amazing guitar ever."

Though Cooder and Lindley have similar tastes and backgrounds, and have recorded together — Lindley also played mandolin on Ry's *Jazz* album — the two have only toured together once, as a duo. "We wanted to take the *Bop Till You Drop* band on the road, but the record company wouldn't front Ry enough money to do it, so we toured Japan and Australia, just the two of us. We played 'The Bourgeois Blues' in Melbourne and started a riot. We finally did get to do one gig with the band, at the No Nukes Concert." (It is interesting to note that on the recording of "Little Sister," on the *No Nukes* LP, David plays the guitar solo, although Cooder played the lead on *Bop Till You Drop*.)

The reggae/R&B flavor on *Bop* just begins to hint at the style that pervades *El Rayo-X*. The type of reggae Lindley is especially attracted to is the early ska/bluebeat style. "Some of the new stuff I like," he allows, "but some of it is too sophisticated — it's too citified. It doesn't have enough of the country in it. That early stuff is the same thing as in Otis Redding's stuff. It also reminds me of country music. In fact, there's a lot more country music influence in that music than there is in so-called country music nowadays. It's been sanctified and preserved down there, whether they knew it or not."

By no means a purist, about reggae or anything else, Lindley is a big fan of the new wave/ska bands to come out of England in recent years. "When I was playing with Terry Reid in England, I used to hang around all the Jamaican bars. That's when the skinhead thing was starting over there. Bands like Madness and the Police and the Specials have that essence; they haven't strayed too far from the real stuff."

The mixing of styles from different countries and cultures, the orginal idea behind Kaleidoscope, is something that Lindley continues to practice and listen to. "It's the *chunk*, mon." he says in pigeon English. "In Japan there are these bands that mixed Japanese, Korean and Chinese music with rock 'n' roll and reggae, and they call it *chunk*. Very rhythmic, scratching sound. It's all played on cheap Teisco electric guitars. Then there's the African Brothers Dance Band and the Black Masters' Band from Northern Africa. They play electric guitars with this high sound. I went for that sound on a lot of the album."

One of the big surprises to emerge on *El Rayo* is Lindley's vocal strength. A lot of the credit, he says, must go to Lindley's voice coach, Mark Forest. A former Mr. Universe, Forest showed David how to open his throat so as not to strain his voice. The resultant high, pinched singing has a definite reggae sound to it as well, because of Lindley's fondness for Jamaican phrasing, which often comes up in conversation. "Their phrasing is very musical," he states. "The people who talk with that accent, it's a very musical sounding language. Like, Italian is a very musical and wonderful language, so is Spanish. The traditional Hawaiian falsetto singers are just beautiful, and part of that is the way they pronounce or modify certain consonants.

"There are a lot of people who have never heard reggae music, and I'd like to change that. It doesn't get to some people, but it got to me immediately — I don't know what it was about it. But once it goes in, it stays. Like *Alien* [laughs].

"Danny Kortchmar and I used to pick up our guitars at soundchecks and play reggae," he goes on. "Start scratching away. The guys we were playing with would say, 'Don't play that shit, man.' They called it 'insect guitar.'"

The transformation from sideman to leader has been difficult, Lindley admits, but also satisfying. "It feels real good," he smiles; "I like it. I get to try out ideas I've had for a long time. I can say, 'Let's do this, let's play this part like this. No, not quite that way. Do it a little more like this.'"

The band Lindley put together is as multi-faceted collectively as Lindley is individually. David found rhythm guitarist Bernie Larsen working in a music store he frequented. "He sold me a couple of Silvertones," the leader recalls. "He plays really well. He used to be a drummer, so he's got this great sense of time going for him. He's real quiet, except when he gets on stage and then he's an animal. This is definitely a band of animals. No one is more of a beast than Ian Wallace."

Englishman Ian Wallace, besides being an incredibly powerful drummer, is an extremely eclectic one as well, having played with King Crimson, Alexis Korner, Billy Burnette, Lonnie Mack, and Bob Dylan. "Ian's got these long arms," Lindley explains, "and that's where he gets all that power from. It's like the rock-on-the-end-of-the-string principal. Sounds like a

David Lindley's Equipment

David Lindley's collection of stringed instruments numbers well over a hundred and includes violins, mandolins, banjos, acoustic Hawaiian guitars, lap steels, Turkish sazes, bouzoukis, and his array of thrift store electric guitars. On his current tour, Lindley could be found playing a two-pickup, short-scale Silvertone (the kind that comes with the amplifier in the case), an aqua blue National with three pickups, and a double-neck Supro pedal-less steel. He also soloed on an acoustic Weisenborn Hawaiian lap guitar made of koa wood with a hollow neck, and employed one of his latest infatuations, a tiny Vox "mandoguitar," which is a short-neck electric 12-string tuned an octave higher than standard.

Lindley uses different techniques, in the same way he uses different guitars, to arrive at his endless array of tonal colors. He sometimes plays with a flatpick, other times with metal fingerpicks, and strings each guitar up for a specific sound. "The Silvertone sounds great with heavy-gauge strings," he divulges.

Most of David's amps are either old small Fenders or Howard Dumble Overdrive Specials. He often plays through a Roland Boss Chorus Ensemble that he had modified so that "it doesn't go quite as deep." The new Ibanez Multi-Mode analog delay is, in Lindley's words, "the best device to come along so far. It's fantastic."

SCOTT WEINER/RETNA LTD

Lindley: "I could see that Jackson was going to be really huge and when something becomes the real focal point, you don't try and go 'Me too, me too!'" Says Browne: "I'm hoping I can get a job as his rhythm guitar player. He's my hero."

freight train."

Jorge Calderon, who co-wrote the title tune to *El Rayo-X* with Lindley, auditioned for the group on guitar but ended up on bass. "He's turned out to be one of the best bass players I've ever worked with," David states without reservation. "He played in a lot of salsa bands, and he plays these real simple lines, with big holes in them. It's beautiful. Guy's an amazing bass player." Calderon recorded one solo album for Warner Bros. and has also worked with Warren Zevon and Ringo Starr.

Lindley's "main man," whom he met through Ry Cooder, is the group's percussionist and accordian player, a Rastafarian named George "Baboo" Pierre. "This guy's a true mystic," Lindley whispers. "He says some stuff you wouldn't believe. He comes from this really distinguished family in Trinidad."

Baboo describes Lindley's hybrid reggae/rock as "beautious. Lindley is one who don't have his mind complicated. That's why all the brothers in our group love him. We're like blood brothers."

"Right now it's a real strange feeling," Lindley offers, "because it feels like a *band* — which is what I've always wanted to do. I've had enough time to check out and get the right people. I couldn't have done it better if I'd ordered them manufactured, complete with options and stuff."

Does this then mark the end of David Lindley's days as a sideman? "I'll still go out with Jackson," he promises, "as long as time allows." And if time doesn't allow? "Well, I'll have Jackson come out with me."

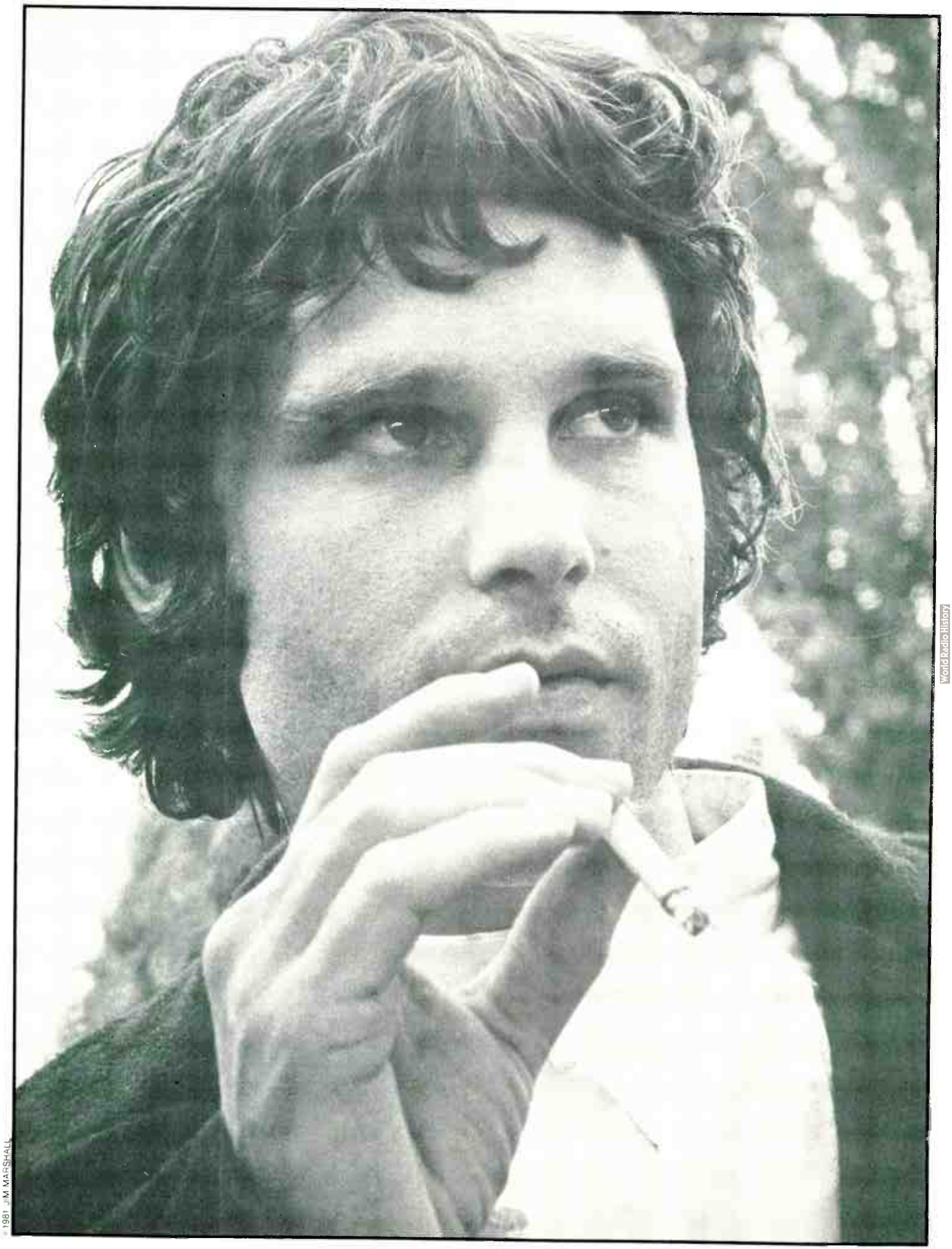
Nothing would please Browne more. "I'm hoping I can get a job as his rhythm guitar player," says Jackson. "See, when David plays, it really means a lot to me — just pure meaning. It always has, from the first time he ever played on one of my songs. He's my hero."

And when Lindley and his band played their debut club gig in Palo Alto, California last May before embarking on his current tour with Joe Walsh — sure enough — his former leader, and biggest fan, was in attendance. "I just came to listen," he insisted, but before the night was over. Browne was supplying vocal harmonies, playing one of Lindley's Danelectro six-string basses, and even singing a couple of his own hits. "These guys rearranged one of my songs," Jackson told the dancing-room-only throng, "and they didn't tell me about it." Lindley's band gave Browne's smash "Doctor My Eyes" their patented reggae treatment, so that in the end it came out "Doctor I Eyes."

For two hours of nonstop energy, Lindley & Co. covered the musical gamut, from rock to funk to reggae to New Orleans second-line to a French-Canadian fiddle tune, infusing each with an infectious and identifiable sound remarkable for a band that began rehearsals only a month earlier. It was an impressive and enjoyable demonstration in what David Lindley calls the "universal language."

"There are things from completely opposite ends of the earth that fit together," he explains. "I don't like to define what it is we do, or even try to, because then it wouldn't be as fun. It would be too analytical.

"I heard this band in Japan," he goes on, ' and you could put them down in Louisiana, and they'd go screamin' nuts. Or you could take a good Cajun band from Louisiana, take 'em to Japan, and they'd lock right in. That's the great fun that I get out of all this — seeing how similar things are, how similar people are, just in their musical values. Then there's all this other crap that comes along — distance, politics, race. 'That person's yellow, that's foreign, alien' — that sort of garbage. All this mumbo-jumbo drummed up to pacify. Things are either safe or they're unknown. But you listen to the music, there's none of that crap. I think that was one of the ideas behind *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*. That musical language. It's incorruptible." M



JIM MORRISON

BOZO DIONYSUS A DECADE LATER

Just as Morrison was at his best as a poet of dread, desire and psychic dislocation, so he was also at his best as a clown. He made everything about the times even more bizarre, dangerous and apocalyptic than it really was, then turned around in midstream and made everything a joke.

By Lester Bangs

We seem to be in the midst of a full-scale Doors Revival. It had been picking up steam for a while, but when Jerry Hopkins' and Daniel Sugerman's biography of Jim Morrison, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, became a Number One best-seller last year, all the Doors' LP product began to move in a big way again. Now there is the inevitable talk of a movie of Morrison's life, with (shudder) perhaps equally inevitable hints that John Travolta might have the starring role. The first question that would occur to anyone might be that asked by the first person I told I was doing the article: "Yeah, just why *is* there this big Doors fanaticism all over again, anyway?" The answer to that is not so hard to find, though in the end it may be questionable just how much it really has to do with the Doors. I'm reminded of the younger brother of an old girlfriend — he recently graduated from high school, and still lives with

their parents in Detroit, and when she told me he was playing in a rock band and I asked who his favorite artists were, she said: "His three favorite groups are the Yardbirds, Cream and the Doors."

Think about that for a minute. That kid is now entering college. The Doors broke up ten years ago this July — well, okay, Morrison died then, and if you want to call the trio that went on after his death the Doors, you can, but nobody else did — and Cream and the Yardbirds have been dead since '68-'69. Sure all three of them were great groups, but were they all that epochal that somebody who was in elementary school when they scored their greatest triumphs should look back to them like this, to be holding on to them after that many years? Yeah, the Beatles were one thing, but *Cream*?

Perhaps a more apposite question, though, might be: can you imagine being a teenager in the 1980s and having absolutely no culture you could call your own? Because that's what it finally comes down to, that and the further point which might as well be admitted, that you can deny it all you want but almost none of the groups that have been offered to the public in the past few years begin to compare with the best from the sixties. And this is not just sixties nostalgia — it's a simple matter of listening to them side by side and noting the relative lack of passion, expansiveness and commitment in even the best of today's groups. There is a half-heartedness, a tentativeness, and perhaps worst of all a tendency to hide behind irony that is after all perfectly reflective of the time, but doesn't do much to endear these pretenders to the throne. Sure, given the economic climate alone as well as all the other factors it was a hell of a lot easier to go all-out, berserk, yet hold on to whatever principles you had in the sixties — today's bands are so eager to get bought up and groomed and sold by the pound it often seems as if even the most popular and colorful barely even exist, let alone stand for anything.

So what did the Doors stand for? Well, if I remember correctly, back in 1968 when I was living in a hippie crash pad in San Diego, California, all my roommates used to have earnest bull sessions far into the night about the "Death Trip" the Doors were supposedly on. Recall this one guy used to sit there all day and night toking on his doob and intoning things like "*Genius*...is *very close* to...*madness*..." instead of doing his homework, and he had a high appreciation of the Doors' early work. Me, I always kind of wanted Morrison to be better than he actually was, like I wished all his songs could have had the understated power of, say, "People Are Strange" ("Faces look ugly when you're alone/Women seem wicked when you're unwanted..."), and, like many, it was only after being disappointed that I could learn to take the true poetry and terror whenever it could be found and develop an ever-increasing appreciation for most of the rest of Morrison's work as prime Bozo action.

As for the Poet himself, Hopkins' and Sugerman's book is primarily interesting for what it apparently inadvertently reveals. In the foreword, on the very first page of the book, Sugerman lets go two sentences which have stopped more than one person of my acquaintance from reading any farther: "I just wanted to say I think Jim Morrison was a modern-day god. Oh hell, at least a lord."

It was never revealed whether Hopkins shares this assessment, but the authors then go on for almost four hundred pages, amassing mountains of evidence almost all of which can for most readers point to only one conclusion: that Jim Morrison was apparently a nigh compleat asshole from the instant he popped out of the womb until he died in that bathtub in Paris (*if* he did indeed die there, they rather gamely leave us with). The first scene in the book takes place in 1955, when Jim was twelve years old, and finds him tobogganing with his younger brother and sister in the snowcapped mountains outside Albuquerque, New Mexico. According to Hopkins and Sugerman, Jim packed his two moppet siblings in front of him in the toboggan so they couldn't move, got up a frightening head of downhill steam and aimed the three of them straight for the broadside of a log cabin:

How can you create anything real or beautiful when you have absolutely zero input from the real world, when everyone around you is catering to you and sheltering you? This system is why almost all our rock 'n' roll heroes end up having nothing to say.

The toboggan was less than twenty yards from the side of the cabin on a certain, horrifying collision course. Anne stared dead ahead, the features on her face numbed by terror. Andy was whimpering.

The toboggan swept under a hitching rail and five feet from the cabin was stopped by the children's father. As the children tumbled out of the sled, Anne babbled hysterically about how Jim had pushed them forward and wouldn't let them escape. Andy continued to cry. Steve and Clara Morrison tried to reassure the

younger children.

Jim stood nearby looking pleased. "We were just havin' a good time," he said.

Surely an auspicious episode with which to begin recounting the life of a god. But it is only the beginning. Later we will see Jim's little brother breathing heavily at night due to chronic tonsillitis, and the future Lizard King sealing his mouth with cellophane tape and laughing at his near-suffocation. Or ridiculing a paraplegic. Or, at the age of seventeen, rubbing dogshit in his little brother's face.

What the book makes clear is that this sort of thing was no different in kind from later Doors-era antics like covering an entire recording studio (when they first went in to cut "The End") in chemical fire extinguisher foam, or dragging a cab full of people up to Elektra Records president Jac Holzman's apartment in the middle of the night, where Jim ripped out massive amounts of carpet and vomited all over the lobby. Yet this was the sort of thing that not only the authors but his friends and fans from the sixties seemed to admire, even encourage. On one level it's just another case of a culture hero who by now you may not be so surprised to learn you would never have wanted to be around. On another, though, it's just more sixties berserkitude of the kind that piddles down to pathetic sights like Iggy Pop walking through a song called "Dog Food" on the *Tomorrow* show in 1981 and then telling Tom Snyder that he represents the "Dionysian" as opposed to "Apollonian" type o' performer. But there was a time that was true for both Iggy and Jim, though one must wonder just what the creepily conservative teenagers of these supremely Apollonian times might see in this kind of behavior which if anybody they knew was imitating would probably cause them to immediately call the cops. These kids would feel threatened by any performer who came out today and started acting like Morrison did, so is it only the remove of a decade that allows them to feel safe enjoying his antics? Or is it that, just like they could conceivably march happily off to get shot to pieces in El Salvador or Afghanistan to the tune of "The Unknown Soldier" without perceiving any irony, so they can take the life and death of Jim Morrison as just one more TV show with a great soundtrack? And could it be that they are right? If Jim Morrison

cared so little about his life, was so willing to make it amount to one huge alcoholic exhibitionistic joke, why should they or we or anybody finally care, except insofar as the seamy details provide trashy entertainment? Or do they, like Danny Sugerman, take exactly these rantings and pukings as evidence he was a "god" or at least a "lord"?

Similarly, in the legendary Miami "cock-flashing" incident, the book reveals that likely all that really happened was he made a fool out of himself, moving entertainingly if not smoothly from "Ain't nobody gonna love my ass" to "You're all a bunch of fuckin' idiots," surely an appropriate *homage* to the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*. When you're reading all of this stuff, one emotion you may well feel is *envy*, like, *I too* would like to be able to have a fullblown temper tantrum whenever I pleased, and not only get catered to by everybody around me but called a genius and an artist for letting myself act out this way. Or actually, any of us who aren't catered to in this way can count ourselves lucky, because it's supremely unhealthy. In a way, Jim Morrison's life and death could be written off as simply one of the more pathetic episodes in the history of the star system, or that offensive myth we all persist in believing which holds that artists are somehow a race apart and thus entitled to piss on my wife, throw you out the window, smash up the joint and generally do whatever they want. I've seen a lot of this over the years, and what's most ironic is that it always goes under the assumption that to deny them these outbursts would somehow be curbing their creativity, when the reality, as far as I can see, is that it's exactly such insane *tolerance* of another insanity that also contributes to their drying up as artists. Because how can you finally create anything real or beautiful when you have absolutely zero input from the real world, because everyone around you is catering to and sheltering you? You can't, and this system is I'd submit why we've seen almost all our rock'n'roll heroes who,unlike Morrison, managed to survive the sixties, end up having nothing to say. Just imagine if he was still around today, 37 years old; no way he could still be singing about chaos and revolution. There are some people who think that everything he'd been through had finally wrought a kind of hard-won wisdom in him that, had he lived, would have allowed him to mellow into perhaps less of a cultural icon and a better poet.

There is another school of thought, though, which holds that he'd said it all by the first Doors album, and everything from there on led downhill.

My response is somewhere in between. I never took Morrison seriously as the Lizard King, but I'm a Doors fan today as I was in 1967; what it came down to fairly early on for me, actually, was accepting the Doors' limitations and that Morrison would never be so much Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Villon as he was a Bozo Prince. Surely he was one father of new wave, as transmitted through Iggy and Patti Smith, but they have proven to be in greater or lesser degree Bozos themselves. One thing that can never be denied Morrison is that at his best (as well as perhaps his worst, or some of it at any rate) he had style, and as he was at his best as a poet of dread, desire and psychic dislocation, so he was also at his best as a clown. So it's no wonder our responses got, and remain, a little confused.

UPI

Certainly there are great Bozo moments scattered through the Doors' records: the mock-portentousness of the "Do you remember when we were in Africa?" coda to "Wild Child;" the drunken yowling sermon "Yew CAN-*NOT* pe-TISH-SHON the Lo-WARD with PRAY-yer" at the beginning of "The Soft Parade;" the whole idea of songs like "Five to One" and "Land Ho," extending to the rhythmic bounce of the latter. Hopkins and Sugerman point out the line "I see the bathroom is clear" in "Hyacinth House," and of course there are many here among us who always thought "The End" was but a joke, not to mention the scream of the butterfly. I recall sitting in another hippie pad, in Berkeley during the Summer of Love, when one night in our dope-smoking circle on the floor we were not at all nonplussed to hear the FM deejay take off "The End" halfway through and bury it with snide comments before returning to his fave rave Frisco group; admittedly there was probably some Frisco vs. L.A. chauvinism at work there, but we laughed right along with him and at this "masterpiece." Finally, the Bozo Classic to end 'em all was probably *Absolutely Live*, which included such high points as Morrison stopping "When the Music's Over" to scream at the audience to shut up; the way he says "Pritty neat, pritty neat, pritty good, pritty good" before "Build Me A Woman," which begins with the line, "I got the poontang blues;" the intro to "Close to You:" "Ladies and gentlemen...I don't know if you realize it, but tonight you're in for a special treat" — crowd cheers wildly — "No, No, not that, not that...last time it happened grown men were weeping, policemen were turning in their badges..."; and, best of all, the (almost certainly improvised) sung intro to "Break on Through #2:" "Dead cat in a top hat/suckin' on a young man's blood/wishin' that he could come...thinks he can kill and slaughter/thinks he can shoot my daughter...dead cats/dead rat/thinks he's an aristocrat/that's *crap*..." — true street poetry indeed. Plus the bonus of a brief reprise of the "Petition the Lord with prayer" bit, in which this time he sounds like no one so much as Lenny Bruce doing Oral Roberts in his "Religions, Inc." routine — listen to 'em and compare.

In the end, perhaps all the moments like these are his real legacy to us, how he took all the dread and fear and even explosions into seeming freedom of the sixties and made them first seem even more bizarre, dangerous and apocalyptic than we already thought they were, then turned everything we were taking so seriously into a big joke midstream. Of course, there are still the other songs too, which will always be starkly poetic in their evocations of one "gazing on a city under television skies," perhaps the best conjurings of the L.A. myth in popular song: "End of the Night," "Moonlight Drive," "People Are Strange," "My Eyes Have Seen You," "Cars Hiss By My Window," "L.A. Woman," "Riders on the Storm." But even in these there are lines, all the "Mr. Mojo Risings," that give away his own sense of humor about, if not his talents as a poet, certainly his own persona and even the very real way in which he let his pop stardom lead him unto a betrayal of his poetic gifts. And perhaps what we finally conclude is that it's not really necessary to separate the clown from the poet, that they were in fact inextricably linked, and that even as we were lucky not to have been around any more than our fair share of "Dionysian" infants, so we were lucky to get all the great music on these albums, which is going to set rock 'n' roll standards for a long time to come. M

*Jerry Hopkins and Daniel Sugerman, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, Warner Books, 1980.

"The mask that you wore
My fingers would explore..." *Jim Morrison*

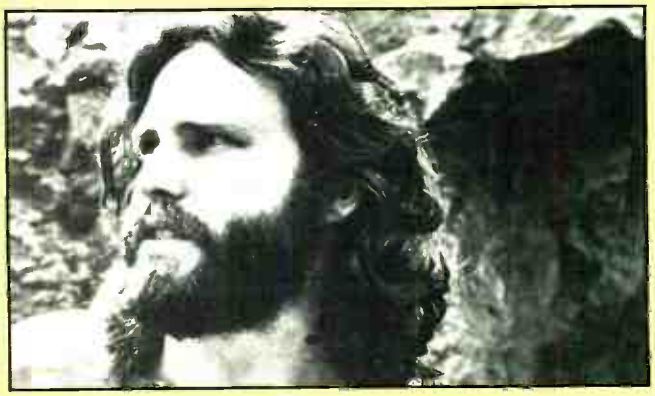
Irwyn Greif is a noted New York psychic whose work has been written about in the Village Voice, New York Magazine *and the* New York Daily News. *Among his many talents is the ability to psychically "read" photographs, to assess the problems and personalities of individuals by touching and studying their photos.*

When we first contacted him about reading pictures of Jim Morrison, Greif knew nothing about the Doors and had not listened to their music. The only information he was given was that they had been a phenomenally successful group, and that Jim Morrison had died (mysteriously) in 1971. The following is his psychic analysis of Morrison, based on these four photos, taken between 1966 and 1971. Brian Cullman

In the first photo (Jim Morrison with the rest of the Doors), Morrison is frightened and very intense. He is trying to do something greater than what he and the Doors were achieving at that time and is not succeeding. He has the face and the eyes of a crusader, or someone on a spiritual quest. There is a real need in him to attack the status quo (in and outside of music) and to force changes in the world. But he also has the face of an introvert, of someone who is deep inside himself. He has an innocent and trusting nature, almost like a child; but he can be suspicious and defensive, convinced that people are trying to trap him, trying to control his work and his life.

He needs to play the big brother, needs to lead and to organize, and he takes this responsibility seriously. He is continually in need of a family, of a brotherhood joined in a common cause; yet within that situation he also needs to retreat, to go off by himself and withdraw from everything.

In the second photograph (Morrison wearing sunglasses), he is in the midst of great insecurities and is withdrawing even further from people, from life, and from music. He is dissatisfied with himself and with his music, and he is filled with self-reproach. He feels a need to leave music and records behind. He may have gone off by himself, perhaps to Europe, to wander around and put parts of his life behind him. He realizes that the music he has put out so far has failed him; it has not helped him in his inner work or led him into a deeper life; if anything, the opposite is true. He is dissatisfied with the Doors and feels they have gone as far as they can go. He is thinking of disassociating himself from them and working solo. More than anything, he wants and needs to be left alone. He does not want publicity and does not want royalties from the records he has made so far. He is having difficulty accepting money, especially the vast amounts of money he is making, for work that he is dissatisfied with. He does not want to be rewarded if he feels he has failed himself. He is his own worst enemy and his own harshest critic.



In the third photograph, Morrison is taking on the role of a spiritual leader, intent on giving words a divine meaning. He is attempting a form of spiritual psychiatry within his music, trying to lead people to some sort of inner awakening. He is impatient with his audience and wants to be working more and more for an audience of peers, people who can be giants in their own right. He is becoming more aware of his own need to influence people, to give them a higher awareness.

In the final photograph, Morrison is seen with his wife. He is disoriented and off center, very much off course. He is trying to focus all of his attention and love and will into his relationship with her and away from the world at large. He has lost his center of gravity and is becoming unbalanced psychologically and creatively; he has lost sight of his goals and standards.

This is a man who should always be open to the call of the world. He should not turn aside and try to force this larger talent into a personal love, into a singular relationship. The love of a woman should help expand him, nourish him, give him the joy and satisfaction in his life which could then further amplify his music and his purpose. But instead of expanding, he is contracting. I sense in this photograph that he is trying to create something out of this woman that she is not, trying to make her a goddess, a universal being. He desperately wants a peer, an equal, and she simply cannot fit the role that he is forcing on her. I feel that he is losing his resolve, and he is beginning to fragment, to come apart at the seams.

It is my feeling that his interest in life is waning. The only two alternatives he could have, based upon this last photograph, would be to disappear off the face of the earth by actually dying, or to disappear by arranging his own "death" or exit. My feeling is that he did not die, but arranged for an escape route in order to go into a very deep withdrawal; and that somewhere in the world Jim Morrison has assumed a completely different identity and is playing out his life in a very different way.

DOORS' ORGANIST RAY MANZAREK

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

STRANGE DAYS

By Pete Fornatale

The hair is shorter now. The face older, more lived in. And the stoneface of all those old album covers now cracks quickly into laughter. But the gaze is as penetrating as it ever was. As with his fellow Doors, Ray Manzarek's post-Morrison efforts have been at best uneven, at worst, deflating. Helping to build a bridge from the 60s to 80s, his greatest success has come as the producer of X, Los Angeles' most *musical* new wave band.

Ray was born in Chicago in the winter of 1939. He studied piano as a child, showing considerable promise in the classical milieu. But — and there is always a "but" in such stories — Ray discovered rhythm and blues in his teens and began hanging steadily at the great, smokey blues rooms of the South Side. After earning a Bachelor's degree in economics from DePaul University, he enrolled in UCLA's law school. Two weeks with the law books proved two weeks too long, and soon Ray was through the doors of the cinematography department, where he met a fellow stu-

"The Doors' message was this: come to grips with fear, with reality, come to grips with your own dark side, with the madness that lies within. You've got to conquer it, or at least come to terms with it. And that message is as pertinent today as it was then."

COURTEST OF ELEKTRA ASYLUM

dent named Jim Morrison. The interview picks up from there...

MUSICIAN: Let's start at the beginning. How did the Doors get together?

RAY: About a month and a half after I graduated from UCLA film school, I was sitting on the beach in Venice not knowing what to do with myself, when who comes walking down the beach but Jim Morrison. And I said hey, man, what have you been doing? How come you're still here in L.A.? He said, "I decided just to stay for the summer." I said, well, what's going on? He said, "I've been writing songs." I said, well, far out. He knew I was a musician. We'd never really done anything together, but he knew I'd played in bands around Los Angeles, and I said, hey, let me hear one of the songs. And he sang "Moonlight Drive." He sat down on the beach and he just sang the words, "Let's swim to the moon, let's climb through the tide, penetrate the evening, that the city sleeps to hide." I said, hey, that's great, man, those are the best lyrics I've ever heard for a rock and roll song! Then he sang a few more tunes that he'd put together and I said, why don't we get a rock and roll band together? He said, "That's exactly what I want to do." And the rest is history. Simple as that.

MUSICIAN: The name — the accounts are that it came from...?

RAY: ...It comes from Aldous Huxley's book, *The Doors of Perception*. It's a line by the English poet-mystic William Blake, who said, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, man would see things as they truly are — infinite." And that's what the Doors were all about — peyote, acid, and infinity; raising your consciousness, breaking on through to the other side, opening the doors in your head.

MUSICIAN: Can you recall the very first time the Doors played together?

RAY: When Robby came to audition for the band. We played "Moonlight Drive." I showed Robby the chord changes. It was an easy song to start with. Robby slipped his bottleneck on his finger and tuned his guitar to an open tuning and hit a few notes — like those wiggly snakey notes that he was capable of — and Jim and I just got shivers up and down our spine. And at the end of the song that was it. The band was whole. The band was complete. I said, I've been playing music since I've been seven years old. I've played in a lot of bands, I've played in little pick up bands, in bar bands, little rock bands, little jazz bands, but this is the most *intense* musical experience I've ever had. I had never really understood music until that point, and what it meant to get into it.

MUSICIAN: The recorded version of "Moonlight Drive" was quite advanced stylistically. Are you saying it just came out that way?

RAY: No, it was a funkier, bluesier kind of song when we first did it. More of a James Brown, Otis Redding kind of song. It was a lot like "Soul Kitchen." So when it came time to record it we said, wait a minute...we've done that beat. Let's start this song differently. So we fooled around for awhile, and I sat at the piano and said, wait a minute, I got it — we're gonna do a tango. And they said, "We're gonna do *what*?" Don't worry, I said, it's going to be a *rock tango*. Worked out fine in the end.

MUSICIAN: The sounds that you were putting together were so new and unique — and the music industry is so conservative — did you have difficulty in making your initial contacts in that world?

RAY: Yeah, we sure did. We made a demo, and had five songs on it, and we would go from record company to record company to record company, saying we're a band called the Doors, and they'd go: "The What? The Doors? How do you spell that?" And then we'd play the demo for them, and got rejected by everybody in town. Even got thrown out of a few offices. One guy said, "Get out of here, just get out of this office — I'm not going to tell you anything. I don't want to *hear* that kind of stuff!" If it hadn't been for Jac Holzman and Elektra Records, a New York outfit, man, we wouldn't have recorded. If it hadn't been for the media, the publicity we got in New York City, the press and everybody, the radio, and the fans all behind us, there wouldn't be any Doors today.

MUSICIAN: And of course, you did coincidentally happen to come along at a time when radio was beginning to reflect some changes, the FM band...

RAY: Yeah, FM was just starting to happen. The music was revolutionary, and getting it onto the airwaves was revolutionary. It was a great time to be alive, the golden age of rock.

MUSICIAN: What about the Doors' songwriting process? The notes on most of the albums give credit to the group, not individuals.

RAY: Well, obviously Jim was the major lyricist. Jim was the poet and lead singer, so he wrote most of the lyrics. Robby, however, did write quite a few songs. Actually, Robby Krieger initiated "Light My Fire." He's the one who got the song started. He came to rehearsal one day and said, "Hey, I've got this song called 'Light My Fire.'" He had the chord changes and he had one verse and a chorus. It was a typical Doors song in that everybody had some input. John said, "Listen, let me do this kind of beat, this kind of Latin thing. And then we go into the chorus part of it and then I'll go into a hard rock thing." And I said, that's great, John, you do that — OK, Robby, go ahead, play that, wait a minute, we got to start this somehow. How do we start it? Let me see if I can come up with some kind of an introduction. And I kind of noodled around for about five minutes or so, and my fingers just fell right into place. (He hums the opening notes.) It came out like magic. And then Jim said, "Well, we need a second verse here and we don't have anything, and wait a minute, I've got something...Our love become a funeral pyre..." — that verse. And there we were with, actually, a 3½-minute song, and after two choruses, we said, wait a minute — let's take the solo here. I said, why don't we do this kind of Coltrane thing, A minor, B minor. We'll just do this modal, droning kind of Indian thing and take a solo on it, and little by little the song began to develop.

MUSICIAN: It also became a big hit on AM radio when it was cut down to about three minutes. How did the short version come into being?

RAY: Well, a lot of AM stations were saying, "Hey, we want to play 'Light My Fire' — we're getting a lot of requests for it, we like the song, we can't play a 7½-minute song, we're stuck in the 3-minute formula." So we sat down and said, what are we going to do with this? We had two verses, two solos — I played a solo and Robby played a solo — and then two more sections at the end. Then somebody said, "Why don't we cut the solos?" And I said, *cut the solos*? Wait a minute, man, that's the hypnotic part of the song! That's the part you ride on — that goes over and over and hypnotizes the audience. We *can't* cut that out, that's virtually the whole point of the song. But, sensible heads prevailed and said, listen, you guys have the choice, and we said, well, let's see how it sounds, let's just try it. So we cut the solos out and sat down and listened to the tape and said, great, it works. Let's go with it. Our producer, Paul Rothchild, and our engineer, Bruce Botnick, just cut that tape so nice and clean and spliced it together in a way that no one could tell where it was cut. When I hear the song on the radio to this day, I never know if it's going to be the long version or the short version. After Jim sings, (vocalizing) "Fire" — there's like five seconds where we have the instrumental as it is on the long version, and then the cut happens. And I'll be in the car and going...Help! Is it going to be the long version, come on, no, it's the short version, or is it gonna be...yeah, it is! Then you can sit back and cruise the L.A. streets.

MUSICIAN: Was the band more of a studio band or a live performance band? Which came first, or was more comfortable?

RAY: We were both. We'd take off one hat and put on the other. When we'd go into the studio, it was like scientists going into a laboratory. We'd put on our white smocks and everything and say, okay, here we go — we're going to make a record now, and everything became pretty precise and clean and ordered. The improvisation was worked out in the studio. In person, we'd do anything, and sometimes the shows were so totally unprofessional that we'd almost have riots because we'd take so long

Live at San Jose, 1968: On stage, the Doors would throw away their careful arrangements, their structured improvisation, and even their song list with occasionally riotous, often transcendent results.

Morrison was always amazing us and the best part of working with him was that we got to see all his performances night after night. A lot of times it wasn't so good; a lot of times it was absolutely brilliant.

between songs. We never had a set worked out. We'd work out the first three songs, we'd say, all right, let's start with "Back Door Man," and then we'll go into something else, and then we'll do "When The Music's Over." And then after that, let's see what the audience feels like. So we'd have three songs worked out, and everything after that would be group conference, depending on how the audience felt, how crazy they were, how we felt, how Jim felt — and then we'd start tossing tunes back and forth. So live performances were never structured, and the recordings of course were structured. Robby would come in with a song to rehearsal, or I'd come in with a song, and we showed each other the chord changes. John would get the feel of what the beat should be, unless either one of us had an idea, or Jim had an idea for the beat. Then we'd try to tell John that and he would take that input. But mainly he was free to do whatever he wanted, and that's what was great about the Doors. We were all free to do whatever we wanted within the framework of the song and those changes. I could do anything...it's in E minor, tempo is chunga chunga chunga...now what am I going to do within that E minor? Play a straight E minor? Or E minor 9th? Do I invert that E minor? What kind of moving line can I get against the left hand bass line that I'm playing? What can I fit in with the right hand so as not to interfere with the words, not to interfere with what Robby's playing but to harmonize with all of that. That's all a matter of studying music, of making sure you know what the hell you're doing and listening to a lot of music. That just doesn't come automatically.

MUSICIAN: Did it become more difficult to avoid the laziness trap after the success you achieved?

RAY: Not for the Doors, no. If anything, the Doors got a little more under the gun. We were pressured to produce. We worked on the first album for two years, starting from the inception of the band, to writing the songs, to finally recording the album. On the second album, half the songs were left over from that initial burst of creation. By the third album, it was time for all new songs, so we had to learn to create at a faster pace. You couldn't just fool around and goof off waiting for our Muse to come and visit. You had to *call the lady down* like...*come on, give us a hand here*! And invariably she'd come.

MUSICIAN: Some observers have claimed that the Muse for one of your biggest hits, "Hello, I Love You," was actually Ray Davies and the Kinks' "All Day and All of the Night." Were you conscious of that at the time?

RAY: Yeah, we were conscious of it. When we first started doing it we thought, hey, this song's a *lot* like a Kinks song! ...Well, it doesn't sound *that* much like a Kinks song. It's all rock and roll, we're all family, we're not stealing anything from them, we're sort of...(hums melody)...and actually the only thing is...(continues humming). Yes, it *is* a lot like it, isn't it? Sorry, Ray.

MUSICIAN: I talked to Ray about it a while ago and he said he could never hear the similarity.

RAY: I take it back, Ray!

MUSICIAN: I thought that was such a great attitude compared to the situation that George Harrison found himself in.

RAY: Well, that's the spirit of rock 'n' roll, man. I mean, going out and stealing something blatantly from somebody, that you obviously shouldn't do. But if someone influences you...the Kinks were a very big influence on the Doors...the Kinks were a very, very heavy band. We listened to Beatles, the Stones, and the Yardbirds, and we were very heavy into Van Morrison.

MUSICIAN: On the fourth Doors album, *Soft Parade*, the music started to branch out even more. Was that conscious? Had you finished some sort of cycle with the third album?

RAY: I think we had, yeah. I don't think it was quite that

FRED MCDARRAH

conscious but in retrospect I think it was like the initial trilogy had been completed and now it was on to Part II, and everybody wanted to do something different. We'd always talked about using some jazz musicians — let's put some horns and strings on, man, let's see what it would be like to record with a string section and a big horn section.

MUSICIAN: Did it reflect any kind of a mood change in the band? The music sounded more positive at that point. Was that simply a result of the different instrumentation and attitude?

RAY: If anything, there were perhaps getting to be more personal problems within the band at that time. Interestingly, the music does not reflect it, it's just the opposite. The Doors were always able to transcend any personal problems or any emotional problems from outside through the music.

MUSICIAN: Then came *Morrison Hotel*, which seemed to be a return to basics.

RAY: At that point we said, oh, the hell with horns and strings or any of that stuff, man, let's just play Doors — let's get back to Doors basics. It's one of my favorite albums. I love "Queen of the Highway." God, a great song. It makes me cry when I hear that song now; "American boy, American girl" — God, that's Jim and Pam..."He was a monster black dressed in leather, she was a princess, Queen of the Highway"...It's an American Frontier Indian swirl, a love dance...a mating ritual, and the Indians started all over again to begin the new generation. Unfortunately they didn't. They never had any children.

MUSICIAN: Let's talk about the live album for a bit. Artists put out live recordings for all sorts of reasons. Everything from fulfilling a contractual obligation to wanting to leave a permanent documentary of a band. How did you view *Absolutely Live*?

RAY: It was the latter in our case. Yeah, we definitely wanted to get it down because Jim was so good on stage. God, the guy was incredible! I mean the extemporaneous things he would do; the way he could talk to an audience — nobody before or since has been able to talk to an audience the way Morrison did, and you could hear some of that on out-takes from "American Prayer," or in "Road House Blues" where he's talking to the girl and saying, "I'm a Sagittarius" then off to the right hand side a girl says, "Oh, me too, " and he says, "The most philosophical of all the signs," and then she starts to say something, and then Jim shuts her up with "Personally, I don't believe it — this is a bunch of *bullshit*"— the audience cheers— and then out of the blue, "I tell you this, I want to have my kicks before the whole shithouse goes up in flames." Where did he come up with that one, man? He was always amazing us, and the best part of working with Morrison was that we got to see all his performances night after night. A lot of times it wasn't so good; a lot of times it was absolutely brilliant. So we wanted to get that on tape, we wanted to get the Doors excitement on tape.

MUSICIAN: You don't think that Jim ever got into a particular formulation of his presentation? In other words, he was always taking risks?

RAY: Yeah, it was always unpredictable. Occasionally he'd have too much to drink and hold the microphone into the monitors and work feedback for 15 minutes! We played two concerts in Seattle, and both of them were just...Jim was drunk out of his mind and just fed the feedback god. They never got a good concert out of the Doors in Seattle. You never knew what he was going to do...Sure there were certain set things that we would do within the songs that had to be done as cues so that everybody could get in and get out together, and those were always more or less the same, but there were large blocks of space for improvisation by Jim, John, Robby and myself. I'd solo, then Robby would start to do a little thing and John would answer him. It's like in Indian music, the tabla and sitar trade off...

MUSICIAN: Call and response...

RAY: Exactly. And then I would join in on that and we'd work it for a while, and then come back down into vamping, and wait for Robby to give the three against four the dot...dot...da...cue that meant we were coming out of the solo. Often before that would happen Jim would come in and say, "Hey man, I want to get something in here, you got a nice little soft space for the singer." And he would just step right up to the mike and start singing something — start talking to the audience or whatever. We'd follow him for awhile, and when he was finished — when Robby felt that he had said his piece — he would come in with the cue to build it up to the restatement of the theme, then the last two choruses and out.

MUSICIAN: Let's move on to the final Doors album with Jim, *L.A. Woman*.

RAY: Well, when it came time for *L.A. Woman*, we got together with Paul and Bruce and played some of the songs, and Paul Rothschild, our producer, said, "I pass. I'm not enjoying this music, there's something wrong here." I must say, he was right, 'cause when we played the music for him we played poorly. I don't know why, we just played the songs badly. I knew the songs were excellent, and I knew "Riders on the Storm" and "L.A. Woman" were masterpieces, but for some reason or another we just played them very badly and very dully. Paul said, "God, are you guys kidding? This is terrible! You guys better get back into rehearsal or something!" We said, no, this is the way we want to record. It's gonna be great, don't worry. Wait until we get into the studio! And he said, "Well, if you really want to record, you're gonna have to do it yourselves, because I'm gonna have to pass." Our relationship at this point just terminated. So Bruce said he'd do the production. We said, alright, let's do a co-production. Then the idea occurred to use also a rhythm guitar player, Marc Benno, on a couple of cuts to free Robby so that he wouldn't have to play rhythm all of the time and overdub his solos. We had been rehearsing in our Doors Workshop for the last three or four years by that point. We knew the sound in there so well — the placement of where the organ and the keyboards were, where the drums were set up, where the guitar was, where Jim would sing. We had that room down; we could make it sound really

good. So everyone looked at everyone else and said, hey, why don't we record right here? Why don't we just bring stuff across from Elektra Records, fortunately right across La Cienega Boulevard. We just wheeled over a console, and a tape machine. Bruce set up everything upstairs and ran cables down out the back door on the second floor, down to the first floor, put the mikes in, baffled the place off a little bit, and we recorded it virtually live. There is very little overdubbing on *L.A. Woman*. One of our best albums. Really, a hot, hot album.

MUSICIAN: Let's talk for a minute about probably the most notorious live performance by the Doors. What happened in Miami on March 1st, 1969?

RAY: What happened? A steamy night. A hot steamy night, it must have been 85, 90 degrees. Humidity was up around 85-90. The place held 7,000 people. They had oversold the place, they had 12-13,000 people in the place. Packed. Bodies were just packed together. Everybody was in a kind of strange mood. They knew that Jim was a Florida boy. He lived in Florida for awhile, he went to Melbourne High School in Florida and went to the University there, I forget which one, Tallahassee, Florida State, I think. So they were aware that Jim Morrison was a native son, in effect, and here were these guys from Los Angeles coming out to make this strange music. Kings of acid rock. Kings of orgasmic rock. The Lizard King himself. So they had a preconceived notion in their minds of what was supposed to happen — snakes, lizards, craziness — and on top of it, the heat — all the people in there. What I think *really* happened was a mass hallucination. I'm not sure that Jim ever did it...pulled it out. He said he was going to, he said, "You people aren't here for just music, you don't want music, you want something more, something you've never seen before, isn't that what you want? Well, what if I give you that? What if...Do you want to see?" And he took his shirt off. Then he held his shirt in front of him, he he was doing a kind of striptease, and said, "I'm going to do it, I'm going to show it to you, that's what you want — something sensational. Watch ...there...did you see it?!" And the people went, "*Yeah, he's doing it, my God, he did it. I saw it!*" People went crazy. There was a riot. The stage started to collapse, people were climbing on the stage, while two karate guys threw Jim off the stage into the audience. The audience caught Jim, threw him *back* up on the stage...people were just going *insane*, man, the whole thing was just madness, Jim grabbed some cop's hat, threw it into the audience, and finally Jim was pushed off the stage for good, and he kind of made a snake dance, you could see Jim — John and Robby and I kept playing, keeping it going, keeping the madness going, "Light My Fire" on and on and on, and it was just an insane thing, and then finally Jim just snaked his way out of the audience, with maybe 75 people all behind him, and up the stairs, disappeared into the dressing room. After the concert was over, we got back into the dressing room and had a few beers, and said, whew! we made it, I don't know how we got through that one, but we made it — all right! Five days later, I get a call on this island, I'm getting some sun, relaxing in the Caribbean. "Ray, you better get back here, there's big trouble." Trouble, what do you mean? "You guys are busted." *Busted?* I'm sitting on an island, in the middle of the Caribbean, how can I be busted? "Do you know Miami? Well, you're busted." Indecent exposure, drunk and disorderly conduct, public obscenity and profanity, and simulating oral copulation in a public place. Those were the charges. We said, oh, my God. And the shit hit the fan. It was never the same after that.

MUSICIAN: Yeah, it had to have been a turning point.

RAY: It was as far as Jim was concerned. I don't think it really affected his poetic output or his singing, and it didn't affect our actual music. But it did affect us in relationship to public performances. We had a 20-city tour scheduled after Miami. Miami was the first gig, and as long as we were down there we said let's take some time off in the Caribbean and relax and take it easy, and then get tan, get healthy, and then begin a 20-city tour. *Every city cancelled out.* Cincinnati, St. Louis, Detroit, Omaha, etc., etc. Do not bring those guys into town. We are not going to allow the Doors to perform in a public or municipal facility. So we lost the entire tour. And then it came to trial, and Jim was convinced that...we *all* were...even the lawyers...that we could change the obscenity laws of the country. Because the charges against us were public profanity, nudity or simulation of oral copulation, all that stuff. And what was going on at the time? *Hair* was playing in Miami. Our lawyer wanted to take the jury to see *Hair* and say, "Listen, if you're going to bust the Doors, you've got to bust *Hair*, too. *Hair* has people taking their clothes off on stage. *Hair* had the same words that Jim Morrison used on stage, you've got to bust them." Then he was going to take the people to see some of the comics and the reviews in Miami Beach, and you know what goes on in Miami Beach, man — the foul-mouthed comics, strippers. "If you're going to bust Jim Morrison, you've got to bust the stripper, if you're going to bust Jim Morrison for saying dirty words on stage, you've got to bust the comic for using those same obscenities, or the laws don't apply. The laws have to apply to all people equally." And we thought, hey, dynamite. And we've got a case here. This is going to be great. We may change the obscenity laws of this country. And every time our lawyer tried to bring one of those things up in court, the judge said, "Inadmissible evidence. Sorry, I'm not going to hear it. It has nothing to do with this case." And all our plans were shot, man, just shot down the toilet. Gone, man. Ironically, this very same judge, a year and a half after he heard the Doors case in Miami, was busted for taking a bribe from — dig it — *a child molester*. So that was justice in Dade County, Florida.

MUSICIAN: Irony of ironies. It all seems so tame, now.

RAY: Right. It was nothing. Another time, another place.

MUSICIAN: Well, you know the underlying antagonism toward rock and roll is nothing new. It's here today in some respects. It was there in '54 and it hasn't changed.

RAY: The whole thing started with rock and roll, and now it's out of control. But as I said, that's what was great about rock and roll, that's what was great about that whole sixties era. We were giving, sharing, I mean it was — dare I say the word — love. People on the street loved each other. That's all Jim was ever talking about. That's what he was talking about in Miami. We've got tapes of him, somebody recorded Miami on a little

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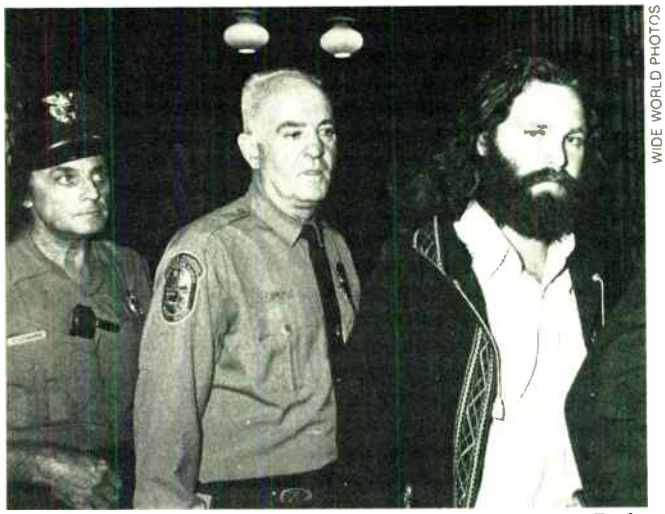


WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

"Inadmissible evidence." Morrison is escorted from a Dade County courtroom after being sentenced to six months and a $500 fine for "profanity and indecent exposure."

People went crazy. The stage started to collapse, people were climbing onto it, while two karate guys threw Jim off the stage into the audience. The audience caught him, threw him back up on the stage...people were going insane. John, Robby and I just kept playing.

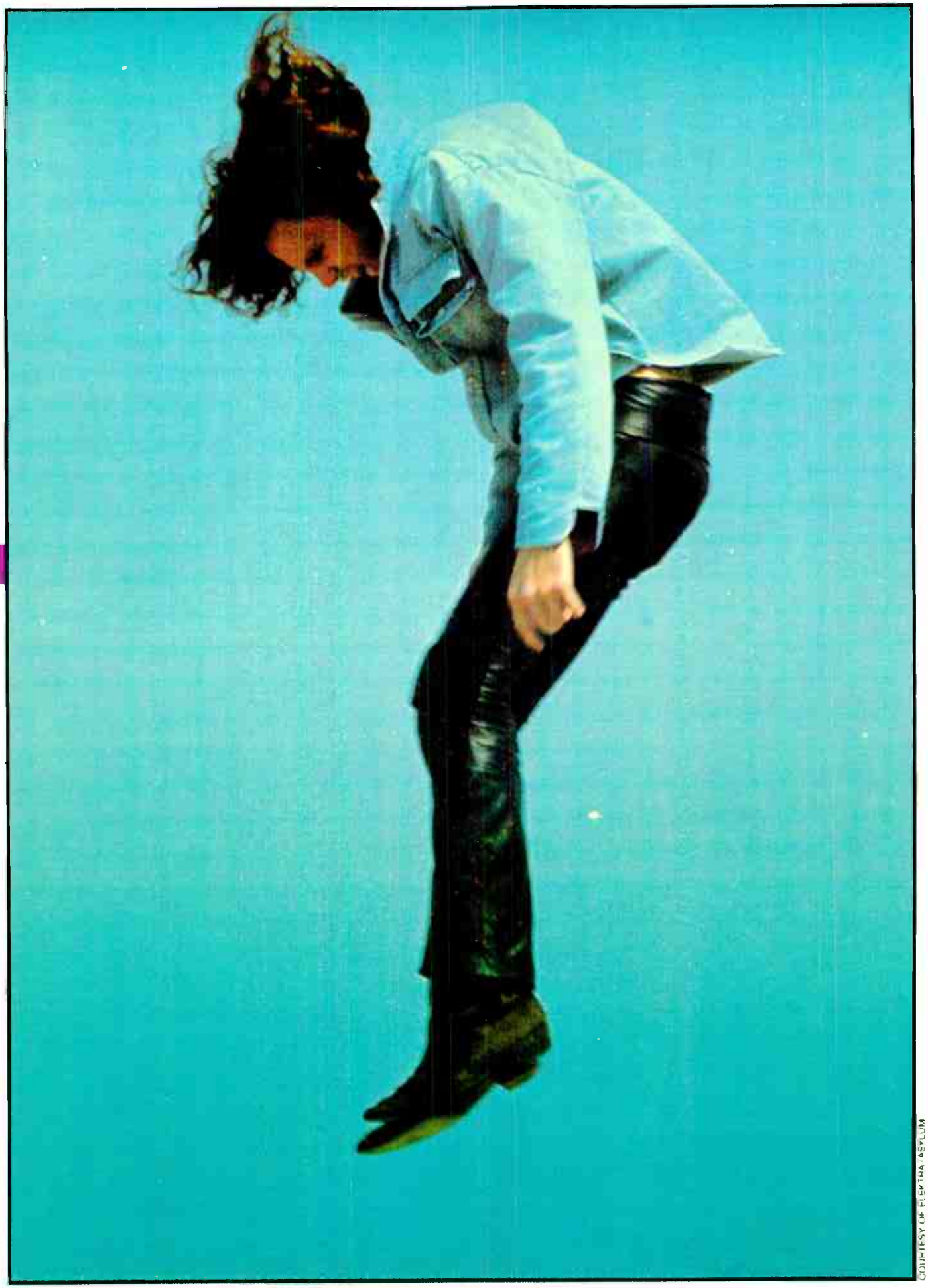
"As a child, Jim was driving with his parents, and there was a truck full of Indians that had crashed and overturned. There was a medicine man dying at the side of the road and Jim, this five-year-old child, vividly remembered a mystical experience when, as the shaman died, his spirit entered Jim's body."

BLUES FOR A SHAMAN

DOORS' PRODUCER PAUL ROTHSCHILD

By Vic Garbarini

As a friend, mentor, confidant, and producer of all the Doors albums except *L.A. Woman,* which he refused to do because he felt the band was in its death throes and totally without direction, Paul Rothschild knew and understood Jim Morrison as well as anyone on earth. (Or anywhere else, for that matter.) As the band's producer he enjoyed a unique perspective, one which combined the access and intimacy of an insider with the objectivity and detachment of an outsider. Besides the Doors, Rothschild has chalked up notable successes with at least two generations of artists, ranging from Janis Joplin and Bonnie Raitt to his most recent project, L.A.'s Fast Fontaine. Today he speaks of Jim Morrison with an informative blend of passion and detachment, and makes no attempt to disguise the fact that he was — and still very much is — a believer in the Doors and what they were trying to do.



COURTESY OF ELEKTRA/ASYLUM

MUSICIAN: Looking back, what would you say was your most significant contribution to the Doors and their sound?
ROTHSCHILD: Well, I personally always tried to focus on longevity and honesty. We stayed away from trendy cliches, including the use of popular devices of the time like wah-wah pedals. I asked them if they wanted to be remembered in 20 years, and they said yes. Well, I said, we can't use any tricks. We have to stay honest, and it's got to be pure. We would do advanced and avant-garde things, but they couldn't be trendy.
MUSICIAN: And you feel that enough of that purity and depth was translated onto vinyl so that it still carries force today?
ROTHSCHILD: Absolutely. After the first record, when we got past the material that had been thoroughly rehearsed and started getting into newer material, my input became greater and greater. I never forced my opinions on the band; I presented them with choices and options to pursue, which they were free to accept or reject.
MUSICIAN: I imagine you must have had a lot to do with broadening the instrumental base on *Soft Parade*.
ROTHSCHILD: Right. I was always encouraging them to expand musically, and Ray and Robby were always interested in expanding the band's instrumental concept. And the two of them plus Jim were also into expanding the direction of the music itself, as well. Jim came up with a programmatic concept that became "Unknown Soldier," which took an enormous amount of time to record because it had so many different sections.
MUSICIAN: It must have been hell to splice together.
ROTHSCHILD: It was. It was quite orchestral in its design, and we had to do it a bit at a time, section by section. There are different timbres and orchestral voices that change from section to section. We wound up putting it together much the same way the Beach Boys did "Good Vibrations." Piece by piece.
MUSICIAN: How many tracks were you working with at the time?
ROTHSCHILD: I believe we finally made it up to 16 tracks on that one. "Light My Fire" and the whole first album were done on a four-track recorder. And we only used three of those!
MUSICIAN: Getting back to Jim and his message: exactly what was it you felt he was trying to get across to people?
ROTHSCHILD: I think "Open your eyes to your inner self," was his greatest message. "Don't believe the lies you've been raised with; there's a greater truth out there and it's up to all of us to seek it in whatever way seems right and appropriate for us."
MUSICIAN: From where did he draw his main inspiration?
ROTHSCHILD: The pivotal event in his life was when the medicine man leaped into his body at the age of five. You know that story?
MUSICIAN: He was driving with his parents in the Southwest and they came upon a car wreck, and a medicine man was dying in the road?
ROTHSCHILD: That's a fact. In "An American Prayer" there's a section that goes "Indians scattered on dawn's highway bleeding...something, something...the young child's fragile eggshell mind." As a child he was driving with his parents, and there was a truck full of Indians that had crashed and overturned. There was a medicine man dying at the side of the road, and Jim, this five-year child, *vividly remembered* a mystical experience when, as the shaman died, his spirit entered Jim's body. That was the pivotal event of his entire life. He always viewed himself as the shaman, having mystical powers and the ability to see through many facades to the truth. It was this power that drove him. This was the great force that pushed his life and took him out of the rigid, military environment of his youth and turned him into a seer in his right.
MUSICIAN: I'm intrigued that he seemed to have at least some idea of what he was looking for. He even wrote a college thesis on the sexual neuroses of crowds, which links up with what many traditions say about music's ability to help transform the higher, sometimes sexual, energies of a group, creating a true communal consciousness... assuming it's done the right way. Jim seemed to be trying to key into some aspects of this, but without understanding the entire process. Did he ever talk about all this as it was happening? How much of what he was doing was consciously directed, and how much was pure instinct?
ROTHSCHILD: It would be hard to separate that in Jim. He was constantly exploring all areas of personal experience and metaphysics. He was totally fascinated with the work of Castaneda; he spent a lot of time with the Indians in the desert eating mushrooms. He also worked a great deal in Chicago with the Living Theatre, learning how to get the audience involved in the artistic moment. You know, where the audience becomes a participant rather than just...
MUSICIAN: ...passive.
ROTHSCHILD: Exactly. And the man was always reading, always carrying a book. And a notebook to write in. So that was one part of him, the intentional seeker. Then there was this other part of him that came out especially when he was drunk — which was a good part of the time — which was...*involuntarily* metaphysical.
MUSICIAN: Meaning that alcohol would open something in him?
ROTHSCHILD: Yeah, it was alcohol 90% of the time, and the rest was psychedelics. Those were his only drugs, really. Contrary to popular belief he was *not* a junkie, he was not into coke, he wasn't into pills, he didn't even smoke grass. But as for the involuntary metaphysics: he'd come into the studio drunk and out of control. I'd turn on the machine and he would just go into these head raps of his. At times he would start talking in tongues. We got some of it on the records. Some of the rants you hear at the middle or end of tunes were put together from that kind of material. We'd take the most significant moments and put them together to create a piece of subconscious poetry.
MUSICIAN: Okay, but I still think that he didn't entirely understand the processes he was exploring, and I'd venture that, like a 20-watt bulb that's fed 80 watts of current, he wasn't prepared to handle what he encountered. This led him to various psychological distortions, drugs, alcohol, and other forms of self-abuse. Was he something of a Jekyll and Hyde character? Was he overwhelmed in some way by the forces he invoked?

We all thought "Strange Days" was the best album. It said everything we were trying to say musically, and it contained some of Jim's best poetry. It was musically exploratory — we hadn't yet tried using the more commercial approach.

ROTHSCHILD: I think his quest overwhelmed him. It's interesting that you mention the Jekyll and Hyde concept, because Jim really was two very distinct and different people. When he was sober, he was the most erudite, balanced, friendly kind of guy-you-could-take-home-to-mom. He was Mr. America. When he would start to drink, he'd be okay at first. Then, suddenly, he would turn into a maniac, turn into Hyde. And it confused and frustrated all of us who were involved with him. It was both impossible to deal with and a source of some of his brilliance.
MUSICIAN: So the same powerful energy that could lead to transcendence, when flowing into the wrong channel, into his negative aspect, could also fuel his self-destruction?
ROTHSCHILD: That's correct. He was more frequently brilliant while sober, but there were moments of transcendence while he was loaded. About two months after Jim died, I heard a news report on the radio that doctors had just discovered that there was a type of what they called a "brawling Irish barroom drunk," who sits around and drinks and drinks, and then all of a sudden starts to pick fights; for no apparent

JERRY HOPKINS/DOORS LIBRARY

When sober, Morrison was Mr. America, a bright, well-read, friendly guy you could bring home to meet the family; but when drunk, he became "a maniac, an absolute monster."

reason, he seems to go schizophrenically insane. Well, this was Jim. He would drink, and all of his friends around him would be getting drunk, but he wouldn't be. And then all of a sudden, he would snap from sober to absolute monster. In this report they said they'd discovered that there was a *huge* group of people in this category; the transformation happened because they were lacking the enzyme to metabolize alcohol. So rather than alcohol being metabolized at the rate of an ounce an hour, as is normal, it wasn't being metabolized at anything near that rate. Then the brain, confronted by all that pure alcohol, actually went into psychosis. Chemically-induced psychosis. It would push the schizoid switch in a normal brain. I was driving in my car as I heard this on the radio, and I screamed, *that's Jim!* It was almost as if he had died two months too soon. Had he been able to tell he was getting drunk, as we all normally do, he wouldn't have gone into that psychotic place; he would have had better control over that energy.

MUSICIAN: But why alcohol as opposed to drugs?

ROTHSCHILD: It's so simple, it's staggering: when people asked him to talk about music, he'd always say, "I'm not a musician, I'm a poet. And I'm Irish." The drug of Irish poetry is alcohol, so that's what he took. Simple as that.

MUSICIAN: John and Robby were into Transcendental Meditation at the time. Did Jim ever show any indication of wanting to try that route, or something similar?

ROTHSCHILD: He gave it a few minutes, but decided he liked the American Indian way better.

MUSICIAN: An Irish shaman using alcohol instead of peyote.

ROTHSCHILD: Right. He'd also use psychedelics.

MUSICIAN: There's more to being a shaman than just gobbling drugs. Didn't anybody try to stop him when he went over the edge? Why didn't anybody say anything to him?

ROTHSCHILD: (Laughs loudly.) EVERYBODY TRIED TO STOP HIM!!! You can't...*strangers* would stop him on the street and try to help him. We *all* tried to stop him. We even hired *professionals* to stop him. If you'd known Jim for even 10 seconds you'd know one thing: he was unstoppable. He was his own motive force, an astounding human being. There was no stopping him. Not even the woman he loved the most could stop him, even for a moment.

People weren't hearing the Doors' music. They went to see Jim Morrison's sexuality, and to hear him sing "Light My Fire." That was very depressing to him; Jim wanted to go up there and do "When the Music's Over" and "The End," and other meaningful compositions.

MUSICIAN: Did they have a healthy relationship?

ROTHSCHILD: Certainly not. It's my personal feeling that Jim used Pam horribly. One of the things Jim did more than anything else with people was test them. Minute to minute. He tried to find where their buttons were and push them as hard as he could to find their breaking point. He did that with Pamela, and they developed it into a very sick game. Yet she was the only woman whom he regularly found any peace with, the only woman he ever trusted, as well as the woman he abused the most.

MUSICIAN: Ray told us that Jim became extremely disillusioned after Miami. Disillusioned with his ability to convey what he intended through music, or possibly disillusioned with pop music itself as a suitable vehicle, or even with his audience's ability to respond to what he was doing. Is there any truth to that? Was he getting discouraged at that point?

ROTHSCHILD: Definitely. He kept insisting, more and more, that he wasn't a singer, or a rock star, or a sex idol, or any of that. He was a poet, and the only way he would be understood

FRED MCDARRAH

The Doors at the Fillmore East: surprisingly, the Doors were never a popular band in L.A. New York was the place they "got it."

was through the world of poetry, by the intelligentsia.

MUSICIAN: What happened to divorce him from the music so thoroughly?

ROTHSCHILD: People weren't hearing the Doors' music. They went to see Jim Morrison's sexuality, and to hear him sing "Light My Fire." That was very depressing to him, because "Light My Fire" was *not* indicative of what he was trying to do. Most people identify that song strongly with Jim, but it was actually written by Robby! Jim wanted to go up there and do "When The Music's Over" and "The End," and other meaningful compositions. But the fans wanted to hear the hits.

MUSICIAN: Well, it's inevitable that when you break out beyond your core audience with a hit, you're bound to attract some yahoos who are just looking for familiar tunes and rock 'n' roll oblivion. Are you saying he was disappointed that he wasn't getting the depth of acceptance out in the heartland that he was used to on either coast?

ROTHSCHILD: Believe it or not, the Doors were never a popular band in L.A. This was one of the least successful cities they ever played. They just didn't *get* it here. New York was the place.

MUSICIAN: But what Jim really wanted the audience to hear, is that what's happening with this new sub-generation of kids getting into the Doors? Has it taken 10 years for people to get the point?

ROTHSCHILD: Exactly. This new generation *hears* what the Doors were trying to do, rather than what the band was famed for during their career. That's very significant...and we, the Doors, talk about what a great vindication it is that what we attempted to do in the 60s is being heard in the 80s. Today, when people, especially young people my kid's age, are into the Doors, they're really *into the Doors*, not just "Light My Fire." That's really significant. During their career we were attempting to get people into the mystique of the Doors' lyrics and the mood of their music. And that's what the kids pick up on today.

MUSICIAN: But couldn't that be because they don't seem to have a vital, purposeful rock culture of their own?

ROTHSCHILD: Yeah, that's a pretty good read. I'll buy that.

MUSICIAN: Getting down to specifics, what piece of work would you say most captured what the Doors were all about? What was the best realization of the concept?

ROTHSCHILD: *Strange Days*. That was a bulls-eye. We all thought it was the best album. Significantly, it was also the one with the weakest sales.

MUSICIAN: As is often the case. What made it work?

ROTHSCHILD: It said everything we were trying to say musically, and it contained some of Jim's best poetry. It was musically exploratory — we hadn't yet tried to reach the broadest possible audience using the more commercial approach. On *Soft Parade* we were really trying to hit the mass, *mass* market, with horns, strings, the full orchestra treatment. But that was all done very consciously in an attempt to explore all the idioms available to us.

MUSICIAN: Ray talked disparagingly about "Touch Me," or at least said that it never worked when they played it live; even implied he didn't want to play it. Did they feel this kind of a thing was a compromise of their art?

ROTHSCHILD: Well, it was a compromise that they were very, very delighted to participate in. "Touch Me" sold a couple million records — their second most successful single. It lost them part of their original audience, while at the same time gaining them an enormous number of new fans.

MUSICIAN: If Jim thought "Light My Fire" was lightweight, how did he justify "Touch Me"?

ROTHSCHILD: At that point Jim was pretty bereft of ideas, and, as I mentioned, he was losing interest in the music in general. Also, when we did that album, the concept was to go all the way back to home base on the next album and really surprise everybody. Which is exactly what we did on *Morrison Hotel*.

MUSICIAN: Let's jump ahead to *L.A. Woman*, when you decided to break with the band. What were your feelings about the record at the time, and how do you see the whole thing now?

ROTHSCHILD: I have the same feelings today that I had the day I walked out of the studio. There are two songs on that record; the rest of it is...*dogmeat*.

MUSICIAN: I assume you mean "Riders On The Storm" and "L.A. Woman"?

ROTHSCHILD: Easy to guess, isn't it?

MUSICIAN: Yeah, but two classic songs on an album isn't a bad score.

ROTHSCHILD: Sure, they're splendid. But if you'd been there you would have seen what was going on. We were in rehearsal on that one for about three months, and the band was very lethargic. Jim had to be *dragged* into the studio. It was a band in its death throes, and it was grotesque to watch. I had just finished with Janis Joplin's *Pearl* album, which was a labor of love, one of the greatest experiences I'd had in the studio. Just like the first Doors album had been. So here I am, at the nether end of a career with a singer that doesn't want to sing and a band that is hanging around lackadaisically coming up with terrible ideas. So reluctantly I went into the studio with them, and they were totally unprepared — just like they'd been on the previous three albums. But I thought, what the hell, let's try it again.

MUSICIAN: How bad was it?

ROTHSCHILD: Well, I was in the studio with them and I realized that I actually had my head down on the console for the first time in my career. I just wanted to go to sleep! That's how *bored* I was. The music...it sounded like a cocktail lounge in there!

MUSICIAN: Specifically, what was wrong with the music?

Rest assured, Jim Morrison is well dead. I know it because when Pamela came back from France, she visited my house regularly... and endlessly wept the bitterest tears I've ever seen over the death of her lover. That's something she couldn't possibly have faked.

ROTHSCHILD: There was no heart in it. The arrangements sucked. They weren't listening to any of the ideas I was presenting; they weren't listening to each other. And Jim was singing *horribly*. Finally, I turned to our engineer, Bruce Botnick, and said, "The best thing I can do for these guys is to get out of here." Not only because I was bored shitless, but also for altruistic reasons. The only way they were going to get together to make a record was if they lost me as a whipping master. They had to be self-directed, or it was going to collapse. And wha'daya know; they got together enough so at least those two songs feel great.

MUSICIAN: When you say that the band was in its death throes, was this a result of Jim's degeneration or external factors? Or a bit of both?

ROTHSCHILD: It was definitely because of Jim. The others were almost totally demoralized; there was almost open warfare between the band and Jim at that point. They'd survived Miami as a unit, stiff-upper-lipping it and all that, even though it cost the band a fortune. But no, it was Jim's attitude that demoralized them after that. He just didn't really want to put out.

MUSICIAN: That brings us to the theory that some people including Ray Manzarek, have put forth that Jim may have become so disillusioned that he finally decided to disappear, to remove himself as an image...

ROTHSCHILD: ...not as an image. At that point he was speaking almost daily with his good friend Francis Ford Coppola, who wanted to make films with him. That's where Jim was headed.

MUSICIAN: Okay. But there's still the assertion that, with the exception of Pam, none of his friends actually saw his body in Paris, as the coffin was sealed.

ROTHSCHILD: Rest assured, Jim Morrison is well dead. If for no other reason, I know it because when Pamela came back from France, she visited my house regularly...and endlessly wept to bitterest tears I've ever seen over the death of her lover. That's something she couldn't have faked. Ray may not have seen him dead, but Pamela did. Jim is gone.

MUSICIAN: Amen.

ROTHSCHILD: Amen, indeed.

The shaman who desires a song does not fix his or her mind on particular words nor sing a known tune. In dreams, or other dreamlike states, the songs come through the barrier that separates the human being from the spirit world...perhaps it is the mind of the shaman that is now ready to receive the sacred sounds that come from within or without and are rendered into a poetic chant. These poetries, arising at a moment of divine inspiration in the crucible of the soul, are often felt to be medicine. Isaac Tens, a Gitksan Indian, recalled that his first encounter with the spirit was heralded by a loss of consciousness. His body was quivering: "While I remained in this state, I began to sing. A chant was coming out of me without my being able to do anything to stop it. Many things appeared to me presently: huge birds and animals...these were visible only to me, not to others in my house." Such visions happen when a man is about to become a shaman; they occur of their own accord. The songs force themselves out complete without any attempt to compose them.

Shamanic Voices: A Survey of Visionary Narratives
Joan Halifax, Ph.D., Copyright 1979, E.P. Dutton

FRED MCDARRAH

Morrison's grave at Pere La Chaise, Paris.

Since its introducti
Synclavier II has outsold all o

Synclavier II creates sounds never before possible from any synthesizer.

In April of this year New England Digital Corporation introduced a stereo LP demo record to illustrate some of Synclavier II's incredible sounds. After hearing this record, many people called to say they couldn't believe all the sounds on the demo could possibly have been created by any synthesizer. However, after seeing and hearing Synclavier II for themselves, they were amazed at more than just the absolute realism of its instrumental sounds. They were awed by the infinite variety of tonal colors, unique sounds, and special effects so easily created by this incredible instrument. We might add, many of these people now own a Synclavier II.

Synclavier II not only produces sounds no other synthesizer can produce, it also offers more live performance control than any other synthesizer.

Synclavier II gives you an extraordinary ability to change sounds as you play them. Using Synclavier II's real-time controllers you can accurately recreate many of the subtle changes real instruments make during a live performance.

Here are some of the real-time controls that have made Synclavier II famous: Attacks can be individually altered both in length and brightness for each note. Vibratos can be brought in at different times. Vibrato depths can be changed at will. Individual notes and entire chords can be made to crescendo and decrescendo smoothly and naturally. Final decays of percussive sounds can be made to ring out longer for low notes than for high notes. In strummed chords, some notes can ring out longer than others to compensate for the differences between open strings and stopped strings. Individual notes and entire chords can be pitch bent up or down. The overtone content of any sound can be completely varied from one note to the next. Up to four different rates of portamento can be performed on the keyboard at one time. Some of the harmonics of a sound can remain stationary while other harmonics of the same sound slide against them. And the list goes on.

The possibilities for programming new sounds with Synclavier II are limitless.

Although Synclavier II comes preprogrammed with over 128 preset sounds, it does not lock you into these preset sounds. All of these presets can be modified any way you wish. The possibilities for creating sounds from scratch are limited only by your own skill and imagination.

Synclavier II can store an unlimited number of sounds.

Any sound created on Synclavier II can be permanently stored on a floppy disc with just the touch of a button. From 64 to 256 separate sounds can be stored on a single mini-diskette. The number of mini-diskettes you can use with Synclavier II is unlimited.

All of this is just a glimpse of Synclavier II's enormous potential. The real potential of Synclavier II can be more completely understood by taking a close look at Synclavier II's super advanced hardware and software. The capabilities of Synclavier II's hardware and software extend far beyond any demands currently being made on them.

Synclavier II is controlled by the most powerful computer available in any synthesizer made today.

New England Digital Corporation leads the field in the development and use of hardware applications for music synthesis.

New England Digital uses a powerful 16 bit computer that addresses up to 128k bytes of memory. Other digital manufacturers design their systems around microcomputers. Microcomputers are simply not powerful enough to control large numbers of voices on the keyboard at one time. Most current digital systems are limited to 8 usable voices. When these systems try to control more than 8 voices at once, the speed at which these voices can be played on the keyboard slows down considerably. So, for musical applications, more than 8 voices can not be played on the keyboard at one time.

These microcomputers are also not fast enough to permit extensive real-time control of a sound while it is being played on the keyboard. A few real-time features are available while other important features are deleted because of speed limitations of the microcomputers.

New England Digital Corporation designs and builds its own 16 bit computer, as well as the Synclavier II synthesizer.

New England Digital's 16 bit computer and Synclavier II synthesizer are so unique, New England Digital has been awarded three basic patents on their design, and has several others pending.

The speed of Synclavier II's computer is unmatched by any other digital synthesizer system on the market today. Synclavier II's computer can easily control up to 32 voices on the keyboard at one time without slowing down. No other digital system in the world comes close to this kind of control.

While some synthesizer manufacturers consider a "voice" to be one separately controlled sine wave, one voice of a Synclavier II synthesizer consists of the following: (1) 24 sine waves, (2) a volume envelope generator, (3) a harmonic envelope generator, (4) very sophisticated digital FM controls, (5) an extensive vibrato control, featuring up to 10 different low frequency wave forms, (6) a portamento control that can be either logarithmic or linear, (7) a decay adjust feature, permitting lower notes to have longer decays than higher notes.

i just one year ago, er digital systems combined.

Synclavier II's 16 track digital memory recorder is more sophisticated and has more features than any other synthesizer recorder or sequencer in the world.

Synclavier II's digital memory recorder has enormous capabilities because its computer is fast enough to perform the millions of math computations necessary to make all these features operational at one time.

For example, Synclavier II's digital memory recorder enables you to set independent loop points for each of its 16 tracks. So, you could have 8 notes repeating on track #1, with 64 notes repeating on track #3, and 2 notes repeating on track #7, and so on. All 16 tracks can be looping independently at the same time but still be in perfect sync.

In addition, you can transpose each separate track individually. Track #6 could be transposed up a 4th, while track #8 was transposed down a 5th, and so on.

Other recording features made possible by Synclavier II's ultra fast computer.

Sounds can be bounced from one track to another. You can overdub on just one track, without losing the material already recorded on that track. You can change the volume of individual tracks. You can change the speed of the recorder without changing the pitch. You can punch in and out instantaneously. You can fast forward or rewind just as you would on a 16 track tape machine. You can instantly erase any number of tracks in the recorder.

You can change the scale of a piece of music already recorded in the recorder. For example, if you had a piece recorded in the key of C, you could change it to the key of B flat minor without rerecording a single note in the recorder. Or you could change a piece of music already recorded in the recorder from a tempered scale to a microtonal scale, without recording a single note over again.

You could keep the notes of an instrument that was recorded on one of the tracks in the recorder, and assign a new instrument to play the previous instrument's notes. For example, if a flute were playing on track #5, you could assign a guitar to track #5 and have it play the flute's notes automatically.

Synclavier II's computer is not only the fastest and most powerful computer available on any synthesizer today, it's also enormously expandable. with A to D converters, D to A converters, real time clocks, printers, modems, and alphanumeric and graphic CRT's.

The New England Digital Computer has had 5 years of proven production and successful sales to scientific end users for real-time applications. This history of steadfast reliability has been a major part of Synclavier II's unparalleled success in a market place choked with new products.

Synclavier II has the fastest and most accessible software available in any synthesizer today.

Synclavier II uses an extremely high level structured language called XPL. XPL has proven to be an extremely fast language which has continually provided the means to add new features to Synclavier II on a regular basis.

Other synthesizers are still using languages too limited for our purposes. Assembler is a good example. It is by far a much slower and more difficult programming process to use than XPL. Software improvements made by Assembler language could take months. But with XPL we've been able to add totally new features to Synclavier II in a few days.

New England Digital can add new features to your Synclavier II synthesizer through the mail.

During the 10 months since the introduction of Synclavier II, New England Digital has issued four software updates to the owners of Synclavier II synthesizers. Those updates were mailed out to Synclavier II owners automatically. They included new software that customers had asked for. The updates also included new features and improvements that New England Digital felt were a strong enhancement to the operation of Synclavier II.

Software updates ensure the Synclavier II customer that his system will always be state-of-the-art.

When you buy a Synclavier II, you will automatically be sent new features as they are developed this year, next year, and for years to come.

The Synclavier II synthesizer is not a temporary answer in a technological world moving at warp speed. It is the answer. When you buy a Synclavier II, the instrument improves as fast as our technology improves. Since we're already leading the field of digital synthesis, we feel you are comfortably safe in assuming Synclavier II will be your companion for a long time to come.

When you own Synclavier II, you will never need to sell your "old" system in order to buy a better one. Your Synclavier II system becomes better automatically.

For further information and a copy of Synclavier II's stereo LP demo record, send your address plus $1.00 to either of the following:

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(802) 649-5183

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Oakland, CA 94611
(415) 339-2111

new england digital

tape cassette recorder. "I'm not talking about revolution, I'm not talking about guns and riots, I'm talking about love. Love one another. Love your brother, hug him." He said to the audience, "Take your clothes off and love each other." He didn't mean it sexually, necessarily. He meant an outpouring of good feeling for one another. Love. That's what he was talking about. Craziness, wildness, madness, love, love, love.

MUSICIAN: The dark day, of course, July 3rd, 1971. Jim's in Paris, word filtering out a week or so later that he has died.

RAY: Mysterious circumstances, actually. Bill Siddons, a guy who was our manager at the time, called me and said, "Ray, I got a call from Pam in Paris, Jim's dead." I said, come on, man, I've heard this story too many times. I know Jim's fallen out of windows, Jim's smashed up his car, I mean something was always happening to him. But it was ridiculous. I don't believe it. And he said "I've got a noon flight from L.A. to Paris." I said, good, go over and find out what's going on there. See if there's any truth to the story at all, and call us and let us know what's happening. He got prepared, goes to the hotel room, and there's a sealed coffin in the hotel room. The French death certificate says his heart stopped—doesn't say heart attack—it says his heart stopped. It didn't make any sense. There was nothing that said what caused the death of whoever, or whatever, was in that sealed coffin. He never saw the body. Death certificate never said anything. A day later, they put a coffin in the ground. A few people were there, and Jim was supposed to be in that coffin. I assume he is. I haven't heard from him in a while, but if there's one guy in all of rock and roll that would have been capable of staging a little event like that—getting a phony death certificate or paying off some French doctor to sign his name to some death certificate and putting 150 pounds of sand into a coffin and splitting to some point on this planet — Africa, who knows where — Jim Morrison would have been the guy to pull it off.

MUSICIAN: With what motive, Ray?

RAY: Go back to the whole disillusionment that began to happen around the time of Miami. Here were the Doors, we were trying to change the world. The world said, we are *not* going to change the way you want us to change. Richard Nixon is going to be our president; we are going to continue to fight the war in Vietnam; you guys are not going to change the obscenity laws; that's all there is to it. And Jim just gave up, and said, I can't beat it, man, I'm giving everything I can, I'm just a poet, a singer, in a rock and roll band, telling my stories, man, singing my words. If you want to listen to me, we can go far together. If you don't want to listen to me...

MUSICIAN: Ray, it's been ten years since Jim's death, and in addition to the continuing success of the Doors, you're enjoying your new role as the producer of X, one of the hottest new bands in L.A. How do you see the continuity between what you were doing then and what's going on now?

RAY: What I like about the Los Angeles new wave/punk rock scene, is the intensity, the commitment to the music. I didn't find that going on in the seventies, I didn't really hear many bands that were totally dedicated and committed to music. That's why I am involved with X today. The feeling is very similar to when the Doors were around; people are really committed to music and not committed to making money. Making money is the secondary aspect of making music. If you are good at making music, you'll make money. If you're not, maybe you'll make money too, if you get together with a good producer. But you can't worry about money; a musician cannot think about money. A musician must only think about that transcendent moment when the music is happening. When you are the music and the music is you, and it's in you, and it's out of you and within you and without you and all those things. That's what a musician has to live for. And that's what the kids today are doing, man! That's what the new rockers are all about, and I love the intensity. X is the best band in Los Angeles; hands down, they're a phenomenal band, and they were influenced by the Doors. It's interesting that on X's first album they do "Soul Kitchen." I got a tape from them of six or seven songs, and it was very badly recorded, and I couldn't really hear what was going on, and after about the fifth listening to it, I went, wait a minute, wait a minute, this song—the one that goes real fast, D-D-D-D-Dorothy, come here, listen to this, this is "Soul Kitchen." I was amazed, absolutely shocked.

MUSICIAN: In the ten years since Jim's death, other groups from that era sound dated or are forgotten altogether. Yet, the Doors go on, bigger than ever. How do you explain that?

RAY: Well, the Doors were always ten years ahead of their time. It's ten years since Morrison decided to leave the planet. So I think all avant-garde art takes a while for the public to catch up to it. The Doors weren't necessarily avant-garde, but I think the Doors were different. The Doors were *strange* — that's for sure. So I think it's taken a while for a lot of people to understand the Doors, to put the Doors into some kind of historical perspective and to realize the timeliness of the Doors, the universality of the Doors' message. You know we didn't really want to comment necessarily on what was going on, we wanted to talk about the human condition, about being alive. And I don't think anything has changed since the Doors recorded their first album in late 1966. I don't think the human condition for America has changed at all. I think the things we were talking about are just as pertinent, if not more pertinent, today: coming to grips with fear, coming to grips with reality. coming to grips with your own dark side, with the madness that lies within. You've got to conquer fear and you've got to conquer madness within you, or at least you've got to come to terms with it. Otherwise you're not going to be a whole human being. And that's what the Doors' message was all about. M

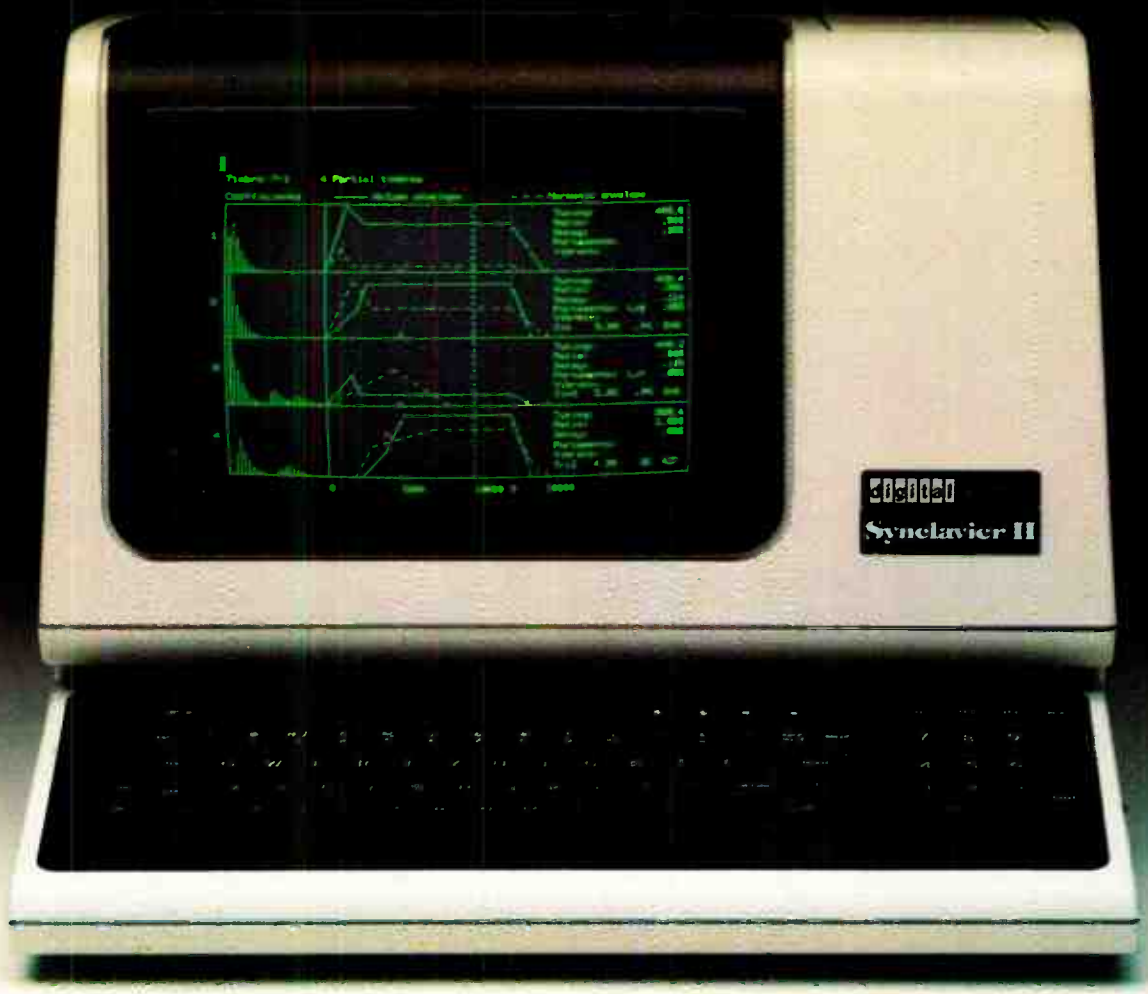
The Doors' Equipment

Ray Manzarek: "I started out with a Vox Continental organ, like all the English groups used. It was flat on top so I could put the Fender Rhodes Piano Bass right on top of it. The bass would be up on the left, so I'd play the organ with my right hand. That's how I did the first album, before we brought in a studio bass player. Then I overdubbed some acoustic piano, I think it was either a Yamaha or a Baldwin. 'Crystal Ship' was acoustic piano and organ. The second album was done the same way, except we added a Hohner Clavinet and a harpsichord played through a Baldwin amp, which was wonderful. We started off with Sears Silvertone amps, which were actually very good. Then we went on to Fender and Acoustic stuff. We used Fender amps in the studio, and the band bought me a Hammond C-3 organ for my birthday, and I used that on *L.A. Woman* a lot. That tinkly sound on 'Riders On The Storm' was a Fender Rhodes electric piano. I also used a Wurlitzer — a funky little piano — that's on *Morrison Hotel*. I didn't use any synthesizers myself. We brought in the late Paul Beaver, a real genius, to put some things on *Strange Days*. 'Horse Latitudes' may have been the first time a synthesizer was used in rock 'n' roll, I'm not sure. On the first album I played bass on the Rhodes Piano Bass, but it didn't have the punch, the attack, of something hitting a string. It was fine in concert, 'cause it would move a lot of air and carried a deep bottom to it."

Robby Krieger: "I originally was using a '64 Gibson Melody Maker; that got stolen so I went to an SG Special. We used Acoustic amps at first, and then built our own stuff. But I always preferred the old Fender Showmans. I wound up using a Fender Twin Reverb quite a bit in the studio, too. Nowadays I'm into a Gibson 355, and a '61 Stratocaster. I've got a Mesa Boogie for the stage, and a bunch of old Fenders that I use in the studio."

John Densmore: "Billy Cobham and Art Blakey were big influences. I started with Gretsch drums and then switched to Ludwig. It was a pretty standard set-up. One tom-tom on the bass drum and a floor tom. Real spectacular! I never went for the two bass drum routine; there are lots of people who can do more with one than most guys can do with two. I liked to take the bottom heads off my toms to make them bark and growl. I hated new skins — I loved the sound of 'em after they'd been beaten to death for months. Snarling as hell — that was my sound."

Introducing Synclavier II's Terminal Support Package.



The Terminal Support Package provides a completely new method to access Synclavier II's computer. The Terminal Support Package consists of three items: (1) Graphics, (2) Script, a music language, (3) Max, a programming language.

GRAPHICS

The Graphics Package allows the user of Synclavier II to have a readout of numerical data printed out on a computer terminal screen. With the depression of the return character on the terminal, the numerical data is changed into a graphic display. A clear depiction of the volume and harmonic envelopes are drawn out on the screen. The relative volumes of each sine wave, comprising the sound whose envelopes are currently on the screen, is also displayed.

The graphics display provides an extremely valuable visual tool for programming new sounds and for thoroughly analyzing sounds which have already been programmed for Synclavier II.

SCRIPT

Script is a music language. It can be used as a composing tool to write musical performances into Synclavier II's computer without playing anything on the keyboard. Precise polyrhythmic melodies can be developed which would be difficult or even impossible to play on a keyboard. Composing with Script gives you up to 16 tracks to record on.

All the real-time changes available with Synclavier II's digital memory recorder can also be programmed through a terminal with Script. This includes dynamics and other musical accents.

Any composition created with Script can be stored on a disk, and then loaded into Synclavier II's digital memory recorder. All compositions created with Script can be made to play back in perfect sync with a multi-track recorder.

Another feature which is extremely helpful for musicians is the editing feature of Script. This allows you to edit existing compositions through the terminal. You can cut apart, reassemble, or tailor in any manner a composition without ever risking a loss of any of the original elements.

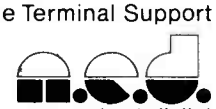
MAX

Max is a complete music applications development system. It allows you to control all of New England Digital's special purpose hardware, i.e., the computer, analog-to-digital converters, digital-to-analog converters, and other devices like a scientific timer which can be programmed to be SMPTE compatible.

Max comes complete with documentation for the Synclavier II hardware interfaces to enable a programmer to design his own software program. This language is for people who possess a much more sophisticated knowledge of programming computers. Basically it is a superset of XPL, the software language New England Digital uses to program Synclavier II's computer.

Max is designed to permit the owner of Synclavier II to take greater advantage of New England Digital's powerful 16 bit computer. Up to now, all software had to be written by New England Digital. The Terminal Support Package with the Max language gives you the opportunity to explore new ground on your own. The ways in which Synclavier II's hardware can be used by Max is virtually limitless.

All of us at New England Digital feel we've only begun to explore and tap the awesome potential of the Synclavier II digital synthesizer. The Terminal Support Package is just one more step in an exciting journey toward this realization.



Number One *cont. from pg. 35*

"But Mort! We can't just *murder* a man!"

"He's not a man!" Mort shouted. "He's a mad dog! A rabid, shit-eating, foamy-mouthed hound of Heaven coming to tear you to Alpo! Putting a bullet between his eyes is the only thing he's *left* you to do!" Mort's voice fell and he added, "If you're any kind of man at all."

"But how?" I asked miserably.

"How? No problem, kid. You take a meeting with Becket. Secret place. Contact talk. Use someone else's name. Someone he trusts. Not mine. Get him alone. Boom-boom! Or use poison if you think it's safe. Slip some strychnine in his holy water. All it takes is guts, imagination, and the *will* to succeed."

"But, Mort, this is murder!"

"Murder is for detective movies and people in the low brackets," Mort insisted. "This is business. Becket's the one who wants to play rough. In 99 per cent of the countries in the world, a man attempting theft on his scale would be automatically executed without trial. Keep that in mind."

"I'll need an alibi," I reminded him, and was then amazed that I had said it.

"No problem, Brother!" Mort clapped his hands together with the glee of a piranha in a feeding frenzy. "I'll say we were together in a meeting! Look, I'll even write it in my appointment book! Hell, Becket's such a recluse it'll probably be two weeks before anybody knows he's dead."

"I can't help thinking," I put in with a resolve that made Pontius Pilate look like Patrick Henry, "that there must be some other way."

"Yeats," Mort moved his nose right up to my forehead. "There is no other way. In the jungle you either hunt or you starve. I figure it like this. If Becket's as big a phony as I think he is, he *deserves* to get blown away."

"And if he isn't," I rationalized, "he's damned anxious to meet his maker anyhow."

"There you go!" Mort slapped the desk top. "Not to mention, Becket's death is the one thing, at this point, that could really revitalize his career."

I looked up.

"Not that that has anything to do with this *directly*," Mort amended. "But as long as we're going through with it, it'd be shortsighted not to at least *examine* the impact Becket's death will have on his catalog sales."

"I hadn't thought of that," I swallowed.

"You would have, don't worry." Mort pulled out a folder. "Look, these damned religious albums will *explode* in this new context. People love hearing dead singers yodel about God and Heaven and Better Worlds. Nice marketing touch."

"And the old albums..." I began.

"Right! By the time we pick up the catalog, Becket'll be a legend. Look at the records the Doors have been moving since Morrison kicked off! Or the way they kept Hendrix turning out product *long* after he'd gone to Electric Angel Land. Some of these guys are a lot easier to merchandise dead than they were alive!"

"Yeah," I nodded. "No conflicts. No big demands. I guess I could do for Becket what that plane crash did for Jim Croce."

"Jim Croce!" Mort snickered and shook his head. "Yeats, I'm thinking TV movies, T-shirts, cult-like devotion! I'm in Presley/Lennon territory and you're over there giving me Jim Croce!"

"Sorry, Mort." I still felt out of it, but I admit I was getting used to the idea. I knew Mort would have nothing constructive to say now that the platinum fever was upon him. But before he faded out altogether I needed one more thing. "Mort?"

"Yes, Yeats?"

"I'll need a gun."

Mort went into his desk and came out with a tiny, gold-plated .22 automatic. The same kind Reagan was shot with. Across the barrel ran the inscription, "To Mort, With a Double Shot of Your Baby's Love. Best, Uncle Monkey."

"It's real," Mort assured me. "Nice promo item. Always kept it loaded. Now Yeats, you go out there and shoot James Becket...back up to Number One." Mort repeated "Number One" and, licking his lips, added "with a Bullet."

I recall now how I went back into my office, locked the door, and sat studying my reflection with the gun.

I tried to force myself to examine this circumstance as I was sure I would, for the rest of my life, replay it in my mind. After I had shot Becket I would be different. I would be a *killer*. Nothing else I could ever become, not a father, not a millionaire, would change that. Once you kill you are a killer forever. The fact that I was going to kill a celebrity — a popular artist some people cared for very deeply — didn't mean that much to me. I considered that I might even be an *assassin*, but decided that didn't fit at all. An assassin was a weird, pale little ferret ejaculating bullets into a public figure in lieu of any personal potency. An assassin doesn't know his victim personally and has no practical motive. I, ordered and clear-headed, was not an assassin in any but an archaic sense. If I fit into any category, I supposed it was "torpedo." I rolled that one around for a while. Torpedo. I was like the marble-mouthed Mafia hood with a bag over his head, telling how he executed a dozen Detroit contracts while not sounding bright enough to execute a proper left-hand turn.

Maybe not. Maybe I wasn't a Torpedo. After all, a professional killer kills as a regular gig. Not I, my friend. I was, I decided, like one of those suave killers Perry Mason or Charlie Chan comes up against. I was a one-time-only slayer, resolutely practical and self-controlled. Is there a name for this sort of killer? "Murderer" would be okay if one pronounced it with the professional clipped accent of Raymond Burr: "Mur'dra." Lady MacBeth histrionics ("MURRRR-DERRRER!") wouldn't do at all.

No, I decided, what I was was not an assassin, not a torpedo. I was a *guilty suspect*. I decided I was surely one other thing, too. I was about to shoot a famous millionaire for the sake of my position in a record company, and, incidentally, for the sake of that company's profits. Young or not, I sure was a real *businessman*.

I arranged for Becket to come to New York to meet with our art director about album graphics. We booked him into a suite at the Navarrone and I took a room on another floor under an assumed name. When Becket's meeting adjourned, I approached his room and knocked on the door.

He answered bleary-eyed and bathrobed, obviously surprised to see me. The frail singer turned and entered his room. I followed, locking his door behind me. I withdrew my heater, my rod, my gat, my piece, and raised it to James Becket's boney nose.

"You gonna shoot me?" he asked in a thick, soft voice.

I tried to answer but my throat was constricted. I nodded quickly. He stared past the gun barrel, at my eyes.

"Care to tell me why?"

I knew I shouldn't say anything. Shouldn't talk to Becket at all. The last thing I needed was to relate to him as a *person* instead of as the ravenous dog I'd geared up to shoot.

But I guess I would have grabbed any excuse to delay stepping over that homicidal line.

So I spilled my guts to my victim. I told him all the good reasons I had for killing him. Becket sat with his chin on his fist and seemed to consider everything I said quite dispassionately.

When he finally spoke he sighed, "Well. There's *no* way I can see keeping Mort Parnel on under *these* circumstances."

"What do you mean, 'Keep him on'?" I thought maybe the circumstance had sent Becket completely off the pier.

"Use your head, Yeats!" he said a little more testily than I would have thought was wise, considering our respective positions. "I don't need any more money! I ain't out to ruin your damn fool record company."

"Well, you may not mean to," I countered. "But all the same you're succeeding in its destruction with all the grace of a giraffe in a china shop!"

"Don't be naive," he shot back. "What do you think will happen when Orpheus Records can't meet my advances?"

"The company will fold!"

continued on pg. 98

The only synthesizer that can improve on Synclavier® II is Synclavier® II.

New England Digital is the only digital synthesizer manufacturer in the world that completely designs and builds its own computer as well as its own synthesizer. New England Digital's powerful 16 bit computer, along with the XPL language used to program it, make Synclavier II more versatile, flexible, and expandable than any other synthesizer made.

In order to understand how advanced Synclavier II truly is, it's necessary to understand the enormous differences between Synclavier II's hardware and software, and that of other digital systems.

No other digital synthesizer on the market is capable of keeping pace with Synclavier II's XPL language.

XPL is a high level structured language, which offers tremendously fast and accurate control for writing complex real-time digital synthesis programs. Synclavier II is the only digital synthesizer totally programmed in a high level structured language.

Other digital systems are programmed in much simpler languages, like Assembler. Using Assembler language, it's very difficult to write complex programs with any degree of speed or accuracy.

XPL language uses a compiler. The compiler automatically translates the way we think into the way the computer thinks. Assembler doesn't use a compiler. So the programmer has to do his own translating from the way he thinks into the way the computer thinks.

For example: If you wanted to express the equation A = 2 + 5 in Assembler, you would have to go through the following instructions:

(1) Find a register in the computer that is empty.
(Let's say it's register 0)
(2) Assign register 0 to contain A.
(3) Load register 0 with a 2.
(4) Add to register 0 a 5.

In XPL, the programmer just types in A = 2 + 5. That's it. The compiler automatically translates that equation into a series of instructions that the computer can understand.

If you wanted to compute the square root of five in XPL, you would simply write A = SQR(5); the compiler would automatically generate a set of instructions to communicate that equation to the computer. In Assembler, the programmer would have to write almost 100 instructions all by himself in order to get the same result.

The more complicated a program gets, the more XPL pays off. The inverse is true for Assembler. The more complex a program gets, the more impossible it is for the Assembler programmer to keep track of all the enormous details all by himself.

Synclavier II allows software changes to be made quicker and more accurately than any other digital synthesizer.

It's no small wonder that Synclavier II offers more than five times the features found on any other digital system. Synclavier II's XPL language is the most advanced programming process currently being used to program a digital synthesizer. XPL offers solutions to digital programming that other languages can't offer.

For example, one big problem encountered in programming is how to change one small function of a synthesizer system without changing something else in the process.

A change such as this is not always so easy to do in Assembler language. In order to change the function of just one button in Assembler, the programmer would have to rewrite the software program for practically the entire synthesizer. This is an extremely difficult task because the programmer himself is totally responsible for keeping track of every detail of the software program. Making a software change with Assembler is like having to tear down a finished house and rebuild it from the ground up, just to add a new window.

This tearing down and rebuilding process required by Assembler takes an immense amount of time, not to mention money. Furthermore, the chances are very great that the rebuilt "house" will have more variations on the original structure than the one change the programmer intended to make.

Using XPL to add a new feature to Synclavier II doesn't require the programmer to start over from scratch. The programmer can specifically address the one feature he wishes to change and let the XPL compiler take care of the rest. The compiler allows the new information to be incorporated into the present software without destroying any part of already existing features.

With XPL, New England Digital can afford to add new features to Synclavier II on a regular basis. In this way Synclavier II can remain state-of-the-art for years and years to come.

Synclavier II is the only digital synthesizer that can make affordable changes in its hardware.

What happens when a digital synthesizer eventually uses up all the computing power available in its computer by adding too many new features or options?

If you change any part of the hardware in a digital system programmed by Assembler, nothing will work at all. The new computer hardware won't know what to do with the old software. In order to make the new computer hardware work, an entirely new program must be constructed from scratch This is a far greater project than merely adding on new software feature to an existing program. The time required to redesign Assembler software so it could deal with a hardware change, could take up to a year or more.

The architecture of Synclavier II makes hardware changes easy to incorporate. Synclavier II uses a MOVE architecture computer. Synclavier II's MOVE architecture allows additional computing power external to the computer's central processor itself. This means that the possibilities for implementing new hardware can be done in a modular form.

Synclavier II's software is designed so modular hardware additions can be handled by modular software additions. The use of hardware and software modules gives New England Digital total freedom to create any new operation they want for Synclavier II.

If the constant addition of new features eventually exhausts the computing power of Synclavier II's computer, New England Digital will already have the means to accommodate additional computing power for the Synclavier II system at a very reasonable cost. Other digital manufacturers will eventually be forced into a complete redesign of their systems at an enormous cost.

No other digital synthesizer in the world is capable of improving on Synclavier II's advanced technology.

No other digital synthesizer on the market is controlled by a computer anywhere near as fast as Synclavier II's. In fact, Synclavier II's 16 bit computer is more than 10 times faster than any microprocessor currently being used by other digital systems.

No other digital synthesizer is programmed in a high level structured language like XPL. The likelihood of another synthesizer manufacturer developing a high level language compiler competitive to New England Digital's, is not something to bet your future on. To bring New England Digital's XPL compiler to its present state has required more than 10 man years of development.

Synclavier II not only has the fastest computer and the most advanced software, it also has the only architecture that is flexible and expandable enough to permit serious advancements in its system's design without taking forever.

Synclavier II is truly designed to be a state-of-the-art digital system today, tomorrow, and for years to come. And New England Digital is the only synthesizer manufacturer that can honestly say it has the means to upgrade every Synclavier II they sell to keep pace with new changes in digital technology.

new england digital

CARLA BLEY

The Toast of the Continent

America's Great and Neglected Post-Bop, Pre-Avant, Neo-Modern Fe-male Jazz Composer

By Rafi Zabor

We didn't get to hear her play piano and sing from the age of three in her father's Oakland church, so for the most of us the public life of Carla Bley began in the early sixties with the horselaugh of "Donkey" and the other tunes she wrote for Paul Bley, who was then her husband. She had met him, as history tells us, while working as a cigarette girl at Birdland, and when the Bleys moved to California for awhile, Carla midwifed the audible birth of the decade's avant-garde by recording Paul's gigs with the Ornette Coleman quartet (Paul later bootlegged them on his own, to universal opprobrium), crouched underneath the piano, so she's said, with a microphone and a mixer. Back in New York, other people — Art Farmer, Jimmy Giuffre, George Russell, Steve Kuhn — started playing her tunes, among them the classic "Ida Lupino," which summarized her errant charm by sounding at once like a work of the most complete sophistication and a six-year-old child's one-fingered attempt to write a blues.

Outside of the big bands, it's almost impossible to make a mark solely as a tunesmith in modern jazz — all the great writers have been great players, with Tadd Dameron virtually the only exception — but Bley's work was so distinguished and original that she actually received some recognition and won a few polls. In the seventies, she would be able to support herself on composer's royalties; the mid-sixties found her doing some gigs on keyboards but making the bulk of her living as a hat-check girl and usherette. She and Bley had separated but she had retained the name which suits her. "Carla Bley" is euphonious while at the same time suggesting something slightly strange. In point of fact, her music sounds more like

LAURA LEVINE

her maiden name: Borg.

It seems inevitable, at least in retrospect, that a composer of Bley's, or Borg's, gifts would find some kind of big band — but where, in the avant-garde of the sixties, was a big band (and the money and the audience to support it) to come from? She came into an extraordinary piece of luck, if there is such a thing as luck. The sixties were great for utopian dreams but short on execution: the Jazz Composers Guild, which included virtually everyone in the New York avant-garde but John Coltrane, lasted only six months. It was to have been everything that Chicago's A.A.C.M. would later become: aesthetic and economic collective, spur to inspiration, means of survival, brave new world. After its civil war and dissolution, only its orchestra, which Carla Bley and Michael Mantler had organized, remained. They kept it together as the Jazz Composers Orchestra, both for their own use and for others on the scene who wanted to write major orchestral works. Mantler produced pioneering large-scale concertos for Cecil Taylor, Roswell Rudd, Don Cherry, Gato Barbieri, Pharoah Sanders and Larry Coryell. Bley found her orchestral voice and nothing like it had ever been heard before, although its elements had circulated among church choirs, football bands, Kurt Weill operas, German beer halls, Renaissance brass, gazebo orchestras in the town squares of Europe, New Orleans tuba jazz, drunkards in the alley, Mexican funerals, Wagner tetralogies and other four-car collisions for generations: avant-garde Dixieland, performed by free-blowers condemned to play polkas. Ornette Coleman had loosened music up so that "creeps like me were let in underneath the cracks," and the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* album showed her "interesting music that was

not influenced by Black music. Here was European music, and after all I was European." Doubly encouraged, Bley went forth into the world. What resulted was some of the freest, funniest music in or out of jazz.

She released three major orchestral works, *A Genuine Tong Funeral*, recorded by Gary Burton and now out of print, *Liberation Music Orchestra*, her collaboration with Charlie Haden, also out of print, and the preprosperous operatic chronotransduction *Escalator Over the Hill*, still glorious and available on her own JCOA label. Three records long, it is clearly her masterpiece so far; it is also the club that detractors of her subsequent work beat her with — "Why doesn't she do something like *that* again?" — the same way Orson Welles gets beaten with *Citizen Kane*. Like *Kane*, *Escalator* is a genuine, unprecedented piece of American bravura that gives you a whiff of new worlds and the sense that genius can get away with anything. Carla's big brass band meets hard rock from Jack Bruce and John McLaughlin, and they in turn run into Don Cherry's Third-world desert band; Linda Ronstadt sings some of the loveliest melodies she's ever encountered ("Star Bright, Star Bright") and Charlie Haden sings four-part country backup; Gato Barbieri delivers the tenor screams of his career over solemn brass canons; Viva rambles, Carla sings; Bley's pentacostally polymath music gives concrete life to Paul Haines' surrealist/obscure libretto, and it's not really fusion because the different styles of music all live, like the characters who sing the parts, in different rooms of Cecil Clark's old hotel. Everybody meets in the hallway. Yodelling ventriloquists pass by in the night. It took Bley, what with financial difficulties and the normal hazards of life on earth, four years to compose and record *Escalator* and the wonder is that, like the bumblebee and the B-59, it flies. With one wholly idiosyncratic leap, Carla Bley had landed in the same ballpark as Duke Ellington and Mingus. They had no other company, and not even she thought she belonged there. The record came out in 1972. A dove bearing an olive branch landed on her windowsill; European institutions gave her awards. She and Mantler were living on a farm in Maine. They were the best-liked husband-and-wife team since Nick and Nora Charles.

Having thus cleared her throat, she settled down to work on a smaller scale. Bley and Mantler distributed their own records on the Watt label and reserved the Orchestra for other Composers, commissioning works, raising funds and producing the records. Having kept at least one foot in utopia, they also set up the New Music Distribution Service, a nonprofit agency to distribute not only their own records but any record by anyone at all. To this day the NMDS remains the only open house in the industry, and the only national venue for literally scores of small labels. "It's really hard and blah. It's the one nice thing we do in life."

On Watt, Bley came out with *Tropic Appetites*, *3/4* and *Dinner Music* before putting together a working band, taking it on the road and putting out an album, the excellent *European Tour 1977*. There it was again, Carla Bley's creature, rocking on its two-keyboard tandem and big brass bottom of tuba, French horn and trombone, with two sawtooth reeds and Mantler's exemplary lead trumpet clearing the way ahead. It was one of the best and funniest bands I'd ever heard, and it retained the unique performance style Bley had established years before, at once ragged and precise, able to accommodate Bley's exacting charts and the spontaneous additions of the moment. The following year's tour was preceded by some personnel changes and a set of interviews in which Bley expressed her disaffection with the avant-garde and confessed to having led a punk rock band, Penny Cillin and the Burning Sensation, for six months. All her new tunes, she announced, would be three minutes long with lyrics, although there was also a new long composition, *Musique Mechanique*, which the band would play like broken toy musicians with rusted gears and missing limbs and faulty clockwork. The songs turned out to be hilarious, *Musique* worked out fine in concert, and Bley's humor had come further to the fore than ever. The 1980 tour presented more new songs, with "I'm a Mineralist" providing the broadest public puns in recent memory, and on the instrumental side a final thumbing of the nose at the avant-garde with the very pretty and deceptively simple "Reactionary Tango."

This year, the spring and summer tours are about to begin and two fine records are coming out, the rock songs under Nick Mason's name as *Fictitious Sports*, and the new Carla Bley Band album, *Social Studies*, on Watt (to be distributed by ECM). The albums pair off well. *Sports*, the wilder of the two, is conclusive proof not only of Bley's wit but of her real brilliance as a songwriter. Most of Bley's band is on hand to provide the authentic and antic atmosphere. *Social Studies* shows us how assiduously Bley has been working at the composer's craft.

I've gradually come to believe that Bley is a more expert composer now than she was ten years ago. She may be a genius but she learns normal things slowly. The news that she has just embarked upon a major new work — an opera described at unintentional length in the interview — could not be more welcome. Bley is at her best when faced with material that forces her to wrestle it into new shapes. Length is not the issue — her recent adventure with three-minute rock proves that. She has said that *Escalator Over the Hill* was written by someone who didn't know her limits. The same could be said for all her best music, which is perhaps why it conveys so exhilarating a sense of freedom, of what our lives might be like, from belly-laugh to majesty, if we slipped the yoke and made it outside the compound for real. Carla Bley is one of the real ones, there to remind us what it's like. Lest we forget.

Dinner Music

When I complimented them on the beauty of their home in Willow, New York, Bley and Mantler spoke of the pleasures of living on credit and suggested a French restaurant in another neck of the woods where we could conduct our interview. My usual form was the exhaustive article but I had run out of things to say. Then you're out of luck, Bley told me, because I've been talking a lot this week and I can't think up any more lies. The night is young yet, I assured her; we set out in two cars. I had trouble keeping up with Mantler's grey Porsche on the S-turns. To my knowledge, Bley's most formidable lie in an interview was that she had been married to Charlie Haden for ten years. She had also described marriage as one of the few means of locomotion available to women. By the time we got to the restaurant it was twilight. The air smelled of pines, horses and earth. We went inside and found a table in a corner. They explained that their daughter Karen, who had just finished making her first solo record at the Grog Kill home studio, would join us later, and contribute significantly to the strangest portion of the interview. It was the 10th of May.

MUSICIAN: Are you sure you're short of lies?

BLEY: You've caught me at a bad time of the week. The band is leaving for Europe on the 24th. Rehearsals start Thursday, the music has to be finished Wednesday and this is Sunday. I always pull through by the skin of my teeth, but this time I feel that I'm not going to. Six new tunes, I thought: one week for each orchestration, one week to copy each orchestration, so if I started 12 weeks before the tour — all the music was written by that point so it isn't that I'm still... *I try so hard*. I don't mess around. I mean I *work* and huh, I *failed*... I figured 12 weeks, I should have figured 15. Anyway, it's a small point. I'm about three weeks short of having a good book.

MANTLER: To sum this up: hard work, not enough time.

BLEY: It's hard work and not enough time, but I don't understand how I could have miscalculated so drastically. And then I started writing a new song.

MANTLER: You could keep playing the same stuff, like everyone else.

BLEY: I couldn't. I'd die of boredom. And I'm not getting the panic that was supposed to have come about two weeks ago. Usually I get this panic, and I work in an inhumane way, without resting, eating and sleeping and stuff like that. That hasn't hit me and it's four days to go.

MANTLER: But you can cheat. The Carla Bley Band can


JOHN EHRENCLOU

Despite American anonymity, Carla is able to maintain her large ensemble by playing for an enthusiastic European following.

have an evening that's a shambles and still be good.

BLEY: Sometimes better. I know. That's why I started writing that kind of material and including catastrophes in the set, because of the fear that something would go wrong. But I don't know if that works anymore, because less is going wrong naturally, and I don't want to *make* things go wrong. Maybe that's what I'm doing by not getting the panic. Insuring that things will naturally go wrong.

MUSICIAN: I've seen a couple of good shambles.

MANTLER: In this country?

MUSICIAN: At the Bottom Line, before *European Tour 1977* came out.

BLEY: That was a long time ago. Andrew (Cyrille) took that long drum solo in the middle of the set. It was a filibuster. Andrew took a solo and that was about half the set. I was *crushed*. Those gigs at the Bottom Line are sort of... etched in my memory.

MUSICIAN: Live, you can get a looseness and interplay on top of a basic precision. When you record at home, you have to overdub the parts because the studio is too small for the whole band, and that looseness is lost.

BLEY: True. I know. I'm going to make a live record. That's my next one. I was trying to put out a concert that we did in Paris last November instead of *Social Studies*, but the sound wasn't good enough. The radio people had mixed it and it was direct to two-track, so there was nothing that could be done. *Social Studies* is very precise, almost like a classical record, which is what I decided to do if I couldn't record live. That's what I've got to do now.

MUSICIAN: There's so much give and take in the band live.

BLEY: I tried to do all the horns together in the studio and one guy would keep making mistakes, so I had to take him out of the ensemble and do him afterwards and ruin the blend. Never again. The money has always held me back, and you can't really put a person in jail for that, not since the Bastille. I'm going to have to borrow the money now. I would need to record four nights in a row live, and I'd like it to be in the same location so the sound was the same, and then choose from four choices for each song that I wanted on the record. I couldn't do it from just one concert, because if I knew that concert was coming up and the rest of the band knew it, they'd get nervous and play terrible and not do anything... unusual. So that means a 16-track recording truck for four nights and you can figure out yourself why I haven't done it. It's very expensive. I own my own studio and that costs me nothing, so when it comes down to whether I do a live record or not I have to do what's economically possible.

MUSICIAN: Would you ever record for an outside company?

BLEY: No, of course not. I don't have to. If I were dying or starving, but as long as I'm not quite there I won't. Would anyone do that unless they had to? Record companies are just like banks. If you don't have the money then you have to have a record company do it for you, and that's why most musicians, I suppose, don't make their own records. I won't do it unless I have to.

MUSICIAN: There's still a lot of childhood in your music.

BLEY: Not anymore there isn't.

MUSICIAN: Now you're a serious composer?

BLEY: I'm getting more serious all the time.

MUSICIAN: You were getting more zany all the time last year.

BLEY: I'm going in another direction now. *Social Studies* is very straight and there's not a chuckle in the whole thing.

MUSICIAN: There's humor in it, but no outright gags to fall down and laugh about.

BLEY: I don't like that anymore.

MUSICIAN: You did that with the songs, in particular with Gary Windo.

BLEY: He's not in the band anymore. I think that when Windo left, the other guys took his place, 'cause I've got a lot of guys in there that enjoy ham very much. No, we're not doing that anymore. In fact, all the things I'm writing now are a totally new kind of music...*Fusion*. I'm writing only fusion now. My new pieces are fusion.

MUSICIAN: Why are they fusion?

BLEY: Well, these are pieces that could be played by Billy Cobham easily. That's why I call them fusion. I hear a lot of Billy Cobham in what I'm writing now. *Don't tell anybody*.

MUSICIAN: But your voice is your band. You can go from one idiom to another and it'll still sound like you. I can't imagine it being very different really.

BLEY: You'd be surprised how many people I think it is, although I realize, and I've been told, that it doesn't come out who I think it's sounding like. In my imagination I try to sound like other people.

I'm happier on stage than off. I went on stage for the first time when I was three years old. It was the first time I felt comfortable in my life.


JOHN EHRENCLOU

MUSICIAN: But you're stuck with yourself. And that's great.
BLEY: I wouldn't be facetious enough to say that isn't great. I really think that's great, and that's through ignorance, through not really knowing how to imitate well enough to carry it off. But I do try.
MUSICIAN: But you're an original and you're stuck with it. A lot of people have to work at that.
BLEY: You can't work at that. No. You can't, see? It's interesting... Also, as well as my new fusion music, there are two new pieces with words for the band to sing, so I still have a remainder of that streak that I can't quite control. That stuff comes out whether I want it to or not. One is called "The Internationale," and it has all the languages in the world and all the nationalities. It's almost a theatre piece, although it won't look like anything. In my mind it's theatre: the band, they're all 80 years old, they're wearing overcoats, they have beards, and they're sitting in an old cafe in Vienna but none of them are from the same country and the waiter can't understand the order, and they can't understand the waiter, and one person orders something in German, one in French, one in Spanish, and the waiter keeps saying, "What did he say?" I play the role of the cashier, and I keep telling him, "It doesn't matter what he said, just smile at him and nod your head."
MUSICIAN: How long does this go on?
BLEY: This goes on for about seven minutes. I really tried to get all the nationalities in there. I've got Turkey. (Sings:) "We're Turks, you're Tunisians. We're Thais, you're from Brooklyn." The thing goes on. It's really funny. It's got a plot. At the end I close the restaurant and throw them all out. D. Sharpe is the waiter. Mike was the waiter until today, and then all of a sudden — The waiter has only one line all the way through the piece, comes in saying, "What did he say," and I thought Mike could deadpan that. But then I thought that if Mike said it the audience would get frightened, 'cause Mike is really deadpan. Like, Mike is *death*pan. (Laughter.) But with D. Sharpe it would be funny. And that's always good, not only to be severe but to be funny, too. D. Sharpe, I guess, isn't really severe. He can't be severe. He tries to be severe. I wrote another song for D. Sharpe himself called "I Hate to Sing," because the guys in my band do, indeed, hate to sing and I make them sing and it's a terrible tragedy, but they need the bread I guess. I don't know why they... Other than that the rest is fusion.
MUSICIAN: Did I tell you that the first time I heard *Escalator* was on an airplane?
BLEY: *Say that again!*
MUSICIAN: The first time I heard *Escalator Over the Hill* was on an airplane in June of 1972. About half an hour of it on the headphones they gave me.
BLEY: PanAm, right? Isn't that bizarre? Isn't that crazy? You slip through the wires once in awhile. I'm writing a new opera.
MUSICIAN: Wonderful.
BLEY: It's a religious opera.
MANTLER: Fusion.
BLEY: Severe. It's called *Holy Roller Coaster*. It's religious. It's a science fiction opera set about 100 years in the future. But things are escalating, time is going quicker now than it used to, so it's set 100 years in the future when there are invisible force envelopes put over the cathedrals, the great cathedrals of Europe, because they're so beautiful that everyone realizes they shouldn't be destroyed. This was written before the neutron bomb. I have to really rework it, to allow the neutron bomb in. Within the cathedralophic envelopes are kept certain species of pure humans, certain blends of half-synthetic, half-humans and some synthetics. In those days in the future, they'll be making synthetic people to do things that no one else wants to do. Then there'll be all kinds of blends of humans and synthetics. Artists — a lot of artists will be synthetics, but there will be something called the pure human, in a museum situation certain pure humans will be kept. Not like in a zoo, but sort of in preservation. There's really a plot. It's sort of dumb. All of a sudden people will be building roller coasters around these cathedrals so that peple won't have to walk up the 400 steps to get to the bell tower, and instead of just going on a little slow ride, they bring speed in too, so that you get to really zip around these beautiful cathedrals, and like go all the way up to the top of the spires and way down, all the way through the catacombs and in and out of the arches and the flying buttresses. It's a tremendous ride, all the cathedrals will have them. There's one particular place where this happens — the finest cathedral — it's the one in Cologne — the Dome in Cologne. If you've ever been to Cologne, that's my favorite cathedral.
MUSICIAN: How long will the opera take?
BLEY: Two years. I'm going to quit the band in November and two years from November it'll be ready.
MANTLER: On this tour we're going to play in front of the Cologne Cathedral, outdoors.
BLEY: But unfortunately we're not going to play any of the material from the opera, which is sad. That's one of the things I didn't have time to orchestrate. I'm writing the words myself: "Here's a leisure time attraction for the more religious faction."
MUSICIAN: How many characters?
BLEY: Fifty.
MUSICIAN: I was hoping you were going to do something huge and ungainly.
BLEY: I wanted to do something huge. No one would give me the money. This time Paris Radio gave me the commission, if you call that a commission. It's a very small amount of money. For Avignon, the summer of '83, but the money is so small that I may have to make it a co-production and get some German money too. I'm working on that. The business side is okay to talk about.
MUSICIAN: It's been said that the gothic cathedrals are conscious works of art which preserve knowledge for centuries, and from which people can learn how to be human — pure humans, if you will — when things are forgotten, as they are.
BLEY: They are also a bit bizarre. They attract the other part of one's personality too, not the love of beauty but the love of ugliness. Because some of them are so incredibly ugly too.
MANTLER: Grotesque. The Cologne Cathedral is the most ornate and grotesque.
BLEY: You've got to walk up there. It's black. A lot of the best ones are black and just dripping with statues. Some of the statues are obscene!
MANTLER: You're driving to Cologne and all of a sudden you're seeing this thing — from miles away — this *thing*.
BLEY: So much bigger than the rest of the world. You've got to see the one in Cologne — that's it.
MANTLER: It's really hard to keep your eyes focused on it.
BLEY: I also love prisons. Big prisons. There's something about that thing that's bigger than people that attracts me. Big prisons, wow. I was born in Oakland, and I knew Alcatraz and San Quentin very well. I'm terrified of Riker's Island. You're very close to big prisons in Oakland. Used to be. San Quentin isn't doing much anymore and they've probably made a museum or something out of Alcatraz. It was great when it was a prison. To see that every Sunday when I was a little kid going on the ferry across from Oakland to San Francisco. To go past Alcatraz was one of the most exciting moments. I didn't have cathedrals, you see, in the United States.
MUSICIAN: Prisons!
KAREN: [Bley's daughter] And sanatoriums.
BLEY: Yes! Sanatoriums. They're great too.
KAREN: There's a real small one in Kingston. So weird. You see the bars on the windows and the great fluorescent lights. A plain white house.
BLEY: Got to go there.
KAREN: I think they're really interesting.
BLEY: They *are*.
MANTLER: Have you seen the one when you drive down the Palisades?
BLEY: Rockland. You know Rockland. It's very famous.
MANTLER: It's a very big one. It's got sort of a dome-like structure.
MUSICIAN: This episode of the Addams Family has been brought to you by...

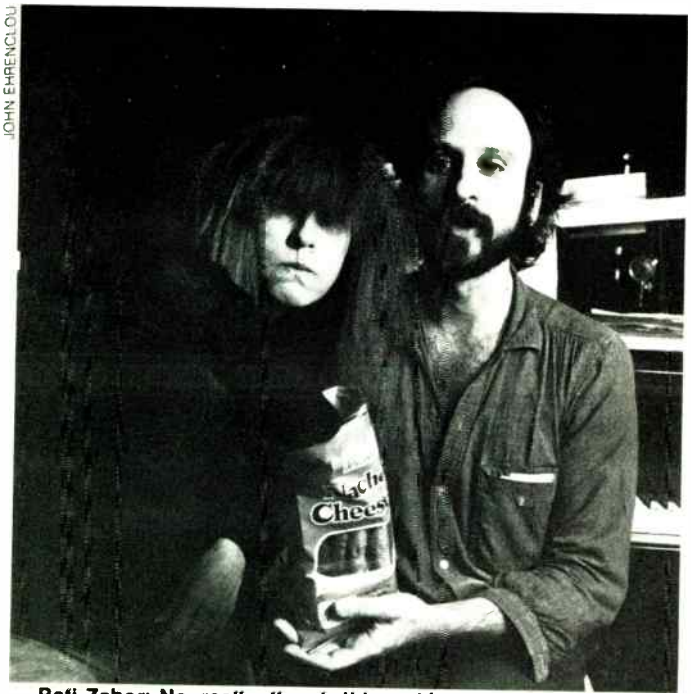
JOHN EHRENCLOU

The Carla Bley Band: Arturo O'Farrill, keyboards; Steve Swallow, bass; D. Sharpe, drums; Michael Mantler, trumpet; Tony Dagradi, tenor sax; Steve Slagle, alto; Earl McIntyre, tuba and bass trombone; Gary Valente, trombone; Vincent Chancey, French horn.

I wrote "I Hate to Sing" because the guys in my band do, indeed, hate to sing and I make them sing and it's a terrible tragedy, but they need the bread, I guess.

BLEY: Very medieval looking. Looks like a cathedral.
MUSICIAN: You started out making music in churches and now you're back.
BLEY: My father will be either very pleased or very upset. (Laughter.) I lived my whole life in churches, before I had a choice, so I really have a background. And in this opera will be all kinds of religious music. Not just Gregorian chants. There'll be gospel singers and stuff. All kinds, but only Christianity, it's the only thing I know about.
MUSICIAN: *Musique Mechanique* had to do with a broken mechanical toy orchestra you saw when you were a child.
BLEY: Yes, children hate it when somethings's broken. They hate it when a doll has a missing eye. It really spooks 'em out. And after you hate something, in order to handle it you love it. That's how you exchange it, I think. Maybe I'm terrified of cathedrals and jails, really.
MUSICIAN: Did you and Charlie Haden get the Liberation Music Orchestra reorganized as planned?
BLEY: Yeah, we played a concert in San Francisco. Two concerts that were so full we had to do another concert the same evening. Don Cherry and Charlie Haden and my band and some guitar player from the Bay Area that Charlie knew. That was fan-tastic. Now we're talking about getting together again, and we have in a bid to go to Cuba. Also, to follow his star. That's his star and I'll follow it with him. Charlie Haden is so unselfconsciously great, he doesn't even have to try. He's just *great*. Gee, how do you get to be like that. You don't. He was always like that. I've known him since he was 18 and he's always been uncomplicated and un-effortful. You see him as trying really hard? I think he's totally natural. He is that way.
MUSICIAN: Do you read your reviews?
BLEY: Why would I refuse if they're in English?
MANTLER: Not too seriously.
BLEY: Oh no, I take everything seriously. If somebody says I'm no good I firmly believe it. For months!
MUSICIAN: We appreciate humor in people, but very often downgrade it when it turns up in music.
BLEY: That might be right. I don't have any humor anymore, and I won't either. Not if I can help it. If it happens then I can't help it. It may have gotten to a point once, a couple of years ago, I may have tried to make something humorous, but I immediately caught myself and said, "That's not happening." I don't want to ever do that again. From now on I intend to go out and do a straight concert, and that's the way I'm going to keep it because humor is too delicate to fool around with and I try not to have it.
MUSICIAN: But if it's you, you're not going to try and expunge it, are you?
BLEY: People have said that it's some insecurity in my background. That's why I'm so humorous. The reason people are humorous is that they're afraid they can't be perfect. They're afraid they'll make a mistake so they...well, you know what I mean. It's true. It betrays a lack of confidence.
MUSICIAN: Maybe humor isn't the right word. I was trying to figure out why someone would approve of humor in life but not in music. Maybe they set music apart, or feel that it has to do with the depth of their souls and that humor doesn't belong there. But they're probably wrong.
BLEY: Well, I think they're probably right. I probably have committed a few crimes. And I'm trying to improve. The problem is, a rehearsal is so damned funny. When my band does a rehearsal we're on the floor the whole time, so the point is, why try to stifle that when you're in front of an audience? But maybe you're supposed to. Maybe it's like sex. Something you really shouldn't drag out onto the stage.

JOHN EHRENCLOU



Rafi Zabor: No, really, there's this real bear who plays alto, see, and he's arrested in the Tin Palace...
Carla Bley: mmffgrbmmtppgrf...

MANTLER: There's plenty of sex for audiences, and people seem to enjoy it.
BLEY: Well, I think that humor belongs in the bathroom, and I'm going to try to keep it there.
MUSICIAN: You once said of *Escalator* that it was done by people who weren't aware of their limitations, and we can't do that anymore because people have been educated to believe in limitations.
BLEY: So you don't think I've committed unpardonable sins?
MUSICIAN: No, I think you've done fine things.
BLEY: Well, you're not in the majority. But thank you anyway. You see, jazz is not mine to fool around with so why should I change the rules? That's why what I do is not right. It's not mine to fool around with, really. I should mind my rules a bit more. I'm going to now.
MUSICIAN: I don't think you'll make it. Anybody else coming up the way you did would have tried to copy everybody. You didn't, or couldn't.
BLEY: Couldn't. Like the Shaggs. You know about the Shaggs? They're really wonderful, you've got to admit that. There's no intellig...*there's a better word than that.* They pursue what they're doing with a total lack of knowledge of what's supposed — I mean they don't know. The bass player is playing in D flat, the band is in C and it's absolutely...
MUSICIAN: Sounds like Ornette.
BLEY: Yes, and totally unselfconscious. I just go crazy when I hear it. It's so beautiful. I could never do that because I've lost too much ignorance by this point. I don't have that much left. But I sure admire people like that. If you've got that much left it's great. That really tickles me in the right place, the Shaggs. The Shaggs and Ornette are quite related. The first time I heard them I thought that really is a relationship. I love Ornette. He's my favorite.
MUSICIAN: In the best of all possible worlds, what band would you have?
BLEY: In the best of all possible worlds, I would have exactly the band I have today, and Ornette Coleman on alto, Cecil Taylor on piano, and Archie Shepp on tenor.
MUSICIAN: Your luck's been good. So many original or eccentric people, particularly women, get crushed.
BLEY: Yeah. I'm still here.
MUSICIAN: Eating good food.
BLEY: Living in the country... Touring the capitals of Europe.
MANTLER: Rotenburg...Freiberg...Mannheim...
BLEY: Rotenburg. Ah yes.
MUSICIAN: Are you going to do an American tour after Europe?
BLEY: We're trying. A few places. We'll get to play Alaska. I've had problems in the United States. I want Max Gordon to let me have a week at the Vanguard, but he won't give it to me. I'm gonna get it from him, I'm gonna drag him to one of my rehearsals.
MUSICIAN: Your New York audience always comes out for you, doesn't it?
BLEY: I don't have much of an audience in New York. Maybe five hundred people. I don't have a large audience in the United States. I have quite a large audience in Europe. Sometimes. Depending on what year it is and what country is feeling what way. I was awfully good in Paris, I mean in France this year.
MUSICIAN: You don't depend on arts grants, do you?
BLEY: I don't get them. I have humor in my music and it's not appropriate.
MANTLER: I think you should mention the National Endowment story.
BLEY: I don't get money from...I know musicians that can't write at all that get money as composers, year and year after year, and I have never gotten any, and I've applied many times.
MANTLER: They sent her application on to the serious people, saying it wasn't really jazz...
BLEY: I had to compete with Stravinsky or somebody.
MANTLER: And then the serious people said, well, that's jazz, so you're not getting a grant.
MUSICIAN: So how does one get a grant?
BLEY: Well you sort of have to, um, *humiliate* yourself...
MANTLER: ...Anyway, the next year they asked her again, they actually approached her and said, "Put in your application this year, because we realized we screwed up last year..."
BLEY: This time I got a piece that was unmistakably jazz...are you taping this? Maybe you shouldn't.
MANTLER: It's all right, he can leave it in. There won't be a National Endowment next year anyway.

Jazz is not mine to fool around with so why should I change the rules? That's why what I do is not right. I should mind my rules a bit more. I'm going to now.

BLEY: Right. So the next year I sent them a piece that was ...See, the first year I made the mistake of writing and thinking a week about what I wanted to do with the money. I decided I wanted to write a piece of music simple enough that even classical musicians could play it. I thought that was a funny joke, and I put it in the application. I thought that was *hilarious* — "simple enough that even classical musicians could play it" — and I really intended to do that, because I knew a lot of classical musicians that didn't know how to play music. They didn't know how to phrase, they didn't know how to play eighth-notes, so I thought I could really figure out what made eighth-notes tick and explain it to all the people in the world that didn't understand eighth-notes. It was a work of love for the world, it had nothing to do with myself or what I wanted to write. The next year, since I didn't get it by getting in trouble that way, Mike wrote it for me and said, *Six Piece Suite for Jazz Band.* And we sent them some piece of music which was pure jazz or something. I didn't get it then, either. So that's it for me. Never again. I will *never* —
MANTLER: So much for all the press kits showing that she won the composer's poll in *downbeat* for ten years in a row...
BLEY: And you have to get like Ornette and Cecil and all those guys to write applications for you, to write letters...it's so *embarrassing.* "Hey Gil, will you write me *another* one?" It's just too embarrassing.
MANTLER: Then they call you up to write one for them...

The buck starts here.

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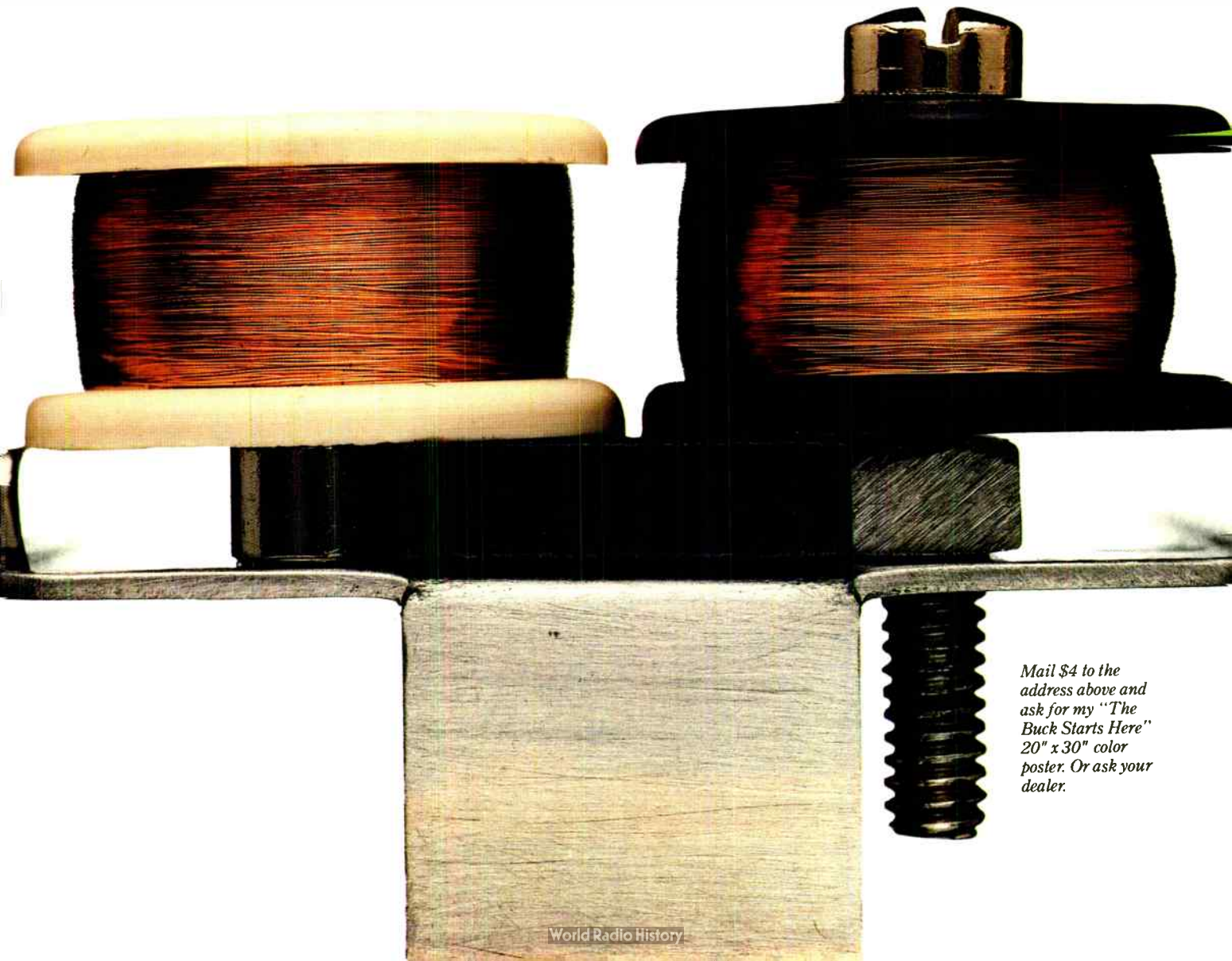

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BLEY: Yeah. So that's it, I decided to make it in business. I'm the number one composer in the poll now, and I can't get a grant from the National Endowment and I'm starving to death! (Gorges herself on an enormous piece of veal.) No, that's not gonna last, I'm the wrong person in the polls, they got the wrong man, I'm gonna go back into the woodwork. But who is there? I mean, tell me who the composers are. Maybe I'm not the wrong man. Maybe there isn't much around so that I have to get it. Charlie Mingus is dead, so like what are we supposed to do? I'm a composer, 'cause I don't play much, and I just spend all of my time writing music, the whole time. The rest of 'em are players that write tunes for themselves. I don't do that.
MUSICIAN: You, Gil Evans and George Russell and Michael are composers.
BLEY: Absolutely. The American story. I worked hard and got to the top.
ALL: (Distantly) Yaaay.
MUSICIAN: Does avant-garde music still bore you now that you're severe?
BLEY: Yes. I'm more conservative every day.

A rehearsal is so damned funny, we're on the floor the whole time. Why try to stifle that when you're in front of an audience. But maybe you're supposed to. I think humor belongs in the bathroom and I'm going to try to keep it there.

MUSICIAN: What do you listen to?
BLEY: Bebop. Real bebop. To me that's the most beautiful, sophisticated music in the world. You have to be a freak to play it. I just love bebop, I really do. I could *never* play it, or write it. I wouldn't touch it. But I like to listen to it.
MUSICIAN: You listen to classical music much?
BLEY: No. I don't even listen to bebop. I don't listen to anything. I don't like classical music because of their phrasing. They don't have bebop phrasing. That's their problem. And rock 'n' roll is totally boring, has been for about two years. So I'm just looking to bebop right now for some kind of quality control. I like the people that are all my enemies in real life, who have always looked down on me, I guess. The straight guys. The straight conservative people. Those are the people I *like*. Gee, if they only knew...I heard George Russell's band at the Vanguard and it was very good, and the audience was great. All those musicians were in the audience, and so I had visions, really hopeless dreams of that happening to me. I don't think I'm old enough. My band doesn't ever do what I tell them to do, so it's really a "fictitious sport." "Play that slower." "NO!"
MANTLER: They just grumble, you know. They're all New Yorkers.
MUSICIAN: I wanted to ask you a question about *Escalator*. When Paul Haines gave you the libretto for that, did he write all the voices and characters or did you? It was you, wasn't it?
BLEY: *How did you know that?*
MUSICIAN: (Beaming modestly.) I looked at the text and figured it out. The credits confirmed it. Words by Paul Haines, "adaptation" and music by you.
BLEY: *Nobody* knows that.
MANTLER: It was in absolutely no order or anything.
BLEY: It was 20 pages of poetry.
MUSICIAN: So where did that whole thing, that whole structure come from?
BLEY: Paul Haines is a brilliant — I'm sure that it was in Paul Haines' work, and I'm sure that I divined it. There would be names of people in the poems, and it was...It's a delicate subject. I'd love to do it with him again. I prefer working with someone else's words, and I hope we can still make up and do it together. As for *Escalator*, just say that "the source material was very important — how can a person weave without wool."
MUSICIAN: Very good.
MANTLER: That's very good. The award will be presented shortly.
BLEY: (Weakly:) Another award? I think they should make all those awards into cash prizes, then maybe musicians would understand them more.

After dinner we drove back to the house, and I was shown the studio in which Watt Works records its music and, upstairs in the kitchen, the electric wall oven in which its discs are pressed from virgin lasagna. A few days later, in New York City, I was able to attend the two days of rehearsals for which Bley had felt so insufficiently prepared. With the exception of Bley, Mantler and Steve Swallow, it was a very young band, looked small and sounded big — Bley knows plenty about voicings. She ran through the new pieces first. "This is where I get to hear them for the first time," Bley told me, "and it's scary. They're naked. You move from the concrete to mystery, the reverse of life, I think. It's as if two people would meet, take their clothes off immediately, brush their teeth and only later, gradually, clothe themselves. Hopefully in beauty."

I heard "The Internationale," Bley's monument to incomprehension between nations ("Surmounting language barrier by drinking and get merrier"), during which the band had trouble playing and shrugging at the same time. "Shrug with your eyes," was the composer's advice. She had some more asides for your reporter: "Now I get to find out if the pieces work. Oh, they'll all work, but I get to find out what *makes* them work." Did she expect to get it nailed by the end of rehearsals? "Oh yeah, I'll have it by tomorrow night."

Like diplomacy, leading a big band is the art of the possible. Bley rehearsed her band expertly. She knew when to try the hard pieces, when to introduce comic relief, and when *esprit de corps* had risen high enough for her to criticize specific musicians without inflicting damage. Her ear was superb; she was able to revise French horn parts from memory. "Four bars in from B," she might say at the end of a longish piece of something near its beginning, "I want that played as triplets." By the end of the second day, the band was definitely in shape. Bley's proclamations of impending retirement from the concert stage are best taken with several grains of salt. *Holy Roller Coaster* will no doubt get written, as will a film score for Michel Andrieu's *Le Voyage* (I'd always hoped she'd do a film score), but I suspect that this is not the last time the Carla Bley Band will set forth for the capitals of Europe. Rotenburg...Freiberg...Mannheim... M


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RECORD REVIEWS

Grateful Dead
Reckoning (Arista)

Good news... you don't have to be a die-hard Deadhead to enjoy the latest live LP issued from the Dead's headquarters in mellow Marin County (where *real* longhaired, dope smokin' hippies can still be found). *Reckoning* — 16 songs on two records, taken from dates in N.Y.C. and San Francisco last year — is the first good album from the Grateful Dead in ten years. It's no accident that this record includes acoustic performances (although Phil Lesh does play electric bass), a format in keeping with the music and feel of their best albums, *Workingman's Dead* (1970) and *American Beauty* (1971): albums that found the band remaking folk music to fit their psychedelic worldview.

This relaxed set shows off the band's instrumental abilities, rarely at the expense of the song itself (an exception is "Bird Song," which includes a lengthy instrumental that sounds like the Dead have been listening to old Dave Brubeck albums). Garcia's singing is strong (for him) and the pairing of his raspy old-man/wiseman voice with acoustic fingerpicking is natural enough. Particularly satisfying tracks are "It Must Have Been the Roses," a yearning love song with a tender reading by Garcia over loose interplay between Weir, Garcia and Brent Mydland on acoustic guitars and grand piano; and "China Doll," featuring Garcia's dramatic vocal set against the Victorian moodiness of Mydland's harpsichord. Bob Weir's all-American vocals have never been impressive and his unmemorable, passionless versions of "The Race Is On" and "On the Road Again" are the low points on an otherwise solid record.

As an electric rock 'n' roll band, the Grateful Dead have been stuck in a late 60s time warp — a creative rut — playing the same cosmic anthems and rambling jams ("...noodling around aimlessly for 15 minutes" is how Garcia recently put it) year after year. But by opting for acoustic folk and country music, the Dead break that mold (at least on this album), exchanging dated ensemble work for a timeless American sound that is, still, distinctively their own. — *Michael Goldberg.*

Squeeze
East Side Story (A&M SP-4854)
Split Enz
Waiata (A&M SP-4848)

The idea of neoclassical pop generally makes me nervous. *Of course* cultural and historical continuity demands that we all stand on the shoulders of giants from time to time. The hard part is sorting through the myopic small fry who, straining on tiptoes, can't manage to see farther than the illustrious predecessors supporting them — Tom Petty, after a hot start, seems to be a rather ordinary sort — to get to the worthy inheritors.

Worthy inheritors in the neoclassical school must have the full complement of pop chops: attractive, recognizable leads; lovely harmonies; taut, balanced playing; haunting hooks, etc., etc. They must also believe in radio (transistors, dashboards, tuners, et al.) as the one and true medium for pop music. I met both Squeeze and Split Enz on the radio and I'm certainly glad of it, though in differing degrees. Squeeze may ultimately be too subtle for the string-of-smashes Hall of Fame and Split Enz may ultimately prove to be midgets, but they both belong on the radio.

To take the simplest first, Split Enz, who at one time wanted to be the Wizard of the South Pacific, threw away their fright wigs and had a wonderful AM hit last year. "I Got You" had the kind of chorus that was indelibly imprinted after two hearings. Their new LP, *Waiata*, contains several tunes that could imprint whether you want them to or not (an old pop trick). The first cuts on each side — these guys are aggressive — are the likely candidates. "History Never Repeats," a nasal lamentation with a high pressure hook, is probably a hit in spite of the dreadful couplet "There was a girl I used to know/She dealt my love a savage blow." "Hard Act to Follow," reminiscent of the Cars' first album (they're not stuffy about whose shoulders they stand on), just might follow. "I Don't Wanna Dance" with even more Cars-ish percolation and angular vocals, and "Walking Through the Ruins" which sounds like Traffic on a very busy day, are the tracks I most favor. There are some I don't favor at all, but Split Enz belong on the radio and what is more, they *will* be on the radio.

Squeeze's new LP, *East Side Story*, belongs not only on the radio but on headphones as well (Walkman album of the month). Its finely crafted and accessible pop is reminiscent of *Revolver*-era Beatles music, but the *narrative* songs — the best since the Kinks left Reprise — raise them head and shoulders above the 60s revival. The band's songwriting/guitar/vocals team of Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook seem utterly incapable of knocking off airy ditties about nothing at all. In fact, all 14 songs (that's right, 14 — influenced, no doubt, by producer Elvis "I Can't Stop" Costello) develop elaborate scenarios filled with sophisticated touches and vivid, novelistic details. There's enough material on this record for the next 10 years of *Masterpiece Theatre* and it's not that far-fetched to expect some of these songs to be filmed rather than covered. In "Labelled With Love," Tilbrook sings about an aging alcoholic dying amongst her memories back home in England, the widow of a drunken cowboy she followed to Texas after the war. (This sentence bears the same relation to the actual song that Cliff's Notes does to *Pride And Prejudice*.) "Someone Else's Bell" x-rays a relationship rotted hollow by infidelity; "Piccadilly" follows a nervous date through several interesting changes of scene; and "Woman's World" carefully chronicles the disintegration of a neglected housewife in under four minutes. *East Side Story* makes liberal use of Beatles' moves,

though it stretches far beyond neoclassical orthodoxy, and the hand of Mr. Costello is also in evidence, though the songs here are neither elliptical nor obviously personal. Most of all the songs of Difford and Tilbrook call to mind the particularly English novels of someone like Beryl Bainbridge: sharply etched, in good supply, and stocked with unique sensibility and characterization. *And* they've got a good beat and you can dance to them. — *Jeff Nesin*

Tom Petty
Hard Promises (MCA)

Tom Petty is just about my favorite cracker. The dictionary says a cracker is "a poor white person of the rural southeastern United States," but to me a cracker is a state of mind, and I don't care if Petty, originally from Gainesville, Florida, is a very well-to-do white rock star living in L.A. — he still acts like a cracker horse trader: beleaguered and snakebit, just trying to cut his losses, humble-talking, but ultimately canny as a Rockefeller.

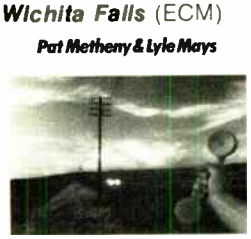
I'm not referring to problems with his record company, first getting his right to self-governance back after months of wearying lawsuits, then turning around and fighting to keep his *Hard Promises* LP's list price down. I'm talking about the way he poor-mouths his own skills (and goals) as a songwriter. "I don't know anything about the U.N., so I'll sing about the things I'm more in touch with," said Tom a couple years back, and he talks about his love songs as if they were bolts of fabric cut from the same ratty roll used by dozens of other rag merchants.

The point Petty ends up emphasizing is right — on paper, his lyrics don't make you smack your forehead and throw away your poetry books. But he has a natural, colloquial style and the sense to trust it: "Well, yeah, I might have chased a few women around/ All it ever got me was down..." Sounds like the truth to me. The angrier Petty the songwriter gets, the better his eye for details. Amid the bitter but not aimless machete strokes of "The Criminal Kind," he manages to notice "dog tags on the mirror, hangin' down from a chain" and a girl who "don't wanna die in no liquor store." Like Dylan's "The Walls of Red Wing," the song implies a diatribe against the penal system. Ultimately, it doesn't apologize for the criminal, even if it only lets him feel the flat of the blade.

Another lyric that can't go unmentioned is on "Something Big." If he didn't pace a few paces composing this gem of compressed narrative, then the song is one hell of a happy accident. When Speedball, a two-bit scam artist, asks the night clerk for a drink, then rebuffs the clerk's mumbly suggestion of a place outside of town that "might still have some wine" and asks instead for an outside line, you know as much as Petty wants you to know at that point in the song, and it's plenty.

This album is a collection of vignettes, with sparer arrangements than *Damn The Torpedoes*. If Petty's influences are the Byrds and Dylan on one hand, and Graham Parker and Bruce Springsteen on the other, *Torpedoes* was full of the latter duo's influence. Almost every song rammed through the gears fast. *Hard Promises* definitely sounds Byrdsy, with a dollop of Merle Haggard (cross a smart Okie with a playing-dumb cracker and you get someone who declares, as Petty does on "Letting You Go," that "There's no one as honest as those in pain.") Side two of this record is a rather forlorn suite, and the liner photo of a seated Petty conducting a dry run with the band looks more like the Juilliard Quartet than the boogie-woogie flu victims on *Torpedoes*' back cover. Except for the drolly barreling "King's Road," and the resplendently full-bore single, "The Waiting," this is a rather artsy outing, and probably a conscious pull-back from the drive of its predecessor. I'd be the last to say that means Petty's slipping. Retrenching is more like it, and taking care of business is just fine. Even if he doesn't know anything about the U.N. — *Fred Schruers*

Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays
As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls (ECM)



This is a duo album (despite the third-wheel participation of Nana Vasconcelos on percussion and vocals) that relies more on compositional collaboration than on the improvisational empathy of a traditional jazz duet. The give and take process seems to have taken place more at the drawing board rather than in spontaneous performance.

There's nothing wrong with this approach as long as the writing is edited and the material is not allowed to expand beyond its means. Half of this record I find frivolous and self-serving, though not in the extreme. Fortunately, every record has two sides, and the second is a success.

Side one encompasses over 20 minutes of title track, the music living up to the rambling nature of its moniker. Crowd noises are heard while straight eights repeat and bombs explode beneath. The introduction, right? Sure is. However, the sections that follow never really seem to gel. Variations are apparent; a little percussion for foot tappin' here, some haunted-house night-at-the-opera organ there, and can that be Metheny reading the serial number off his guitar — "38...14...55...3...!"? Seriously, Pat, stuff like this is better left to Fripp or Eno or, better yet, to the Count on *Sesame Street*. To make matters worse, throughout these quartered-off sections Metheny's guitar presence is virtually non-existent. In fact, Metheny's guitar work is way down in the mix, incorporated only to lend support to Mays' multi-keyboard textures and to delineate the harmonic foundation. With Metheny taking a backseat role, Mays is left with the unenviable task of maintaining listener interest alone.

Luckily, side two steers clear of extended departures and manages to condense the experiments of side one into more workable form. The first tune, "Ozark," is a frolicking hoedown reminiscent of Metheny's *New Chatauqua*. Mays solo relies mostly on rhythmic jabs rather than flowing lines and, though the technique works here, I harbor doubts as to his improvisational capacity on up-tempo tunes. The next two cuts are the album's gems. "September Fifteenth" is an involved (like the title track) yet subtly evolving (unlike the title track) composition that doesn't tangle itself with overly indulgent gestures. The piece begins with a simple melody on plucked nylon by Metheny while Mays blankets the remaining space with synthesized strings as tender as can be duplicated by electronics. Both musicians take solo spots, and here Mays excels with a lighter side of Keith Jarrett acoustic piano cadenza that fits splendidly. On "It's for You," Mays' hallowed, distant synthesizer (the same shaded tones heard before on "The Search" from *American Garage*) leads into a polished and welcome Metheny electric solo amid simple yet apt changes. Metheny's plugged-in sound is immediately identifiable and consistent with his past recordings. As usual his left hand technique is lucid, as he glides over rather than grinds into frets. His approach to the instrument is more vertical than horizontal, with a lot of sliding single-string execution. In contrast, Metheny's less aggressive, pamper-the-strings acoustic touch is wholly unremarkable, and bolstered on recordings by ECM's now (in)famous studio techniques. It can complement, but it can't lead.

In spots, this music appears to have been written for the Pat Metheny Group minus one and a half members. Be that as it may, since the release of *80/81* last year, I've become more aware and appreciative of Metheny's diverse capabilities as composer, leader and sideman. His willingness to extend his talents into diverse musical environments assures him a place in the recording world for years to come. Though

Falls doesn't compare with the darker, more venturesome *80/81* there probably shouldn't be any comparison. — *Peter Giron*

Reggae Collections

The King Kong Compilation (Mango)
Sly and Robbie Present Taxi (Mango)

Jamaican pop music has had a very distinct, even intricate history all its own, full of rhythmic developments & a ripening melodic sophistication that, heard in retrospect, form a fascinating and somewhat Byzantine musical thread. Until the 50s, the most prevalent pop musical form on the island was mento, a riotous, uptempo mixture of English folk song and sea chanteys, calypso, and African rhythms that had survived almost completely intact from the days of slavery. With increasing industrialization and bauxite mining in the late 50s, however, came a more urban, American R&B influence, resulting in ska music. Two excellent and recent Mango collections document the ska era, *Intensified! Original Ska 1962-1966* and *More Intensified! Original Ska 1963-1967*, when fast, horn-laden productions ruled the island and yielded its first international hits as well. Now two new Mango compilations trace two subsequent eras in Jamaican pop, and if anything, these albums are even more illuminating as regards the music's global influence.

The quasi-legendary Jamaican summer of 1966, with record high temperatures and dryness, supposedly ended the furious ska dancing craze on the island and set the stage for the much cooler rock-steady and reggae beats that followed. *The King Kong Compilation* picks up that change around 1968, centering on the productions of one Leslie Kong, a Chinese-Jamaican record store owner-turned-producer, and an early partner of Island/Mango Records founder Chris Blackwell. Gone now were the hysterical horns, distorted guitars and seemingly haphazard vocals that lent ska its charm and craziness; instead, Kong featured tasty organ fills, a relaxed beat, sweetly precise backup vocals, skanking guitar "chickas" on the backbeats, and perhaps most important, a heavy-duty bass sound that nailed down the groove without being frantic. Desmond Dekker and the Aces' "Israelites," which leads off the compilation, was a big 1968 hit in the U.S., combining the ever-present Jamaican religiosity with this new production style to great advantage. Other treats here, depicting the "King Kong" sound in all its laid back glory, include the Melodians' "Rivers of Babylon" (which became a huge hit remake for Boney M in the late 70s), the Pioneers' relentlessly grooving "Long Shot Kick De Bucket," and a very young Toots and the Maytals doing the song that first charted them, the churning "Monkey Man." A new one on me, but a delightful surprise, is the passionate "Bitterness of Life" by Bruce Ruffin, which is such a great tune that it fairly begs to be covered today.

Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare are of course the premier drums/bass duo to have emerged from the Jamaican music scene; *Sly and Robbie Present Taxi* is a compendium of their equally impressive production triumphs via their own Taxi label, which is distributed by Island/Mango worldwide. The songs here are all fairly recent, with Sheila Hylton's version of the Police tune "The Bed's Too Big Without You" still on the charts in Jamaica. As producer/players, Sly and Robbie are about using empty space to maximum advantage. For instance, the dub track on the late General Echo's "Drunken Master" has only bass, minimal drum kit and slight percussive guitar sounds — but the groove is thick and absolutely undeniable. Even the more arranged songs here, like Dennis Brown's "Sitting and Watching," which features a relentless upbeat syndrum, have the basic Sly/Robbie rock-solid beat as the firmament on which the more ornate electronic touches depend. This album very much depicts the sound of popular reggae

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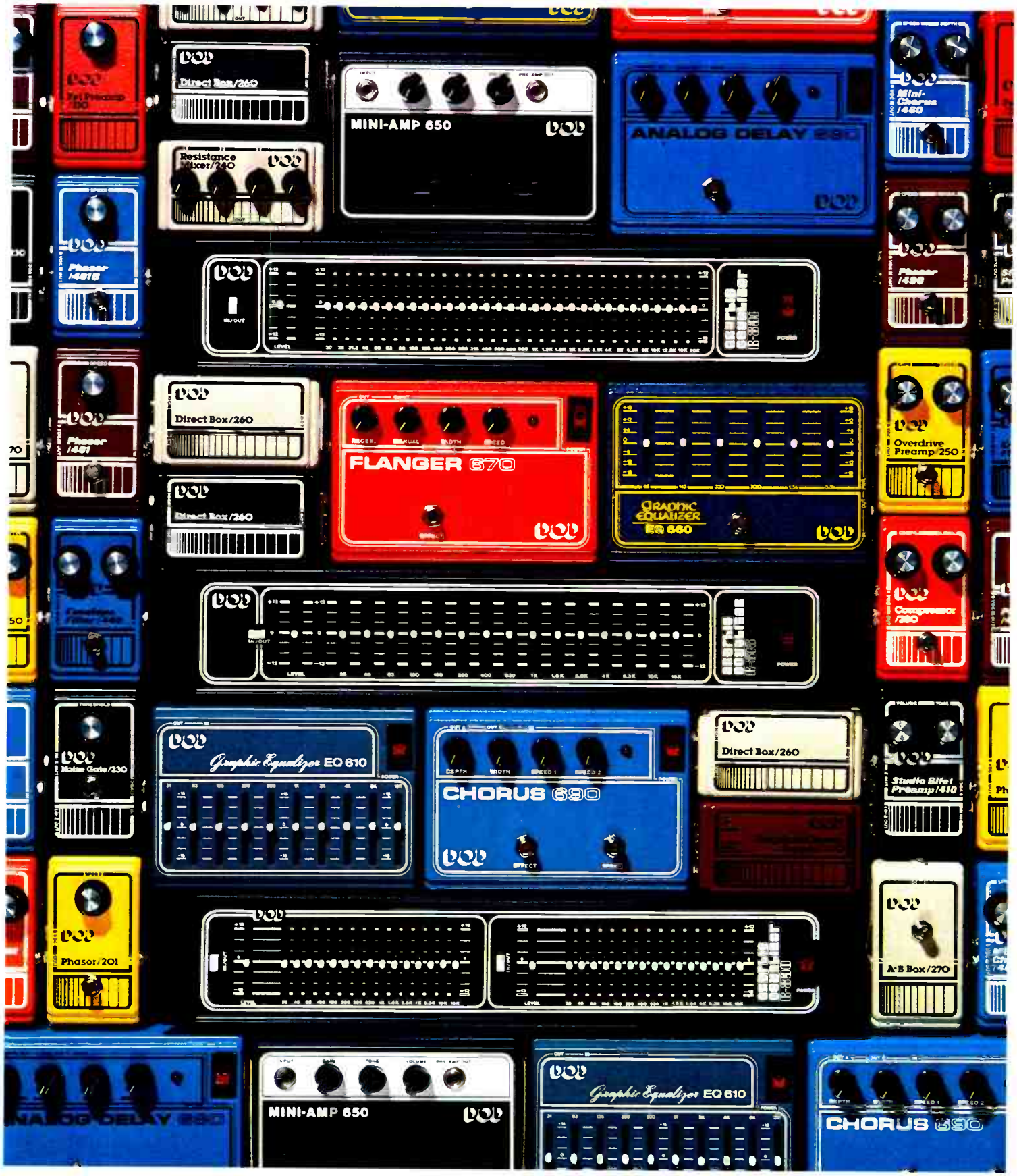

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today, in Jamaica and worldwide, and the Dunbar-Shakespeare team has also produced such pop-reggae hits as "Don't Look Back" by Peter Tosh/Mick Jagger, "Sinsemilla" by Black Uhuru, and "Soon Forward" by Gregory Isaacs. Taken together, these two compilation albums nicely trace reggae's formative years through its most recent and cosmopolitan incarnation. And the fact that the music has survived, grown and refined itself over the last 15 years is proof enough that it's here to stay.
— *Crispin Cioe*

Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition
Tin Can Alley (ECM)

The boppish title cut, coming up first, preserves an astonishing continuity with the first *Special Edition*, though DeJohnette's two-horn front line has changed and he's been involved in a number of other projects since. Proves two things perhaps: how clear his aims are for his individual bands, and that he really is a classicist, a collector and refiner of the tradition. Here, he distills Ornette, Dolphy, Sonny's trios, Trane, and Miles' last quintet in ideal stasis and supple form, slightly dry, with some of the aroma of the gallery, the museum. (But records are like that; it's a more rough-house band live.) On the first, celebrated album, what emerged most clearly from the group identity were Arthur Blythe's knife-edged alto solos, for which David Murray's eloquent muttering, mumbles and cries provided an effective foil. Now there's the much-improved Chico Freeman on tenor and bass clarinet and a real find, John Purcell, heard most often on baritone sax, and the tone of the album has deepened and darkened correspondingly. On bass, Peter Warren maintains his importance with his solid time-playing, excellent choice of notes and ability to team with the leader. He's simply better at playing with DeJohnette than any other bassist I've heard. On drums, Jack the classicist presents Elvin, Philly, Tony, Haynes in synthesis, the most comprehensive style on the axe today. A pianoless quartet: earth, air and fire, no water.

The second cut provides it; DeJohnette plays lots of Jarrett-like piano, and I believe the drum part is overdubbed. "Pastel Rhapsody" takes us into new areas for the band, though everyone's been writing Ellington tributes lately and the "Lush Life" tag, also used by Mingus on "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love," comes from Billy Strayhorn. The standout is Purcell's blithe alto. On side two, Warren's casually boppish "Riff Raff" features the composer substituting cello for bass, gaining greater clarity and finer

team polyphony when the two reeds, using a strategy familiar from the first album, enter and take their solos simultaneously.

"The Gri Gri Man" is played solely by DeJohnette, a reprise of experiments past and an omen, perhaps, of solo albums to come. He's on congas and tympani in addition to the trap set, but the most creepily effective business on the cut is his organ work, a few sustained dissonances in the manner of Miles Davis. Otherwise, it's a glamorous throwaway.

The funky two-beat of "I Know" concludes the album. Freeman plays a little like Murray, as if the role's there to be inhabited, and DeJohnette echoes the monumental indecorousness of Rahsaan Roland Kirk in a raunchy, sexy vocal: "When she puts her sweet, juicy red lips up against mine — I KNOW!" The recorded audience interpolated toward the end of the cut sounds like deep fat boiling up around a basket of fries. Why's it there? For all the boozy braggadocio there's little real elation on the cut, or the rest of the album, perhaps because it's been done with such care. As on the first album, DeJohnette's production, erroneously credited by this reporter and others to Manfred Eicher, practically combs the harmonics into a permanent wave. I remember being dismayed by the neatness of the first album when it first came out, then playing it nonstop for months. *Tin Can Alley* will likely go the same route. Without Blythe, who knew how to set himself off and make himself remembered, it's more of an ensemble effort than ever, goes down smoothly, and yeah, there's delight enough in that last "I *know*!" I hear Manfred was upset. — *Rafi Zabor*

Junie Morrison
"5" (Columbia)

Places like Michigan and Ohio have traditionally been fountainheads of funk music because, as anybody knows who's lived in the Midwest, they're funky places to be. Factory rhythms, car and truck rhythms, and just flatland rhythms — it's no accident that Motown, George Clinton, the Ohio Players, Earth, Wind & Fire, and even James Brown (don't forget, King Records was in Cincinnati) all spent some formative musical years crankin' it out on the one in the great American breadbasket. And if you remember the Ohio Players' first national hit, the eternally weird early 70s novelty-dance groover "Funky Worm," then you've got a bead on what Junie Morrison is all about. Morrison, a Dayton native, left the Ohio Players soon after "Funky Worm," made a couple of solo albums, joined the Parliament Funkadelic, and coauthored such P-Funk stompers as "Groove Allegiance," "Cholly," and "One Nation Under A Groove." Following last year's heralded *Bread Alone*, *"5"* (his second album on a major label), continues and expands Morrison's unusual mixture of gritty folk, romantic melodies, and lavish arrangements that have had a profound influence on much modern R&B, and which are Midwestern down to the bone.

Morrison plays most of the instruments here: hard, backbeating drums; spare-but-precise bass; slashing funk guitar; and a florid, gospel-cum-jazz piano style that adds elegance to the electronics (check his expansively percussive piano solo on "A Taste Of Love"). Horn charts are intricate, brightly melodic, and constantly changing — another romantic touch — and his roughly sweet tenor voice, usually swathed in four female backups, has that floating quality that George Clinton started using so convincingly in the 70s. In other words, this is very dense, challenging pop-funk with strong roots, and even Junie's lyrics carry a kind of downhome flavor that's soul all the way, as on "Victim of Love," which begins: "You were livin' there across the tracks/All my money was across my back — oh baby. . ." In the chugging, gospelish ballad in 6/8, "Cry Me A River," Junie's romantically emotional side combines with a skilled, innate melodic sense, and while I don't claim to be an A&R executive, my guess is the song will turn up being covered by other artists. "Rappin' About Rappin' (Uh-Uh-Uh)," the album's first single, is a fairly laid back number that, like a small and tasty hors d'oeuvre, doesn't really indicate how sizzling the

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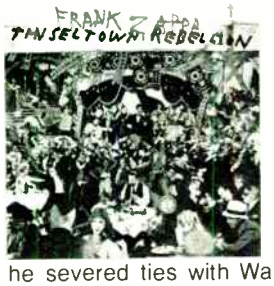
main dishes that follow will be. As it stands, "5" is one of the most satisfying dance-funk noshes served up this year. — *Crispin Cioe*

Frank Zappa
Tinsel Town Rebellion (Barking Pumpkin)



That's right, folks — it's another album by Frank Zappa. If it occurs to some that the market has been glutted with Zappa product since he severed ties with Warner Bros., it's only because he has released two double albums and one single LP on his own Zappa Records while WB almost simultaneously unleashed *Studio Tan*, *Sleep Dirt* and *Orchestral Favorites* — all in the past two and a half years.

The always prolific Zappa seems to have been rejuvenated by his new lease on labels, and much of the material on this double live set illustrates the melodic, accessible, almost fifties approach evident on *Sheik Yerbouti* and *Joe's Garage* (especially "Ain't Got No Heart," "For The Young Sophisticate" and the title song, an appropriately cynical view of the L.A. new wave scene).

Recorded over the course of his last two or three tours, *Tinsel Town* features Zappa's multi-guitar band, with Ray White, Waren Cucurullo, Steve Vai, Denney Walley, and Ike Willis in various combinations. Zappa discovered Willis working as a roadie at a college concert a few years back, and he has developed into one of the strongest vocalists to pass through the Zappa band. Willis provides two of the album's many highlights, the raunchy "Easy Meat" and a blues shuffle called "Bamboozled By Love." A vocal highpoint of a different sort is reached with keyboardist Bob Harris' falsetto part on "Love Of My Life" (from *Cruisin' With Ruben & the Jets*).

Most of the four sides are comprised of previously unrecorded Zappa compositions, although a few welcome reminders of the past are tossed in. The LP closes with "Brown Shoes Don't Make It" and "Peaches III." This is the third time Zappa has recorded "Peaches En Regalia," but this version may be the best.

Most of the cuts are fairly succinct, under five minutes, and usually stick with one theme, although "Easy Meat" degenerates into a tiresome jam. For those Zappa fanatics who are also guitar fanatics, the inner sleeve includes an order form for Zappa's three all-instrumental albums: *Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar*, *Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar Some More*, and *Return Of The Son Of Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar*. These are available only by mail order, from Barking Pumpkin Records, Box 5510, Terre

Haute, IN 47805. I've heard two tracks from *Return Of The Son...*— the Metheny-esque "Stucco Homes" and "Canard Du Jour," which should be retitled "Shut Up 'N Play Yer Bouzouki" — and was duly impressed. This makes — what? — thirty-something albums by the Mother, and I can't imagine not owning a single one of them. — *Dan Forte*

Paul Winter
Callings (Living Music Records)

Music seeks its own level: If it was created of brilliance of mind, it illuminates us. If music was born of pain, struggling and transcendence, it imparts that to us. If it was about boogalooing down Broadway, we boogaloo too. So, what to make of an album, in fact, a whole genre of music, that is about communication with animals: seals, whales, otters, dolphins, and other large and small creatures?

Paul Winter's new album, *Callings*, is a boxed set of two records and a 24-page color booklet. It is a digitally recorded series of conscious interactions between man and beast. Packs of orcas off Vancouver Island; blue whales in the deep Pacific; harp seals in eastern Canada; sea lions in Baja, California, and eleven others.

For the most part, the animal sounds are previously recorded tracks, to which instrumental parts were added, answering, mimicking, and acknowledging the original and primary music of these creatures. The playing, as in other Paul Winter Consort albums, is understated and extremely competent. There seems to be an implicit acknowledgment that there is no one to impress. There are only beings — the animals and the eventual listener — to communicate with. Because of that, the album is sometimes deeply moving.

When I listened to the album, instead of feeling alienated or drawn into a different world by the repeated use of animal sounds, I felt my humanness more. The music brought me back to a feeling of dignity about the human task. I felt as if creation were literally singing one song, and had one aim: to get to know each other better. The whale's slow and ancient philosophy. The fur seal's grace. The otter's excitability. Man's tremendous flexibility and unique ability to see the patterns of creation.

This is not an album about alienation or the worst of the times we live in, though those things exist. It is about unification and community. It shows us in our best light. Neither is this a fashionable album, and that's both good and bad. It's bad because many people might feel

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this is not for them, and would miss out on a beautiful experience. It's good because it by-passes all the waves — new or old — and goes directly to the heart of the sea. It won't be out of date next year. My only criticism is that it depends heavily on the use of the old Scottish folksong "The Grey Silkie" throughout the album, without giving it *quite* enough acknowledgment. A minor point.

This is a record to listen to at night or in the early morning. When you're feeling down on yourself, restricted, contracted, and foolish. It enhances our dignity, our natural grace, and brings us into touch with the soft majesty around us. — *Jason A. Shulman*

Al DiMeola, John McLaughlin and Paco DeLucia
Friday Night In San Francisco (Columbia)

Destined to be the "guitarist's guitarists" acoustic album of the year, *Friday Night In San Francisco*, a live take on last year's DiMeola/McLaughlin/DeLucia tour recorded at San Francisco's Warfield Theatre, could pose a few problems for those less inclined to luxuriate in the penultimate guitar riff. No doubt Al DeMeola, John McLaughlin and flamenco master Paco DeLucia easily represent about as much collective guitaristic horsepower, in terms of sheer technical mastery and charismatic stage presence, as can possibly be generated on one stage at one time. But herein the rub: sparkling, near-transcendent moments emerge from delicate ensemble passages, particularly on McLaughlin and DeLucia's highly sympathetic interpretation of Egberto Gismonti's lilting "Frevo Rasgado," only to be overpowered by supercharged technical displays on less structured performances like the DiMeola/McLaughlin showdown which mars Chick Corea's "Short Tales of the Black Forest."

There is nothing inherently wrong with virtuoso guitar playing, especially when each musician embodies such a wealth of stylistic influences and variations as those represented here. When "cutting" (here used in the most primal sense of simply *topping* one another as opposed to an exhilarating and occasionally dangerous method of mutual enlightenment) starts to dominate the proceedings, the fragile melodic continuity of these guitar-based compositions can be quickly diffused. After listening to cascading torrents of 16th and, in some cases, 32nd note runs, no matter how well articulated, the listener may yearn for some elemental legato-style playing.

No single player here can be faulted for the "double-time" feeling that courses through this recording. DeMeola, using a steel string Ovation acoustic-electric, still features a lightning fast, heavily percussive attack but is actually rather laid back on many of the tracks considering the speed of the company he's keeping. McLaughlin can rev up his Ovation classical instrument when the music calls for it, or when Al starts to get on his nerves, but he is generally content to "flesh out" the compositions with his unique phrasing and chord work. DeLucia's traditional flamenco approach blends in exceedingly well on two of DiMeola's better pieces, "Mediterranean Sundance/Rio Ancho" and "Fantasia Suite," but even he, normally a model of concision and good taste, carries things a few choruses too far on occasion. A supergroup LP in the most understated sense of the word, *Friday Night In San Francisco* is not so much a battle of egos as a hyper-kinetic guitar "event" where the natural adrenalin rush created by three such gifted players in one setting is fueled by an adoring horde of fretboard *aficionados* to the point where the natural tempo of the concert begins to assume unreal proportions.

On McLaughlin's "Guardian Angel," a studio recording which closes off side two with a more stately tone, the three guitars work exceptionally well together, creating a rich mosaic of interweaving chords and melodic figures played in unison and/or contrapuntally. These moments are what this tripartite collaboration should be about. The vertiginous instrumental displays are best left as grist for the aspiring guitarists to gnaw on till the next thing comes along. But the undeniable excitement created by what is essentially an acoustic guitar chamber group bodes well for the future. In fact, a live LP of Larry Coryell, McLaughlin and DeLucia (the "European" version of this trio) might provide some pointed comparisons. — *J.C. Costa*

Stephane Grappelli
At The Winery (Concord Jazz)
Stephane Grappelli and David Grisman
Live (Warner Bros.)

You'd think by now, at age 72, yet another album by the premier swing violinist Stephane Grappelli, consisting of pretty much the same repertoire as the dozens and dozens of LPs

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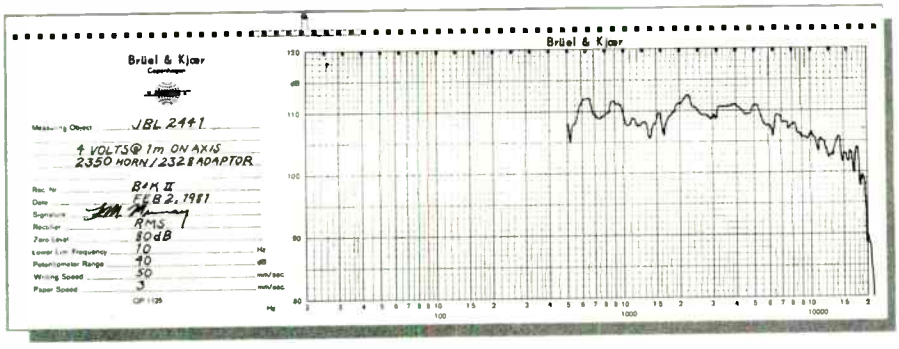

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he's recorded in his lengthy career, would sound like all the rest. These two new live recordings don't. Grappelli is one of the few artists for which the tired phrase "better than ever" actually applies, due in large part to the stimulation he gets from the young musicians he's been performing with in recent years. In the liner notes to *Live* he writes of Grisman, "When I play with him, I feel fifty years younger," and the same is apparently true when he is in the company of the English guitar duo of John Etheridge and Martin Taylor (*At The Winery*).

Though relatively obscure to American audiences, Etheridge and Taylor are well known in Great Britain — Taylor, who's 24, through his recordings with Ike Isaacs; Etheridge, in his early thirties, through his work with Soft Machine. Grappelli gives each ample solo space, and each is showcased alone for one tune. Taylor fingerpicks his way through an amazing "Taking A Chance On Love," highlighted with some well-placed harmonics and subtle use of chorus effect. Taylor's fingerstyle approach is unlike anything I've heard in jazz. Not the usual Charlie Byrd technique of bass and melody in unison, and not the Chet Atkins-style alternating bass — Taylor actually lays down a syncopated walking bass while improvising around the melody.

Though also mainly comprised of standards ("Misty," "Satin Doll," "Sweet Georgia Brown"), the Grappelli/Grisman collaboration is regenerated by the double-mandolin instrumentation of the Grisman Quartet. Purists who have been hesitant to recognize the mandolinist's bluegrazz will have to reevaluate the Dawg's position in jazz after this recording. Grisman swings like a madman, solos with the best of them and — with his medley of original compositions from the movie, *King Of The Gypsies* — comes closer to capturing the spirit of the Django Reinhardt/Stephane Grappelli collaborations of the 1930s than anyone has since.

And Grappelli? Superb, impeccable, tasteful: his technique is always in service to his feeling. Getting younger by the record, that fiddler. — *Dan Forte*

Fred Frith
Speechless (Ralph Records)
Robert Fripp
Let The Power Fall (Editions E.G.)

When is a guitarist not a guitarist? What distinguishes pop music from avant-garde or classical? Why is most cerebral music purely instrumental? Can you dance to ambient music? Is rock 'n' roll distinguished by its beat?

Good morning students and welcome to Professors Fred Frith and Robert Fripp's Theory of Pop Music 101. These two eccentric English gentlemen have more in common than the similarity of their surnames. Both are cult figures with fanatically devoted followers; both have put in time with seminal art-rock outfits (Henry Cow and King Crimson); both have partaken of the energy on the New York new wave club circuit to resuscitate their causes; both have spent the better part of a decade expanding the boundaries of the electric guitar. *Speechless* and *Let The Power Fall* exist at the farthest fringes of the pop spectrum, offering possibilities, blueprints, half-formed ideas and the notion of music as spontaneous sculptures of landscaped sounds. Unfortunately, as finished, articulate pieces, both LPs reflect their creators' various strengths and weaknesses as fully-fledged artists.

Fred Frith has long been an innovative voice on the left-field English progressive wing, at once too arcane for the commercial success experienced by contemporaries like Pink Floyd, Genesis and Yes. His stints with Henry Cow and Art Bears, though, have garnered him an intensely loyal audience, one committed to Frith with a hippie-like sense of undifferentiated awe.

Like his compatriot Fripp, Frith is at his most accessible with a powerful rhythm section to frame his drone-like excursions. At various times, Frith's treated guitar approximates an Indian raga, an Irish folk song, a Rio bossa nova, supermarket muzak, African chants. *Speechless* even employs the "found material" approach Byrne and Eno utilize on *Bush of Ghosts* and Fripp has used on *Exposure* and the recent *League of Gentlemen*. But it is the live tracks, recorded at CBGB with bassist Bill Laswell and drummer Fred Maher (Massacre), on which Frith's ideas really take hold.

Let The Power Fall is a continuation of Fripp's fascination with the tape-loop method he calls Frippertronics, featuring a series of live performances culled from his one-man tour of a couple years ago. That said, these meandering conundrums of overlapping guitar brush-strokes do not seem to outlive their transient circumstances. Still, the sound is so present that Fripp's whining guitar hypnotically leaps across the room, bouncing from speaker to speaker. Pity he couldn't capture that angular buoyancy on the one-dimensional *League of Gentlemen*, his own dance LP.

As self-declared avant-garde artists, Fred Frith and Robert Fripp are theoretically tied to those contradictions which make their art so problematic. *Speechless* and *Let The Power Fall* pose the aesthetic questions that others will eventually answer in commercial terms. — *Roy Trakin*

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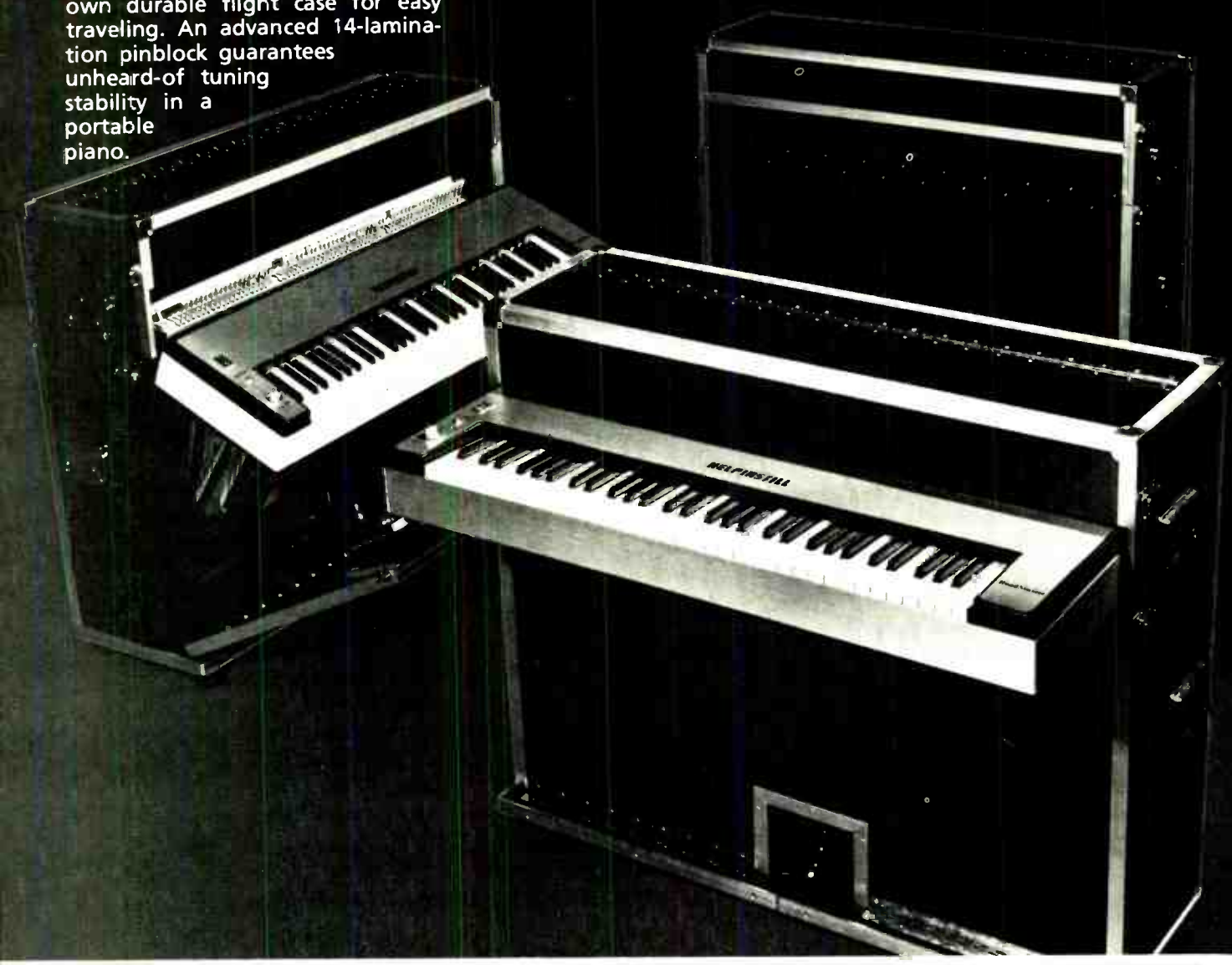

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Joe Walsh — *There Goes the Neighborhood* (Asylum) There was a time when Walsh, as a solo artist, went places where Eagles dare not to go, plowing a Rocky Mountain way with his witty turn of phrase, melodic smarts and spirited arrangements. But now that he's got his wings, Walsh may be losing his nerve. With the exception of the animal house party jig "Down on the Farm" and a feisty funky hymn to paranoia called "You Never Know," this is just another supergroup solo album. Terminally ordinary.

Ph.D. (Atlantic) An admirable experiment in post-Buggles pop, this voice-and-keyboards duo run through ten quite hummable art-rock airs with neither pomp nor circumstance. Although singer Jim Diamond has a gritty, expressive style compared to most electro-pop crooners, keysman Tony Hymas (noted fusion sessioneer) just fluffs up the songs with marshmallow arrangements. Nice try, but no degree.

9Below Zero — *Don't Point Your Finger* (A&M) Ah, just what the Dr. Feelgood ordered — smokey 60s electric R&B that no doubt sounds best when you're soaked with your own sweat and someone else's beer down at the Marquee. Originality is not this British quartet's strong suit, but they nevertheless win this hand with punchy riffing, Mark Feltham's iron lung blowing on harp, songwriting promise, and brawling covers of "Treat Her Right" and "Rockin' Robin." Cool name, hot stuff.

Grace Jones — *Nightclubbing* (Island) The androgynous disco ice goddess consolidates her growing art appeal with a nine-song selection (including Iggy's "Nightclubbing," Flash and the Pan's "Walking in the Rain," and a psycho-reggae number called "Demolition Man" written by Sting of the Police) that simply recaps her last LP *Warm Leatherette*. "Pull Up to the Bumper" is an ace tune, indicative of her horrorshow fusion of roots rhythms and futuristic cool. But whatever happend to her version of Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart" and the session she did with the U.K. avant-funksters A Certain Ratio?

New Musik — *Sanctuary* (Epic) An unfortunate name for a well-meaning band. Singer-songwriter-producer Tony Mansfield has a knack for writing winning pop ditties of which their rock disco smash "Straight Lines" (included here) is the best example. But spread over an album, their brand of synth-based Devolving Abba sounds more like new muzak.

Linx — *Intuition* (Chrysalis) The new face of Black British funk. Singer David Grant, bassist Sketch and band cook up a steamy gumbo of snappy songnooks, rhythms that shake you by the scruff of the neck, and socio-political passion that has a lot more to do with the punk protest of the Clash than it does the cosmological parables of Earth Wind and Fire. Of the ten tough tracks here, "Don't Get in My Way" just about says it all.

Moody Blues — *Long Distance Voyager* (Threshold) More mom 'n' pop art rock from these veteran cosmic rockers (immortalized as such in one of their own songs here). At least when they make a record together, they're too busy to make any more of those dreadful solo albums.

Van Halen — *Fair Warning* (Warner Bros.) Love 'em or loathe 'em, these four horsemen of the heavy metal apocalypse are full of sound and fury even if it doesn't signify all that much. There's a paucity of truly hot tunes this time around, but the headbanger next door will still buy it and play it loud enough to be heard in four counties. You have been warned.

999 — *Concrete* (Polydor) Just what the world needs — a new wave Humble Pie. Workmanlike bash'n'crash with HP crossover appeal, although whom they thought their version of Sam the Sham's "Li'l Red Riding Hood" will appeal to is anybody's guess.

The Swinging Madisons (Select) With a great name, an inspired choice of covers ("Hurdy Gurdy Man," "Volare"), and a sound somewhere between George Thorogood and Television, this smarmy-looking New York foursome deserves more than the five songs alloted them on this 12" EP. Song titles of the month: "Guilty White Liberal" and "Put Your Bra Back On."

Marshall Tucker Band — *Dedicated* (Warner Bros.) The best album in many moons by this yahoo rock and campfire pop band. The playing is tight and to the point, Tom Dowd's production rock-hard, and the songs warm and inviting. Even "This Time I Believe," which borders on MOR-Doobieland, has an inescapable charm. A fitting tribute to the late Tommy Caldwell.

Bram Tchaikovsky — *Funland* (Arista) Now this is more like it, spritely unabashedly 60s-style style stuff by an ex-Motor and produced by Nick Garvey who may as well be an ex-Motor (one album in almost four years?). Garvey goes a little heavy on the Spectoresque echo and Bram's version of "Breaking Down the Walls of Heartache" smacks of an all-too-obvious bid for a single. Still, it's nice to hear that long-lost Motors nugget "Soul Surrender" again.

continued on pg. 94

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JAZZ

SHORT TAKES

Trane slides in, Pepper strings out, Taylor and Cooper, Abercrombie and Farlow pluck while Grappelli saws.

By Jon Pareles

The big news this month is **John Coltrane**'s *Bye Bye Blackbird* (Pablo Live), 36½ minutes of music by the classic quartet recorded in 1962. The title tune and "Traneing In" occupy a side each, but to my ear "Bye Bye Blackbird" is just a warmup — lots of Coltraneisms you've already heard, though he was just disovering them at the time. In 1962, Coltrane was still teetering at the edge of transcendence, not quite ready to flatten changes into modes, yet well aware that something had to give. All those pent-up ideas — and maybe a little frustration — make "Traneing In" a volcanic performance, continually pushing, pushing, pushing. Tyner, Jones and Garrison play lighter than they would in the years to come, which makes Coltrane's power stand out even more. It may not be "his greatest concert performance," as the album's off-putting cover says (there are, after all, the Vanguard sessions to contend with), but it is nothing short of remarkable.

Pharoah Sanders is still trading on Coltraneiana with *Rejoice* (Theresa), which includes lyrics to "Moments Notice" that turn it into a Trane commercial, as if one were needed. Sanders has two moods, it seems — facile mainstream and Afro-bliss — and he uses a different group for each; I prefer the Afro vamping paced by pianist Joe Bonner.

Art Pepper's *Winter Moon* (Galaxy) brandishes the dread phrase "With Strings," and I would've skipped it if I hadn't heard him play one of the most scarifyingly brilliant sets in my experience, last year at Fat Tuesday's. The strings, thank goodness, are kept in the background, used as they would be on a pop album to add a little emotional resonance. Pepper doesn't need it, of course, and though he does seem to be holding back a little, spooks appear on the title cut and in Pepper's clarinet (!) playing on "Blues in the Night." It'll give muzak consumers considerably more than they bargained for. Unlike **Jay Hoggard**'s *Rain Forest* (Contemporary), a tame effort that even Chico Freeman can't get off the ground. Blending into the background is an occupational hazard for vibes players; Hoggard — as a leader — acts as if it's a virtue.

While I'm quibbling, I'll bring up **Cecil Taylor**'s *It Is in the Brewing Luminous*

CHARLES STEWART

(hat Hut SIXTEEN), a double album recorded last year at Fat Tuesday's by a Taylor sextet. The music is wonderful, Taylor's inimitable roil and quall, but the mix misinterprets a lot of it as soloists backed by a band instead of the incredibly polyphonic unit (hmmmm) any Taylor band aims to be. And it takes headphones to hear the interchanges betwen splash-and-burn Sonny Murray and precision-personified Jerome Cooper on drums. But it's there.

Though I wouldn't exactly call it a trend, at least a few jazz musicians are testing out minimalism as a strategy toward creating a genuinely pan-ethnic music, something that doesn't have to turn its back on Africa or Asia or even Europe. Last year **Jerome Cooper** released *The Unpredictability of Predictability* (About Time), a one-man band manifesto of rigorously schematic expansions on the simplest motifs, with a clock-steady pulse. For all its structural priorities, it turned out to be cheerful and catchy. So does *For the People* (hat Hut SEVEN), a duet album by Cooper with Oliver Lake that's built on a three-note melody and its rhythm equivalent, both tenacious as barnacles. Each player does his duty — Lake squirreling around his alto sax and flute, Cooper providing both rhythmic and tonal centers on his tightly tuned drums — and the result is both loose and purposive.

If you want to try minimalism from the classical side, I recommend **Jon Gibson**'s *Two Solo Pieces* (Chatham Square LP24, now distributed by New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012). Although Gibson plays winds in the Philip Glass Ensemble, the two semi-improvised pieces on the album are far less choppy than Glass' music. "Cycles," for pipe organ, sounds like one rich slowly changing organ chord; "Untitled" is an alto flute melody pieced together out of prescribed melodic fragments, in a warmly elegiac performance. Great cover, too.

Minimal devices like ostinatos and augmentation (adding a note each time a riff comes around) serve **John Abercrombie** well on the Abercrombie Quartet's *M* (ECM). In "Boat Song," tolling guitar notes generate that proto-ECM hypnosis, and pianist Richard Beirach's arpeggios come close in bassist George Mraz's tune, "Pebbles." In between, though, Abercrombie and Beirach spend too much time imitating Metheny and McLaughlin (what does M stand for, anyway?) and Bill Evans via Keith Jarrett; their own zaniness only emerges in "What Are the Rules" by Beirach, who deserves co-billing.

Speaking of guitarists, there's a slew of 'em this month. **Tal Farlow**, who's been known to pull fast fades behind his sidemen in concert, steps out front on *Trilogy* (Inner City), calmly upstaging Mike Nock on piano and Lynn Christie on bass (plus a drummer on the final cut). Farlow is steely-fingered and indefatigable as ever, inverting harmonies and rhythms like The Amazing Randi with a handful of handkerchiefs. Nock and Christie don't make the mistake of trying to match Farlow note for note; the astonishing thing is that Farlow never wastes one. Skip Teo Macero's vamp-until-ready "The Wolf and the Lamb," and prepare for a jolt with "Funk Among the Keys." where Farlow trades his usual exact pitch and warm goosed-acoustic tone for slideyness and echo-y electronics. A *very* peculiar ending to an album of standards. Larry Coryell, call your office.

Don't ask me how **Sangeeta Michael Berardi** got Archie Shepp, Roswell Rudd, Rashied Ali, and Eddie Gomez to play on *Divine Song* (New Pulse Artists). You probably shouldn't ask him

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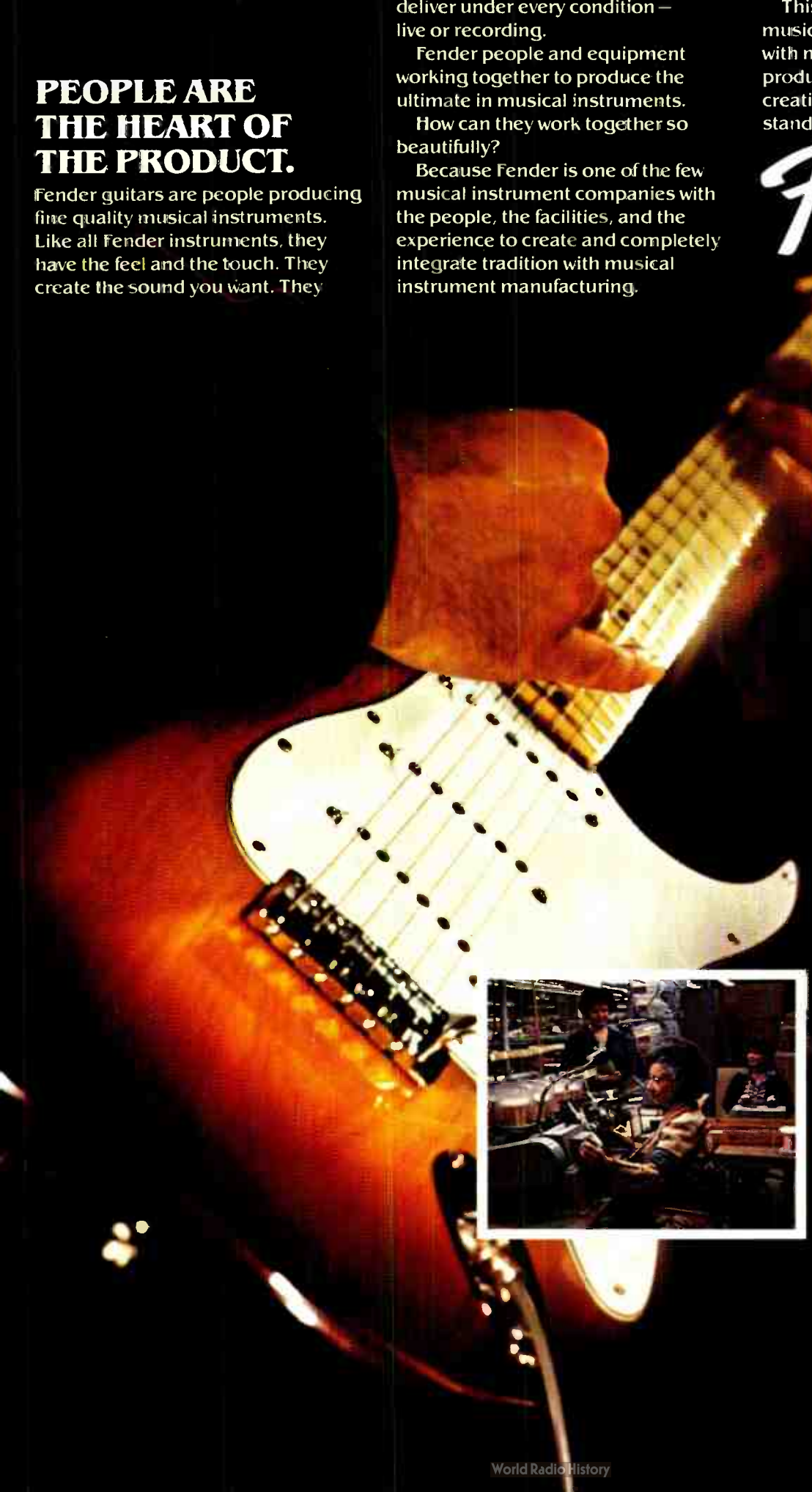

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how long they rehearsed, either — the group is woefully untogether on Coltrane's "Some Other Blues," and barely coherent in "The Fifth Heart String Sings," although the latter has a few good wrangling Rudd-Shepp collisions. On the other cuts, backed only by basses and/or drums, Sangeeta sounds like he's been practicing scales and arpeggios alone in his room too long.

Meanwhile, **Jimmy Ponder** turns in a suavely aggressive set of chitlin'-circuit blues with an unnamed rhythm section on *Ponderin'* (51 West, distributed by CBS), and acoustic guitarist Nels Cline and bassist Eric von Essen free-associate six *Elegies* (Nine Winds, 11609 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90064), one dedicated to Charlie Haden, whose hushed profundity is what they're aiming for (and often reach). A must for brooders.

Any Excuse for an Ellington LP Dept.: **Teresa Brewer** treats the Duke tunes on *A Sophisticated Lady* (Columbia) as sassy high-society romps, digging her little-girl voice into the rhythms nicely — and leaving the other nine-tenths of the songs unplumbed. If you've got cash to burn, though, the record might be worth it for some pearly Benny Carter solos (over-echoed) and the way Oscar Brashear's muted trumpet tone mocks Brewer mercilessly.

Ellington is among the dedicatees on **Stephane Grappelli**'s *"tribute to"* (Europa JP2001, P.O. Box 20513, Orlando, Florida 32814), along with Basie, Jobim, Reinhardt, Waller and seven others. Other than their titles, it's hard to tell what makes the tunes tributes except for the occasional bossa nova pulse; "Dizzy," for instance, doesn't bop or make its way up to the high register. Still, Grappelli plays a lot better with his French quartet than with David Grisman's bluegrass refugees on *Stephane Grappelli/David Grisman Live* (Warner Bros.), where he goes for those crowd-pleasing portamentos. M

Rock Shorts *continued from pg. 90*

Marty Balin — *Balin* (EMI America) To call this disappointing is a gross understatement. It's good to have his evocative wail back on record again after his last aborted tour of duty with the Starship. But it is wasted on a generally banal collection of songs only one of which he bothered to co-write. There are some Top 40s ballads mixed in with the melodramatic rockers, but no "Miracles" here.

Stranglers — *The Men In Black* (Stiff America) These U.K. punk outlaws play the devil's advocate in an album-length discussion of matters religious. Compared to the hellcat urgency of their earlier records, this one radiates an air of Faustian dread through the often declamatory vocals, the unsettling interplay of Hugh Cornwell's guitar and Dave Greenfield's eerie keyboards, and the sonic boom of the J.J. Burnel-Jet Black rhythm section. If Hammer Films were going to do a remake of *King of Kings*, this would be the soundtrack.

Renaldo and the Loaf — *Songs for Swinging Larvae* (Ralph) If Flo and Eddie were members of the Residents, they would probably sound like this marvelously weird British studio duo. Guaranteed to liven up any party, or at least empty the room afterwards. M

Fahey *continued from pg. 18*

fectly capable of re-interpreting Wagner's Ring cycle or possibly The Koran for solo guitar. (On an early album, he noted that the first selection, "Song Of The Stallion," was "a condensed musical history of California, starting with a European theme." Ulp.)

His first albums on Takoma show an agile if somewhat heavy-handed guitarist overflowing with ideas, obsessed with Eastern and Middle Eastern musics, relentlessly pursuing the spiritual in music, looking for the lost chord. The search often led to his writing and singing highly devotional lyrics, which often sounded like very bad translations of foreign poetry. His songs are definitely an acquired taste (*Basho Sings!* warned the title of one of his early Takoma recordings), but his voice is as rich and fervent as his lyrics are embarrassing and earnest. It takes a truly bright man to

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write lyrics this perversely awful, and you can't help but be fascinated by his complete lack of self-consciousness. When, as sometimes happens, his voice soars wordlessly and simply sings itself, the effect is breathtaking and almost worth the struggle.

Art Of The Acoustic Steel String Guitar 6 & 12, his most recent album, continues his fascination with Eastern musics but also includes interpretations of classical pieces. Despite the somewhat ponderous title, it shows a new delicacy, a lightness of touch only hinted at in his earlier recordings; and, happily, it is all instrumental. Ⓜ

Paquito *continued from pg. 28*

obviously has no love for the internal politics of the Cuban musical establishment: "Too many stupid people giving orders. You are not a musician, you are not an artist or even a painter. You can't know how I feel or how the bongo player feels."

Bureaucracy inhibits creativity, "Because if you are in a band, a very bad band and Irakere asked you to come play — it's like playing solo piano in some restaurant and Dizzy Gillespie called you to play with him — 'no man, I can't go with you because of the union.' It's crazy — you can't be better or worse. Maybe, you are in Irakere but you want to play the piano in the restaurant. No, no you can't play the piano in the restaurant, you have to keep traveling with Irakere. You cannot decide for yourself."

Paquito's government-imposed hiatus ended in 1973. His musical mentor, pianist Jesus "Chucho" Valdes asked him to be a co-leader of a new experimental group, later known as Irakere, manned by the cream of the Modern Music Orchestra. "The idea was to make a pop group and play popular music in the same way you play good music — something like Blood Sweat and Tears — pop music — rock music that's not the same bullshit. We didn't play the same salsa thing — 'Cong King...Tse Tse...Cong King...Kink Kink...Cong Cong King' — same thing. We try to make popular dance music but with quality — with great musicians. That was dangerous for everybody. That's why there was a fight. They fought to destroy the group. For example, the chief of EGREM (Cuba's national recording company) said something like 'You people are playing jazz music, not Cuban music.' We said this is Cuban modern music, the new way to see the Cubans. 'No, this is jazz music.'"

In spite of the government's hostility the group was appreciated by Cuban audiences and critics from the beginning. Eventually they won over the cultural officials and became cultural heroes. "It was just natural. We played jazz and we played Cuban music all our lives. We had to find a way to play jazz that

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This particular O-28K is not available in the Martin line of instruments. The O-28K was photographed courtesy of John Barnard and COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE.

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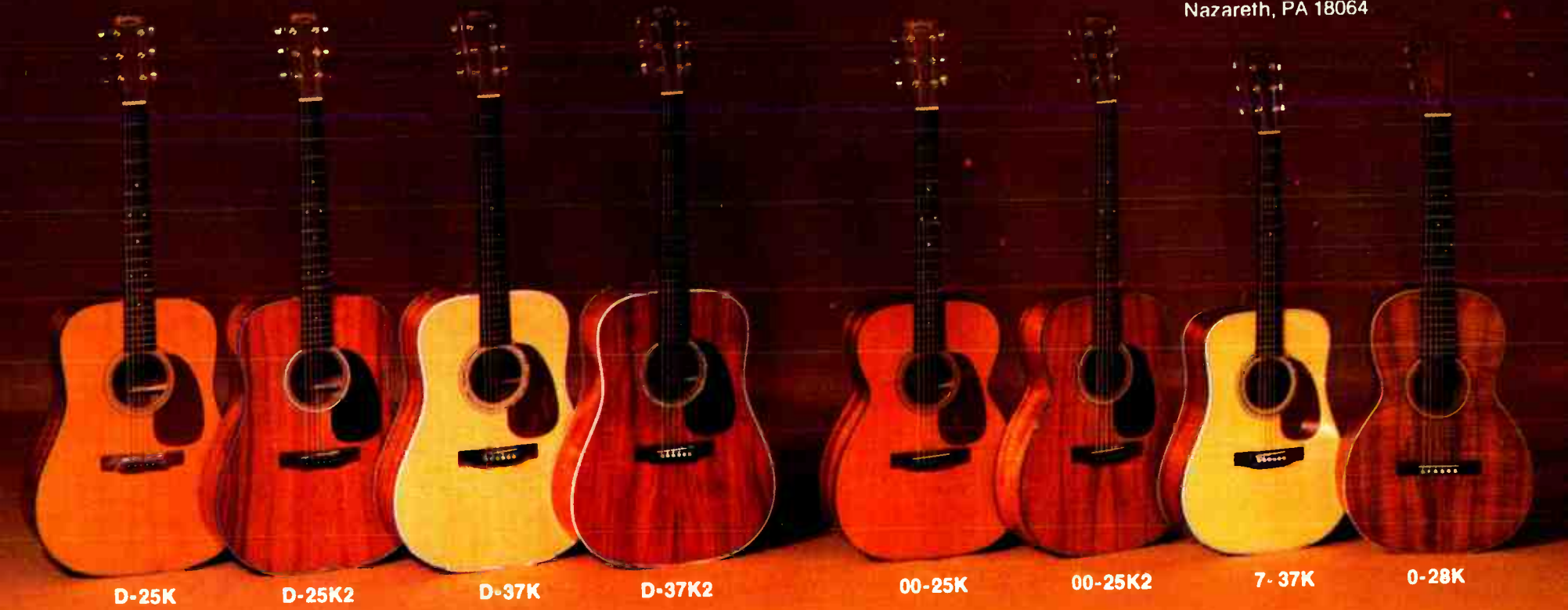

wouldn't be called imperialist. We improvised the same bop lines but the percussion ensemble played Cuban rhythms." He scats two versions of "A Train" to make the distinction. This is the birth of what Paquito calls Cuban jazz, "the American tradition and the Cuban roots. That music was made in the time of the Revolution but the same thing was going to happen if there was not the Revolution."

His dissatisfaction with life in Cuba resulted in action on May 6th, 1980. When Irakere stopped in Madrid, on its way to a festival in Sweden, Paquito walked off the tour. "I had felt so bad for so many years. It was hard but this was my only way to get out." His mother, father and sister had left Cuba for the United States 14 years before. With his mother's help he obtained a visa and came to New York in October. He was joined by his brother, who left Cuba by boat in the "Freedom Flotilla."

His decision was a painful one. He called my attention to photographs of an attractive woman and a young boy that hang on the wall of his room. It is a poignant reminder of the family he has left behind, his wife and his six-year-old son. He channeled the pain of a separation into a bittersweet ballad, "Song to My Son," that is on *Paquito Blowin'*.

"I would have liked to go out of the country easy — peaceful. Everybody could say, 'Okay man, you can go out, we have nothing against you.' I just want to go to China to play Chinese music. It's not possible. They don't want to understand that. You can't do that, you've got to wait for the trip to Spain and run like a criminal. As if you have a bag of cocaine. I don't have a bag of cocaine. I only want to play jazz and be with my mother."

Instruments

Alto — a 30-year-old silver Selmer alto which he bought from a friend 10 years ago in Havana. Mouth piece: Selmer metal F. Soprano — a Rampone and Cazzani curved soprano. Paquito just bought it and recommends it, saying that it resembles the curved Selmer but the handling is superior. Mouth piece: Auto-Link #6. His flute is a Haynes. He has tried electric mouth pieces but prefers to play with acoustic. M

Bullet *continued from pg.62*

"Yeah! The company will fold alright. It'll fold right into my pocket. *I'll* own the controlling shares of Orpheus instead of..."

"Mort?"

"Yeah. Mort. That's the only difference, you knot-head! Mort Parnel's got you out here, wired up and scared out of your skin, all set to shoot me to protect *his* stock option!"

I had to think about that one.

"Y'see," Becket went on, "I figured that once I owned the company I could attract *all* my friends and fellow superstars to sign with us. Mick, Paul, Bruce, all them cats'll come over. I'll give 'em huge points and they'll record great stuff for us!"

"Geez," I sighed. "That almost makes sense."

"Almost!" Becket flung his hands in the air. "If that idiot boss of yours had kept his nose out of my ear I would've kept him on as president. But..." He gestured toward my pistol. "I sure ain't gonna keep him on the payroll *now*."

"Wait a minute!" I insisted. "Don't forget what's going on here!"

"Don't be a monkey, Yeats," Becket moaned. "You don't *have* to shoot me. By now my lawyers have initiated legal action to suck Orpheus into receivership. If I'm dead the courts will just give the company to my ex-wife. Then you'll *really* regret killing me."

I wanted to cry.

"Look," said Becket reassuringly, "as far as solving your problems go, you'd be better off shooting yourself than shooting me."

That was good to hear.

"But if you want to, seeing's how Mort's definitely gettin' the gate, I'll promote you up to president and you can run the label!"

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

"Come on! Perk yourself up!" Becket *sounded* rational. "I'll need someone who knows what he's doing to be in charge of the business end of things. And you're obviously a fellow who'll go to great lengths for the sake of the company."

"But how," I asked warily, "could I ever trust you not to turn me in?"

"Turn ya in?" the singer laughed. "For what? For talkin'? Come on, Yeats! You haven't committed any crime and you know it. The way I figure it, it's good for both of us if I make you head of Orpheus as soon as I get control.

"I also figure it's bad for both of us if you drill me. Now, I don't have to plead with you to make my point. You're a smart boy. You'll admit I'm right."

Well, readers, it did make sense, I did agree, and I didn't shoot that joker after all. I feel like a rat for taking you all along this far, gun in hand, and then not killing anybody. My editor says I should've shot Mort, just to round out the story.

But the fact is, sometimes people get all the way to the edge and then *don't* go over. They just climb back down with a different point of view.

So today in Manhattan I sit behind my desk and run an empire. I am president of Orpheus Records. Our sales are up again. Our new artist-profit-percentage-program (fixing royalty rates to radio-programming) is the talk of the industry. Jim Becket's gone new wave with great success. I have a million dollars in my checking account and, for reasons only partly sentimental, a gold-plated pistol in my top drawer.

And all I have ever done, when you really stop and think about it, is what I was supposed to do. M

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Once again, Roland led the way in overcoming the size and practicality problem with the introduction of the Boss DR-55 "Dr. Rhythm" unit. Very small and compact, the DR-55 offers three basic rhythm sounds (bass drum, snare drum and rimshot) with a standard pattern hi hat and an accent control. Up to sixteen different rhythm patterns can be loaded into memory and "remained" even when the power switch is turned off. These patterns are divided into sixteen steps and are loaded into the DR-55's memory one step at a time. The ability to "write" specific rhythm patterns and retain them for further use or to play the "Dr. Rhythm" in real time, all of this in a highly portable, logically-designed and, for the first time, a truly affordable package, made the DR-55 an instant hit with musicians who wanted a multi-faceted rhythmic reference point for home recording or stage work.

With all of this, Roland continued to work on the authenticity of their drum sounds or voicings, an effort that eventually produced their top-of-the-line Roland TR-808 "Rhythm Composer." *Composer* is the operative term here, because the TR-808 is billed as the only contemporary rhythm device which can "record an entire composition's percussion score." By switching from one rhythm to another while the unit is in the "Compose" mode, the user can create a complete rhythm track with "every fill, straight beat and break, up to 768 measures in length." Programming is accomplished with the step method originally developed with the "Dr. Rhythm," and the TR-808's "digital memory" can handle a total of 32 different rhythm patterns, even time signatures like 5/4 and 7/8. Rhythms can be programmed with as small a division as 32nd notes and LEDs indicate which rhythm is actually playing. A "Prescale feature" insures that all rhythms stay in time with one another, even when the user is switching between odd and even signatures. The much improved instrument voices include various toms, snare and bass drums and three cymbal sounds that are generally acknowledged as the best in the business.

Another serious contender in computer-based rhythm machines is the Korg KR-55. Weighing in at less than five pounds, the KR-55 features microprocessor storage that can handle up to 48 different rhythms, 12 "authentic" instrument sounds (bass drum, snare, cymbal, hi hat, toms, conga, rimshot, cowbell and clavier) and, like the TR-808, mixing capabilities for each of the voices. A "Swing Beat" ostensibly gives the rhythm tracks more of a syncopated feel while 16 "Intro" and "Fill-In" patterns help to round them out.

As good as these particular devices are, and for the money they are *very* good, there are still some extremely finicky people who resist the sound of synthesized percussion voices, no matter how authentic or programmable they might be. Luckily for these folks, a young

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man named Roger Linn happened on to the music scene several years ago. A guitarist and songwriter who played on Phil Seymour and Leon Russell LPs and wrote "Promises" for Eric Clapton, Linn was interested in obtaining some strong and viable drum tracks for his home recording projects. Starting with a rhythm device hooked up to a regular business computer, he went on to invent, with the aid of digital technology, the Linn LM-1 Drum Computer, the current professional standard in the industry.

Admittedly not a device intended for the budget-minded musician, the Linn Drum Computer has *real* drum sounds digitally recorded and stored in its memory. This major advantage immediately gave rise to a storm of speculation within the industry as to what famous drummer (people like Steve Gadd and John Robinson were often mentioned) recorded the drum beats. Actually it was an L.A. session drummer named Artie Wood who did the recording but it's really a moot point since only one drum strike was recorded at a time and the ability to differentiate between individual styles becomes impossible and irrelevant. Besides many of the programmable features mentioned previously, the Linn LM-1 breaks new ground with special goodies like automatic error correction and a "human" rhythm feel, the result of "special timing circuitry." The 12 drum sounds include bass drum, snare, two toms, congas, hi hat, cabasa, tambourine, cowbell and clave. Cymbal sounds are conspicuously absent but that's due to the fact that prodigious amounts of memory (which means more $$) are required to "bring out" the cymbal sound correctly. The user, operating a simple and cleanly laid out front instrument panel (again, the inverse law of techno-proportion applies here — the more you spend, the easier it is to figure out), can program 100 drumbeats, dynamics, flams, rolls, build-ups or open and closed hi hat in *real time*. A virtue repeatedly stressed in their promotional literature, real time in this instance refers to the ability to hear the beat you are programming in reference to an audible click track while error correction circuitry makes up for non-drummer lapses in time keeping.

I won't even attempt to describe how good the Linn LM-1 actually sounds. Listen to the rhythm tracks on Elton John's latest single "Nobody Wins" (programmed by Jeff Porcaro) or "Textures" on Herbie Hancock's *Mr. Hands* LP and judge for yourself. Other musicians like Lee Ritenour and Keith Emerson and producers like Giorgio Moroder (the Linn supposedly can be heard on Donna Summer's *The Wanderer*) are using the LM-1. This machine also has applications for live performance as Devo intends to use one on eight tunes for their new live show.

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As things stand, the Linn LM-1 Drum Computer is the closest thing to a real drummer yet devised by man. Roger Nichols, engineer extraordinaire for Steely Dan, has devised a machine called the Wendal (credited on *Gaucho*) which comes close but I'm not convinced that it will ever be commercially available. Even more heartening is the fact that drummers seem to be responding more favorably to these newer machines as a supplementary tool to assist them with the more dreary timekeeping chores. Nothing will ever replace the sound of a real drummer kicking in the beat with a powerful attack that literally defines the parameters for much of today's music. But, in the meantime, musicians, recordists and music aficionados of all types have literally a wealth of options available till the drummer shows up. M

Blue Collar *continued from pg. 14*
Rhode Island sextet has Springsteen's roller coaster Spectorized sound. Lead singer and songwriter John Cafferty often prefaces his blue collar beach tales with rambling monologues. They even have a black saxophone player. At Desperado's in Wasnington this year, one listener requested "Rosalita." Cafferty rolled his eyes and pleaded, "Give me a break. They figure if you got a black sax player and a white singer, you can do 'Rosalita.'" Cafferty — an impish Irish Catholic elf — punched the air, and launched a distinctive original, "The Heat of the Night," that wiped out the Springsteen shadow.

People don't realize that Beaver Brown has been playing this same sound for nine years now, and they befriended Springsteen's group when both were $400-a-night bands on the same East Coast bar circuit. If you talk to Cafferty in his dressing room, he'll tell you that other influences are far more important than his friendship with Springsteen. Perhaps the biggest influence is obvious when Beaver Brown launches into the thick harmonies and irrepressible optimism of the Beach Boys' "Fun, Fun, Fun."

Beaver Brown is best described as a tough, gritty East Coast version of the Beach Boys. While the Beach Boys were sheltered teenagers who considered "fun, fun, fun" a birthright, Cafferty is a working class kid who has had to scratch and claw for it. This is reflected in the music where Gary Gramolini's guitar and Pat Lupo's bass scratch and claw at the full harmonies of Michael "Tunes" Antunes' tenor sax and Bobby Cotoia's piano.

"The kids we know in Rhode Island hang out on the beach," Cafferty explains, "so that's what we write about. No one else is writing songs about them, so we have to. In fact, there's not that many records out there that hold my attention right now. I'm not hearing the songs I want to hear, so we have to make

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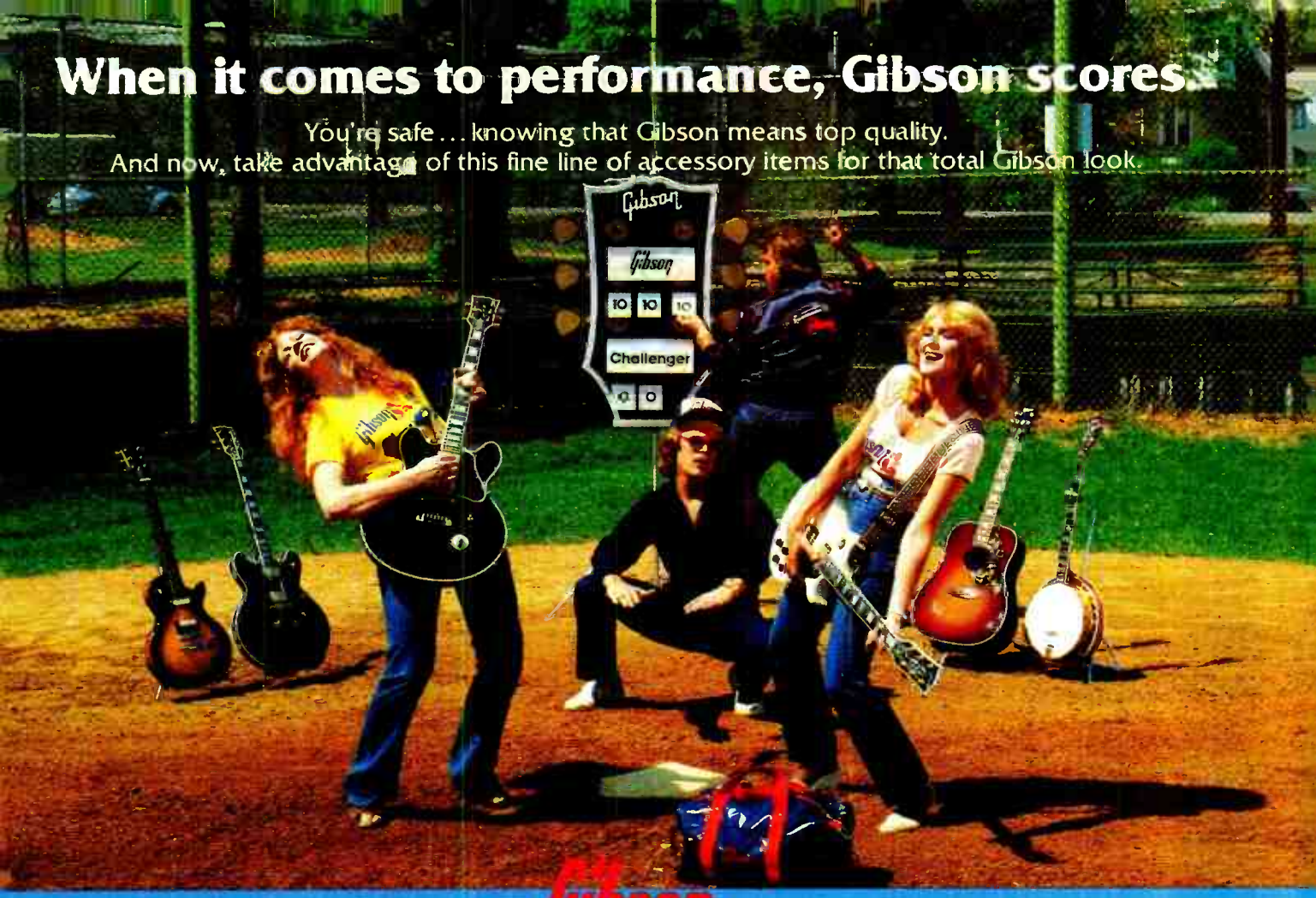

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them ourselves. I like that old music; it reached out to you. It was emotional; it said something. That's what I want to do."

If Joe Grushecky is the Northern mill-worker version of blue collar rock, Bill Blue is the Southern poor white version. Born in a small North Carolina town and living now in Richmond, Blue sings about the underdog view of life in the New South better than anyone since Lynard Skynard. Blue has a raw, gravelly voice that's a cross between Bob Seger and a grizzly bear worn out by double shifts at a textile mill. Blue learned the blues by playing with Arthur Crudup, but he always employs a couple of hot Memphis soul sound horn players.

The Bill Blue Band uses its R&B-flavored rock 'n' roll to voice the frustrations of young shift workers at a feverish pitch and then release them with explosive force. Blue writes about the rewards of the working life: "Ain't it funny? Sometimes you're up; most times you're low." The way he sings it, it's obvious he doesn't find it funny at all. He writes about getting off work and slumping down in front of the tube to watch the politicians and stars. When he cries, "Who are your heroes?" he doesn't expect an answer. (The Iron City Houserockers voice the same frustration on "Heroes Are Hard to Find" on their first album.)

Sometimes he completely transforms old songs. He took the title line, "Hit the Road, Jack," and gave it new music and new lyrics about a shift worker named Jack, and his wife, Pearl, who has a well-heeled lover. With his drooping eyelids and luxurious handlebar mustache, Blue half sings and half tells the story till it builds into a screaming climax worthy of a Tennessee Williams hothouse drama. Similarly, John Handy's "Hard Work" is transformed by Blue's mid-song monologues about all the things he's wanted and how hard it is to get them. As an antidote, Blue leads the crowd at Baltimore's No Fish Today into a hand-shaking, revival tent fervor as he chants his advice: "Gotta be cool!"

"The average working person is my audience," Blue claims. "The guy who works hard all week and has to blow half his money every weekend just to have a good time. The guy who makes $50,000 a year isn't listening to me. So, almost subliminally, I've written for my audience. I know what it's like to hold down that job. I grew up in a working family and worked all the way up till I went professional. Even in the music business, it's such a struggle, especially if you have a family.

"You see it all the time, especially on the club circuit. I talk to these guys and the constant theme is either they're not working or they have to work too much. If anyone needs a spokesman, it's those people." M

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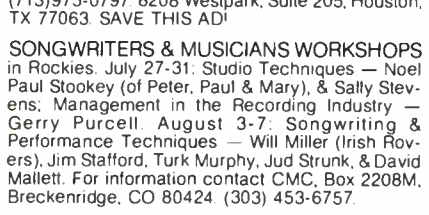

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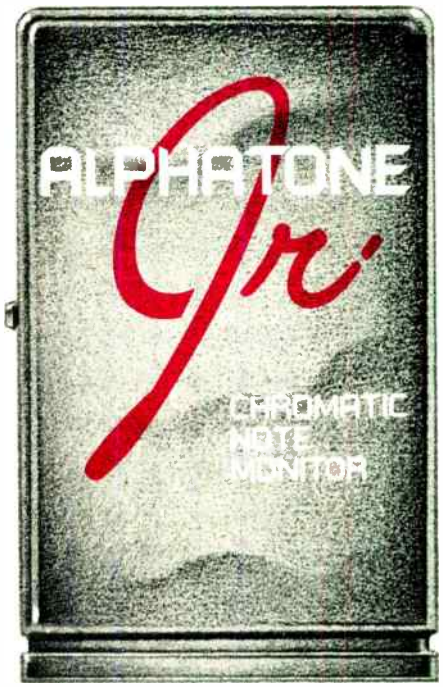

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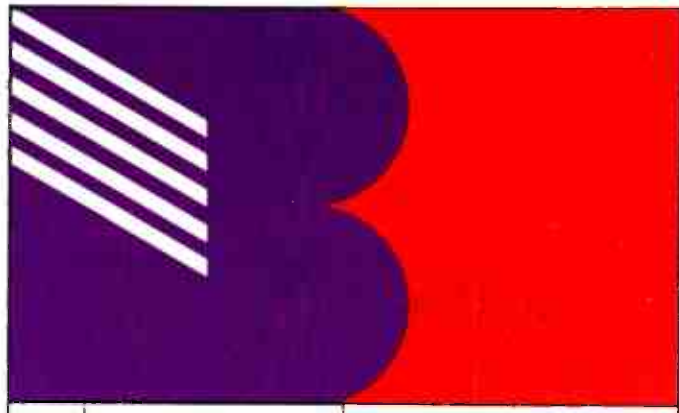


A new family of instruments called Timpanello RotoToms specifically designed as pedal-tuned percussion has been introduced by **Remo**. Created for use wherever definite pitch timpani-like sound is programmed, played or practiced, Timpanello units combine a RotoTom with a rapid-tuning pitch pedal and an improved coppertone metal reflector. Previously, these components had to be ordered separately and assembled by the user.

Timpanello RotoToms are available in four sizes — 12", 14", 16" and 18" — which cover the entire practical range of full size and piccolo timpani from E (below bass clef) through E (first line treble clef).

The new instruments can be used to augment timpani, to practice timpani techniques or even as substitutes for full timpani in choir and ensemble use. Remo, Inc., 1204 Raymer Street, North Hollywood, CA 91605.

An effective, low cost wireless guitar system is being marketed by **Samson Music Products** of Old Westbury, New York. Consisting of a small broadcast unit which is plugged into the guitar and clipped to the player's belt or shoulder strap and a small FM receiver connected to the amplifier, the Samson TR-2 system has a range of about 200 feet. Operating on a fixed band, it is very simple to use. Special noise squelch circuitry is used to reduce background noice and the system has FCC approval. Samson Music Products, 249 Glen Cove Road, Old Westbury NY 11568.

DOD Electronics announces the addition of the DOD 870 Stereo Flanger Doubler, a full featured, short to medium delay device. The 870 incorporates all the features necessary for studio or live performance: Flanging, Doubling, ADT, and Stereo Chorus.

It features in/out, invert, and delay time switches; input level control with clip indicator; stereo outputs with dual mix controls; LED status indicators on all switches. The 870 Stereo Flanger Doubler is housed in a rugged 1¾" x 19" standard rack mount case. Suggested retail price is $299.95. DOD Electronics, 2953 South 300 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84115.

Walker Guitars is a new line of electric guitars and basses manufactured exclusively by BKL Kramer. These instruments feature a new concept in neck construction — matching the quarter sawn rock hard maple on the back of the neck with a synthetic fingerboard with all the virtues of ebony but immune to the usual problems of expansion, compresesion and splitting. The necks are reinforced with a specially designed vertical dual truss rod. Its sonic balance offers the player a fingerboard truly immune to dead soots. Walker guitars and basses are available in six different models, all of which feature brass hardware and various arrangements of pickups. The body shapes range in style from traditionally accepted shapes to classic contemporary ones. All models have Seymour Duncan Pickups as optional equipment. BKL Music Products, Inc., 1111 Green Grove Road, Neptune, NJ 07753.

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the invention of the Autoharp, **Oscar Schmidt** proudly introduces the OS-85C solid body electric Autoharp with built-in chorus effect. The OS-85C has 36 strings which when used with flanging, echo, compression or any of the available effect-pedals, can simulate everything from an entire string section to gigantic power chords. In addition, when used with a volume pedal and a small amount of distortion, the OS-85C sounds like an organ. The Autoharp is very easy to learn to play and may be used as a solo instrument or as a back-up instrument by anyone in the band. Oscar Schmidt International, 1415 Waukegan Road, Northbrook, IL 60062.

Hartley and Melia Peavey of **Peavey Electronics** announce the first shipment of their newest guitar — the T-15, the only American made electric guitar (with a hardshell case) to retail for less than $200.

The 23½" scale maple neck features Peavey's patented bilaminated construction with full adjustment capabilities. A contoured hardwood body, two high performance pickups with selector switch and an adjustable bridge make the T-15 an excellent buy. Peavey Electronics, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301.

Gibson Strings announces the addition of bass strings to the popular Equa String series.

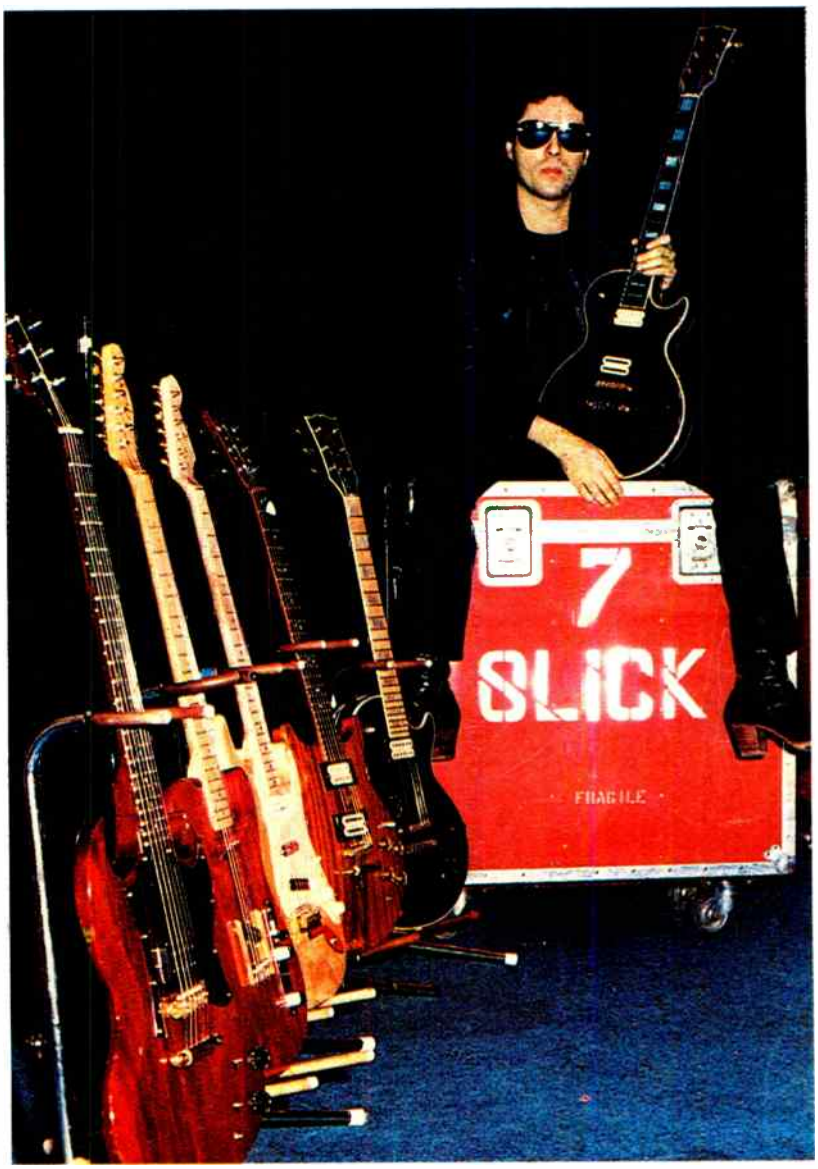
The theory behind these strings is that they can actually make the bass guitar sound better because they're "equalized" —as no string is overshadowed by the next, they vibrate more consistently.

When asked how Equa Bass Strings would affect actual playing technique, Gibson said, "Because they're so consistent, fingers or picks won't get hung up on strings of different tension. And 'bending' or 'choking' will feel more evenly balanced."

Equa Bass Strings are available in round wound or ground wound configurations to satisfy the tastes of all electric bass guitar players. Gibson Strings, 1725 Fleetwood Drive, Elgin, IL 60120.

Hondo presents a bass designed for the performing musician, the Longhorn Model H1181. Light weight, balanced, and fully playable to the 24th fret, the Longhorn body horns allow for easy access to all upper playing positions. 34" scale, split pickup, brass nut and bridge, bass boost control, available in cream sunburst, natural walnut, and brilliant metallic bronze. International Music, Box 2344, Ft. Worth, TX 76113.

Earl Slick's sound changes with every album.



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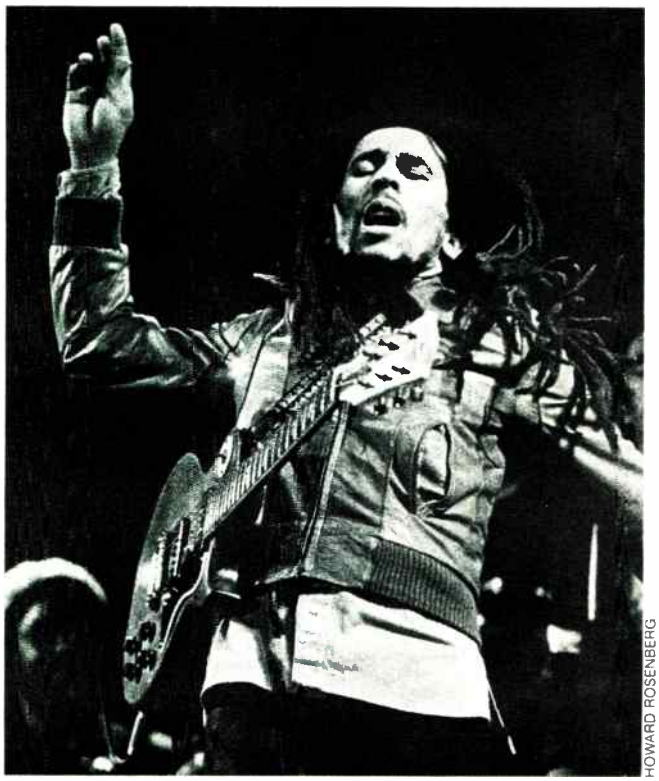

HOWARD ROSENBERG

BOB MARLEY'S DANCE

By Joshua Baer

In 1976, during the Wailers' third tour of this country, Bob Marley spoke with Barry Farrel, a writer for *Chic* magazine, in a motel room in Los Angeles. *Chic* published the interview in November of that year (*Bob Marley — The Visionary As Sex Symbol*). Among many other things, Bob Marley said: "I wan' tell yuh, yuh don' really feel no difference — is de same t'ing here as home. I mean we used to feel de difference, like when we came on de fus' tour, and den de secon' tour. But when people get a-know yuh, is like it start gettin' really warm, man, yeah. An' sometime yuh can see wen de people get de *new* look. an' den yuh know dey start a-unnerstan'... Dese songs, people unnerstan' dem or dey can unnerstan' dem, but yuh ha' a-sing dem. Wha' de people wan' is de beauties, man..."

I read that interview thirty or forty times. Each time I read it, I came to the same dark conclusion: Bob Marley was a visitor to the popular world, not a resident of it. His impact would be huge, but brief. In a year or two he would be gone.

I expected an assassination. His profile, both as a star and as a political icon in Jamaica, was so high, so rousing. Someone did take a shot at him — I think at a concert in Kingston — but he survived and, when I went to two of his concerts during the amazing *Babylon By Bus* tour in 1978, he turned my mind around. His strength on stage was a solid, interior kind of power. Singing with his eyes closed, his head tilted back and his hands shaking in the air, he drew nothing from his wild audiences, he just gave and gave and gave, feeding their wildness. For all his ecstatic antics, he remained a composed performer, and I took this composure to mean that Bob Marley was much less a target for the perils of stardom than I had originally thought.

He'll be around for a long time, I told myself. You'll collect the albums and go to a couple concerts each year and it will be the way it is with Bob Dylan: an open-ended account of a wise, paradoxical life.

Today is May 12, 1981. This morning the *San Francisco Chronicle* had the facts from the wire services on its obituary page. "Bob Marley, 36, a Jamaican singer and songwriter who became the world's premier reggae music star, died yesterday of cancer. The leader of Bob Marley and the Wailers was flown to Miami's Cedars of Lebanon Hospital Thursday from West Germany, where he had been receiving treatment for lung cancer that had spread to his brain."

After I finished the paper, I made a tape of *Bob Marley Live* and *Natty Dread*, something I had meant to do for months but had always postponed. I also listened to "Who The Cap Fit" on *Rastaman Vibration* several times, though I can't figure out what drew me to that song. Then I put the albums away, found the *Chic* interview and tried to read it.

Nothing helped. The only thing I had that in any way took the edge off the news was a memory, an image of Bob Marley in concert, doing his dance. During the concerts I went to, he played rhythm guitar for the first seven songs. Midway through the eighth song — "Jamming" in both cases — he stopped playing, lifted the guitar off his body and handed it to a roadie who took it backstage. Then he danced.

It was a contorted, spasmodic dance. He worked against the pulse of the music, fighting its current, though never moving out of its rhythm. Covering his face with the dreadlocks, he danced all over the stage, tracing the pattern of a knight on a chess-board: one step back, two steps left, two steps forward, one step right.

He reappeared at center stage, sang a verse, raised his arms and shook them at his God. Then he continued his dance. He drifted by Al Anderson and Family Man Barret, then slid backwards and danced in place for a half-minute next to the platform where Carlton Barret and Seco Patterson were drumming. Maybe he told them that, when the concert was over, he knew of an excellent Thai restaurant which served late dinners. Maybe he told them which song he wanted to do next. Maybe he told a joke. All I know is that they smiled when he came near them, and that his dance was pure magic.

Cancer has become the angry god of our age. We find it convenient, as a sickened society, to blame all these tortuous deaths on a biological process which science can neither explain nor reverse. This is not to suggest that the doctors who diagnosed Bob Marley as a victim of lung cancer which metastasized to his brain were mistaken. I'm sure they were correct, within the limits of their skills. I just find it impossible to accept the fact that death, for Bob Marley, came from inside. I know. He smoked. Boy, did he smoke. But how could a malignant cell live, divide, thrive and spread inside such intensity? I would think that the dance alone would have burnt out anything which threatened his life.

It hardly matters. He is in open country now. There is only one gesture worth making, only one proper response. In "Crisis," he put it this way:

But no matter what the crisis be
No matter what the crisis be
Give JAH all the thanks and praises...

As a person who counts himself among the people who want the beauties, I find it difficult, and yet wholly appropriate, to praise JAH and thank JAH for the life and death of Bob Marley.

LISA DUBOIS

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