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$1.95 NO. 65, MARCH, 1984

One Tough Mother & THE PRETENDERS

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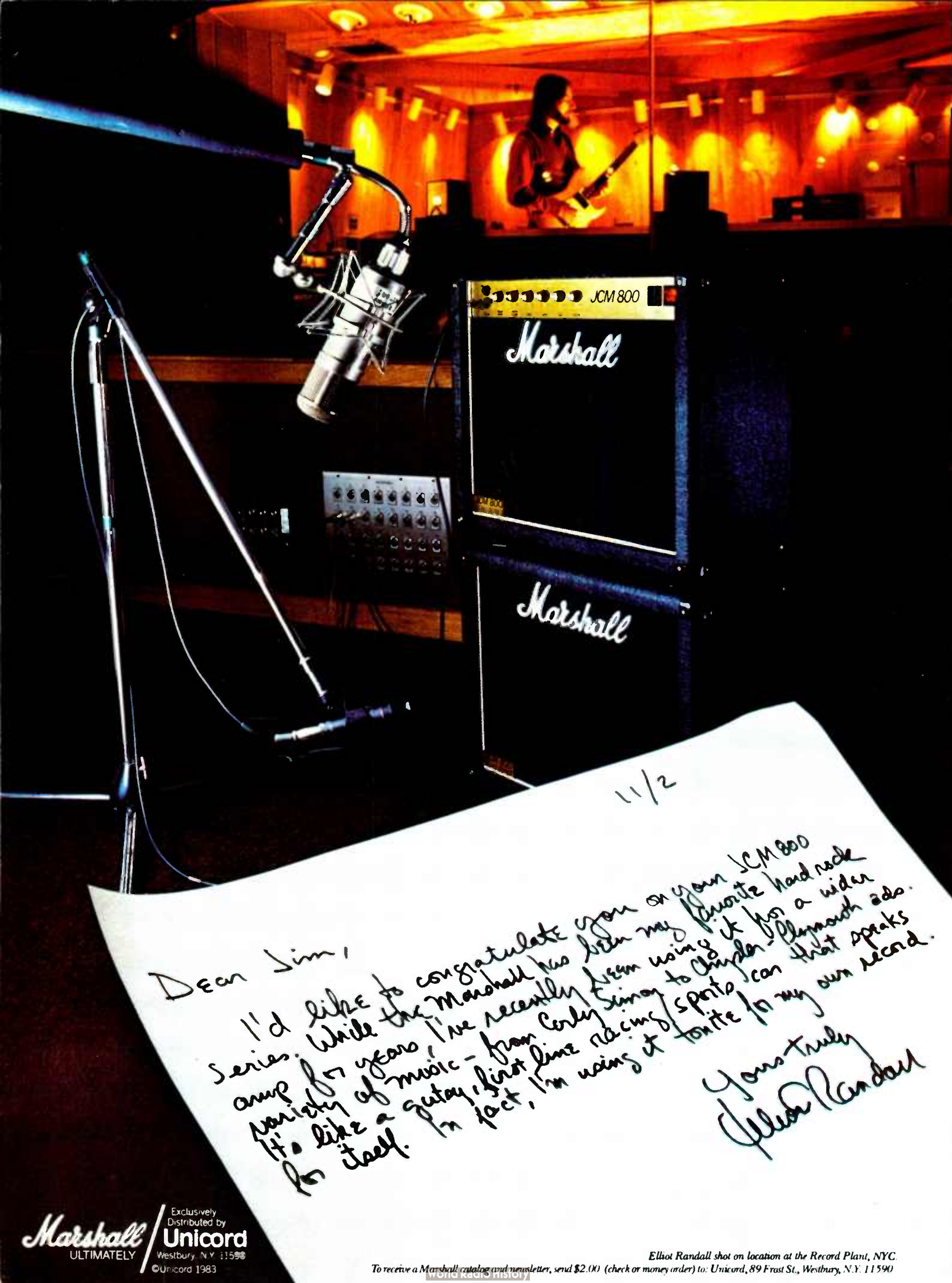

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WIZARDS OF OZ

There are not many treasures left on earth, but David Fricke's article "Australian Rock" is one of them. As a Canadian addict of Australian and New Zealand rock since the Easybeats, I congratulate Fricke for his brilliant exposé of environment, culture and the creative spirit of down under. It is time for America to start learning from Australia, as they have from America.
Lech Sulikowski
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

MTV RATINGS

Loved the article on Olu Dara. What a wonderful fellow to read about. He makes Mississippi sound so nice, instead of the poorest state in the union.

Also, the article on Australian rock was superb, but there's one thing that bugs me: I don't give a damn how far ahead Men At Work are in the rock video game. In fact, I couldn't care less if the MTV studios blew up this morning. When does having a tune set to a three-minute video have anything to do with rock 'n' roll? Something is either music of it's television. And as far as I'm concerned, *that's* television.

It wouldn't be so bad if they didn't have these smug slugs interrupt every fifteen minutes to sell you their satin jackets and show you how nonchalant and palsy-walsy they can be with you-there-at-home. Did Jimi Hendrix have to put his music to video-taped messages? No! But I'll bet his music evokes vivid and different messages to every listener. What a lack of imagination.
Bruce Piscitello
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

GOOD PAGE

Thanks so much for the interview with Jimmy Page in the January issue. He is undoubtedly one of the best rock guitarists of all time, as well as one of the most fascinating to read about. Thanks again!
Laura Dickey
Dayton, Ohio

STONES GATHER NO MOSS

Stunning articles on "Keith & Mick/ Glimmer and Gore" by Vic Garbarini, as well as a fairly decent interview with Robert Plant by J.D. Considine. However, it's a shame most of the article was about Led Zeppelin. For me, learning about his new band, especially Robbie Blunt, would have been better reading. Besides, what Robert Plant is doing now musically surpasses his Zeppelin work.

To Keith Richards, his remark about Stevie Ray Vaughan's *Pride And Joy* album: Face it Keith, Stevie Ray is on the way. I'd like to see you and Stevie onstage; the outcome would probably be interesting, not to mention predictable.
Cynthia Bishop
Austin, Texas

My thanks for the dual interviews with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. Of all the interviews I've read from these two, yours are the most informative and entertaining.

It amazes me that a band as raunchy and wild as the Stones has been together for twenty years. Their so-called politics have really been spur-of-the-moment rather than a reflection of the band's deep-seated beliefs in justice and fair play. They have always been a commercial band.
Gary Kimber
Downsview, Ontario, Canada

WELL, A LITTLE MOSS

In response to Vic Garbarini's interviews with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, I find it hard to believe that after twenty-one years people are still trying make Mick Jagger out to be some sort of buffoon. That nonsense about "Yaga" and "the priest" was so stupid that I wondered what kind of a living this Garbarini makes writing crap like that about someone who has contributed so much to music worldwide.

Granted, Keith Richards is an integral part of the Rolling Stones, but Jagger *is* the Stones. Jagger and Richards have written some of the best music ever. What good will it do to pit one's personality against the other's talent?
Sarah J. Rowell
Montgomery, Alabama

This concerns the record review of the Rolling Stones' *Undercover*. I don't mind Fred Schruers very *capitalistic* freedom to vomit forth any vacant gush he cares to. I also don't mind my own, very *capitalistic* freedom to either sponsor it or not.

Cancel my subscription at once.
Mark J. Zug
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

EQUAL TIME

Several years ago, when I began my subscription to *Musician*, I found it to be a viable alternative to *Rolling Stone* and its *People* magazine mentality. I found your equal emphasis on jazz quite refreshing. Now it seems you are concentrating on the sixteen-year-old rock 'n' rollers and neglecting those of us who like serious rock music as well as jazz.

The last jazz artist to grace the cover of your magazine was Miles Davis, well over a year ago. Try not to let your magazine become a mouth-piece for the corporate rockers. You have a fine group of writers. Let them write about something other than the Police or the land "down under."
Douglas Robbins
Norton, Massachusetts

BAG RAG MAG ADS

To be able to compete with other music mags, you definitely have to cut down on the advertisements. That's all your rag-mag is—advertisements. It's a damn shame, 'cause you have some very talented writers. Put them to work!
T. Straight
Rochester, New York

BRIAN CARR REPLIES

The report of the dispute between Keith Jarrett and Brian Carr in the November issue represented only Mr. Jarrett's view of the situation and not the opinion of Musician. *The following is Mr. Carr's position:*

Musician's recent interview with Keith Jarrett contained several references to his being "robbed" by his manager. I would like to set the record straight, because I was his business manager and agent from 1978 to 1982. He was never an easy man to work for, but I respected his musical talents and he usually treated me well. Unfortunately, after I quit he lashed out at me with a lawsuit accusing me of robbing him and stealing his children's trust fund. These allegations are *hogwash*; he authorized every dime I was paid and approved of every step I took in dealing with his and his children's finances. I absolutely deny any wrongdoing whatsoever. I have countersued and am confident that both his suit and mine will be decided in my favor.
Brian Carr
Rockport, MA

In anticipation of our Paul Simon interview, we planted some spicy non-rumors in issue #64. Has he really joined the Clash (page 10)? Is he an up-and-coming photographer (page 69)? Actually, he didn't Clash and Peter *Simon deserves all the photo credit.*

We also forgot to mention labels for the Long Ryders, PVC; Three O'Clock, Frontier; and Rainy Day, Llama.

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John Lennon Milk and Honey Yoko Ono

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by Mark Rowland

Record prices are about to go up again. At least they will if enough other majors follow the lead of Warner/Elektra/Atlantic, which in mid-December jumped the list price of new records by the Rolling Stones, Yes and Genesis from $8.98 to $9.98, the first time a record company has ever increased the cost of an album *after* its initial release. Certainly it's an ominous harbinger for the future. Both the timing of WEA's move—two weeks before Christmas—and its possible motivation (in a year when the industry is finally on the rebound, Warners hasn't had any blockbuster hits) were duly noted and castigated by retailers across the country, who necessarily bore the first brunt of the price jack. One major marketing head called the move "A sick thing to do in the middle of a holiday." A Cleveland distributor claimed it "destroyed credibility." Others openly accused WEA of greed.

All of which may be true, and still misses the point. Other companies may wince at WEA's action because, as Capitol Records president Jim Mazza pointed out, they could have picked "a more opportune time," but none are claiming that they won't follow suit. When asked to comment on the controversy, a Columbia spokesman coolly observed that "we like to keep our marketing options open." RCA, which hiked the Hall & Oates greatest hits package to $9.98 a month previous, was obviously even less inclined to voice righteous indignation. And while executive v.p. of MCA Distributing Sam Passamano, Sr. claims he can't recall a December price increase in thirty-three years, he goes on to point out that large record chains like Wherehouse, Musicland and Record Plus have been inching their own retail prices up toward list anyway, thus helping to negate any edge that might serve the consumer by a list price freeze. Any way you cut it, it doesn't look too rosy for record buyers; a good guess is that prices will go up across the board by summer.

Ah, Mergerland. As you'll recall from our last exciting escapade, WEA was planning to merge with PolyGram; Columbia was threatening a lawsuit to block the merger; RCA was distributing Arista, Columbia Chrysalis, and WEA, MCA. Now RCA is also distributing Motown, and Island, already distributed by WEA, has purchased a fifty percent interest in Stiff Records, though Stiff's U.S. distribution deal with Columbia purportedly will not be affected by the agreement. (Don't you wish you were a lawyer?) Stiff founder Dave Robinson has been named managing director of both companies, and former Island managing director Phil Cooper is now the m.d. of Island International. Also, both companies insist that this is not a merger. To quote **John Cougar**: "Uh huh."

On the little merger beat, Muse has acquired the Savoy Jazz catalog from Arista under a new rubric, SJ Records. The gospel Savoys have in turn been purchased by Prelude. And finally, in a refreshing change of pace, Arista and Buddah have agreed to terminate *their* distribution deal. Just thought you'd like to know.

Several hundred thousand **Pat Benatar** fans got a bonus when they bought her last LP, *Get Nervous*—a three-by-five index card that could determine whether said record was in fact authentic or counterfeit. Fans were invited to ship the card back to Chrysalis, where its fiber patterns were analyzed by computer. Over 150,000 fans did so, all the cards proved to be part of the real thing and now Chrysalis, buoyed by its success, has enclosed cards with Benatar's latest, *Live From Earth*, along with **Billy Idol**'s new LP.

Record counterfeiting has long been a problem in the music industry, bilking approximately $350 million in revenues a year, according to the RIAA, and for some reason Benatar has always been one of the worst victims. According to a spokesman for Light Signatures, Inc., the California firm that developed the card analysis system, over forty percent of Benatar's previous record sales were in fact bogus records, which may make her the first rock star to go pyrite. The card system seems fairly foolproof—like fingerprints, each card has a unique fiber pattern, so chances of duplication are almost nil. The only question was how enthusiastically fans would respond to Chrysalis' missive, but so far the return has been impressive. Which only leaves one problem: if counterfeit records disappear, who else can be blamed when the album you buy comes out warped?

It's not easy being Queen: **Aretha Franklin** and Arista Records have resolved their financial disputes out of court, at least for the moment. Aretha charged Arista was holding back royalties from 600,000 copies of *Aretha* and *Love All The Hurt Away*. Arista retaliated by calling in $325,000 worth of loans and the return of a $100,000 advance for a live album that never came to pass. Meanwhile, Lady Soul was hit with yet another bill, this one from $100,000 in back taxes from the state of New York.

Stop holding your breath: **Pete Townshend** has announced that the Who have officially split up.... **Chops**, the horn section from the most recent Rolling Stones tour, has been signed by Atlantic.... **Laurie Anderson** and **Peter Gabriel** are collaborating on a single and a video, due in March.... **Barry White** has been signed to portray **Fats Waller** in a movie about the great composer and pianist.... **Bryan Ferry** has been recording in New York sans **Andy Mackay** and **Phil Manzanera**, who are now in the process of forming a separate band. No word of a breakup though.... Fun couple of the month: **Jaime Lee Curtis** and **Adam Ant**.

Chart Action

The top ten has finally slowed to the point of gridlock, as every entry remains unchanged from the week before. Indeed, the top four LPs, Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, Lionel Richie's *Can't Slow Down*, Linda Ronstadt's *What's New* and the Police's *Synchronicity* respectively, remain unmoved from their position of two weeks previous. Quiet Riot (thirty-eight weeks on the charts) rounds out the top five followed by Yes' *90125*, Culture Club's *Colour By Numbers*, Billy Joel's *An Innocent Man*, the soundtrack to *Yentl* by Barbra Streisand and Hall & Oates' hits package. Top add-on is Billy Joel's *Cold Spring Harbor*, debuting at #178. Midnight Oil is #201 and Bubbling Under. Looks like hibernation.
The Stones' *Undercover* dropped seven places to #11 after only seven weeks while McCartney's newest stalls at #19.

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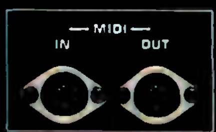

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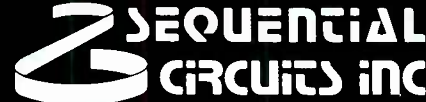

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JOHNNY SHINES

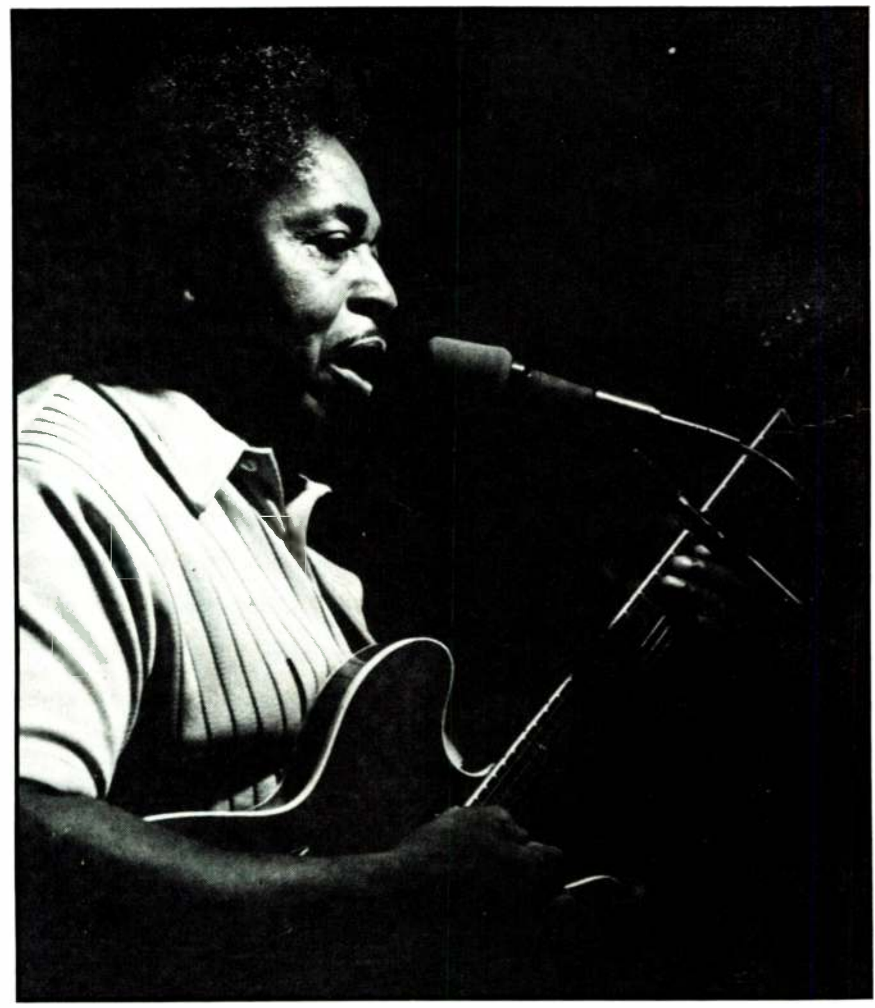
ONE OF THE LAST GREAT LINKS TO DELTA COUNTRY BLUES CONTINUES TO THRIVE.

ALLEN BARRA

The nattily dressed young man, looking like an advance man for the Alabama Republican Senatorial candidate—which, in fact, he was—walked into the Birmingham dive seeking release from a day on the road. If you grew up in New Jersey, as he had, you didn't get many chances to hear someone like Robert Jr. Lockwood, the star attraction that night at the Wooden Nickel Lounge, and such opportunities were not to be missed. The set was rousing, the atmosphere congenial, and the advance man soon found himself involved in a vigorous discussion of blues history with a robust, fifty-ish looking black man who seemed to be enjoying Lockwood as much as he was.

"I heard a rumor," said the advance man, trying to show off his knowledge of the blues, "that Johnny Shines is still alive and living somewhere around Tuscaloosa." The black man looked surprised for a moment, then threw back his head in an enormous, bellowing laugh. "Your rumor," he said, "is partially true. *I* am Johnny Shines."

The above incident occurred four years ago and is entirely true. I was there. *I* was the advance man. If I wasn't aware at the time that Johnny Shines was still alive, I was certainly no more to blame than a large chunk of the music critical establishment, for whom Shines may as well have disappeared years ago. It is arguable that of all surviving blues greats Johnny Shines is the most important link in the musical chain that starts with the Delta country blues and follows through the Chicago electric blues of the 40s and 50s to rock 'n' roll; yet he pretty much remains an untapped source of musical and historical gold. What makes this even more puzzling is that of all the surviving Delta bluesmen, Johnny Shines alone has continued to grow and develop as an artist in terms of musical and lyrical style and sophistication. But despite more than a half century of playing acoustic and electric blues and living a legend of book-length richness, Shines has never had hits, never attained the notoriety of Muddy Waters, possibly the only bluesman whose range of experience even approaches Johnny Shines'. If Shines had had hits ("hits," of course, being a relative term in the world of blues), he might have been content, like so many other famous bluesmen, to recycle them for each new generation. But having never had them, nor a ready-made audience, his music became free to expand and grow. Shines' loss thus became a blues lover's gain.



Shines mixes mythical blues past with contemporary comment.

Johnny Shines was born on April 26, 1915, near Memphis. As a teenager he learned the basics of blues guitar from his early idol, Chester Burnett, a.k.a. Howlin' Wolf. Wolf was just one of many great bluesmen Shines was exposed to; on a given night in Helena in the early 30s an aspiring blues singer might hear the likes of Roosevelt Sykes, Honeyboy Edwards, Memphis Slim and Elmore James. But the one who made the biggest impression on him was the man who was probably the most influential of all blues singers and guitarists, the Baudelaire of the blues, Robert Johnson.

Johnson's impact on rock guitar playing has probably obscured his position in the pre-war blues hierarchy. Johnson's records sold poorly in their day, and he was pretty much ignored except by a handful of younger guitarists like Elmore James and Muddy Waters, who could see at once that Johnson was up

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to something completely new. His soaring, bottle-neck guitar runs and kinetic, heavily rhythmic patterns combined with the unearthly, tortured wail of his vocals and his impressionistic lyrics to present a kind of blues that was dramatically different from that of Skip James, Son House or Charley Patton. Johnson anticipated the Chicago electric blues of the 40s and 50s; indeed, as Greil Marcus suggested, a good case could be made for Johnson as the first rock 'n' roller.

Johnny Shines traveled the roads and rails with Johnson in the mid-30s through the South, Midwest and even to Canada. He recalls Johnson as "moody, anti-social; you never knew when he was going to pick up and leave without telling you, or decide he wanted to go to some town to play just because there was someone there he wanted to hear." Hear—or play against. The practice was called "headcutting," or "headhunting," and the idea was to find somebody whose guitar playing technique you admired and challenge him to a face-off jam—gun-slinging with guitars. Johnson, Shines recalls, was the champion headcutter of his day: "You could tell by the faces of a lot of veterans he played against that he was into things they hadn't thought of. I think his intensity scared some of them." Did he and Johnson ever hunt each other's heads? "Yeah," he remembers, "one time." Whose head got cut? "Mine. Mind you, *he* didn't think so. *He* thought *his* head got cut, which is a tribute to me, I guess. But *I* knew better; I didn't know nearly as much as he did, not back then."

Robert Johnson, Shines insists, was "the most exciting guitar player I ever heard. Note for note, Lonnie Johnson was more versatile; Lonnie could play gutbucket blues one night and walk up on anybody's jazz bandstand the next and *not get lost*. Robert wasn't that versatile or that sophisticated—he was an instinctive genius. But you can hear his influence in almost every piece of real American music that you listen to today. He influenced Charlie Christian and a lot of other jazz guitarists that followed. In his own way, he was as radical as Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. He influenced Muddy and Wolf and Elmore James, and through them, all of rock 'n' roll."

And Johnny Shines. Shines moved to Chicago in 1941 and became one of the prime exporters of Johnson's torrid country blues style to the big city. His early Chicago recordings were among his most brilliant work ever; "Ramblin'," an electric blues adaptation of Johnson's "Walkin' Blues," was also one of a series of early recordings that featured Shines' long-time pal Big Walter Horton on harp. Today, the records are regarded as classics, but like many such efforts they made no major impact at the time of their release.

Shines had as much trouble as anyone else keeping a band together in that era, and in 1946 he recorded on his own for Columbia. However, the producer, Lester Melrose, didn't consider the sides commercial enough and they remained unissued for nearly a quarter of a century. Likewise was a now-treasured set of recordings he made late in the 1950s with some of Muddy Waters' sidemen. The records show that by this time Shines' style had matured and expanded, especially his singing, which featured as much of Lonnie as it did of Robert Johnson, especially in the way he would jar a listener from complacency with a sudden burst of loud, impassioned singing. But for whatever reason—the most likely being a dispute with the Mayor Daley of Chicago blues, producer Leonard Chess—the sides went unreleased for nearly twenty years.

Shines continued to play the Chicago club scene, winning the respect and admiration of his fellow musicians but little money. In 1958, discouraged and disgusted, he quit the music business. For the next seven years his only connection with music was as a fan, collecting autographs and photographs of all the blues greats that passed through Chicago in the late 50s.

Musically speaking, the Johnny Shines story might have ended in 1958 if

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not for the British musicologist and author Mike Rowe. At first Shines was reluctant to get back into recording. "'Who needs it?' is what I said to myself when I saw his letter. 'It took me too long to get over that kind of life,' I thought. But I guess music's just in my blood. I couldn't stay away." It took Shines three more years to get back in the studio. When he finally did, it was evident that his talent had been maturing in isolation.

Shines' music, in fact, that has never stopped evolving: his latest LP for Rounder, *Mister Blues Is Back To Stay* (recorded with longtime friend Robert Jr. Lockwood, Johnson's stepson) sounds closer to small combo jazz or the modern Chicago blues of Son Seals than it does to country blues—or to Muddy Waters, for that matter.

"I listen to all kinds of music," Shines told me. "I love Duke and Coltrane, and I like a lot of the 40s big band arrangements, Glenn Miller and the Dorseys. I like to keep up with different styles and different types of music. I can learn something from any of them. I've learned things like how breath control and proper phrasing create tension from listening to opera.

He is a big man, vigorous and healthy-looking at sixty-seven years old despite a stroke three years ago that has cut down on his touring mobility. Those lucky enough to hear Shines in live performance get not only a cross-section of blues history but a state-of-the-art report on where blues is in the 80s. At a charity concert in Tuscaloosa last year I heard him do a seventy-three-minute electric set that left a local pickup band completely befuddled. Their spirit was willing, but like so many eager white blues enthusiasts, they seemed to play as if taste and restraint somehow detracted from the "authenticity" of the music. Shines, in contrast, has a jazz man's feel for when *not* to play; his style may have begun with country blues, but as he demonstrated on that hot Tuscaloosa night, it has taken sidetracks as far from home as T-Bone Walker and Django Reinhardt.

Unlike some who are quick to holler "exploitation" on the subject of whites playing blues, Shines makes an important distinction: "I only resent people who want to pass up the blues. It's not just music, it's history, and a lot of black kids dislike it 'cause they've been brainwashed, brought up to feel that they should be ashamed of anything that reminds them of their history. They've been made to feel that their heritage is mean and low and something they should be embarrassed about. That's the attitude of *anyone* who overlooks the blues, black or white."

But there may be another reason why Johnny Shines has never gotten his just due. To the majority of blues fans, which means white middle-class former college students like myself, the blues is something to be respected, revered, studied—everything but treated like a living thing. I know my love for the blues is genuine, but I also know that that love is made easier by believing there is distance between the historical context of the music and my own (hopefully) raised consciousness. Shines doesn't let me off the hook that easily; he makes each song a painful reminder that the evil that forged the conditions of the blues is alive right now, in less violent but often more insidious ways.

If a trace of bitterness creeps into Shines' voice now and then, it's certainly understandable: he has never been able to make a living from music and has had to work at a succession of jobs from driving a truck to construction to support himself and his family. What separates Shines from so many other bluesmen is that he is able to articulate his frustration, indeed, to give it a political focus. In "Eisenhower Blues," for example, an unrecorded song which he wrote in the 50s, Shines laced political commentary with biblical parody:

Ike is my shepherd, and I am in want,
He makes me to lie down on park benches
I used to ride in a Cadillac but no more I don't.

On his 1981 "Inflation Blues" with Robert Jr. Lockwood, he lamented that:

I can't live forever, but I guess I'll have to try...
The cost of a funeral is so outrageous, I just can't afford to die.

Not all of Shines' political songs have such a humorous tinge; indeed, some aren't political in the strict sense of the word. "Tom Green's Farm," one of the most chilling songs about racism ever written, deals with conditions on an Arkansas prison farm, and features the famous lines:

Man, if you miss your sweet woman, you can bet your hat,
Go to Mr. Tom Green's farm, that's where you'll find her at.

This subject has been treated by other blues singers, notably Lightnin' Hopkins, but Shines brings it out of the mythical past of Staggerlee and John Henry and sees it in contemporary terms. It is almost as if Johnny Shines has succeeded in isolating the unnamed terrors in Robert Johnson's songs, and in so doing found a way to confront them. Not necessarily defeat them; some tasks are beyond the powers of the greatest blues artists. But in finding a way to confront them he has confirmed his power to engage evil and, at the very least, to emerge with the conviction that the battle isn't entirely futile. ■

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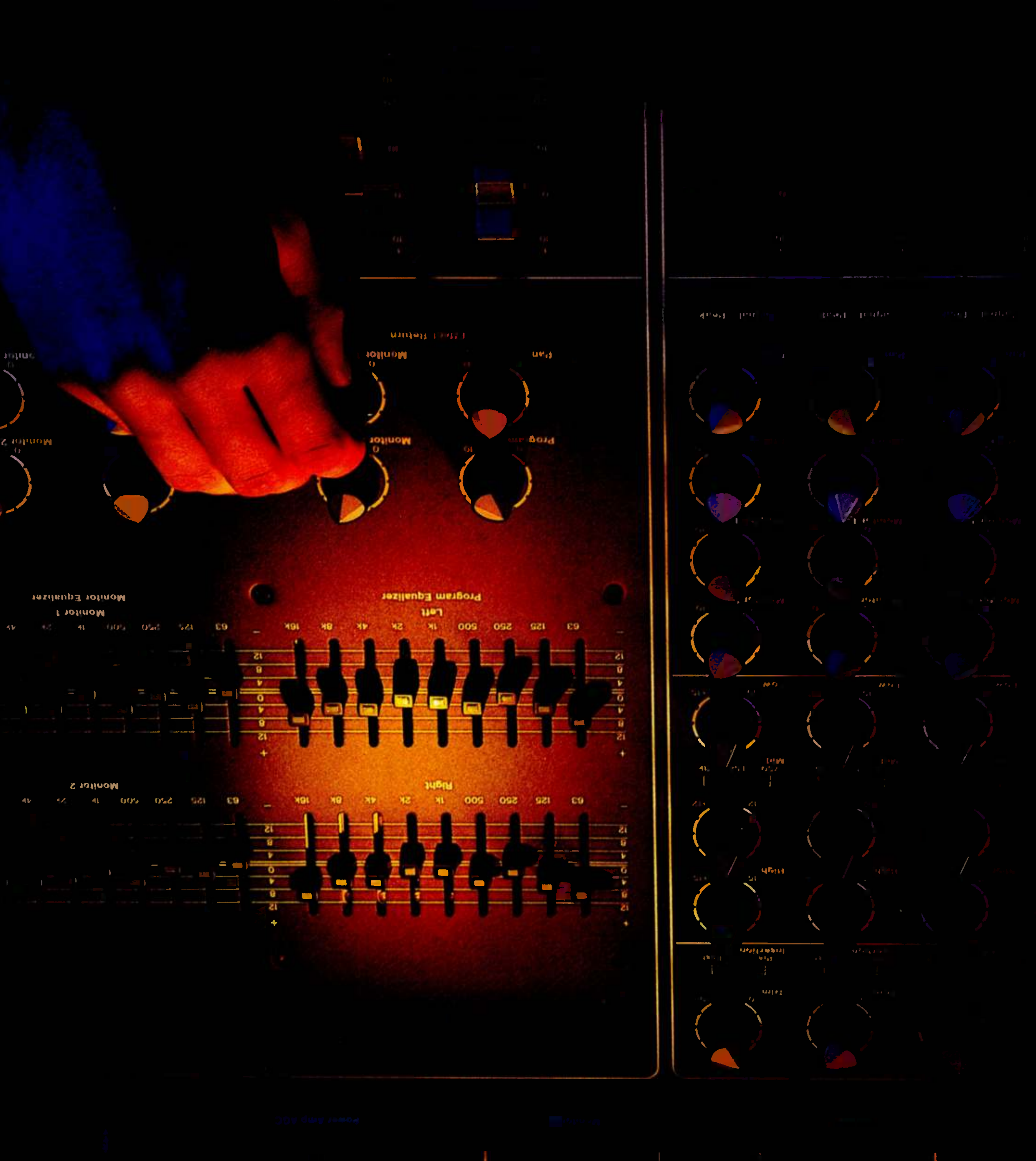

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LINDA RONSTADT

SOLVING THE RETRO RIDDLE: THE QUEEN OF COVER ROCK RE-IGNITES THE TORCH TUNE.

BILL FLANAGAN & ROY LEONARD

When Linda Ronstadt and producer Peter Asher heard the first playbacks from the first session for *What's New*, her album of torch songs, they were discouraged. "We kept trying to make the orchestra synch up with the bass and drums," Ronstadt recalls. "Like rock 'n' roll does. Everybody on the same backbeat. But the backbeat just isn't the dictator of this music like it is in rock 'n' roll. So Peter and I were in there tapping our feet and frowning and saying, 'There's a flam here, there's a flam there!'

"Randy Newman was in the neighborhood and came by to visit us. He's had a lot of experience conducting orchestras and recording with them. Randy just laughed at us and said, 'You know what you're doing? You just listen to the *flow* of it.' As soon as we figured that out it was a little bit easier."

Readjusting how they listened to music was only one of the special efforts the singer and her sometimes reluctant accomplice had to make to complete the latest of Ronstadt's unexpected career moves. From embracing Elvis Costello to interpreting *Pirates Of Penzance*, the queen of 70s cover rock has emerged in the 80s as a pop chameleon.

GARY GERSHOFF/RETNA

Rescuing 30s and 40s classics from elevator exile proved harder than Ronstadt thought.

"You can kill a good song by overexposing it," Ronstadt maintains. "Sammy Cahn is a great songwriter. He wrote 'Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry' which is a brilliant, brilliant song. He said, 'We've been made into clichés. We sweated our guts out writing these great songs—and they're prisoners of the elevator!'"

"Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry" is one of nine standards from the years 1922 to 1949 that Ronstadt chose for *What's New*. After several false starts, the thirty-seven-year-old California rocker finally completed an LP of the sort of smooth pop songs that were buried under the 50s rock 'n' roll avalanche.

Sinatra-era aficionados have praised Ronstadt for her intentions and courage, though some have questioned her execution, pointing to a stiffness in her handling of antique lyrics and jazz-age phrasing. The criticisms recall a comment Ronstadt once made about trying to reconcile her dual ancestries: she said that her ideal is to think like a German and sing like a Mexican—but that she sometimes thinks like a Mexican and sings like a German.

"'What's New' was the first thing we recorded and I thought it sounded pretty good—but I have a hard time listening to my own singing, so I'm never quite sure if it's good or not. I say, 'Oh, there's a million things wrong with my voice.' But we took it exactly as we recorded it. We didn't change anything."

In fact, the occasional flaws in Ronstadt's delivery are vital to the effectiveness of *What's New*. The vocal fluctuations remind the listener that these are live-in-the-studio performances—and make even more impressive the singer's graceful execution of tricky passages in tunes like "Crazy He Calls Me."

Ronstadt abandoned an initial attempt to record an LP of torch songs with producer Jerry Wexler. She instead cut *Get Closer*, her hardest rock album, two years ago. The torch project was then approached again with Peter Asher, the singer's longtime producer/manager, and veteran arranger Nelson Riddle.

It doesn't take much intuition to suss that Asher initially regarded the idea as a star's indulgence. "This wasn't considered a particularly commercially viable project," Ronstadt concedes. "I'm thrilled by the success this record is having because I was instructed to the contrary, that there would be *no commercial audience* for this and it would probably be the end of my career if I put it out."

Nelson Riddle's classic arrangements for Frank Sinatra albums like *Only The Lonely* set the standard that Ronstadt chose to emulate. Riddle's involvement granted *What's New* a legitimacy beyond a rock star's latest fancy.

"Peter was not very familiar with this

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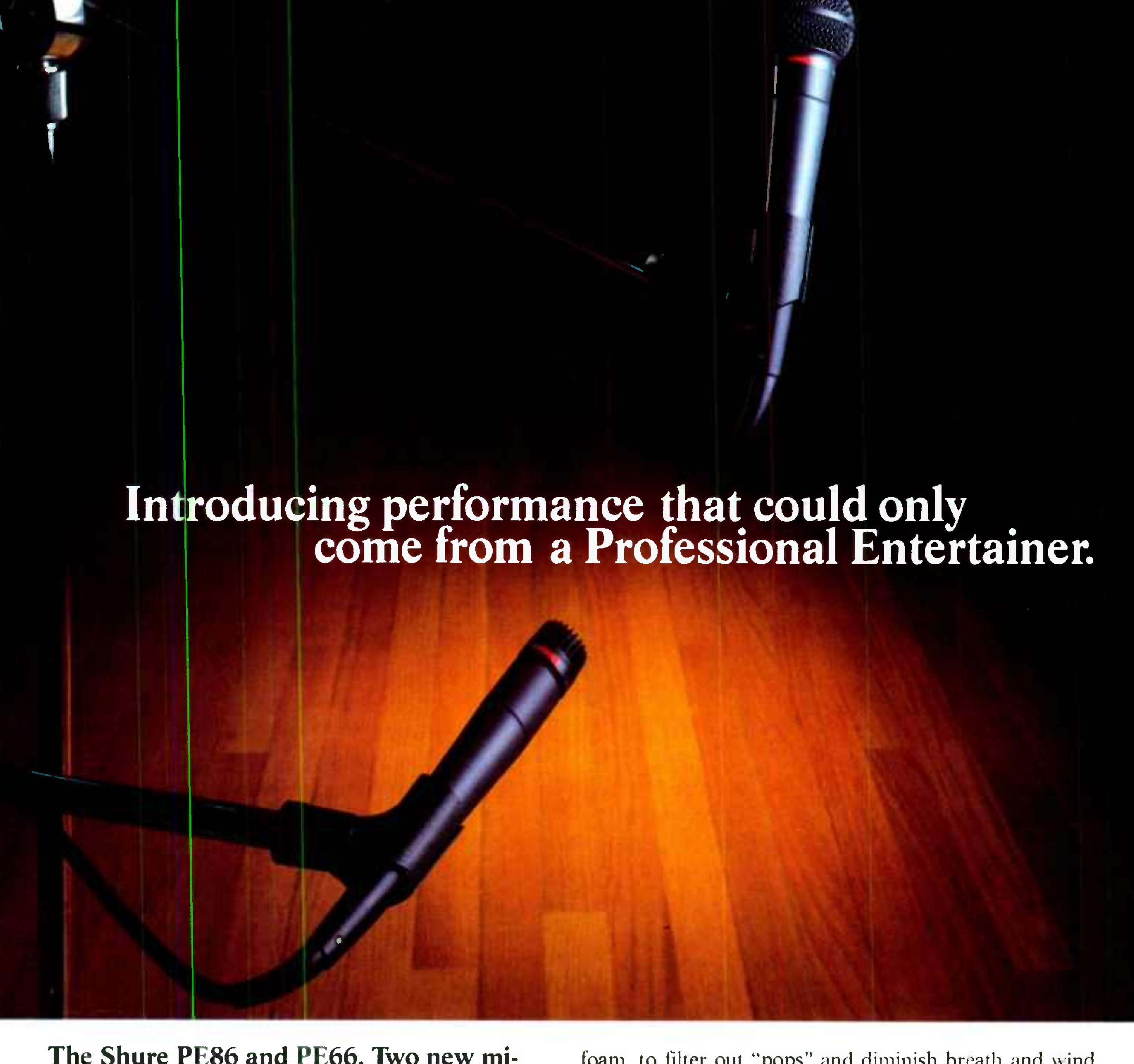

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kind of music," Ronstadt says. "It was my idea to get Nelson Riddle to do the arrangements. Nelson was one of the few guys who really, legitimately interpreted jazz to an orchestra without losing its flavor and its authenticity. He knew how to do that without turning things into sugar water."

But Riddle's presence—and the nature of the material—also put Asher and Ronstadt in the position of athletes to play on someone else's court—by someone else's rules. "After we recorded the first three songs with Nelson," the singer recalls, "I didn't think they were good enough. Then Peter said, 'Forget it. This is really not going to happen. This is much too hard.'"

So the project was shelved and Asher guided Ronstadt back to familiar territory with *Get Closer*. Linda's torch song instincts, though, were still encouraged by friends like comic Steve Martin and *New York Times* critic John Rockwell, as well as fellow musicians J.D. Souther and Andrew Gold. "That gave Peter and me the confidence to go back and try again," recalls Ronstadt.

Unlike most interpretive rock singers, there is nothing immediately distinct about Ronstadt's vocal manner—nothing as unique as Rod Stewart's rasp, Joe Cocker's howl or Bette Midler's brassy Mae West-meets-Ethel Merman gut blasts. Ronstadt is the rarest of rock cover artists: a vocalist who disappears into her material. If it is difficult to separate Ronstadt from Asher's canny productions, it is virtually impossible to imagine her identity apart from the material she chooses to record.

So *What's New* ultimately rises or falls less on Linda Ronstadt's technical competence—which is finally unimpeachable—than on one's reaction to the compositions themselves. Young listeners unfamiliar with antique patois ("Seeing you was grand ... adieu," "I fell and it was swell," "a cunning cottage") may find it hard to get beyond historical respect, to feel genuine *affection* for these tunes. But for those whose tastes were fixed before rock 'n' roll, up to and including the parents of the baby boom, Ronstadt's resurrection of what was once termed "make-out music" will probably prove irresistible.

Linda recalls how she came around to the Sinatra / Riddle LPs that would eventually win her away from rock: "In 1972 when I met J.D. Souther, he sat me down in the living room one night and said, 'Now listen—we're really going to listen to this.' And we listened to Nelson Riddle. It was great. I just flipped out. I said, 'This is gorgeous!' One of the great things about Nelson's arrangements is that they are so unobtrusive. They don't make you think of the arrangements—they don't dominate the record. What they do is *evoke* like crazy. When you listen, you simply surrender yourself to the feelings it evokes.

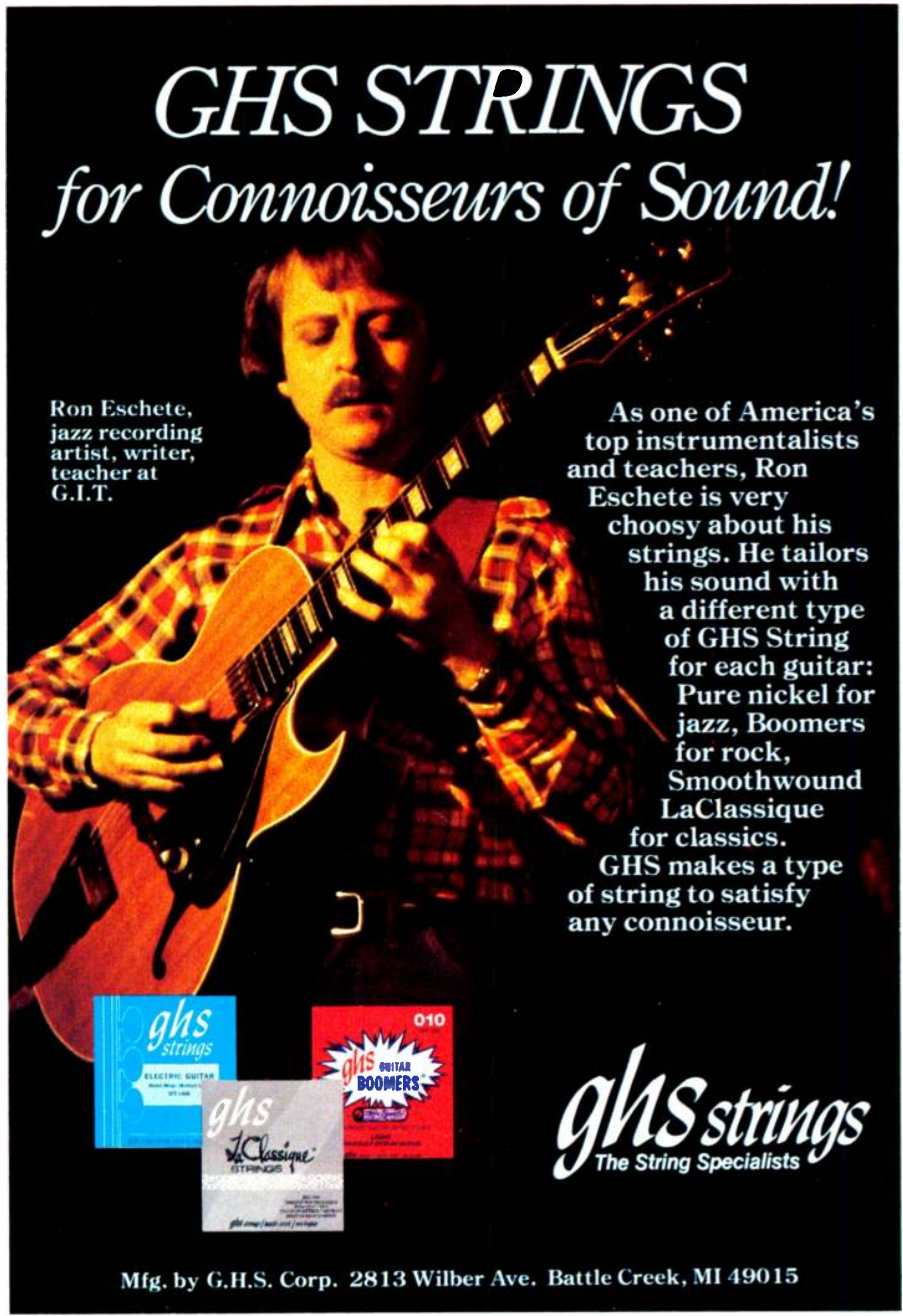
"I've got 'One For My Baby' on my jukebox at home. For years I just said, 'Wow, listen to that. Just Frank and the piano.' And all of a sudden I realized that there is a *whole orchestra* on it. Nelson got it in and out so subtly that all it did was paint pictures for you, instruct your mind to see all those visions. But you're not aware of it. That's really brilliant.

"Yet when you really listen critically and say, 'What are the horns doing there? What are the flutes doing? What is the string section doing?' you just go crazy because it's so beautiful. It's so subtle and so complex."

So what was going through the evangelical new convert's mind last autumn when she stepped onto the Radio City stage with Riddle and his orchestra? "God," the singer smiles, "'Where is the nearest subway?' I was really scared." She turns serious again. "But I really wanted to do it. It was like a dream for me."

And there are other rewards. Not as glamorous as the Radio City limelight, perhaps, but ultimately more satisfying. "Older people come up to me on the street and thank me for having liberated this music again," enthuses Ronstadt. "For letting it come out of the elevator and back into the mainstream." ■

Thanks to Roy Leonard and radio station WGN in Chicago for interview material.



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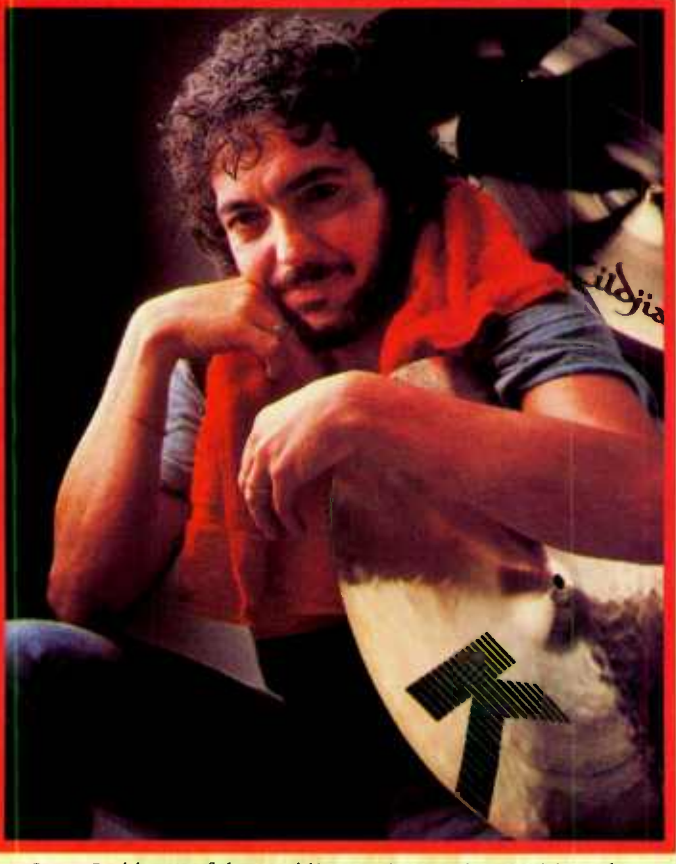
STEVE GADD. HOT ON ZILDJIAN.



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As you can imagine, between his touring and recording, Steve's not the easiest guy in the world to pin down. But he did stop for a breather the other day and we got a chance to talk with him.

On Practice. "I've been playing since I was a kid. As long as I keep my muscles loose, I don't have to practice a lot every day. When I do practice, I just sort of let things happen naturally and then later on try to work it into my playing. Like on '50 Ways to Leave Your Lover'... I used my left hand on the high hat for the whole section – it was a little thing I'd been practicing and it just worked out."

On Control. "Sometimes I use light, medium and heavy sticks to do the same drills because the sticks affect my muscles in different ways. You have to use your hand and arm muscles differently to control your playing. It's a subtle thing but it helps me tremendously."

On Effects. "After I graduated from Eastman, I played in a rock 'n roll band. It was keyboard, bass, drums and a lot of homemade stuff. I bought 6 big artillery shells, sawed them into different lengths and hung them on a rack that I built. I'd use them for the free sections in the music."

On K's. "Art Blakey gave me my first set of K. Zildjian's a long time ago. I love the feel of them. There's something about the way the stick reacts to the surface...it almost becomes part of the cymbal. They're not cold or edgy. They have a very warm and deep feeling. They've got real character. I use a 20" Ride and an 18" Crash Ride with 14" Hi Hats for recording and live sessions."

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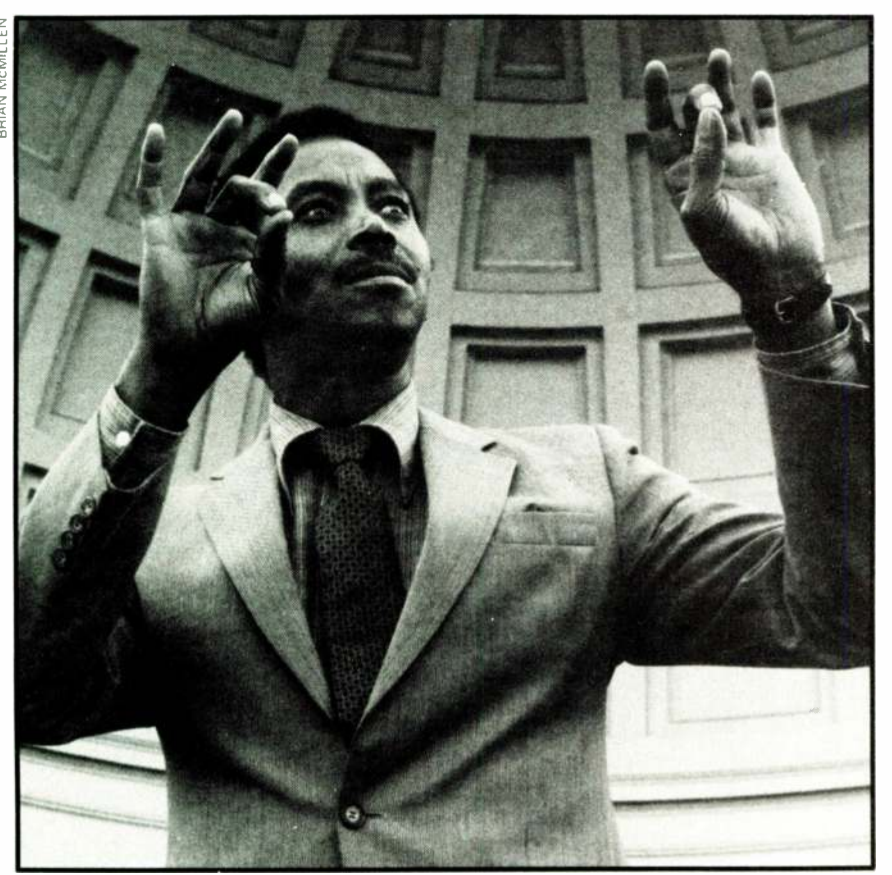
ODEAN POPE

STUDENTS & TEACHERS: TRACING FORGOTTEN TENOR TRADITIONS

BRIAN McMILLEN



Pope's compositions are a shifting series of melodic vignettes and rhythmic modulations.

CHIP STERN

In the days before radio and recording, musicians may not have had Walkmans, but they carried BIG EARS; a lick here, a phrase there; a new harmonic concept; different kinds of rhythmic combinations. One man with the right connections (or the right complexion) could put it all together and become the historical lightning rod upon which future generations would mark the evolution of music. And well they might, but friends, consider this: not everyone has heard of Buster Smith, yet they know of Charlie Parker; not everyone has heard of Don Redman and Fletcher Henderson, yet they know of Benny Goodman; not everyone's heard of John Gilmore, yet they know of John Coltrane. And what of all *their* forgotten mentors? All those who never made it to Manhattan?

Odean Pope's is not a sad story—not at all. We're not going run down the suffering artist myth one mo' time. No, but one should understand that many, many things make up a man and his music: family, geography, spiritual faith, community—intangibles which may have little to do with music, but much to do with life. These are the lessons an Odean Pope passes on to his students, much as his mentors guided him; and so it passes that jazz never dies. It just comes in and out of fashion.

Such was the feeling critics and aficionados gleaned from Odean Pope's debut as a leader, *Almost Like Me* (Moers Music), one of the great, lost gems of 1982, a bristling trio date that was progressive and contemporary in the best sense of those words. Here was music that re-synthesized modern jazz and funk, without short-changing either form (not surprising, given Pope's experience as tenorist and multi-woodwind artist in Max Roach's Quartet, as well as in stints with Stevie Wonder, the Temptations, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Sunny Murray, Chet Baker and Archie Shepp). Pope, it seems, has worked out some provocative solutions to the static structures of mid-60s modal jazz and the domineering fatback pulse of R&B so that the music is loose and swinging but with a dancing exuberance that is unmistakable.

With his torchy, cantorish tone and voluminous rhythmic intensity, Pope's heraldic tenor dominates *Almost Like Me*. Ranging over the entire length and breadth of his horn, Pope sounds as if he were trying to play every harmonic and melodic permutation in one gulp of air. But instead of simply chasing the snakes in pseudo-hip, free jazz fashion, Pope composes marvelous electric bass ostinatos and catapulting trap set cross rhythms (particularly delightful on "Scorpio Twins"), so that he's free to sync up with his two young giants, Gerald Veasley and Cornell Rochester, and groove; superimpose a contrary structure; or parallel their equestrian inventions with new rhythms of his own. The overall effect is of an ever-changing series of melodic vignettes and rhythmic modulations.

"Well, to me the drums are as melodic as any instrument and that's where the main energy of the group has to come from or it's not happening," Pope confirms in his gentle, dignified voice while sipping an imposing cocktail of hot water and cayenne pepper. ("Helps cleanse the system," he offers, but all I can think of is how red his hair is.) "If a drummer and a bass player aren't playing with total independence and freedom; if they're not constantly extending the rhythms, it's not interesting for me to function. It doesn't have the kind of intellect and feeling I want and I feel boxed in. It isn't about any one style of music because I love all kinds of music, and I want our concept to be broad, but open. It's like Cornell Rochester's drumming is the summation of Max Roach, Art Blakey and Billy Cobham, and out of that he's arriving at his own voice. Same with Gerald, because his playing owes as

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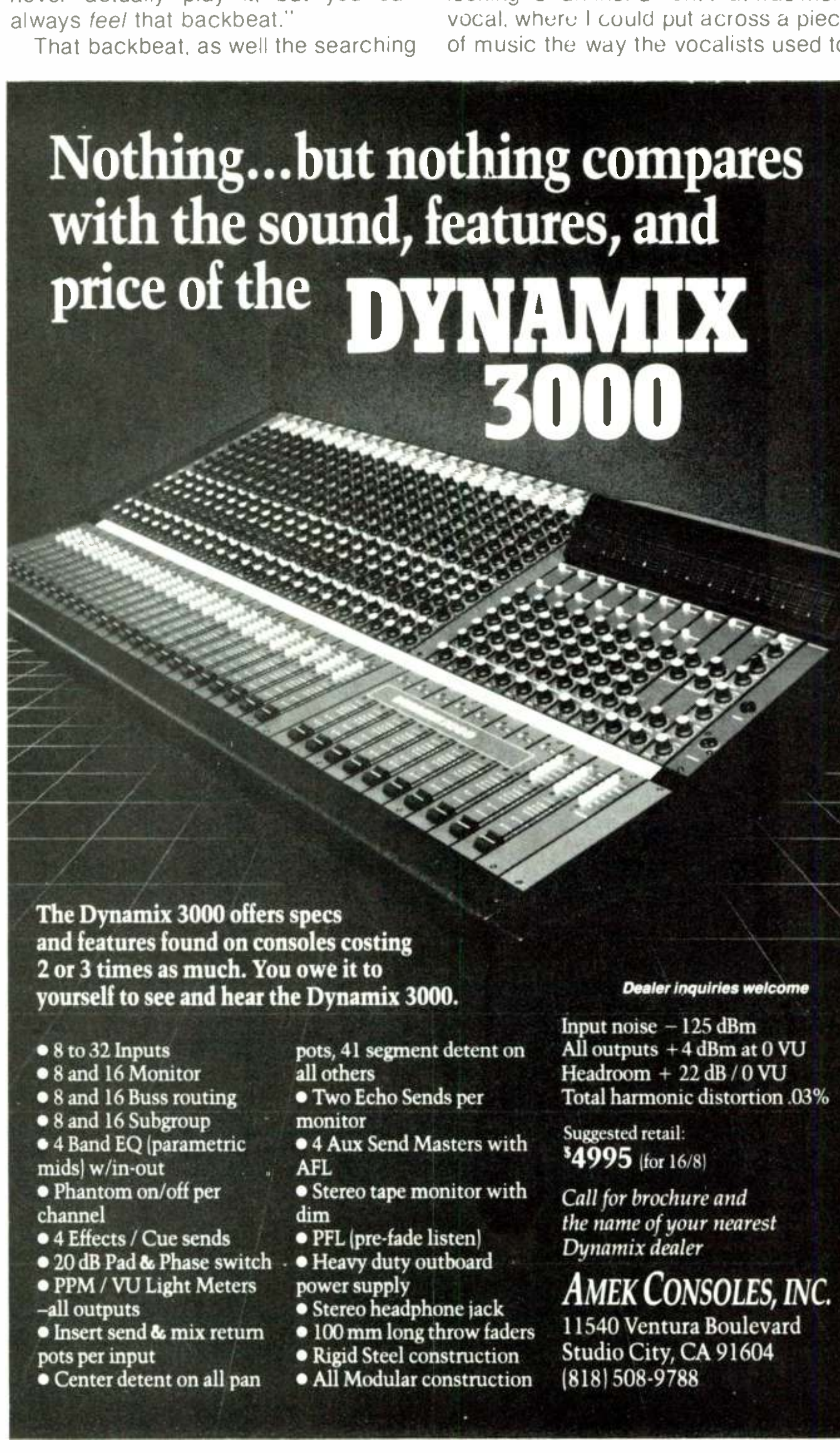
much to Oscar Pettiford as to Stanley Clarke, and there's a lot of flamenco in there too.

"So they give me the kind of energy I need; when they come up with an idea, I can go with it or create a contrast. The main thing I usually tell Cornell is that I want a funky beat, but I don't want you to play funk; I want a backbeat feel, but I don't want you to play the backbeat. One of my first major gigs was with guitarist Tiny Grimes in the late 50s, and he used to emphasize that to his drummers all the time. I've heard Max [Roach] and Art [Blakey] play like that, too, where they never actually play it, but you can always *feel* that backbeat."

That backbeat, as well the searching spirit in Pope's music, derives from his childhood experiences in the church. "I was born October 24, 1938 in a little city called Ninetysix, South Carolina," Pope recalls fondly, "and I lived there until I was ten, when my family moved to Philadelphia. My father Wardell was an excellent baseball player, and played trombone and trap drums. My mother Jenny Pope was a summer school teacher, an organist and choir director of the church. When I was five, I used to speak as well as sing in the church, and from that experience I believe I was drawn to the saxophone, because I was looking for an instrument that was more vocal, where I could put across a piece of music the way the vocalists used to; which is why, after I came through piano and clarinet, I finally got myself a C melody saxophone in junior high school. Now that's a concert instrument that plays in the same key as the bass and piano, whereas tenor saxophone's a B*b* instrument, a whole step above a concert instrument, so if you played a C on the C melody, the tenor would play a D—you have to transpose. When I finally got to high school and got graduated to a Mark VI Selmer is when I discovered an instrument I could really be expressive on. And when I think back to all those years I lived at home and studied, and not once did my parents tell me to go out and get a job, because they saw how serious I was about music—and they wanted me to be independent. They gave me a gift, allowing me the time to develop, to get inside myself. I'll always be grateful."



Philadelphia was (and is) *anything but* a second city when it comes to jazz, and the experience Odean Pope gained there put him in touch with who he wanted to be as an individual on tenor (as well as oboe, clarinet, piccolo and flute). So when critics make him out to be little more than another derivative Coltrane stylist, it's worth reflecting on their common heritage in the Carolina churches and on the Philadelphia jazz scene. More to the point, both Coltrane and Pope share a fascination with the ins and outs of harmony, so it's not surprising that Odean derives much of his concept from pianists. "About twenty years ago, I got rid of all the records in my collection with saxophone players and began listening to nothing but pianists and drummers, because I felt the only way to be serious on your instrument and to get any recognition was to come out of yourself, and listening to the way pianists extended harmonies enhanced what I was doing, rather than making me sound like just another horn player. So my real musical forefathers are people like Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, Art Tatum and Earl "Fatha" Hines. But more than anyone else, Hassan Ibn Ali."

The *legendary* Hassan Ibn Ali, who surfaced to record one classic trio date for Atlantic under Max Roach's leadership (with Art Davis on bass...but don't hold your breath waiting for Atlantic to reissue this historic date). A stylistic original and a complete genius, Hassan represents the extension of bebop keyboard into the so-called avant-garde era; a future traditionalist much as Eric Dolphy was with saxophone (whereas Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman represented, to many, stylistic breaks with the past). When people hear Coltrane or Odean Pope, very likely they're hearing Hassan.

"Hassan was the root of all the saxophone players who came out of Philly,

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including me, Jimmy Heath, Trane and many others. All the musicians in Philly got something from Hassan—he was their father. For instance, if you've ever checked out "Naima," Trane was using consecutive major seventh chords throughout that piece, what we call the 'triangle major seventh'—that's Hassan's invention. And the system Philly musicians used, inverted fourths and perfect fourths—all that comes from Hassan, too. To this day, I try and convey all that to my students the way he did to me. I was very fortunate to grow up two blocks away from Hassan, and he pulled my coat to so much. Hassan's thing was so advanced, nobody would give him work. It intimidated cats, and they said he didn't know what he was doing. When he came to gigs to sit in, horn players and drummers would sit down because he was playing a lot of two against three: 7/4, 11/4 and chord voicings that weren't the standard. But I wanted to play with him, so every day for two years, I'd shed with him." (And eventually record an unreleased Atlantic date in 1967.)

"Hassan would get up every day and go through this little ritual. He'd practice from morning till dinner time; his father [William Landford] would bring him some lunch. At night, he'd dress up, go to these two or three houses, and give these private concerts for people. And that's where he worked. And he never diverted from the purity of his expression for any economic advantages; he was true to his music right till the end. [Hassan died in 1980.] My roots are in the church and Hassan's music—"Almost Me" was the title of one of Hassan's songs. Through his influence, I began applying the fork fingering of the oboe to the tenor to get multi-phonics and the whole overtone series, extending my horn into the altissimo range. And because Hassan played with his fingertips, rather than with the traditional fingerings, that influenced me to practice nights for two years, from ten till four in the morning, where I'd just sit in front of the mirror and practice to develop my own fingertip approach to tenor fingerings, without blowing into the horn. Through that I was able to generate a lot of facility. At the same time, I'd be reading books, doing breathing exercises and all. That discipline gave me a different kind of independence on the horn.

"Besides the church and Hassan, a very important influence on me was bassist Jymmie Merritt, a great musician who played with Max and Art. I played for five years with him. He's the father of that whole cross-rhythmic thing, which Aficans have been doing for years."

All of which gave Odean Pope the stamina and creativity to take on the tenor chair in Max Roach's Quartet (to particular advantage on the Columbia release *Chatahoochie Red*), a musical accomplishment he values every bit as much as his own trio and nine-piece saxophone choir ("my attempt to further explore the possibility of horns duplicating that speech/song element I heard in the church"). But far from the glare of the public spotlight, Odean Pope carries on the tradition of his mentors, keeping the flame of creativity alive in up and coming musicians. "My inner thoughts are constantly on my children," Pope says beaming with pride. "When I say my children, I mean my students. I teach at the Settlement Music School in Philly, and I've been actively involved in teaching, one way or another, since 1971. Back in 1974, at Model Cities, I was with Jymmie Merritt, and he had a student by the name of Jamaaladeen Tacuma; and Cornell Rochester was there, too, and of course, we're so proud of all they've accomplished.

"It's funny. Years ago, you could tell kids anything and they'd accept it, but now they'll put you on the spot, and you'd better have the answers. And what's so beautiful to me is that we can bring the values of older players and older styles alive for these kids, just as it was done for us, and make it all relevant today, because we can't ever be so contemporary that we can't use what our elders put down for us. This way the continuity is maintained, and I'm prouder of that than just about anything else I've accomplished in music." M

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FACES

THE BLUEBELLS

Scruffy Scots Get Serious

"Scruffy bunch of lads," muttered Bluebells guitarist Russell Irvine as the rest of the band straggled onstage at the Music Machine in West Los Angeles. Then Russell grinned. "But that's our basic charm."

Yeah, sort of. Here's another side of the Scottish Invasion: a scruffy bunch of untrained Glasgow kids who picked up their instruments a couple years ago and are learning to play at the same time they're producing an effervescent brand of pop that's rougher, more melodic and, yes, more charming than their more celebrated countrymen. Big Country pens anthems and Aztec Camera has literary significance, but the Bluebells write terrific little pop songs to hum, built around soaring, hook-laden melodies and laced with seamless harmonies, pleasant squeaky harmonica and bright, jangly arrangements.

The band's origin sounds like a nifty bit of fiction, but these guys swear that it's true—and it's hard to be skeptical in the face of the fresh-faced vigor and genuine boyish enthusiasm they were showing halfway through a short American tour. The story goes like this: Robert Hodgens was running *Ten Commandments*, one of Britain's most respected fanzines, when he got tired of writing about hometown favorites like Orange Juice and Aztec Camera. So he began inventing bands. A rival fanzine asked for a song from one of those bands for a compilation tape. Robert dashed off a number called "She Hates Travel" (about a phobia of Ava Gardner) and recorded it under the name 007. The head of Glasgow's Postcard Records heard it and encouraged him to form a real band.

But that outfit, Oak's Farm Warriors, was "appallingly bad," according to Bluebells singer Kenneth McCluskey. Robert sacked them and hooked up with some friends of friends: Kenneth and his brother, drummer David; bassist Lawrence Donegan; would-be guitarist Russell. (The band prefers first names only, albeit rather formal first names.) None of the group had much experience, but then neither did local heroes Orange Juice—"They were a big influence, because the main point of that band was that they couldn't play," said Lawrence.

The surprised object of a record label bidding war, the Bluebells ran through a batch of producers on their three British maxi-singles. Elvis Costello manned the board for five songs ("He was great to work with," said Kenneth), while Leo Sayer's producer, Alan Tarney, handled another session ("He's a shithead"). But of all their records, the band is happiest with "Cath," an upbeat romp recorded when Elvis called in sick one day.

"We're a really spirited band," added Lawrence, "and 'Cath' is the closest thing we've come to capturing that spirit."

At the Music Machine, the band showed enough spirit to easily compensate for ragged technique, careening through a brief ten-song set that ended with a rousing "Sugar Bridge." While the musicianship was occasionally frail, the sound was more robust than on record, as befits a band whose current preferred listening list is made up of the likes of Big Star, Creedence Clearwater Revival, the Band and Buffalo Springfield.

"We've only really started getting serious in the last six months," said Lawrence. "That makes it funny, because now the record company turns to us and says, 'Okay, now you're competing with Michael Jackson.' He laughed brightly. "We've got a long way to go, but you've no idea the improvement in this band lately. I just wish we had started sooner." — **Steve Pond**

THE MC5

The Punk Starts Here

Think of the first time you heard the Sex Pistols, the first time you were beaten senseless by Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love," the first time the Dead Kennedys spit their white noise politics in your face. And then think of this....

A young white brat speeding on monster feedback and amphetamine Chuck Berry riffing fills his lungs with hot sweaty Detroit air and yells with *kamikaze* fury, "Kick out the jams, motherfuckers!" Instantly, the guitar army behind him explodes into atomic distortion, the drummer coming down hard but fast on his kit as if to dodge and deflect the razorback chord fragments coming off the guitars like some high-decibel fallout. Meanwhile, that brat singer is damned if

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he's going to be drowned out, torching his tonsils with hoarse exhortations to get good and crazy, the ragged background vocals rising with his in a maniacal epiphany. Finally, the band collapses around him in a heap of fuzz crescendos and amp shriek.

This is MC5, cutting *Kick Out The Jams* onstage in October, 1968, and—never mind what you know about the Pistols and the Clash—the punk starts here. So do heavy metal and hardcore. The MC5 didn't just do them first; they did them all at once, epitomizing a school of Detroit rock for which the term "high energy" hardly seems sufficient. Bouncing off walls as far apart as the Who's blasts of mod arrogance and the black free jazz wail of Shepp, Ayler and Coltrane, they strove for a revolution of the spirit, in the street, at a time when hippies spelled relief m-e-d-i-t-a-t-i-o-n.

The '5 paid for their insolence in spades. Dropped by one record label, they were ignored by another, finally dissolving in 1972. Both bassist Michael Davis and guitarist Wayne Kramer did prison stretches, as did their manager, radical activist John Sinclair. But the generations of garage rock guerrillas who succeeded them have not forgotten the debt they owe the MC5. For everyone else, the new retrospective cassette *Babes In Arms* on Reach Out International is an overdue reminder.

"I wanted the depth and diversity of the band to come through," explains Kramer, who compiled the *Babes* cassette from his own private stash of studio outtakes and unreleased mixes. "We just weren't rock 'n' roll bashers. We had an idea of a way to play music that was meaningful, that was nonconditional and went beyond the traditional ways of thinking about rock 'n' roll."

With typical shotgun enthusiasm the '5 spread that idea anarchically over a couple of early raw singles and three albums—*Kick Out The Jams*, *Back In The USA* and *High Time*. *Babes In Arms*, despite ho-hum fidelity in spots, gives it to you in one savage gulp, from the hard Them crunch of their '66 indie 45 "I Can Only Give You Everything" to the boiling boogie anger of "American Ruse" and the maddening jazz-punk twists of the previously unreleased "Gold."

And everywhere there is the righteous echo of the '5's outlaw politics, the ominous feeling of a knuckle-sandwich-for-peace coming at you behind every power chord. "The Detroit riot of '67 really drove it all home," Kramer remembers. "One day I woke up and this was my neighborhood that was burning. We saw everything was screwed up and we didn't dig it. And playing in the band was the best thing we could do about it."

So what if *Kick Out The Jams* sounds like it was recorded by the GM assembly line choir in a subway toilet? Big deal that the tracks included here from *Back In The USA*, their 1970 slab of guitar power-plus, are turned into mono soup. The MC5 were always loud, always proud and the joyful noise they made almost fifteen years ago is still never less than that. Try banging your head against *High Time*'s "Sister Ann"—the frantic wham-bam of the band mutating into an eerie hallelujah chorus and sputtering Salvation Army horns—or slam dancing to the locomotive jump of "Gotta Keep Moving." The pain is practically inspirational.

The '5 died with their boots on, suicide troops in a war only the straight people could win. "I had an idea that what the MC5 was doing was pretty important," Wayne Kramer muses in retrospect. "I thought in ten years it might really mean something.

"But it's blown up a bit much, y'know? I ain't nothin' more than another rock 'n' roller, just like anybody else. *Anybody* can do it, we proved that." Only the MC5 did it before everybody else. — **David Fricke**

MAX ROACH

Estate Fresh

"Rap is as American as the jazz drum set." Unlikely words to be heard from Max Roach, but this master percussionist, part-time academician and perennial visionary had just participated in "Estate Fresh," a unique musical conglomeration performed at Soho's experimental art loft, The Kitchen. With DJ Spy and Nick Nice manning the turntables, the New York Breakers cutting up on the dance floor and Roach on the traps, they attempted to emulate what frontman Fab 5 Freddy proclaimed during one of his raps: "Hip hop marries bebop."

That Roach had just come off a European tour, mixing his jazz group with a classical string quartet (their Beethoven variations supposedly tore the place apart) and went straight to an evening of free-form street music, didn't seem to faze him in the least. "I love breaking down musical barriers; if people tell me it's a no-no, then I've got to do it. Labels are unimportant. It's like when I did those duets with Braxton and Cecil Taylor. It wasn't bebop meets avant, it was just two guys mutually interested in exploring sounds."

"Estate Fresh" was no easy attempt to jump on the Hip Hop bandwagon; Roach's understanding and commitment to American black culture runs too deep for that. "Unlike fusion, which was an A&R concoction, rap and break dancing are true phenomenons. They sprung up naturally, like a phoenix, from the more depressed urban areas"—places like Brooklyn's Stuyvesant, where Roach himself was raised. "They're serious about all they do and I respect that."

In the spirit of Hip Hop's origins, "Estate Fresh" was a spontaneously staged performance. Its three indeterminate sections spotlighted Fab 5's breathless vocal set, an energetic if graceless break dance demonstration and a too-brief duet/duel between Roach and the men behind the machines. With

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DEBORAH FEINGOLD

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RAIN PARADE

Psychedelic Power

The problem with the current American psychedelic revival is that there are purists and there are *purists*. Like the guy with the mouth that roared through nearly half a set by new L.A. acid-folk quintet the Rain Parade at New York's Folk City recently. Without any consideration for the Rain Parade's delicate balance of modal guitar drone and fragile choirboy harmonies or for the audience wrapped up in its paisley swirl, this outraged punk with the foghorn lungs kept yelling requests for "Boss Hoss," an old maniac thumper by 60s garage legends the Sonics.

Sorry, wrong 60s. The psycho-sax honk of the Sonics and neo-Yardbirds grunge of a thousand other forgotten *Nuggets* warriors have little to do with the quiet spiritual lift of the Rain Parade. Their studious assimilation of *5D*-era Byrds guitar tingle, Oriental pastel arrangements and humble folkie romanticism, all played with the gentle air of a chamber string quartet, is instead directly descended from vintage cult popsters like Love, the Beau Brummels and the Beach Boys in their expansive *Pet Sounds* period. Onstage, they cover the Who's 1965 mod raga "Instant Party" and at Folk City the band took a friendly tumble through "No Good Trying," a Syd Barrett gem from his post-Pink Floyd therapy album *The Madcap Laughs*, complete with colliding treble guitars and Will Glenn's violin swinging up and down in mad baroque arcs.

But the purity of that inspiration, as documented on the Rain Parade's shimmering debut album *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip* (on their own Llama label), is refracted off some startling influences. Drummer Eddie Kalwa's martial rumble and the bitter chime of Matthew Piucci and David Roback's guitars in the original "I Look Around" recall the introspective Television of "Venus De Milo." "And if we were sitting here talking to Joe Zawinul," explains Roback, twenty-five, the band's principal singer and songwriter, "I would be telling him what an influence he's had on our band. There's Miles Davis and Bach, that very classical thing. And there's something about those Oriental scales—it's as if you're on a wave and it captures you, it keeps you going with the drone. And that's not just psychedelic. It's honest music from another place entirely."

In fact, the Rain Parade are so far-out that they may actually be coming in, carried along by the growing success of fellow members of L.A.'s Paisley Underground like the Three O'Clock and the Dream Syndicate. Major label interest in the band is tentative, which is ironic since fifteen years ago this was considered highly commercial music. "But," Piucci insists, "we've gotten letters from people saying, 'I absolutely cannot believe this isn't FM commercial music. Why haven't I heard of your group before? Are you trying to keep a low profile or something?'" — ***David Fricke***

FIVE BLIND BOYS

Gospel Giants on Broadway

BEATRIZ SCHILLER

There are actually seven of them, only four are blind, it's been a good thirty or forty years since any of them could realistically have been called boys, and not all of them are from Alabama. But who's counting? The Five Blind Boys are elder statesmen among the great gospel vocal groups, part of a tradition that goes back to the Kings of Harmony and the Golden Gate Quartet; that flourished in the late 1940s and early 50s with the Swan Silvertones, the Soul Stirrers, the Original Five Blind Boys (a different group—these from Mississippi), and the Five Blind Boys From Alabama (then known as the Happyland Singers); and that continues today through the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Mighty Clouds of Joy and the Sensational Williams Brothers.

Despite the addition of two members to strengthen vocal parts and supplement the backing band, the Five Blind Boys remain what they have always been—a vocal quartet supporting the astonishing Clarence Fountain, a charismatic singer whose yearning tenor will occasionally dip down to a low baritone reminiscent of Brook Benton's in its warmth and silkiness. In his higher register, with his voice wavering and humming, he sounds more like Clarence Carter ("Patches," "Slip Away"); you can hear traces of any number of great southern R&B singers in his phrasing and delivery, and echoes of great harmony groups like the Ravens, the Drifters and the O'Jays in the backing vocals.

The chill of recognition cuts deeper than a few names named or a few similarities here or there; virtually all the traditions of soul and R&B come from gospel, and most of the great rhythm & blues singers came directly from gospel groups and choirs or took their main inspiration from the top gospel singers: Sam Cooke and Johnnie Taylor both served apprenticeships with the Soul Stirrers; Aretha Franklin (daughter of the amazing preacher Reverend C. Franklin) cut her first records as a pure gospel singer when she was about fourteen; Archie Brownlee of the Original Five Blind Boys served as Ray Charles' early role model; and Al Green (now back singing gospel) modeled his style on the glorious swoops of Claud Jeter (leader of the Swan Silvertones).

These days the Five Blind Boys are finding a new audience through *The Gospel At Colonus*, a remarkable revisioning of Sophocles' *Oedipus At Colonus* that pairs Greek tragedy with the traditions of the black church.

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THE RUBINOOS

Emotional Rescue

PAUL CANTY/RETNA

Okay, so "new music" is happening. The charts and the airwaves are full of it; the synthesizer has effectively challenged the electric guitar as pop music's primary weapon. But at what cost? The days when great rock records were so often built on real songs, with good vocalists actually singing in harmony, have been lost in a maelstrom of riffs, rhythm machines and stupid poses.

It's for that reason that a record like the Rubinoos' *Party Of Two* sounds so refreshing. The Human League? Echo & the Bunnymen? Thanks all the same, but the Rubinoos—a two-man band consisting of vocalist Jon Rubin and guitarist / vocalist / songwriter Tommy Dunbar—will take the Beatles and the Beach Boys any day. Sure, they made a clever video for the MTV generation, and the sound production (by Todd Rundgren and Utopia) is state-of-the-art. But the tune in question, "If I Had You Back," is a soaring, purely *fun* pop concoction featuring no less than twelve — count 'em — vocal parts at once.

A brief history of the Rubinoos: formed in 1970, when Rubin and Dunbar were fourteen; cut their first single, "Gorilla" (a cover of a tune by the immortal de Franco Family), in '76; signed as a quartet to Beserkley, the San Francisco Bay Area label that also gave the world Greg Kihn and Jonathan Richman; released an album in '77, featuring a version of Tommy James' "I Think We're Alone Now" that caught some national attention; released another album in '79; opened for Elvis Costello on tour that same year.

Jon Rubin picks up the tale from there. "Did you see *The Dead Zone*?" he asks. "We were in a coma.... Actually, what happened was, we'd left our management and our label, and we didn't know what to do. We thought, 'Oh, yeah, we'll get another deal—no problem. The Rubinoos? They *must* be popular.'"

What transpired instead was a fairly precipitous drop out of sight, culminating in a gig at the Pine Cone Lounge in Lake Tahoe, where the Rubinoos, then a quintet, played for two weeks. Explains Dunbar, "It was such hell that three of the members bailed—including the drummer, after thirteen years."

That left Rubin and Dunbar, who moved to Los Angeles and polished off the demos that landed them an EP deal with Warner Bros. With Utopia having been recruited to play (except Rundgren—"I was *way* faster than him," says Dunbar) and produce, they recorded *Party Of Two*, with its layer upon layer of high harmonies wedded to a rather contemporary, guitar- and keyboard-dominated instrumental mix.

What now for the Rubinoos? Any plans to form another working band depended at least in part on the record's taking off, which it hasn't. "Maybe it'd be different if we were English," sighs Rubin. "It seems to be very difficult for people to accept an American pop band right now, especially one that leans more towards Olivia Newton-John than Duran Duran." But there's hope. "I figure President Reagan's new immigration bill will probably take care of the English invasion. Then we'll make our move." — ***Samuel Graham***

PAUL YOUNG

Soul Synth Success

Robert Mitchum once described himself as a man who doesn't court people. Paul Young doesn't court people, either. The twenty-seven-year-old Britisher is currently—and justly—regarded as one of soul singing's great white hopes, thanks to his impressive techno-soul LP, *No Parlez*. Along with Boy George, Young is trying to find where the aesthetic imperatives of greats like Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, Al Green and Levi Stubbs can hope to fundamentally alter the emotional architecture of post-new wave popular music.

Unlike George, Young is enamored of synth-pop's sound-for-sound's sake introversion. Throughout *No Parlez* he pits the revelatory textures of his baritone against inviting but self-absorbed arrangements that seek to hide the heart of the songs. (Maybe soul singing can't be as naked as it was in a world so ambivalent about emotional intimacy.) Young's own ambivalence surfaces in his interviews. The moment a tape clicks off, concern alters his placid expression. "I'm sort of difficult, aren't I?"

Young's features are more animated when talk turns to finding songs their possibilities; Young likes to take soul stylings and graft them onto non-soul songs. "The songs don't have to be soul; it's actually better if they aren't, because we're freer to experiment. Some of what we do gets lost in the mix, but that's okay—we have such wonderful fun."

Though press and public always want to find emotional and spiritual surrogates in their most beloved singers, Young is simply not letting them get that close, via either singing or speaking. Is he protecting certain intuitive sources and processes essential to his singing and songwriting? "Yes, I think so. I've always had this thing inside me that shuts down when something gets too analytical or overly complex. Almost everything I've ever done, I've done by instinct."

Young instinctively ascribes manipulative motives to public self-examination. "I don't want to sound stupid by pulling apart everything I do and trying to put into words what's already there in the music. I

continued on page 38

World Radio History

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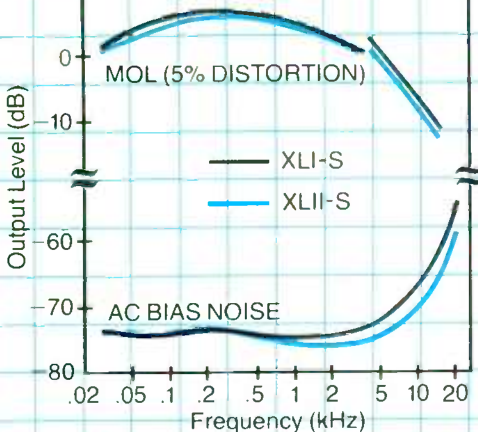

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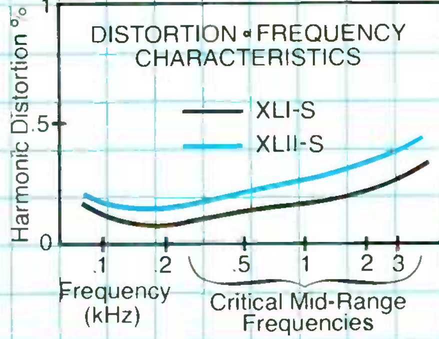

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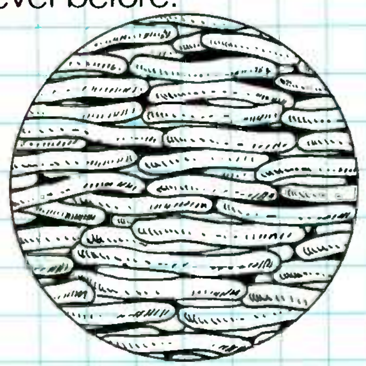

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World Radio History

Roach from page 33
Spy and Nice laying down a continuous, recorded backbeat, Roach was used as a "percussive rapper," commenting and interacting rather than stepping out and directing attention to himself.

Yet this self-effacing attitude ultimately doomed "Estate Fresh" as an erratically exciting experiment rather than a homogeneous success. While the Hip Hoppers had free rein to do their verbal, mechanical and gymnastic twists and turns, there was always the nagging feeling that Roach was being held back; forced to be a guest, not a true collaborator. The inherent rhythmic limitations of the music—the basic and unrelenting funk patterns that are the marrow of the Hip Hop art—never allowed Roach enough space to inject any sophisticated jazz time. Next time, let's see Fab 5 and friends move to *Roach's* beat. — ***Steve Futterman***

Five Blind Boys from page 34
Conceived and directed by Lee Breuer, best known for his work with Mabou Mines and with the New York Shakespeare Festival, *Gospel* features not only the Five Blind Boys (collectively playing Oedipus) but the Soul Stirrers, the J.D. Steele Singers and the Institutional Radio Choir (a sixty-piece gospel choir). Theater-goers used to the dim-witted and dimmer-spirited mewlings of *Annie*, *A Chorus Line* and *Sugar Babies* have been overwhelmed by the music (well adapted and composed by Bob Telson, a former employee of Philip Glass and a long-time associate of Breuer), the singing and the raw devotional energy. Now playing to capacity crowds at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a soundtrack album and a move to the bright lights of Broadway both seem imminent. — ***Brian Cullman***

Young from page 36
won't do in-depth interviews where I get into talking about my soul. I can't use interviews to sell what I do."

If there's spiritual or sociological import in the barrage of new English soul music, Young is insistent that it be left in the grooves undissected. "I don't think there are many good, new soul singers around—Boy George is one. As far as soul music is concerned, England is making better dance music in general now because the country is more integrated and the kids are growing up more naturally alongside things like reggae. I think soul is coming up again. Rock is about over, but soul laid down when I thought it had a lot of life left in it. I always wanted to do something that had a big soul influence. I just love soul music so much... I just *love* it, that's all." — ***Laura Fissinger***

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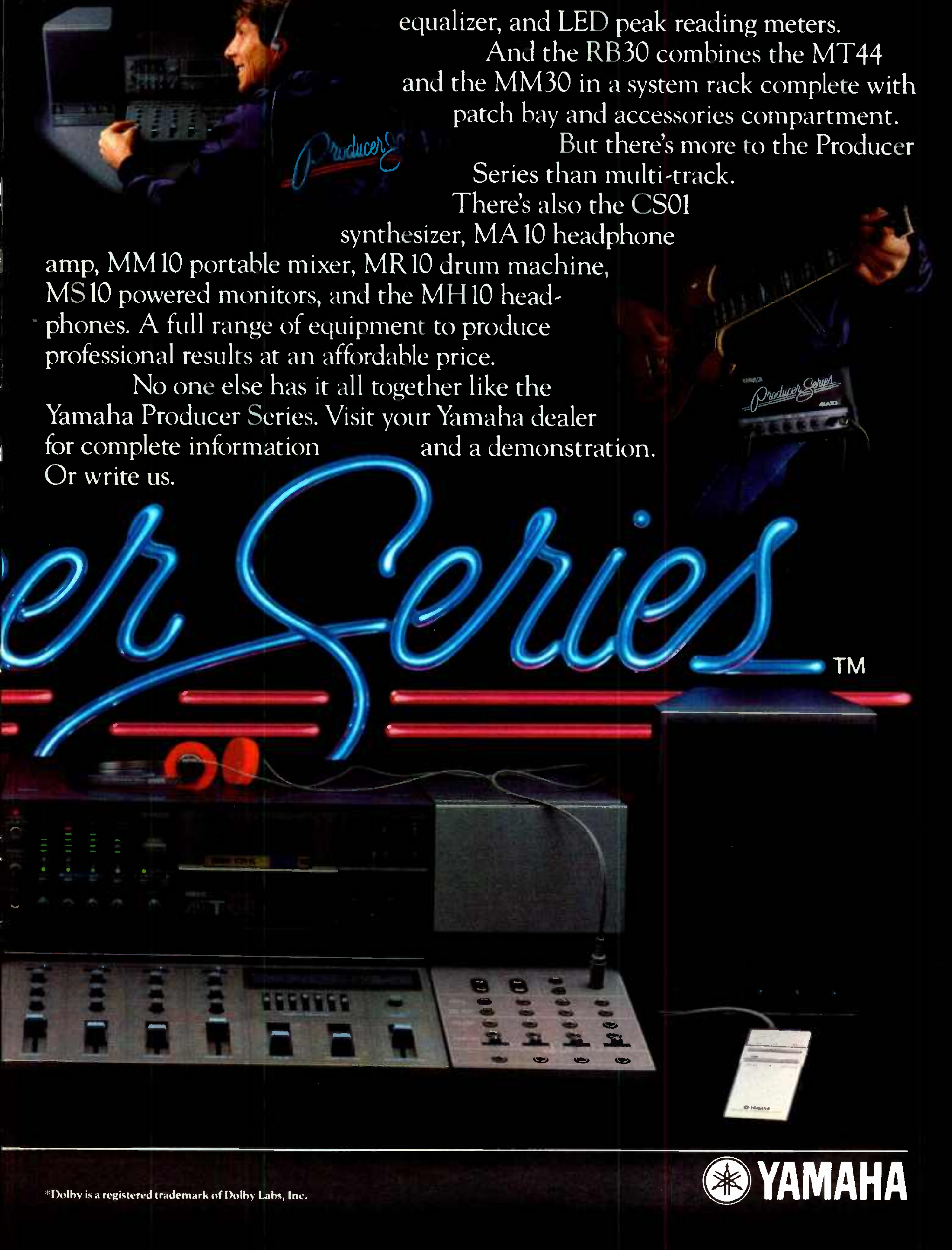
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holds good as far as I'm concerned."

Judging ABC strictly on their music and not on their predictive abilities still gives them high grades. *Beauty Stab* may be one of the few really excellent albums of 1983, a year of great singles and lesser LPs. With seven sure kills out of eleven songs, this one could have a suprisingly long shelf life (the other unmentioned finds? "Love's A Dangerous Language," the riveting "Power Of Persuasion," the disco-sneer "Unzip," and two fine songs that were written as a comment on the other nine, "If I Ever Thought You'd Be Lonely" and "Hey Citizen!").

Much had been revealed about the mysterious musical processes behind ABC, and clearly the equality of each member in the group was matched by their eloquence. In fact, the similarities of the accounts seemed at times less a happy coincidence than a carefully coached unity of preparation. Buzzwords like "instinct" and especially "a magnificent failure or a magnificent success, but magnificent" suggested that ABC had not lost their media skills. But the change in tone from the eager, irreverent imports of 1982 kidding about the ABC Code of Gentlemen to Martin Fry's earnest demeanor in late 1983 was a still a marked one. Sporting a natty but restrained green plaid suit with a leather vest beneath the coat in the stuffy Manhattan conference room, Fry declined to join Mark in a few stabs at his fashionable illegitimate pop-children and insisted on returning to questions he felt he hadn't answered completely. Instead of the man-with-the-answers-one-step-ahead-of-the-questions, Fry seemed a quiet, slightly self-conscious, sincere young fellow. Despite a strong hint of higher education, no traces of aristocratic manner or hip corporate craft were anywhere in evidence.

MUSICIAN: *It seems that above all ABC craves importance.*

FRY: We want to do something that doesn't waste people's time, something that is worth the price of admission. (laughs ruefully) I can see I'm going to spend '84 going, "No...did I really say that?"

MUSICIAN: *You've always had "ambitions to carve out a very considerable niche in the international pop world...."*

FRY: (groaning) Oh right! That was in the days when nobody had heard of the group and I realized there was 350,000 better singers than me, so we mythologized ourselves straight away, in a kind of tongue-in-cheek fashion. It's kind of the old gospel according to ABC.... Yeah, definitely to make an impact, to at least to make records that are important enough to have an opinion about, rather than cobbled together like some schlock that might crawl to the top of the charts and then be immediately forgotten about. We've always collectively felt it was better to shoot for the stars, and we do sometimes create kind of ridiculous ambitions and dreams you never think you could touch and make real...and some of them came true, actually.

As for the quote you mentioned, I think that's the sleeve notes to the first single ("Tears Are Not Enough"), and in a way it backfired on me, because people read it now and think, "Smart aleck! He had the whole thing planned. ABC are cynical, calculating strategists." But what people aren't willing to see is that at the time, it was kind of a brave step for a record that could just have easily have been slipped in the bargain bins. So, you know, you can't win. You win, but you can't win.

MUSICIAN: Beauty Stab *is a difficult record to get on the first few passes. There are no killer singles....*

FRY: Yeah, it's not a collection of singles, it's not chock-a-block 45s. It's long-play; we wanted to make an LP. I don't think there are many around at the moment that benefit from listening to more than once. So many just have two good tracks and filler.

MUSICIAN: *It sounds as though you've had some premonition of the current "new music backlash," with guitar-centered bands like Big Country, U2....*

FRY: Good groups...I don't know about the new music backlash; I haven't gotten that far yet. I've never understood the term "new music." I went to one of the conferences and I still don't understand it. All I got was Malcolm McLaren preaching to the converted. But I believe we've changed not simply to escape a mold; it's more from a heartfelt desire, an intuitive sort of sidestep maybe. A desire to make a record that did sound very different from *The Lexicon Of Love*. We definitely feel a desire to strip things down, unzip them and kind of get back to recording the spirit of the group rather than a cosmetic wipeover of everything. You can, through trickery, remove the warts, remove the kind of spontaneity that really gives a record its personality. It's not just the synthesizers; a lot of synthetic records don't even use synthesizers, records that just sound like other records. When somebody makes a record to buy a house, it's a dangerous thing.

MUSICIAN: *It does seem that it's an ABC* modus operandi *to take a style that is most critically reviled, like disco or heavy metal, and to use it specifically because it arouses such opposition.*

FRY: It's partly that, yeah, and partly...we're not a heavy metal group. I don't think we've got it in us. I'm no saint, but I've not kicked enough TV sets through enough hotel windows. But yeah, the emphasis is on the guitar. Maybe to say something that a heavy metal group wouldn't dream of saying. Heavy metal has got its virtues and its vices. A lot of it I find a bit dull, especially the lyrics, but the physical sound of a guitar played at high volume, I think, speaks for itself.

MUSICIAN: *Certainly the ABC on* Lexicon, *dressed in immaculate tuxes, has now dived in and gotten its hands and clothes dirty.*

FRY: It was part and parcel of what we had to say. We decided we didn't need to finish a quest for a fantasy. We canceled our subscriptions to the Club Tropicana. We've realized that chasing after that is an illusion: glamor, television....

MUSICIAN: *But you were always subverting the glamor....*

FRY: Yeah, but sometimes we realized that in some people's eyes, we were just taken as such, you know. Certain people felt that *Lexicon* was a collection of dewy-eyed love songs. There's a danger in even the slightest wry pastiching; people take it on face value. So we wanted to get a lot more direct. I sort of got to thinking, "Well, there's only so many songs you can write about me, me, me or the girl of my dreams has just walked out the door."

MUSICIAN: *Which seems to happen a lot in your songs, by the way. Is your love life as bleak as your lyrics indicate?*

FRY: Not quite, not quite, but close to it, yes. But traveling around kind of broadened our outlook. I wanted to do lyrics that reflected what the group had been through, some of the things we were interested in. Why pander to an audience, why resell them what you think they think of you? Why caricature yourself? Here's this chance to get in contact with a vast amount of people, and it doesn't have to be nursery rhymes. I think a lot of modern pop music is designed by adults for these fictitious children; it's like old men's versions of what thrilled them when they were young, force-fed through whole marketing strategies to young people. And young people aren't particularly stupid; they don't enjoy being patronized. So I don't

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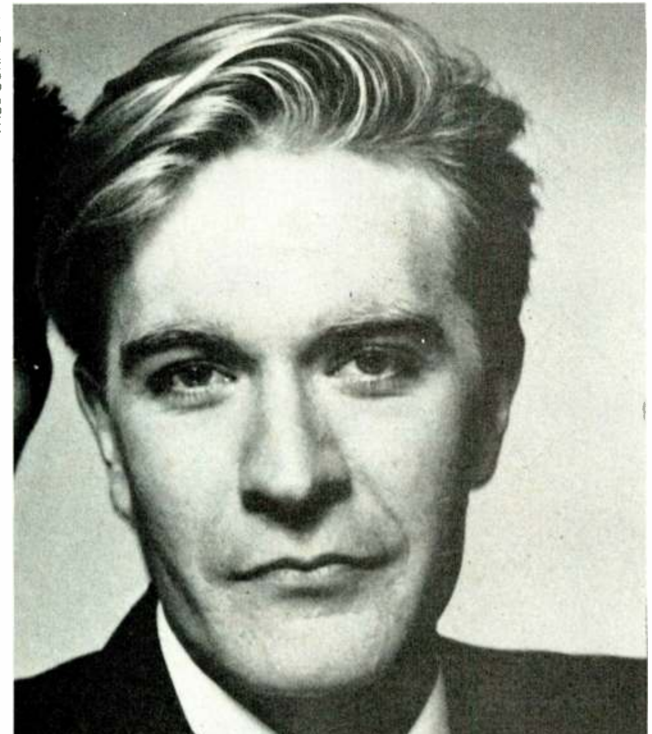
think lyrics should necessarily be mumbo-jumbo.

MUSICIAN: *And yet, a line like "Cock a snoot, loop the loop, hock the hula hoop, but now it yo-yo'd back again" from "The Power Of Persuasion" isn't a strikingly clear way to reach children or adults. It's almost like you're saying, "We know what you* think *we're doing, so we're going to throw a curve."*

PAUL COX/RETNA



Martin Fry considering getting more direct...but not too direct.

FRY: Umm...it sometimes turns out that way, but it's never intended, sort of clever-clever, as such. You *are* allowed to listen to a record more than once. "Power Of Persuasion" is about how the world of advertising can sell you anything from a skateboard to a Prime Minister or President and that you're often persuaded to buy things you don't really want. But there's highs and lows, light and shade; you can't rant for three minutes solid; it sometimes comes over clumsy or you lose the point. But we do move against the grain sometimes.

MUSICIAN: *Still, we're accustomed, after listening to your work, to doubt your sincerity.*

FRY: I used to hear that sometimes, or read it, and I sort realized that in a way I've sacrificed something when we drew attention to the fact that everyone in pop music is an entertainer, from the Gang of Four through to Liberace. We tried to draw attention to the fact that everyone's selling some sort of gimmick, to reduce the mystique surrounding record companies. And in a way, we bit off more than we could chew. We ended up doing a tour with sixteen people that maybe would inspire young people coming to the show to *not* form a group, to say, "How do we aspire to *that*?" So yes, some of the things we've done have sacrificed our credibility.

MUSICIAN: *But even the way you write lyrics; your songs are never what they seem. Take a song like "If I Ever Thought You'd Be Lonely," which sounds like a very romantic song until you catch a line like "If I ever fought the alimony," which makes you realize that it's really more like a peace treaty.*

FRY: A peace treaty...I kind of like that idea. Well, you know, sometimes you do something and you can see what's going to happen next. It's like you meet somebody and think, "You can marry them and then divorce them," the odd sort of sensation you can get. I'm not married, by the way, or divorced. The lyric just came...you travel around and hit a hotel room and switch the TV on and flip the channels and there's anything from a desert to a frozen waste, somebody parachuting out of a plane, and you drift off and think about someone across the ocean you miss very much. That song sort of came up intuitively; these aren't questions you ask yourself when you're writing. Some of the songs are bits glued together, and when the cracks show, it's bad songwriting."

But as for sincerity, you sacrifice that because the lyrics aren't one-dimensional; I *don't* just sing about one thing all the time. People used to accuse Bowie of that, in his plastic soul period, and I used to wonder why. And really, when you look at his stuff, there is this pulse, behind it, throbbing away, this energy that is bigger than any questions about "Did he really think he was Ziggy Stardust or President Joe or whatever." So when people say that now, I'm not particularly bothered. But all our songs and ideas *are* from personal experience, things that happened to you, things that you wanted to happen to you, things that didn't happen to you.

You can only write songs about a vast amount of things if you're willing to tap that. *Some* of our stuff is maybe...it's never repartee, it's never just word play for word play's sake, but....

MUSICIAN: *Even a line like "She's vegetarian except when it comes to sex"?*

FRY: Well, (laughs) when that pops into your head, you have to put it down. Yeah, sometimes I write get-out clauses into things, or say at the end, "All the characters in this work are fictitious and bear no resemblance to anyone in everyday life" or whatever. But I think a lot of people who write songs are liars; they simplify things too much. In daily life, you constantly see things differently. Four weeks later, you've just got a different reply to something.

It was time to spring the big one, the Roxy Factor. What about it, Martin? *Is* ABC merely selling repackaged Roxy to an audience too young for it the first time around?

"No, I think Bryan Ferry's already done that," replies the unabashed Fry. "No, for me, personally, Roxy aren't a big, big influence. But they're a group I respect. It slightly irritates me when people compare us...I imagine it's more irritating to someone like Bryan Ferry to read that. No, I used to like the Clash; they were like *the* group: I bought all their records, the number of times I've seen them is well into double figures. Kraftwerk as well were special to me at one time."

Fry grows more pensive."The other night I was listening to *Never Mind The Bollocks*...by the Sex Pistols and I was thinking...I mean, our stuff is nothing like theirs, but I just admire them and like them. And all the memories came flooding back. I thought there were some records that, if the house went up in flames, I'd rebuy: Patti Smith's *Horses*... what an album! It hasn't become dated. Sly & the Family Stone's *There's A Riot Going On*, I'd rebuy. *What's Goin' On* by Marvin Gaye.... Hello. Do you need this room? Do you want us to leave?"

Several shirtsleeved executives from PolyGram have begun filtering into the conference room. One of them answers good-naturedly, "We're in the process of having a *major meeting*, which you can join if you like...." It is noted that among other things, they'll be discussing the ABC promo budget. "No, I haven't the instincts," demurs Fry politely and springs from the room (later to say farewell in an adjoining office) with the speed and dignity of a large, guilty bear who has just stolen the honeycomb and sees the bees are now after him. Ⓜ

Next month, in part 2 of "New Music Whiplash," Vic Garbarini talks to Mod-on-the-lam, Paul Weller, about his controversial new project, Style Council.

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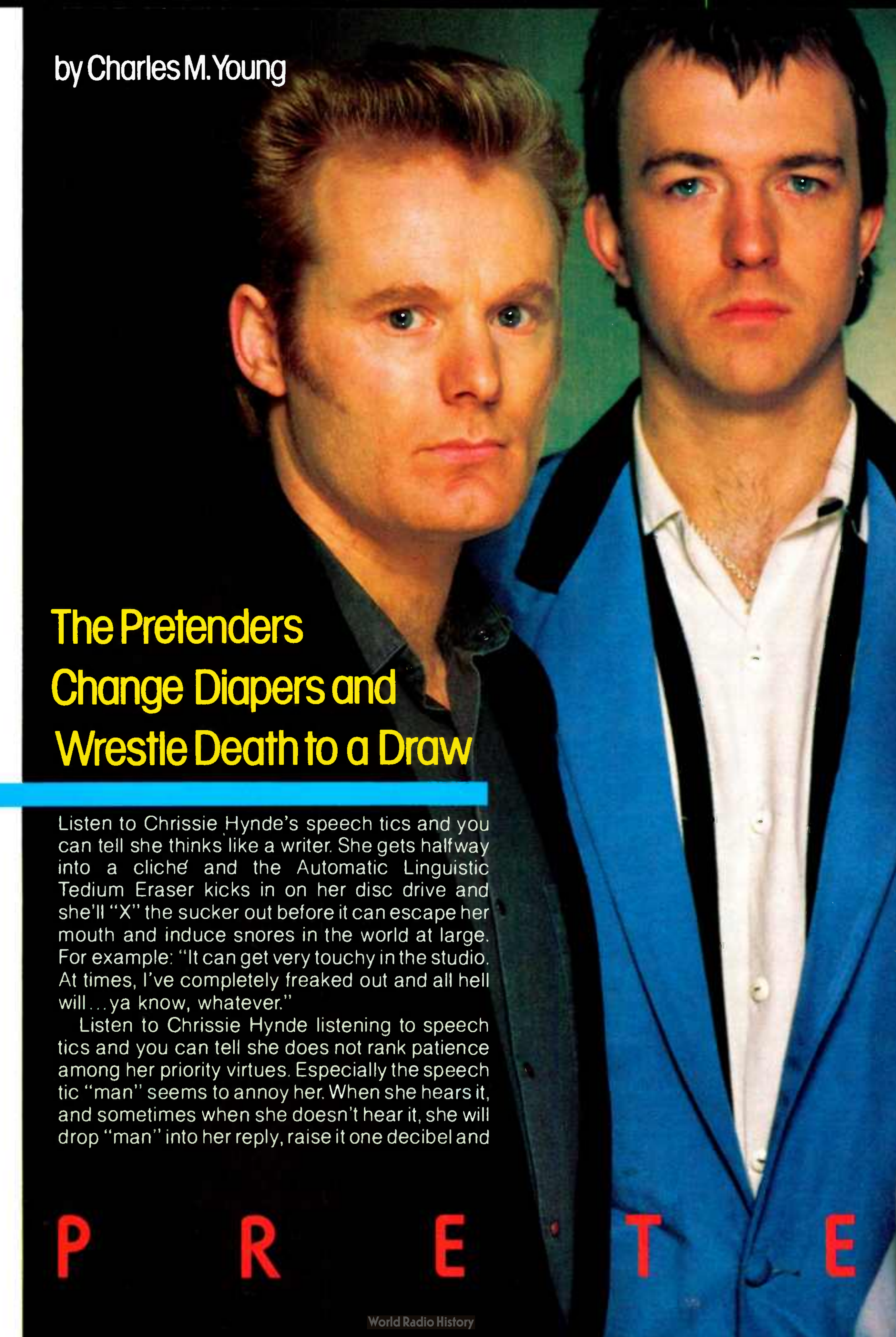
World Radio History

by Charles M. Young

The Pretenders Change Diapers and Wrestle Death to a Draw



Listen to Chrissie Hynde's speech tics and you can tell she thinks like a writer. She gets halfway into a cliché and the Automatic Linguistic Tedium Eraser kicks in on her disc drive and she'll "X" the sucker out before it can escape her mouth and induce snores in the world at large. For example: "It can get very touchy in the studio. At times, I've completely freaked out and all hell will...ya know, whatever."

Listen to Chrissie Hynde listening to speech tics and you can tell she does not rank patience among her priority virtues. Especially the speech tic "man" seems to annoy her. When she hears it, and sometimes when she doesn't hear it, she will drop "man" into her reply, raise it one decibel and

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Photograph by Paul Cox

italicize it with sarcasm so dripping that it will leave dead patches on your lawn. On the other hand, Chrissie Hynde shows a higher tolerance for her own speech tics. Like so many midwesterners, she lays a heavy backbeat into her conversation with "ya know" and provides extra emphasis with "you know." For example: "It's like getting up there and just taking a chance, plunging into the deep end. Ya know, going in head-first. Ya know, going crazy. Ya know, anarchy. So okay, let me drag my empty sack of a body, ya know, up onstage in front of 300,000 people [at the US Festi-

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guitar, pal. Leave it alone. But it was a very sad day, and he'd made me laugh. It was Jim again somehow."

- IV -

Chrissie Hynde is credited in some quarters with being the first "punk chick." She'd as soon leave that laurel off of her resume. It is nonetheless a fact that when she first arrived in London in 1973, seeking fame and fortune and rock 'n' roll, she terrorized the reserved English with her brashness, honesty and binges. She hung out in the early punk scene, worked as a clerk in Malcolm McLaren's boutique Sex, took part in some of McLaren's pre-Pistol projects (the regretably short-lived Masters of the Backside), was friends with Sid Vicious and credits Nancy Spungeon with bolloxing up the first-generation scene by bringing heroin with her from the United States. A few years older than the average punk, Hynde never rejected her more melodic influences from the 60s and worked at refining her voice through several bands that didn't last. By the time she and the three Herefordians coalesced into the Pretenders in 1978, she had little in common with the punks other than being irritated by everything.

Their first album, *Pretenders*, was the surprise success of 1979. Hynde quavered, moaned, belted, crooned, breathed, seduced, shouted and hit all the right notes in a combination that sounded wonderfully new and original but within all the right traditions. (She could also swear better than anyone in the history of recorded music. Check out the line, "But not me, baby, I'm too precious/ So fuck off." The sibilance in the extended "f" carries her right through to the "k" with hardly any "u," setting up a thrilling epiglottal syllable division that explodes into the final "f" sibilance. Fearful symmetry, they call it.) The album also revealed James Honeyman-Scott as a guitar hero of the first order, if overshadowed by Hynde. The guy was almost too versatile for his own good. He could soar with Eddie Van Halen, get low down with T-Rex, slop and throb with Keith Richards, jangle with the Searchers, and what else is there? (Well, there is "widdly-woo," Honeyman-Scott's term for long masturbatory solos. He didn't do any of them.) And the rhythm section of Martin Chambers and Pete Farndon took some truly eccentric riffs and time signatures (7/4 on "Tattooed Love Boys," 5/4 on "The Phone Call") and made them flow like a runaway raft on the Colorado.

The Pretenders had something for everyone. Critics explicated Hynde's profanity. Musicologists ate the weird time signatures off a stick (Hynde didn't even know she'd written them until Chambers counted out the songs). FM programmers hooked millions of listeners on the unforgettable melodies. Rock 'n' roll fans thanked God it wasn't more disco crap. Concert goers could watch Hynde glare from under her bangs, Honeyman-Scott be cute and animated, Farndon be distant and handsome and Chambers pour water on his floor toms, causing a rainbow splash into the colored lights everytime he played a fill.

Most of all, journalists loved Chrissie Hynde. The woman was a walking quote machine. "For every act of sodomy I was forced to perform [while hitchhiking], I got £10,000 to show for it now," she told Kurt Loder in *Rolling Stone*. With a little courage from the bottle, she would attack customs officials, assault cops, kick her manager in the balls. It was the stuff of legends.

"I'm just Chrissie Hynde from Akron, Ohio, ex-cocktail waitress," she now says. "I'm a female Bobo Belinsky. Remember Bobo Belinsky sitting in his armchair? He was my favorite R. Crumb cartoon. It was twelve frames and each one showed him doing nothing from a different angle. One from the ceiling. One from behind his head. One from his boots. And the caption was, 'Believe me, he's no big deal.' That's me. Not some mythical rock 'n' roll goddess."

An EP, *Extended Play*, followed in 1981 and was criticized by previously ga-ga reviewers for not being an album. When the album *Pretenders II* arrived later the same year, it was criticized for not being *Pretenders I*. Play both records back to back in 1984 and they sound almost equally good. *Pretenders II* wasn't a revelation, but what band has ever produced two revelations in a row? It had as many good songs, maybe more, as the first album. Listen to "Message Of Love" again and see if the phrase "like Brigitte Bardot" doesn't make you feel happy for a week. Or, if you want to feel rotten for a week, identify with the subject of "Pack It Up": "And furthermore, I don't like your trousers/ Or your taste in women/ And what about your mind/ And your insipid record collection." *No* one else can sing like that.

"I don't see me as so original," says Hynde. "If I gave you all the albums I'd listened to for the last fifteen years, it would be pretty damned obvious. It's very derivative, anything that a kid sitting in Akron, Ohio, with a transistor radio could pick up on."

Yeah, well, Loverboy is a product of those influences too, and....

"I don't know who that is."

They're boring.

"Then why should I listen to them?"

Everybody's a product of their influences....

"My influences were probably hipper than Loverboy's. I saw Sam the Sham & the Pharoahs onstage. I saw Jackie Wilson. I saw the Yardbirds. I saw the Rolling Stones with Brian Jones. I saw Dennis Wilson throw his drumsticks in the air and storm offstage in disgust. I saw Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels have a fistfight onstage. I was fourteen and it freaked me out, so I stayed around for the second show and they had the same fistfight again and I realized they had faked the whole thing. How could I possibly go wrong with influences like that?"

Ten thousand clone bands had those influences too.

"Well, you have to learn how to sing, don't you? When I was sitting in Cleveland, starting to sing with a band, I'd go in the closet when everyone else left for their jobs and sing at the top

Hynde, Martin Chambers and Robbie McIntosh fire it up.

EBET ROBERTS

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of my lungs just to hear what the possibilities were. You can sit in an audience for years and imagine how you might sing, but you don't know until you try. One of the hard things to get over for a lot of people is learning to appreciate their own strong points. Like a girl with a weak chin always admires a girl with a big boxy chin. You always admire what you don't have. I could imitate Janis Joplin, but I sure didn't know what I had. The thing to do is just accept what you're best at. Don't try to do what you like in someone else unless it comes natural to you."

Was there a point where she came to admire what she had in herself?

"No."

She still doesn't admire what she has?

"No. I just try to do what comes naturally to me."

- V -

Robbie McIntosh is the Pretenders' new guitarist. He used to play with the Foster Brothers, Chris Thompson (once of Manfred Mann) & the Islands, Night (their "Hot Summer Nights" got to #17 in the States) and Dean Martin's Dog. He joined the Pretenders at the behest of his friend Honeyman-Scott, who in yet another odd coincidence called the night before he died to say the band needed another musician for the stage show and would McIntosh be interested?

"It was weird joining a band that was already successful," he says. "I didn't feel I should copy anything that Jimmy did, but his playing is such a part of the songs that it's unavoidable. People ask if I feel silly doing it, but not at all. I think it's sort of a tribute. And of course I have the new material for myself."

Most memorable McIntosh quote, upon hearing Hynde repeat Ozzie Ozbourne's remark that biting the head off a bat was like eating a Crunchie (an English candy bar) through a chamois: "I know just what he means. I ate a Crunchie through a chamois the other day, and it tasted just like the head of a bat."

Malcolm Foster is the Pretenders' new bassist. He knows McIntosh from when they went to the same high school and when they played together in the Foster Brothers, led by Malcolm's older brother Graham. He used to play rugby and remains a muscular chap through karate and judo. He is grateful to have been laid off his job as a construction estimator or he might not now be a Pretender. The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of this play, he will be the only band member on the upcoming tour without a small baby (McIntosh's wife, like Chambers', is pregnant). "I'll find solace somewhere," he promises.

Most memorable Foster quote: "I'd read all those things about the wild lady of rock 'n' roll. When I met her, she was already pregnant and I think that changed her a lot. I don't think there's much of the old Chrissie Hynde, the terror, left."

The sort-of fifth Pretender is Chris Thomas, who has produced all their work except the Nick Lowe-produced first single, "Stop Your Sobbing." Only McIntosh has any extensive experience working with another producer, Richard Perry.

"They're both top-class producers," says McIntosh. "But Perry is much less personable. He sort of shows up with his chauffeur and sits there and says, 'Make that sound different.' I never got to know him as a person. Chris is much more hardworking. He really knows the studio and spends a lot of time pushing buttons and moving microphones. Chris is so un-big-time, it's ridiculous. Chrissie takes the piss out of him if he just wears a leather jacket."

"I don't know how other people work," says Hynde, "but we have a very straight-forward, methodical, obvious way of working. We go in and put down the backing track. We'll do five or six if we have to, then we'll sit down and listen to them and decide that number four and number six are best because of the great drumfill on six. Then we'll do an edit. Then we mend anything that needs it. Then we'll put in the guitar solos. When there's enough for me to work with, I'll do the vocal. I might leave it to the very end, or I might do it early on so the rest of the band can work around it. Whatever's going on, everybody's gotta be there. You can't say, 'Well, I've done my bass line. See you next Thursday when we do the next track.' That would be unheard of in the Pretenders. If someone has a suggestion at any point, we want to hear it. That's why the album is very much a band product at the end."

'I DO THINK ABOUT DEATH *ALL* THE TIME. NOT LIKE I'M AFRAID OF HER, BUT AS A REALITY.'

The new band product, the third Pretenders album, the first with the new lineup, is *Learning To Crawl*. Thematically, most of the record is about pain: the vengeful pain in relationships ("I Hurt You," "Thin Line"), the nostalgic pain of loss ("My City Was Gone"), the contemptuous pain of knowing an asshole ("Time The Avenger"), and the nightmare pain of watching life crush a friend ("Back On The Chain Gang"). It's about getting out there and mixing it up with the world ("Middle Of The Road"). It's about the unstoppable Sherman tank called maternal love ("Thumbelina," "Show Me"). And finally it's about washing clothes on Saturday night when everyone else is having fun ("Watching Clothes").

Musically, *Learning To Crawl* sounds remarkably like the old Pretenders. McIntosh has many of the same influences as Honeyman-Scott and seems equally at home with straight ahead rock 'n' roll, R&B, or even the early Johnny Cash riffs in "Thumbelina." The band's reason to exist has always been Hynde's songwriting, of course, and that has remained constant.

"I'll just come in with the basic chords and the lyrics—not even that sometimes—and say, 'More of this, more of that,'" says Hynde of her creative process. "Okay, it starts out with the bass: buh duh dunt don. And then the drums: dah duh dah buh duh duh dah. And then the bass again: duh duh dump duh duh dum ding ding chingk. Duh duh dah dum duh dah dah. Dodododododododunt. And then the guitar: dah duh duh day. Bass again: dunt dunt dunt. I don't know why we even bother to play instruments. I'll just stand there like a loony and sing all the parts."

How would that process translate into something like the new single, "Middle Of The Road"?

"Well, it's very basic chords, isn't it?" says Hynde. "It's almost like a regular R&B song. It's like taking a basic format, like the blues, and just giving it new lyrics.... The Stones could never get me for plagiarism, 'cause they've been the worst at that. But you know the song "Empty Heart" that they used to do? Well, to me this song is the same meat, different gravy. Because I used to play that song with the band and after we'd been doing 'Middle Of The Road' for a while, I realized it was the same chords. So it's a very standard format. And there's not much of a melody to it. It does have a nifty guitar solo It's just me sort of trying to sing rock 'n' roll."

- VI -

Peggy Sue Fender Honeyman-Scott met James Honeyman-Scott backstage at the Armadillo World Headquarters on April 10, 1980. It was her third day back in Austin after a couple of years in California where she'd been going to college and modeling. She thought he was strange, particularly when a local journalist wanted to know if they were an item. Honeyman-Scott replied that they were engaged to be married, this after knowing her all of a few minutes. It seem to be one joke among many that night, but he would say later that somehow

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'I'D GO IN THE CLOSET AND SING AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS, JUST TO HEAR THE POSSIBILITIES.'

he did know they would be married. And they were, exactly a year later.

"He didn't do a lot of drugs," says Peggy Sue from her boutique, Dressed To Kill, in Dallas. "Everyone goes through a phase like that. He was no worse than anybody else. He was just born with a weak liver. It's just so unfair. So unfair. After a couple of beers, he would turn yellow. Not so you'd notice, but I did, because I was with him all the time. I'd go on tour with him just to help to keep him off drink. You know how the English drink. He loved that 'mate' thing, having a pint with his friends, and it was terribly frustrating to him not to be able to do it."

After much soul-searching, she chose the following for his gravestone: "Put love into this world, and heaven with all its beatitudes and all its glory becomes a reality. Love is everything. It is the key to life, and its influences are those that move the world."

"That was Jimmy," says Peggy Sue. "He put so much love into the world. I also had a Firebird 7 engraved on the stone. It was the one guitar he still wanted and didn't have. It was my final present to him."

Did she know Martin Chambers had apparently experienced a visitation on Jimmy's birthday?

"No, I haven't talked with Martin for a while. It's difficult for me to see him because they were so similar. But that would be just like Jimmy, throwing a little tantrum because nobody was paying attention to him on his birthday."

Had she any similar experiences?

Peggy Sue pauses for a deep breath. "I don't know if I should tell you this. People will think I'm nuts. But, okay. I was sitting in my living room with my girlfriend one night about a month after he died. I walked into the bathroom and in the hall I suddenly felt someone behind me. I turned around and looked down for some reason. His feet were there. Not physically, but spirit feet somehow. It sounds weird, but I loved his feet. They were really cute feet. Then I went to the bathroom and I thought, 'Oh, my God, he's watching.'

"For months afterward, I would scream and cry and tell him, or God, how much I missed him. Then one night I couldn't bear it any longer. My heart was burned out. I begged him to put me to sleep. I asked him to knock me out, and the next thing I knew it was morning. That sounds crazy, but unless you've experienced it, you don't know. But I knew it was him. And he's with me now." Peggy Sue stops for a beat. "Can you hear that over the phone? The Pretenders just came on the radio."

- **VII** -

Chrissie Hynde stuffs a forkful of mixed vegetables into her mouth (she hasn't eaten meat for years) in the cafeteria of Radio Television Belgium where she is awaiting yet another lip-synch taping of "2000 Miles." "You wanted to know before if I missed America, right?" she asks, sticking out her tongue with the wad of half-chewed vegetables, drawing groans from several grossed-out Europeans in the vicinity. "How can I miss America when I am America?"

Well satisfied with herself, Hynde decides to expostulate on the current state of music. "I think next year is going to be the year of the song. I've been hearing a lot of riffs lately, but no great songs. Know what I mean? We've made some great records, but I haven't written any really complete, great songs. They'll have to start writing songs again, just so Dean Martin can cover some material other than 'Something.' We gotta give the old folks some new songs. I was gonna write a letter to Frank Sinatra with a list of Kinks songs he ought to cover."

Hynde launches into an enthusiastic Sinatra-interpretation of "Sunny Afternoon," "Don't Ever Change" and "When I Go To Sleep."

"*Frank Sings Ray*. Be a great album, huh? Ray actually wrote a song for Sinatra once: 'Thanks but no thanks/ Just call me Frank/ 'Cause I mean what I say.' But that's as far as he got. I hope he finishes it."

Exactly what Hynde's relationship is to Ray Davies, leader of the Kinks, has been a matter of much speculation over the years. He is the father of their baby (BRAND NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST) but is not her husband. Reading past interviews with both, one would think they sit around reinforcing each other's depression.

"I was depressed before I met Ray."

But Ray doesn't seem able to believe anything good about himself after twenty years as a rock 'n roll star.

"Yeah. Ray is *really* depressed."

So does the baby have your personality or Ray's?

"This is it. She was born with her *own* personality. She's as happy as a lark, for a start, so she's got nothing to do with either of us."

Ray does his fair share of taking care of her?

"Hmmmmmmm."

You do most of the diaper changing?

"Oh, yeah."

Is he thrilled with the baby as you are?

"He loves her. Well, she is a pretty neat kid. And I have to love her. I can't take her back now, can I? If I didn't like her, I'd really be in the shit." Hynde fishes through her handbag for a snapshot of a beautiful, grinning baby. "How can you not be thrilled to see that thing? I want her to grow up to be Bobo Belinsky, too." ■

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Malcolm Foster (2nd from left) joins Pretender democracy.

Pretender Extenders

Chrissie Hynde plays a Fender Telecaster through a Fender Twin. "All I know is switching it on and off and whether it's too loud," she says. "That comes from the days when, if I was tuning up, the guy guitarist would come over and do it for me, just because he was the guy, and I would do something else. As a result, my guitar sounds like shit much of the time."

Robbie McIntosh is also a Fender fan, playing his Telecaster and Stratocaster through a new Marshall "modified by a guy named Pete Cornish to sound like an old Marshall." He has tried other pickups but always returns to the originals. "If it isn't Fender, it doesn't jangle enough."

Malcolm Foster plays a bass custom-made by Roger Griffin with parametric controls ("like having the amp controls on your guitar"). His amp is Ampeg, his strings are Guild, and he has an abalone shell goat inlaid in the neck in honor of his astrology sign Capricorn.

Martin Chambers, one of the heaviest hitters around, just got a new drum kit from Sonor. "They're a German company, so you play them once and you feel like you're invading Poland," he explains. "You can beat hell out of them and they'll stand up to it. They're going to be completely white, even the cymbals and fittings, so it looks like one big molded piece of plastic, like the world in 1984."
— cmy

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The Luminous Heart of a Dark Horse

Nineteen fifty-four was a year of shots heard, and felt, around the world. In March, five U.S. Congressmen were wounded in the main room of the House by gunshots fired from the spectator's gallery by Puerto Rican nationalists. In July, the Vietminh defeated the French at Dienbienphu, and both sides withdrew to either side of the newly created Demilitarized Zone that divided North and South Vietnam. That November, Dr. Jonas Salk began innoculating children against polio.

On Christmas Day in Houston, Texas, Memphis-born rhythm & blues singer John Marshall Alexander, Jr., a.k.a. Johnny Ace, twenty-five-year-old former piano player in B.B. King's first tour band and a hit vocalist with the single "Please Forgive Me," died of a bullet wound to the head that he'd suffered the previous evening while in his dressing room at the City Auditorium.

Half a country away, twelve-year-old Paul Simon was in his upstairs bedroom in his two-story brick home on 70th Road in the Kew Garden Hills section of Queens, New York, contemplating the New York Yankees and Michigan State football pennants tacked to the plaid wallpaper, when the radio announcer came on to say, "I hate to break it to his fans, but Johnny Ace is dead...."

by Timothy White

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Photograph by William Coupon

SIMON

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The report saddened and intrigued Simon, who was largely dividing his free time between baseball and music. He was a star player in the Queens' Five-Foot softball league, a devout Yankee fan and a formidable stickball batter in the Spauldeen pickup games in the playground of P.S. 165. He and Artie Garfunkel, buddies since they'd met back in nearby P.S. 164, had recently made their singing debut as a duo, crooning an *a cappella* version of the Chords' current smash single, "Sh-Boom." Listening to the tale of Johnny Ace's demise, Paul resolved to find out more about the late singer, just as he had resolved to press his father for a guitar on his next birthday.

In 1955, Paul's second resolution was rewarded with a $25 Stadium acoustic. A year later, he wrote his first song with Artie, "The Girl For Me": "The girl for me is standing there/ That's the one, flowers in her hair...." They got the song copyrighted, sending the requisite four-dollar fee to the Library of Congress along with the registration form. Soon afterward, they took the stage names of Tom Graph (because Art liked to chart the progress of the latest hits on graph paper) and Jerry Landis (Paul's steady girl being Sue Landis)—or Tom & Jerry for short. On Saturdays they'd hang around the legendary Brill Building in Manhattan, home of numerous music publishing firms and their staff writers, who were continuously cranking out songs for tiny labels and hoping to snare the attention of majors like Atlantic, RCA and Columbia.

In the winter of 1957, Tom & Jerry landed a deal with one of the Brill Building minors and found themselves welcome in the same corridors then crammed with other untried writers whose pimples far outnumbered their published material: Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, Bobby Darin, Neil Sedaka, Howard Greenfield, Neil Diamond, Gerry Goffin and one Carole Klein—better known, one fine day, as Carole King. Tom & Jerry would issue a number of sides from the Brill Building but only one would click—"Hey! Schoolgirl"—which sold 120,000 copies, remaining in *Billboard*'s top hundred for nine weeks. Paul Simon was sixteen.

Both his mother, Belle, a grammar school teacher, and father, Louis, then an itinerant bass player who played with studio orchestras on the Arthur Godfrey, Garry Moore and Jackie Gleason shows, encouraged Paul's musical ambitions, but Tom & Jerry would never repeat their initial success. Focusing again on baseball, Paul stole home in the eleventh inning of a Forest Hills High baseball game—"One of the greatest moments of my life," he still insists unabashedly.

Moving on to Queens College, he tried penning a couple of pop tunes with math major Carole Klein but there were little results beyond mounting disillusionment. One day in 1963, the radio *and* television informed him that "John Fitzgerald Kennedy is dead...." Sick at heart, Paul decided he was leaving the country for a while, but before he split, he and Artie cut a demo session (of originals and folk fare like "The Times They Are A-Changin'") for Columbia that turned into a (flop) album, *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.* But one of the tracks, "The Sounds Of Silence," began to catch on regionally.

Meanwhile Simon departed for Europe, busking in France and Spain, sleeping in hostels or under bridges, repairing his spirit. It would suffer another grievous blow when he learned, while in Paris, that a Queens College classmate, Alan Goodman, was one of three civil rights workers found slain in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Settling down in London during the ascension of the Beatles, Paul was becoming something of a staple on the British folk scene when still more unexpected news arrived from home: "The Sounds Of Silence" had hit the American top twenty in December of 1965. He returned to the States to cut a second Columbia album with Garfunkel called *Sounds Of Silence*, much of its material culled from his own CBS solo LP in England, *The Paul Simon Songbook*.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 70s, Simon & Garfunkel would haunt the airwaves on both sides of the Atlantic. "Homeward Bound," "I Am A Rock," "Mrs. Robinson," "The Boxer," "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "El Condor Pasa" were among their chart successes, and 1968's *Bookends* was their album masterwork. The breakup of the duo, precipitated in part by Garfunkel's mounting interest in film acting (*Catch-22, Carnal Knowledge*), came on the eve of the completion of their 1970 *Bridge Over Troubled Water* LP.

Bitter, Paul went on alone—seemingly *very* alone at first—and his 1972 solo effort, *Paul Simon*, was a bleak by-product of his dark mood, with tracks like "Paranoid Blues," "Everything Put Together Falls Apart," and the anti-drug soliloquy, "Run That Body Down." The two rays of light seeping into that coal cellar of an album were "Mother And Child Reunion," a reggae romp named after a chicken and eggs dish on a Chinese restaurant menu, and the catty urban cartoon, "Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard."

As subsequent Paul Simon albums began to appear, their power and solidity, their sense of artistic completeness, grew downright startling, the multi-hued grace of *There Goes Rhymin' Simon* (1972) and *Live Rhymin'* (1974) giving way in 1975 to the grim-but-game classicism of *Still Crazy After All These Years*. A chronicle of the slow-drip dissolution of his marriage to Peggy Harper (which produced a son, Harper James Simon) and the steeling of his burgeoning new self-awareness, *Still Crazy* was one of the most absorbing pop records of the decade.

The grit and grist of rock 'n' roll's answer to Gershwin would fail to jell into something greater on *One-Trick Pony* (1980), the soundtrack to Simon's first screenplay. He now describes both the movie and the record as "how things could have gone in my life and my career if I hadn't grown up artistically and personally." A look at a fading gig-aholic groping through his last luckless hurrah, it produced two inspired tracks, "Late In The Evening" and "One-Trick Pony." The rest might have sounded exceptional coming from a tempered novice riding on Simon's coattails, but it simply didn't rise above the singular new standards of the man himself.

The lukewarm reception for *One-Trick Pony* apparently prompted a reassessment by Simon of his artistic imperatives, as well as the way his fans perceive his work. Enormously candid about his own highly commercial output over the last decade, he feels his own hit singles were often throwaway material, having little of the mettle and sinew of the songs he is capable of writing during the 1980s. Of the material collected in 1977 on his *Greatest Hits, Etc.* album, he says that "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover" was "just a fluke hit that I slipped into by accident," asserts that he's "tired" of "Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard," discounts both the anthem-like "American Tune" ("That's a Bach melody and it turned out to be a song that people like a lot, but it's not my favorite; I never felt attached to it") and "Mother And Child Reunion" ("Not particularly great early reggae"), professes mild affection for "Kodachrome," and discards "Stranded In A Limousine" altogether. The tracks on the album that he still thinks highly of include "Still Crazy After All These Years," "Have A Good Time," "Duncan," "Slip Slidin' Away," "Something So Right," "Loves Me Like A Rock," and especially "I Do It For Your Love"—"It's amongst my best songs, but it's not often thought of." Indeed, most of the material of the recent past that Simon is proudest of consists of complex, nuance-laden ballads that require more than casual listening but absorb the attentive with their trenchancy.

Now, in the last gray days of 1983, the darkest horse on a course crowded with promising comebacks (Dylan, Stones, Stevie Wonder) or rapidly developing new talents (Culture Club, John Cougar) scores one of the most resounding personal victories of his career with *Hearts And Bones*, an open-ended epistle whose eloquent stock-taking starts out unilateral and winds up passionately, poignantly universal. The little boy assesses the man, the man measures the boy, the two embrace the distance in between and merge, all of it accomplished with mettle, humor, intelligence.

This interview took place on an overcast day in early winter,

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in Simon's expansive designer offices (a low-tech cross between a quasi-Medieval rectory and a modern executive's trophy den) located high in the Brill Building; while most of the music publishing world has moved on, Art Garfunkel and James Taylor also maintain offices on the premises, as do leading video and film figures such as Lorne Michaels and Francis Ford Coppolla. Dressed in cord jeans, sweatshirt and tweed jacket, Simon strode in briskly, mentioning that he had just come from Parent's Day at his son's school, and then chatting with considerable enthusiasm about some tapes of West African music he had just received from KCRW disc jockey/archivist Roger Steffens.

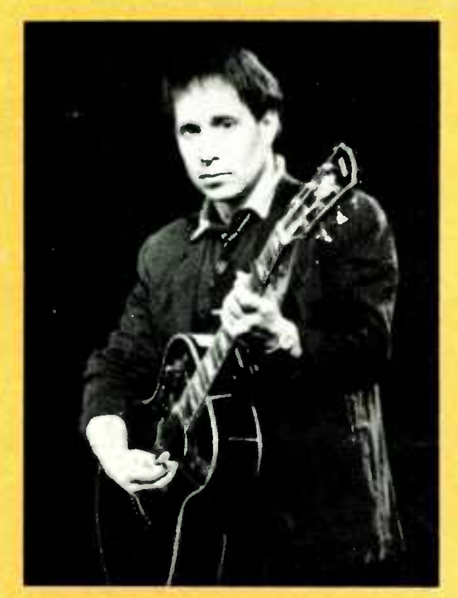
Imposing despite his short stature, Simon is a well-built man with delicate gestures that complement his soft, sonorous voice. Shy, almost diffident at first, he chose his words carefully, as if each were a potential asset or nettlesome liability. A quarter of the way into our conversation, the sun suddenly sprang through leaden clouds and he immediately rose from his chair, leaving the room in mid-sentence and without explanation. Seconds later, Simon returned clutching a large color photograph, fresh from the developer, of handsome young Harper James, dressed in punk regalia and striking a suitably aggressive pose with his electric guitar.

"This is my boy," he said with a generous smile and a fierce pride. "This is my son, a rock 'n' roll kid."

For the rest of the afternoon, Simon's mood was buoyant, garrulous, yet increasingly reflective.

MUSICIAN: *After a period of relative quiet in terms of your solo career, many people are now saying that Paul Simon has finally outdone himself again with* Hearts And Bones. *Does Paul Simon see it that way?*

SIMON: As a cohesive collection of songs, I think it's probably the best work I've yet done, and people who know me well know how unusual it is for me to say something like that. I'm proud of the fact that I've learned my craft, and that I continue to improve, but this late stuff didn't just pour out of me, since I haven't released an album since *One-Trick Pony* in 1980.


ALAN KLEINBERG

"The point is to open up my heart."

If I work steadily, it usually takes me about two and a half months per song, but some have taken years, like "The Late Great Johnny Ace." Each song on any of my albums has a different problem to be solved, and I always solve them, more or less—usually less. This record has songs that have a pretty high solution level, though I still could quibble. A few of them are well-realized pieces, ultimately being pretty satisfying structurally, especially "The Late Great Johnny Ace."

I had the title of that song for a long time but I didn't connect it with that melody—actually I had it with another. I was going to write it as a play about Johnny Ace and John Kennedy. Then Lennon died in December of 1980, and I wrote the basic song the following summer; he became the third character. Lorne Michaels suggested I write it as a song to see if I could say, in a condensed form, everything I wanted to about violence and the degree to which we have become inured to, or anesthetized by it.

When I first wrote "Johnny Ace," it was *not* a pop music melody, and I conceived of it as a duet. I even have some lyrics based on a two-voice song that's in an ambiguous key—which is an occasional element of my work. You don't really feel a sense of key in "Johnny" until you get to the bridge. Up till then it kind of skirts around the key. It goes back and forth from a B flat major 7th with an E in it, to an E 7th, but essentially its key is D. I wrote it on guitar. I've only written one song on piano in my life, "Nobody," on the *One-Trick Pony* album.

I've seen "Johnny Ace" described everywhere as a tribute to John Lennon. I don't mind, because any tribute to John Lennon is okay with me, but that's not what I wrote it as. It was to be a three-decade look at people dying by gunshots: Johnny Ace killed himself, John Kennedy and John Lennon were murdered.

MUSICIAN: *The Johnny Ace story is a strange one, with many versions. I've repeatedly heard one (perhaps apocryphal) account of his demise in which the fatal gunshot was not self-inflicted—as is commonly reported—while playing Russian roulette in a backstage incident.*

SIMON: I believe I may have heard that other version also. But in either case, my song tells in almost prose-like terms how I remember hearing about Johnny Ace on the radio. Proportionally, I spent a longer period of time talking about Johnny Ace's death than Kennedy or Lennon, because at the time—when I was twelve or thirteen years old—it had a tremendous impact on me. I was in my bedroom in Queens and I think it was Alan Freed on the radio. I later had [the posthumously-released] "Pledging My Love," which was on Duke Records.

Duke Records had a very odd-looking label, maroon and gold, and a strange name; all of the labels of the 50s seemed so exotic to me! Imperial was a blue label with black letters, Atlantic was a red label with black letters, Aladdin had the little lamp on it—Old Town, Baton, all the little tiny companies that had such a *presence*. They had a kind of life to them that Mercury and Columbia and Capitol didn't. But then that's the age when things have such a great effect on you. From eleven to fifteen, I was very sensitized, and those memories are still very strong.

MUSICIAN: *That's an age when innocence peaks. Something as commonplace as a radio report can be the first instance in which the world reaches out and grabs you with a poignant detail, suddenly making you realize that you're a participant.*

SIMON: (nodding) There's a short story by M.F.K. Fisher that I read once, I think it's in a book called *Sister Age*, that had a certain epiphany, a major loss of innocence in which the young character sees someone crying and immediately understands—*knows*—he'll never have the feeling that "everything is fine" again.

Boy, I was very upset, thinking back, about Lenny Bruce's death. *Really* upset. I remember that Artie and I had to do a show and I was crying. By the time I'd heard about Lennon's death, it was very, very shocking, but we'd already had those three major assassinations in the 60s—the two Kennedys and Dr. King.

MUSICIAN: *There's an image in "Think Too Much (b)" of a father embracing his son, telling him, "There's not much more that you can do, go on and get some rest." It's such a vivid, powerful couplet. Being a father yourself, do you think a lot about the power of parental love? A number of times in songs you've written there is that image of a paternal figure embracing his child, or coming a great distance to see his son.*

SIMON: Yes, and the second image is in "Slip Slidin' Away." I was thinking about my father in "Think Too Much (b)." He'd had open heart surgery about a year and a half ago, and that's the "chest" he held me to. It's like a protective thing, saying,

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"Watch out for your heart, conserve your life forces."

When I write I try to begin all my serious songs with some statement that is true. Meaning something true personally in my life, either something that actually happened or something that I really feel. Because I think if I can deal with something that is personally true, then it's easier to go from that to a universal feeling. Generalizations don't have as much kick, as much gun powder. If you're talking about yourself and are able to distance it just slightly, then somehow it seems to transcend.

MUSICIAN: *What then, would be the underlying point in your work?*

SIMON: (long pause) The point is to open up my heart. The point is to find the root to my heart, and that's hard because we protect ourselves. A *lot*. Very often it's embarrassing to actually say what you feel. We mostly know how we're supposed to feel; we know how we wished we felt; and we know feelings we admire.

MUSICIAN: *People confuse sincerity and honesty a lot in their lives.*

SIMON: Sincerity having to do with intentions, and honesty having to do with reporting. I think that's a good observation. It's a great skill to be a good reporter of your own life, and not to editorialize to make the point. Just laying out the facts tells more.

MUSICIAN: *The amazing array of gifted musicians who've contributed to your records, from Urubamba and the Dixie Hummingbirds to jazz harmonica player Toots Thielemans, never sound like grandstanders or hired guns. How, for instance, did you come to have Al DiMeola play that incredibly terse and articulate lead on "Allergies"?*

SIMON: I had wanted to do two songs with Al, "Rene And Georgette Magritte" and the solo on "Allergies." We spent almost two days on "Magritte" and we never got anywhere on it, and I ended up playing the guitar on it myself. I think he felt a little bad, but there was no reason because I just hadn't puzzled out what to do and was still searching. I called him back to do "Allergies," and when he asked what I wanted, I said, "Play *anything* that interests you." He felt very free and eighty-five percent of what's there he had by his third take. Then he took another two days to finish the remaining fifteen percent. It was *great* to watch him work, modifying slightly, changing his tone.

MUSICIAN: *The mutual respect that's apparently engendered in these sessions translates into unusually rich recordmaking, with classical textures and tonalities. Compositionally, everyone merges wonderfully into the whole.*

SIMON: I do two things with that: one, I take advantage of the privilege of my position so that I get a chance to work and play with people whose chops I admire. The second aspect of it is when I think, "What would I love *here*?" On this record, I played three songs on demo tapes for Philip Glass and asked if he would like to contribute anything and he picked "Johnny Ace." I also found him a valuable guy to bounce off, asking him orchestral questions.

With the use of the Harptones on "Magritte," I had originally wanted to get the Moonglows, because their name was in the song, but I couldn't. All of the names of the groups that I picked had a surreal overtone—Penguins, Orioles, Five Satins—so if you didn't know that these were groups, they would just be interesting images. After ultimately using the Harptones, I excluded their name from the lyric for that reason.

ALAN KLEINBERG

Simon relives stealing home in the 11th.

MUSICIAN: *Did you know from the start that you would use their vocals on that song in such a spectral way?*

SIMON: No, and they came in with the idea of singing the titles of the old songs on the track. There's something about their quality as a group that sounds like a time warp, so it wasn't hard to place them that way on the record.

MUSICIAN: *What does the song say to you? What were you hoping to evoke?*

SIMON: It is an evocation more than a definition, meaning that I didn't make any linear connections—I made emotional connections. In order to keep the surrealistic quality, I didn't apply a logic to it. The only linear thinking in it is the aging and the corruption that happens at the end of the song. Otherwise I put the images together in a way that would be entertaining.

Several of the reviews have them dancing naked in the song. That's funny; in my mind, I never thought of them dancing naked. I see why: the songs says, "Easily losing their evening clothes," so the critics thought they took all their clothes off, not that it matters. I envisioned them dropping elements of their clothing, like a dinner jacket or a wrap—elegance that we don't have today.

MUSICIAN: *The acts of dancing and remembrance seemed to connote a moment of ultimate intimacy and bonding in the non-sexual sense.*

SIMON: There's a whole element of privacy that goes on in the song. You're in the room after they lock the door, and in the last verse they do an act that's really an invasion of privacy, going into the bedrooms of their guests to look in their bureau drawers. That's something really intimate, investigating someone's bedroom while they don't know it. And then you see them asleep, their clothes intertwined. There is a certain intimacy in all of the scenes.

MUSICIAN: *Do you see yourself as thinking too much? You wrote two songs about it.*

SIMON: (smiling) That's right. Sometimes I do. The thinking too much is really not thinking enough. It's when you haven't understood something that you're obsessed by it. If you get some sort of clarity of vision you don't have to think that much about it, but until you have that you go over things again and again. As for the two songs, yes, it's a comment on the title, a good joke. One is light and the other is stream of consciousness.

MUSICIAN: *After roughly half a dozen solo albums, how do you feel about your own voice? Are you comfortable with its capabilities and its limitations?*

SIMON: Technically, uptempo songs can be hard for me. The reedy quality in my voice comes out when I have to sing forcefully; I wish I had a gravelly, pounding voice but I don't. My range is fine, and it'll accommodate any melody that I write, but it's when I stay in the middle of my range that I get the quality I like.

MUSICIAN: *Besides carefully choosing your collaborators, you're also very attentive about the rhythms that will propel your songs. I've always wondered where you got the frenetic rhythm for "Late In The Evening" on the* One-Trick Pony *LP.*

SIMON: That's Steve Gadd playing drums with four sticks at once, two in each hand. Steve likes Latin feels and so do I, so a lot of my uptempo songs have them. "Late In The Evening" I wrote after I cut the rhythm track. That's one of those songs that I made in the studio.

MUSICIAN: *I always liked "Peace Like A River," on your debut solo album,* Paul Simon; *the lyric was so gripping....*

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SIMON: It was also the last time I played good guitar, before I hurt my hand. I'm ambidextrous and play all sports left-handed, but I play guitar right-handed. At the time I was playing a lot of racquet sports, and the racquet and the guitar were both falling against the same joint on the first finger of my left hand. I bruised it in one of the two activities and I just kept playing until I formed a calcium deposit around the joint. Then I couldn't bend the finger and I had to get cortisone shots.

It took about two years to fix it, and in fact I wouldn't have fixed it if it weren't for Yoko Ono, who sent me to a doctor who changed my diet around. But it never healed fully; the strength never came back into that hand.

When I do play guitar it's a Stratocaster or various Yamaha acoustics, and I have Steinway and Bechstein grand pianos.

MUSICIAN: *Is baseball still important to you?*

SIMON: (shy grin) I like baseball a lot. A *lot*. I like to go to night games in the summer. I like everything about baseball: it's pace; the fact that there's no time limit on it; it's a nineteenth century game; it's got innings rather than timed quarters or periods; I like the rhythm of it; I like the way it looks; I like the green grass; I like the dignity of the man alone at the plate or standing in the outfield.

MUSICIAN: *Besides stealing home in the bottom of the eleventh inning, have there been any other major nonmusical epiphanies in your life?*

SIMON: My son Harper James' birth. He's eleven now, and plays guitar. He's into modified punk. He likes the Sex Pistols, UB40, some white reggae bands, Talking Heads.

'It's a great skill to be a good reporter of your own life, and not to editorialize.'

MUSICIAN: *Does he listen to your stuff?*

SIMON: Yeah! And tells me what he thinks. He said he thought the new album was my best because, as he put it, I'd written songs like the real good stuff I had done in the past, but I had also written things I had never written before. All those songs are a little different for him—it's definitely not *his* favorite album, but he's not embarrassed by it.

MUSICIAN: *It's probably strange to say, but I expect you're good company for him. There's something childlike about you.*

SIMON: I don't like the word "childlike," even though I understand the distinction between it and "childish." If you mean to say that I am able to remain very open or even vulnerable to my son or to people much younger than I, I hope that's true. One of the most important things about having children is preserving that openness, because they are full-blown individuals who stand apart from you. You have to get to know your children the way you have to get to know any stranger. You can't mold them, but you can help guide them.

MUSICIAN: *Another thing I'm struck by in speaking with you, both now and in our last interview some seven years ago, is that, despite the fact that you write a lot of whimsical songs, you don't appear to have a whimsical personality. You're pretty intense in conversation.*

SIMON: I have a whimsical side, which I like getting into, but I wouldn't call myself whimsical or funny. Actually though, I tend to blend in with the foliage on any given day. If it's sunny and I'm around humorous people, that side will come out. On overcast days, I'm a bit more somber. But the idea of making people amused by my songs, the thought that I can get them to feel happy, to laugh—especially at themselves—is extremely pleasing to me. I get very excited thinking I can make people smile. See, the sun has just come out, and I'm smiling now.

MUSICIAN: *Speaking of happy things, there are a lot of songs on* Hearts And Bones *about relationships—father and son, husband and wife. "Think Too Much (a)" seems like a song about your arriving at the decision to remarry, this past summer, to Carrie Fisher.*

SIMON: That certainly is a part of the song, but as we're talking here, I believe it's becoming obvious that much of what I write takes on a mosaic quality, in that a lot of different themes ultimately get interwoven. The topic of my marriage is in there, but there's so much more there I'd also like listeners to notice, or be aware of, or just discover for themselves. To get too particular sometimes misses the mark, in the same way that I can't describe exactly where all of what I write comes from. The mystery of that is significant too.

MUSICIAN: *Artistically, who do you admire these days?*

SIMON: In popular music? David Byrne, Laurie Anderson, Brian Eno, Rickie Lee Jones—she's a really good singer. I also like Philip Glass, Robert Wilson; I like Woody Allen's movies; I like Twyla Tharp. The last really good book I read was *Rabbit Is Rich*. I read poetry, like the Greek poet Cavafy, and Auden.

MUSICIAN: *You've had your own internal disagreements about what constitutes a good record. Wasn't Clive Davis the man who decided to put out* The Graduate *soundtrack album, which pushed Simon & Garfunkel over the top commercially with "Mrs. Robinson"?*

SIMON: (nodding) Neither Artie nor I wanted it out. While I was writing a whole score for the film, Mike Nichols was using existing material to fill in the places where the score was supposed to be, and the more he lived with it, the more he decided that that material was absolutely appropriate, so the only new song that made it into there was "Mrs. Robinson."

MUSICIAN: *Was Simon & Garfunkel a satisfying experience, or do you feel that most of your Simon & Garfunkel work was merely on the way to something better?*

SIMON: That was a more natural time; I didn't think so much then, I just wrote. I didn't begin to think seriously about what I was doing until *Rhymin' Simon*.

MUSICIAN: *You also did some serious rethinking recently about whether to include Art Garfunkel on the new album, which was originally titled* Think Too Much, *and wound up taking him off the record.*

SIMON: After the Simon & Garfunkel reunion I tried very hard to write an album for the both of us because I thought it would be important to continue working together, but it just wasn't coming. Art added some nice colors here and a pretty solo there, and we cut some strong harmonies, but I could hear it just wasn't working as a two-voice project. Things were not meshing, it felt extremely forced and unnatural. I had a lot of trouble admitting that to myself, but I finally did around the end of the summer or so, and we talked about it. Part of Artie definitely agreed, and part of him definitely disagreed—and I suppose still does. I just heard one voice talking throughout all the material, and the songs all had that mood, however we tried to fight it. Frankly, we haven't discussed it since.

MUSICIAN: *Are you proud of your profession? Do you get a charge out of being part of the rock annals?*

SIMON: Yes, I do; very much. That's one of the reasons I did that last big reunion and world tour with Simon & Garfunkel. I wanted to solidify Simon & Garfunkel's place in rock 'n' roll. Actually, we were only functioning for four years—sometimes that's forgotten. The 60s produced the Beatles, Stones and Dylan. It also produced us—although we weren't at that level.

Yet rock 'n' roll is a field without statesmen. You know, it's a field that really is not given to thinking—and *resents* thinking. Which I believe is the big error of rock 'n' roll. It's always aspired to be the music of the working class. And it's never been looked upon as a vocabulary for art and artistic thinking. While it actually *is* great working-class music that is so much a part of our lives now, it is also our vocabulary, a vocabulary whose basis is 1950s rock 'n' roll. We have to be able to

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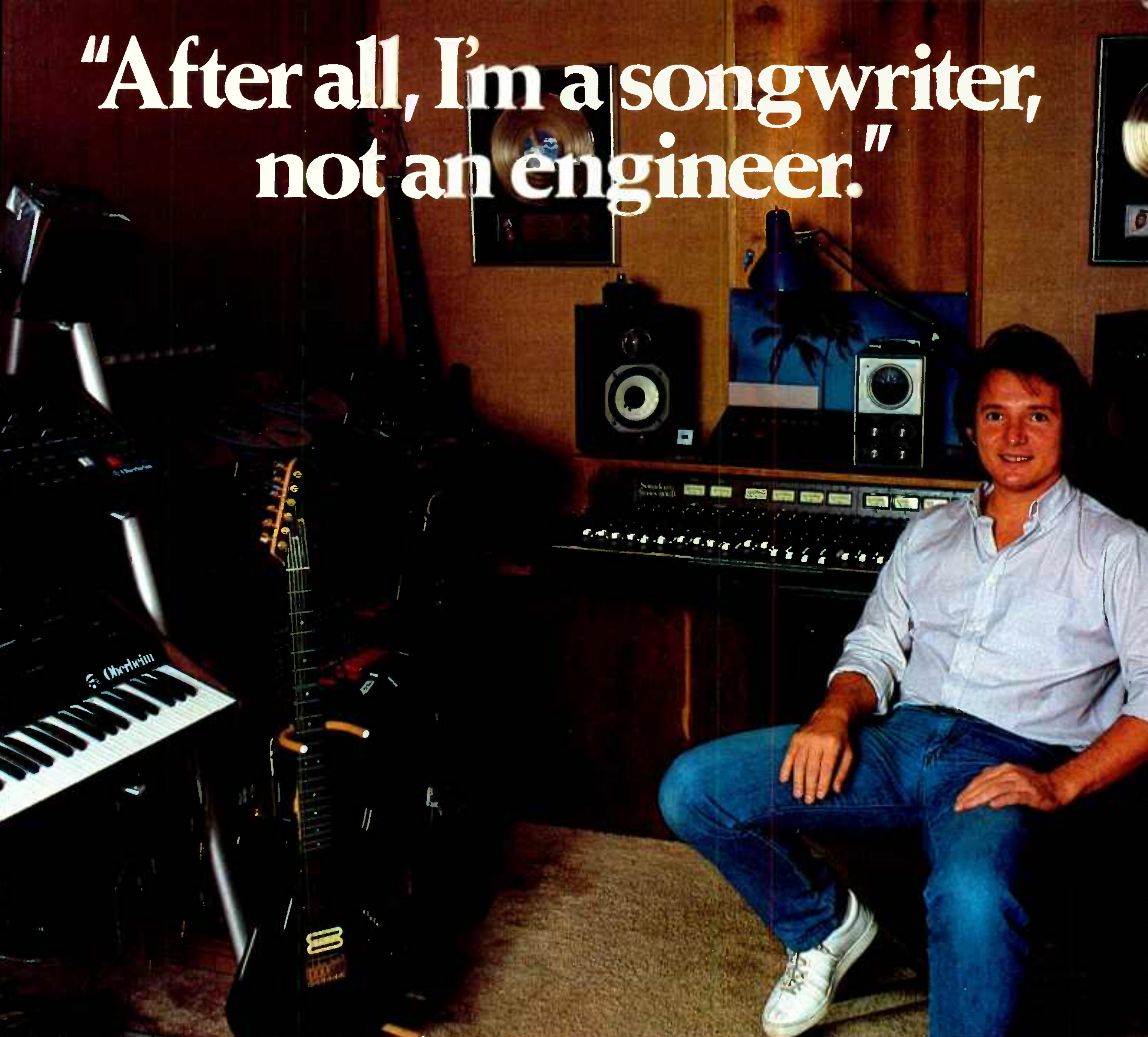

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expand the vocabulary to express more complex thoughts.

MUSICIAN: *One of your greatest accomplishments is that you never devalued the past; you helped pull rock 'n' roll out of its adolescence, and instill it with a sense of craft.*

SIMON: Yet, for the most part rock 'n' roll is back in an adolescent phase, isn't it? There are some exceptions—the Police are obviously not an adolescent group. The tremendous disappointment of my generation is that there were so many gifted people that looked like they were going to fulfill their promise and did not. Say, John Lennon; I didn't think his last record was that great. But there was something about the voice he had, something about his ability and willingness to expose himself that was terribly moving. I didn't agree with everything he said or his actions or conclusions, but he was a leader, more than any of the others.

MUSICIAN: *He was constantly struggling to reinvent himself, so he should be admired for that alone.*

SIMON: Definitely. He didn't really reject the Beatles, but at least he tried. He tried to reject that fame, that box you can't get out of. You know, there are certain people who are inspirational, and there are influential people. There's a difference.

James Dean, for instance, was far more influential than he was inspirational. His effect was enormous, but when you break it down, what does it say? It was self-destructive androgyny, and it's something that's been emulated for thirty years! It's not a great contribution, but it has had a huge effect on fashion. Fashion is lethal, fashion *kills* people.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think fashion killed John Lennon?*

SIMON: I think John Lennon was killed by a random act of violence. That guy would have been content to kill Johnny Carson. He picked John Lennon because he, the gunman, was obsessive, and this is a phenomenon that we can see today. He's not the only guy who was obsessed with becoming someone by destroying someone else. For our times, it started with Lee Harvey Oswald.

MUSICIAN: *Who's someone who's been destroyed by fashion?*

SIMON: Sid Vicious. A lot of kids think a lot of Sid Vicious. My son does; he's a big fan. Others who've been killed by fashion: Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Keith Moon. Most of those deaths are about some misperception of what life is, a misdirection of the life force.

MUSICIAN: *So what is rock 'n' roll, if not the cruel art that a lot of people currently see it as being?*

SIMON: Well, that cruelty is a fashion view. I don't see what was cruel about any of the founding guys of rock 'n' roll, although there was a touch of it in Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis.

However, there is an element of cruelty in rock 'n' roll's negative cultural ripple effect. After John Lennon was killed, God knows how many people thought they weren't as big a star as John Lennon because they weren't killed. (rhetorically) "What must Paul McCartney think? 'Gee, John's the bigger star, they killed *him*.'"

(Gravely) This self-destructive, androgynous inclination of rock 'n' roll has been incorporated into its fabric and is very difficult to get out. We're so used to it, we think it *is* rock 'n' roll.

MUSICIAN: *Who besides Lennon do you believe has been a positive inspirational figure in rock?*

SIMON: Dylan. He made us feel at a certain time that it was good to be smart, to be observant, that it was good to have a social conscience. These are all things that are out of fashion now. Real art remains when the fashion changes, but art can run conjunctively with fashion. Both can occasionally be quite intelligent at the same time.

MUSICIAN: *Blessed with the hindsights of adulthood, what's the smartest thing you ever heard anybody in rock 'n' roll say?*

SIMON: (long pause, small smile) "Be-bop-a-lula, she's my baby." That's smart. A bit naive, but *smart*. ■

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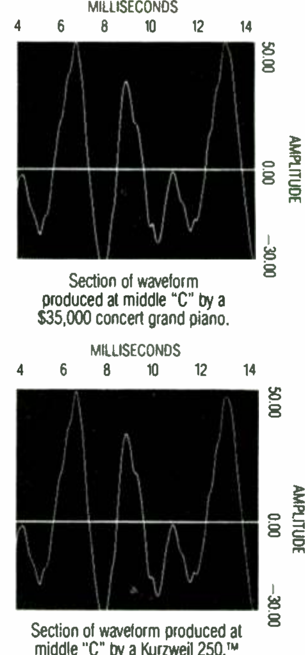

Section of waveform produced at middle "C" by a $35,000 concert grand piano.

Section of waveform produced at middle "C" by a Kurzweil 250.™

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WORKING MUSICIAN

74 **TREVOR HORN**

Off-the-wall and behind-the-board with a maestro of gift and gimmick, the producer of the Buggles, ABC, Malcolm McLaren and now Yes' remarkable resurrection LP, *90125*.

P L A Y E R S

80 **BRINSLEY SCHWARZ, PARKER'S SPARK**

Behind the sensitized sarcasm and contemporary cut of Graham Parker's new *Real McCaw* lies a reunion with his oldest collaborator, the inventive, mercurial leader of the Rumour and (with basher Nick Lowe) the Brinsley Schwarz Band.

P L A Y E R S

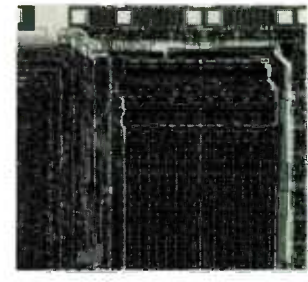
82 **WHO THE HELL IS CARLOS ALOMAR?**

While his name and face may not exactly be grist for gossip mills or guitar-mag covers, Carlos nonetheless knows a good deal about "Fame," since it kicked off his ten-year stint with David Bowie, the thin white duke of Young American R&B.

D E V E L O P M E N T S

84 **MICROPROCESSORS FOR THE MASSES, PT. 2**

A rah-rah-rah, the-future-is-now celebration of the new technological landscape. Freff reveals how these powerful microchips work their magic, how you too can learn to harness them, and how they'll change music forever and for better.



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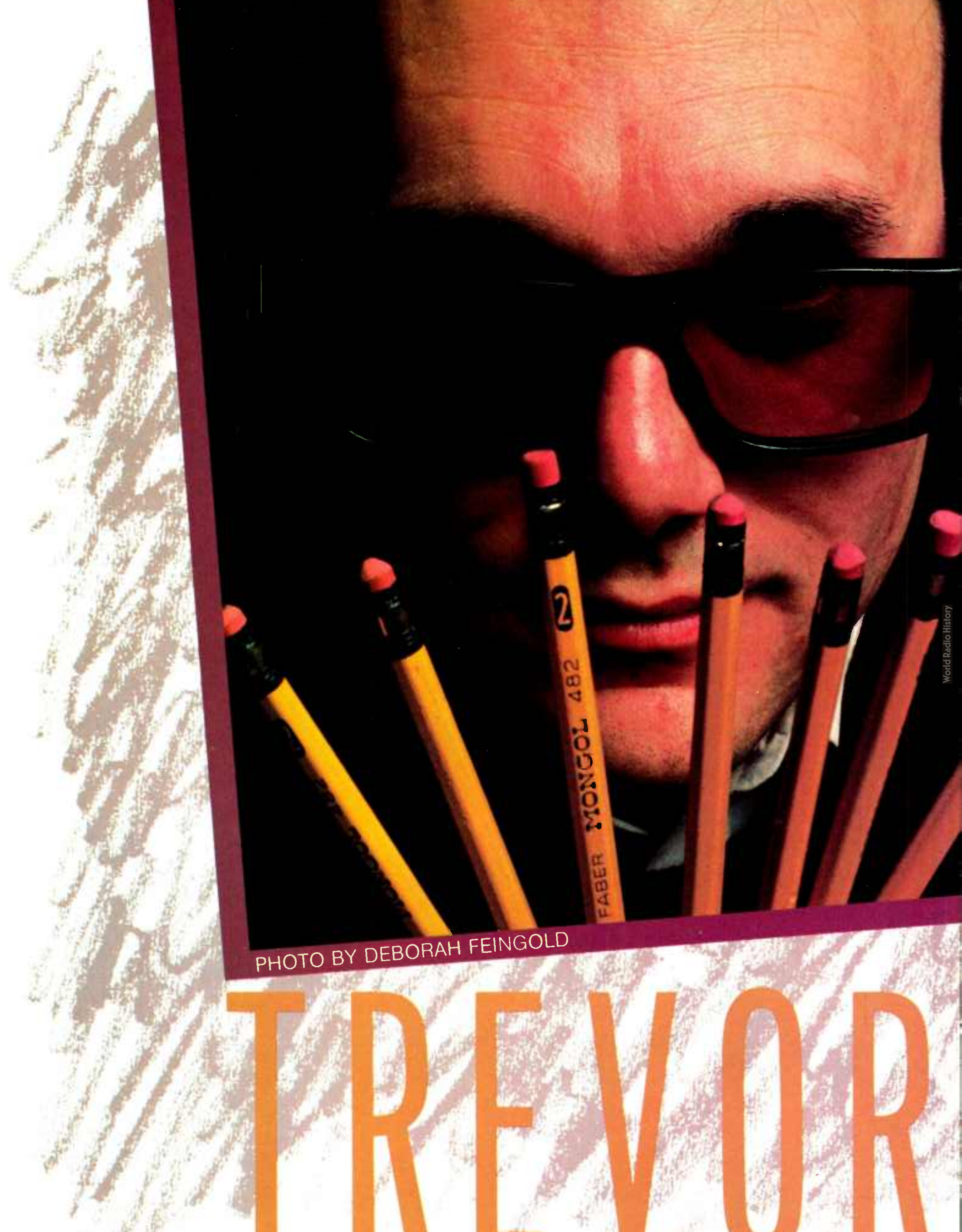

PHOTO BY DEBORAH FEINGOLD

TREVOR

World Radio History

A STUDIO WUNDERKIND AND HIS QUIVER OF PRODUCTION ARROWS

by Freff

"Anyone can make off-the-wall stuff. The *challenge* is to make off-the-wall stuff that sells. And in order for something to sell it has to communicate clearly, even if it's crazy."

That was Trevor Horn speaking. And now for a word from some of his sales figures: single of "Video Killed The Radio Star," five million copies; single of Malcolm McLaren's "Buffalo Gals," one million copies; the new Yes album, *90125*, one and one half million copies in its first three weeks and rising fast....

Despite prevailing record company wisdom, it appears that you *can* make off-the-wall music, assemble songs from virtually nothing, play drastic games with people's preconceived notions, choose your projects much the way Don Quixote tilted at windmills, and still Sell Big in the battle for a piece of the world's entertainment budget.

Of course, you might have to be Trevor Horn to get away with it, and that's not a job everybody is suited for. *WANTED: record producer with perverse sensibilities for work involving long and ludicrous hours, insane risks, major setbacks, rising costs, ego management and total contradicitons of logic and sense. Must have weak eyes, wide vision, writing talent, a foot in every camp and the capacity to see nothing unusual in producing both Malcolm McLaren and Foreigner. Applications will be accepted thirty-four years ago by Mr. and Mrs. Horn, County Durham, England.*

Trevor's dad, a dairy engineer, played acoustic bass in a local Durham dance band. Trevor was thus addicted to music from childhood, the final fix supplied by early 60s English radio. Deeply hooked, nursing a reverence for the Beatles and Dionne Warwick that bordered on pantheistic, he started to sing and play

HORN

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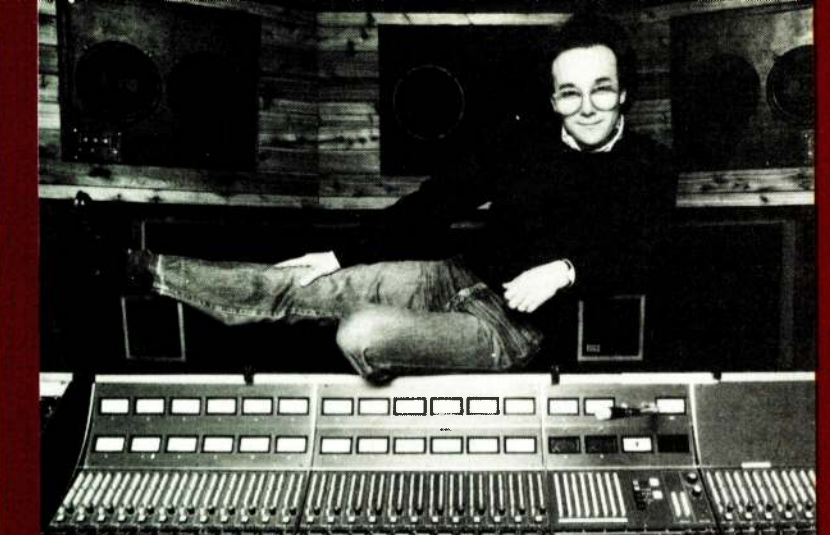

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Between the Buggles, ABC, Yes and Foreigner, Trevor keeps a delicate balance.

in groups of his own. A move to Leicester in his late teens did nothing to halt the slide of his schoolwork; it just gave him a whole new set of clubs to haunt with his Bob Dylan act. ("I used to say, 'Name any Bob Dylan song and I'll sing it for you.' That was my gimmick.")

He quit college for a day job, couldn't stand it, and finally turned pro as a bass player at the age of nineteen.

One of his few distinctions was that he could sight-read bass guitar music, a rare skill in those early days. So for the next four years he parlayed that edge into a string of jobs with dead-end jazz bands and dimestore record sessions. There was also a disastrous brush with touring in Gary Glitter's band, at the age of twenty-two, when he got drunk in Manchester and started a fight with the police. This adventure lost him both freedom for a weekend and gainful employment ("You're fired!"). He's been a teetotaler ever since.

Getting nowhere fast as a session player? What next to do—it's so obvious, right?—but get together with a friend and build a recording studio.

That's *build*, as in "from the ground up": foundation, frame, bricks, mortar, rafters, tile, the lot. "There wasn't any money to rent with, so we built. We called it Drumbeat Studios, and it had one of the first half-inch 8-tracks in England. Our best business in those days was for song contests. People would bring in these half-complete songs to do, and I would re-arrange the tunes and get the musicians together, and make demos for the people to send in to the contests.

That lasted six months before the partnership tattered. Trevor's next oddball step towards fame and royalty statements was getting romantically involved with Tina Charles, a singer with a string of hit disco singles. "I think she was living with me at the time because she wanted a bit of a change. She wanted to try somebody intelligent, to see if the idea grew on her, you know?

"Because she was making big records, and, being her boyfriend, I tagged along to things like *Top of the Pops* and got to see how it all really worked. And I just knew it was what I really wanted to do. In the end I used Tina as a bit of a stepping stone, I guess, because I'd gotten the job as her musical director, and even after she ended up marrying someone else, I kept it. I put her band together for her. Tina Charles' records were quite heavily orchestrated, so I put together a six-piece lineup with a multi-keyboard player to approach that sound live. I really *worked* the band, like they were in a physical exercise class."

The multi-keyboardist he'd hired was Geoff Downes, Trevor's future partner in the Buggles and Yes (now with Asia, and current holder of the Enough Is Enough Already award for extravagance in keyboard stacks). Trevor smiles ruefully. "Poor boy, what did I start him off on?" The band did well enough, but fell apart after the tour. The Horn-Downes musical partnership that grew out of it proceeded to spend the next four years slogging from one demo project to the next.

Then came the breakthrough, the birth of the Buggles. "All this time we were working for other people. Finally, in a fit of absolute desperation, we decided to become the artists. We tried to put everything we'd learned in four and a half years into four minutes...and had our first hit, 'Video Killed The Radio Star.'" (An unerring piece of prophecy.)

The inspiration for the song was a sci-fi tale by J.G. Ballard called "The Sound-Sweep," about a young man with a kind of "sound vacuum cleaner." It took them *three months* to polish into final form, the result of sheer, unadulterated perfectionism. "God, I was freaked out about things like drum rattles getting onto the track. If the Buggles could have had a LinnDrum, it would have been heaven, because that's what we wanted. We made Richard Burgess *sound* like a Linn. If there was a single buzz, if we even suspected he'd slowed down on one beat of a take, if it wasn't *perfect*—we wouldn't keep it."

They chose a deliberately repulsive name and saw their joint work soar to #1 in sixteen countries around the world. "The Buggles name...that was a joke. We used to think that group names, especially in the punk era, were just absurd. When you've been busy recording people who call themselves things like the Unwanted, you become much too cynical to take it all seriously. Of course, now I see that you do have to take it seriously, because often people don't *see* the joke."

Sudden fame, after years of starvation. Success, record sales, and satisfaction. What to do next, of course, but screw it all up?

"Joining Yes," says Trevor, "was one of those stupid things that you do sometimes. I had this awful sense of inevitability when I met Chris Squire. He'd really liked our album, *Living In The Plastic Age*; and Yes was going through these terrible changes, and Geoffrey and I gradually got drawn into it."

Looking back now, he calls it "one of the two or three times in my life that I've done something that I knew was wrong." The experience was, in a word, awful.

But also *very* educational.

There was, for example, a lesson in the omniscience of management. Trevor had been under the misconception that groups like Yes were properly organized and that their management was all-knowing and all-seeing. He discovered quite the opposite.

"Would you like to know how much Brian Lane, the band's manager, understood their music? He was always pushing me to 'get the guys to record a single.' Well, I could have walked into his office with 'Sugar Sugar,' by the Archies, told him that I'd pulled the guys around and here was the single—and he would have said, 'Great! It'll be a big hit.' *That's* how much he understood."

And then there was that singularly unpleasant moment sitting in Madison Square Garden for the very first time, knowing that in mere hours he would be facing tens of thousands of screaming Yes fans, every one of whom would be measuring him against the impossible standards of the Converted. "I remember thinking—how could I ever be worried about making a record again, or getting a mix right, after something as truly horrific as this? And I suppose a bit of that has stayed with me ever since, because I've put out several records that other people would have been quite nervous about."

Yes broke up. Geoff Downes split from the Buggles, to go off and be a keyboard hero in Asia, leaving Trevor to polish up some of their pre- and post-Yes demos as the Buggles' last album, *Adventures*

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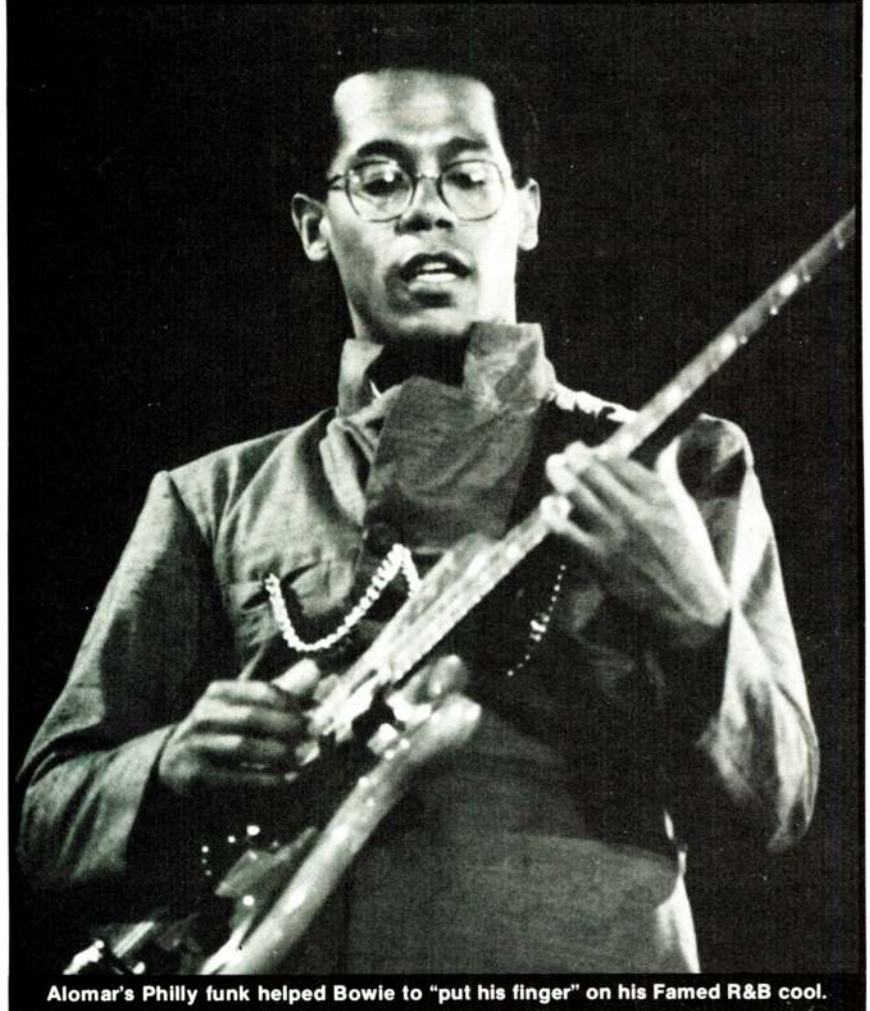

Alomar's Philly funk helped Bowie to "put his finger" on his Famed R&B cool.

WHO THE HELL IS CARLOS ALOMAR?

The Guitar Power Behind Bowie's Thin White Throne

By J.D. Considine

"You *can't* find out anything about me," Carlos Alomar says cheerfully. "In the last ten years, you will not find any pictures of me, you will not find any interviews, you will not find any press releases, you will not find any bit of information on me. Which is totally intentional on my part, because I don't want that. I've seen all that do a number on David Bowie. I don't want any of it."

Carlos Alomar?

If the name doesn't ring any bells, perhaps the sound will. Remember the crisp, chunky guitar riff that Bowie's "Fame" was built upon? Carlos Alomar. The smooth, sinuous rhythm lick in "Golden Years," the one that sounded like a James Brown groove encased in lucite? Alomar. As was the colder-than-ice chordal punctuation that made Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes" seem far more chilling than merely the notion of being "strung out in heaven's high." Or maybe you remember seeing him onstage with Bowie, tall, muscular and elegant in his Nehru-collared frock coat and domed hat. Maybe you chanced upon him a year ago, when he was touring with the Rumour-less Graham Parker, or the year before that, with Clem Burke behind Iggy Pop. Still, odds are that Alomar is just another name on a credits-list to you.

But Carlos Alomar is not publicity shy, he's publicity *smart*. He hasn't been hiding from the press, just biding his time; and now, with an armload of demos and plans to take Bowie's road band into the studio for his own purposes, he's ready to make his move.

For the moment, however, Alomar is more than happy to answer the $64 question: What's it like working with David Bowie?

"It's not like a regular session," he says, "because at a regular session you have all the musicians there, you give 'em the charts, you know exactly what you want, and they do it. But David doesn't have any idea of what it sounds like until you give it to him. Then when you give it to him, he knows that's what he wanted."

That sounds like an awfully vague way to go about recording, but in actual practice it's not. "It's all conceived and written and done in the studio," Alomar explains. "We'd go in with three pieces—bass, drums and guitar—and David comes in, bangs a little on piano, puts a little something down on guitar, and that's it. He just says, 'I want something that sounds like this,'"—here Alomar hums a simple melody in straight quarter notes. "And we'd say okay, and do something like this," he says, humming the same melody, but now heavily syncopated.

"We'd do different arrangements on it, see which one he liked. As long as we got the groove, the feeling of it, then we'd carry on with the balance of the song. So it's a simple way of doing it, but it's very strong, because at that point you can start developing the sound before everybody jumps in."

Alomar is a firm believer in a lean sound for rhythm beds. "It makes it a lot easier, because when you're working with just three pieces, you put down the basic parts and you have the whole song there," he says. "Plus you have holes—you can hear them, as opposed to having everybody play at the same time, where it's all cluttered up." Of course, it has happened that when Bowie brings in the rest of the band to fill out the sound, some of Alomar's parts are done over by another instrument, another player. "I do a lot of tracks that are being played by other people when I get the album," he says. "See, we do a lot of tracks, and then we leave. Go home. Later, everybody else comes in and does what they have to do. So I've

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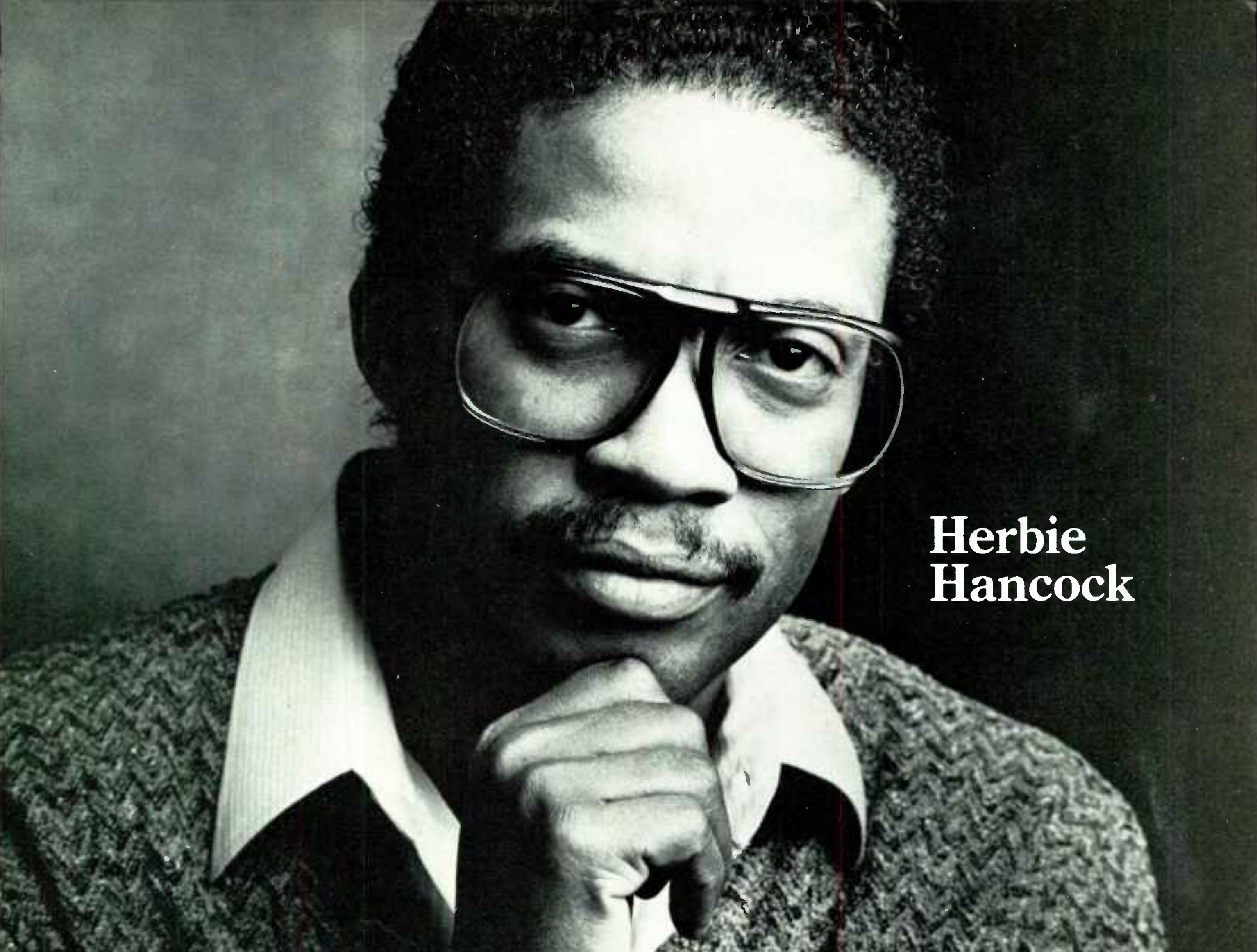

"When I hear a sound in my head, I'll touch the keys in a way that I think will get that sound. What comes out of the Chroma is *exactly what I expect to hear.* It's great because most synthesizers that have gotten into the area of touch sensitivity won't do that. With the Chroma, I have full control over the sound because it's geared to how my fingers work. And if my fingers have to compensate for a synthesizer, it's just not good enough."

"The other thing I really love about the Chroma is that for the first time here's an analog polyphonic synthesizer that allows you to choose the signal path. And because you can change the signal path, you can do things with it that aren't available on any other synthesizer. It's almost like having a different synthesizer for each different path."

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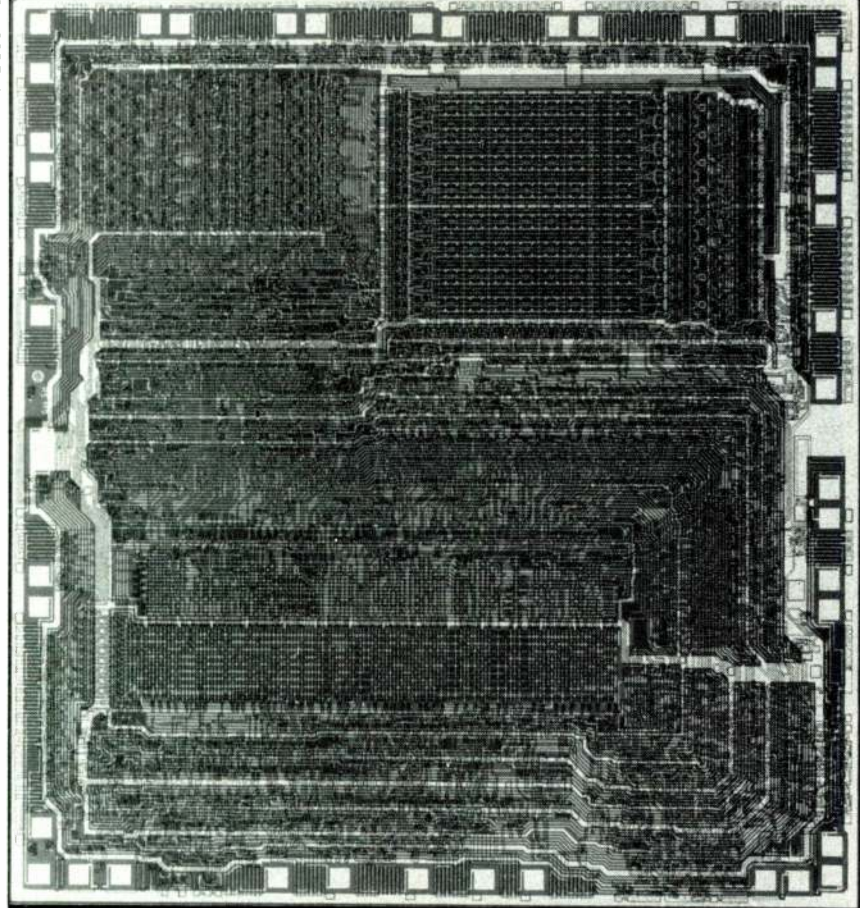

This tiny Zilog Z-80 microchip packs an entire revolution into a half an inch.

MICROPROCESSORS FOR THE MASSES, PT. 2

Further Revelations on the Mysteries of the Digital Future

By Freff

The Shocking Truth: What's *Wrong* with Microprocessors!

Actually, not much.

Oh, there are problems, make no mistake about it. Fast as they are, for some purposes microprocessors still aren't fast enough. The bit-size the microprocessors "talks" in sets hard limits on how much memory it can make use of. There is *digital noise*, the not-*quite*-analogous equivalent of the kind of noise you get in any electronic circuit. And microprocessors are far more susceptible to being damaged or deranged by static, or by voltage surges and drops, than older electronic technologies. But all of these are hardware limitations, and can be coped with by proper engineering and improvements in microprocessor design.

Software problems are a little more distressing because of the frustration they can cause the inexperienced user ("Aaaaargh, why won't it *work*?"). I have only one piece of advice: get used to them. There is a dictum in the computer world that goes, *anything you can buy is either experimental* or *obsolete*, and it's very true. Every useful program in the world has a bug in it somewhere (musical programs especially, because of their relative complexity) and the best you can hope for is that the bug is so obscure that you never run across it. Second best is that it can be easily fixed by the program's designers, once the bug is pointed out to them.

But the biggest problems don't come from the machines or the programs. They come from the human beings behind them. Designers and programmers make choices, and sometimes those choices are shortsighted, or clumsy, or limiting, or just plain wrong. Dave Rossum of E-Mu Systems puts it quite bluntly: "The problems are usually just that the designers are too dumb."

Take keyboard scanning, for example. In your average synth today a microprocessor is doing many thousands of things every second, and one of those things is taking a quick scan across every key to see whether or not any of them are being pressed down. But it isn't the microprocessor that decides how fast it will scan the keys; that decision was made long before, when the instrument was first created, by a designer who might very well have opted for a slower scan time in order to free up microprocessor time to support other features. It's a tradeoff. But a slower scan time means a less responsive keyboard, and if the designer has made a mistake and chosen a scan time that's too slow, the keyboard will seem "stiff" and uncomfortable to a player. But it *isn't* the machine's fault, it's the designer's, for misusing the available resources.

Here's a somewhat more harmless example a lot of you have probably observed. The LEDs on the early Prophet 5 had this annoying quirk of flickering whenever the instrument was played. It drove a lot of players crazy thinking something was wrong with their brand new wonder-synth, because generally when lights flicker it's because of voltage fluctuation (*bad* news in a voltage-controlled instrument). But it wasn't that at all. The way LEDs work is that the microprocessor is continually turning them on and off, too fast for you to see the flickering. This saves on power and dramatically increases their working life. But because of the way the designers wrote the first Prophet 5 software, playing the instrument made the microprocessor too busy to update the LEDs as fast, and the flickering slowed down to where human eyes could see it.

A Little Miracle Called MIDI:

The miracle of MIDI, a.k.a. Musical Instrument Digital Interface, is that it exists at all. There is no precedent in the electronic instrument field for the kind of multi-company collaboration that has resulted in the MIDI specification (it can't really be called "standard" in the United States, because of the legal

continued on page 91

World Radio History

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August 1, 1982

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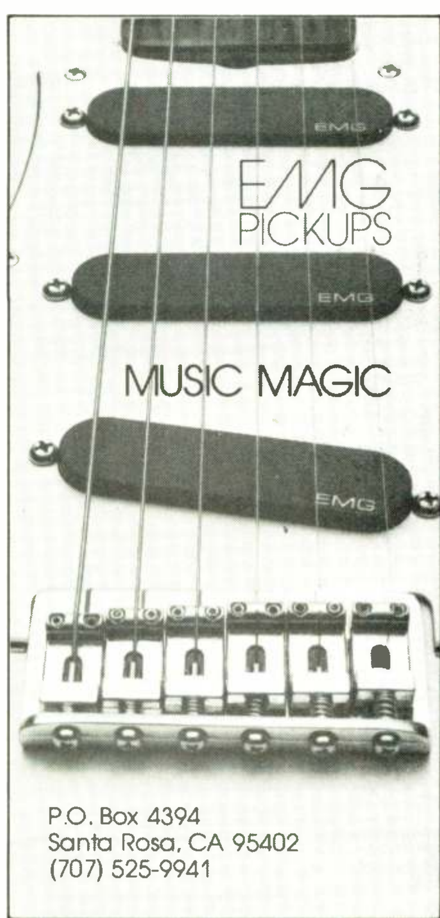

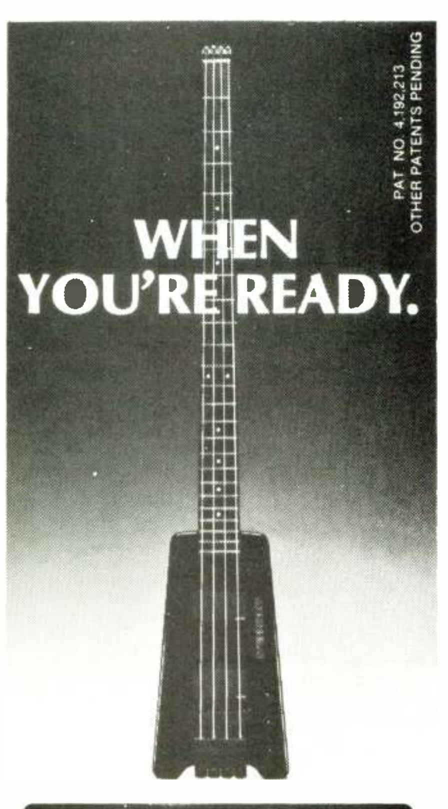

Schwarz from page 80
cians, they weren't averse to backing Parker, "as long as there was no touring involved," according to Brinsley. But within a year, he recalls with a laugh, "we had done nine tours and were cutting a second album with Graham." The ensemble tightness that Schwarz had striven for with BSB became a Rumour hallmark, and their five-year collaboration with Parker, from 1975 to 1980, was perhaps the finest artistic collaboration between band and artist of the era—the Rumour's subtle but fiery interplay providing a dynamic backdrop for Parker's prickly, passionate songwriting and singing.

Brinsley states that Parker's "only constant is that he's always changing," a characterization borne out by Graham's two classic albums, *Heat Treatment* and *Squeezing Out Sparks*. Both are stamped by unrestrained vocals and bone-cutting lyrics, but the musical approaches are very dissimilar. On the former LP, Parker incorporated R&B horn influences into a highly individualistic triumph; with *Squeezing Out Sparks*, he forged a heavy, overdriven "pure" rock style that showcased Brinsley's guitar.

"*Sparks* was ruthlessly produced," Schwarz reveals about what many consider Graham's finest work to date. "Jack Nitzsche (the album's producer) would say, 'Okay, it's your turn to play any fills or solos and you've got one shot and that's it.' I got to play one solo over on 'Ordinary Passion,' and he said, 'You've got five minutes to work out your break and then we're doing it.'" Schwarz thinks that Nitzsche's rushed attitude may explain why his guitar was so prominent. "For some reason Jack relied on my guitar at the expense of Bob's keyboards," he muses. "I don't know if it was because he just didn't like keyboards or if he was unhappy with Bob's playing and wouldn't give him the time to come up with something different. At any rate, it was all done on one or two takes and what we played was there for posterity."

In 1980 Graham and the band "parted amicably," and the Rumour attempted, unsuccessfully, to work their magic for Garland Jeffreys, and later, to establish themselves as a separate artistic entity in their own right. Neither project was particularly successful. Despite three fine solo albums, the band never escaped Parker's shadow, particularly since Brinsley, who'd supplied most of the vocals on the band's LPs, balked at duplicating this role in live performance. "A frontman," he points out characteristically, "is not part of my stage persona." After his suggestion that the Rumour hire another lead singer was rejected, the band split up in late 1981.

Their legacy to Parker's music became more evident, however, with the appearance that year of the relatively sterile *Another Grey Area*. Perhaps realizing that he'd been "blanded over," as Brinsley says, by his studio accompanists, Parker rehired Schwarz for *The Real Macaw*. Not only does this album showcase the singer's rejuvenated passion, it also signals a new high-tech Parker sound, with increasing reliance on electronic keyboards and a drum machine. And as usual, Brinsley has fashioned a complementary guitar/amplifier/effects configuration to flesh it out in detail.

Up until *The Real Macaw*, the guitarist had added all his effects through the board, "because they were obviously better." But on this album, Schwarz's good taste in new equipment was pleasantly confirmed when, after hearing one of Brinsley's components, a Roland Dimension D stereo box, the studio engineer went out and purchased one the next day. The Dimension D is just one of the many devices Brinsley employs, but all together their complexity pales before Schwarz's Rube Goldberg-style amp setup. He explains: "I play through a Jim Kelley 30/60 watt amp with one 12-inch Electro-Voice speaker in it. What's really important about the Kelley is that it has two true channels and effects loops; this way I can put certain devices on the clean channel and others on the distorted one.

"I take the Kelley's signal," he goes on, "and tap off that to feed my effects rack. Then I run the effects signal to a small Yamaha stereo mixer and feed that into two Mesa Boogie slave amps that drive the two 12-inch EV speaker cabinets that rest on either side of the Kelley." The purpose of this setup, he claims, "is that I get the pure straight guitar sound from the Kelley, and the effects from the two other speaker cabinets. This way the effects don't interfere with the sound of the amp—it's only a guitar plugged into an amplifier—and however loud or soft I want the Kelley, I can set the effects to match." In addition, the three-speaker setup enables Brinsley (as applied on *The Real Macaw* sessions) to record a "clean guitar sound" on one studio track and his "effects sound," often in stereo, on two other tracks. This in turn provided Graham and producer Dave Kershenbaum with various sonic options to choose from.

Schwarz's devices included a group of Roland boxes—Boss Chorus, CF2 compressor, Echo and Dimension D Stereo—plus an ADA TFX-4 and Delta Lab delays. But of all the effects used for the album, the Dimension D is clearly Schwarz's favorite. "It's a true stereo box," he enthuses. "They don't actually tell you how it works, but it takes the signal, delays it and then choruses each delay. The delays are calibrated in mini-

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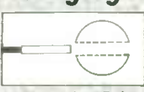

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seconds and it modulates each note in and out of tune like a violinist's vibrato. Because one delay is slightly ahead of the other when the frequencies match together, they go into the middle of my stereo setup. And as the frequencies go out of sequence, the signal shifts."

Once torn between a "Gibson or Fender-styled guitarist," Schwarz says he has found the best of both worlds with the two Hamer guitars he now plays. "My Standard has that real humbucking Gibson sound," he says, "and on the sessions I used it if Graham or Dave wanted a real over-the-top thing ("Sounds Like Chains"). And if they wanted something a little gentler (on all but two tracks), I played the Prototype."

Now reunited with Parker, and furnishing a most vital spark, one of pop music's most respected and traveled journeymen expresses a measure of contentment with his niche. "Even if he does seem angry on the surface, there's a lot of love in Graham's songs," Brinsley Schwarz declares with obvious admiration. "And when I hear his lyrics I think, 'Wow, that's exactly how I feel.'"

Alomar from page 82
never met Robert Fripp, though we've both played on the same albums."

Still, that's not quite as distancing an experience as recording the "symphonic" material for *Low* and *Heroes*. Those tunes—"Warszawa," "Art Decade," "Sense Of Doubt," "Neukoln"—were recorded using scores, but not scores in the traditional "four bars after letter G" sense. "We put it down to a click track," Alomar explains. "You start the tape, and all you have is, 'One, two, three, ...' and they just count all the way up to one thousand if they want to. When part number fifty-five comes in, you play"—he hums a three-note phrase from "Neukoln"—"and then wait until number one hundred sixty-nine comes in, where you play"—he hums a second phrase from "Neukoln." "And that's it—then you go home."

He laughs, then adds, "When you finally hear it, you find this synthesizer part and all this other stuff there, and suddenly your part comes on and you say, 'Was I playing that song? I don't remember playing that.'"

Then there's "Boys Keep Swinging," where it looks as if somebody goofed up the credits listing Alomar is listed on drums, drummer Dennis Davis is on bass, and bassist George Murray is gone altogether. "Well, what happened was, it's a very off-the-wall type of song. When we started playing 'Boys,' each of us were playing our appropriate instruments, and it really sounded nice, really smooth, really mellow. And David's saying, 'No, no, it's not supposed to sound *sweet*, it's not supposed to sound *mellow*, it's not supposed to sound *right*. So Carlos, why don't you *not* play guitar, which you play so well, and play drums, which you play terribly. And why doesn't Dennis play bass, and....' So he switched off all the instruments, and it sounded like a *punk* band, where it's all out of tune and the drummer is falling around...and he says, 'It's *perfect!*'"

Alomar shakes his head, laughing. "That was David—it went down on wax. I'll never forget it."

Odd as that may have been, it was typical of what Alomar has gained from working with Bowie. "Playing with David, I've learned that a mistake is not a mistake," he says. "That was a very rude awakening for me, because being the type of musician I was, I would never throw in a certain note with something, like a C# with an F chord. Because it's *wrong*. But then David would come up to me and say, 'That's marvelous, that's the note I want.' That's why, with David, he brings out a certain amount of 'dumb' parts and weird parts that I would never play, like on 'It's No Game.' Those are all clashing chords.

"Sometimes, you don't need perfection—you need expression."

Expression was one of the reasons Alomar wound up working with Bowie in the first place. "I was working with the Main Ingredient at the same studio where he was recording *Lulu*," Alomar recalls. "I was working for RCA, and the studio musicians were able to play both sessions. They needed a guitar player for the *Lulu* tracks, he said, 'Hey man, sounds real good,' and I said, 'Thanks a lot. You want to come to my house for dinner?' So we hung out, and he invited me to do the Diamond Dogs tour."

It sounds amazingly ballsy in Alomar's description, but even at twenty-one he had a lot of experience to back him up. At fifteen, he was playing in a band that grew out of workshops at the famous Apollo Theater in Harlem; their first gig was opening at the Apollo for Sly & the Family Stone. After that, he went on the road with the first Sesame Street tour (he still does a mean Cookie Monster). By seventeen, he was "working after-hours joints, plus playing the Apollo Theater, plus playing Amateur Night, plus thinking about getting married, plus going to school." He smiles blithely. "I was a real active kid."

Because of his R&B roots, he was instrumental in assisting the stylistic change between Bowie's *Diamond Dogs* and *Young Americans* albums. "I was one of the people who helped put his finger on it," he says of Bowie's shift from glitzy rock to a cool, R&B-inflected sound. "But he already had a rearing in that kind of music. He had an extensive record collection, which included Aretha, Sam & Dave, the Stax things, all that stuff.

"But the influences he was able to get to do the albums were definitely mine, because when we were in the studio, all the people he used to get that sound were from my clique: Robin Clark, Luther Vandross, Anthony Hinton. So yes, I influenced him to do it in that R&B flavor.

"Still, he already had that thought in mind," Alomar allows. "That's why he wanted that Philly sound."

One thing that ought to be cleared up is the credit for "Fame," the biggest hit from the *Young Americans* sessions, and the single that truly established Bowie in the American mainstream. Roy Carr and Charles Shaar Murray of the *New Music Express*, in their picture book-*cum*-record guide *Bowie, An Illustrated Record*, claim that "Fame" was built from "a grinding riff nicked from James Brown's 'Hot (I Need To Be Loved, Loved, Loved)' by Carlos Alomar." Indeed, the James Brown single features the Godfather grunting over the self-same guitar figure, with a release date roughly co-incident with the release of *Young Americans*.

So was it nicked?

"Naw. 'Fame' definitely came first," replies Alomar nonchalantly. "'Cause I know the musicians James Brown hired to cut the tracks. The thing was, the way they do it in the music industry, you let something happen and then if it hits, if something goes on, *then* you bring your lawsuit and do what you're going to do. But nothing came of it, so David didn't feel it necessary to take any action. But ours was definitely first.

"See, what happened was, I was playing that line on 'Footstomping,' and David always liked it. But when we went into the studio to cover the tune, it didn't happen the way he wanted it to, so he just salvaged the line. From there, I added other guitar parts until there were about six or seven of them, and then John Lennon came into the studio to do the intro and the middle section, some of the words, and that was that.

"It came off real...*lopsided*—it was cut up, put together, and finally developed just the way it was."

In other words, just another day in the studio with David Bowie.

Manicured Guitar

Carlos Alomar's criterion for his stage sound with David Bowie is fairly simple: "When I strum my guitar," he says, "I want to hear it come out of the amplifier just like on the record." To get that clean, well-manicured sound, he uses an Alembic stereo guitar, outfitted with Dean Markley strings (usually .009s), run through two Roland Stereo Chorus amps, with two Ibanez UE-300 effect units, a pair of Yamaha E-1010 delays, and twin Electro-Harmonix 203 guitar synthesizers. He also uses a Stratocaster, a couple of Yamaha guitars, and a prototype Steinberger guitar which he describes as "*great*, it's really great."

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Micros from page 84

structures involved; but enough manufacturers are jumping on the bandwagon to make the MIDI spec a *de facto* standard).

So what is MIDI, anyway? Simply put, it's an agreement on how to pass data from one instrument's microprocessor to another, so they can work together. No more, no less. But what it means in practice is far more complex.

It means you can control more than one synth at a time—easily. It means you can quickly link synths and drum machines together, creating your own personal system. It means you can tie your instrument or your system into a home computer and take advantage of all that extra memory and processing power to do things like multi-track sequencing and recording, or *very* precise control over sound parameters, or playing musical patterns and rhythms you can think of but haven't the technique for.

Companies will stop trying to sell you a whole new instrument every three years. The market is getting saturated; and while there are still people who by inclination and wealth can afford to buy one of everything, the rest of us have to be choosier. The math of it is simple—there are a lot more people willing to spend a lot of money to buy a whole new one. Microprocessors made it easier for manufacturers to make their instruments upgradeable but MIDI makes it easier still. Over a year ago Octave-Plateau was the first major manufacturer to jump on that concept of guaranteed upgrade, with their Voyetra Eight polysynth. Now, looking at the trade ads, it is clear that every manufacturer will do the same just to stay properly competitive.

D.I.Y.

Yes, you too can join the game. It won't be easy, because if you don't already know programming there's a lot to learn. But you made it through all those years of teaching yourself how to play an instrument, didn't you? Learning to program is no different. (You might even find that you have a knack for it. A major insurance company once did a massive statistical study to figure out who made the best programmers, and musicians topped the list, even beating out mathematicians.)

To do it, you'll most likely have to learn to work with assembly language. That's the code that's one step above the machine language (0s and 1s) that the computer uses. Higher level (and therefore easier) languages like BASIC, or PASCAL, or C, are good places to start.

Read books. Try *The Soul of a New Machine*, by Tracy Kidder (it isn't about musical applications of computers, but it's fascinating, and if you have even the slightest nascent interest in getting your hands on the electron flow, this book will kindle it into a flame). Check out *Musical Applications of Microprocessors*, by Hal Chamberlin, which is as close to a Bible as the field has. Subscribe to M.I.T. Press' *Computer Music Journal*. Go to meetings and symposiums. But best of all, take advantage of how cheap personal computers like the Commodore 64 or the Timex/Sinclair have become...buy one and leap in with both feet!

The Independents:

Maybe programming isn't your cup of tea, or you're too busy to tackle it head-on. Not to worry. The future belongs to you, too, because there are plenty of people out there who are going to be developing musical software packages. All you'll need is a decent home computer and instruments with MIDIs, and all these new options will be yours. Recently I saw a package from a Californian named Jim Miller; with it you could use an IBM PC to control instruments like Prophets, Emulators, and various drum machines by writing in music notation on the computer screen. What you wrote, the instruments played—and it could handle scores of up to *orchestral*

continued on page 94

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Micros from page 91
complexity. This package was to music what computer word processing is to writing, and it ought to be officially marketed soon.

Freff's Crystal Ball:
Predicting the future is always dangerous. I'm going to do it anyway. But before I begin, I'd like to point up a little lesson from history.

The first true electronic computer in the United States was a beast called ENIAC, which went into operation in 1946. It filled a large laboratory to overflowing, had over eighteen thousand vacuum tubes in it, and generated so much waste heat it could have doubled as the oven for two or three pizzerias. The best computer scientists of the day nodded over it proudly and proclaimed that all the computing the world ever needed could be handled by three ENIACs; three, and no more.

Oh yeah?

Ever play a video game? Every single one of those has a microprocessor in it that's more powerful than ENIAC. My Apple II is more powerful. A $200 Commodore 64 is more powerful. Hell, the Zilog Z-80 chip in a Prophet 5 is more powerful!

That's the lesson of history. Computer technology is getting faster, smaller, and cheaper at a rate that has only *increased* in the forty years since ENIAC.

With that in mind, I'd put money on any and all of the following. Between now and 1989 you're going to see:

—a total synthesizer/computer package, capable of recording sequences as long as symphonies, automatically printing out musical transcriptions of what you play, and working from your choice of digitally generated sounds or digitally-*sampled* sounds (in other words, the equivalent of a Synclavier with all options) for less than $5,000; possibly even less than *$2,000*.

—a whole series of beautifully responsive instrument controls (new keyboards, new guitars, woodwinds, percussion units), all microprocessor-controlled and costing under $300 each.

—24-track, computer-assisted mixdown, professional quality recording systems for under $5,000.

—total integration packages (your instrument, your recording system, your effects, your live mixing, your home computer, *everything*) all operating out of the same basic software system.

—acoustic and electric guitars with microprocessor-controlled systems, either mechanical or optical/electronic, that never go out of tune; or that can be shifted into alternate tunings at the press of a switch.

—automatic and intelligent feedback dampers on P.A. systems; the end of the unintentional earsplitting howl.

And then there's my favorite. Want to make music? Want to get it heard? Want to skip the whole straightjacket of record companies and corporate rock? It's going to happen. Maybe not by 1989, but certainly by 1999.

But the how and why of that is a whole other article. Power to the purchaser, indeed. M

Trevor Horn from page 78
tricks, the lyrics, everything, they're all less important than the arrangement of the *feel*. Records with a bad feel to them are never hits."

Giving credit where it's due, Trevor feels that the other Trevor in the Yes project, South African-born guitarist Trevor Rabin, was an essential part of *90125*'s success. "He made much more of a difference to Yes than Geoffrey and I ever did as members of the band. Not just because of his playing on guitar and keyboards, and his singing, even though all are extraordinary, but because he has this kind of naive stubbornness that's a strength. Even when he didn't get his own way he was strong enough to pull things off in a certain direction, and that direction was a healthy one."

These days, Trevor is in America, confounding people yet again by co-producing the new Foreigner album. ("From a production point of view, I always like to do things in a different way. And therefore Foreigner was attractive to me because it was something nobody would expect me to do.") He's seven weeks into it, still recording ground tracks, with the end nowhere in sight—but Mick Jones' perfectionism is an easy thing for him to understand.

Foreigner, however, is going to be his last outside project for some time. There are lots of other irons in Horn's fire....

Like his four SARM studios in England, which he has consciously set out to make "the best in the world." Three of them have Solid State Logic mixing desks and 48-track recorders. The fourth, an overdubbing room that's still under construction, is going to have to limp along with the relative unsophistication of a new Neve (how appalling). He's particularly proud of SARM #1. "It's a huge room, and the speakers are specially designed and set into concrete. They're like an enormous set of home hi-fi speakers, because for the last few years I've been working off a set of AR-18s. I don't like to listen to mixes loud, on big speakers; I prefer to save my ears."

Or ZTT, his Island-distributed record label. There are two acts currently on the label, Frankie Goes To Hollywood and his own group/non-group, the Art Of Noise, a foursome dedicated to what their name implies. ZTT, by the way, stands for "ZankTumTum." ("It's just noise, like karaang bang blat, or boomblankboomblank—the art of noise.")

Or some unusual recording and film projects, like one that he's been discussing with rockers turned video directors Lol Creme and Kevin Godley, in which he would record a straight orchestral *Rhapsody In Blue* and then mix it as if it were a rock record. It's all a long way from building your own studio, or taking up the artist's reins out of desperation.

Some of the changes can be seen in the gear he's elected to keep with him. There are six guitars (a Gibson acoustic he played while with Yes, and still travels with; a Yamaha acoustic; a "really great" old Martin 12-string; Washburn and Fender Telecaster electrics; and a virtually antique 4-string thing called a Don Siver model combination Hawaiian and tenor guitar, the first stringed instrument he ever owned); three basses (an Alembic, an Aria Pro 1000 and a Fender Jazz with a Precision neck), and a wide variety of electronics and synthesizers: Fairlight, Prophet 10, OB-Xa, Minimoog, Oberheim DSX sequencer, a set of Simmons electric drums, a Roland sequencer, the Roland TR-808, an English device called The Conductor that allows you to control other instruments with the Fairlight's sequencer page, and both a LinnDrum and an Oberheim DMX.

"Eventually, I hope to build a really huge computer and sign it to ZTT—Elvis Computer. You could conceivably do anything with it."

But his *use* of the gear, more than the gear itself, indicates how far he's come. Take those drum machines:

"I prefer the sound of the DMX for making records. It's got a thicker sound, and while it doesn't feel as *flash* as the Linn when you first put it up, it actually sits in a record better."

This, from the original anti-drummer man? "Oh, yeah, the Buggles hated drummers. But now I kind of appreciate them. I get bored by rhythm boxes that have been programmed by people who don't understand what a good feel is. If you look at the heart of a record that was played by a machine, and the heart of a record that was played by someone, you'd see a difference. In the one that was *played* you'd see the imperfections that make it really beautiful."

That's a far cry from his early days of techno-perfection, when three months spent glossing up one single seemed the right way to do things. When asked if he felt he was naive in those days, Trevor answers "yes" without the slightest of pauses.

"It's kind of a cliché," he concludes, "but the simplest things are the hardest to play, because they've got to be dead right. I suppose that, in the end, I have the most respect for people who can play really simple things—but play them beautifully." M

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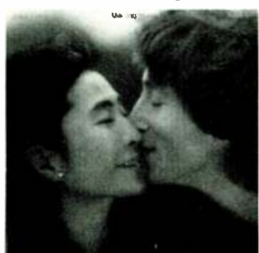
RECORD REVIEWS

John Lennon & Yoko Ono
Milk And Honey (PolyGram)



Joseph Conrad once said: "Why should a man certain of immortality think of his life at all?" *Milk And Honey* is is the long awaited sequel to John and Yoko's flawed but lovely *Double Fantasy* (1980), which was a deeply felt assessment of the joy that the often troubled couple had discovered in a cloistered domesticity that was tempered with rigorously democratic sexual politics. From "(Just Like) Starting Over" to "Woman," the mutuality of their vibrant love was celebrated as both a healing agent and a fortifying tonic, enabling the battered Lennon to re-emerge as a potent musical force even as he confessed he was most content "just sitting here watching the wheels go 'round and 'round." While spare and at times postcard-like in its compactness, *Double Fantasy* had a striking warmth, along with a quality of intimacy whose often-riveting magnetism eclipsed even portions of the breast-baring *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* (1970).

Like its predecessor, *Milk And Honey* is evenly split (in this case, a dozen songs to *Double Fantasy*'s fourteen) between Lennon and Ono compositions. All of John's songs date from the 1980 *Fantasy* sessions and show a determination to rock out with almost childlike abandon. "This here's the story!" he exclaims on the kick-off number, "I'm Stepping Out," and the elemental bounciness of the throbbing bass and heavy drum foot that underscore the outing are disarming to the point of intoxication. But the big treat is the vivid coloration in the effervescent vocals—never have the contours and textures of Lennon's wonderfully scrappy singing been framed to better, more spacious effect. This is a manifestation of Yoko's prudent decision to preserve the documentary integrity of these tracks, letting the unvarnished statements speak for themselves rather than costuming them with the kind of sugary overdubs Lennon had favored since *Mind Games*. I'll take the cold turkey Lennon anytime, from *Live Peace In Toronto* to his off-the-cuff rave-ups back when he co-hosted the *Mike Douglas Show*. And the boyish good humor that both the lyrics and their playful delivery exude is shivers-up-your-spine exhilarating:

If it don't feel right don't do it
Just leave a message on the
phone and tell them to screw it
After all is said and done
You can't go on pleasin' everyone
So screw it!

Lennon's mood is both complemented and ingeniously augmented by Yoko's slow-building "Sleepless Night." A sprightly, sexy reverie ("Sleepless night/ The moon is bright/ All I'm asking for is/ Three-minute love"), it opens with a dub-wise wash of sound and quickly slips into an echoy, addlepated narrative that might be Millie Small on dexedrine.

"O Sanity" is a solemn studio poem that promises Ono-brand tedium, then stops dead with a suddenness that leaves the reluctant listener red-faced—*fooled ya!* On "Borrowed Time," Lennon lures us inside a quasi-bitter soliloquy that erupts into an affectionate dismissal of adolescent phobias.

Then comes the spirited "I Don't Wanna Face It," a *whirring* tape delay intro spiraling into a gutsy, garage-band rave-up, Lennon rising to new heights of agitated *bonhomie* as he booms: "Well I can see the promised land/ And I know I can make it!"

The album is developing as a tit-for-tat exercise in oneupsmanship when Yoko returns with "Don't Be Scared," the airy, attenuated one-drop reggae tempo punctuated by impish trombone figures. Those who have little love for Yoko's atonal bleating will be startled by the girlishly ingratiating breathlessness of her singing here, layered to perfection with a creamy, sensual interplay of female backing vocals that should give the I-Threes pause.

Throughout the album, a raw, offhanded feel prevails, as first-takes and home tapings are unveiled and esteemed for the vitality they evince. The news they carry is not only that John Lennon is recording again, but that he's doing it with verve, wit, immediacy, relish. But *Milk And Honey* is no mere romp—not even by Lennon's previous standards of inspired self-indulgence. When he woos Yoko anew on "(Forgive Me) My Little Flower Princess," Lennon makes it plain that the stark flair of his earlier collaboration with David Bowie on "Fame" (1975) was actually a deft scrutiny of both their strengths. "Princess" effortlessly leapfrogs over Bowie's recent, studied "China Girl," fully realizing the darkly refractive Oriental tableau David had only taken a comic book stab at.

After this agile demonstration of mature rock invention, the album begins to grow strangely ominous. Yoko's "Let Me Count The Ways" is a plaintive thank you for the awesome highs and lows she and her mate have known together, a disquieting adult lullaby. Lennon responds with "Grow Old With Me," arguably the most haunting ballad he has ever written. A moving elegy, one wise step past the message of, say, "Maybe I'm Amazed," it consists only of piano, voice and a "tambourine"-set rhythm box. The closing cut is Yoko's "You're The One," an exquisite dance track somehow redolent of solitude, lightly ebbing and flowing, fervent recommitment giving way to bittersweet farewell. It evokes the approach of a storm, and then the devastating silence of its aftermath.

With *Milk And Honey*, John Lennon is back in our company again, making music informed with the gravity of four decades of experience but cast with the buoyancy of a brilliant first demo. For all his stunts and pratfalls, his excesses and hurtful withholdings, whenever he again opens his heart and hearth to us we are won back too damned easily. Cutting iconoclast, humble inheritor, profoundly gifted original, maddeningly mischievous son of a bitch, he's the kind of character that Miguel de Cervantes imagined in *Don Quixote* when he admonished that "he who lives well is the best preacher." And just as the mythical Quixote of La Mancha dreamed impossible dreams of men and their potential dimension, so Lennon has become an immortal legend in his own right. — ***Timothy White***

World Radio History

The Pretenders
Learning To Crawl (Sire)

The puzzling thing about the Pretenders, old and new, is the contrast between their slapdash technique and the depth of leader Chrissie Hynde's songs. That technical ineptitude was (and here continues to be) covered up by producer Chris Thomas in the studio, but in their onstage playing and, yes, their public image, the prevailing winds blew confusion. Certainly the late James Honeyman-Scott was a virtuoso, but in a band of bashers he was not about to be the one minding the beat. The band that contained Scott and (likewise deceased) bassist Pete Farndon ofttimes sounded expert at their craft on only one song per set, that one being the balls-out rocker "Day After Day."

Nonetheless, the band and Thomas managed to meld a Pretenders sound, largely because they had the patience to sit around and convert Chrissie Hynde's magic book of bass, drum and guitar licks, which she would hum or signal to them in the studio, into serviceable (and during Scott's solo breaks, sophisticated) rock 'n' roll. Her real musical gift was in her ear for top-heavy tempos ("The Phone Call" came hunching out of the speakers and *leaned* on you) and inspired vocal phrasing. Her musical heroes were the *bel canto* singers, people like Jackie Wilson and Tim Buckley who, once they had a good lyric, poured their guts into pure singing and let the meaning take care of itself. She added the interesting twist of *talking* lines or even whole stanzas, in a forcefully intimate way that came via Marlene Dietrich and Dirty Harry.

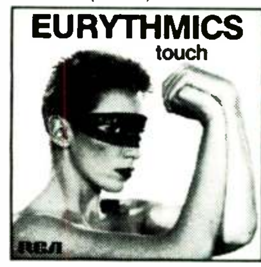
All of this needs saying in the face of this new Pretenders lineup, because the music they make is only just serviceable, so Hynde's singing is more important than ever. It seems churlish to press the point, but when the only two songs that approach past Pretenders heights—"Back On The Chain Gang" and "My City Was Gone"—are the work of pickup players Billy Bremner and Tony Butler (the latter, of course, bassist in Big Country) you begin to search for shortcomings in new guitarist Robbie McIntosh and bassist Malcolm Foster. (Drummer Martin Chambers remains the band's spiritual and rhythmic anchor.)

"Back On The Chain Gang" is a natural, eulogizing Scott and Farndon tenderly but not vulgarly. Bremner's guitar is both lyrical and tangy, and one chanted stanza offers a valediction purposefully blind to the dead men's drug abuse and puts the song on a defiantly loving plane: "The powers that be/ That force us to live as we do/ Bring me to my knees/ When I see what they've done to you...."

"My City Was Gone," by managing to wring poetry out of Akron, Ohio's modernization, speaks volumes about middle America and the expatriated Hynde herself. Seldom has she had a more sympathetic, evocative setting than Butler's melancholy, walking bass line and Bremner's James-Burtonish guitar. On the rest of the record, there's nothing that's less than interesting. Part of Hynde's London apprenticeship was served with Nick Lowe, and she's got his freebooting, unapologetic love of lifted licks: the Outsiders' 1966 "Time Won't Let Me," on the nicely nasty "Time The Avenger," the Rolling Stones' "Empty Heart" (as she confesses to Chuck Young elsewhere in this issue) on "Middle Of The Road," Johnny Cash (via Rank & File) on "Thumbelina." This latter songs addresses a "poor little thing" who's been "shifted around like a pawned wedding ring" and along with "Show Me," "Watching The Clothes" and assorted snippets, lends this album a motif of new motherhood that's entirely appropriate to Chrissie's current status.

Deaths, birth and time pressures have in fact made this set of songs quite autobiographical. But with the brooding Hynde, there's no simple trip to the laundromat. Allegories (in this case, about whites, coloreds and delicates) keep popping up, and you have to be prepared to travel from the Third World babies in tin shacks (early in "Middle Of The Road") to the harassed mama rocker's attempt to evade fans in the street. As elsewhere in her songwriting, love is somewhat between a punch and a kiss, and may even be a kind of suicide (viz. the rather watery cover of the Persuaders' "Thin Line Between Love And Hate"). In sum, Hynde's talking has often been better than it is here ("If you'd have been in the S.S. in '43/ You'd have been kicked out for cruelty") but her singing is in peak form. Through elided notes and artful vibrato, she takes the lyrically lean pickings of "2000 Miles" and makes rich musical fare of them. It's a talent she exercises liberally throughout *Learning To Crawl*, so that you finally have to believe that the title ultimately refers not to her new daughter, not to her view of the world as a Hobbesian jungle full of forced compromises, but to the status of the Pretenders. I think Chrissie Hynde is confident that despite turmoil, despite the kind of slights which reviews like this can't resist, her new bandmates will gain strength from her moxie and talent. They might even stand up and make another run towards the rock pantheon they began pretending to five years ago. — ***Fred Schruers***

Eurythmics
Touch (RCA)



Compared to the transient pleasures of most synth-pop chart fluff, the Eurythmics experience is no easy thrill. In fact, one doesn't just *like* a Eurythmics record like last year's *Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)*. The dramatic sweep of Lennox and Stewart's art-pop concepts and the scientific accuracy of their execution inspires a kind of unnatural awe, a noble admiration foreign to the usual MTV idol worship. The problem with awe, though, is that it implies distance, and the new Eurythmics album *Touch*, for all its wonders, does not always connect.

With its futurist island lilt and sunny vocal blend, "Right By Your Side," a recent British hit, is a real deceiver. Dave Stewart's overlapping calypso drum machines swing in perfect formation while Annie Lennox's voice—with strategic overdubs—laps up alongside the *ersatz*-steel drum synth part with just the right tropical fire. But the antiseptic choreography of the duo's every move sounds contrary to the lazy sensuality and carnal glow of their Caribbean intentions. There's also a little too much android stiffness in Lennox's gruff, Grace Jones vocal and the snorting, funk backbeat of "Regrets," while halfway into its seven minutes "Paint A Rumour," a moody, synth-meditation with toy keyboard bip-bops and vague Arab inflections, loses its way in a forest of Dave Stewart-dub mischief.

Still, that same advanced pop thinking and studio cunning yields powerful medicine in the misty electro-swirl, in Lennox's soft but fervent pleading and in the discreet sob of the string section in "Here Comes The Rain Again." Stewart later sucks you into the breathless disco whirl of "The First Cut" with a catchy guitar twang and rubbery funk intrusions, holding on through the slithering drone of "Aqua" (with its funhouse guitar and keyboard effects), and then setting you adrift in a strange, black reggae space called "No Fear, No Hate, No Pain (No Broken Hearts)" lit by Lennox's operatic flashes. And even that hat-trick doesn't beat "Who's That Girl," the simple plaintiveness of Lennox's voice heightened by her own high, siren wails and Stewart's heartbeat syncopation.

The trouble with *Touch*, though, is distinguishing its intellectual appeal from its emotional impact. Not exactly too clever for their own good, Lennox and Stewart sometimes just try too hard, their insular duo approach exaggerating the distance already between them and

World Radio History

their audience. There is no question that Eurythmics have the "touch." Yet, you can't help but wonder how many people feel it. — ***David Fricke***

Various Artists
Zulu Jive (Earthworks ELP 2002)
Viva Zimbabwe (Earthworks 2001)
The Sound Of Kinshasa
(Original Music 102)

It may come as a shock to fledgling lovers of African music that Sunny Adé and juju music is far from the most popular music in Africa. Until recently, in fact, Sunny was barely known outside Nigeria. The vast African continent has a multitude of regional styles flowing across national borders in response to radio play, record distribution and bootleggers constrained by neo-colonial economics. Anyone just turning on to African sounds has a whole heap of exploring to do. Luckily, a sudden stream of African releases, covering the Congo and points south, has just made the multi-faceted world of African music much more accessible.

The most popular music in Africa must be the lilting, guitar-based rumbas known as Congo. Its coast-to-coast popularity has held firm for nearly twenty years, and dozens of regional variants have sprung from the Zairian original. A Congo orchestra typically involves a brace of guitars, trap drummer, electric bass, percussionists, singers and a horn section, but guitars (intertwining in a unique, fingerpicked style) and voice always predominate. At its best, Congo is magically seductive, gently hypnotic and danceable.

Many people, on first hearing Congo music, say it sounds "Spanish" or "Cuban." There's no better way to understand Congo's Afro-salsa sound than to listen to *The Sound Of Kinshasa*, John Storm Roberts' magnificent historical sampler of Congolese music. In fourteen tracks he traces the evolution of Congo over thirty years with a selection of rare recordings mastered from Congolese singles virtually unobtainable by Westerners. High points include the traditional feeling of "Masida Ngalina" (which features acoustic guitar and assorted percussion), the stinging guitar work of master guitarist Franco on "Bomboko Awuti Na New York," and the introduction of a chiming guitar orchestra underneath the ethereal vocals of the great Rochereau. Because many of these tracks come from poorly-recorded singles or 78s, the fidelity is low, a limitation for those who want to get off on Congo's unique, aural beauty. But the LP remains essential for those who can appreciate sublime music-making in less-than-ideal circumstances.

The Congo influence can be felt on *Viva Zimbabwe*, an exuberant sampler of recent (mostly post-independence) Zimbabwean dance tracks. As with Jamaican music, where independence unleashed ska, the first national style to smash the stranglehold of calypso and American R&B, a Zimbabwean style has broken the dominance of Congo and Zulu jive in Zimbabwe. Or more accurately, Zimbabwean musicians have melded elements of jive and Congo with Shona traditional music to create a new style.

As *Viva Zimbabwe* shows, the new style offers driving, uptempo dance music in a stripped-down combo format that is much less complex than many African styles. A couple of guitars, a bass, drums, one percussionist and perhaps an accordion or horn, form the basis for a kind of African folk-rock. These musicians snap, pop and crack the music, avoiding the widespread African tendency to flow gently. So celebrated chart-topper Thomas Mapfumo's inspirational anthem "Ndamutswa Nen-

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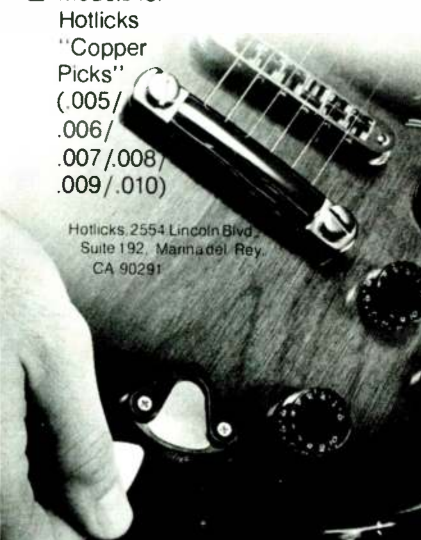

goma (Drums Have Woken Me Up)" has the ringing thrust and jet-stream harmonies of early Byrds. On "Zvoku Mayadhi (Affairs Of Domestic Servants)" by Devera Ngwena Jazz Band, rapid-fire, double-picked guitar and bass licks propel a neo-Congo ditty, forcing it to rock as no Congolese band would. The album fairly bursts with exuberant energy, the joy of liberated people.

In contrast to Zimbabwe's happy simplicity, the South African township *shabeen* music compiled on *Zulu Jive* seems darker, rougher, more soulful. There's a country-ish feel to the playing that recalls early Chicago blues, likewise the music of country folk newly ensconced in a harsh, urban environment. The typical Zulu jive sound, as played by Aaron Mbambo, is a kind of rollicking stomp-on-the-fours drums, finger-picked guitars, a wheezy accordion or pennywhistle and bluesy, insistent vocals in front of funky harmony. Sometimes, as Joshua Sithole's tracks demonstrate, reggae's one-drop bass drum and scrubbing organ sound emerge. It's great, gut-bucket music to chase the blues—indeed all three LPs invite you to dance your blues away. — ***Randall F. Grass***

Van Halen
1984 (Warner Bros.)

Was George Orwell ever prepared for this? Big Brother meets the band with the Big Balls and the noise is enough to blow out windows over an entire New York city block. Guitarist Eddie Van Halen whips off half a dozen breathtaking variations on the hot-damn solo that got Michael Jackson's "Beat It" on white rock radio while rhythm boys Michael Anthony and Alex Van Halen cook like Krakatoa in heat. And above all, David Lee Roth wails with enough cartoon macho huff 'n' puff and barnyard sexual innuendo to make Iron Maiden blush.

Okay, Van Halen have basically been making the same album over and over again since their 1978 atomic-bop duet. But if they're not above sharp criticism (they still can't muster up thirty minutes of solid original material per LP), how do you argue with a band that goes about their wrecking-ball rock with such good locker-room humor and physical jubilation? "Hot For Teacher" is fast and lewd, at once a chummy parody and dizzy celebration of high school punk lust with Roth matching Alex Van Halen's super-Burundi drum intro with some real bow wow wow. There's no school, though, that teaches the kind of bizarre guitar math Eddie Van Halen counts off in "Girl Gone Bad"—serrated chords coming down in asymmetric chops between his impossibly elastic twang and maniac string hammering.

For those of you keeping count, *1984* is the year Van Halen adds synthesizers to its act. No, not the prissy tick-tock of Depeche Mode's or Vangelis' whipped cream swirl. No, this is real *man's* electronics. Even on the subdued strutter "I'll Wait" with its vaguely baroque Yes/Genesis outline, Eddie Van Halen's synthesizer sounds like a pipe organ shot through a fuzz box and a stack of Marshall amps. And the fat hydraulic pump of that synth, combined with the core riff's uplifting arc, makes "Jump" Van Halen's best pop shot since their 1979 hit "Dance The Night Away."

This *1984* won't win any Pulitzer prizes but a little Van Halen joyjuice once a year can do wonders even for the most avant-garde sourpuss. Just take *1984* in the spirit in which it was made: Big Brother is watching and who gives a good goddam? The party's down *here*. — ***David Fricke***

Various Artists
The World's Worst Records (Rhino)

I probably shouldn't be admitting it, but it's projects like this that really get a reviewer's juices flowing. No sooner did I get this out of its package than I was headed for the turntable; my editor, upon having this review proposed to him, broke out in giggles of anticipation. It isn't the prospect of unleashing this month's supply of snide remarks that makes *The World's Worst Records* so appealing—if I only wanted to be nasty, this would have been a review of Andy Gibb's new album—so much as it is the *totality* of the thing. Bad records, after all, are a dime a dozen, but *truly terrible* records are perverse treasures and ought to be accorded the same respect as, say, reruns of *My Mother The Car*.

World's Worst promised to deliver the goods. Not only was it assembled with the assistance of Michael Ochs and Dr. Demento, two guys who ought to know garbage when they hear it and remember it for years to come, but the folks at Rhino even went so far as to tape a barf bag to the back of the jacket. Class packaging, right? And sure enough, there are some real buffalo biscuits here. Starting off with "The Crusher," a 1964 stinker that found the Novas growling wrestling holds as if they were new dances sweeping the nation, the collection churns up such gone-but-

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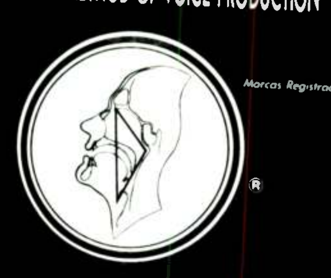

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misbegotten items as "Kazooed On Classics" by the Temple City Kazoo Orchestra, a record that made Louis Clark continue to laugh his way to the bank; and Jimmy Cross' classic "Teen Angel" send-up, "I Want My Baby Back." Some of the records are laughably inept, like Gloria Balsam's searching-for-the-right-note "Fluffy"; others, like the hysterically bloated "Surfin' Tragedy" by the Breakers, are masterpieces of misconception.

But to tell the truth, a lot of this album *simply isn't bad enough*. "I Wanna Be Your Dog" by the Seven Stooges (Moe, Larry, Curly, Iggy, Ron, Dave and Scott) is a clever idea but it doesn't measure up to Jump N the Saddle's "Curly Shuffle." Barnes & Barnes' "Boogie Woogie Amputee," by contrast, is merely stupid. Other tracks, such as Ogden Edsl's "Kinko The Clown," Heathen Dan's "I Like" or Wild Man Fischer's "Young At Heart" seem like little more than refugees from the next Dr. Demento album. Frankly, this won't do. If Rhino wants to use this album as a sort of hazardous-waste disposal site for singles stinking up their vaults, that's their business. Personally, I was hoping for some of the classics of radio dread: David Geddes' "Run, Joey, Run"; Rick Dees' "Disco Duck"; and Dan Hill's gut-wrenchingly maudlin "Sometimes When We Touch." Those, folks, are records that *really* make including a barf bag worthwhile. — ***J.D. Considine***

Kip Hanrahan
Desire Develops An Edge
(American Clave)

Kip Hanrahan orchestrates and records Latin percussion with such clarity and presence that you rediscover what a drum is, find some terminal essence of wood, skin, hand, effort, time. His first album, *Coup De Tete*, started from there and proceeded to one of the smartest mixes of avant jazz and rock on wax, a series of chilling, sometimes anomic cityscapes and one of the best albums of its year. *Desire Develops An Edge*, aside from hands-down winning my private album-title-of-the-year award, likewise starts on the head of a drum but opens out, freed from the rigidity of a funk bottom, into a two-disc song cycle of surprising warmth and passion, and gives up the game of mixing genres by situating itself well beyond them. It's not a rock album, not a jazz album, but a Latin album—I hope *somebody* plays it on the radio. This is a very personal piece of work, and not at all what I

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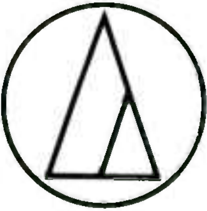

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PICK HITS

VIC GARBARINI ***Hot:*** **John Lennon & Yoko Ono** — *Milk And Honey* (PolyGram); **the Pretenders** — *Learning To Crawl* (Sire); **Cyndi Lauper** — *She's So Unusual* (Epic); **Various** — *Los Angelenos—East Side Renaissance* (Rhino); **Def Leppard** — *Pyromania* (PolyGram); ***Cold:*** **Christine McVie** (Warner Bros.); ***Live:*** **Cyndi Lauper**—MTV New Year's Party, Savoy, New York City.

DAVID BRESKIN ***Hot:*** **Kiri Te Kanawa** — *Chants D'Auvergne* (Decca); **Big Country** — *The Crossing* (PolyGram); ***Singles:*** **Bob Dylan** — "Jokerman" (Columbia); **Rufus & Chaka Khan** — "Ain't Nobody" (Warner Bros.); **Cheryl Lynn** — "Encore" (Columbia); ***Cold:*** **Stevie Nicks** — *Wild Heart* (Modern); ***Live:*** **Earl Van Dyke** at the Fairlane Club, Dearborn, Michigan.

FRANCIS DAVIS ***Hot:*** **Anthony Davis** — *Hemispheres* (Gramavision); **James Blood Ulmer** — *Odyssey* (Columbia); **Johnny Griffin** — *Call It Whachawanna* (Milestone); **Dave McKenna** — *Hoagy Carmichael Celebration* (Concord Jazz); **Coleman Hawkins** — *Coleman Hawkins Set* (Verve); ***Live:*** **David Murray** and Strings at Sweet Basil, New York City.

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expected. I like it a lot.

So who is this Hanrahan? In the liner notes he likens himself to a film director and that seems fair. He plays no instrument and this time leaves the vocal duties to Jack Bruce—a wise move: Bruce is sensational, and Kip's non-vocalist vocals were always a sore point with me on *Coup*. He appears briefly in a scary, vulnerable monologue near the end and has one percussion credit. What he's done is much of the composing, all the producing, conceptualizing, hiring, firing, sweating the aesthetics and the bucks—in short, it's his idea and he gets to say what goes.

The lyrical territory is much the same as last time—love's sexy minefields and the trickiness of identity—but the lyrics sound a lot better, partly because of Hanrahan's growth as a poet but mostly because of Bruce, who is unforgettable. He is impassioned without losing his grip on the particulars of any song, and commands a surprising emotional range: this is the work of a mature artist, the speech of an honest voice. Beneath him moves a complicated, nocturnal beast, whose limbs are the inimitable percussion (mostly Jerry Gonzales and Puntillo Orlando Rios), untypically discreet use of the trap set (Ignacio Berroa, Anton Fier), a series of miracles on electric bass perpetuated mostly by Steve Swallow, though there's also some Bruce and Tacuma tonal and atonal guitars played by Haitians and Arto Lindsay respectively, and strong tenor playing from John Stubblefield and especially Ricky Ford. There is expertise in every atom of this music, and detail upon detail of invention in each of its aspects and admixtures, but what skulls me about the album is the depth of feeling that emerges from the aggregate, how heartfelt and romantic it is, even, in acceptably confused and urban terms. All of these intertwined megamusicians have conspired to generate a single voice. Hanrahan has extraordinary taste in musicians with extraordinary taste. My favorite cuts fall outside the song cycle as such, Haitian celebrations called "What Is This Dance Anyway?" and "Don't Complicate The Life," played by a large and very happy-sounding ensemble, more festival than party music but you could party to it all the same. Hanrahan is two albums into a very interesting career. His stuff sounds like nothing else out there, and I have no idea what to expect next. The album ought to be available on street corners, but if it's not, order from N.M.D.S., 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012, and tell 'em Groucho sent ya. — ***Rafi Zabor***

World Radio History

Nina Hagen
Fearless (Columbia)
Nena
Nena (German CBS)

Tired of pop? Think you've heard it all? You obviously haven't been listening to Nina Hagen. Any one of *Fearless*'s ten tracks can induce dizziness and shortness of breath. For longer doses, listeners should proceed with extreme care: with Hagen, the line between euphoria and nausea is perilously thin.

Nina Hagen is a German hurricane with a frightening vocal range. She can veer from a shrill shriek to Howlin' Wolf baritone rasp, and does, often in the same phrase. If that weren't enough, her songs justify the approach with bizarre subject matter and general hysterics.

With virtually everything sung in English, *Fearless* is the most accessible plunge yet into Hagen's swirling psyche. The opening "New York, New York" even pays sarcastic tribute to that city's music clubs: Hagen rattles off their names against a stompy dance beat. When not sounding like the devil in *The Exorcist*, she chirps in sing-song or shows off her classically-trained voice in mock-operatic passages.

But the full Hagen effect comes through better on songs with anachronistically cosmic sentiments. "Flying Saucers" is a paean to UFOs as universal panacea. "The Change" affirms that "there is no such thing called death." "I Love Paul" balances musical disco clichés against the Hare Krishna chant.

Gabriele Susanne "Nena" Kerner is another female German vocalist, but there the resemblance with Hagen ends. *Nena*, her debut album, can't match Hagen for inspired mania, but it does contain quality high-tech pop. Relying more on keyboards than guitar, her eponymous band covers a variety of styles: electrodance ("Kino," "Nur Getraumt"), "heavy" rock ("Noch Einmal"), dreamy pop-rock ("Einmal Ist Keinmal," "Vollmond"), and early Ant-music ("Indianer").

Nena's airy singing is well suited to these tunes of yearning love and adolescent fantasies. She also adds a winsome touch to the anti-war "99 Luftballons," whose ethereal melody and Wagnerian-funk bridge has won over the dance club crowd. Since all the vocals are *auf Deutsch*, the album's appeal is limited, but fans of pop exotica and anyone who'd rather dance than listen will find *Nena* a distinct, if minor, pleasure. — ***Scott Isler***

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World Radio History

ROCK SHORT TAKES

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

Womack & Womack — *Love Wars* (Elektra). This duo comes with an impressive pedigree—Cecil Womack is from the same clan as Bobby and Curtis, while wife Linda is Sam Cooke's daughter—so perhaps it shouldn't come as a surprise that *Love Wars* is the answer to any R&B fan's prayers. The singing is marvelously soulful, an ideal distillation of gospel roots and commercial smarts, but what ultimately carries the album is the uncluttered aptness of the rhythm arrangements and the resonant depth of the songs, from originals like "T.K.O." or "Catch And Don't Look Back" to an incandescent reading of the Stones' "Angie."

Don Felder — *Airborne* (Asylum). More than any other alumnus of that band, Felder has achieved a workable simulacrum of the Eagles' sound, perhaps because his guitar was the essential element of that sound, but more likely because he couldn't think of anything else to do. At least that's the impression the songs give; aside from a few mildly diverting rockers, like "Bad Girls," *Airborne* could as easily have passed for *Life In The Slow Lane: The Eagles' Greatest B-Sides*.

Real Life — *Heartland* (MCA/Curb). On one level, this Australian quartet is nothing more than the latest refinement in the Gary Numan school of post-Bowie synthpop, but that sounds too much like a dismissal for a band this likeable. Not only does Real Life produce songs instead of just a couple of hooks set out in a verse/chorus arrangement, but they're catchy little suckers as well, from the romantic uplift of "Send Me An Angel" to the wry bop of "Always." Could be this year's Flock Of Seagulls.

Dr. John — *The Brightest Smile In Town* (Clean Cuts). I don't know about his smile, but it's clear enough that Dr. John has the brightest approach to solo piano on record these days, and this album ought to be welcomed by everyone who fell over for *Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack*. It may even supplant that album in a few hearts, since the lightly romantic melodies and off-hand vocals which grace this album give it the sort of down-home genuineness its predecessor only suggested. (Box 16264, Roland Park Station, Baltimore, MD 21210)

Specimen — *Batastrophe* (Sire). The Next Big Thing? Ha—Motley Crue for the Anglophile set would be closer to the truth. But what do you want from a group who acts as if glitter had been invented by *The Rocky Horrorshow* and then copied by Bowie? At least these guys know how to make singles, and songs like "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" are a hoot by anybody's standards. But when do they record "Bela Lugosi's *Still* Dead"?

David Bowie — *Ziggy Stardust: The Motion Picture* (RCA). Speaking of Bowie and glitter, here's the album to consult should you ever wonder just *how* sick Bowie got of doing Ziggy.

The Chieftains — *The Year Of The French* (Shanachie). The Chieftains' greatest strength has always been ensemble playing, their ability to coordinate the swirl of fiddles, flute, harp and uillean pipes that runs through their reels and jigs, so it ought not to seem too unusual to find them working with full orchestra for this TV soundtrack. Though things get a bit portentous at times, as in the melodramatic "McCarthy's Arrest," there's enough rollicking energy and undisguised joy in these pieces to make the listener forget that it's only a movie. (Dalebrook Park, Hohokus, NJ 07423)

Chic — *Believer* (Atlantic). Unlike the last few Chic albums, which seemed to have been built around the angular chatter of Nile Rodgers' guitar, *Believer* homes in on the tension between the rigidity of the rhythm machinery and the muscular wallop of Tony Thompson's drumming. Unfortunately, it's a lot easier to hum angular guitar lines than muscular thumping.

P-Funk All-Stars — *Urban Dancefloor Guerillas* (Uncle Jam). Here's where George Clinton's cast-of-thousands approach really pays off. Because each track acts as a cameo appearance for such P-Funk alumni as Bootsy Collins, Junie Morrison, Gary Schider or Phillipe Wynne, the net effect is like a *Best Of* collection featuring all new material (well, mostly new—"Generator Pop" and "Pumpin' It Up" preceeded the album singles). This is Clinton's best effort since *The Mothership Connection*.

Re-Flex — *The Politics Of Dancing* (Capitol). Any group suggesting that Big Brother would have better luck if he went on the radio and let us know it ain't nuthin' but a party probably deserves a place in 1984, but not on my turntable.

Sweet Honey In The Rock — *We All...Everyone Of Us* (Flying Fish). The singing put forth by this six-woman *a cappella* group is surely breathtaking, combining the righteous fire of gospel testifying with the passionate insistence of soul harmonizing. But the songs are something else again, social critiques so strident and unforgiving that they batter and intimidate the listener until it's hard not to wonder if even great singing is worth such punishment. (1304 W. Schubert, Chicago, IL 60614)

Minutemen — *Buzz Or Howl Under The Influence Of Heat* (SST). Instead of the post-Ramones rave-ups that serve as the staple of most hardcore bands, the Minutemen offer an attack that accelerates the sort of white funk practiced by the Comateens to speeds illegal on most interstates. It's a sharp move, making the music brittle and propulsive in a way that pulls you into the pulse instead of flattening you under it, but what else would you expect from a band witty enough to use overblown recorder lines to imitate feedback and perceptive enough to write something like "I Felt Like A Gringo"? (P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260)

Trouble Funk — "Say What?" (D.E.T.T. 12-inch). The Redskins' offense isn't the only "Fun Bunch" in D.C.—it's hard to imagine a more enjoyable dance strategy than Trouble Funk's horn-spiked, percussion-heavy go-go style dancebeat. Part of the appeal is the way a song like "Say What?" manages to sound like a jam while carefully regulating each internal climax, but the key to Trouble Funk's appeal is their ability to make the beat so melodic that you *can* hum along (are you listening, Chic?). (3834 Ironwood Place, Landover, MD 20785)

The Slickee Boys — *Cybernetic Dreams Of Pi* (Twin/Tone). While we're on the subject of fun bands from our nation's capital, Washington's favorite garage-rock maniacs finally have an American album that has everything their shows would leave you expecting: low-budget guitar heroics, wickedly

continued on page 112

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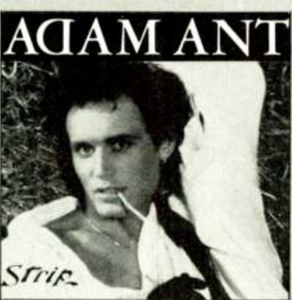

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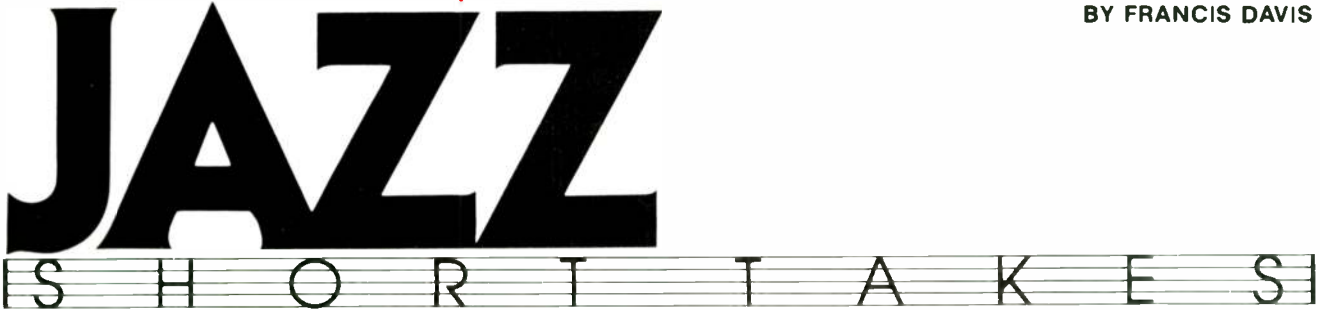

BY FRANCIS DAVIS

Jazz At The Philharmonic (Verve). Did crew-cut college boys really used to holler "Go, man, go!" at jazz concerts in the 1950s? They sure did and you can hear them loud and clear on the ten budget-priced volumes of *JATP* concert performances from 1947-57, just reissued by PolyGram Classics. The obvious lure of the *JATP* concerts was that they promised civilians the hot licks musicians supposedly reserved for one another at the fabled after-hours cutting contests. What a fallacy! When paying customers are present, musicians go for the crowd. In retrospect then, like the Dixieland return to basics a decade earlier, *JATP*'s get-hot-fast exhibitionism represented little more than another hasty escape route from the increasing intellectualism of modern jazz. The story of *JATP*, as told on these ten records, is largely a story of wasted opportunitites: Charlie Parker and Lester Young are together onstage on *Bird And Pres At Carnegie Hall '49*, for example, but all the pandemonium going on around them denies them a chance to interact. Still, evidence suggests that some music of enduring merit was presented by *JATP* in the solo sets featuring one artist, if not in the jams. *The Ella Fitzgerald Set*, consisting entirely of previously unissued material, is a pleasure from start to finish; and *The Coleman Hawkins Set*, which also boasts its share of new material, is even better, capturing the great tenor saxophonist at two of his creative peaks. *Blues In Chicago 1955* is the most satisfying of the jam sessions, with Dizzy Gillespie and Roy Eldridge vying for the stratosphere on a blues, Gillespie and Young brushing lightly on "The Modern Set," and Young offering a lovely "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" on the ballad medley. It ought to be pointed out that whatever its shortcomings, *JATP* rescued from undeserved obscurity such heroes of the late swing era as Charlie Shavers, Bill Harris, Benny Carter, Willie Smith, Ben Webster and Flip Phillips, all of whom have their innings in this series. But take it from me, listening to all ten records consecutively can be a numbing experience. The titles I've not already mentioned are *The Drum Battle, The Rarest Concerts, Norgran Blues 1950, The Trumpet Battle 1952, One O'Clock Jump 1953* and *The Challenges*.

Original Jazz Classics: If you don't already own *Monk's Music*, **Miles Davis'** *Collector's Items*, **John Coltrane's** *Settin' The Pace*, **Bill Evans'** *Portrait In Jazz*, **Art Blakey's** *Ugetsu*, **Mal Waldron's** *The Quest* and **Oliver Nelson's** *Screamin' The Blues* (these last two with blistering Eric Dolphy) on twofers, the opportunity to purchase facsimile editions of the original covers should be all the incentive you need. Not all the entries in the latest release of Prestige and Riverside *OJC*s (from Fantasy) are "classic," but it's good to have most of them back in circulation, particularly *When Farmer Met Gryce* and *The Rat Race Blues*, two dates spotlighting the imaginative playing and writing of altoist **Gigi Gryce**, who faded from view in the mid-60s, and died last year without ever receiving his just due. The other reactivated titles are *Red Garland's Piano, Jackie McLean & Co., Back Country Suite* (**Mose Allison**), *On The Sunny Side* (**Paul Quinichette**), *New Trombone* (**Curtis Fuller**), *The Cats* (**John Coltrane/Tommy Flanagan/Kenny Burrell**), *Bill Harris And Friends* (with magnificent Ben Webster), *That's Him* (**Abbey Lincoln**, with Sonny Rollins and Kenny Dorham), *Last Chorus* (**Ernie Henry**) and *Chet* (**Baker**, that is, who benefits from some spare but beautiful accompaniment from the young Bill Evans).

Dizzy Gillespie — *One Night In Washington* (Elektra/Musician). More manna from the Bill Potts/Jack Towers production/engineering team that has already delivered similar bounty from Charlie Parker and Lester Young, this is especially valuable for its Afro-Cuban material, which seems even more provocative (and pertinent) now then it must have in 1955. Dizzy is never bolder nor more inspired than when he stands in front of a big band, and the superb D.C. orchestra he fronts here is equal to every challenge he hurls its way.

Thelonious Monk — *Evidence* (Milestone); *Tokyo Concerts* (Columbia). Neither of these posthumous releases tells us much of anything about Monk we don't already know, but how good it is to hear them! And how consistent a performer he was, eccentricities and all! The Milestone combines the unused quartet portion of the Riverside *Monk Orchestra At Town Hall* with outtakes from *Live At The Blackhawk*; the Columbia is the first domestic issue of a double long available from Japan, with an especially rousing version of "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You."

Kenny Burrell — *Bluesin' Around* (Columbia). Tasty sessions from '61 and '62, and I have no idea why they weren't issued sooner. In addition to the guitarist's usual blues-based urbanity, there are dapper touches by Hank Jones and whistling solos by the irrepressible Illinois Jacquet.

Not everything new this month is old, to wit:

Johnny Griffin — *Call It Whatchawanna* (Milestone); **Jimmy Smith** — *Keep On Comin'* (Elektra/Musician). The centerpiece of the Griffin LP is a rapturous and brilliantly sustained eleven-plus-minute "Lover Man" and the rest is very nearly as good. Griffin displays as fertile a harmonic imagination as exists in jazz, and a rhythmic zeal that is contagious. And the rhythm section of Mulgrew Miller, piano; Curtis Lundy, bass; and Kenny Washington, drums, is as tuneful and alert behind the tenor saxophonist as it was behind singer Betty Carter. Griffin and his winking blues "Call It Whatchawanna" combine with guitarist Kenny Burrell to add a touch of class to Smith's live date, as unadorned and funky a record as the organist has made in years.

Freddie Hubbard — *Sweet Return* (Atlantic); **Woody Shaw** — *Night Music* (Elektra/Musician). If all of Hubbard's records were as righteous and swinging as his new one (with Lew Tabackin, Joanne Brackeen, Eddie Gomez and Roy Haynes—fabulous group), we critics would leave him be, and I bet he'd still make a decent living. Shaw puts out only good records, but *Night Music*, drawn from the same live performance that yielded the excellent *Master Of The Art*, lacks the pacing and variety that might have made it one of the better ones.

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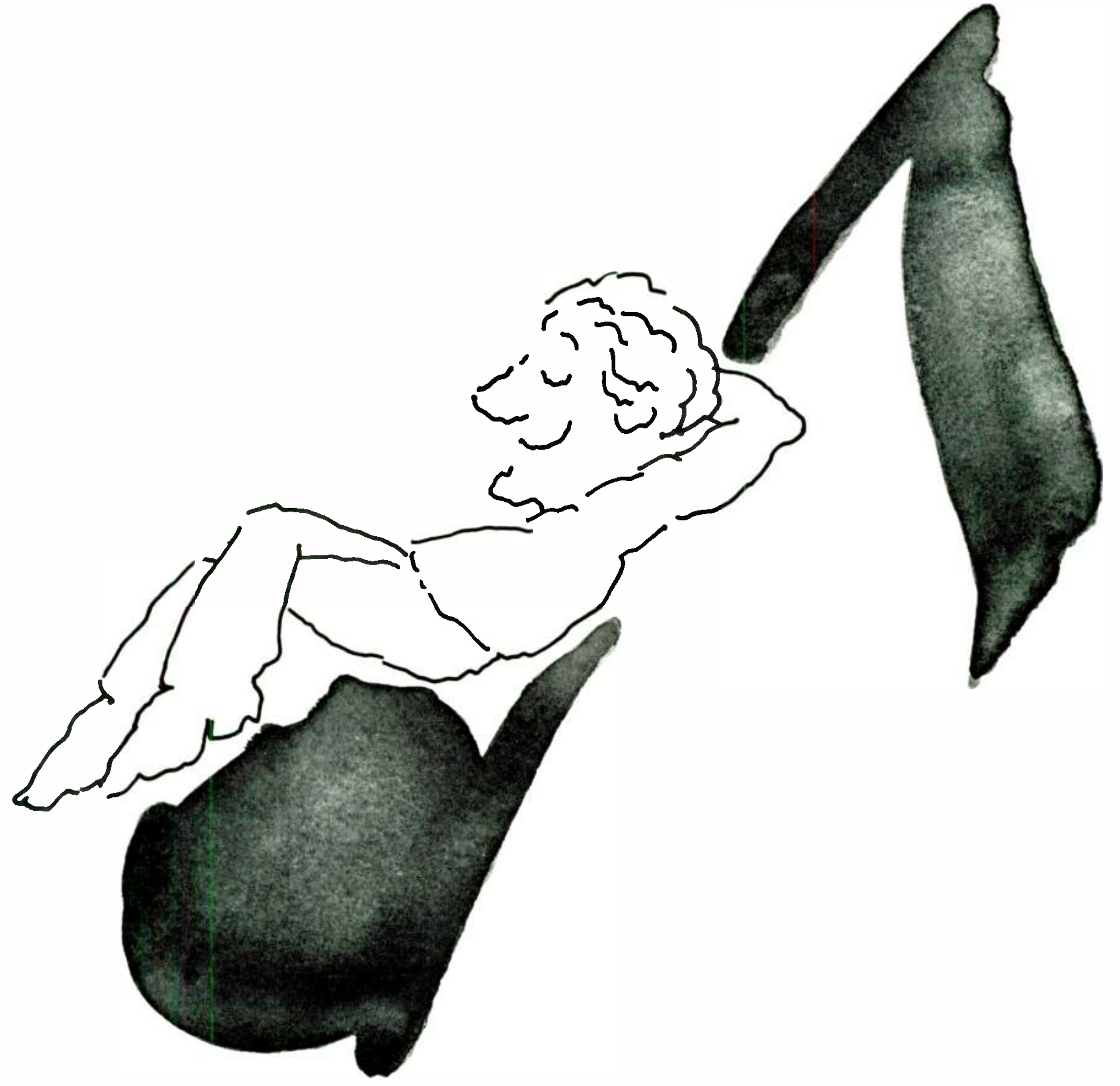

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Rock Shorts from page 106
warped lyrics and a great cover of "Pictures Of Matchstick Men." Now if only they could figure out a way for us to hear how loud their clothes are.... (445 Oliver Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55405)
Arkansaw Man "Every Job" b/w "Mark Twain" (Subterranean single). This is reductionist funk of the best kind, as jaggedly tough as early Gang of Four and as ruthlessly stripped-down as vintage PiL, yet boasting a supple grace that our British cousins never succeeded in grasping. (677 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110)

Jazz Shorts from page 108
Dave McKenna — *A Celebration Of Hoagy Carmichael* (Concord Jazz). The most sophisticated of latter-day stride pianists and the most homespun of vintage American tunesmiths make an inspired match, especially on a flapping "Riverboat Shuffle" and a fragrant "Stardust." Highly recommended.
Big Sky Mudflaps — *Sensible Shoes* (Flying Fish). The problem with revivalism generally is that the demons that pursue innovators seldom bother with revivalists. But the good time these country swing (more like country bop) revivalists promise, they deliver, and at any rate, it's good to hear Judy Roderick again.

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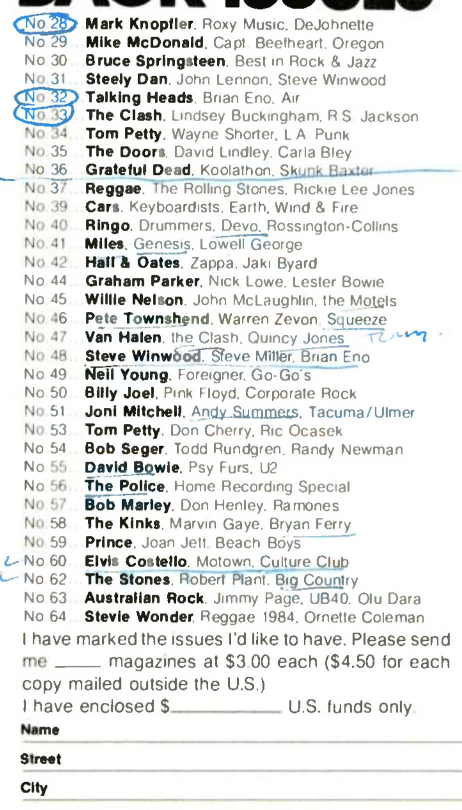

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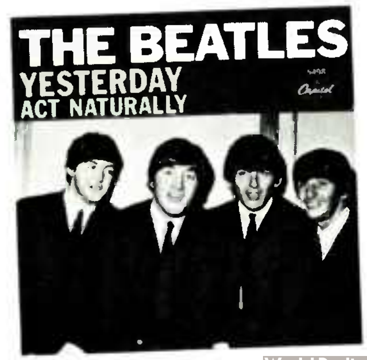

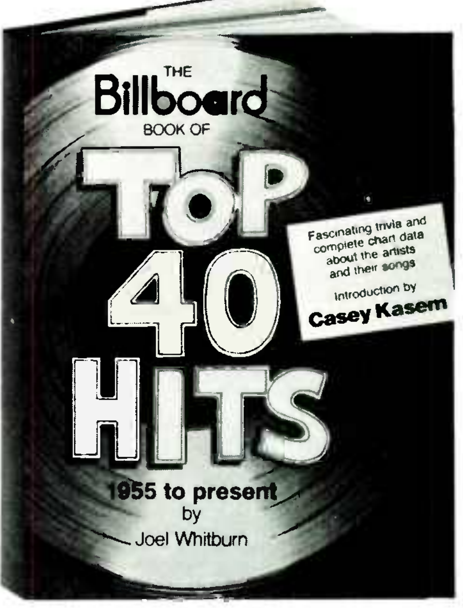

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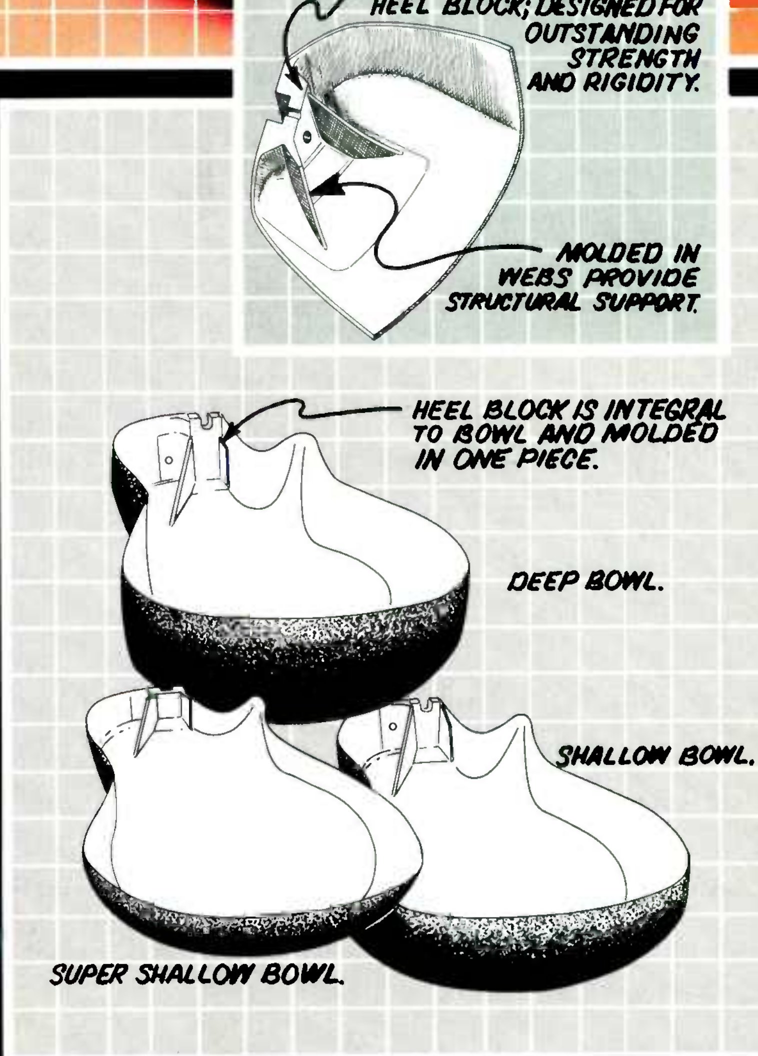

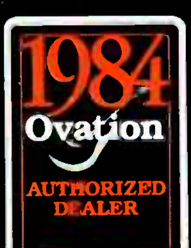

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