BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN LIVE • THE ASSEMBLY • CYNDI LAUPER

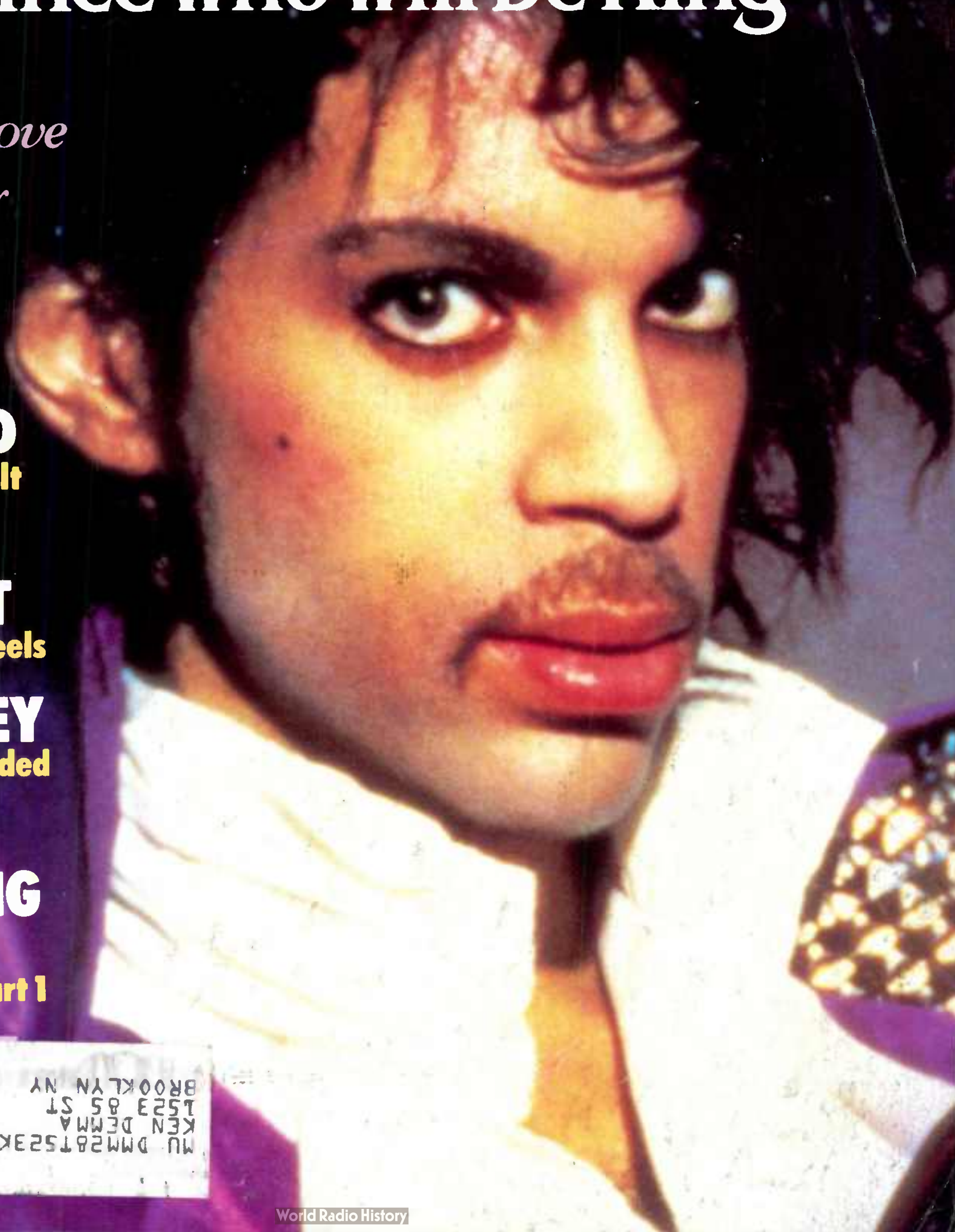
MUSICIAN

$1.95 NO. 72, OCTOBER 1984

◆A Prince who will be King◆

The Kid Makes His Move

by Scott Isler



LOU REED
Rock 'n' Roll Adult

ROD STEWART
Beck Bolts Rod Reels

GLENN FREY
The Eagle Has Landed

HOME RECORDING STUDIO
Build Your Own Part 1

World Radio History

The KORG MIDI

More options, more control, more accessible, more affordable.

POLY 800

As the manufacturer of the largest selling electronic keyboards in the United States, Korg was one of the first to make a longterm commitment to the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) System.

EX 800

Tapping the enormous potential of this universal interface, we are building the **Korg MIDI System**: a comprehensive arrangement of MIDI-equipped synthesizers, expander modules, drum machines, synchronizers and computer software designed to give you the most "user-friendly" control over your music for composing, arranging, recording, scoring and live performance.

We started off by establishing a new class of synthesizers with our precedent-setting **Poly 800**, the first lightweight and portable eight voice polyphonic synth. It offers you 64 professional-sounding programs, digital control over 50 parameters, built-in sequencer and MIDI interfacing, in a remarkably affordable keyboard.

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RK 100

World Radio History

System

POLY 61-M

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KMS 30 SYNCHRONIZER

Korg's dedication to MIDI means more than *just* a succession of system-related products. It involves a growing library of Musical Software, like our Korg 4 Track Sequencer and a Music Scoring program. Our software will be constantly updated and expanded to maximize the system's potential control over music.

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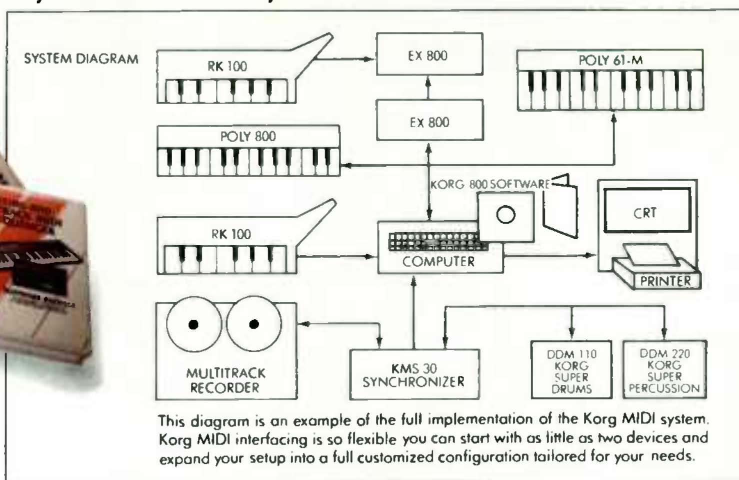

This diagram is an example of the full implementation of the Korg MIDI system. Korg MIDI interfacing is so flexible you can start with as little as two devices and expand your setup into a full customized configuration tailored for your needs.

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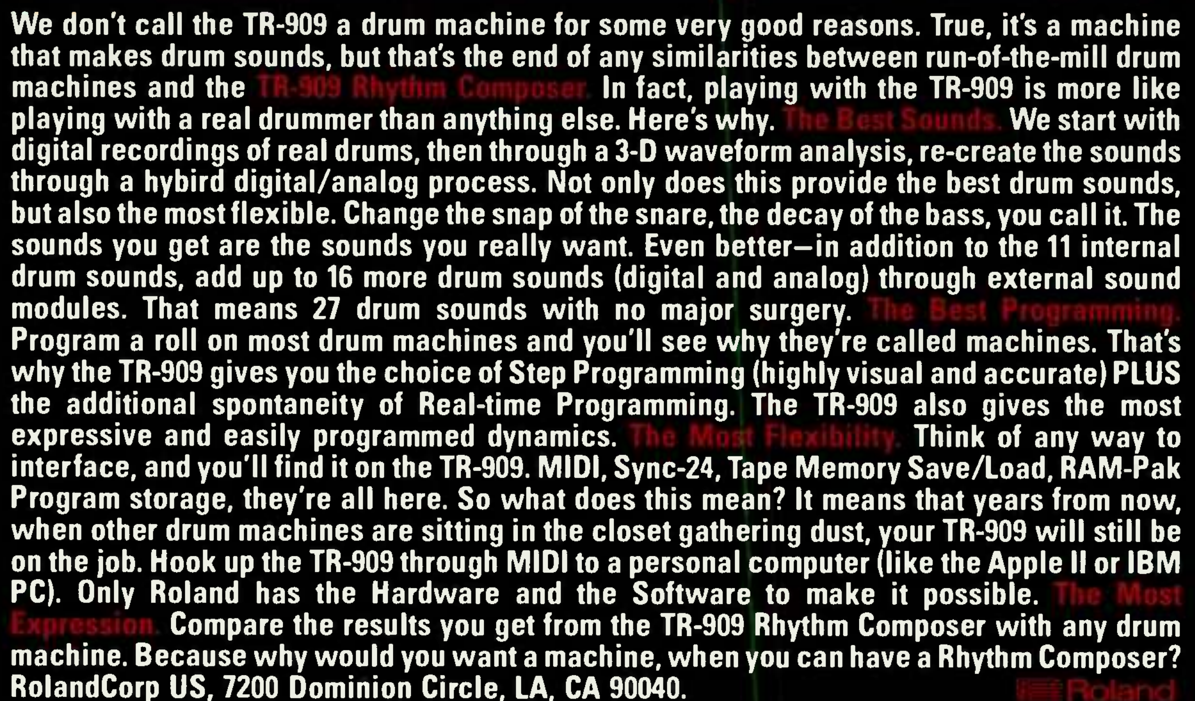

Roland Makes It Happen!

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MUSICIAN

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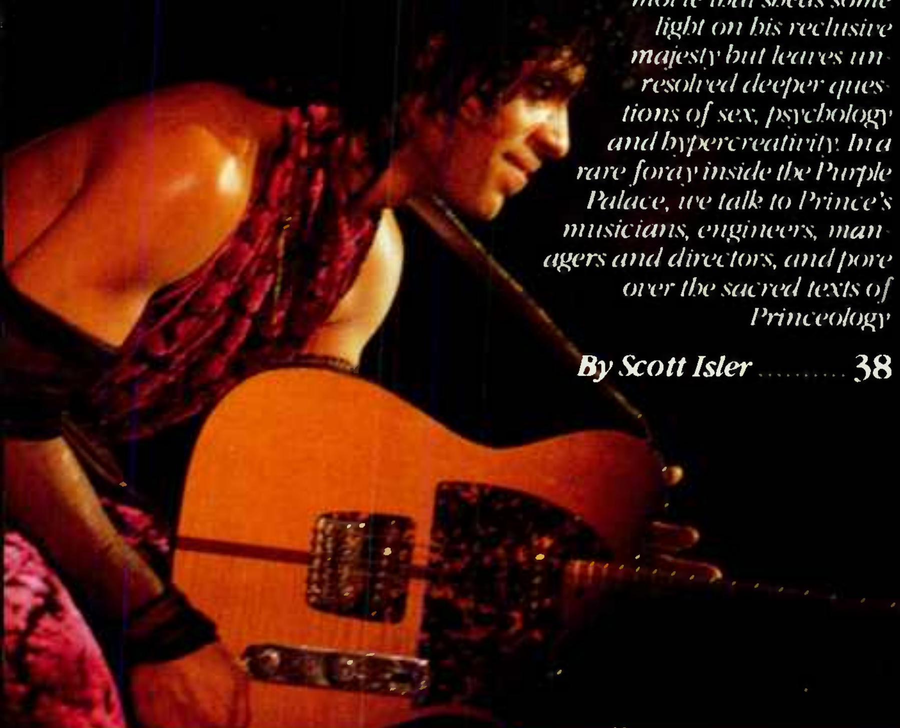

PRINCE

The Raining monarch of casebook crossover makes an autobiographical movie that sheds some light on his reclusive majesty but leaves unresolved deeper questions of sex, psychology and hypercreativity. In a rare foray inside the Purple Palace, we talk to Prince's musicians, engineers, managers and directors, and pore over the sacred texts of Princeology

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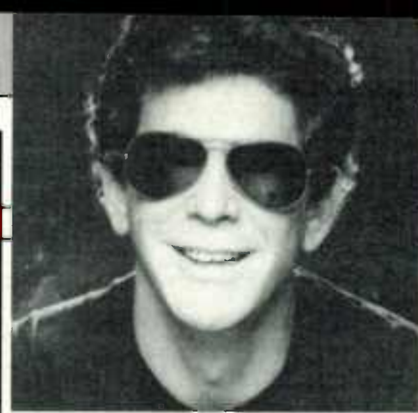

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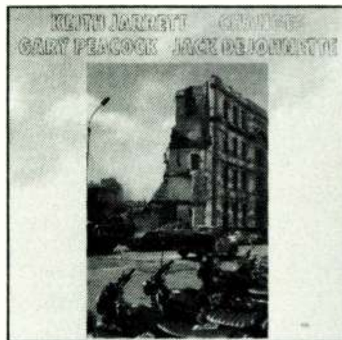
Keith Jarrett
Changes

with Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette



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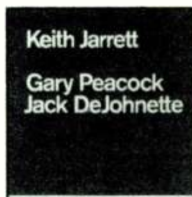

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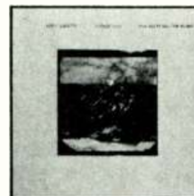
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Invocations/The Moth and the Flame

Digital recording

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Sam Holdsworth
Assoc. Publisher/Ad Director
Gary Krasner
Executive Editor
Vic Garbarini
Art Director
Gary Koepke
Managing Editor
Jock Baird
Promotion Director
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Production
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Typography
Don Russell
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Cindy Amero
Administration
Michelle Nicastro Paula Amato
April
Main Office/Production/Retail Sales
31 Commercial St., P.O. Box 701
Gloucester, MA 01930 (617)281-3110
New York Advertising/Editorial
MUSICIAN, 1515 Broadway, 39 fl.
N.Y.C., N.Y. 10036 (212)764-7400
Group Publisher
Gerald S. Hobbs
Circulation Manager
Barbara Eskin (212)764-7467
Subscriber Service
Gregory Thompson (212)764-7536

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Letters

MICHAELMANIA

Where *Time* and *Rolling Stone* failed, *Musician* succeeded!

As an avid Michael Jackson fan, I was ecstatic to finally read an intelligent article on the megastar. Instead of concentrating on the usual sensationalistic drivel, your magazine actually addressed the substantive social and cultural issues raised by Michael's success.

Debbie Kortokrax
Bowling Green, OH

It's just too bad the Jacksons could care less about their fans. First, they pack them into 80,000-seat football stadiums; then they charge $28 [*Actually $30*] for tickets. Then to top it all off you must order a minimum of four tickets. The answer to the burning question "what happened to Michael Jackson's other glove?": He used it to thank his fans with this slap in the face.

Frank Ingenito
Hicksville, NY

I almost canceled my subscription to *Musician* when I saw Michael Jackson on the cover. If I wanted to read about his over-used face, I could buy some trashy teenybopper magazine.

I AM SO SICK OF MICHAEL JACKSON I COULD PUKE!!!

Karin Friedemann
Ann Arbor, MI

Paul Weller once argued that "The public wants what the public gets." To me, Michael Jackson is proof. We like our music benign. Give me Christopher Cross any day.

Robert J. Reilly-USN
USS Shenandoah (AD-44)
FPO New York

Nelson George's attempt to attach racial and political significance to Michael Jackson's unprecedented *pop* triumph is outstandingly manipulative—forgivable only because, like paint on a slick surface, it doesn't stick.

George complains about "prevailing reactionary currents powered by big money and a national nostalgia for a white bread past." Never mind wondering how something "prevailing" could also be "reactionary"—the real question is: Could Michael Jackson dance if he carried a Nelson George-sized chip on his shoulder?

Scott McTigue
New York City, NY

REM RAP

Why did you subject the readers of *Musician* to the cover picture of Michael Jackson when you had a fantastic article on a fantastic band like R.E.M. in the same issue?

What are you trying to do, get a few more sales from the teenybop crowd?

Elisa Grey
Providence, RI

Sometimes you just can't win! I mean here you have R.E.M., a band who have a style all their own, make damn good songs, aren't "pretty & flashy," and best of all they're American. You'd think *some* people would be satisfied that there is still some classic rock 'n' roll sense left in the U.S.A. But noooo! We want bands that sound like Def Leppard, like Bon Jovi, ad nauseam. This country is sometimes achingly slow to catch on.

By the way, I always thought the U.S. Air Force was on our side?

Bill Nelhart
Shamokin, PA

Finally! An intelligent article about an intelligent band! David Fricke shed light on what R.E.M. really is, instead of using some preconceived notion of what they might be or should be. R.E.M. does not need to be categorized or interpreted, just appreciated.

Elizabeth Breen
Fresno, CA

THE ARTISTS SPEAK

I'm mad.

In your April issue Roy Trakin calls Alex Chilton a "wasted shell." That's a pretty serious claim to make about any human being, and it is also a LIE. Roy, you know Alex and should know better.

In New Orleans a few weeks ago A.C. was in grand shape—articulate, vigorous, and still excited by music, nobody's patsy and nobody's peer.

Look, I don't usually care. But you really struck a nerve with this one. If you're gonna malign my friends, don't put my name in big letters on the same page.

Chris Stamey

There are some misunderstandings in my interview with Peter Keepnews that I want to straighten out. I'm not saying that Peter didn't quote me correctly. What bothered me when I read the interview was what I think got left out. I did say that if people wanted something different from what I'm doing they could listen to Grover Washington. But I continued to say that Grover Washington is excellent at what he does, so I don't want people and I definitely don't want Grover to think that I'm putting myself and what I'm doing above what he or anybody else is doing. I'm still a young musician trying to learn how to play different kinds of music that I find valid and challenging. Therefore, I don't want to get put in the position of putting down what other musicians do. If I don't like it, I listen to something else. If people don't like what I do, *they* listen to somebody else. That's all I was trying to say.

Branford Marsalis
Brooklyn, NY

RUBBER REACTION

Bravos to Jock Baird for his documentary on Rubber Rodeo. When I subscribed to *Musician* last year, it was this sort of journalism that I was anticipating, not the over-abstracted bloat of *Rolling Stone*. It's a credit to his good taste that he kept his own ego out of the way of his subject.

It is the rock writer's responsibility to relate the musicians to their consumers with the accent on the musician. Jock's article was commendably telling in that respect; my only criticism might be that the producer came off with more dimension than the band members somehow, but in this era of record and video producer *king*ship (it is a sexist field, isn't it?), Jock may have only been telling it like it is.

Patty Dewing
St. Louis, MO

RUSH SHORT TAKES

Here's some of the throng of letters received about the Rock Short Take of Rush's Grace Under Pressure:

Anyone who calls Rush mindless either thinks lyrics are irrelevant or is incapable of understanding them.—*Ken Younts;* I consider Rush some of the most talented musicians in the music business today, and would strongly suggest that the staff of *Musician* take an intensive course in music theory to get an idea of what some groups are actually doing.—*Steve Helland, Mankato, MN;* I'm surprised *Musician* printed it. The only conclusion one can draw from comparing the Police and Rush is that they are both rock bands, and that they are both good at it.—*Braxton Howle, Plainview, TX;* Up until now I was impressed with your magazine.—*Mad in Minnesota, Kurt Fasen;* Comparing Rush and the Police is ridiculous.—*Jeff Beemer, Napa, CA.*

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If you want the realism of PCM digital sound. And the sophistication of computerized control. You want the Technics SX-K250 Portable Keyboard.

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The science of sound

World Radio History

MUSIC INDUSTRY NEWS

SCOTT ISLER

VIDEO GOES TO THE MOVIES

You wanted your MTV, and you got it. Now some six hundred U.S. movie theaters are giving you your MTN, whether you want it or not.

MTN isn't a new vitamin but the Music Theatre Network. The organization's first offering is Concert Cinema, a quarterly offering of single-song clips distributed as shorts to first-run movie houses. The operation kicked off July 1 with the **Police**, **Van Halen** and **Styx**. Every three months Concert Cinema will serve up a batch of performances for participating theaters.

The footage comes from concert videos which MTN has transferred to 35mm film in a widescreen format and Dolby stereo. The company claims to have spent over half a million dollars perfecting a video-to-film process, although the results still look like video-to-film. MTN matches artist to theater so Ingmar Bergman audiences won't be jolted by David Lee Roth. Proving that great minds think alike, American Screen has distributed 35mm prints of **Roger Glover**'s "The Mask" video to twenty theaters in southern California.

There's also a punch line: In the best tradition of free enterprise, each Concert Cinema clip ends with a twelve- to fifteen-second commercial. Pierre Cardin menswear is the first client. The films are available without the ads, but then theaters have to pay rental fees. So far no theaters are showing the commercial-free versions.

MTN owners **Robert Wilson** and **Robert Kardashian** (with athlete **O.J. Simpson**) have the expertise to make Concert Cinema click—they co-founded the very heavy trade paper *Radio & Records*—and they seem to be succeeding. A survey of theater managers shows that "audience response is beyond expectations," says R&R marketing vice president Les Carroll. Judging from present and upcoming artists under consideration, Concert Cinema's roster will be barely more expansive than MTV's. Later this year MTN plans to distribute full-length concert films as weekend bookings.

So not even the big screen is sacrosanct. Concert Cinema brings music videos to you—with a brief message from our sponsor.

REAGAN ON THE CHARTS (NO BULLET)

Ronald Reagan is a man for all media. Our pres not only has a distinguished movie and TV career behind him, he also dabbled in the record industry. RCA signed a contract with Reagan in 1954, and released a spoken-word album, *Tales Of The Great Book*, on its Bluebird children's label in 1959.

John Edmunds, owner of the Nickelodeon record store in Dixon, Illinois—Reagan's hometown—learned of the album during a local celebration of Reagan's birthday this year. He and mayor **Jim Dixon** decided to re-issue the record on their own Nickelodeon label as *Ronald Reagan Reads Stories From The Old Testament*. (Funny, he doesn't look Jewish.)

Dixon says RCA's copyright expired in 1982. The label disagrees, and got a temporary restraining order to halt sale. Nickelodeon had distributed 10,000 copies, and was ordering 50,000 more. Dixon has said his record company might contribute some profits toward the upkeep of Reagan's birthplace/museum.

Mayor Dixon is a Democrat.

DEAD AS A DRUMMER

E Street Band drummer **Max Weinberg** is the proud father of *The Big Beat*, a book of "conversations with rock's great drummers." (*Musician* excerpted his chat with **Charlie Watts** in our July issue.) But Weinberg should have proofread his publisher's press release, which referred to "such late great rock drummers as **Keith Moon**, **Ginger Baker** and **John Bonham**."

Okay, so growing olives in Italy may not be your idea of living life to the fullest. Baker, though, isn't ready to be shoved into a coffin just yet. Poor guy—he probably thought he outlived all those walking-dead rumors (drumsticks taped to hands, etc.) that turned Cream's farewell tour into a vicarious Ginger Baker deathwatch.

Keith Moon assures us he's still dead, making this his longest-running prank yet.

PARTY MUSIC

Times Have Changed, number 43 in a series: Fifteen years ago the **Jefferson Airplane** released *Volunteers*, their most acerbic album. Recorded while the group was shell-shocked from the 1968 Democratic convention, the album in essence urged listeners to kill their parents as quickly as possible.

Comes the 1984 Democratic convention, and the band has changed its tune—and name, to **Jefferson Starship** ten years ago. The Starship played at a party for delegates hosted by California assembly speaker **Willie Brown**. They did not do any *Volunteers* material.

The Democrats aren't the only party looking for a good band. Republican officials considered asking **Michael Jackson** to appear at *their* renomination wingding. Jackson had been to the White House in May for lending his song "Beat It" to a campaign against teenage drunken driving. "We never thought we had a ghost of a chance," confessed convention manager **Ron Walker**.

CAROL SEITZ

PHOTO FLASHES

Musician staff photographer **Deborah Feingold**, bestower of silver-halide immortality, gets some recognition of her own in *Rock Photo*, a one-shot publication from *Modern Photography*. Feingold is one of ten "top photographers" chosen by editor **Roman Kozak** as the epitome of their craft. Yay, team!

BOYSWAX

The next time you think **Boy George**'s complexion looks waxy, make sure you're looking at the real thing. La Boy celebrated his twenty-third birthday by unveiling a figure of himself at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London. George is the youngest person ever to get the Tussaud wax treatment. Other music figures in the museum are the Beatles, Elvis Presley and David Bowie. Can Duran Duran be far behind?

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The sounds of a momentous decade

Here are the *great vocalists* singing the great songs: Tony Bennett with "Rags to Riches," Jo Stafford with "You Belong to Me," Nat Cole crooning "Mona Lisa," Eddie Fisher with "Oh My Papa." Here are the *duos, trios and groups*: the Mills Brothers, Les Paul and Mary Ford, the Weavers, Bill Haley and the Comets. Here are the *great bands and orchestras*: Count Basie, Harry James, Ray Anthony, Gordon Jenkins and Mitch Miller.

And there are *rarities* too. The panel included hard-to-find recordings such as Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly singing "True Love" (the only record she ever made). The inimitable Louis Armstrong doing "Mack the Knife." And Jane Froman with her emotional rendition of "I'll Walk Alone."

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The 1⅞ IPS tape speed lets you play pre-recorded tapes. And there's also Dolby* B and C noise reduction, zero play/zero stop, optional remote control and outstanding specs.

For mixing, there's the MM30 4 x 2 mixer with built-in analog delay, 7-band master graphic equalizer, and LED peak reading meters.

And the RB30 combines the MT44 and the MM30 in a system rack complete with patch bay and accessories compartment.

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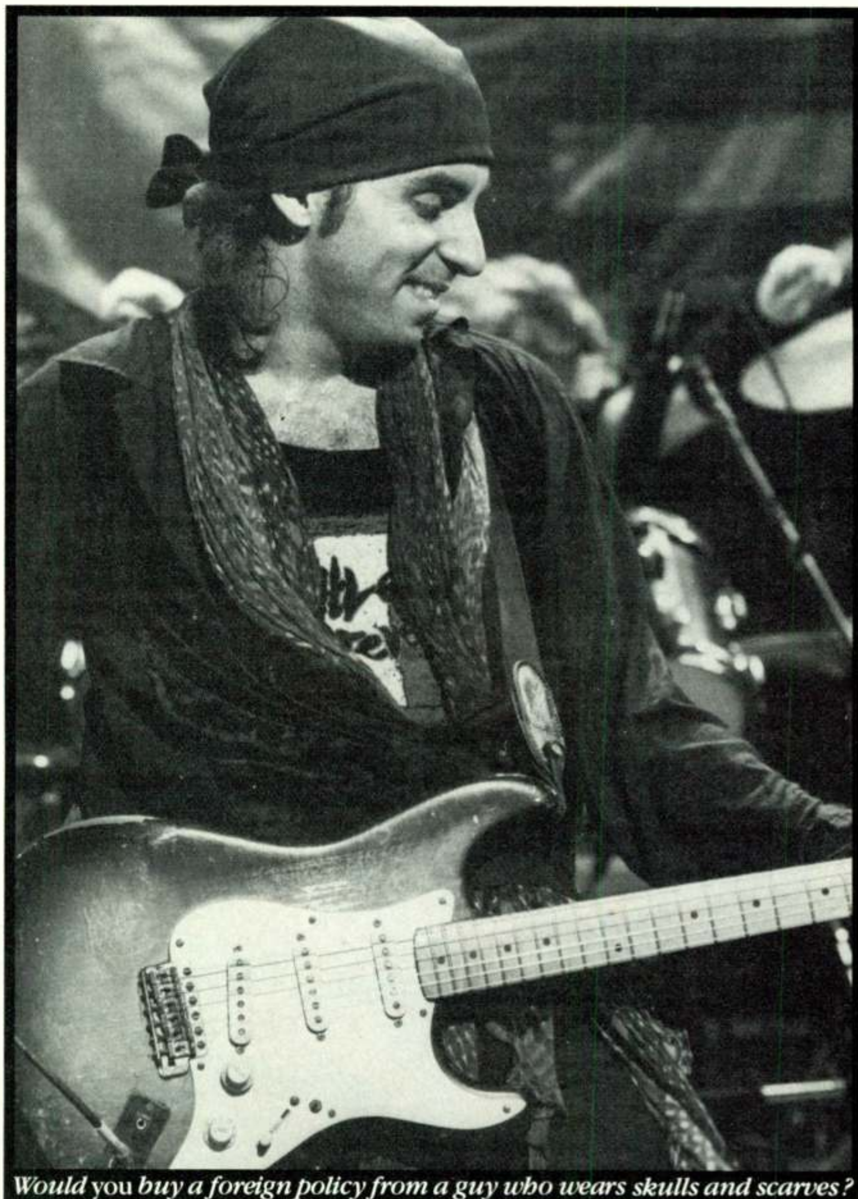
World Radio History

LITTLE STEVEN


JOHN BELLISSIMO/RETNA

Would you buy a foreign policy from a guy who wears skulls and scarves?

BY STEVE POND

THE PIRATE OF PEN-ZANDT PREACHES NEW AMERICAN AXIOMS

Ladies and gentlemen! On the guitar, Poet of the Soul, Master of Rock 'n' Roll, the man who brought you such great hits as 'I Don't Want To Go Home,' 'Sweeter Than Honey,' 'This Time It's For Real,' 'Some Things Just Don't Change,' 'Daddy's Come Home' and 'Trapped Again': Miami Steve Van Zandt!

The introduction is instantly familiar: Bruce Springsteen had his rap down cold when it came time to introduce the guy who stood off to his left swathed in scarves and headbands, who joined in on stories, played a solo or two and added dead-on rhythm guitar and wonderfully nasal backing vocals to the Big Show.

Now, the introduction is also history. While his former employer marches across the country with Nils Lofgren in charge of rhythm guitar and scarves, Steve Van Zandt—his own Boss—makes a concept album about post-World War II U.S. foreign policy, a politicized message of such one-dimensional determination that one writer has already dubbed him "political cartoonist Little Steven."

"I don't see any limitations on rock 'n' roll," asserts Van Zandt, who tends to speak as well as sing in forceful, simplistic axioms. He is sitting beside the pool at L.A.'s Sunset Marquis hotel on a hot, smoggy day that has natives gasping for breath but Van Zandt beaming (that's why he acquired the nickname "Miami"). He's festooned with typical Little Steven touches: half a dozen rings sporting skulls and snakes, a black vest, a red scarf tied around his head. And a new twist—a dozen thin braids hanging down to the middle of his chest, lending an Indian touch to his gypsy-pirate sartorial splendor.

And we're supposed to listen to this guy sing about foreign policy? Well, yeah. Steve Van Zandt may look like a cartoon character, and his politics may not be sophisticated, but there's no mistaking his passion. He has written terrific rock 'n' roll music since Southside Johnny's graceful, bittersweet "I Don't Want To Go Home" eight years ago; now, on his second solo album, a newfound political consciousness fuels songs like the blistering "Los Desaparecidos (The Disappeared Ones)."

"Rock 'n' roll isn't entertainment, it's *motivation*," Van Zandt snarled, in an ambitious, personal—and misguided—movie he made to accompany his first solo record, 1982's *Men Without Women*. And though he's since shifted sights from romance to considerably shakier rock 'n' roll terrain, he still has a way of explaining himself in "case-closed" axioms. He even has one about why he dresses so silly.

"They're there to remind us not to waste time," he says of the skulls and snakes that adorn his jewelry. "The skull is *us*; the snake is the god of death. We ain't gonna be here too long, man, so let's make the most of it."

Something about Europe brings out the patriot in American rockers. After the E Street Band toured the continent in 1981—"the first tour where the band really came together," says Van Zandt—Springsteen returned home singing the

World Radio History

distinctly American tunes of Woody Guthrie and John Fogerty, pausing in the middle of shows to recommend Nevins and Commager's *History of the United States*, and later producing the records *Nebraska* and *Born In The U.S.A.* His guitarist was paying attention.

"That was one of the tours that did it," he says. "On my new record I was writing as an American, but I wrote the songs in Europe, and I think it feels that way. I think (Springsteen's) universal truths come from a very American, and sometimes rural setting. But in Europe that point of view communicated on a purely emotional level, and seeing that moved me."

Something else about Europe affected the politically naive Van Zandt: a widespread hostility toward America. Van Zandt wanted to know why; he studied, found an answer or two, and eventually wrote *Voice Of America*. "They don't like us for absolutely legitimate reasons," he says now. "Because we're so isolated, historically and geographically, we never know what goes on beyond our borders in our name. I think if Americans really knew, they wouldn't allow it."

But does Van Zandt himself know? He freely admits he's no expert—"I don't want anybody taking my word for anything"—but says he's on a piecemeal crash course: "I started reading books and paying more attention to the news, talking to people and directing more of a focus on it." He's also asked aides to find him a political advisor.

"The ideals of America are being compromised to the point of no return," he says. "And since World War II our foreign policy has been colored by a fear of communism that has made us commit immoral acts. Simple as that."

He pauses, then adds, "Well, *not* as simple as that...."

This is, of course, the trouble. Rock 'n' roll has a knack for reducing complicated political questions to "simple as that" equations, and *Voice Of America*'s force and purposefully direct style often oversimplify its issues.

Simple, politically-directed pop is currently in vogue, however, from young idealists like Big Country and the Alarm to such relative vets as U2. Van Zandt saw and liked those groups, and he's also heard critics call those bands naive. "What else is a cynic gonna say? That's part of being young, isn't it? Give them a break."

But when he attributes their naivete to youth, Little Steven sidesteps the connection between their work and his own record, which, with lines like "I see peacemakers coming/ I see justice in our time," seems ripe for similar charges of naivete.

Side two of *Voice of America*, for instance, begins with the album's fiercest rocker, "Los Desaparecidos," and ends with the anthemic "Undefeated (Everybody Goes Home)," a song whose point, says Van Zandt, is "if you're fighting, you've already lost." In between those tunes is a sinuous reggae tune subtitled "And The River Opens For The Righteous." Van Zandt has already been attacked because of the title, and chorus, of that song: "I Am A Patriot."

"That was perhaps the most difficult song I will ever write," he says. "It's the most difficult line I can imagine saying, and I stared at it for six months, knowing I had to say it. I put myself in the situation of a Latin American who doesn't have the sophistication to tell one political ideology from another, who says, 'Wait a minute, I'm not a communist, I'm not a capitalist, I'm not a Republican or a Democrat. All I am is a patriot, so leave me alone and let me live with some dignity.' I consciously put it in a third-world setting, but it also satisfied what I wanted to say as an American."

If Steve Van Zandt's fervent idealism, his belief in the power of rock and his newfound attention to American history seem familiar, it may be because a well-known friend of his exhibits many of the same symptoms. Ask him about the Springsteen parallel, though, and he shrugs and looks at the table.

"It's hard to say, isn't it?" he says. His words become slow and deliberate. "I think we were attracted as friends for some reason. I think we probably got into rock 'n' roll for idealistic reasons, but

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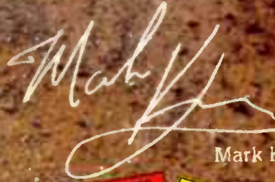

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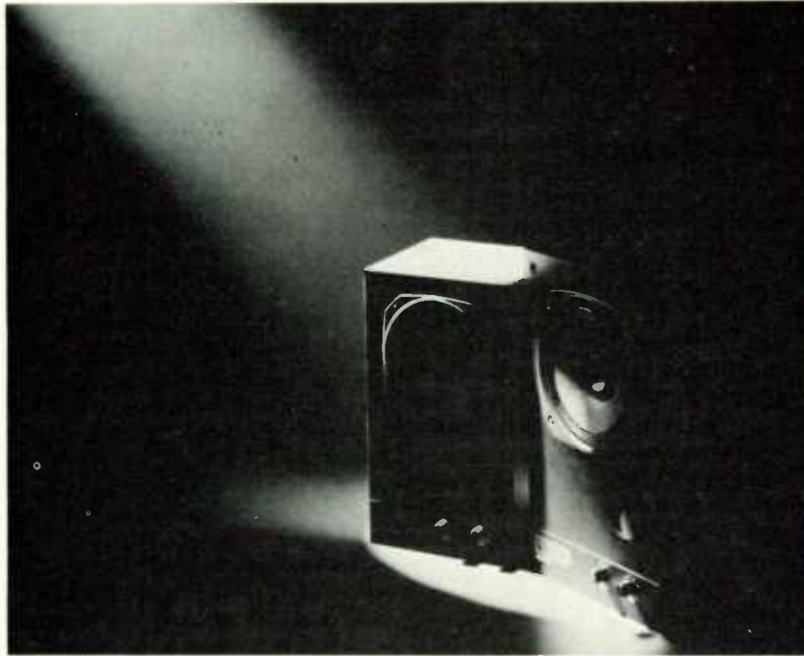

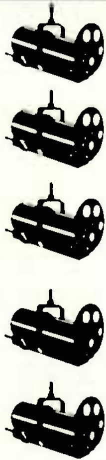

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I hope *everybody* did at some point.

"Certainly you had to in the 60s, because if you weren't one of the nine guys in the Beatles or the Stones, you might as well work in a factory. You had to be emotionally moved rather violently when you were playing nine to five every night for fifteen dollars a week."

That's precisely what Steve Van Zandt, Bruce Springsteen, Southside Johnny Lyon and a host of others used to do at the Upstage Club in Asbury Park. Van Zandt had grown up a half-hour from that faded resort town.

He actually gave up music for a while in the early 70s, disgusted by too many half-hour guitar solos. What he didn't realize, he says, is "once it's in the blood, forget it." Through a bass player he knew, he got a job playing the oldies circuit with the Dovells, an assignment he accepted because it would take the self-described "up-and-coming degenerate gambler" to Vegas. He met heroes like Ben E. King (for whom he wrote "I Don't Want To Go Home," though he was too embarrassed to ever show the tune to King); he also found he was virtually the only musician in the band who liked the oldies they were playing every night. (The first record he bought was Little Anthony's "Tears On My Pillow"; he also remembers falling for the likes of "Pretty Little Angel Eyes" and "Duke Of Earl.") And he began doing sets with a band that served as the basis for the Asbury Jukes.

"I was the lead singer," he says of that original outfit. "Johnny was in the band, but he was the harmonica player, the singer on some of the bluesier songs, and the troublemaking sideman—which is still his actual personality. When I left and gave him the band, he hated it. Never forgave me, I think."

But Van Zandt took another offer in 1975, though he remained the Jukes' producer, sometime manager and chief songwriter until 1978. "I didn't realize what I had going," he says, "all I could see was more arguments with the bar owners. So I said, 'Lemme get out of town for a while and have some fun with my friend Bruce,' who I never got to see." A laugh. "I stayed seven years."

He hung around, he says, because he had a lot to do. "I joined as a guitar player, but right away I started arranging, and the fifteen-minute 'Jungleland'-style things turned into 'Badlands.' Partly that's because that's what *Bruce* wanted to do," he quickly amends, "and partly because I hear things in terms of three- and four-minute singles."

Never the chief producer on any Springsteen track, Van Zandt did "whatever was needed: a bass part, a drum fill, the sound of something, an edit, a speed-up or slow-down. Bruce was always very liberal in the studio, he always had a very creative environment

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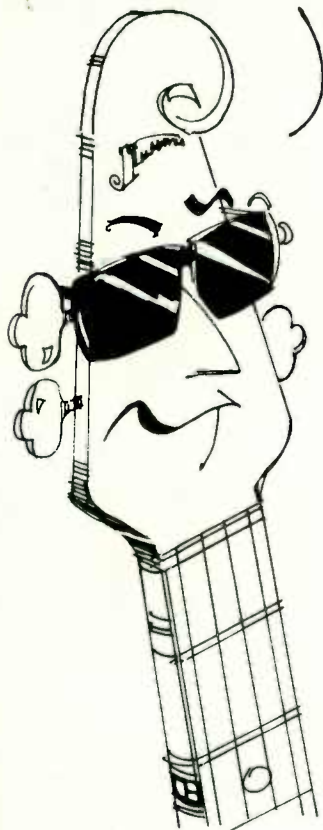

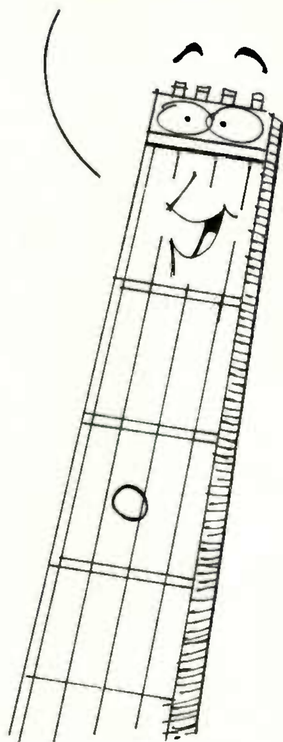

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when he was making a record. It was always, 'Take your time, let's come up with the best thing,' though by the new album we did things very quickly in the studio. I'd have a hundred suggestions per song, but he never said, 'Enough, shut up, this is *my* record.' It was fun, you know." He pauses. "Most of the time."

And now it's over, Van Zandt moving on "partly because he had absorbed a lot of the things I'd be doing for him anyway, partly because I had my own thing to do.

"To me," says Van Zandt, "the story of this record is in some ways the story of my life. I felt the clouds sort of open up and I knew exactly what I wanted to do, how I wanted to do it and who I was. I think on the first record I explored who I was; you can feel the struggle. Now I really think I'm doing something nobody else is doing. I wasn't sure I was ever gonna find that."

Because Little Steven's album was released a mere two weeks before Springsteen's, the two are rivals competing to see whether buyers will go for an album called *Born In The U.S.A.* or one called *Voice Of America*, a single titled "Dancing In The Dark" or one titled "Out Of The Darkness." Van Zandt laughs about the similarities, which haven't helped him in the marketplace.

"If that's not good for me, then so be it. The mega-dollars attitude, I've been there. I made a lot of money one year, the year I helped produce *The River* and we did that big tour. Bruce had a reputation for being successful quite a few years before he really was, but that was the only year anybody made money."

At which point Steve Van Zandt made yet another discovery. "I found out that I don't need a lot of money to live," he shrugs. "In the end, it was nothing but a big tax problem." Ⓜ

LITTLE STEVEN'S WEAPONS:
Steve Van Zandt plays Fender Stratocaster and Guild X-79 guitars (he owns two of each) through Mesa Boogie amps and Marshall speaker cabinets. He uses Fender 150-R strings and a Nady transmitter.

This information was gathered from Benjamin Newberry, Little Steven's "guitar guy"; the star is, to be kind, a little hazy on these details. "The songs are what count, not the weapons," he says. "I'm using the same old stuff. Oh yeah, I switched to a Guild a little bit on this record."

Which Guild? "How do I know? You're lucky I remembered the brand. I was proud of myself for remembering the *company*. I just say, 'Benjamin, I'm gonna do a fast song today and I want it semi-distorted.' He picks a guitar, I plug it in and it's usually close."

He does have one modification planned, though. "I play everything at '10,' but since I saw *Spinal Tap* I'm having a few amps made that go to 11."

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ABBEY LINCOLN

BY DON PALMER

A DISTINGUISHED AND DAUNTLESS JAZZ SURVIVOR DISPENSES WITH THE COCKTAILS

DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"I have never been political. I am social. I live here."

During her recent performance at Lush Life in New York City, Abbey Lincoln Aminata Moseka molded standards as well as songs from her new album, *Talking To The Sun*, with the ease of a goddess, the funkiness of a lady of the night, and the opulence of an African queen. Her voice, thicker than Billie Holiday's and more emotive than Ella Fitzgerald's, is heavy and reedy, and not, by normal standards, pretty. But she uses it to create a compendium of sounds—with shades of Danmask singer, Delta blues moaner, saxophone and drums—into a style as inventive as Betty Carter's, albeit not so fast or serpentine. Lincoln's color, time and phrasing are remarkable, and her entrances dramatic as she intimately breathes vowels or envelopes a phrase with a single word. Yet she also pushes down hard and on the beat to create a slow, ceaseless tension and release, generating a subtle and rather chilling sense of swing.

Abbey Lincoln has been singing and recording, at various intervals, for nearly thirty years, yet outside of a small circle of jazz aficionados, she remains a virtual unknown. In the late 50s and 60s she rapidly acquired a cachet as one of that generation's premiere young singers. Then she collaborated with Max Roach on a trilogy of albums focused on the American civil rights movement—*We Insist! The Freedom Now Suite, Straight Ahead*, and *Percussion Bittersweet*—whose political sentiments were neither widely accepted nor appreciated. Lincoln herself was subsequently viewed as a militant; gigs and recording dates dwindled, then disappeared. That public response may not compare with the punishment meted out to Mississippi activists Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner in that summer of '64, but Abbey Lincoln was nonetheless mugged by the music industry.

She recalls one established jazz critic (who will remain nameless) calling her a "Professional Negro." "I thought, 'Isn't this rude? If you live in a world where you can't afford to love your ancestors, then you're dead already.'"

Actually, Lincoln's early recordings on Riverside (two of which, *That's Him* and *Abbey Is Blue*, were recently reissued on Prestige's Original Jazz Classics label) portray a female jazz singer eager to depart from her historical stereotypes. A former cocktail singer with a bebopper's sense of dignity and dedication to music, Lincoln was at once firmly grounded in the styles of Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan and Bessie Smith, and increasingly inspired by such bop and post bop instrumentalists as Kenny Dorham, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Booker Little and, most importantly, Max Roach, whom Lincoln eventually married. In an attempt to assimilate these various influences, she began to redefine and expand the emotional possibilities of the jazz vocalist. She dispensed with the coy, girlish mannerisms, passive attitudes and maudlin sentimentality so often endemic to popular standards. Like Holiday, she refused to indulge in contrived or excessive emotions, instead striving to "give a feeling to the people, because if you don't feel anything, then it didn't happen anyway."

Although Lincoln's young voice

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sometimes lacked a clear sense of direction, it always sounded poignant, wavering between the harsh and ethereal. She convincingly wed the field cry, the lullabye and the love song in manners that were by turns soothing, sorrowful, romantic, strident, and later, heavy with rage. Her diction was precise and eloquent, forming lyrics into long, loosely structured and freely rhythmic descending lines, which were often embellished by an array of accents and inflections. She was capable of accenting a single consonant/vowel/note with a forceful, percussive sigh, a holler, or a melismatic cry. Today, Lincoln exhibits a unique style that stresses individuality within a tradition, and improvisation that is ordered, formalized, and reified. Unfortunately, her initial fame proved more fleeting than any of the emotions her singing so deftly underscored.

Talking recently with Lincoln in her sprawling apartment overlooking Central Park on New York's Upper West Side, I nervously asked if her past decisions had hurt her career, and if she'd take any of those decisions back. At first, her response was guarded, hidden behind a smile that vacillated between open glee and a clenched-teeth hiss.

"It made a difference," she answered somewhat enigmatically. "I believe that whenever a person is serious about doing something there has to be a break, because we all see things differently. All we did was express our feelings, and if that made the industry 'hinkdy,' if it frightened them, there wasn't anything I could do about that. I wasn't doing it for the industry. I was doing it for the sake of my soul. No, it didn't hurt me because today I am considered a serious"—Lincoln pauses—"person and a contributing artist."

Despite Lincoln's role in forming a new vocal aesthetic, one which by the early 60s was presaging the caterwauling lyricism of "new thing jazz," she remains deeply affected by older jazz singers: "It's because of Billie Holiday and some of the women of her era that I choose to sing the songs I sing or write." At the same time she's always been sensitive to the frequently patronizing or demeaning implications of so many popular song lyrics of that era. "That was what was required of the woman in that time," she goes on. "I broke that trend; and that was also part of the flak that I received. I didn't want to sing about a man who wasn't nothing. If I can't sing their praises, I don't want to talk about them. I sing for the glorification of my life."

Lincoln has been criticized for merging art and politics, yet she doesn't really consider herself political. "I have never been political. I am social. People take social things and make them political, but I am not running for office. I'm interested in mores and social standards because I live here. I believe that the work of the artist is to give the people images.

"Some of us choose to be social and some of us do not. It says something about the mentality of the people that you represent. It *can* be social, though, to sing about your man and yourself, or even how you feel about a dog. Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith sang about the conditions of life on a broader level. For Bessie, it was more than her life—it was everybody's life she was concerned for, knowing that her own life was dependent upon everybody else. *That's* the difference."

Lincoln's pride in her art carries over to her stage presence—in concert she's often attired in colorful African apparel, which in combination with her countenance (frequently framed by rows of cornbraids), helps create a visual aura as striking as her music. "This is theater," she declares, "even though the music is serious. We ask people to come and see us. A lot of times you have to tell musicians, 'Put on your best, you're coming to the Holy Temple, the Inner Sanctum. Bring the best of everything

continued on page 26

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Cyndi Lauper Bops

BY MARY ANNA FECZO

DIRECTOR EDD GRILES AND THE CHEMISTRY OF CONSISTENCY

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Star/actress/furniture painter Lauper immerses herself in her vids.

Matching the right recording artist with the right producer is a game of musical enzymes, getting the chemistry right. Video is no different. Ask Edd Griles.

Griles has directed three Cyndi Lauper vidclips: the bubbly "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," introspective "Time After Time" and comic fantasy "She Bop." His link-up with Lauper dates back four years, when Griles directed three promos for her group Blue Angel. The lengthy relationship is almost as impressive as the highly viewable clips themselves. What's the secret?

"The more equal the partners, the more chance to have this dynamic," explains the thirty-eight-year-old Griles, whose background is in advertising and sports television. "If the artist likes the director's style, professionalism and what he can bring to the project, then they've found a bond. If the partnership is formed, the director needs to learn the artist's needs and attitudes on-screen and off." Power trips are a no-no. "Once egos get involved, that's when it falls apart."

Nobody said maintaining the balance is easy. For Griles it's a matter of "being with the artist and taking the input the artist has in mind when the song was written. The videos I've done for Cyndi come from things that have been part of her life experience. For me or any director to say, 'Here's what I see,' is ridiculous. A song has a history and a writer; the director has to become part of that."

Thus Griles is unstinting in his praise for Lauper. "Cyndi gets involved in every aspect of anything she does—the scripting, costuming, casting and art direction. The night before we shot the interiors for 'Girls,' Cyndi was in the studio painting furniture. Her mind is always going. She comes up with so many things, you have to control it. But somewhere in what she's saying I know she's right. I may have to scrape away some stuff, but usually it's right on top."

A video director/artist relationship isn't always hearts and flowers. "Infighting goes on all the time," Griles says. "It's usually about stupid things, but that's not the case here. With Cyndi it's her being so involved in every detail. Her tendencies to get it absolutely right can wear somebody's patience. I don't think there are a lot of directors who could handle it."

Lauper's perfectionism is evident in the final train segment of "Time After Time." "That last shot in the clip was the first we took," Griles says. "There was just me, Cyndi and the cameraman. The tear came down *on cue* and it came down on the right side of her face *to camera*! I said, 'Cut,' and looked at the cameraman and he looked at me. I hugged Cyndi. It was the first take we did."

Even Griles, who acknowledges his artist to be "a damned good actress, even though she doesn't admit it," was shocked. But Lauper has always excelled at juggling real-life vulnerability with almost braggart assertiveness, and in her videos she gets virtually free rein.

She felt awkward storming through the (genuine) construction workers in "Girls," but came through the line beating her chest after Griles told her, "If you don't want them to whistle at you, push them out of the way and show them you're a woman." She read in the "Time

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After Time" script that "Cyndi does something outrageous to set her boyfriend off," so she gave herself a checkerboard mohawk. She knew that the Busby Berkeleyish finale in "She Bop" called for a Ginger Rogers flair, and donned, according to Griles, "*her* version of a white tuxedo."

Griles went along willingly with these and other off-beat Lauper touches, such as appearances by her entourage of family members, close personal friends and professional associates (her makeup man, the woman wrestler she manages). "We never did the same thing twice," he notes, "because we very consciously made sure we didn't fall into a trap."

Yet the question arises whether a director's successive videos with the same artist eventually becomes limiting. "It's important for an artist to have another point of view," Griles concedes. "Cyndi may learn how impatient some directors are. I may work with more demanding artists."

He is unsure whether he'll direct a fourth Lauper video. Having completed two Huey Lewis & the News clips ("The Heart Of Rock 'N' Roll" and "If This Is It"), and after producing the MTV Annual Awards Show, Griles is definitely "hot," with only his working hours in short supply.

But the Lauper/Griles connection remains, and perhaps will continue, as a rare blend of nutsy permissiveness. "To me an emotional song is best told not necessarily through images, but through relationships, through people," the director observes. His videos with Lauper will probably never lose those psychic bullets.

Lincoln from page 22

you have.'"

Lincoln grew up in rural Michigan, where she found "her power at the piano, doing something for myself." She praises her mother, whom she calls "respectful, reverent, and brilliant," for contributing to her early education. When she was fourteen, her family moved to Kalamazoo: "My people lived under a hill and the wealthy people lived on top of the hill," she recalls, "but we went to the same school. I had a chance to discover the best that European-Americans had to give as far as school was concerned. By the time she began to perform professionally, Lincoln was familiar with her contemporaries from listening to the radio. "I had already heard Billie Holiday. I loved Gene Ammons and I loved Dinah Washington. But, I was listening from a distance. I had not met a masterful person, a person who knew how to master an instrument. The first one I met was Max. He took me through that door."

On the other side of the door, Lincoln has also starred in three movies—*The Girl Can't Help It*, *Nothing But A Man* and *For Love of Ivy*—and performed in the touring company of the Broadway musical *Jamaica*. She relished the opportunity to work with the "great Sidney Poitier" in *Ivy*. Nonetheless the exposure did little for her musical career.

"Shortly after I made *For Love of Ivy* (in 1968), I was invited to Las Vegas to work at Caesar's Palace," she explained. "I guess a lot of people thought that after I made that film, I would be doing a lot of things." But Lincoln's political reputation continued to hinder her career. A year after she signed her contract to appear at Caesar's, "they couldn't find anybody who wanted to be on the bill with me."

After this let down, Lincoln decided to take a break. In 1970, following her divorce from Roach, she moved to California. Her career languished as she mixed work with community theater groups with an occasional festival appearance in Europe. Despite two mid-70s recordings for Inner City Records, it wasn't until 1981 that Lincoln felt ready to return to New York, and resume her career in earnest. The sabbatical is over and Abbey Lincoln Aminata Moseka is back. This time, I hope we're ready.

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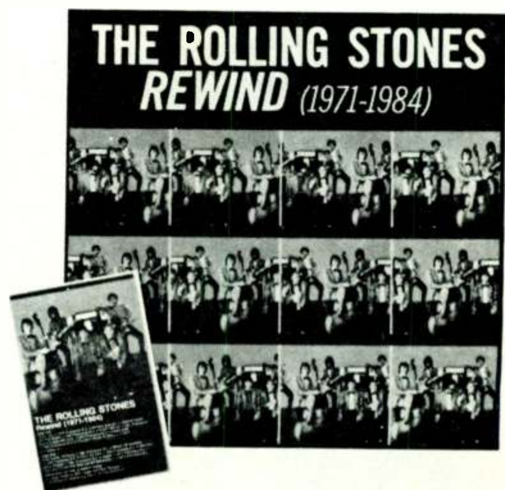

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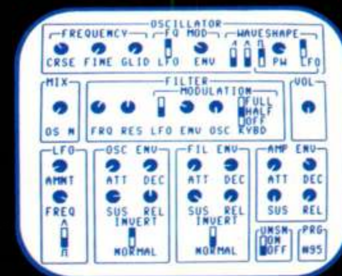

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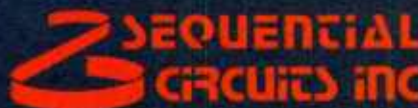

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FACES

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Vaughan mates Hendrixisms with blue-chip blues roots.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

The Torch Is Passed

Last year, Stevie Ray Vaughan was the guy who had the gall to walk out on David Bowie's *Let's Dance* tour. This year, nobody's talking about that. With a successful debut LP (*Texas Flood*) and hot follow-up (*Couldn't Stand The Weather*) under his belt, the Austin guitarist is shaping up as the sparkplug of an American roots music resurgence.

"Other people started this revival before me," says the self-effacing Vaughan, citing the Stray Cats, George Thorogood, and brother Jimmie's Fabulous Thunderbirds. True enough. But his effortless, supercharged blues licks make Stevie Ray the leading candidate for modern-day guitar hero in the tradition of Jimi Hendrix.

The connection between the two is explicit on *Couldn't Stand The Weather*: Vaughan and his band Double Trouble (drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon) peel off a fiery eight-minute version of Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)." He acknowledges that treading on sacred ground was risky business. "I didn't want people saying I was picking Hendrix's bones. There's enough of my own feel that I think it'll be taken the right way."

Vaughan becomes uneasy with talk of six-string deification. He's far more comfortable relating how he's gotten to know and play with such boyhood idols as Buddy Guy, Hubert Sumlin (of Howlin' Wolf fame) and Lonnie Mack. "We've had some jam sessions in Austin like you wouldn't believe," he laughs.

However, Vaughan is more than a curator of past glories. He praises up-and-coming Texas artists like guitarist Denny Freeman and singer Angela Strehli.

"I like to help other musicians whenever I can. Someday I want to own my own studio, as well as a pressing plant and radio station, and make free recording time available to people the big labels won't take a chance on. There are a lot of good musicians who can't afford to make a record, and that's a shame, because they're often the ones who deserve the opportunity the most."
-**Jon Young**

HUGH MASEKELA

Grazing in the Techno-Bush

Just beyond the South African border, in a stretch of Botswana bush ten miles from the nearest town, there's a mobile recording studio with state-of-the-art equipment. It was brought there by Jive/Arista Records at the insistence of South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela to record *Techno-Bush*, an updated homogenization of South African *mbaqanga* and global pop.

Amid the new LP's glossy re-workings of "Grazing In The Grass," "The Lion Never Sleeps," zulu jive and calypso comes—surprise!—the driving electro-pop of "Don't Go Lose It Baby." This disco chart entry sounds conventionally trendy until you notice a driving marimba figure and synthesized percussion lines based on South African rhythms.

"People expect when they hear African music that they will hear a very heavy bush thing," Masekela acknowledges. "But we all wear jeans and sneakers. The songs you hear on WBLS you hear in Africa."

Few people are in a better position than Masekela to speak of global currents. He came to the U.S. in 1961 as a jazz trumpet prodigy—escaping apartheid even as he jammed with the idols of a generation of South African musicians. The latter were blending elements of jazz with South African tradition to create horn-driven *kwela*, *marabai* and *mbaqanga* styles.

Masekela's involvement with world-wide black liberation movements in the 60s influenced him to make rec-

ANDY FREEBERG

Masekela continues to mine his South African heritage.

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ords based on South African sounds. He scored a worldwide hit with the ebullient "Grazing In The Grass," based on a Zambian melody. In the 70s he explored the West African music scene, meeting Fela Kuti and recording with a young Ghanian band called Hedzollen Soundz.

Masekela and his Kalahari band have just embarked on a U.S. tour; he hopes to include some gifted South African soloists (longtime *mbaqanga* stars the Soul Brothers are *Techno-Bush*'s rhythm section). Meanwhile that studio in the bush stands ready to bring a new generation of African musicians into the international arena.

"There are some very interesting groups," Masekela says, "some playing rock or disco things. I tell them, 'You'll never be able to do it like Chic or Cameo, so you'll have to put as much home flavor in it as possible.'" - **Randall Grass**

RON DELANEY

"Bright and energetic" Bangles, throwback, not revival.

BANGLES

L.A.'s Other All-Women Band

"We picked 'The Bangs' because it was loud, bright and energetic," says drummer Debbie Peterson, co-founder (with sister Vicki) of the Bangles, L.A.'s newest power-pop sensations.

"After our first single came out we found there was another band using the name so we added the 'le' and ...*voila!* Bangles."

That first single got the all-female band off to a running start when it became a hit on KROQ. Several members of the (English) Beat were so impressed with it that they gave the group an opening spot on their 1982 U.S. tour. As they were getting ready to leave, Faulty Products offered them a one-off EP. The Bangles found themselves with forty-eight hours to pack, cut a record, quit their day jobs and hit the road.

Michael Steele, bassist and newest Bangle, picks up the story. "Some of the crowds were hostile, since we were unknowns and women, but we won 'em over. The oddest thing about the tour was that we couldn't find our record anywhere. Turns out Faulty went bankrupt the week our record came out."

Faulty lasted long enough, however, to send out promos to college radio. Underground airplay, word of mouth and energetic live shows helped the Bangles land a CBS deal in late 1983.

With its jangling guitars, three-part harmonies and crisp, three-minute pop tunes the *All Over The Place* LP sounds like a throwback to a more innocent time. "I love that *Revolver* guitar sound," Peterson remarks, "but we're not tryna revive anything."

"We listen to the radio all the time," Steele puts in. "What we're aimin' for is a combination of sweet vocals, kinda like the Mamas & the Papas, and gritty music, like the Seeds meet the Yardbirds. Hard-edged pop with a lotta high end. Modern radio music." - **J. poet**

DIAMANDA GALAS

Electronic 80s Oracle

Diamanda Galas (accent on the second syllable) looks as hellbent as the sonic impact of her electro-acoustic, new wave operatic music. Her ominously painted eyes and angular face suggest a stark reptilian gaze; the mass of black hair seemingly generates an entanglement of microphones, her polyrhythmic tools.

A modern Medusa? That's not the half of it. Galas is an Oracle for the 80s, weaving her pristine soprano in and out of rolling moans, shrieking whines and an assortment of gasps, whimpers and stutters delivered at breakneck speed. It's all part of her transforming circuitry—quadraphonic sound, mike settings, delay units, live signal processing, harmonizers and digital reverberation—into a macabre, impeccably controlled Babel.

Well known in her native San Diego, and possessor of a hefty cult reputation in Europe, the classically trained thirty-one year old is slowly expanding her audience. Two years ago the only East Coast venue to risk booking her was New York City's Danceteria: a spartan audience of well-medicated punks applauded in all the wrong places while Galas performed her "homicidal love song," *Wild Women With Steak Knives*, and the otherworldly *Litanies Of Satan*.

This year she fared considerably better. Jacob Druckman, composer-in-residence of the New York Philharmonic, invited Galas to participate in their Horizon Series, where she bloodcurdled her way through *Wild Women*'s "logical stepdaughter" *Eyes Without Blood*, and an excorciating tribute to victims of the

Mike Medusa Galas performing "homicidal love songs."

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seven-year Greek junta dictatorship, *Song From The Blood Of Those Murdered.*

"Performance," Galas says, "expresses the densest, purest distillation of the most honest part of one's being. This extreme concentration is bound up in violence which is merely an exaggerated sensibility to push through another dialectic. It's forcible evolution. I'm trying to develop a discipline until I become as good as I can. Then I won't be responsible for whatever happens."

Galas cites as influences Iannis Xenakis, Albert Ayler, Jimi Hendrix and Jerzy Grotowski; their music and work "penetrate beyond what is commonly considered human." Then there's the legacy of diva Maria Callas. "Now *she* was a person who understood what each aria meant," Galas says admiringly. "She wasn't just singing a bunch of notes." –**Mary Anna Feczo**

DAVID KNOPFLER

No More Strait Man

It's 1984, and Big Brother is watching. For David Knopfler, Big Brother is his sibling Mark, leader of Dire Straits and the man most responsible for welcoming Bob Dylan to the 80s. In the eyes of Mom and Pop Knopfler, and to the pop music world, Mark is a hard act to follow.

But David is doing his best. He's just released his debut solo album, *Release*, on Passport (the album came out last October in England). On it, he displays a flair for Mark's trademarks: sweetly melodic songs, spare arrangements and elliptical lyrics.

As its title suggests, *Release* marks the end of a long period of frustration. In 1978, the Knopfler brothers formed Dire Straits. David split during work on *Making Movies* in 1980. "Relationships in the band were becoming tenuous," he explains. "I wasn't getting along with Mark."

The younger Knopfler had always written songs, but not for Dire Straits. "I saw that as Mark's band," David says. Once on his own, he took his time. After knocking around New York for a while, looking for musicians, Knopfler eventually made some demos in Boston with Robin Lane's recently divorced Chartbusters. No label interest. Finally he went back to England, found a business partner for his own label and cut the disc with British session players. Knopfler describes the result as "a fairly autobiographical restrospective of the four years since I left the Straits."

It would be premature to talk about a "Knopfler sound," but there are resemblances. "I paid lip service to the Straits by doing 'Madonna's Daughter,' which was a continuation of the style and theme of 'Expresso Love' (from the LP *Making Movies*)—deliberately so. I had to find companies that would sign me, remember."

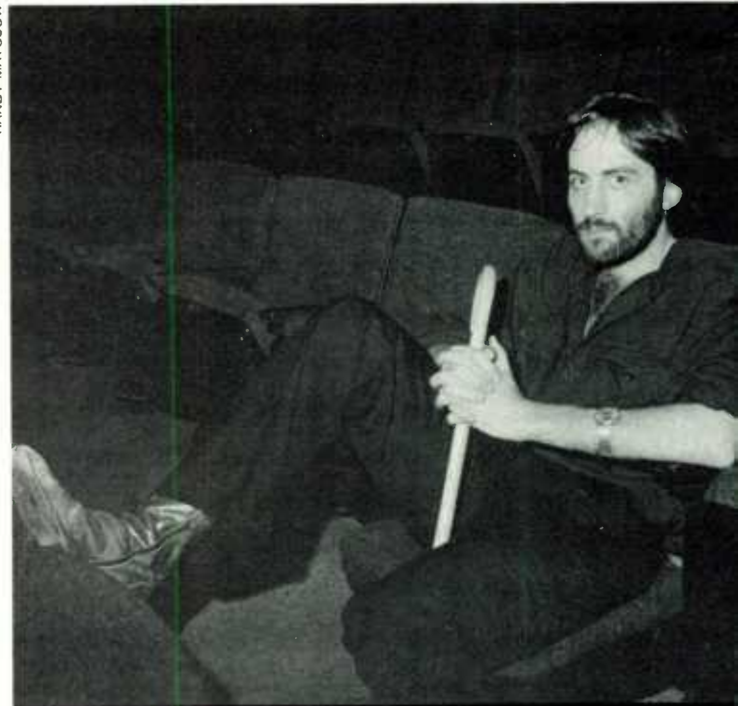
The strongest point of similarity is a common belief in that 80s anachronism, the singer/songwriter. "I'm a songwriter," David says, but "it's not an anachronism. I refute that. Because at the end of the day, that's all there is. That's like saying God's an anachronism when it comes to religion."

Such is the talk of dreamy singer/songwriters who make airy, listenable records. Mark Knopfler is still at the head of that class. But *Release* is a respectable challenge. Mr. and Mrs. Knopfler can be proud of their boys. –**John Leland**

JANE BOWN

Knopfler deftly borrows bro Mark's sparse melodicism.

RANDY MATUSOW



Hanrahan, maestro of conjugation with representation.

KIP HANRAHAN

Highest Common Denominator

Kip Hanrahan has a delightful penchant for tweaking the noses of musical purists. His *Coup De Tete* and *Desire Develops An Edge* albums marry third-world rhythms, funky bass lines, jazz and rock avant-gardisms with Hanrahan's own romantic sensibilities. Bassist/singer Jack Bruce, a new addition on *Desire* and in the Kip Hanrahan/Jack Bruce Band, provides a needed focus to this welter of styles.

"If some Cuban or Haitian band or Brazilian composer had asked me to do something like this," the typically demure Bruce says, "I'd feel like I couldn't do it. But because it was a mixture of musics, I felt I could conjugate something. Kip brought all these guys together to make something that is completely new, to make a kind of music that takes the very highest denominators and allows them to coexist. I've always felt that that's one way music can grow. And Kip has proven that it can happen."

The admiration is mutual. "For every vocal option Jack chooses," Hanrahan retorts, "you can hear nineteen other options he's considered. I watched the drummers and jazz guys looking at Jack with those expressions that say, 'This guy is incredible.'"

The Hanrahan/Bruce Band is large: six percussionists and drummers, three guitarists, two bassists and four horn players. Their concert debut, at New York's Public

continued on page 104

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A Reluctant Legend Doffs His Mask–Briefly

LOU REED

by Scott Isler

He has temporarily commandeered a small office at RCA Records. He sits behind a desk, revealing only a red sweatshirt bearing some kung fu legend or other. (He has come from working out at a gym.) Lou Reed at 41—or 40—or 42 (who cares?)—has no time to waste. At first he scribbles a note to himself, apparently oblivious to the interviewer's opening question. Then he glances up, looks his visitor in the eye, and talks. Time has lowered and abraded the distinctive Brooklyn-tinged monotone. He winks and winces a lot, and lights one cigarette after another; once in a while he takes a puff. The chiseled face is impassive. This is business.

For Reed, three half-hour interviews constitute a full day of press activity. The fabled singer/songwriter anticipates meeting journalists as lesser mortals do visiting the dentist. Reed dedicates himself to unflinching portrayals of human nature disguised as contemporary rock 'n' roll; that should be enough revelation for anyone. Why hold conversation he must find trivial at best, insulting at worst?

Because pop music is an industry as well as an art, that's why. Reed's 1982 album, *The Blue Mask*—his first upon returning to RCA after dallying with Arista—had critics blathering ecstatically; the record peaked at #169 on the charts. *Legendary Hearts* the following year at least crawled into the top 100. Building on this momentum (?) with *New Sensations*, Reed has consented—or been prevailed upon—to grease the publicity machine. He's even making a video.

Not that Reed's history isn't rife with aesthetic contradictions. He started in the mid-60s, slipping darkly humorous schlock-pop ("Do The Ostrich," "Cycle Annie") past uncaring record executives. Later in the decade his Velvet Underground went where rock had never dared go before, tackling previously taboo subject matter ("Heroin," "Venus In Furs") and anarchic jams. Reed's post-Velvets solo career is marked by extreme mood swings between deceptively casual-sounding pop and almost unbearably bleak musical onslaughts. His surgical lyrics are the only constant. He had some mass-market success ten years ago with "Walk On The Wild Side" and the *Sally Can't Dance* LP, but Reed doesn't write with hits in mind.

Behind his unsettling steely presence one senses discomfort at talking about himself. Reed's gruff delivery alters when he gushes about music and musicians he likes. His replies can be surprisingly ingenuous. He seems nonplussed at the suggestion of religious undertow on "Turn To Me" from *New Sensations*: "Huh. Never thought of that. I thought it was really funny."

After twenty minutes Reed's manager enters the room to announce the interview should be winding up. Three minutes later he reappears—the end. Reed has been compliant if not chummy, cooperative but not especially forthcoming. Businesslike.

Sorry to bother you, Lou. You shouldn't have to talk if you don't want to. The records say plenty.

MUSICIAN: *When you started out in music did you think you would still be doing it eighteen or twenty years later?*

REED: I wasn't thinking that far ahead. I like doing this. I would like to start getting into writing, like a collection of short stories. Maybe someday take a crack at a novel.

MUSICIAN: *Do you think of yourself as a musician, a poet, or someone who writes lyrics that are put to music?*

REED: I think of myself as a writer. I operate through a rock 'n' roll format.

MUSICIAN: *When you write, what goals or effects do you have in mind?*

REED: I'm just happy if I can write! I'm not thinking about any goals. I've always had the same goal: write very well. It's like shooting fish in a barrel; it's an uncharted area. Things that would be in books and plays and everything, in a rock 'n' roll song somehow it's a big deal. [I wanted] to write something for

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adults, so an adult could listen to rock 'n' roll.
MUSICIAN: *Does songwriting come easy to you?*
REED: I have to really work at writing. I can't just sit around and wait for it.
MUSICIAN: *How do you get in shape?*
REED: I sit down with a pad and pen, and a guitar, and a tape recorder. And sometimes...nothing...happens, no matter what. Other times—like the song "My Friend George" [on *New Sensations*]: I worked really hard, I fought to capture that song. I had this melody and I couldn't quite focus on it, couldn't quite get the chord that would go with that melody. As it turned out, they're all really simple chords, it's just the order they're in is a little odd. I spent hours trying to get it. I almost had it, and then I couldn't play it and hear it in my head at the same time. I had to really spend time and figure out where it was going. Then I finally had a song. I really like that song. Whereas I didn't have to think about "I Love You, Suzanne" at all, it was just there.
MUSICIAN: *Do you find most reviewers take your use of the pronoun "I" to mean "Lou Reed"?*
REED: Yeah, but they're supposed to. I set it up that way. I want everybody to think this is absolutely the truth, completely and totally real.
MUSICIAN: *Does* New Sensations *mark a new direction in your songwriting?*
REED: I think there's a certain style to my songs. This is a positive album, looking at things positively. And I think that's the direction I'm interested in.

I was in the studio with this album twice as long as I've ever been in the studio. My method of recording is determined by the amount of time I can concentrate on one thing, and mistrust of engineers basically—just trying to go in and get the thing recorded spontaneously, like the best performance and get outta there. That's why my records sound the way they sound: pretty dry, in and out.

But I didn't want to do that this time. I was capable of longer concentration. Plus a lot of the records I was listening to on radio, I *loved* the bass and drums going on. The things they're getting out of just bass and drums, which to me is the heartblood of a rock 'n' roll record, are just great. Things like Art of Noise—some of the editing things they're doing are just incredible. The remixes they do, like on KISS or KTU—it's just *amazing* how great they are!

I said, I want my next record to have that kind of strength and sound. I just can't go in and do what I did before. All these people can do it, it's possible now. There are all these tremendous sounds they're getting out of the studio these days on all these records, particularly in disco, that I really like. And I want to have that on my next album.

So I set out to find somebody in the rock 'n' roll area in New York who got that kind of sound. Since I'm not disco, it wouldn't do for me to do what David [Bowie] did, get Nile Rodgers, that was a pretty hip idea. But I wasn't changing my music, I just wanted a sound. There were a couple of things I liked by [*New Sensations* co-producer] John Jansen. There's this great drum fill at the end of [Air Supply's] "Making Love Out Of Nothing At All"—he was involved with that. I liked the hugeness of his sound. So I got in touch with him.
MUSICIAN: *Do you have a philosophy of record production?*
REED: I want to get in and out of the studio as quickly as possible, with the least number of tricks being played at the board, and basically have it come out sounding like what it was when it got recorded.
MUSICIAN: *You didn't mind having to be in the studio twice as long for* New Sensations?
REED: No, I really enjoyed it. I was capable of being in there twice as long. I wouldn't have been capable of being in there twice as long a year ago. I didn't have the interest, or the ability to concentrate that long.
MUSICIAN: *Are you tempted to do any remixes?*
REED: I would love to have Shep Pettibone take a crack at "My Red Joystick" just for the hell of it. I'd love to hear what would come out of that. I would ask if I could just sit there and watch, just to see what he does.
MUSICIAN: *What happened to guitarist Bob Quine? He's not on* New Sensations.
REED: I wanted to play all the guitars, that's all. I've been getting involved in my guitar playing again. People aren't knocking my door down to go play on their records, so the only real chance I get to play is on my own. I love playing guitar, and I wanted to have one main guitar with bass and drums—have all that space and get this big, tremendous, huge sound without people saying it sounded empty. I want you to hear the parts interacting; I want it to be big, strong and approachable. It's not like I wanted this heavy-metal, overloaded guitar coming at ya. I wanted big, clean guitar—understated. Big and strong—what I like in rock records.
MUSICIAN: *There's some drum machine on the new album.*
REED: [Drummer] Fred [Maher] knows how to do it. So does John [Jansen]. Fred's playing on every single track. It's like John Bonham drumming, or that great break on Phil Collins' record. Just wanted this really strong drum, well-defined, y'know? That's one of the ways to get it these days. Also, Fred's playing with a click-track on everything, which is something I would have been horrified at not that long ago. It takes all the feeling out. But when you're playing in a studio situation I found it made things immeasurably easier to have this click-track going. You didn't have to lean on the drummer so much. And then if you want to add anything you *know* there's no slowdown, no speed-up. So I really was happy doing it that way. I was very surprised, because I was trying it for the first time in my life—and I liked it.
MUSICIAN: *Have you ever thought more about...melody?*
REED: I always think about melody. My guitar solos are always based on melody. My chord structures are really very simple; a two-year-old ought to be able to play a Lou Reed song. The little guitar overdubs at the end of "George" I worked on, I really thought about that melodically, to put a cap on the song and make it emotionally satisfying.
MUSICIAN: *Was the import* Live In Italy *album released with your consent?*
REED: Yeah. I really like it. It was great that we had an opportunity to release an album by the band that played at the Bottom Line, besides the videotape.
MUSICIAN: *Did you choose the songs?*
REED: Yup. I had nothing to do with the packaging, which was done in Italy. I wouldn't have chosen that picture of me on the back. I just pick the best tracks, and the hell with it.
MUSICIAN: *Which musicians do you admire?*
REED: Other than the guys I work with, obviously, I like James Jamerson. I like Ornette Coleman. I like Don Cherry. I like Keith Moon. I like Keith Richards. I like Eric Clapton. I like an awful lot of those guys doing this disco stuff, whoever they are. I can't even tell ya the names of some of the records I like.
MUSICIAN: *Do you hear them in clubs?*
REED: Radio. My wife buys a lot of 12-inch singles. Afrika Bambaataa....
MUSICIAN: *"Looking For The Perfect Beat"....*
REED: Yeah! Jeesus! That just kills me. That is just spectacular, in my opinion. Amazing.
MUSICIAN: *What about songwriters?*
REED: Bryan Ferry writes some nice songs. The Stones write nice songs; "Start Me Up" is just perfect.
MUSICIAN: *Do you listen to country music?*
REED: I listen to a lot of country music. I just get a kick out of it. Standard stuff: "You cheated on me and now I metcha at the bowling alley and I'm gonna drive my beer truck through and knock your pins down." It's fun. There's one country singer in particular I'm crazy about. A woman singer, blind. [*Probably

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"I'm looking at things positively; that's the direction I'm interested in."

Terri Gibb.] There's one country & western guy I'm thinking of; Elvis Costello did a show with him....

MUSICIAN: *George Jones.*

REED: His singing kills me. Ray Charles kills me. Stevie Wonder kills me. Jennifer Holliday can be absolutely amazing. Michael Jackson—the background vocal arrangements he does are just stunning. Stevie Wonder playing anything—I really like him a lot.

MUSICIAN: *How do you rate your singing voice?*

REED: I do the best with what I have. I don't have a whole big range, so I have to do a little acting. I just try to croak along.

MUSICIAN: *How important is public recognition to you?*

REED: I like public recognition. I think my stuff is really good. I really enjoy myself. I enjoy that people enjoy my records. I don't make them to just sit at home alone with them.

MUSICIAN: *What achievements are you happiest with?*

REED: Just exactly what I'm doing. ▣

LOU AND LEO

"I'm one of these people who truly believes that for rock 'n' roll guitar, you can't go wrong working off the various variations on a Fender. By that, I mean the Fender Twin, a Stratocaster or a Telecaster. Any contemporary version—that's not to say the new ones, but the variations off it, like the Mesa Boogie amp or the Schecter Tele guitar, which is what I use. I have a whole bunch of Schecter guitars. Schecter through a Mesa Boogie Simulclass has made me finally content.

"I still really get off on the sound of a good guitar. When I'm playing, I don't go off trying to be real clever, doing this, that or the other cool move. It's like [Robert] Quine said: Leo Fender hit it out of the ballpark first time out, which is kind of a drag for him. How do you follow up a Strat? A Tele? You can't. To me a Mesa Boogie is nothing more than a souped-up Fender. And done perfectly. I'm happy just to stay there, and with the Schecter Tele: It stays in tune, it does what I want out of it. I don't need a whole bunch of things cluttering it up. I've been using the same strings forever. I think they're D'Addarios."

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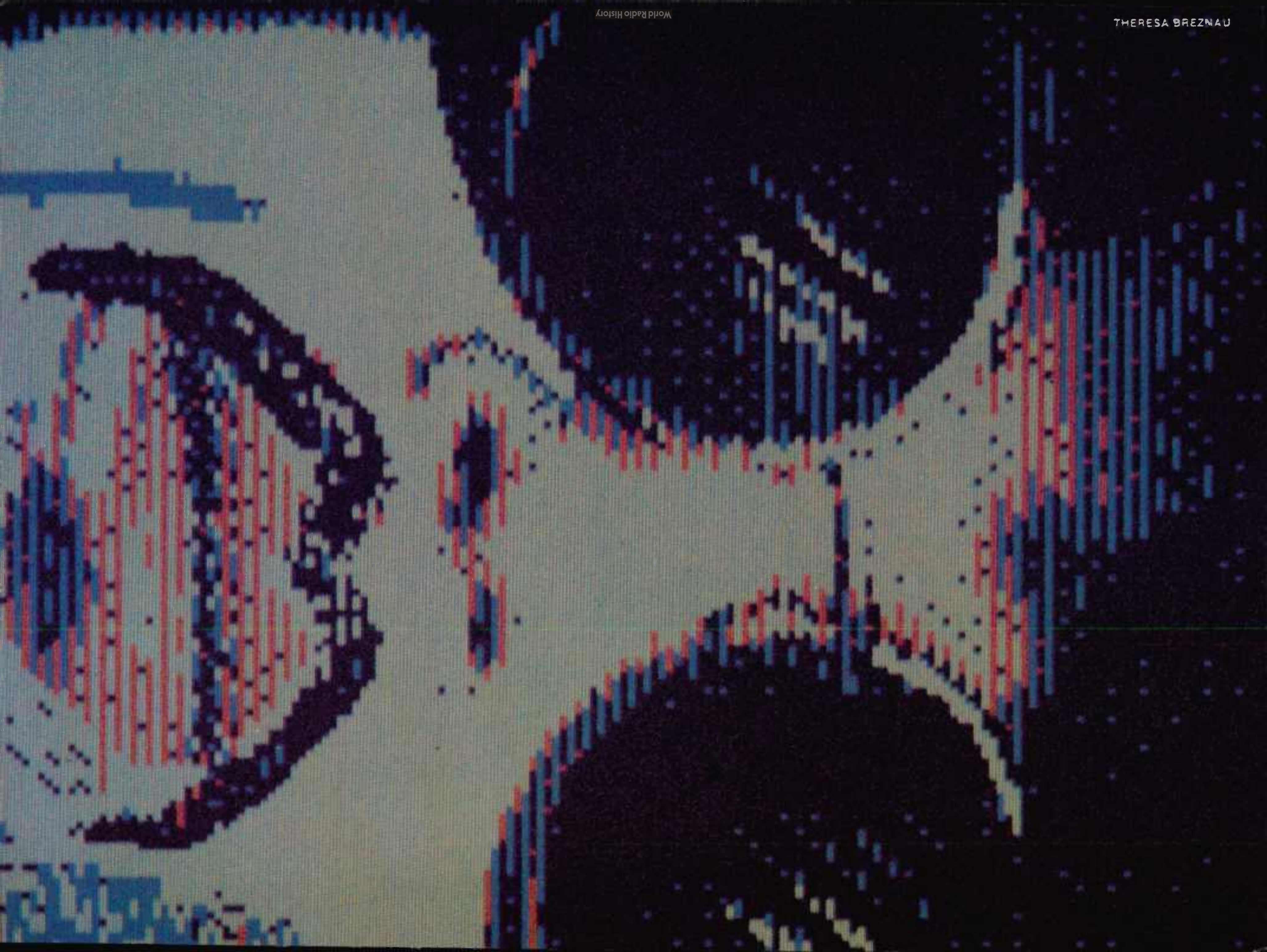

THERESA BREZNAU

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PRINCE IN EXILE

Interrupted Transmissions from the Inner Sanctum

By Scott Isler

It was a great interview. Prince Nelson was talking about his family, his troubled upbringing, his personal relationships, his curious teenaged existence in a Minneapolis basement. Then, in mid-sentence, he paused. "I don't know why I'm telling you all this," he said, sounding more puzzled than

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annoyed with himself. But he resumed talking.

That interview, conducted almost three years ago by Barbara Graustark (and run in last September's *Musician*) is the cornerstone of Princeology. It's nearly the whole edifice. Not long afterward the singer/composer/musical polymath abruptly walked out of another interview, and hasn't spoken to the press since. The hottest one-man dynamo of pop music (and now movies) is paradoxically also one of the most reclusive.

Prince is full of paradoxes. He hides out in middle America while subtly proposing himself as a leader for disaffected 80s youth. He is in firm control of his music, his band, even a movie, but is so vulnerable at interviews that he's imposed a virtual press blackout on himself. His albums celebrating the pleasures of the flesh are dedicated to God.

In one sense, Prince is everywhere. You can't get within listening distance of a radio for very long without hearing the ominous bass drum thump of "When Doves Cry" or push-pull rhythms of "Let's Go Crazy." Chances are you're not far from a movie theater showing *Purple Rain*, Prince's feature film debut, either. But who is this guy? And *why* is he?

In the mass media, you are what you seem to be: image is everything. Prince made himself known as a satyr, always a riveting challenge to public attention. Like sex itself, such a persona has a limited time span. After the novelty wears off, a pop idol trading on sex appeal had better deliver the goods on a higher aesthetic plane or risk being discarded like a used—or risk being discarded.

Prince is making the transition admirably. Without jettisoning his stud element—he's still only twenty-four—he's broadening his musical approaches and thematic concerns to merit the leadership role the public has thrust on him. What first seemed like a decadent hang-up with sex has emerged as a concern for building an extended family. No wonder Prince and Bruce Springsteen are battling each other for the top of the record charts: Both are idealists, positing a better universe somewhere. Who wouldn't want to believe that?

ONE FOR ALL AND ALL IN ONE

THE "WHY" OF PRINCE STARTS WITH HIS MUSIC, WHICH is casebook crossover. He reconciles black and white pop traditions, writing both open-ended funk riffs and structured verse/chorus tunes. He is fond of 4/4 rock rhythms. The refrain of "Purple Rain" has a plaintive country feel, buttressing his claim that that music was all he heard on radio while growing up in Minneapolis.

Other influences are more obvious. *Purple Haze*—sorry, *Purple Rain*—was heralded with photos of Prince wearing round tinted glasses straight out of a late-60s head shop. The image and title are only the latest manifestations of Prince's longstanding Jimi Hendrix obsession. His priapic posturing, moustache, gypsy-ruffle clothes and flowery packaging of the *Purple Rain* soundtrack have direct antecedents in Hendrix and the hippie/love era in which the late guitarist flowered. Prince couldn't have chosen a better role model in the last black musical artist to make the race issue redundant.

Like Hendrix, Prince burst into notoriety as a threat or promise to the nation's daughters, coupled with virtuosic musicianship. (Prince can't match Hendrix on guitar, but he's clearly studied the master's concert footage, as the live "Let's Go Crazy" sequence in *Purple Rain* makes apparent.) Both are cultural mavericks: Hendrix, though an American grounded in R&B tradition, made his name in swinging England with an extreme form of progressive rock. Prince is adept in soul and funk genres but not bound by them. He and Hendrix played down their race; they operated outside such parameters.

Both also found themselves cramped by their initial styles. Hendrix died wrestling with an image increasingly out of phase with his artistic progress. Prince, with seemingly greater control over his career, is escaping this noose.

Here is where Prince, born a generation after his hero, learned from Hendrix's mistakes. In contrast to the latter's shaggy career, as casual as his drug consumption, Prince is a model of forethought. Every move he's made builds carefully on what preceded. His first album, *For You* in 1978, flopped. His self-titled second album a year later contained a black hit single ("I Wanna Be Your Lover") that helped it turn gold (half a million sales). *Dirty Mind* in 1980 broke through to critical acclaim, possibly influenced by X-rated subject matter ("Head," "Sister") that guaranteed lack of airplay. The following *Controversy* resumed Prince's cruising speed, also going gold within months. Two years and over two and a half million copies later, the double album *1999* is still doing nicely on the charts, thank you—even against the *Purple Rain* soundtrack LP, which matched its predecessor's sales figure in a few weeks. And Prince is down on drugs.

Hendrix flourished amid a tense counterculture that preferred to make war, not love against a perceived establishment. He was almost a secret weapon whose excesses (hair, clothes, music, lifestyle) could have been designed by a hippie Dr. Strangelove to send the over-thirties screeching for cover, hands over ears. Prince's younger followers weren't even born when Hendrix was storming the guitar barricades. In a never-ending story, they take the hard-won victories of the past for granted—so much so that society's pendulum is swinging back the other way. Sex, once a forbidden fruit, is now more like a dietary staple; and *Rolling Stone*, which did so much to promote better living through chemistry, publishes a book on how to get *off* drugs. Yesterday's hippies are today's yuppies. Hendrix signified rebellion, Prince reconciliation—between male and female, rock and funk, black and white.

Indeed, Prince has protested (a bit too much?) that he is barely black at all. He has variously described his mother as half-Italian, black or "a mixture of a bunch of things," his grandmother as Indian and his father as half-black, half-Italian and half-Filipino—which makes for a lot of father. "In Minneapolis there are no pure black people anyway," he told Graustark. Prince's multi-racial looks add to his allure and are distinctly *au courant*: processed hair has regained the crown from the separatist Afro. This is the 80s after all, not the psychedelic 60s when an electric-frizzed Hendrix waved his freak flag high. But Prince isn't selling out, he's buying in.

THE JOY OF SEX

NOT TO GENERALIZE TOO MUCH, BUT IN ANYTHING involving living animals, the bottom line is usually sex. The lowest common denominator in the human condition; sex manipulates our feelings and behavior: We're in thrall to this primal urge regardless of whether we surrender to it (too predictable) or sublimate it (too predictable).

Prince is the latest in a long, honored line of musical performers who are increasingly blatant about sex. His songs go where no mainstream pop lyrics have dared go before; his stage props have included a bed; he's performed in bikini underwear. He makes clear that music, with its steady rhythms, emotional catharses and stroking of auditory ganglia, is a sex placebo.

His exhibitionism guarantees Prince a loyal audience of

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voyeurs and geeks. And there may well be fans of Prince's music who find his stage shtick too unbuttoned for their taste. Prince attracts considerably more than the voyeur/geek crowd, though, for radiating sex besides acting it out.

Prince's idol Jimi Hendrix also outraged audiences with his sexual flamboyance, but here again their approaches diverge. In the days before women's lib, Hendrix relied on macho swagger. Prince is prone to boasting in his songs, yet overall his sex appeal is more gentle and teasing than overbearing. Hendrix played up the reputation of a large phallus; Prince would rather be known for having a shapely ass. His penchant for women's stockings, leotards and Danskins imparts an androgynous quality, but there's no whiff of homosexuality to Prince. He projects sensitivity without wimpiness—a dream-date fantasy.

More importantly, Hendrix symbolized carefree hedonism. Prince, no slouch on the couch himself, has deeper and darker thoughts on the subject. "Friendship, real friendship—that's all that counts with me," he told Graustark. Later in the interview he added, about his audience, "You're telling them about wanting to be loved or whatever...accepted."

The conclusion is that, for Prince, sex is a shortcut to intimacy. ("All my friends were girls.") Sex will lead to friendship and extended family. Who thinks this way? Maybe someone who's had his own family cut out from under him—someone for whom isolation has led to little beyond carnal knowledge.

LIFE WITHOUT FATHER

PRINCE'S UPBRINGING IS ALREADY TAKING ON AN AIR of picaresque legend. He was born on June 7, 1960 in Minneapolis, and christened Prince after his piano-playing father's stage name. Prince thinks his forty-seven-year-old father named him to "get back" at his mother: "They weren't getting along at the time and he knew he was leaving." His parents, said to be quarrelsome, did separate, but not until Prince was seven. He considers himself and a younger sister "mistakes...most of my brothers and sisters are (fifteen to twenty years) older."

Significantly, Prince's musical interests begin in earnest with the departure of his father: John Nelson was no longer around to tell Prince to stop banging his piano. The family's fortunes took a turn for the worse until, a couple of years later, Prince's mother remarried. Young Prince resented his new stepfather, who "would bring us a lot of presents all the time, rather than sit down and talk with us and give us companionship."

When he was twelve, Prince ran away from home...and started a band with his friend Andre Anderson, known now as Andre Cymone. The band may have been the only constant during Prince's puberty: he moved around from his father's apartment to an "aunt"'s house to the Andersons' basement His father gave him an electric guitar.

After graduating high school at age seventeen, Prince stuck with music as the only viable way of earning a living. He got studio experience working at a local eight-track operation, Moon Sound, where his band had cut a demo. Owner Chris Moon thought Prince was the most talented member of the group, and, Prince says, pressed him into service playing guitar and keyboards on local commercials. In exchange Moon let him fool around at the board recording his own material after hours.

Prince says his band "hated" those solo tapes. "Disgusted" with Minneapolis, he came to New York to peddle his wares. He stayed at an older sister's New Jersey apartment, where—if you believe Prince writes strictly from experience—he conceived the incestuous song "Sister." His Big-Apple business dealings were less eventful, and soon Prince was back in Minneapolis. He hooked up with local promoter/manager Owen Husney, who put together a demo package and sold Warner Bros. Records on an impressive three-album deal, including Prince's right to produce himself.

The rest of the story is a matter of record.

THE ARTIST IN HIS STUDIO

UP UNTIL *PURPLE RAIN*, PRINCE THE MUSICIAN HAD LED two lives: outrageous frontman (live) and studio wizard (on record). His albums are virtual one-man *tours de force*.

"He's a genius, one in a million," avers engineer David Leonard, who's edited Prince's tapes for the last three years. (He's credited as "David the Blade" on *1999*.)

Leonard's wife Peggy McCreary agrees, and she's had even more experience with Prince in the studio. A staff engineer at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles, McCreary met Prince when he came there to record *Controversy*. "He works such long hours—fifteen- to twenty-hour days—that everybody kinda bowed out and I started working with him," she says. "We clicked." McCreary went on to record and mix *1999*, and the Sunset sessions for *Purple Rain*.

"Being in the studio is kind of a boring life," she says self-effacingly. "Anybody who's ever worked live thinks studios are really boring." McCreary doesn't find Prince sessions boring, though, and not just because she likes his music.

"He doesn't make records like other people. He doesn't have any set hours and he doesn't have any set way of doing things. Nothing is normal."

Leonard elaborates. "Most people in L.A. will get a band, cut all their tracks one week, and for the next few months do overdubs and vocals. Then they'll sit down for a month and mix the whole record. Prince does not do things that way. He'll go into the studio with a song in his mind, record it, overdub it, sing it and mix it all in one shot, start to finish. The song never gets off the board. That's the way 'When Doves Cry' was done. A lot of times he doesn't leave until it's done—even if it takes a couple of days."

How does Prince work up his own recordings? "He usually starts with drums or piano," McCreary says. "Then he puts on bass, and builds from there: keyboards, guitars, vocals. If we start a song in the morning it's very rare that we don't finish it that night—at least a basic mix. Then he'll take it home and the next day we'll finish the mix. We do it all in one or two days, very rarely three days. That's different to me!"

Prince can be as demanding of others as he is of himself. "You have to be really fast," McCreary says. "He doesn't want to mess around. If you can't get it right away he wants to drop it; he says it's an omen and it's not happening. You lose the groove. Five minutes to get a drum sound is pretty unique," she laughs.

McCreary keeps a microphone in the control room so Prince can add vocal parts without entering the studio. "The only bad thing is when he wants to do drums right in the middle of something! *That* gets a little hairy!"

The couple depict Prince as a musical conduit ruled by spontaneity. "He'll just write a song all of a sudden," McCreary says in amazement. "Once we'd gotten out (of the studio) at five or six in the morning and he wanted to be back at ten. I couldn't believe it. He said a song was going through his head and if a chorus went through he was going to get up! He just loves to be in a studio. Sleep is unimportant to him. He likes coffee. [*Hah! So much for Prince's anti-drug stance. — Ed.*] If you ask him to eat, he'll say, 'No, it'll make me sleepy.'"

Prince's musical illiteracy—he works only from written

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lyrics—probably explains his impulsive studio creativity. His home, in a Minneapolis suburb, has a full 24-track studio. Many Prince recordings come directly from "Uptown," a generic name for his home and on-the-road tapes, and are complete down to the final mix. "Most people say, 'But it's done at fifteen ips!'" McCreary says, referring to tape speed that's half the professional standard. "Well, big deal. If you got it, you got it. I've had him say to me, 'Peggy, it's over. That's it.'

"He's excellent on piano and guitar," McCreary says. "He makes me smile when he plays bass; it's impressive. He's good on drums, but I don't think he's as comfortable. He likes to pick up different instruments. One time he said, 'Get me a harp' (for 'Possessed,' an unreleased track). It wasn't one of those huge harps but a non-pedal Gothic harp. He picked it right up. He's just a natural."

PLATINUM ON THE SILVER SCREEN

WHEN BILL HALEY UTTERED INCONSEQUENTIAL DIAlogue in *Rock Around The Clock*, he couldn't have thought about movies as a creative outlet comparable with music. Nor did the Beatles, despite their celluloid romps, feel a need to diversify into acting careers. But since the turn of the 1970s, pop stars have gravitated to feature films—usually like moths to a flame—in attempts to broaden their appeal beyond a comparatively small and fickle public.

"Movie studios have had a hard time trying to incorporate rock figures," says Albert Magnoli, the thirty-year-old director and co-writer of Prince's cinematic debut. "I'm sure Mick Jagger has tried as much as he could to get into film in any way that's going to be vital."

Prince's management company of Cavallo, Ruffalo & Fargnoli nursed the *Purple Rain* project carefully. "It seemed like a logical progression in Prince's career," Bob Cavallo says. "He certainly wanted to make a film."

According to Cavallo, Prince wanted his managers to produce. Joe Ruffalo says they were looking to get into film anyhow. By April, 1983 they had hired writer/producer William Blinn, of *Fame* fame, and dispatched a researcher to Minneapolis for source material. The story would clearly be based on Prince's hermetic hometown scene. Ruffalo says they chose Blinn for his reputation—he also write *Brian's Song*, episodes of *Starsky and Hutch*, and adapted *Roots*—and "sense of music."

"I said to them, 'I seem to be strange casting for this kind of project,'" Blinn recalls. "I didn't feel ill-equipped to do it, but I did say, 'You're clearly heading for an R-rated picture.' Their

PAUL NATKIN/PHOTO RESERVE

Revolutionary guitarist Wendy Melvoin and her royal guardian: "He hasn't tried to tame us down at all."

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response was, in essence, that they wanted a picture that had a strong dramatic progression, that from a story standpoint would stand on its own and that music would only make better. They felt they wanted to broaden Prince's audience."

Cavallo scouted for a director. He was interested in *Reckless*' James Foley. Foley was unavailable but suggested his editor, Magnoli. Although Magnoli had only one student film to his credit, that short, *Jazz*, reaped over a dozen awards. Magnoli read Blinn's script, found it "very introverted, very claustrophobic," and turned town the project.

Magnoli, who knew Prince solely through a *Rolling Stone* profile, then outlined to Cavallo what he thought a Prince movie should be. Cavallo was so impressed he agreed to let the recent U.S.C. grad school film student have his way, directing his own version.

Purple Rain's credits list two writers, Magnoli and Blinn. The former says ninety percent of the first draft was rewritten, although "the story changed hardly at all." Perhaps Magnoli's biggest switch was resuscitating the parents of "the Kid" (Prince); Blinn had them dead, of murder and suicide, before the film started. Blinn says the script was rewritten to include the parents, and his involvement with *Fame* kept him from doing it himself:

"The overall story—the sense of the Kid's music representing a kind of life force and his home life representing the opposite of that—that was part of the plan from day one, not something I brought to it. That was what the movie was going to be.

"To me, from the start, this picture was either going to be really big or fall right on its ass. That's to its credit. They were taking real risks." Among those risks were a first-time director; a totally non-professional cast, save for the Kid's parents; and location shooting in and around Minneapolis during a brutal November and December.

"Most of that film was shot at about twenty-eight degrees outside," Magnoli says, "and in some cases eighty below. We had crew members coming down with frostbite. Many of those scenes were shot in the rain."

Despite such adversity, *Purple Rain* comes off with considerable panache. Its seven-million-dollar budget is "very small in terms of results," Magnoli says, citing the film's many production numbers. The boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl plot is hardly avant-garde. Yet between Prince's charisma, Morris Day's comic relief, some sizzling concert sequences, equally steamy erotic dalliance and female lead Apollonia Kotero's cleavage, *Purple Rain* shows every sign of being a box-office winner.

If you're unfamiliar with Prince, *Purple Rain* is an entertaining depiction of a weird youth scene in Minneapolis. But the film's pre-sold audience will come expecting a quasi-documentary, and *Purple Rain* does everything it can to heighten the illusion. Everyone except Prince goes by their real name. His backing band, the Revolution, portrays his backing band. The uncommunicative Kid lives in a basement surrounded by recording equipment. His father plays piano and fights with his mother.

THE FILMING OF *Purple Rain*

BILL NATION/SYGMA

BABY I'M A STAR

For some six hundred extras and forty local crew members, the Minneapolis location filming of *Purple Rain* was Prince's Christmas present to his hometown. Rumors flew about the seven million dollar project early last summer. Prince headlined a $25-per benefit on August 3 and brought along a recording truck to cut "I Would Die 4 U," "Baby I'm A Star" and "Purple Rain" for the soundtrack.

First official notice was a casting call for extras (for a "major movie") that took place in a suburban motel parking lot. Outrageously attired hopefuls filled out applications and posed for Polaroids while Prince watched through venetian blinds from the offices inside. (Extras cleared about $24 plus lunch for a twelve-hour day.) Street shooting began downtown on November 7; Prince was there, both on camera and off. Flanked by his immense bodyguard Chick, he watched Morris Day and Jerome Benton take an onscreen stroll. Throughout production Prince was a constant presence; sometimes offering advice to actors/band members, sometimes just keeping an eagle eye on events.

Security was tight. Extras were warned that speaking to Prince was cause for dismissal, and Chick kept a vigil for any spectators toting cameras. A public street became a remarkably closed set. The crew, on atypically short prep time, raced the weather, hoping to complete exterior shooting before winter hit. They didn't make it. Scenes at Apollonia's "hotel" (a former whorehouse, currently awaiting renovation) took place without heat in sub-zero temperatures. One crew member's job was to wrap blankets around scantily clad females between shots.

Outside shooting—Prince on his bike in the country, lakeside with Apollonia, pushing film rival Day into a pile of trash cans—lasted a couple of weeks. The main action was at First Avenue, Minneapolis' premier rock club and site of performance scenes over the next month. The film shows only a small portion of the audience, but Prince wanted a full house. So every day at 7 a.m. six hundred extras piled in to react as the Kid (a struggling musician vying musically with the Time, and personally with Day for Apollonia's affections) did seven live numbers. Prince had told the sound department he wanted a playback level equal to an actual performance. "We brought in the stacks and let 'em have it," says playback operator Matt Quast, a veteran of Chuck Statler rock videos. The dB level was so high that the company bought $200 worth of sound suppressors for the crew.

Five cameras covered the concert numbers. "We'd usually need only two or three takes of each number," Quast says. One problem was that Prince is such a compelling performer that several scenes had to be reshot: the crowd reacted wildly where the script called for indifference.

Prince impressed the film crew as well as the extras. "We never waited for him, he was always there, always knew his lines," says location manager Kirk Hokanson. "He was so attentive, so sharp—he always remembered where his hands were in the previous shot." What was Prince like as a person? "Basically, I never talked to him."

Prince kept to himself during filming, seemingly saving his energy for his performance. Despite his reclusive nature he threw several crew parties, playing solo and with band members throughout the night. A few days before Christmas the last shot was made; after an all-night wrap party, people went back to their regular lives. But there'd been a change. They'd taken part in creating a vision. They'd felt the rain.
-**Tony Glover**

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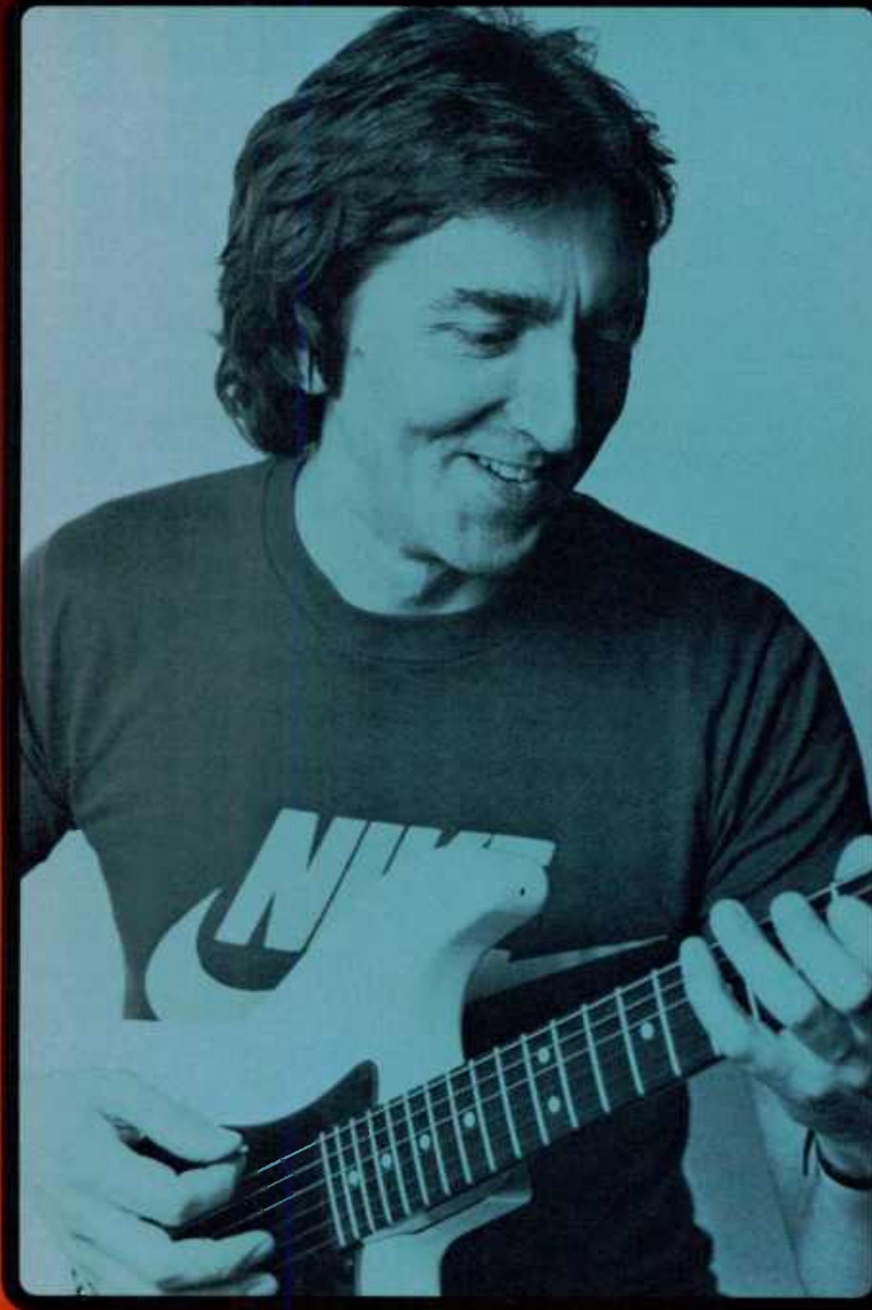

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DEBORAH FEINGOLD

"They didn't believe anything I was saying."

In short, the story encourages Prince fans to think that here is the lowdown on their hero. *Purple Rain*'s Kid is quite a sexist heel: he refuses to listen to a cassette demo from his female guitarist. He takes Apollonia out to a lake, convinces her to disrobe—of course she does, such is the Kid's animal magnetism—and then tries to leave her stranded. (In return, Apollonia buys him a guitar. Can't help lovin' that crazy Kid.) He hits women, although the film excuses this as an hereditary trait. Is this the real Prince?

"I'd have to say no," answers Wendy Melvoin, the Revolution's guitarist mentioned above. "I just hope the public knows that it's a movie. There was a script written."

"It's a biography created by the press, by a lot of rumor and other things," Magnoli says. "Ninety-five percent of the concept is fictional."

"Faction" is how Lisa Coleman, one of the Revolution's two keyboard players, describes it. "In the film we *are* us, when we're onstage and performing. But it's a story."

She giggles over the band's strained onscreen interrelationships. "Yeah, that's a little bit weird. There is some tension, naturally, sometimes. But I think the film showed that we cared about Prince, and in the end it showed Prince cared about us."

Ruffalo believes *Purple Rain* captures "the essence" of Prince. McCreary is even more positive: "That's him. He didn't write it, but that's him in Minneapolis. It's a dramatization—he's not neurotic, and he'll listen to things—but that is kind of his life."

So the secret of Prince's success with women is that he likes to play tricks on them? "I'm not gonna answer that!" McCreary laughs.

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE HEARD

IN CONTRAST TO PRINCE'S CLOISTERED RECORDING habits, he cut two-thirds of the nine songs for *Purple Rain* with the Revolution. That *is* revolutionary. The band shares credit with Prince not just for performing, but for composing, arranging and production as well.

"A lot of those songs came up during rehearsal," Coleman says. "We all had a hand in writing."

"Isn't it wonderful?" Melvoin enthuses. "It's pretty much a unit now. Prince has allowed all of us to express ourselves with our instruments. He hasn't tried to tame us down at all, and he's more willing to accept ideas from each of us."

That may have the air of grateful peasants praising the czar for sparing their lives. This Prince is certainly an artistic despot—and he works hard for the money—but all signs point to a benevolent dictatorship.

"Prince knows what he wants—any leader of a band does," McCreary says. However, "it is interplay to a point. They react from each other."

"He's the boss," David Leonard agrees. "But when he calls upon them for ideas they definitely come up with something. He'll give somebody parts of a song or cassettes to figure out parts."

Three songs on *Purple Rain* include a string section arranged by Lisa and Prince, and conducted by Lisa and Wendy. "It was neat to see Prince relaxing for once," McCreary says, "and not having to do it all himself."

Melvoin explains the Revolution's internal mechanics: "We play a lot together. When we jam we'll get caught in a groove and, knowing each other's style so well, we can create a song. That's how a lot of stuff gets created and arranged."

Purple Rain's songs came about in a few ways. Cavallo says all the film's material was written expressly for it, but Magnoli recollects differently.

"There was a whole body of work that existed beforehand," the director says. "I listened to everything and said, 'How about these?' Other songs were written while we were shooting"; he cites "The Beautiful Ones," "Computer Blue" and "Darling Nikki" as "tailored while we were making the film" (whose heroine originally was named Nicolette). Magnoli says "Take Me With U" and "When Doves Cry" were written in post-production; Melvoin says Prince insisted "Doves" be in the film: "He wanted every song on the album in the movie."

Regardless of whether the music or the movie came first, Prince's teamwork with the Revolution on *Purple Rain* sets a happy precedent. Lisa Coleman feels Prince will alternate band with solo recordings in the future. Wendy Melvoin states Prince "definitely" found group sessions more rewarding than his bouts of solitary confinement. But *Purple Rain* is a watershed album for more than just its personnel.

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A WAREHOUSE IS NOT A HOME

THE OFFICIAL PARTY LINE ON PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION is that it's one big happy family. "We all get along," Coleman says. "Our egos don't get in the way."

"I love Prince very much," Melvoin declares, "and I know he loves all of us too. We all get together as much as we can."

Perhaps Prince has changed his tune, then, since he discussed his band three years ago: "I think they're my friends," he said tentatively, "but I think they're just passing through."

The remark quivers with insecurity. A little Freud is a dangerous thing, but you don't need a Viennese doctorate in psychiatry to piece together some facts about Prince: Product of a broken home. Interest in music dates from his father's departure. Started first band upon running away from mother.

"It Ain't Love But It Ain't Bad," runs a country music song Prince probably never heard. His thematic hang-up with sex has all the earmarks of settling for a one-night stand over genuine commitment. "When I was living alone in Andre's basement," he told Graustark, "I realized music was the way I could communicate what I was feeling." He started writing songs about sexual fantasies and "insane people": "I liked the idea of being insane, of someone who grew up totally alone and ended up in a hospital."

A business associate says Prince is more comfortable with women than men, and started to loosen up when Coleman joined his band (for the *Dirty Mind* tour). A year later Prince toured with his proteges the Time and Vanity 6 (now Apollonia 6). Last year he added Melvoin, a childhood friend of Coleman, to his immediate band/family, fine-tuning the multi-racial, multi-sexual mix. Utopia begins at home, or in this case the Warehouse, his Minneapolis rehearsal space.

Why Minneapolis? "I see him fighting to keep a sense of normalcy in his life," Cavallo says. Prince could hardly pick a better spot to keep the media hounds of both coasts at bay. Coleman complains about having to schlepp from Los Angeles, but Melvoin doesn't seem to mind. "He's taken us all in and takes good care of us," she says, making Prince resemble less a band leader than the head of a foundlings home.

He has called himself shy. Others agree, if not on his shyness, on his reserve. "When I started working with him he was a little difficult," Leonard observes. McCreary says "it took a long time" to achieve communication. "He doesn't talk a lot."

Prince to Graustark: "I tried two or three (interviews) and they were fiascos. They didn't believe anything I was saying, from my name on down to my background, so I said I'm not going to let anything get out in the public eye that's going to be misquoted. They didn't believe I ran away as much as I did, and not at such an early age. They didn't believe I got out of school early—no black kid in Minneapolis does. What they didn't understand was I didn't come from any ghetto. I wasn't really black—not in the sense they thought I was."

There's something affectless about him, sexual braggadocio notwithstanding. It takes ingenuousness, if not naivete, to appear on two consecutive album covers (*Dirty Mind* and *Controversy*) wearing the same coat. When he wore it at an interview, he explained, "It's the only coat I've got." The contradictions and mysteries he perpetuated about himself early in his career (i.e. when he gave interviews) smack more of confusion than deviousness.

Indeed, more than likely Prince stopped talking publicly because of an inability to dissemble. He is said never to discuss personal matters with any of the men in his band. His closest associate in his most creative, personal activity—studio recording—is a woman. Keyboard player Matt Fink was reportedly startled when Prince once opened up to him about his family life. After a few minutes Prince realized what he was doing and promptly broke off.

The Revolution is the family Prince never had, and this time he's firmly in control. "His vision more than dominates," an associate says, "it's almost absolute in its authority." "He runs his show, no doubt about it," Cavallo agrees. Prince became independent the hard way; as he grew up, he "started to care less and less about what people expected of me. Because every time I did what they expected of me, they either hurt me or it hurt them."

To love is to forfeit independence. If *Purple Rain*'s lyrics are a barometer, Prince is expanding both emotionally and as a songwriter. The sex-machine persona is almost totally absent, replaced by sensitive romantic yearnings. Both on record and in the film, "Darling Nikki" represents a nadir of meaningless lust. Prince uses "purple rain" and "dawn" as metaphors for personal overhaul. Sex is still an answer, but the question has changed. He implies his own development.

So does the film, in more melodramatic terms: A one-shot *deus ex machina* suggests the near-death of Prince's father somehow has reconciled a battling family. (To be fair to Magnoli, additional family scenes were cut from the release print.) At the same time, Prince's rendition of the song "Purple Rain"—directed, as was "Darling Nikki," at Apollonia—indicates his coming to terms with the issues of acceptance and intimacy. The film neatly wraps up the Kid's problems, maybe too neatly. Well, it's only a movie, right?

Three years ago Prince spoke ominously of cutting himself off from the world. His enormous success since then shows the world forbids it; Prince can't live behind a one-way mirror, even in Minneapolis. Starting out as a technical prodigy, he has grown in scope musically and lyrically. The stud turns out to have a soul. Fueled by loneliness, he preaches unity—giving yet withholding. He doesn't expect his mother to appreciate his accomplishments.

Artists create for a myriad of reasons. Prince tapped into a potent stereotype, hid behind it, and now is sloughing it off. The mixed-up (racially, stylistically) kid waves a banner for pop in the 80s, and it's no freak flag; it's an open invitation to party, with no RSVP required. He's not a kid anymore.

Prince has sized himself up with typical succinctness: "It could be I have a need to be different."

Prince's Scepters

Prince's home recording studio consists of a control room and a small overdub room. It contains an Ampex 1200 24-track recorder, a Soundcraft board and Lexicon 224X outboard. David Leonard is "pretty sure" it's a Westlake installation. Prince mixes down onto an Ampex ATR-100 (half-inch and quarter-inch) mastering deck. He uses Scotch 250 recording tape.

Sunset Sound also has an Ampex 1200 and ATR-100s. The Los Angeles studio's board is a custom-built console with API components. Monitors use JBL parts; in addition, there are smaller Yamaha NS-10s and Auratones. Peggy McCreary rents Prince drums and a Fender Precision bass. He brings his own Telecaster-style Hohner guitar. The studio has refurbished Steinway 7B pianos. For vocals McCreary likes old Neumann tube 47 microphones. Guitars are amplified through a Boogie amp, with a Music Man for a spare.

Lisa Coleman considers herself "more of a pianist than anything else," but with Prince she plays an Oberheim OBX-a and and OBX/S, Arp Omni and Yamaha DX7. Wendy Melvoin favors Rickenbacker guitars, but modified with EMG pickups. Solo she plays a custom Telecaster "for jazz," and an Ovation acoustic. She plugs into a Mesa Boogie amp, and uses a Boss board for effects.

Prince "uses a lot of Oberheim synthesizers" at his home studio, according to McCreary. Besides his trusty Hohner guitar, in *Purple Rain* he plays a white Stratocaster with gold-plated frets and tuning knobs. His drum machine of choice is a Linn LN-1.

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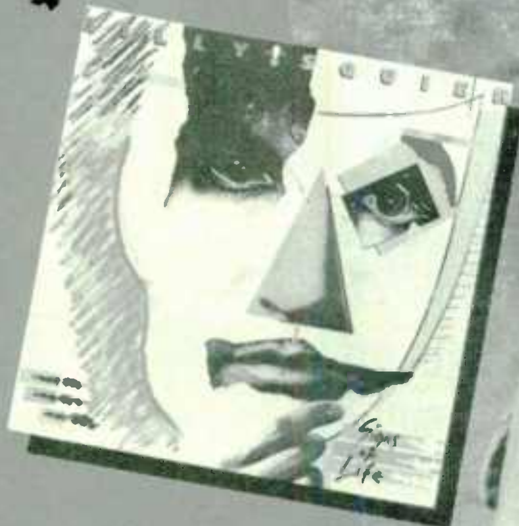
IF ROCK AND ROLL HAS A NAME...

Signs of Life



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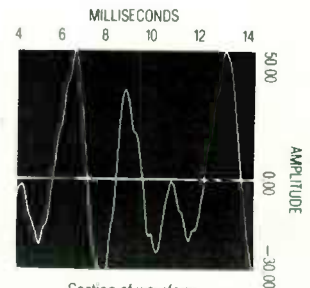

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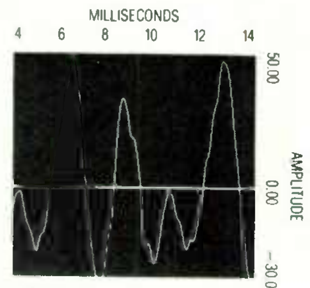

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★

Living Well is the Best Revenge: the Many Faces and Redeeming Graces of Rod Stewart

★

PICTURES OF AN EXHIBITIONIST

By Josef Woodard

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY in the continuing saga of Rod Stewart, ex-Marxist folk martyr/ex-arena fave loved by fans and critics/ex-working-class rowdy turned Tinseltown sybarite. Stewart's manic-maned visage has never been far from the public eye, although the circumstances keep changing radically.

Every Picture Tells A Story established his solo career in a big way. The cover photo shows Stewart, eyes closed with emotion, grasping a mike stand with his usual flair. That was 1971. Rife with raw beauty, the album enjoyed the distinction of being the first to hit #1 in Britain and the U.S. simultaneously. Stewart subsequently opened his eyes. And his wardrobe.

The pictures come with increasing frequency thereafter. There's Rod, in one of his feathery concert costumes, mike stand coming in for a four-point landing. There's Rod, grinning like one who's seen the bottom side of a London evening with his rockstar mates. There's Rod, sidling like a cat in heat against Ron Wood, his guitar player and compadre.

Change of scenery: *Atlantic Crossing* in 1975 marked a new Stewart. There's Rod, smug in a tux, arm draped around Britt Ekland in some Beverly Hills watering hole. Could this swell be the same rough-and-tumble Rod we'd known?

Pictures kept appearing—in places like grocery store checkouts—as Stewart became the epitome of a rock 'n' roll sellout and dartboard material in the music mags. His vain, discofied "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" (from 1979's skyrocketing *Blondes Have More Fun*) was tantamount to treason. The divorce seemed final; Stewart was on rock's blacklist—lost to fast-lane Hollywood, with nothing left to tell us about real life. There's Rod in leopard-skin. There's Rod with new wife Alana Hamilton. There's Rod without Alana Hamilton, but who's counting anymore?

Now Rod Stewart is again making the media rounds, propelled by his seventeenth album (*Camouflage*) and another chartbuster at that. Producer Michael Omartian masterfully juggles synthetics and physicality, melody and melee, from the sparking strains of the smash single "Infatuation" to the smooth nightcap of the closing ballad "Trouble." *Camouflage* is a competent, sometimes thrilling album. It's not *Every Picture Tells A Story*, but it's an honest portrait of the artist as pop survivor.

Stewart currently is poised rather precariously between the earthy verities of his old self and the plush urbanity of the new. Listen to "Bad For You," produced by Stewart himself because its bawdy edges rubbed Omartian's religious feelings the wrong way. A bluesy guitar riff oozes romantic bitterness and sweet revenge, abetted by Stewart's sharp-toned voice and Jimmy Zavala's simmering blues harp. In the middle of the third verse, Tony Brock's oddly-placed eighth-note rat-a-tat breaks

Photograph by Howard Rosenberg

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like a sudden emotional outburst—a musical illustration of the song's central theme.

Stewart has always been a legendary live performer, turning concerts into British fanfares with his whirling dervish gyrations and sartorial diversity. He can still tread the boards with the best of 'em. A few days after an energetic Costa Mesa concert, Stewart sat for a poolside interview at a lush little rented oasis above Sunset Boulevard. He looked a bit tour-weary, but Stewart was a sporting interviewee—at times getting excited and injecting British sarcasm, at times reducing his monologic ramble to a near-whisper and punctuating his reflections with a philosophical shrug of "Life is funny, isn't it?" He's an affable sort who also feels he has some scores to settle, especially the implied and explicit beating he's taken in rock circles. This being soon after Jeff Beck jumped ship on a scheduled "reunion tour," the singer was also peeved on that topic.

If not exactly an elder statesman of rock yet, Stewart is a survivor, flexible and market-wise enough to keep his career afloat. He's a tenacious fixture in pop music who can *get* pretty much what he wants: great gigs, the top twenty at a moment's notice, his picture to tell stories in any number of publications. What he can't get so easily, like another Rod—Dangerfield—and countless of us mortals, is respect.

MUSICIAN: *In terms of production and the flow of it,* Camouflage *has a good sense of identity, more so than past records.*

STEWART: I think there's a bit of depth to the self-penned songs that wasn't there on the last album. Those tunes were a bit shallow. This one gels together better. That's because of Michael Omartian. I felt after *Body Wishes*—which just bombed in this country, did great in England—I was getting tired of the self-producer bit. And I was looking around for a producer, heard this Donna Summer tune "She Works Hard For The Money." I thought, "That's a good sounding record." I called Michael and he agreed to do it. Born-again Christian working with born-again drunks (smirks).

"I usually write the titles of my songs before the words, to see if the atmosphere is happening. You've got to have the hook."

It was really amazing working with him. If you had heard the basic track we did of "Infatuation," how we would have left it, and what added to it; he's just so clever. Like on the chorus, it goes, "infatuation" and then, "whoo—" he did that on synthesizer, I would have never thought of that. He doctored up the rhythm with maracas and what do you call that thing? (twists his hands) Cabasa, right. (trails off, and suddenly yells in mock annunciation) Born again Chris*tian*.

MUSICIAN: *Did you have the tunes picked for the album before going in and doing it?*

STEWART: No, we didn't have it set. The tour was picked, but then we go into the studio and it's a different thing altogether. Most of them were written in the studio. We start trying to work things out, singing to the tracks, write lyrics to the tracks. "Bad For You" was worked out well in advance, that's because the born-again Chris*tian* didn't want to do it.

MUSICIAN: *I can't quite figure out the offending aspect of it. Was it the kink implication of the line "I'll put my brand on you"?*

STEWART: It's just the whole attitude of the song, of seduction, my tone of voice, the make-up of the song. It has a nasty flavor to it. We tried to get him to rewrite the lyrics for me. He tried to turn it into a love song, with lines like "darling let me pour you some wine, for tonight I know you're mine." I said "Michael, this is an angry guy, angry at this bird, ya know?"

I admire him for sticking to his guns, though. I really do. And I think he admired the fact that I wouldn't change the lyrics. He was saying, "how am I going to play this to my church and my children?" I says, "I don't want to sell records to your church and your children." It was wild. It all worked out in the end. We did the album for $300,000, which is unheard of.

MUSICIAN: *Was* Camouflage *one of those painful births, that came out only through intensive sweat and rearranging?*

STEWART: No, not really at all. The only pain is when it comes down to writing the lyrics. It takes weeks and weeks. I have a little book for every song, with extra verses and such that never made it into the tune. I've got every book all the way back to "Maggie Mae." I'm going to auction them off one day.

MUSICIAN: *How did you prepare for the new album?*

STEWART: Just got together with the boys around and said, "We gotta make a new album, lads." They prepare songs on their own, bring a bunch of ideas to me to sift through. Sometimes they have titles. I usually write the titles of songs before the words, to see if the atmosphere is happening.

MUSICIAN: *The general starting point for pop tunes, it seems, is to work outward from a strong hook.*

STEWART: You gotta have that. That's one thing—you've gotta have, for lack of a better word, the hook. You've got to have that one title that summarizes what you're getting at. How to write a hit. People find it strange I only know four or five chords on the guitar. I wrote "Hot Legs," "Tonight's The Night" and "You're In My Heart" with just those four chords. And that's the way it should be, too.

MUSICIAN: *How has the band changed over the years?*

STEWART: There's only one left now—Jim Cregan, him of the cheap skin. He's a close friend of long standing. It's very difficult to have somebody you actually have to pay to be a friend too. Useless guitar player, but a close friend.

MUSICIAN: *You stud the new album with synthesized parts, in the foundation, and the electronic drums are there. But you didn't short sell guitars and horns.*

STEWART: How could I? I think it's a really nice combination. Synthesizers can be pretty cold, soulless instruments at times. A lot of people think that Jeff Beck was all over the tracks but the basis of the guitar parts were done by the local guy here, Michael Landau. He sounds a lot like Jeff. Michael Omartian brought him along, and he did pretty much all the rhythm guitar parts, everything except Jeff's solos.

MUSICIAN: *How did that decision go over with Jim Cregan? Didn't he feel left out?*

STEWART: No, Jim's an accommodating soul. He's a lovely soul. I just said, "It's time for a change, man." You know, he's been on six albums and it *was* time for a change.

MUSICIAN: *I should ask about the story behind the Jeff Beck issue. How did that come about? How did it come apart?*

STEWART: I'd seen Jeff socially a few times last year. I thought to myself, "He looks like he might have changed," And he did "People Get Ready," the song we did in the show, and he asked me to sing on it. I asked him to come and play on my album, which he did. The next step was to tour together, which we did. For seven days.

MUSICIAN: *Seven glorious days, or not-so-glorious?*

STEWART: I think it was hard for him, because his music wasn't going down so well. This is to quote Jeff, he felt his material was a bit old-fashioned, and he was tired of doing twelve-bar blues, which is what we used to do in the Beck group. So it wasn't going down as well as we had hoped. It was great when we played "Infatuation." It was all right when I was on the stage with him, doing old Beck stuff. But when he was on the stage on his own, it started going downhill. I don't think

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JOHN BELLISSIMO/RETNA

he could handle it.

We did everything to accommodate Jeff. Absolutely everything. When we first negotiated the tour, we asked about his supporting musicians. We said, "Why don't you try the boys out first?" So he tried them out and said, "No, they're great, don't need any more musicians." Then he said, "Well, I don't want to open the act." Obviously I said, "Fine. You can come on in the second half of the show." He said, "I don't want to play 'Maggie May.'" I said, "Oh, absolutely, how can you just stand there strumming an acoustic guitar?" We did everything he wanted to do, covered his demands all the way.

It still didn't work. He knew what he was getting himself in for. He did two instrumentals that were supposed to last ten minutes, and they lasted three—"Pump" and "Star Cycle." He said to the audience, "I'll get this over with as soon as possible." So that puts a pall on the evening. I had to come back and get it up again.

I can understand it to a point. But he should have thought about that before he went on the road, before he made a commitment. You can't just run off from a tour like he did. I just wish that on the day he decided not to do the tour, he'd have come out and told me. I would have understood. But he just got his roadie to phone up my roadie, and he hid. He bumped into one of the guys in the band and said, "I'm hiding from Rod." I would have understood. Would have been pissed off, but I would have understood. He's a difficult guy to understand. But he's still an amazing guitar player. He's just got a real self-destruct element about him. We used to go out on tours; the tour would start on Saturday and we'd have to come back on Tuesday, finished. Three or four times we did this.

"'Rod Goes Hollywood.' It hurts to read the rubbish in the press, but it speaks well for my music that I've managed to survive."

MUSICIAN: *Can we go back to the days of yore? When did music first enter your life?*

STEWART: As far back as I can remember, when I was about three or four, my father was an Al Jolson fanatic. Every Saturday night, he'd come back from the pub singing Al Jolson songs. Right away, my parents were singing while drunk, so that was my musical family. After that, it must have been in the 50s, my brother started playing Little Richard records, which was the first time rock 'n' roll came into my life. When I was fourteen I joined a skiffle group in school. Then I joined a group called Kool Kats, with eight guitars strumming like mad. We would do such classics as "Freight Train Freight Train Blues" and "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor On The Bedpost Overnight?"

So I left school at sixteen and was getting pretty good on the guitar. I was listening to Woody Guthrie and Jack Elliot, and turning into a leftist Marxist type. You name it, I'd ban it. I skipped across Europe with just a guitar singing songs like "Cocaine All Around My Brain." Dylan came out with his first album and that was a turning point. I knew every song off that album—"Fixin' To Die," "The Cost Of Sorrow," a great album. From there on, I decided I'd become a beatnik, hair right down the back, radical left-wing type. Did that for a couple of years. And suddenly I smartened up, cut me hair off and became a Mod. Didn't play the guitar anymore. Used to hang out in London when the Yardbirds used to be a local dance band. Mick's girlfriend said to me, "Come see my boyfriend, he's got a band." So I got to see the Stones when they were first starting.

The first band I joined was Long John Baldry's Hoochie Coochie Band, because they heard me singing in a railway station. That's a true story. The rest is pretty common knowledge now that I'm a star and all.

MUSICIAN: *It's surprising to hear you describe yourself as a left-wing folkie, considering your later fate.*

STEWART: Oh yeah, that's why I became a grave digger for a spell, to be next to Karl Marx's grave. He's buried in a cemetery in London. I was also scared of dying, so it was a nice way to confront that.

MUSICIAN: *When did you realize that your voice would be your tool-of-the-trade?*

STEWART: It was when I joined Jeff's band that I decided that singing is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

MUSICIAN: *How did the two of you wind up together?*

STEWART: We were out of work basically. Jeff had been fired from the Yardbirds, I'd been fired from a band called Steampacket. I think we found our drummer lying down drunk in a club in London—the Marquee. So really, it was just thrown together with four unemployed people. We were pretty well respected in our musical circles around that time.

MUSICIAN: *And from those humble beginnings....*

STEWART: From those humble beginnings, we went to the U.S. for two weeks. We laid down *Truth* in fourteen days or so. It was in the shop three weeks after the day we started to record it. Try and do that now, it's impossible.

MUSICIAN: *The general impression, and this may be a misconception, is that you're a blues-rooted singer—that you had a blues monkey on your back.*

STEWART: Oh yeah, I'd point to blues, folk, soul—it's all music to me. If anything, I think I'm more rooted in 60s soul music. I'm not really a great lover of twelve-bar blues per se. That's what I think me and Jeff realized just playing these seven gigs together; that's not really what we wanted to do. It was boring for the audience and boring for him. So I've never been a great blues fan so much as I listened to guys like Wilson Pickett. I do really like old Jimmy Reed—just three chords, overwhelmingly soulful. A genius.

MUSICIAN: *Your earlier solo albums had much more folk music strains than your later stuff. Did you just get it out of your system, or was it the trends of the times that led to the change?*

World Radio History

STEWART: It was very much in me system. Still, I'm more of a folkie than a lover of blues. There is a difference, I suppose. I was listening to Jack Elliot and Daryl Adams and the Carter Family. I did identify with them, certainly. I don't know, maybe I'll do an entire folk album. I wish I had the guts to do what Springsteen did with his *Nebraska* album. That's what I was doing fifteen years ago. Songs in the key of G.

MUSICIAN: *You're in that position now, after seventeen albums and scores of hits, where the audience demand for their fave hits must get intense. Does it bother you?*

STEWART: That's something we're talking about right now. People are saying, "Why don't you drop some of the big hits?" Like "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy," which I'm absolutely sick of singing. I don't know. I can read an audience, ya know, and that's the one that goes down great. So should we drop that?

MUSICIAN: *Do you have a sense of who your fans are? You've been through so many different phases. Your audience must keep getting reconstituted.*

STEWART: I think it changes with every album, it changes with every single. I sort of observe when they're driving up to the gigs what kind of audience we're attracting, but it's difficult to put into a category—really carries a wide field. A lot of women still; I could open a flower shop after this tour.

It's very sweet them bringing flowers up, but you don't know what to do. Part of me wants to go thank 'em, and part of me wants to say, hey, I'm no Barry Manilow up here. Like Liberace or something. It's sweet of 'em to go out of their way.

MUSICIAN: *Has music always been the driving force, the compelling necessity in your life?*

STEWART: I'm not sure what you mean. It's always been a professional goal. I get paid to do it, so it's professional. I love it. I don't consider it to be work. The only time it gets to be work is when the manager's calling up trying to arrange five interviews in one day, when it's my day off and I'm trying to save my throat. But I wouldn't say it's hard labor really. There are no blisters or callouses on me hands (shows his lilywhite palms) from a shovel.

MUSICIAN: *You seem to defy this notion of rock 'n' roll as enlightened self-destruction. You're obviously physically fit and good and limber.*

STEWART: I don't really go out and look after myself. I'm no health food fanatic or anything. Not smoking might help matters a lot. I play soccer three times a week, except, of course, when I'm on tour. Then I gear up by going down to the track, running and singing at the same time. I'll jog three miles and sing all the songs in the set. The band gets about ten days rehearsal and that's all we need.

MUSICIAN: *Is the rock 'n' roll spirit, whatever that means, reliant on hanging out with a group, getting the band feeling in gear?*

STEWART: Yeah, it doesn't exist without it. It sort of gets splintered. We use one big bus because we like to have a few drinks, talk about what we're going to do, get ourselves in top form together.

JOHN BELLISSIMO/RETNA

"Beck's an amazing guitar player, but he's got a self-destruct element about him."

MUSICIAN: *If we were to believe everything we read, the real turning point in your life came with the migration to Los Angeles. How did you wind up in this sunny paradise?*

STEWART: Taxation over there is so crippling I had to get out. I had a few huge selling albums and wasn't that well off considering; the taxes took great chunks of it. So I was advised to leave. I've been here ever since. The climate was a real shock. I'd only been over here touring a few months at a time. When Faces came over, Ron Wood wasn't too impressed and said he never wanted to come back. Life's funny, isn't it? It's the rich what gets the gravy and the poor what gets the blame.

I like it here. If only you could hear the birds singing instead of coughing and some church bells ringing instead of sirens and helicopters and the sounds of murder. The sounds of rape, pillage and murder.

MUSICIAN: *When you did move, it was almost as if the rock 'n' roll world felt betrayed, as if you were a prodigal son.*

STEWART: Rod goes to Hollywood.

MUSICIAN: *The press addressed themselves to what and whom you were wearing this year. Do you have any regrets about the whole transition period?*

STEWART: Not really. It speaks well for my music, really; all the bad press has not been really healthy for my image. I've managed to survive, though, especially the last two or three years. I'm still sexy today. I've been able to hold on, for want of a better term. There are more songs in the old fiddle yet (laughs).

MUSICIAN: *One last question: after all the conflicting reports and all that's happened to you, do you feel misunderstood?*

STEWART: Totally. Not so much in this country, but in me own country, it hurts to read the rubbish from the bastards in the press, making out like I ran away from my wife and kids. It's far from that; I stayed in the marriage for two years and tried to make it work, and they don't write about that, because it doesn't sell papers. That hurts, it really does. My kids mean everything to me. Did you do that story on the ARMS concert? Someone was slaggin' off about it. I think it was *Musician*. [*See January issue.*] I just want to straighten out that whole thing. I was never formally asked to do it. I wasn't even going to be in the country during the concerts. Such a slimey... I would have loved to have done it. Glyn Johns was mouthing off about me. My sister's got MS and I feel strongly about it.

MUSICIAN: *Do you feel misunderstood musically?*

STEWART: If that wasn't a great rock 'n' roll show the other night, I don't know what is. If that wasn't a good response from 17,000 people.... I don't understand the kind of cynicism that crops up in the press. And with that final word, I rest my voice, and my case. Ⓜ

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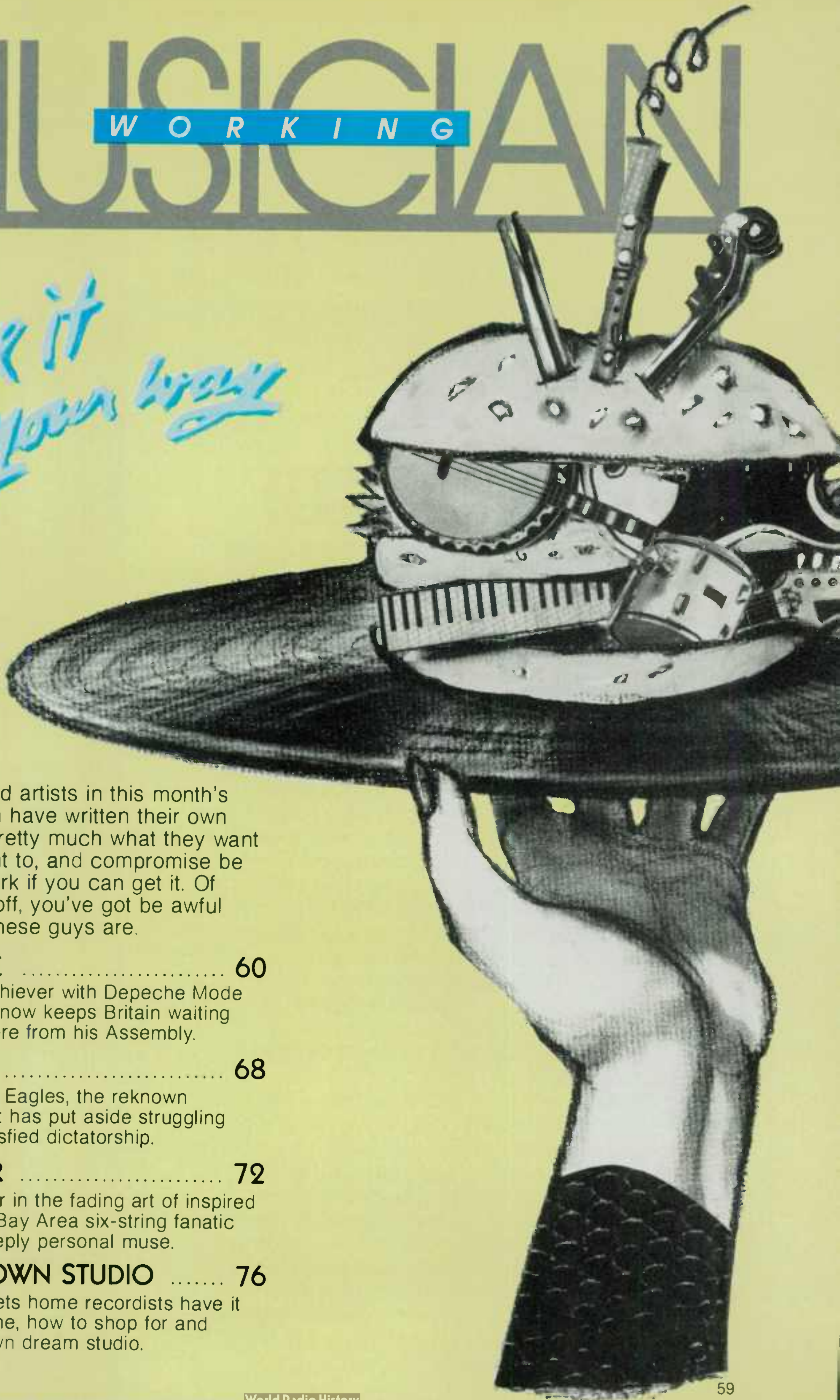
WORKING MUSICIAN



The three featured artists in this month's Working Musician have written their own tickets: they do pretty much what they want the way they want to, and compromise be damned. Nice work if you can get it. Of course, to pull it off, you've got be awful good at it—and these guys are.

VINCE CLARKE **60**
A synthpop overachiever with Depeche Mode and Yazoo, Clarke now keeps Britain waiting breathlessly for more from his Assembly.

GLENN FREY **68**
Once leader of the Eagles, the reknown songwriter/guitarist has put aside struggling democracy for satisfied dictatorship.

HENRY KAISER **72**
Sublime practitioner in the fading art of inspired improvisation, this Bay Area six-string fanatic follows his own deeply personal muse.

BUILD YOUR OWN STUDIO **76**
A new series that lets home recordists have it *their* way. In part one, how to shop for and soundproof your own dream studio.

JAMIE HOGAN

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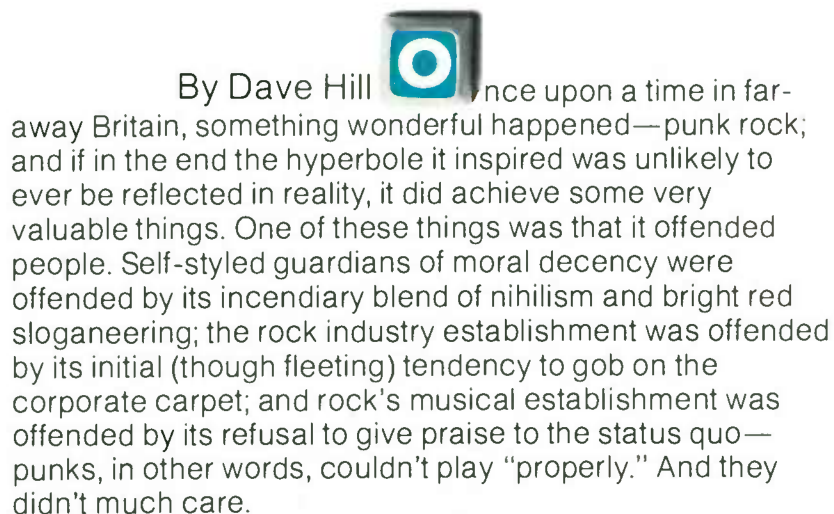
Do you know me? In Britain, I'm a synthpop superhero. I've had top ten records with Depeche Mode, a number one album with Yazoo, and a number one single with the Assembly. But in America my face won't even crack the Hot 100. That's why I always carry KEYS.

VINCE CLARKE



By Dave Hill

Once upon a time in faraway Britain, something wonderful happened—punk rock; and if in the end the hyperbole it inspired was unlikely to ever be reflected in reality, it did achieve some very valuable things. One of these things was that it offended people. Self-styled guardians of moral decency were offended by its incendiary blend of nihilism and bright red sloganeering; the rock industry establishment was offended by its initial (though fleeting) tendency to gob on the corporate carpet; and rock's musical establishment was offended by its refusal to give praise to the status quo—punks, in other words, couldn't play "properly." And they didn't much care.

Vince Clarke is not a punk rocker, and never has been. It is fair to say, though, that without it he may never have got the chance to do what he does now. Clarke is a product of the democratization of British pop and rock. He has become the most consistently innovative exponent of British synthesizer pop since it first elbowed its way into the public mind. In the last five years he has been the crucial force behind some of the brightest, most entrancing and emotive top forty music, first with silicon teen quartet Depeche Mode, then in tandem with a genuine rhythm & blues singer as Yazoo, known in the U.S. as Yaz, and now as

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LAURA LEVINE

Synth meets soul: Vince and Yazoo compatriot Alison "Alf" Moyet.

part of an informal pop project called the Assembly. Punk showed young musicians that you didn't need to be a virtuoso to make a magnificent noise. And true to his roots, Clarke doesn't think that he can "play properly" at all.

"The reason we used synthesizers at the start of Depeche Mode was purely to do with practicalities. Where we came from there weren't many drummers, and it's such a hassle storing and setting up drums that a drum machine seemed like the obvious answer. Then there was cost. Synths were cheaper. I could afford a guitar, but an amp with a good distortion on it—a Marshall or something—was too expensive. Also a synth required less skill. The ones we were buying at the time were monophonic synths which means you could only play one finger at a time anyway. It was like that for a whole year. When you have no knowledge of chords, that's a really good thing!"

The situation is a bit different now. In recent months Clarke has spent most of his time hibernating in a private studio beneath a tiny church in London's grubby Blackfriars area just south of the Thames. Its name is Splendid, and it's jointly owned and occupied by Clarke and longtime engineering partner Eric "EC" Radcliffe. A chubby, amiable man, Radcliffe's working relationship with Clarke started way back at the beginning of Depeche Mode when the group hired his other, neighboring, studio Blackwing to make their first recordings.

Like Radcliffe, Clarke is a small man, but with his sharply-cropped hair, neat jeans and check shirt is clearly more persuaded by the demands of contemporary Brit-pop style. He is after all a pop star as well as a player [*sic!*] and composer. His accent is pure Basildon—one of the now notorious "new towns" built virtually from scratch in the 1950s to house the nearby capital's post-war population overspill. His manner is dry but affable; fairly typical of pop personalities who emerge in a land where reverence from press quarters is not easily secured. Readers expecting grand theological statements or outbursts of boffinish ardor had best prepare for a disappointment.

Try this:

Musician: *So how do you and Eric work together, Vince?*

Clarke: Well, Eric knows where all these wires go (indicates in vague direction of mixing desk) and he knows what buttons to press to make it record onto that (indicates playback spools). I don't. Most of the time Eric will work out rhythms and stuff 'cause I find all that really confusing. I come up with melodies, play the odd keyboard phrase and together we work on trying to find new sounds. That's all we do most of the time. Mess about."

As much as anything else, the form of the Assembly is Clarke's deserved indulgence following his earlier successes. It is not a band. It does not tour, have a fixed lineup or behave in the regular fashion at all. In a sense it is purely a smokescreen behind which Clarke and Radcliffe can do whatever they like. Only one record has been released so far, a 45 entitled "Never Never" which became a U.K. number one in the fall of last year. They *are* working on a followup, they assure me, and there will be an LP, but there's no need to rush.

The leisured informality that informs the operation is underlined by the Assembly's own genesis. After the dissolution of Yazoo last year, Clarke and Radcliffe were "just carrying on recording as normal" (whatever normal is) and ended up with a song. Speculation as to the activities of the elusive Vince led to an entirely unfounded piece of gossip in one of the U.K.'s currently thriving teenie publications. Clarke, it claimed, was working secretly with one Feargal Sharkey, a boy-next-door figure from Derry, Northern Ireland, until recently the singer with the Emerald Isle's finest punky pop group, the Undertones. It was decided to transform this piece of disinformation into fact: "We sent Feargal a demo tape on a Friday, he liked it, came over on Monday, sang it, and went home on Tuesday. And that was that."

"Never Never" was a significant record, and not only because of its commercial success. It nailed home forever the point which Clarke had already proved with Yazoo vocalist, the excellent Alison "Alf" Moyet: that a synthesized ditty and a profound lyrical, melodic and vocal soulfulness are not mutually exclusive. Sharkey's high quavering voice is unique in modern music and capable of remarkable emotional expression. The Clarke/Radcliffe combination proved a perfect caressing complement (rather than a contradiction) to Feargal's evocation of romantic longing. Further, "Never Never" was the first piece of Clarke product on which he utilized fully the Fairlight Musical Computer: a complex piece of hardware for a former single-digit non-musician.

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"It's a lot to learn this thing, but you soon pick it up," says demystifying Vince, selecting software discs, picking out keys and coming up with an extraordinary backwards dance track decorated with bleeps, burps and farts: "The reason I got this was to do a Yazoo tour. I had just two months or so to program all the songs, so I learned very quickly."

On an adjoining wall sit all Splendid's other drum machines and synths, neatly racked on shelves. Everything is portable, moveable, adaptable. The soundproofed area is rarely used—just occasional guitar and voice. The machines are everything. Radcliffe looks around proudly but restlessly: "You see," he says, "it's easy to just go on doing the old stuff, but you've got to find new ways of using what you've got. That's what takes up all the time."

In their quest for new solutions to old synth pop questions, Radcliffe and Clarke have turned to another central figure of Britain's silicon soundtrack heritage—the enigmatic Daniel Miller esquire, expatriate American obsessive and founder of Mute Records, the label for whom Depeche Mode, Yazoo and the Assembly all record. Miller's mid-70s solo album under the revealing handle the Silicon Teens was a touchstone for many of the soon-to-come synth pop pretenders. It was Miller who convinced Clarke that Sharkey's voice would work on "Never Never." He signed the fledgling Depeche out of the firm conviction that pure synthesizer music could, and should, belong not in the rarefied realm of musical academia, but in the hearts of the nation's popheads. Miller is now recruited as co-producer for all the present Assembly projects.

"Daniel has really good ears," Clarke explains, "and I trust them. What we're trying to do now is just get the single arranged. We haven't hardly recorded anything. We've just been organizing things on the computer, different sounds and parts. It's a real slow process, but that's the way Daniel works. It's a real discipline for us. He'll spend a *whole day* just getting one sound. In the early days of Depeche Mode he used to do that. It'd be all right for the first ten minutes; then he'd start adjusting little knobs. We'd all go off and play Space Invaders for a couple of hours, come back, and it would be no different. That's why for two years I didn't work with Daniel. I just went for quick and easy sounds instead. Now we have to stop falling back on old tricks."

Depeche Mode were Vince Clarke, Martin Gore and Andrew Fletcher, who all picked at machines, plus Dave Gahan, who soft-and-sweetly sang. Their first single release, "Dreaming Of Me," crept into the U.K. top fifty at the start of 1981. They contributed a more sinister song, "Photographic," to a compilation called *Some Bizarre* which was eventually recognized as the flagship of the Futurist/New Romantic phase of British pop. The song also cropped up on *Speak And Spell*, their debut LP of 1982, alongside "New Life"—the group's first big commercial success and perhaps their definitive song. Its soft-edged, high-tech hopefulness fitted perfectly a fluffy, boyish image, and seemed the ideal soundtrack to the lifestyles of young men born of a prefabricated community. In Basildon, believe me, everything looks the same.

To most Americans, unaware of Depeche's massive U.K. success, the band seemed only one of a profusion of synth outfits that emerged at around the same time. From Liverpool came Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, an apparently suburban twosome offering faintly loopy dance arias. Ultravox, having made the most of the synth as a vehicle for machine-age alienation, went pomp and did very nicely with the awful *Vienna*. Former Ultravox frontman John Foxx embarked on a solo career which blended a slightly warped pop sensibility with his own curious mental anxieties. We also got Soft Cell, a duo proffering soft-sleaze and crass glam who topped the pinup charts for a year or two before dissolving into off-the-wall solo projects. The very worst of all this came in the

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form of Gary Numan, who simply pillaged the post-Bowie android market and has now gone completely mad. Then there was Blancmange, another duo who have invested the cliche's of synth pop with irony, wit and the psychotic avuncular presence of singer Neil Arthur. And then there was the ultimate synth-era artifact, *Dare*, by the Human League, Depeche's only serious rivals to the synth-pop crown.

After the 1982 the departure of Clarke (who wrote all but two of the songs on *Speak And Spell*), Depeche survived well enough, and began utilizing some of the stunts perfected by electro-funk producers like Arthur Baker and the harsh industrial clankings typical of the "metal music" artisans. Meanwhile, Clarke was discovering the wonders of Alf. Alison Moyet is a formidable young woman descended directly from the traditional school of Brit R&B. All her previous experience had been singing with hard-nosed combos from the same region—thirty miles to the east of London—in which Clarke grew up. Alf answered an ad in the local paper for a singer, and discovered the person behind it to be a pretty young man with a bunch of machines. She decided to risk it, and a liaison was formed. The result was a string of hit singles (including a number one with "Only You" and two big U.S. hits, "Don't Go" and "Situation") and a brace of albums which brought their apparently opposing polarities together in surprising new combination.

"The voice thing was a real challenge for me," Clarke recalls, "something really new to me. I'd never really looked at voices as being terribly important before. I just thought it was, like, another sound to be fitted in. She was the first *real* singer I'd ever heard in a studio situation, and she really brought the songs that I wrote alive."

An amicable tension existed between the pair's conflicting philosophies. Alf found it hard to consider the synthesizer as a valid instrument. "In fact I don't think she does even now," muses Vince. "But then they're not really are they? A proper instrument relies on the acoustics of what it's made of. An electric guitar isn't a 'proper' instrument. It relies on a line of electricity. It's just another load of circuits."

Clarke/Radcliffe music is not in fact one hundred percent synthetic. On the previous Assembly single, and the next one, there is a genuine guitar sound which Radcliffe extracted directly from the instrument: "But Eric can't play it fast or accurately enough, so we just bunged it into the computer and programmed it to the right speed. Whenever I play anything these days I just think 'hell, that's out of time.' So I'd rather program, and get it to play accurately for me."

It is, of course, this kind of practice that drives well-practiced musicians bananas and has caused the British Musicians Union to adopt a Luddite posture regarding synthesizers generally. "I think a lot of professional musicians still view the instruments with suspicion," notes Clarke, "but the general punter couldn't care less. He or she just buys your records and couldn"t give a damn who or what plays on it. Anyway, the synth has made making music more accessible. It's almost ridiculous now with things like Casios. I've got one at home and it's just great for mucking about with. With the first synths it was all a very intellectual process. Scientific really. Now anyone can understand and use one."

Is there, I wonder, anything wrong with that? M

Clarke Bars

In addition to the Fairlight CMI, Vince's battery of keyboards includes a Yamaha DX7, a Kobol, a Prophet One, a Roland Juno 60, a Roland Jupiter 4, a Casio MT200 and a Kawai 100F synth. Splendid Studios also has a Roland Vocoder Plus and a Sennheiser Vocoder to spruce up vocals, and LinnDrum and Roland TR-808 drum computers, a Boss Doctor Rhythm and Simmons Drum Modules. Clarke also makes uses of a Roland MC4 Microcomposer and an Arp sequencer.

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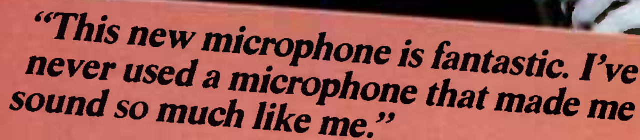

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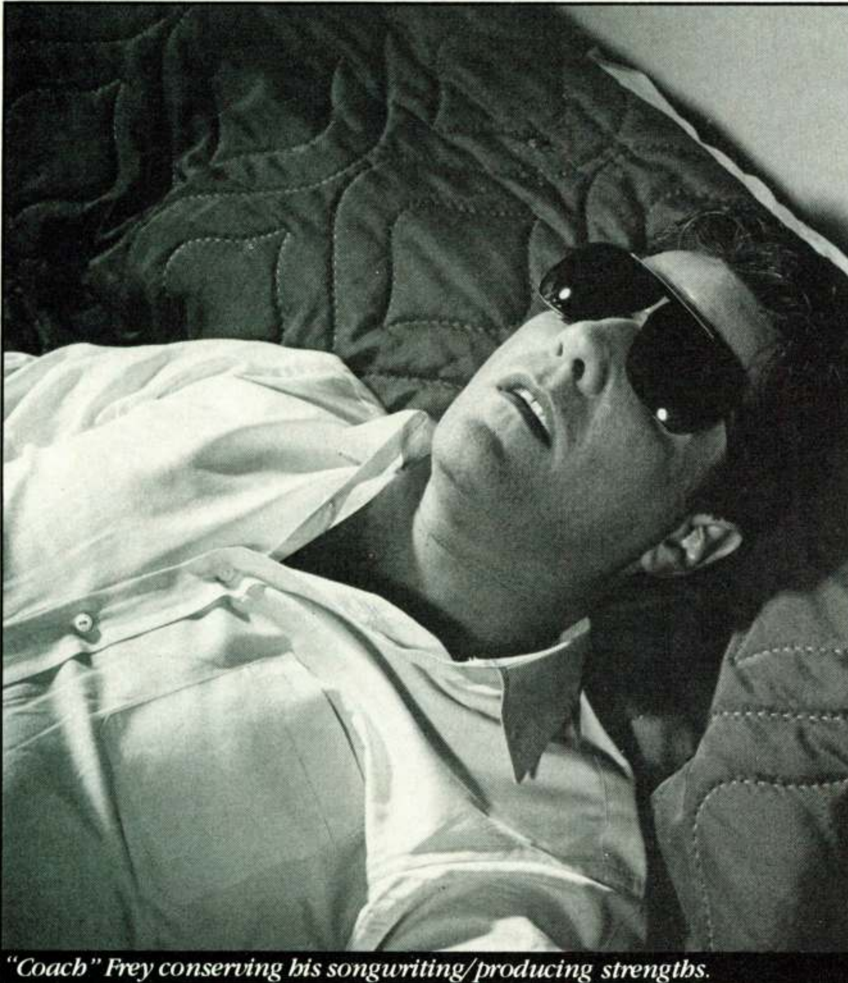

"Coach" Frey conserving his songwriting/producing strengths.

GLENN FREY'S BENIGN DICTATORSHIP

A Former Eagle Hunkers Down for the Long Run

By Jock Baird

My songs grow on people — like warts," grins Glenn Frey, generally acknowledged "quarterback" of the once-mighty Eagles, a co-writer of virtually all their hits, and now an ever-resilient solo artist. He's got a point. Of course, he's also got a head start. There's that voice. Frey's squinting, haunted lead vocals on California classics like "Tequila Sunrise," "Lyin' Eyes," "One Of These Nights," "New Kid In Town" and "Heartache Tonight" have already gotten under the skin of a certifiably large number of Americans. There's also something mixed into the grooves of his backing tracks, a super bonding agent known as Glenn's Glue-All, that eases pop music's absorption into the human body. And Frey's also well in command of that illogical populist instrument, the guitar. So you can figure the guy's got a head start, and when *your* label tells you your music isn't "contemporary" enough and lets *you* go, you better use any head start you can get to stay in business, too, pal. You're only as smart as your batting average—they don't care about your lifetime stats.

Like many artists escaping a band identity (especially a band under that much public scrutiny), Frey's first solo outing, *No Fun Aloud*, was as much a reaction against the Eagles as it was a distillation of his strengths. "The Eagles were thought of as serious—and rightfully so," Frey recalls. "Things got *real* serious after *Hotel California*." *No Fun Aloud* responded by tossing in two cover songs (including the ill-advised "Sea Cruise"), a theme for *Monday Night Football*, occasional dialogue, and a paean to partying (called, naturally, "Partytown") that featured a backup vocal group of random revellers like John McEnroe, Freddie (a.k.a. Jimmy) Buffet and then-manager Urban (a.k.a. Irving) Azoff ("He didn't clap his hands, though; he slapped his wallet. True story. I couldn't make something like that up"). This from the arranger of the impeccable Eagles' vocals? Despite its "lighthearted" flaws, *No Fun Aloud* did have a number of solid tunes, especially the Stax/Volt sass of "I Found Somebody," the Spanish guitar lilt of "She Can't Let Go," and a gooey but nonetheless likeable hit single, "The One You Love."

No Fun Aloud sold a respectable 650,000 copies, but when Frey brought his second record to Asylum early this year, "they said it wasn't contemporary enough." Enter Urban, uh, Irving Azoff again, this time as head of MCA Records. With three new tracks produced by Muscle Shoals' Barry Beckett (and recorded at Frey's expense) added to the record, MCA picked up the project and Frey's contract. Thus was born *The Allnighter.*

The Allnighter is not a work of Genius. It is not an Important Album. But it is a damn nice little record. Frey's latest excursions into authentic Memphis soul, "I Got Love" and "Let's Go Home," are lean, clean and perfectly suited to the honest emotion of his famous voice. Two collaborations with Rufus keysman/writer David "Hawk" Wolinski add synth fortification to the superb "Somebody Else" and the scratch of "Living In Darkness" ("my Prince tune"). Then there's "Smuggler's Blues," a bone-chilling docudrama of drug-related murder and the politics of contraband, set to the razor edge of Frey's savage slide guitar. This one could be subtitled "Life In An Even Faster Lane." Frey is tearing his voice more throughout *The Allnighter*, moving into territory once ceded to former sidekick Don Henley, and it suits him well.

So if this is not a Brilliant or Important record, why talk to Frey? For one, the guy's been making records and writing songs for fifteen years and knows plenty about it. For another, he was the "coach" of a band that was a paradigm of Ameri-

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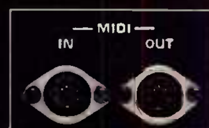

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can 70s rock, a Mt. Rushmore of the California Sound, and no one's ever debriefed him on the experience. Frey understands more than most the crucial dynamics of band participation and individual expression because he has lived through extreme examples of both and creatively lived to tell the tale. And for yet another, Frey is an incisive observer of the music scene and one funny bastard. No one who ever met him would call him serious, self-conscious or dewy-eyed.

This interview was conducted at Manhattan's prestigious Russian Tea Room, where gracious representatives of Frey's new management, Fitzgerald-Hartley, and MCA kept us both plied with Moet champagne (hey, no one said being a music writer was easy). Frey was sporting about a quarter-inch of beard, which made him look nothing like Steve Reeves/Superman and everything like the lead character in "Smuggler's Blues"—in fact, he was trying it on for a proposed video. Dressed in a blue sportcoat and tie ("I'm just a bleeping maniac in straight clothing. There's no reason to dress my monster up"), Frey scanned the gourmet menu and ordered a BLT. His slightly nasal Western/Californiesque accent was frequently enhanced by a throaty delivery, a sort of Tom-Waits-meets-Wolfman-Jack growl. For all that familiarity, nothing could've been further removed from Laid Back.

JIM SHEA

"Needless to say, I had a slight wardrobe crisis."

MUSICIAN: *There seems to be an ongoing tension in your work between the vulnerable romantic and the tough cynic. On the first Eagles album you had "Most Of Us Are Sad" follow "Chug All Night." Now it's "Smuggler's Blues" and "Lover's Moon."*

FREY: It seems when I put together records, as Henley used to say, they're just like movies. They should have action, tension, love scenes, places to relax.... So I don't know if I'm really conscious of being the splendid romantic and then the realist. I don't do that purposefully, but you're probably right.

MUSICIAN: *Do you feel you have to go out of your way to live down a perception of being this dewy-eyed tender type?*

FREY: You mean about me being perceived as (sneers) a balladeer? I think that goes back to the Eagles. When we had Don Henley to sing the rock 'n' roll songs, why should I screw around with it at all? I loved the way he sings—he reminds me of Seger, Wilson Pickett, the real thing. I think emphasizing his voice really helped push us over the top.

MUSICIAN: *You always write songs with a collaborator, particularly Henley. Now it's old pal Jack Tempchin ("Peaceful easy feeling," "Already Gone").*

FREY: We have a very good rapport. It's funny, there are only those certain people where things click—at least for me. He's very *free*. I'll just run some soul licks by him, or I'll bring him something like "The Allnighter," which originally was just about staying up all night. But then we started talking about it and Jack says, "Staying up all night can't play over three or four verses. What if the Allnighter was a *guy*?" So we made him into some woman's Everyguy.

But I don't like writing alone. I don't trust myself. You don't have to have the conversation with yourself: "Is this good enough?" Jack and I are completely honest with each other as far as criticism goes. Of course, even our bad suggestions are usually great. I find it very easy to be honest the older I get. I've discovered that beating around the bush, tainting, coercing, trying to guide people, is more trouble than it's worth. Of course, it's a lot easier now that I'm running my own successful dictatorship (laughs) as opposed to being in a struggling democracy. One of the reasons life is great now is because I'm the boss.

MUSICIAN: *You're coming out of the shadows as a guitar player. With the Eagles, you never really did pursue the heavy instrumental route you could've, because you let Don Felder do it.*

FREY: Well, you see I *drafted* all those guys. I was the one who chose Don Felder and chose Joe Walsh. I had a lot of singing to do. What I want to say is that it was all of my own choosing. I felt that for the benefit of the Eagles it was most important that we get a couple of *blistering* guitarists in there. After Bernie Leadon left, my role as a singer became much more important. I had to be in tune—all the time. But then again, for the albums I always got to play lead on one or two tunes. The bass players! (proudly) The bass players always chose me to play lead on their songs.

MUSICIAN: *So you are a frustrated lead guitarist.*

FREY: No, as a matter of fact, I'm a *happy* lead guitarist. But then again, the best way to learn how to play guitar is to play with people who are better than you are. So what does it hurt me to play with the Joe Walshes and the Don Felders and the Bernie Leadons of this world? Didn't do me too bad at all. I just call it smart. No, I laid back on purpose, because it leaves something for people to discover about you later.

MUSICIAN: *One thing we've only recently discovered is that you're an R&B fanatic. How does a kid who grew up in Detroit manage to get involved with country western and bluegrass?*

FREY: It's funny, people always like something that's different from themselves. When I grew up in Detroit I was more interested in what was going on in California, and only when I got out to California did I think back to Detroit and think about all the records I'd heard.

MUSICIAN: *But your R&B tastes aren't really really Detroit/Motown, but Stax/Volt....*

FREY: It's Memphis and Muscle Shoals, isn't it? See Detroit was Big Production, layers of sound, eight instruments just playing with the backbeat. Muscle Shoals was Small Production, small, tight bands. It comes down to what music speaks to you, appeals to you over a longer period of time.

MUSICIAN: *There is, of course, a big British R&B revival now. It's....*

FREY: So concrete, so androgynous, and it's so dull and undynamic. That's what I miss out of all this synthesized music—it starts to lose dynamics. I saw Billy Idol on the Letterman show last night. Needless to say, I had a slight *wardrobe crisis*. That's when you realize you're no longer part of the younger generation. But Billy Idol's okay. There's a place for everyone in our business. I just haven't figured out where. But you can only hype things so far.

MUSICIAN: *Is the business more image- and product-oriented now?*

FREY: No, it was always product oriented. We fought against jewel-box rock, which was very in vogue in the 70s.

continued on page 84

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CRAIG STREET

Disciplined trapeze artist Kaiser planning new sonic somersaults.

HENRY KAISER'S INCENDIARY IMPROV

Electric Eccentricity: Changing the Rules for the Fun of It

By David Fricke

To most people, free improvised music isn't an art—it's a nuisance. With no apparent structure and nothing you can whistle while you work, a Joseph Jarman free sax workout can be the sound of a car backfiring. A Derek Bailey scratch-and-scrape guitar solo might as well be the dog pawing the screen door to go walkies. Three or more improvisers in one room and you've got a construction site symphony.

Henry Kaiser, a California guitarist specializing in improvised music, can understand that. He used to hate avocados.

"I always thought they were terrible," he admits with a perfectly straight face as he noodles away on a black bullet-like Modulus graphite guitar in the Soho digs of his friend, New York drummer Charles K. Noyes. "Then I recently started eating them and now I've decided they're really pretty good. Actually, I keep re-trying things I never liked in the past just to see whether I'll like them later on.

"People should do the same with music," he adds with a hint of friendly lecture in his bright animated voice. "They should try different things. I don't say the music I do is necessarily better than other kinds. But if people try more different kinds of things, they'll have that many more things to enjoy in life."

Maybe Kaiser's avocados aren't such a great example. It implies that while improvised music, like fruits and vegetables, may not be fun, it's still good for you. But in performance, whether it's a solo communion with his hollow-body Gibson 335 or an electric exchange with frequent guitar partner Fred Frith, Kaiser often looks like he's kicking the jams out of "Louie Louie." He slashes at his guitar with manic glee, dissecting eccentric melodic figures and then recombining them in mad improvisational flurries. Sweat beads on his gently receding hairline as he bounces joyously in place, invigorated by the machete swipe of a harsh metallic chord or a weird new harmonic he's just pulled out of thin air.

Most of Kaiser's over twenty-five recorded projects throb with that same thrill of discovery, even "difficult" solo records like 1979's *Outside Pleasures* and such odd couplings as his *Daredevils* outing with the Rova Saxophone Quartet and the impending *Invite The Spirit* LP, a double album of quiet alien majesty featuring Charles K. Noyes and Korean classicist Sang Wan Park. Kaiser's standard definition of improvised music is "where you're not just playing around with a set of rules—as in jazz, you play with a set of jazz rules—but you play with a set of *changing* rules." Indeed, he is currently taking his guitar into places where many of his free-improv brethren surely fear to tread—Bill Laswell's upcoming Herbie Hancock production, a frantic Golden Palominos reading of Moby Grape's acid-punk guitar classics "Omaha" (with R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe on vocals), a highly anticipated trio record with Fred Frith and (gulp!) avant-folk wizard Richard Thompson.

Kaiser, thirty-one, certainly doesn't talk like the bohemian intellectuals comprising the bulk of his cultish audience. In a 1982 interview, he explained how a scuba diving trip off the northeast coast of Australia—during which he was surrounded by sharks and had the back of his hand ripped off by an angry potato cod—influenced his playing on an entire concert tour. His list of influences zigzags from assorted Captain Beefheart alumni (Zoot Horn Rollo, Eliot Ingber) and bluesman Hubert Sumlin to Merle Travis, Pete Cosey's abstract space-jazz with Miles Davis and the psychotic Delta fuzz of Canned Heat's Henry Vestine. And when confronted with guitar philistines who insist improvised music is just a lot of fingernails-down-blackboard in the name of art, he smiles toler-

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Arlen Roth
on the creative process, Yamaha and choosing an acoustic guitar.

"The process of creativity is a big struggle. You struggle to get somewhere and, when you get there, you *drive it home.* So I'm driving home certain ideas that I've arrived at as being my life within music, within my expression on the guitar."

"When I choose an acoustic guitar, I look for a good feel with my body, a sympathetic resonance. How the instrument *feels* acoustically. I want an easy feeling neck, but not too easy. The notes have to sound like there's some work behind them, there's some emotion there. I also like evenness of tone and great sustain. Yamahas give me much more than I expected in terms of filling that bill.

"I thought craftsmanship at that level was unheard of anymore. That's why I became a collector of old guitars and worried a lot when I was on the road with them. With my Yamaha, I have something that is really sturdy and beautiful, that's made with the same love and care acoustics were back in the 1800's.

"I think of the people who made my guitar when I'm playing it. It's the Japanese aesthetic, how they're on stage too and contributing somehow. We're all tied together. The craftsmen do their work and it goes right into my hands."

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antly and says, "Chuck Berry sounds like that to some people."

As if to prove it, Kaiser has recently made a couple of real big beat records. *Who Needs Enemies*, a Fred Frith collaboration, is rooted in bizarre LinnDrum grooves over which the guitar duo improvises live from a grab bag of rootsy bass lines, composed riff fragments and scales from the occasional Okinawan pop hit. "It was," Kaiser explains, "piecemeal improvisation spread out over time, so that in the end it might *seem* composed."

Marrying For Money—still unreleased at this writing for lack of a stouthearted record company—takes even greater liberties with accessibility. With sibling rhythm section John and Hilary Stench (ex-Jorma Kaukonen, of all things), Kaiser leaps into an improv free-for-all based in solid rock but twisted into novel rhythm patterns and hard brazen but strangely orchestral guitar parts. On the lead-off track, Georgia guitar ace Glenn Phillips takes breathtaking harmonic leaps over Kaiser's rippling chord motif in a guest solo that, in turn, inspires Kaiser to do his own trapeze riffing. The result bears a freaky if distant resemblance to a Mahavishnu Orchestra viciously turned inside out.

"There are all different kinds of improvisation," says Kaiser in defense of *Marrying*'s hybrid appeal. "There's the kind that knowingly tries to stay away from melody. There's the first duet record I made with Fred Frith (1979's *With Friends Like These*) where we played with some rhythmic rock 'n' roll ideas but using non-pitch-oriented sounds.

"But this is essentially free improvised rock 'n' roll. We isolated the guitar, bass and drums in separate rooms where we could barely see each other. And we didn't say what pitch or anything we would play on a particular track. It was just counting off, starting with a pulse and then playing together, improvising on the spot. I remember on one track, we all started playing on the count of ten. I still have no idea how we did it."

To Kaiser, *Marrying For Money* is actually in the San Francisco tradition of 60s Quicksilver-Grateful Dead explorer jams. And he should know. Raised in the Bay area, he spent a lot of time in the local psychedelic ballrooms watching John Cipollina, Moby Grape's Jerry Miller and Jerry Garcia get reckless with established blues and jazz changes. Listener-supported radio introduced him to the wonders of ethnic world music—China, Japan, Africa—and modern classical works. And his father, who died when Kaiser was very young, played the Hawaiian steel guitar.

Yet he did not even pick up a guitar until 1972. Inspired by Derek Bailey, an English improviser who in Kaiser's words "developed a whole new vocabulary for the guitar," he taught himself to play literally from scratch, digesting all the proper music books and toying with the available electronics. Within a year, Kaiser was performing live and only three years after that he was on record,

continued on page 82

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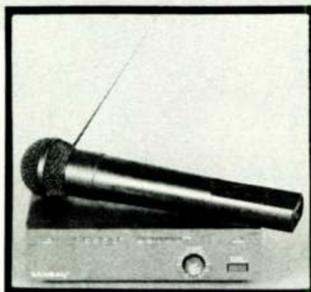

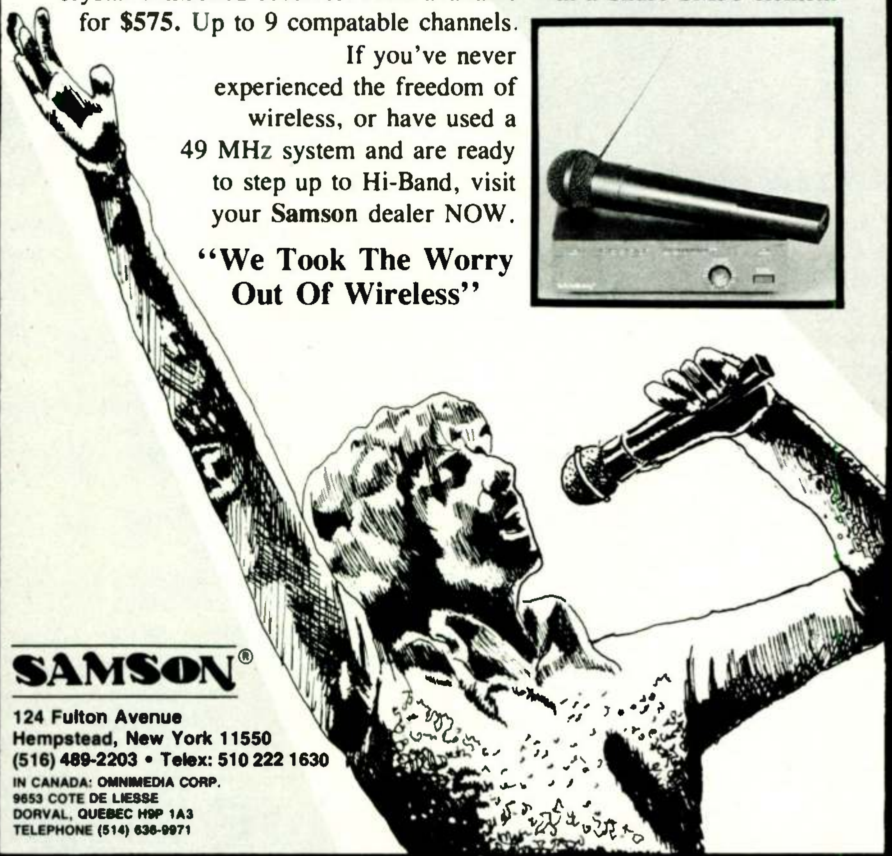

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Kaiser's Kinetics

For this interview, Henry Kaiser supplied a list of influences that was over 120 names and thirteen countries long. And his equipment list seemed at least half that. Narrowing his fifteen guitars down to his primary instruments, Kaiser relies most on his '70 black Telecaster, the Gibson 335 (1977 vintage with Bartolini H1-A pickups), a '58 sunburst Stratocaster with a maple neck and stock Fender pickups and a spanking new 1984 Modulus Graphite Monocoque guitar. Main acoustic guitars include a 1950s arch-top Epiphone and a Howe-Orme custom jumbo.

His Howard Dumble amp collection features an Overdrive Special, a custom tube pre-amp and something he calls a Steel String Singer, all supplemented by an '83 Fender Super Champ. In concert, his guitars run an effects gauntlet that starts with the Dumble pre-amp and continues through a dbx 160X compressor, an MXR pitch transposer, a Valley People noise gate, an EXR Exciter pedal (or an Ernie Ball volume pedal) and two Lexicon digital delays, the Super Prime Time and the PCM-42.

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BUILDING A STUDIO FROM THE GROUND UP

Getting Started: Answer Sheets & Sheetrock By Freff

RANDY MATUSOW

In the end, we had a box. But by God, it was a quiet box.

So there I was, staring down from my apartment window at this delivery truck (upon which was three-and-a-half tons of fiberglass roll, sheetrock and plywood), wondering just how the hell I was going to sneak all of it past my landlady.... But that's getting slightly ahead of the point. Let's backtrack.

This is the first in a series of articles about home recording. We'll be talking practical stuff here, covering the hardware and software that are out there and just how to get the most out of them in a cost-effective way. But we're also going to be talking about freedom and that's the real point. There are massive changes going down in the economic structure of the music industry, and equally massive changes in the technologies and costs of recording. Where there is change, there is always opportunity...and that means room in the game for you.

There are four questions you have to ask yourself before you start. Everything you do in setting up your home studio will depend on the answers and—more importantly—on how those answers interact. (1) What kind of music do I want to make? (2) What do I want to do with it? (3)What are my space and location limits? (4) What are my financial resources?

WHAT IT IS

Obviously, different kinds of music require different kinds of recording techniques, which will in turn require different kinds of spaces and equipment. "Different," in this context, doesn't mean the difference between heavy metal and classical guitar, or rock 'n' roll and C&W. What it really means is whether or not the music you want to make can be recorded D.I.—direct inject—straight into the mixing console.

If you're heavily into synthesizers, you've lucked out. They can be recorded D.I. quite easily, meaning you can set up virtually anywhere and only have to soundproof to whatever degree lets you live peaceably with your neighbors (and if you're willing to record, mix and monitor at low levels or through headphones, you can skip soundproofing entirely). If you want to record vocals or string quartets or real drums, though, you've got to enter the world of microphones and all the problems attendant thereto—keeping external sounds out, controlling room reverberations, preventing standing waves and phase problems, buying chairs that don't squeak, the lot. You can still get away with murder by recording at funky hours or by lowering your demands for quality, but that can create as many problems as it solves (no one's going to notice that passing garbage truck when you finish the mix, right?). If heavy metal guitar is your thing, then you've got a choice: do some truly heavy-duty soundproofing so you can mike your Marshall stack when it's cranked to ten, record your guitar D.I. and use a Rockman or equivalent to give it the sound you want...or move in above a school for the deaf.

WHAT'S IT FOR

The best way to figure out how this affects your plans is to decide just who you think will be hearing your tapes. Only you? The other folks in your band? Club owners and booking agents? Producers? Record companies? The people buying your album? As you go up through the levels in that list, you need higher and higher recording quality to get by. What this usually translates to is better space and better equipment, and therefore greater cost.

Remember this—it's best to overestimate your needs. Why? Two reasons. First, you're a human being, and human beings always wind up wanting more in the long run. Second, you never know when Fate is going to drop your tape on the desk of Ahmet Ertegun. The Boy Scouts said it best. Be prepared.

WHERE THE HELL TO PUT IT

Since the average apartment or home was never designed with recording in mind, it's axiomatic that building a studio in one is going to cause you several headaches before you're done. The first critical issue is how much soundproofing you require after considering both what kind of music you want to record and what you want to do with it. If your goal is the total freedom of making very polished demos and/or album masters, then go buy the Excedrin now. Giant discount size.

Soundproofing is tricky, because sound itself is. It can get through virtually anything except a vacuum; and since it

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isn't practical to build your studio inside a vacuum jar and use an airlock to get in and out, about the best you can hope to do is bring the sound level down to the point that meets your needs. For a demo-class home studio that means making sure the windows are shut and covered with heavy drapes; putting weatherstripping seals around all four edges of any doors; laying down fairly thick rugs over a couple of layers of heavy-grade rubber carpet matting.* Lastly, deal with the walls and ceiling in a way that will both absorb sound and diffuse reflections—you don't want the room to be too dead. The traditional cheap way is to tack up a lot of egg cartons and to hang thick fabric curtains (burlap is good) where needed. If you've got more money than that, look into acoustical tiles from building suppliers, hard packed fiberglass (like Corning 701) or acoustic foam paneling.

Finally, consider the location in a more general way. Does it have enough power for your needs? If not, run good extension cables from elsewhere, and make certain they are on different circuit breakers or fuses, so that you aren't increasing your risk of fire. You'll also need some kind of air circulation or conditioning. Are you in a basement? Then make certain it stays dry! Buy a good concrete sealer and apply it to every square inch. Also, put in a valve so you can close the drains, so the sewers can't back up through them.

WHAT IT COSTS

Money. There is never enough. If you had a million dollars to spend on the project, I guarantee that you'd find something you desperately wanted that cost a million-*five*. So you look again at your answer list—what kind of music, what it's for, where you have to work—and you play the game of compromises.

It's a real back and forth, this part of the decision process. If the budget is tight (and they always are) where do you shave costs without hurting yourself? After all, everything can be hedged—up to a point.

You can buy used gear. That's one way. But be very careful who you buy from, make certain you know where it can be repaired, and mark the possible savings against the possible loss. Try not to stint when it comes to the equipment which actually puts the signal down on the tape, because when that breaks down, the rest of what you've got becomes random, useless wiring. Shop around and get the most competitive prices you can, at every level—from lumber and carpet to cassette deck and mixing board. And try to buy only what you truly need.

But probably the best way you can save money is to do things yourself. Just one thing, though—*don't* rush in blindly. The library is full of how-to-do-it books. Check them out before you start drilling and hammering. And if you've never wired together a lot of studio gear, call in an expert to get you started. It isn't really difficult; but you don't want to use your one and only studio as the low end of your learning curve. What it will cost you in consultant's fees will more than save on repair bills.

TRUE CONFESSIONS

My answer-list went as follows:

- Type of music: a soundtrack album based on a literary property called *Elfquest*, and after that miscellaneous

commercial jobs requiring both D.I. and mikes. Some of the acoustic instruments were very quiet ones, so I had to do massive soundproofing in order to keep outside noises from getting onto the tape. In addition, the music would require a lot of control over ambience and effects, so I would need a comprehensive collection of signal-processing gear. Right away I knew it wouldn't be cheap.
- Goals: what I wanted...no, what I *had* to have, because of contractual demands...was a studio capable of producing an album master.
- Location: the space I had was a single fourteen by fourteen-foot room, with a nine-foot ceiling, in a second-floor apartment. An apartment in a noisy neighborhood, with noisy neighbors both above and below, and a nosy landlady in the basement.
- Budget: tight (what else?). Enough to make a great demo studio, but which brought only frowns and headshaking when I said "album master" while price-shopping. The choice seemed to come down to buying what the stores considered minimum for album work (sixteen track 2-inch recorder and class-A board) and having enough left in the budget to maybe buy a single digital delay, or to go with a half-inch 8-track and pile in enough "extras" so that I could really control the sound I was putting down. I swallowed hard and bought the eight-track and the outboard gear.

Since the noisy space and the need for album-master quality required major soundproofing, I knew I couldn't stint there. It was the point from which I had to begin. Enter the sheetrock. And the plywood, and the fiberglass, and the solid-core doors, and all the rest. After placating my landlady and spending five-and-a-half hours hauling everything upstairs (and that was with four of us working), I could look around my brand-new miniature lumber yard and get to work. What had to be done was the construction of a "floating room"—as isolated as possible from the actual room.

First I put an air conditioner in the window, so that I could keep things cool. Complex routing of soundproofed air ducts was impossible to do in that space, so I opted for a straight tunnel from the air conditioner into the new room, with a door that could be shut when I had to use microphones. Then I sealed the window and windowframe with weatherstripping clay, hung opaque drapes to create a totally innocuous outside appearance, and nailed up ⅜-inch plywood over the entire window...the edges of which were, like the windows themselves, sealed with clay. Sound is a pressure wave in air. Stop the air movement, and you stop the sound. The last preliminary tasks were to do the plywood/sealant trick with the closet door, replace the door I planned never to use (there were two in the room) with a solid-core door and seal it, and to plug extension cords with power strips into every outlet in the room. As the new room was built we would keep cutting holes for cables to pass through. [*The editors blanch at this. It's far better to open up the outlet box cover and run new Romex to new boxes nailed to the stud wall, but Freff's lease precluded that.*]

To create a floating room you need a floating floor. We started by attaching ninety hard-rubber isolators to the underside of a framework of 2x4s. This frame was held together with metal L-braces and good, solid wood screws, and fit into the room with only a few inches of clearance on all sides. The 2x4s were on edge and about eighteen inches apart; between them we unrolled six-inch fiberglass insulation, packing it underneath the wood so it wouldn't slip. (Some hints on working with this stuff—it takes some time to expand to full-size after it has been unrolled, so allow for that; and wear protective clothing. Gloves, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, a breathing mask, goggles if you can get them...fiberglass is a health hazard, and until it is sealed under the floor and behind the walls you don't want

continued on page 82

RANDY MATUSOW

**People using computers or other microprocessor-controlled tools in their recording work should get anti-static industrial carpeting instead of thick shags then play it safe by spraying even those with some sort of anti-static fluid, which you can get through mail-order computer supply houses if your local stores don't carry it.*

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BEST BUYS

BY JOCK BAIRD

No sooner did we tell you about the surprising profusion of new top-quality amplifiers than the latest entry popped into view. It's the 100-watt Sundown, designed and built by New Jersey repairman/designer Dennis Kager, and now distributed by Ibanez/Hoshino. Available as a combo model (with Electro-Voice 12-inch speaker) or as a separate head and slant-front 4x12 Celestion-equipped cabinet, the Sundown has two footswitchable channels, "Green" (rhymes with clean) and "Red" (as in Molotov cocktail distortion). The amp has extremely low intermodulation

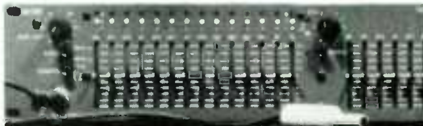
distortion (I.M.D.), eliminating unwanted beat frequencies on the clean channel.

The Red channel is a distorto-fiend's delight. Not only are there conventional Master/Gain controls to shape "front-end" preamp crunch, but two unconventional controls work the "back-end" output stage. One, the "Governor," adjusts the distortion threshold of the output stage—lowering it makes the amp tear more. The second control, the "RMS," adjusts the actual output wattage, from 100 down to 10—this reduces the "size" of the bass response, making the sound smaller.

This last control makes more sense once you crank the Sundown up at a full 100 watts, because the sound is enormous—this is a kick-ass little amp! Two tone controls for the green side and three for the red are augmented by a mid-range boost when the midrange knob is pulled out. Other pull-out knobs add distortion-sculpting features, as do the two dual-sensitivity input jacks. Costing over a thousand dollars, the Sundown may not be the most economical approach to power-fuzz—slitting your speaker with a razor blade the way Brian Jones did for "Satisfaction" is still the cheapest—but it does sound quite a bit punchier. (Hoshino, 1716 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020. (215) 638-8670)

WHO'LL STOP THE RANE?

Having trouble getting a good flat frequency response in the seventh gymnasium you've had to mix this month? Can't seem to get that ugly ring out of the upper mids? Well cheer up, Bunky, because for under $700 you can get your hands on a Rane Model RE 14 analyzer/equalizer. Divided into two stereo 14-band channels, the RE 14 uses red, yellow and green LEDs to tell you when you're over or under your desired frequency. Just plug in accompanying flat-response condenser mike, switch the



sensitivity control to ±3dB, and whenever an LED is in the red or green, adjust the slider until it comes to yellow. Then switch the sensitivity control to ±1dB and fine tune. Anytime later during the show, any feedback or unwanted peaks can be instantly identified and corrected. Throw in a pink noise generator, hard wire bypass, balanced/unbalanced floating active inputs and out and you've Soundmixer Flash and the Furious Five-Minute Setup. (Rane, 6510 216th S.W. Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043 (206) 774-7309)

MAKING WAVES

PPG has not been standing still while other synth powers developed MIDI-fluent superkeyboard systems. Their new eight-voice digital synth with eight-track sequencer, the Wave 2.3, becomes a powerful Music Computer System when linked with the sampling, 24-track sequencing Waveterm computer, the EVU expansion voice unit and the weighted-action, six-octave PRK Processor keyboard (adding two PRKs to the regular Wave 2.3 will give you twenty-four voices at a shot). Sure it's big bucks (the 2.3 is just under nine grand, the Waveterm nearly twelve grand, the EVU near seven thousand, the PRK near three thousand) but have you tried shopping for a 24-track tape deck lately? (Europa Technology, 1638 West Washington Blvd., Venice, CA 90291 (213) 392-4985)

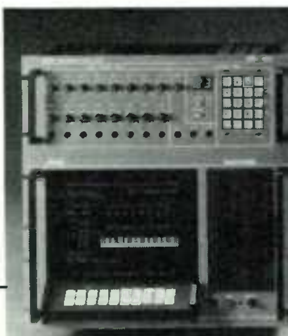
THREE MINTS IN ONE

One of the niftiest P.A. units we saw at N.A.M.M. was TOA's MCX-106. This six-channel stereo powered main mixer and monitor mixer has all the usual goodies you might expect—3-band eq for each channel, feedback controlling 9-band graphic eq for the main output, protective compression circuitry, highly flexible patch bay and a hefty 300 watts of power—but throws in a top quality cassette deck with microprocessor controls and dbx noise reduction. Thus the MCX-106 can be used for intermission music, playing along with prerecorded backing tracks, or live recording. Funny how the things that are so logical are so surprising when they finally appear. (TOA Electronics, 480 Carlton Court, So. San Francisco, CA 94080 (415) 588-2538)

GOLDEN MEDAL OF WIRELESS

Sony is not exactly a newcomer to making wireless microphone systems; their UHF system was used by ABC for their recent Olympic excesses. Such high-stakes standards were recently incorporated into Sony's new VHF system, based on frequency synthesis. Exponential frequency flexibility is a top draw here—far more channels—but that's not to belittle the 100-15K Hz frequency response, linear compander-induced 96dB dynamic range, and 60dB signal-to-noise ratio. The Sony wireless system also uses two tuning sections—with two antennas—on the same frequency, so that waveform reflections in small clubs won't give you phase cancellation and signal loss. If you still have problems, better antennas are available, allowing you to play from as far away as two football fields. Even Springsteen doesn't play houses that big. (Sony, Sony Drive, Park Ridge, NJ 07656 (201) 930-6432)

Last month we somehow managed to change synth pioneer and now Kimball designer Don Buchla's name to Ralph (Ralph?) and a month before changed Justin Hildreth's surname to Mildreth. God, how humiliating.



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Kaiser from page 74

often with the very people—Frith, saxophonist Evan Parker, guitarist Eugene Chadbourne—who had influenced him. "Actually, in a way, I'm very conservative. I like the same things I liked in junior high school. I just like them to greater extremes."

That he is equally conversant in his extremes—backporch acoustic blues, hippie rock windouts, brainy guitar metaphysics—gives Henry Kaiser access to a range of musical sensations and technical possibilities that still surprises him. On *Invite The Spirit*, he and Sang Wan Park (who plays a Korean koto-like instrument called the *kayaguem*) "succeeded in a special kind of communication without having even met each other before going into the studio." Park, in fact, had never heard Western improvised music before. As a further test of his intuition and ability, Kaiser did those sessions in standard tuning, frequently bending the strings of his Gibson 335 behind the bridge in imitation of Park's *kayaguem*. Kaiser: "I'm a big believer in the standard guitar tuning, because you learn where everything is and how you can get it. I take a very technical approach to understand what I'm doing and why it sounds that way."

That applies to his guitar, amp and effects armory as well. Electronic devices like the programmable Lexicon digital delay have enabled Kaiser to get further away from the tempered scale, another one of his pet peeves. On one *Marrying For Money* track, he used a square wave to modulate the Lexicon delay time so that it bent the pitch up and down by a fourth and a fifth. A simple thing like fuzz can go a long way, too. On his '70 black Telecaster (outfitted with a Modulus Graphite neck), Kaiser has supplemented his laminated Bartolini humbucking pickups with a Piazzo hexaphonic pickup *in* the bridge so that each string has its own individual pickup. He doesn't process it as a six-channel signal, but instead sends it through a Zeta Poly-Fuzz which is actually a hexaphonic distortion unit. That's six different fuzzes for each string, or thirty-six fuzzes in all.

But are there any new horizons in guitar *playing*? "Oh, most of that's been done," Kaiser shrugs. "Take harmonics, from Lenny Breau to Derek Bailey and Roy Buchanan. You already have three radically different approaches to it. But put those things together and you can do things with them that nobody has done. There are very fine lines between all these definitions of style and sound. And that's what interests me the most—the gray areas."

(Most of Henry Kaiser's currently available recorded work is on Metalanguage Records, 2639 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705.)

Home Recording from page 78

to mess with it.) On top of this frame we laid one layer of ⅝-inch plywood, cut to fit the room from standard 4x8-foot panels; three layers of sheetrock (laid down in alternating patterns, so that none of the seams matched—luckily sheetrock is easy to cut; just score it with a razor blade and snap off the excess); and one final layer of plywood.

Then it was time to build the four walls. These were framed with 2x4s, just like the floor, except that space was left for the door and air conditioner access. We framed the walls one at a time and leaned them up into place. When all four were done, we nailed them together at their seams, making certain that they did not touch the original walls at any point, and rested them firmly on the floating floor. Then it was time to do the fiberglass insulation trick all over again, this time with 4-inch rolls.

By itself, the new set of walls was kind of shaky. Stability (and more soundproofing) would be gained by putting on a double layer of sheetrock—again, arranged so that none of the seams matched. We marked the floor and the walltops where there were studs (so we could find them again after the first layer of sheetrock was up), attached the sheetrock to the studs with drywall screws, and sealed the seams between the panels with duct tape.

Before the second wall layer it was necessary to do the ceiling, so that the second wall-layer could act as additional support and give us a good soundseal at the edges. We used 2x6s on edge for the rafters, and attached them to the top of the wall frames with large metal L-braces. Six-inch fiberglass insulation was stuffed in cross-wise above the rafters, When you have people above you, you have to soundproof the ceiling more than the walls or floor, because even their slightest footsteps cause their floor/your ceiling to resonate with bass frequencies which are tough to control.

Putting the two layers of sheetrock on the ceiling was just like putting the first layer on the wall, only a lot tougher. But we learned some useful tricks: first, use three people on chairs to lift a piece into place, and have a fourth person ready to shove extra 2x4s into place as braces (a little like vertical supports in a coal mine); second, spend some money on ratchet-style screwdrivers or a variable speed drill—you'll never survive screwing in hundreds of drywall screws above your head. Mark the location of the rafters on the walls, so you can find them after putting the first layer up, use a taut string to position your drill for pilot holes, and DON'T stint on the drywall screws. That's a lot of weight to have hanging above you and your equipment, and you don't want it coming down.

After the ceiling, putting on the second

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M 300

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An elegant-sounding "step-up" mic, the Beyer M 400 has an exceptionally hot and sensitive response which translates into a crisp, articulate sound. The M 400's specially designed filter reduces "popping" noises in close-miking situations to enhance a wide variety of vocal timbres on stage or in the studio.

M 500

Ribbon microphones have always been very popular because of their warm and detailed sound, but their "fragility" has traditionally prevented them from being used in applications where high SPL is a factor. Because of a revolutionary ribbon element measuring only 0.85 inches, the Beyer M 500 is the first mic to deliver the smoothness and fast transient response of a ribbon microphone while accepting higher sound pressure levels (130 dB SPL) than any mic of its type available today.

M 69

The unusual and distinctive shape of the Beyer M 69 is becoming a more recognizable sight in professional recording and live concert situations. Highly sensitive and directional, the M 69's exceptionally clean hypercardioid characteristic suppresses coloration from all frequencies off axis. The M 69 produces a very natural sound and its wide frequency response (50-16,000 Hz) and high output capabilities combine for a distinctively articulate sonic quality.

As always, Beyer Dynamic encourages you to audition its microphones along with the competition so that you can make the Dynamic Decision.

The Dynamic Decision — **beyerdynamic)))**

*Optional Model M 69S shown with Speech/Music switch

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Home Recording from previous page
sheetrock wall-layer was a breeze. So was caulking all the seams. Suddenly we had a box. But by God, it was a *quiet* box, and it had air conditioning, lots of power outlets, and inner-and-outer solid-core doors with an air seal between them. What remained after that was aimed not at soundproofing but sound control—the rug and Sonex acoustic foam paneling from Alpha Audio in Richmond, Virginia—and various matters of pure function, like storage shelving, lighting, and a good hard surface for the mixer and tape machines. Another solid-core door provided that cheaply, and leftover plywood created our rack-mount supports and air conditioner door.

Of course, that's going to extremes. Not everybody wants to make albums in their own home. But it's possible, if you want to go that far. Was it worth it for me? Unequivocally yes. I've been totally spoiled by being able to work around the clock if I want to, never having to worry about how many takes I've done or when the next band is coming in. The biggest plus of all is the freedom—to test, and experiment, and be creative.

Next time: Low Tech Glory! ◼

Frey from page 71
People were going into space on us then, too. But I'm not competing against anybody in the music business but *myself*. It's like they tell basketball players: play well within your game. A white power forward like Kurt Rambis doesn't have the moves of a James Worthy, but he plays within himself. And that's what you have to do as an artist, find out what's good about you, always keep that, and then try to develop a little more without overstretching yourself. One thing I find with younger people—some of these guys are playing *at* being something, they're not really *being* something. You don't get that gut feeling about them.

MUSICIAN: *Even if Asylum didn't think you were contemporary, why would they ignore your sales of 650,000?*

FREY: (cracks a cautious grin) It might've had something to do with the letter I wrote (Elektra/Asylum chairman) Bob Krasnow after his first interview. He pissed me off. He didn't call up Jackson Browne or Irv Azoff and say, "Well, here I am." He just walked right out and told the press, "This label is not going to be a country-rock graveyard. This is a new company." I just thought, "here's a guy with no sense of history." So I photostated a copy of the interview and wrote on the front of it in magic marker, "Dear Bob, Don't ever come to L.A. or your bleeping ass is mine!" So you figure the guy *might* not like my stuff, might be slightly prejudiced against my music. Now Bruce Lundvall's left. I knew he wouldn't last long. He's got taste, he's *gone*.

But also, my deal with them was *huge*. Huge. I probably didn't deserve what I was getting. No, I *did* deserve what I was getting, but you have to be realistic about these things. Hey, I'm playing hardball. I'm ready for the worst now. I had it good, but what can the worst be? Money can't help you if you have liver trouble.

MUSICIAN: *Given you call yourself a dictator, who's there to make sure you're playing as well as you can within your game? Who coaches the coach?*

FREY: (defensively)Well I've already sold 650,000 copies of my first solo LP, which is not too shabby. I think my second album's better than the first one. Unless I appear exceptionally disillusioned to you right now, I want to tell you I've followed my gut feeling from the time I was twenty-two about everything. But I had other opinions: (Eagles string arranger) Jim Ed Norman, my new managers, Irving, Bob Seger. People told me they thought I should do some other things. I said, "How *dare* you?!" and about three days later I did exactly what they suggested I do. Why, are you telling me to change producers? Are you offering me some career advice? I mean, *goddamn*....

MUSICIAN: *Uh, no...I just...well, there's something about the song "Sexy Girl," the overrepetition. I like the bridge; I'm just sick of the hook.*

FREY: Hey, that song affected me the same way. It's my least favorite song on *The Allnighter*. Jack and I wrote a standard called "After Hours," with brushes and stand-up bass and acoustic piano and strings, like Bobby Short at the Carlyle Hotel. And that got bounced 'cause I took other people's advice. And again, I don't know, maybe that's the last time I'll take other people's advice.

But a song like "Sexy Girl"...for a guy who's written "Smuggler's Blues," how can I sit down and tell you this is the greatest thing since candy pants. I just figured, I'm going to a new company, I didn't want to give them any excuses. I was *this far* from just buying my own recording truck and saying, "screw all you guys."

MUSICIAN: *Having produced yourself, Karla Bonoff and Lou Ann Barton, are there changes in the way you record now? You're using things like synths and digital drums.*

FREY: I liked cutting with a drum machine and bringing the drums in after, 'cause real drummers get tired after about eight takes, and that's usually around the time the guitar players have figured out their parts. Before mechanical drummers, one of the keys to a good session was keeping your drummer fresh, stopping him after one take and taking him out of the game before you've wasted him. I've seen it happen a lot.

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MUSICIAN: *Do you still stay in the studio all hours these days?*

FREY: After about eight hours in the studio, you start to not get returns. I've read somewhere that when you're writing, you should stop while you're doing well so you always want to go back to work. That's one of the lessons I learned from doing *The Long Run*, where we stayed in the studio for weeks at a time. I'd just start getting up in the morning and it was just like *school*. I didn't want to get up. Dreading to go.

MUSICIAN: *I'm interested you brought up* The Long Run, *because I've heard it said that the reason the Eagles broke up was because they were unable to artistically equal* Hotel California.

FREY: I think that's a very accurate observation. Hey, I didn't make a big deal out of *Hotel California*. The eighteen million people that bought it did.

MUSICIAN: *But it seems as if this fixation on following* Hotel California *went to such an extreme, when musically* The Long Run *was a very good, very underrated record.*

FREY: I think *The Long Run* is very underrated too, but you can also hear that it's slightly *tired*. (laughs) Maybe it just makes *me* tired to listen to it. But no, actually it was one of *my* favorites too.

MUSICIAN: Hotel California *had the four or five monster songs....*

FREY: And there are a couple or three things that weren't quite as good. But it's funny, people only remember the hits. One of the reasons *The Long Run* is better top to bottom is that with five guys who wanted to express themselves in one way or another, we decided we would do a double album. That way no one worries, "Is this the only song I'm going to get to do?" That's not a good way to draw material out of people. So we actually did about eighteen songs before we honed it down to those nine.

MUSICIAN: *Don Henley did an interview with us last year in which he....(Frey snatches the copies of the interview and reads underlined passages, then pronounces, "absolutely true...that one's absolutely true...." He hands the pages back) So is it true, as Henley says, that the Eagles drove you and him crazy because everyone wanted to be quarterback, that you got tired of being the boss and being hated for it, that you were a great coach who had put this team together and didn't get to express yourself enough?*

FREY: (deliberately) The thing is, when you're in a band, it's supposed to be equal. And when people emerge as having strengths in certain areas, other people are so resentful of having that strength. Everybody makes this big thing about Don Henley and I being the reason for the split in the Eagles, but I'm here to tell you right now that Joe Walsh and Don Felder—and others—created as much turbulence for our band as everybody else did, just because *they're* frustrated quarterbacks. All I'm saying is that in a band, it's a fake democracy. The roles are not so defined.

The thing is, in the Eagles, everybody brought things to Henley, he was the lyrical genius, the English Literature major who could help us put these stories together. So I wasn't encouraging anybody to do anything in the Eagles that I wasn't doing, just giving my music to him and....

MUSICIAN: *He calls you "The glue."*

FREY: I was. I guess so. That's very nice. That's another reason why I couldn't understand all these disturbances from the other players in the band, because *I* was subordinating *myself*. And why couldn't somebody else see their way to take a step backward and do what they do the best, 'cause that's really what grated on me. They didn't make subordinating myself a worthwhile job anymore. Besides being the glue, I was also the guy who said, "You sing this, you play lead on this—*not me*. I'd love to but...." The bass players never gave us any trouble, though. It was the guitar players.

MUSICIAN: *You're the guy who reportedly turned down the two US Festival offers for an Eagles reunion and just lately you told* Billboard's *Paul Grein, "If the Eagles were to fart in a bag, the label would've tried to get a stereo mix and*

continued on page 104

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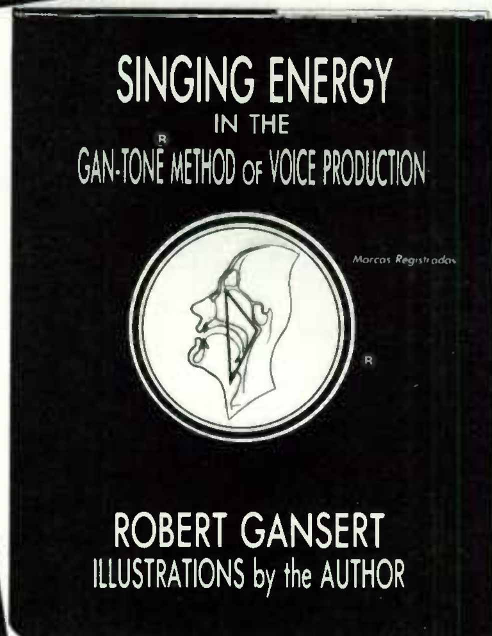

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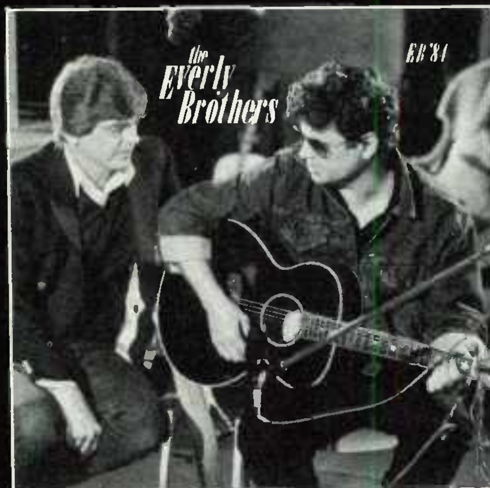

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RECORD REVIEWS

Great Expectations: the Jacksons follow a tough act with a catchy, stylish, but undaring LP.

EBET ROBERTS

THE JACKSONS
Victory
(Epic)

Epic pretensions aside, *Victory* earns its title; completed at the height of Jacksons pre-tour paranoia and handicapped by the insane hype Michael's *Thriller* left in its awesome wake, it is a victory for the other Jacksons that the album came out at all. But the hollow ring that echoes throughout is the sound of good intentions going aground on the shoals of expectations which could never be met.

Most of the problems with *Victory*—only the third Jackson's studio effort since 1978's self-produced *Destiny*—are not with the record itself but with its timing. There simply isn't enough distance between the mighty funk-metal swagger of "Beat It" and *Victory*'s "Torture," a locomotive disco thumper that moves to a static aerobics beat and features a *deja vu* guitar break that is—at best—polite Eddie Van Halen. Michael's two productions, "State Of Shock" and "Be Not Always," are curve balls that turn sharply in opposite directions—the former a heavy metal hip-hop mantra with Mick Jagger that sounds like Afrika Bambaataa stirring up "Brown Sugar," the latter a chamber-pop protest ballad dripping with "Yesterday" sincerity. Both testify to Michael's Renaissance man energies, but compared to the effortless swing of *Thriller*'s greatest hits, they exploit particular moods and tastes without ever transcending them.

The sudden mainstream arrival of Prince further complicates matters. The *Purple Rain* soundtrack is relatively PG when set against the triple X-rated sass of *Controversy* and most of *1999*; yet Prince has absorbed his sexual fixations into a kind of "body" politics and supercharged it with a tight passionate marriage of Hendrixian shriek and electronic chill. The most graphic thing about *Victory* is the rah-rah chorus of Marlon Jackson's "Body" ("Girl I need your body/ Girl I want your body/ Why don't you come home with me now?"). Its bright, choppy syncopation bubbling under Marlon's teasing falsetto gives the track a charming playground lilt which, however, never kicks over into real bump-and-grind.

It's certainly not the Jacksons' talents that are in dispute here, only the risks they are willing to take with them. The album's shotgun songwriting and production approach (each brother is responsible for his respective song) also runs counter to the team spirit of *Destiny* and 1980's *Triumph*, and makes for some awkward transitions. Tito's plaintive EW&F-style ballad "We Can Change The World" fidgets uncomfortably between "State Of Shock" and the bleak, funk snap of "The Hurt," the song's nagging simplicity perversely charged by Randy Jackson's eerie fal-

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setto. The rigid play-by-numbers sound of the session men, a few Totos among them, doesn't help.

But a lot of *Victory*—a catchy, stylish record by normal standards—would sound better if it didn't have the weight of the world's expectations crowding its grooves. Jackie Jackson strolls away with a dark horse hit in "The Wait," which faultlessly mixes pushy AOR hooks, Anglo-synth streamlining and top forty gloss. Still, the bold march of black music into the heart of white pop culture has nevertheless moved much faster than the Jacksons themselves here dare. In its wholesome Hollywood way, *Thriller* brought home the bacon first cooked up by Sly, Otis, Motown, the street corner doo-wop kids and the rest of soul's forgotten heroes. *Victory* shows the other Jacksons still know what cooks. It just never gets hot enough to make you burn. -**David Fricke**

THE NEVILLE BROTHERS

Neville-ization
(Black Top)

Since banding six years ago, New Orleans' Neville Brothers have suffered one bad career break after another. Their debut set on Capitol, a strong pop-soul outing, died on the vine due to weak promotion. *Fiyo On The Bayou* (A&M), the non-selling, critics rave album of '81, was poorly sequenced and mistakenly aimed at white audiences; a potential soul smash, "Sweet Honeydripper," was inexplicably never pulled as a single. Then, after lengthy preparation, a production deal with Keith Richards failed to materialize. Today the Nevilles are languishing locally, like many of the city's R&B greats, but this spirited live set fills the gap while they wait around for the big time.

Recorded at recently-closed and sorely-missed Tipitina's, *Neville-ization* presents a cross-section of the band's imposing talent. It's an informal club set with a stripped-down, small-band sound, elevating the Nevilles' oft-ignored instrumental skills to greater prominence. Art's deft, funky keyboard sparkles throughout, while Charles offers a lengthy soprano sax workout on a syncopated version of "Caravan." Cyril's fiery percussion helps push "Big Chief" and "Africa," which are further enriched by the keyboards of Aaron's son Ivan. The band's rein on grooves ranging from slick soul to reggae and rhumbas seems effortless.

The Nevilles are best known for their vocals, though: Aaron's ethereal ballads, Art's warm crooning, Cyril's raw, street-corner testimonials. And there are brilliant moments when they harmonize, as on "Fever" and Bobby Womack's "Woman's Gotta Have It." Aaron is the group's most distinctive, accomplished singer, though his solo spots here are curiously the album's least effective, notably an overdone re-make of "Tell It Like It Is." Art is unfailingly natural, sounding urgent on "Mojo Hannah" and plaintive on "Why You Wanna Hurt My Heart?" As befits the group's live-wire performer, Cyril's leads—on "Africa," "Big Chief" and "Fear, Hate, Envy, Jealousy"—are the album's most passionate.

Thanks to fine, contrasting vocalists, crisp musicianship and diverse material, *Neville-ization* is a cohesive, unassuming success. While not the *tour de force* Neville fans await, it'll do just fine for now. -**Ben Sandmel**

ANDY SUMMERS & ROBERT FRIPP

Bewitched
(A&M)

Guitar duets are such tiresome things. No wonder Andy Summers abandoned the format for much of his second duo album with Robert Fripp. It isn't that the two don't have enough to say to one another musically—surely, *I Advance Masked* demonstrated how easily the two could create a world within the confines of two guitars—but neither is it hard to see where two such creative *group* players might be interested in using this busman's holiday to fool about with form a bit.

Just how far such foolishness takes them can be heard on "What Kind Of Man Reads Playboy," a droll burlesque on the fusion aesthetic that finds Summers joking about with wry blues interpolations while Fripp monkeys with all the cliches of screaming guitar solos. There's also a droll segment in which, while Summers cranks out brittle atmospherics, saxophonist Chris Winter and bassist Chris Childs toss licks through the haze in a sort of hesitant harmolodics.

Not all the playing around is in jest, though. "Begin The Day" is a wiry, tension-packed bit of Crimsonology that unleashes a few good Frippian screams, while "Train" makes a worthy vehicle out of the contrasts between a mechanical rhythm track (bass and drum machine) and Summers' almost organic cloud chords. Texture is almost more important than melody on some of the selections, and the two guitarists' complementary approaches to guitar synthesizer and chordal accompaniment enrich the album's sonic palette. The title track matches Summers' pastels with Fripp's ice-hot feedback, "Tribe" pairs the former's fluid phrasing with the latter's crisply repetitious rhythm work, while "Guide" sets quivering Frippertronics behind pungent, pianistic leadwork by Summers. Despite such exotic techniques, the result is always accessible, and undeniably musical. In fact, by carefully matching their strengths, Summers and Fripp have produced an album of instrumentals that's almost devoid of noodling. No mean feat by any standard. -**J.D. Considine**

ALVIN BATISTE, JOHN CARTER, JIMMY HAMILTON & DAVID MURRAY

Clarinet Summit
(India Navigation)

A foolish cynic might dismiss this one-time aggregation as the World Clarinet Quartet, what with Murray's popping bass clarinet anchoring the group, and with Ellingtonian watercolors refracting World Sax Quartet-style through Hamilton's close-interval charts for "The Jeep's Blues" and "Groovin' High." But where the WSQ's members earned their stripes in the post-free jazz 70s, the four clarinetists here are a more diverse lot, representing swing (Ellington vet Hamilton), bebop (Batiste), and

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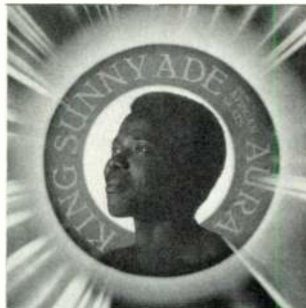
the Old Lions and Young Turks of the avant-garde (Carter and Murray). Besides, the sweetly seductive but often intractable licorice stick is no baby sax, but a horn with its own proud history, of which these players are well aware.

The shining stars here are the perennially overlooked Batiste, one of the very few bop clarinetists, and the legendary Hamilton, who retired a while back and hasn't played much lately. Every musician who's laid off his horn for thirteen years should sound so good. Hamilton's tightrope control and warm, woody tone return intact, and he fits into Carter's seemingly casual but intricate free-for-all "Sticks And Bones" with remarkable ease. "Sticks," and a jaunty duet on "Honeysuckle Rose," where Batiste and Hamilton dance around each other like they've been together for decades, feature the most stunning interaction—unless you count Alvin's brilliant solo "Clariflavors," on which he integrates slow blues, abstract screeches, cadenza corkscrews, Charlie Parker and the kitchen sink into a surprisingly coherent and satisfying history lesson.

The magnificent Carter mostly keeps his sensible-squeal style under wraps, as if he hadn't quite found a comfortable niche for himself, and the delightfully genteel "Groovin' High" ends almost before it gets started, suggesting that four days prep time for this recital wasn't quite enough. Though assembled for one concert, clearly this foursome could accomplish great things if they played together regularly. Hmmm—isn't that how WSQ got started? -**Kevin Whitehead**



KING SUNNY ADE & HIS AFRICAN BEATS

Aura
(Island)

JULUKA

Juluka
(Warner Bros.)

Every so often an exotic style of foreign-bred popular music will arrive on these shores to enliven jaded rhythmic palates. In the early 70s, it was reggae, with its twisted-around beat and odd patois; reggae 80s counterpart has thus far proven to be African pop. Two years ago King Sunny Ade introduced Nigerian juju music to these shores, and while the popularity of African music is still somewhat limited, a fascination with the style persists, as evidenced by the release of the noteworthy *Soweto* and *Viva Zimbabwe* compilations and, most recently, the arrival of new LPs by Ade and the South African band Juluka.

Ade's juju sound was the first African pop to connect in the U.S., and it's easy to understand why. His sound, with its reliance on an intoxicating mixture of modern electric guitars and the propulsive talking drums of Nigeria's ancient past, is kinetic and eminently danceable.

Like Ade's first two American releases, *Aura* is sung in the native Yoruba tongue, so its success for Western listeners can be judged solely by its rhythmic and instrumental impact. And though the novelty of juju has worn off somewhat, *Aura* does contain a couple of beautifully sustained jams which amplify its sonic vocabulary. A sweet harmonica, played Stevie Wonder style, is laid onto the mesmeric beat of Ade's massed juju orchestra on "Ase," creating a soulful atmosphere that is brilliantly

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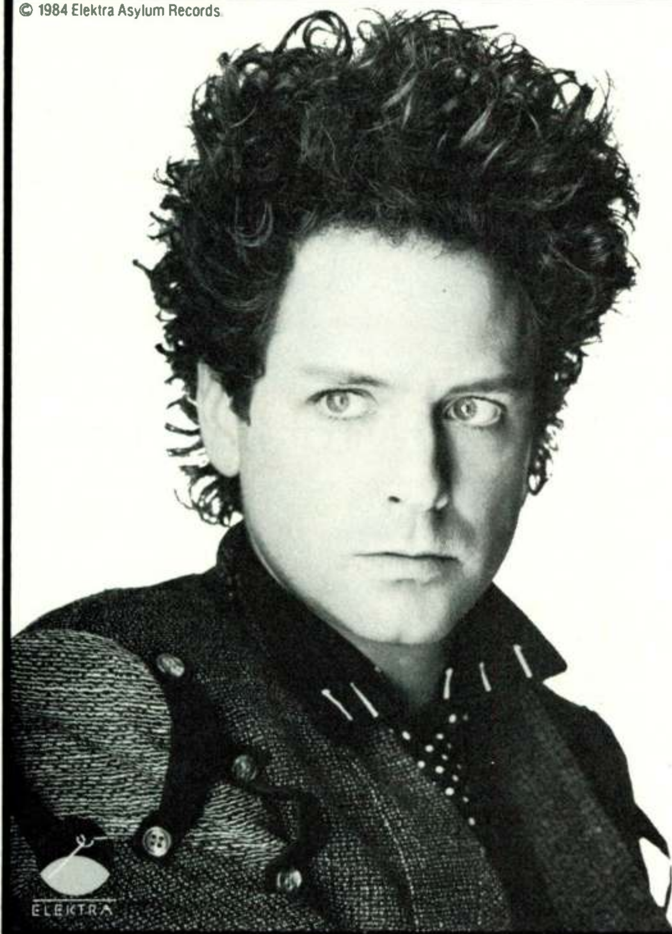

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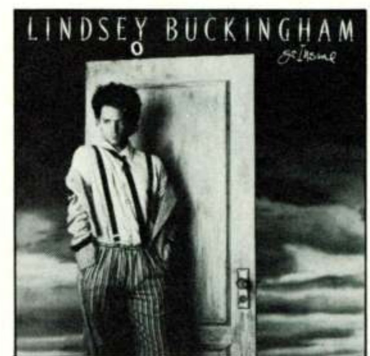

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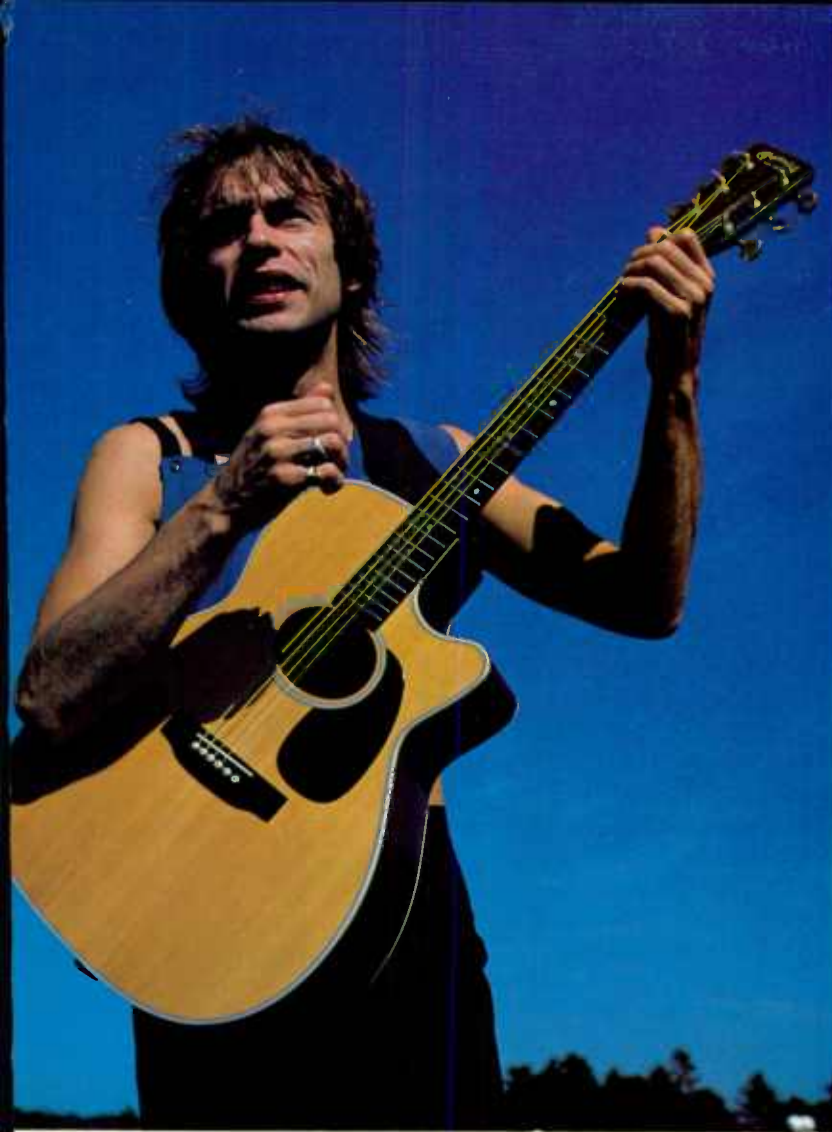

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Pearl

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contemporary. The other noteworthy track, "Ire," is a vividly sung chant with hypnotic cross-drumming. Other numbers are less distinctive, but even the least of them boasts wondrous interplay between Ade's metallic lead guitar and Demola Adepoju's liquid lap steel work. Neophytes should probably stick with Ade's debut *Juju Music* for an introduction to the style, but the already converted will find more juju magic in *Aura*'s grooves.

Listeners yearning for an entrance into the glories of African song should avoid Juluka's second album altogether. This bi-racial South African group represents a noble idea, but the largely deracinated pop music that bandleaders Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu make is so compromised and commercial that it hardly resembles third world music at all. A listen to the first cut on the record, "Kilimanharo," tells all: damned if the thing doesn't sound almost exactly like Men at Work's "Down Under." Juluka's music is cheerily percussive, and their hearts are plainly in the right place (see "Work For All," a right-to-work broadside), but more often than not, they take Supertramp as their musical inspiration.

If you're after the real African stuff, skip Juluka and check into Ade, Fela Kuti, Ebenezer Obey, or the aforementioned anthologies. That's where the real heart of darkness lies. –**Chris Morris**

ROMEO VOID

Instincts
(415/Columbia)

Don't know about you, but I enjoy a good brooding session from time to time. Reliving mistakes, silently cursing enemies, and so forth can be really helpful in purging those lingering bad vibes. The key is knowing when to stop, because stewing in your own juices for too long can leave you bitter and twisted. Such is the fate of Romeo Void on *Instincts*, a bilious *pop noir* outing that's more tiresome and less gripping than they intended.

You have to respect the authoritative way singer Debora Iyall bites into lyrics like she's doing battle with a particularly tough burger. Even Chrissie Hynde couldn't match her dogged persistence. Of course, the main Pretender has a broad range of experiences to draw on, while Iyall seems to be embroiled in one bummer after another. In the brisk "Just Too Easy," she bids adieu to a weak lover with the memorable kiss-off "You look like you think you'd be better off dead," and concludes, "You're always falling apart/ It was just too easy to break your heart." So much for compassion. "You're Life Is A Lie" finds Iyall unloading a double shot of contempt on a hypocritical man. "I am what I say I am," she snarls, thus deciding, "Your life is a lie next to mine."

Counterpointing Iyall's hard-boiled directness, the band casts black and blue shadows that recall the moodier moments of the Doors and Roxy Music. However, saxman Benjamin Bossi and his pals are too mild-mannered to be a viable foil. Don't blame Iyall—the boys have ample opportunity to strut, most notably the aforementioned "Your Life Is A Lie," which rumbles ominously a la "Eight Miles High" yet never ignites, and the lilting, directionless "Going To Neon."

Give 'em credit for thinking big: *Instincts*' ambitious theme is the way people construct defenses to avoid being hurt. Setting the stage, "Out On

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Rock Shorts from page 98
to hear for a while.

Robin Gibb — *Secret Agent* (Mirage). As the smarmy charm of "Boys Do Fall In Love" assures us, he's one of *those* Gibbs. But rather than slide another serving of sugar-coated sentimentality down our throats, Robin Gibb instead spends the rest of his album working out a canny, technologically adept dance rock that's as grittily sensual as Hall & Oates, and as studio-smart as recent John Robie.

Elton John — *Breaking Hearts* (Geffen). It isn't that Elton John's tunes have lost their pop sense so much as they have their effervescence. Granted, they're melodic enough to hum along with; it's just that humming is no longer the imperative it once was. Still, there's diversion, especially for those making make snide conjectures over the relationship between Bernie Taupin's meanly misogynistic lyrics and E.J.'s recent nuptials.

Derek Bell — *Derek Bell's Musical Ireland* (Shanachie). Onstage with the Chieftains, Derek Bell is both musical sage and personable wit; on record by himself, he's still the sage, but submerges his wit into a wry melodicism that pulls every nuance and emotional subcurrent to the surface. If there's a lovelier, more heartwarming music to be found anywhere, I'd love to hear it. (Dalebrook Park, Hohokus, NJ 07423)

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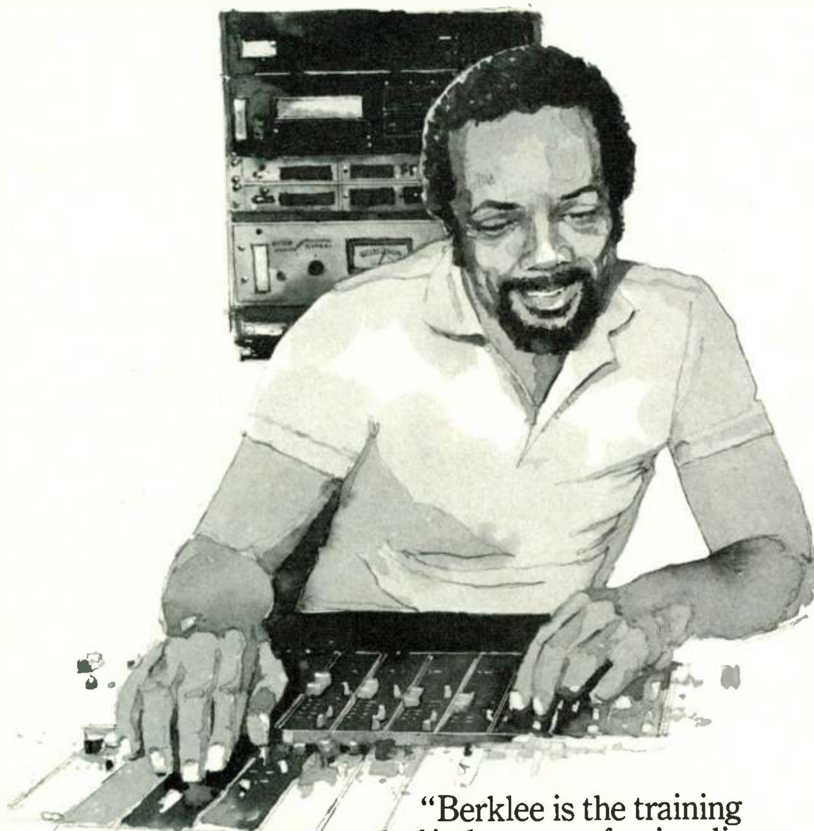

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My Own," leads off with a plaintive account of learning to hide feelings, and the gentle title track closes the show with a lovely reawakening of trust. Most of the rest is too much of a bad thing. Sure, *Instincts* is a powerful experience. So is slamming your fist into a brick wall. In both cases, you don't learn much.
-**Jon Young**

HAROLD MELVIN & THE BLUE NOTES

Today's Your Lucky Day
(Philly World)

Philly soul, once thought to have perished under the onslaught of disco as Memphis soul was once crushed by the emergence of Sly Stone, seems to have managed a resurrection. First, Deniece Williams hit with Thom Bell ballads; then the O'Jays turned in some strong albums; and now Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes are back on course.

This last is perhaps the most surprising of all, because after Teddy Pendergrass departed for a solo career, fans and critics alike had written the band off. After all, singer David Ebo could barely fill Pendergrass' shoes, and the band's subsequent departure for ABC hardly helped their standing. Now, with a new lineup (including Gilbert Saunders and Rufus Thorne in place of Ebo and Jerry Cummings) and a new label, not only have the Blue Notes recaptured their old, glistening sound, but they've actually managed to expand upon it.

Instead of taking the standard lead/harmony approach, Melvin has reset the vocal balance so that the Blue Notes are fronted by either of two lead singers, a gruff Pendergrass-style hollerer—sadly, the album doesn't credit any individual voices—and a smooth, Jerry Butler-style balladeer. This gives the group added flexibility that helps turn uptempo tunes like "Talk It Up" into dynamic, propulsive vocal features, instead of mere groove tunes.

Despite a slight tendency to rely upon past glories, as in the way "What We Both Need" recalls "If You Don't Know Me By Now," the writing is sharp and appropriate, updating the classic Philly sound without removing its essence.
-**J.D. Considine**

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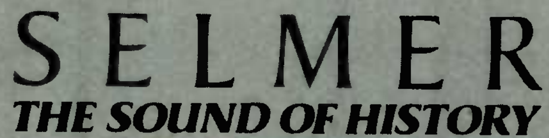

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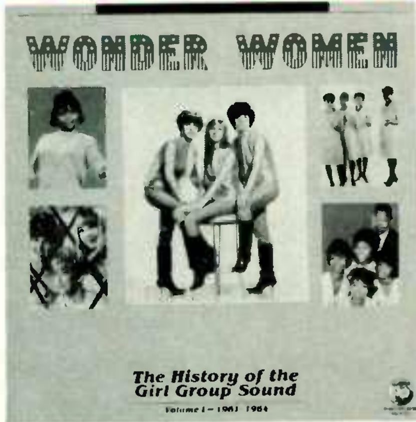

Same Old Song Dept.
Great R&B records never die, they just go out of print. Fortunately, though, a lot of them come back in one form or another, and recent months have seen a virtual avalanche of worthy re-issues.

Perhaps the most needed are a pair of two-volume **James Brown** packages. Despite the Godfather's recent renaissance, almost nothing of his back-catalog is in print. Solid Smoke (P.O. Box 22372, San Francisco, CA 94122) has provided a much-needed service in compiling *The Federal Years, Parts 1 & 2*, a thoughtful survey of Brown's years with the Famous Flames. Even without most of the big hits ("Please, Please, Please"? No, no, no), it's riveting. The first two installments of Polydor's *The James Brown Story, Ain't That A Groove* and *Doing It To Death*, take a similar hit-less gander at Brown's musical development from 1966-69 and '70-73. Must-hear material for anyone interested in the development of funk as we know it, but when will Polydor decide to release the British anthology *Solid Gold*? Soon?

Multiple-artist anthologies are a favorite of record companies and fans alike, because they're generally the best way to get ahold of great singles by one-hit wonders. While a number of the groups on *Wonder Women* (Rhino, 1201 Olympic Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90404) had substantial enough output, placing the **Shangri-Las**' "Give Him A Great Big Kiss" between **Betty Everett**'s "You're No Good" and **Barbra Lewis**' "Don't Forget About Me" is as good as oldies albums get. Speaking of Lewis, she's also featured on the first of Solid Smoke's two-volume *Detroit Gold* series, an invaluable look at non-Motown soul from the Motor City. And, should hearing the **Capitols** rip through "Cool Jerk" again whet your appetite, there's also *The Capitols: Their Greatest Hits* (Solid Smoke), a good look at a mostly-forgotten group.

Not that Detroit is the only city whose soul scene has attracted the attention of Solid Smoke. For a sharp lesson in the development of doo-wop into soul, get ahold of *Low Mileage, High Octane*, fifteen reasons why the **El Dorados** were *the* harmony group to imitate in mid-50s Chicago; then cue up **Gene Chandler**'s *Stroll With The Duke* to hear the payoff in the likes of "Duke Of Earl." For a different sort of enlightenment, try comparing "Rockin' Robin" and "Little Bitty Pretty One" off *The Best Of Bobby Day* (Rhino) to the Jacksonized versions, and see if you can detect an echo of Day in Michael Jackson.

The Official Record Album Of The Olympics is a corny way for Rhino to sell fourteen examples of the best of the **Olympics**, but given the jokey, Coaster-style material the Olympics made their name off of, it's appropriate enough.

For a more contemporary approach to harmony singing, look for either best-of by the **Dramatics** or the **Mad Lads**, both recently assembled by Fantasy's Stax re-issue program. Both are satiny smooth, but not above getting down. Nor should you skip *The O'Jays' Greatest Hits* (Philadelphia International)—unless, of course, you already have them all.

Finally, though it's not a record, much less a re-issue, Gerri Hirshey's *Nowhere to Run: The Story of Soul Music* makes great reading while replaying these hits, especially because Hirshey sticks closer to where-they-are-now than what-they-did-then. A solid book, even without a discography.

Rain Parade — *Explosions In The Glass Palace* (Enigma). With their influences better diffused than on *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip*, it's possible to listen to this band without the distraction of half-memories. Which is great, because it allows these five songs to show just how sharp this band's writing is, from the muted country twang of "You Are My Friend" to the dreamy orientalisms of "No Easy Way Down." Now, if only the vocals had the same authority as the guitar playing...(P.O. Box 2896, Torrance, CA 90509).

J.D. Souther — *Home By Dawn* (Warner Bros.). Don't wait up.

Scandal — *Warrior* (Columbia). Despite her admirable pipes, it's hard to shake the sense that Patty Smyth got her featured billing on the basis of her visual input to the group. The songs sure have little going for them that a pretty face wouldn't help. Add in the expected Mike Chapman glaze, and you have exactly the sort of album Blondie should have taught everyone not to make.

The Special AKA — *In The Studio* (Chrysalis). "Free Nelson Mandela" is more than just the best Afro-pop any British band has ever played—it's a single with both a conscience and a cause, and any listener with either ought to get a copy. As for the rest of the album, though it's not as incandescently melodic as the single, its audacious variety and surprisingly supple musicality demonstrate just how much Jerry Dammers & company have grown since the ska craze.

Quiet Riot — *Condition Critical* (Pasha). Prognosis: Terminal.

Husker Du — *Zen Arcade* (SST); "Eight Miles High" (SST single). Any arguments that hardcore is an inherently limiting pop form ought to be squelched by a single play of this sprawling, ambitious double album. It isn't just that the Huskers can move from the coolly acoustic "Never Talking To You Again" to the muscular, post-psychedelic "Chartered Trips" to the reversed-tape rave-up "Dreams Recurring" to the breakneck thrash of "Indecision Time" to the jittery metadrone "Hare Krsna"; it's that they can do it on a single side, and make sense of it to boot. No easy listen, but worth the effort; still, if you're looking for something short and sweet, try their amphetamined "Eight Miles High," which is as catchy as the Byrds' original, though six times as intense. (P.O. Box 1, Lawndale, CA 90260)

Torch Song — *Wish Thing* (IRS). Just when you'd thought that the synthrock approach had already been done to death, along comes this British trio with an engagingly new twist on the process. Oh, sure, Torch Song use the same percolating synths and sharply insistent drum machines as everybody else, but rather than go for the usual dynamic, they match their textures to Laurie Mayer's wispy alto, and add to the sense of space with a hip-hop fondness for digital delay. Aside from a too-droll remake of "Ode To Billy Joe," this is the best atmospheric dance album you're likely

continued on page 95

J. D. Considine

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JAZZ S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S

Improvisational Arts Quintet — *No Compromise* (RX, available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York City, NY 10012); **Jimmy Stewart & Kuntu** — *An Engineer Of Sounds* (Cadence Jazz, Redwood, NY 13679); **Fred Anderson** — *The Missing Link* (Nessa/NMDS); **Dennis Gonzalez & John Purcell** — *Anthem Suite* (Daagnim/NMDS); **Tim Berne** — *Mutant Variations* (Soul Note/PolyGram Special Imports); **Coe, Oxley & Co.** — *Nutty (On) Willisau* (hat ART/NMDS); **Didier Levallet** — *Scoop* (MFA, from Metalanguage, 2639 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705). Seven excellent-to-merely edifying releases proving that what used to be called free jazz (let's define it as straight ahead blowing outside the changes) is alive and well and turning up in the unlikeliest places, contrary to what a recent trend piece in the *New York Times Magazine* might have you believe. The superb New Orleans-based Improvisational Arts Quintet (which expands to include six pieces on some tracks that feature both electric and stand-up bass) achieves a cohesive group identity while advancing the credentials of an intriguing cast of individuals, including drummer and AACM charter member Alvin Fiedler, flutist Kent Jordan (a player of enormous potential, his meretricious CBS debut notwithstanding) and Jordan's father Kidd, a saxophonist with remarkable tonal control and a flawless sense of construction. The moody and fitful nature of Philadelphia altoist Stewart's music, together with the murky recording quality of his Cadence album, recalls certain ESP discs of the mid-60s—music always on the edge of *becoming*, with payoffs powerful enough to excuse its many dull and awkward moments. The title of Chicago tenorist Anderson's LP refers to the transitional role he played between the tough tenors and the AACM; he combines the tonal bulk of the former with the rhythmic sinew of the latter on three lengthy rubato rampages over bass and percusssion. Trumpeter Gonzalez leads a group of energetic players from Dallas, with added starter Purcell—an asset in any surrounding—turning in some of his meatiest solos on record. Altoist Berne is a New Yorker who has yet to penetrate the charmed circle, though all of his albums have been spirited and extremely well paced. On the latest, he communicates some of his thoughtful urgency to a quartet featuring the spidery trumpeter C. Herb Robertson. Tony Coe is a versatile British musician who doubles on saxophones and clarinet and plays with abandon both inside and out, and Tony Oxley is a similarly resourceful British drummer. The two join forces with their countryman, the fleet bassist Chris Laurence, on the splendid hat ART double (highlight: Coe's abstraction of "Body And Soul"), and with a troup of international soloists (including Steve Lacy) on French bassist Levallet's *Scoop*, a lively affair spiced by the leader's colorful, high-flying writing for octet.

Abbey Lincoln — *Talking To The Sun* (Enja/PolyGram). Trenchant material ranging all the way from Stevie Wonder to Henry Mancini, and unobtrusive support from a fine group including altoist Steve Coleman and percussionist Jerry Gonzalez, underline the fact that Lincoln is a one-of-a-kind singer who conveys an actress' luminous presence without overdramatizing lyrics or otherwise putting on airs. Jazz is much richer for her return to the scene.

George Gruntz — *Theatre* (ECM). The first American release from Gruntz's internationalist big band would be welcome just for including the only excerpt we're ever likely to hear from the Gruntz/Amiri Baraka jazz opera *Money*, with the inimitable Sheila Jordan reprising her stage role. But the rest of the album is pretty heady stuff as well, blending the classical, the folkloric and the contemporary in a manner that never seems forced.

Leo Smith — *Rastafari* (Sackville). Trumpeter Smith's collaboration with the Toronto-based Bill Smith Ensemble is a valuable document, not least for proving that the prophet in the wilderness' theories of sound and silence and space are applicable outside his own musical domain. And the title track is simply a bewitching piece of music, application of theory or no.

Chet Baker — *The Improviser* (Cadence Jazz). Even with Baker records in plentiful supply at the moment, this one from a Norwegian club date rife with screw-ups and false starts becomes a must for illuminating the trumpeter's grace under pressure. Far from perfect in every other respect, it nonetheless approaches perfection in capturing the ineluctable essence of jazz.

Rova — *Favorite Street* (Black Saint/PSI). The Berkeley saxophone quartet's approach to the music of Steve Lacy is similar to Lacy's approach to Monk, which is to say meticulous about small details while mindful of the larger picture. And the best news of all is that the increased emphasis upon composition within their music has come at no cost to their improvisational daring.

String Trio of New York — *Rebirth Of A Feeling* (Soul Note/PSI). With its simultaneous echoes of hoe down and the concert hall, this fourth team effort from violinist Billy Bang, guitarist James Emery and bassist John Lindberg enhances their standing as one of the most promising small groups to convene in recent years, as well as one of the sprightliest and most genuinely beguiling.

Archie Shepp — *The Good Life* (Varrick, from Round Up, Box 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140). The huzzahs that greeted Shepp's re-embrace of the hard bop verities were premature as it turns out, because he has embraced most of hard bop's direst cliches as well. Like too many of his recent albums, this humdrum quartet date lacks not only the verve, but also (what do you know) the *form* of his best 60s free-for-alls.

Al Cohn — *Standards Of Excellence* (Concord Jazz). Yet another dashing album from the veteran tenor saxophonist whose nickname ought to be Old Reliable, with guitarist Herb Ellis captaining the rhythm section this time around.

Francis Davis

World Radio History

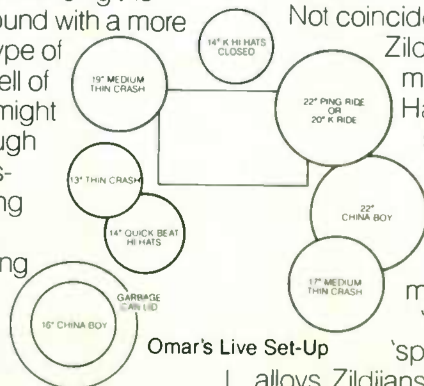
OMAR HAKIM

CHOOSING A MULTI-SOUND CYMBAL SET-UP

As a musician growing up in New York City, Omar Hakim was called upon to play *everything:* funk, rock 'n roll, bebop, salsa and all the variations in between. His diverse background is put to good use in Weather Report, where his powerful and supple drumming fuels the band's heady blend of exotic rhythms, electronic textures and shifting dynamic levels.

Omar's *multi-purpose* drum and cymbal set-up has been chosen with meticulous care to produce the extraordinary variety of sounds he needs for Weather Report and sessions with David Bowie, Dave Sanborn and others. How the cymbals are used and where they are positioned around his kit has more to do with enhancing his musical possibilities than following the "rules."

"I've been changing *roles* with different cymbals. Since Weather Report is mostly electric, I've been balancing the 'wash' type sound with a more defined ride type of thing on the bell of the cymbal. I might be riding through Joe's solo passages or setting up a groove with the 22" Ping Ride on my right. So I'll keep the right hand going and do accents and other stuff with my left hand on the 19" Medium Thin Crash on the left. It's an excellent crash/ride cymbal and it gives me enough different sounds to free me up for this *ambidextrous* approach."



Omar's Live Set-Up

The innate ability to pick the right cymbal is an art that Hakim has refined by spending a lot of time in the city's music stores, playing and listening closely to cymbal after cymbal.

"You should be patient. You've got to know how to really *listen* to the cymbal you're going to play for years. And when you pick a cymbal, you've got to do it with the same sticks you intend to play it with.

"First, I listen for the primary tone. You have to get close to the cymbal to hear it. I also listen to whether the harmonic overtones are coming out evenly. I like the bells to be clear without too many harmonic overtones."

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World Radio History

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Frey from page 86

ask me what I wanted on the B-side." Does that pretty much express your thoughts on an Eagles reunion?

FREY: The point is, if the Eagles were to get back together, it would have to be for the right reasons. I think it would look awful if it were just for the money. The guys in the band didn't call me up and say, "Gee, we missed the music so much, do you think we could get back together and do a couple of benefits for Alan Cranston?" The US Festival twice offered us a lot of money, but money's not an issue. But I think it's an issue with the guys who want to put the Eagles back together. But money's not an issue for Don. *He* understands what's going on. I have a great deal of respect for him, and the reason he and I don't talk so much is because the Eagles were our common interest, not because *we* had any falling out. Many other factors. But you don't like to drag this stuff out.

MUSICIAN: *When all is said and done, can't it be said that the Eagles were really you and Don and your sidemen?*

FREY: I think *you* can say that. And I think so too.

Frey's Talons

Glenn Frey used a rebuilt Fender Telecaster for most of the lead work on *The Allnighter*, but plans to forever hang on to his black Les Paul Junior TV model. His amp is a Fender Deluxe with one speaker. He likes a little bit of "gin" on it—echo supplied by an MXR analog delay pedal. He also fools with a Boss chorus. Frey doubles on keyboards, mostly acoustic piano and Hohner clavinet, and he's particularly turned on to Casiotones: "I have an MT-40 and an MT-45. After I used them to write with and do demos, I wound up using the Casio for the solo of 'I Got Love' when we couldn't get the same sounds off the expensive synthesizers."

Hanrahan from page 32

Theater in July, also showed them to be well rehearsed and inspired. Although working mainly with material from *Desire*, Hanrahan included a healthy dose of Bruce tunes rearranged from albums like *Harmony Road*. The Haitian and Cuban drummers worked exceptionally well together, despite differences in their approach to clave; guitarists Arto Lindsay and Elysee Pyronneau provided potent counterpoint; tenor saxophonist John Stubblefield, a featured soloist, played his heart out; and Hanrahan proved himself a masterful composer/arranger.

The exciting show opened up a lot of possibilities and direction. (It might even provide more material for Bill Laswell.) It also sold out two performances, with the box office turning away over three hundred people. American Clave indeed! – **Cliff Tinder**

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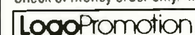

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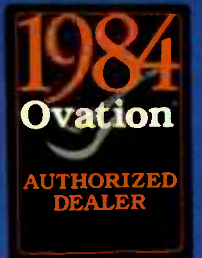

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