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MUSICIAN

JUNE 1991

Conversations with Stevie Ray Vaughan

BY TIMOTHY WHITE

DRUM SPECIAL

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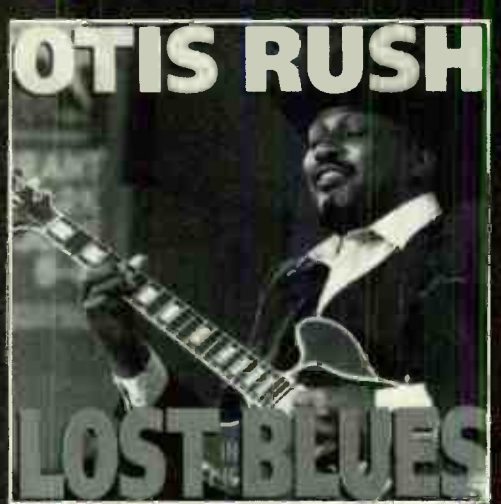

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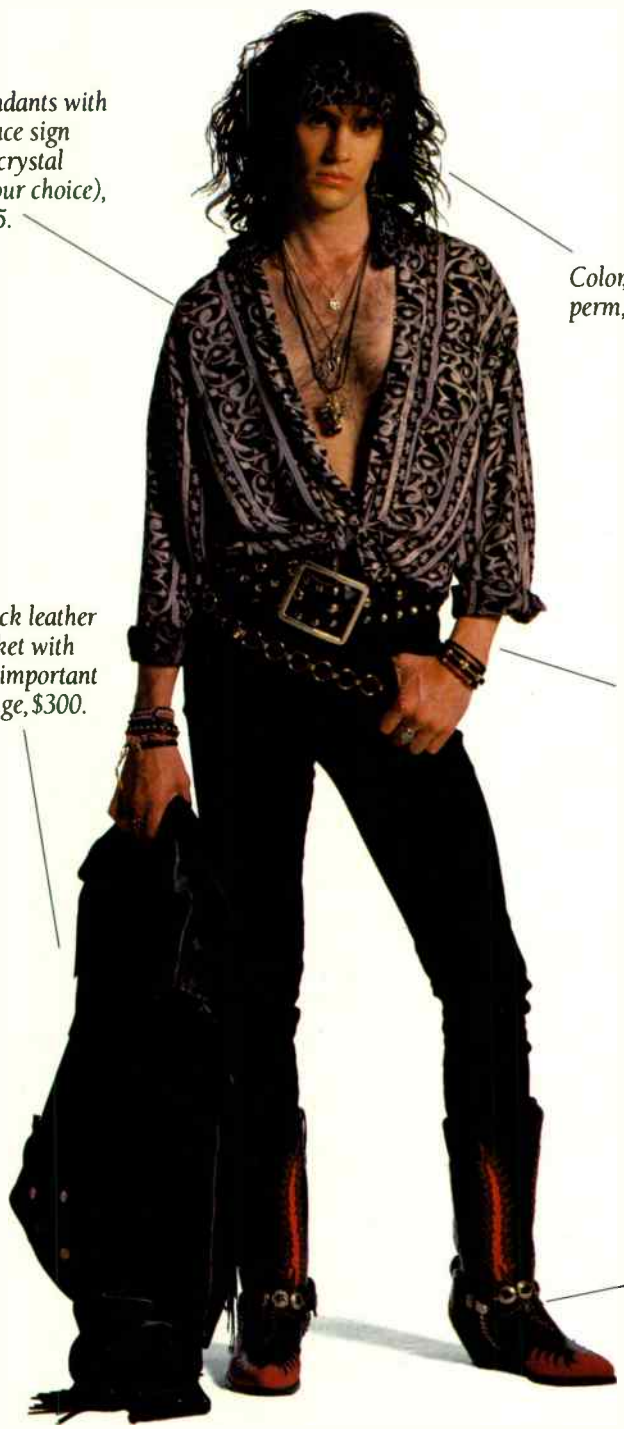

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INSIDE ISSUE 152

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WORKING MUSICIAN SPECIAL

THE DRUMMER'S HALL OF FAME
A special section devoted to the heavyweights behind rock's supergroups

DEPARTMENTS

COVER: *Stevie Ray Vaughan photographed by Aaron Rapoport. This page: Neal Preston/Outline (Ringo); Jay Gorodetzky/Austin American-Statesman (SRV); Michele Clement (Williams).*

JUNE FEATURES

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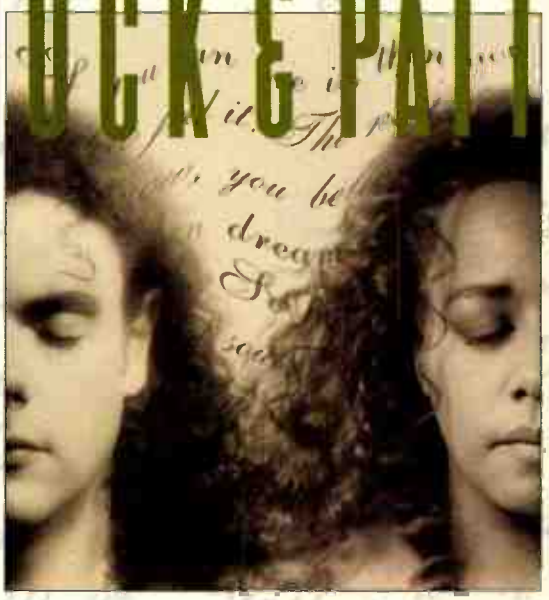
DREAM

TUCK & PATTI



A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF THE MUSICAL PHILOSOPHY THAT LESS IS TRULY MORE. *DREAM* TRIUMPHANTLY SHOWCASES THE DELICATE POWER OF PATTI CATHCART'S RICH, SOULFUL VOICE SET TO THE MASTERFUL VERSATILITY OF TUCK ANDRESS'S JAZZ GUITAR. NEW ON WINDHAM HILL JAZZ.

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Walter Becker

You've been working with Donald Fagen on his new album. What makes it not *Steely Dan?*

Oh, the fact that Donald's written the songs, and the actual input into it. When we were together, there was a kind of even-handed approach to deciding how we were going to do things and who we would do it with, and in these new sessions, I'm basically trying to help Donald do things the way he thinks is the best way to do them. Obviously there'll be a lot of similarities, but the dynamic is a little different; I'm trying to more or less fulfill this different role of being the producer, whatever that might mean.

It's a real burst of activity—you've produced Michael Franks, pianists for Triloka Records and signed another production deal with Windham Hill. Time seems to have loosened you up.

I'm kind of tired of the record-making methods I'm typically known for. It takes too long. I'm into more of the immediate gratification of capturing everybody in the room playing together. You know, the fear is that something is not gonna work, or one of the musicians is not going to be up to snuff or something, but that hasn't happened *yet*. It's organic and fun. The nice thing about working this way is by the time you've finished something, you're not sick of it; you haven't heard it thousands and thousands of times.

Was that symptomatic of your later writing with Donald?

Well, the problems we were having were less with writing than in the studio—just the long, long march to getting takes we liked, drum tracks we liked. It was a direct outgrowth of that frustration, which was probably just craziness and perfectionism. Donald and I have since talked about that; listening to some of the tracks we rejected at that time, we can't *imagine* what we didn't like about them. And anyway, the tracks for *Aja* were so outrageously cool that it was kind of hard to duplicate. Later on, after we started writing by ourselves, it was much harder, especially without the impetus of somebody who's going to come up with the thing you can't get to, or just come up with an idea when you're tired or bored, or frightened or depressed, or lonely or having a psychotic episode.

So you're both finally relaxing; he's doing a soul revue and you're producing jazz records. When you got together for his new record, did you sense parallel evolutions?

"I'm tired of the record-making methods I'm known for. It takes too long."

Well, we're both kind of losing our grip on the whole thing, separately and at the same time. I think there's been some divergence in how we work. There was a kind of accumulated momentum of writing together over the years that peaked at some point and then started to ebb. When we got back together, we still had tremendous affinities, but we had lost some of this kind of...drive to finish. [*laughs*] And we would kind of get stuck on things; we had dissipated some of the juice that helped us get things done, so it was a little bit slow-going.

Is discomfort with your singing the primary obstruction to a solo record?

And laziness and sloth and lethargy, considerations like that. But I am trying to write with that in mind now, and finally realized I might as well just do it. I have some instrumentals, some songs that are pretty firmly in the disco/jazz/spacefunk/Muzak vein. Hopefully at some point in the next six months or a year I'll have enough tunes and an idea about how to go about doing it.

You're working in a pop-jazz medium that didn't exist when you were starting out, and some of the current WAVE stuff sounds like bad Steely Dan arrangements without vocals; critics have a hard time with what they perceive as the "bleaching" of real jazz.

That's always happening in jazz; you always have had white guys who popularized the ideas of black musicians who presented them in a raw form. The intensity of the original thing is a little too great for it to become broadly popular, so somebody comes along and smooths out some of the wrinkles, and that's the version that achieves the wide success. And a lot of the West Coast guys like Warne Marsh or Paul Desmond, or Gerry Mulligan, music from that era, are still my favorites; I know Donald likes that stuff too. And as far as the WAVE things go, I gotta say that bad as it is, any alternative channel is just another possibility, compared to the monolithic garbage that pop radio has been broadcasting all these years. If they broadcast nothing but Swahili weather reports, I would still be in favor of it.

How ironic that two purists embraced, and in a sense, inspired that music.

Well, that will be our cross to bear. Donald and I will probably have some dead time in purgatory for that. —**Matt Resnicoff**

Photograph: Steve Wilkings

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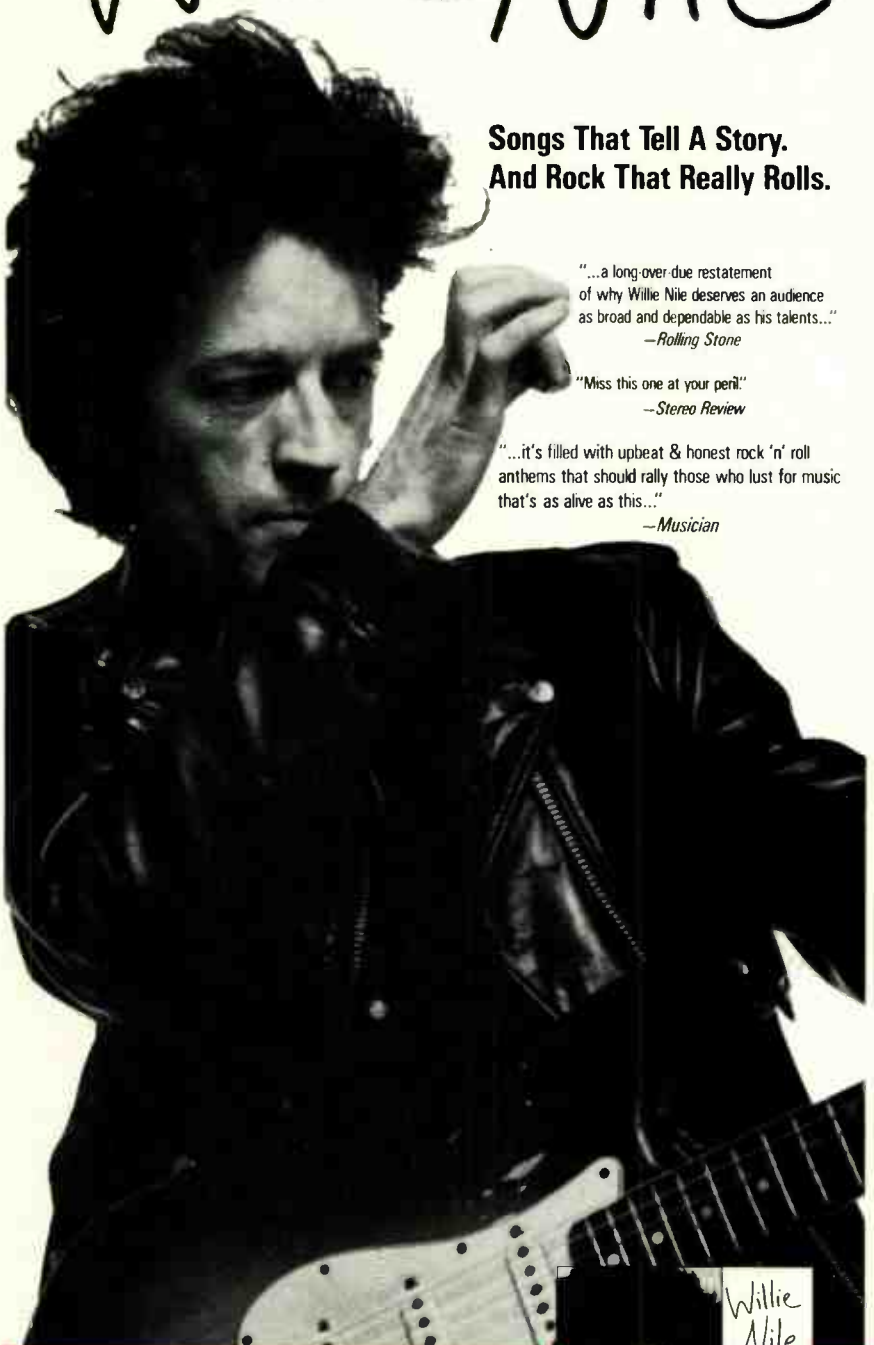
Willie Nile



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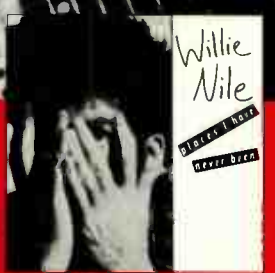

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LETTERS

Elvis Is Dead

I AM A MONDO ELVIS COSTELLO FAN and I wish other music magazines would take him to heart and soul like *Musician* seems to do...until this issue (March '91). Jerry Garcia talked about Jerry, the interviewer directed all of his questions toward Jerry, and Elvis was left to entertain himself with Grateful Dead anecdotes. But I do thank you for the nifty photos.

Amy Maloof
Alta Loma, CA

Court and Spark

I STOPPED READING *ROLLING STONE* when I perceived it was more about who's-wearing-what and who's-sleeping-with-whom than about music and the creative process. I want to thank *Musician* for being the only magazine that appreciates the beautiful talent of Joni Mitchell (March '91). My curiosity was piqued when she mentioned that her paintings are hanging in Europe. Does she intend to show them in the States, and in particular, in New York? And will she *play* New York again soon?

Beth Naprstek
New York, NY

Although Joni's management would like to show her work in the U.S., nothing is scheduled at the moment.

AS MUCH AS I RESPECT JONI MITCHell as an artist, I cannot say the same for her as a rock historian. Her comparison of Milli Vanilli to Fabian and her comments on the doo-wop singers of the "second wave of rock 'n' roll" came off sounding snobbish and at best, ill-informed. To set the record straight, doo-wop is a term coined in the '70s to describe the music of the vocal harmony groups that flourished in the '50s and '60s. When Alan Freed first used the words rock 'n' roll, he was describing the rhythm and blues performed by these early "doo-wop" pioneers. They were the first wave of rock 'n' roll and their music helped to influence and shape the rock and soul that followed. And in all fairness to Fabian, who was not a doo-wop singer, he did actually sing on his own records.

Gary Kupper
New York, NY

WHEN JONI MITCHELL TALKED about "man moving away from nature," did she consider our actions "human nature"? Yes, we may be such as dinosaurs or lemmings, but it is our nature to build, even if it is a planetary tomb.

Guy Morton
Rock Springs, WY

JONI MITCHELL IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE artists, but music and politics make strange bedfellows. If the environment is being destroyed, it is because a lot of people, not just a rich few, are willing to spend to get what is produced at the expense of the environment. All that is needed is a way to make things without destroying the environment: a harmonious technology, not an end to good health, housing, progress and economics.

If communism's end is no victory, maybe Joni will tell this to the millions dead in Russia, victims of Stalin's policy. When the final history is written it will be Stalin, not Hitler, who holds the record for the largest body count. The end of this evil physical and economic devastation can only be viewed with celebration.

Joni, the music that you love is out there, waiting to be purchased, because even though you do not like it, the artist does deserve to eat. I am going to buy your new album, though, and you can't stop me—unless you want to *give* me a copy!

Keith Russell

ON APRIL 17TH, JUST AFTER *MUSICIAN'S* VAN HALEN COVER STORY appeared, Senior Editor Matt Resnicoff, who wrote the piece, got a phone message at the *Musician* office asking him to call Van Halen's manager, Ed Leffler. Matt phoned Leffler. Here's their entire conversation:

LEFFLER: Matt, let me tell you something. You're a bad guy, you're a kike, you give Jews a bad name, and if I run into you, you better go across the street, pal. And I'm going to do everything I can—and I hope you have your tape machine on—to professionally harm you. 'Cause you wrote the cheapest shot article I've ever written [*sic*]. And I want you to know that.

MATT: Well, I'm sorry you feel that way.

LEFFLER: A lot of cheap shots, pal, and you're very prejudice in the way you wrote it, and you lied from day one, and I'm gonna hurt you. And that's all I wanted to tell you. You're a no good motherfuckin' kike. Goodbye.

The Envelope Please

I REALIZE THAT YOUR *1990—THE YEAR in Rock* (*Backside*, March '91) was not meant to be taken seriously, but that's no excuse for not getting the facts right. You referred to the Grateful Dead having "seen all three of their keyboard players die," but Brent Mydland was the band's fourth keyboard player. You're forgetting Tom Constanten, who played with the band for several years, as a guest on *Anthem of the Sun* and as a full-fledged member on *Aoxomoxoa* and *Live Dead*. Tom is alive and well—and probably grateful.

Jeff Bottiger
Newton, MA

IN *1990—THE YEAR IN ROCK* YOU WERE wrong about the Ono award. Tiffany supposedly dated *Jonathan* Knight, not Jordan.

If you have to insult someone at least get the names right, geez. And don't insult Tiffany by comparing her to Yoko Ono.

Cindy Elder
Lincoln, NE

I thought we made that one up!–Ed.

RE: THE CURSE OF THE DEAD KEYboard players: D'ya think they could get Billy Joel to sign up? How 'bout Elton John? Harry Connick, Jr.? D'ya think Sting or Bono might learn keyboards? You get my drift.

Chuck Koch
Philadelphia, PA

IT'S DISGUSTINGLY IRONIC THAT IN the same issue, you made light of the fact that Brent Mydland died last year by offering the Grateful Dead a 1990 Year in Rock "Award," and featured Jerry Garcia on the cover. It's tasteless and Brent deserves better.

Steven Ray Liedlich
Dorchester, MA

Noisome with Axl

THANKS FOR THE STORY ON N.W.A. (March '91). I had nearly given up hope that you'd find anyone more ignorant and hateful to write about than Axl Rose.

Craig Hankin
Baltimore, MD

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Michael J. Soldano
on the new
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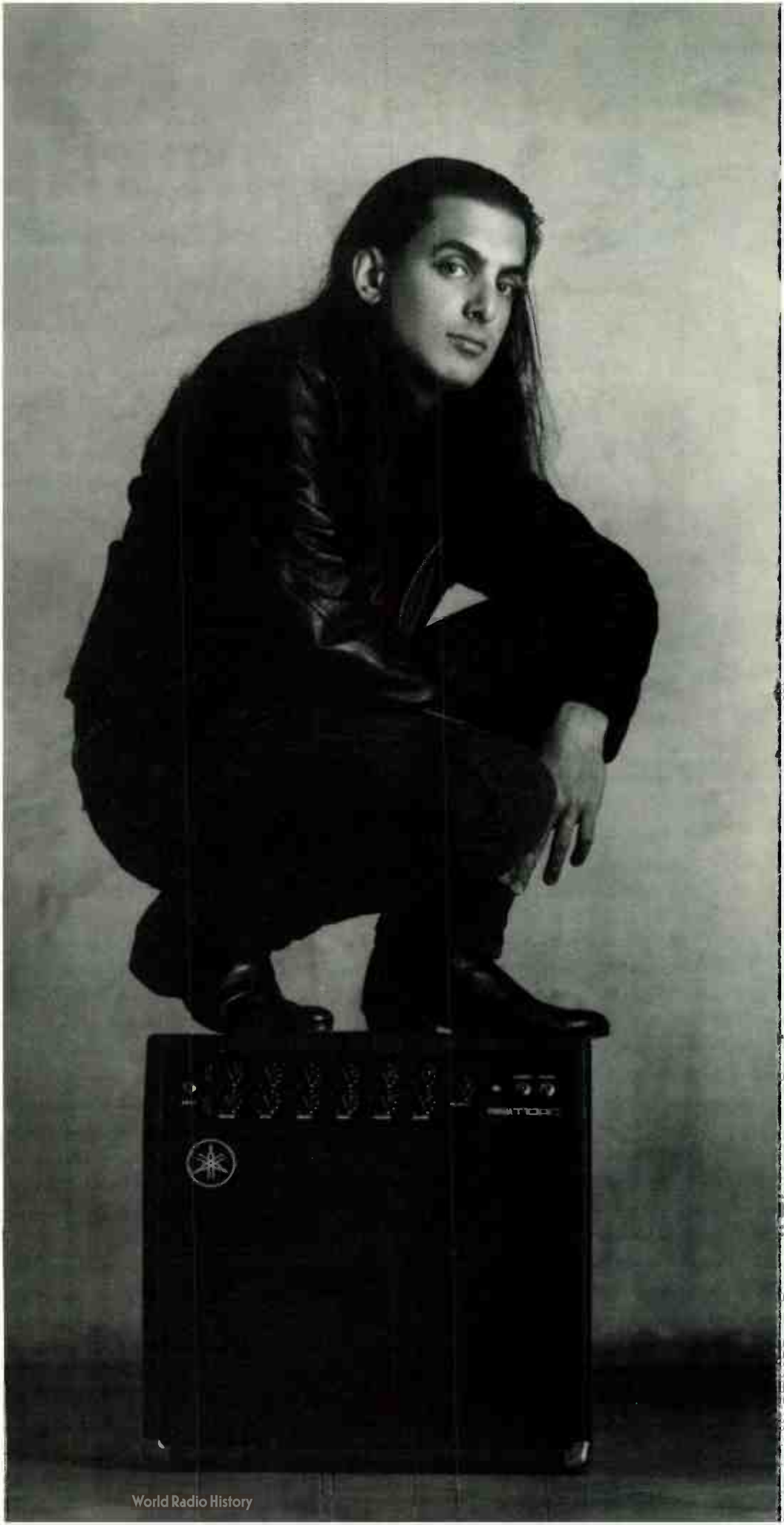

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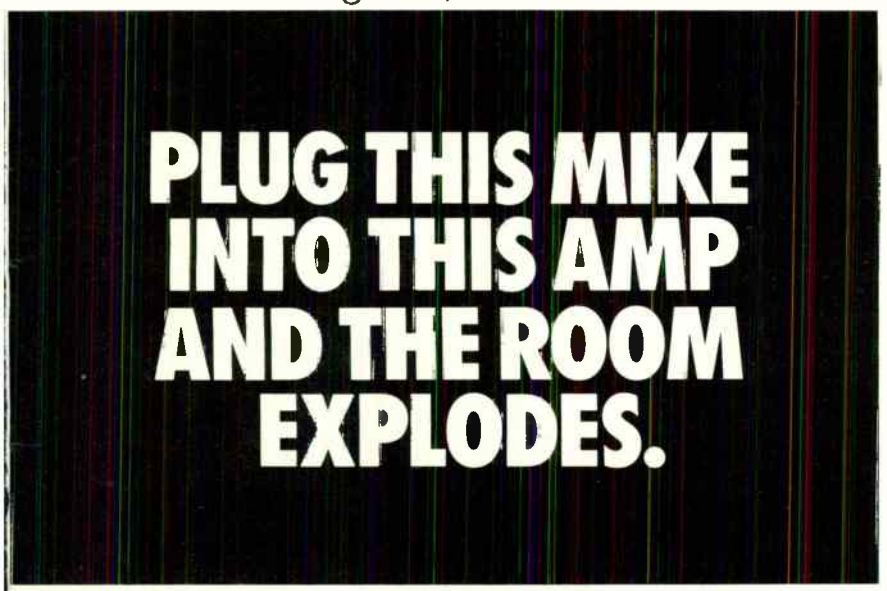

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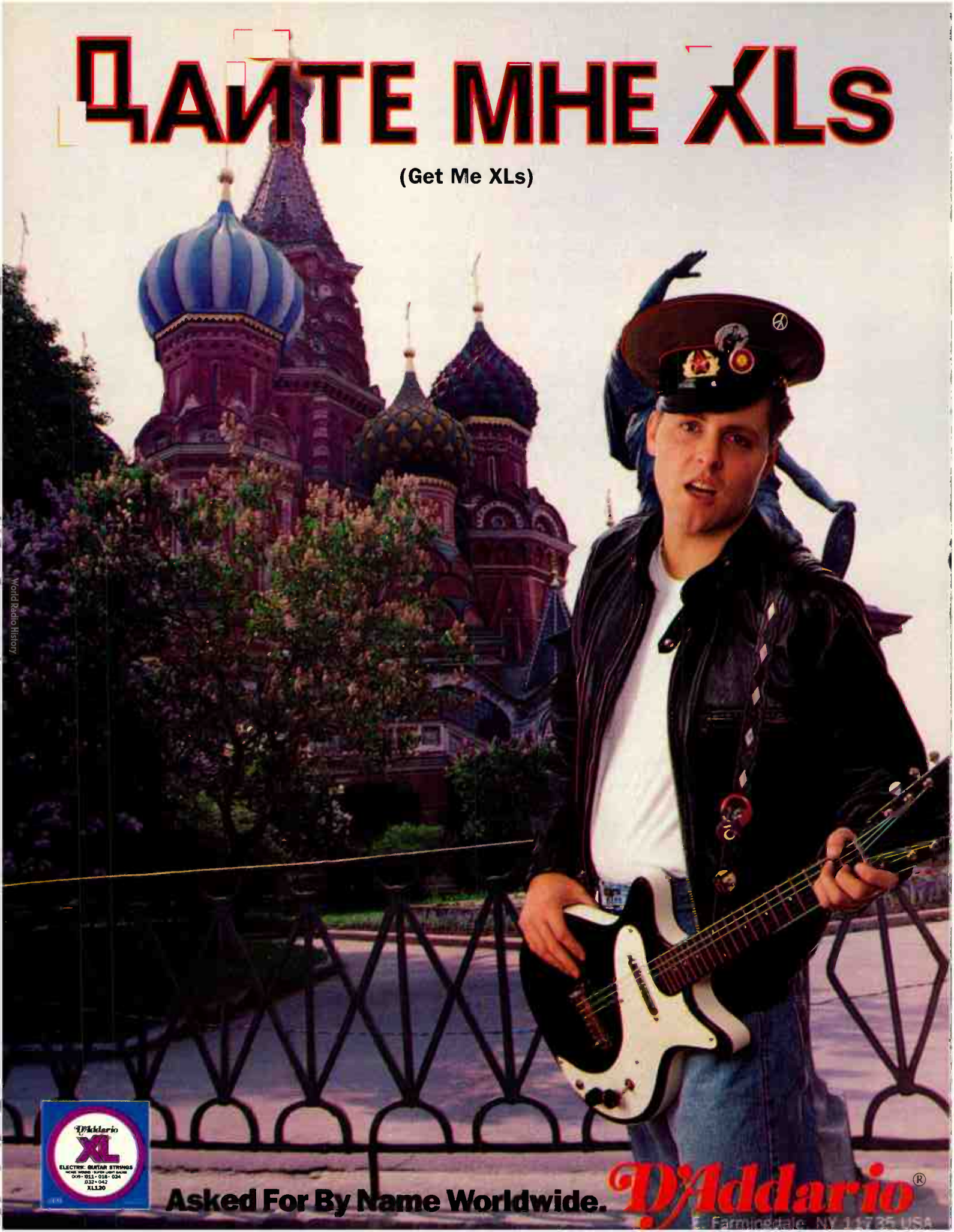

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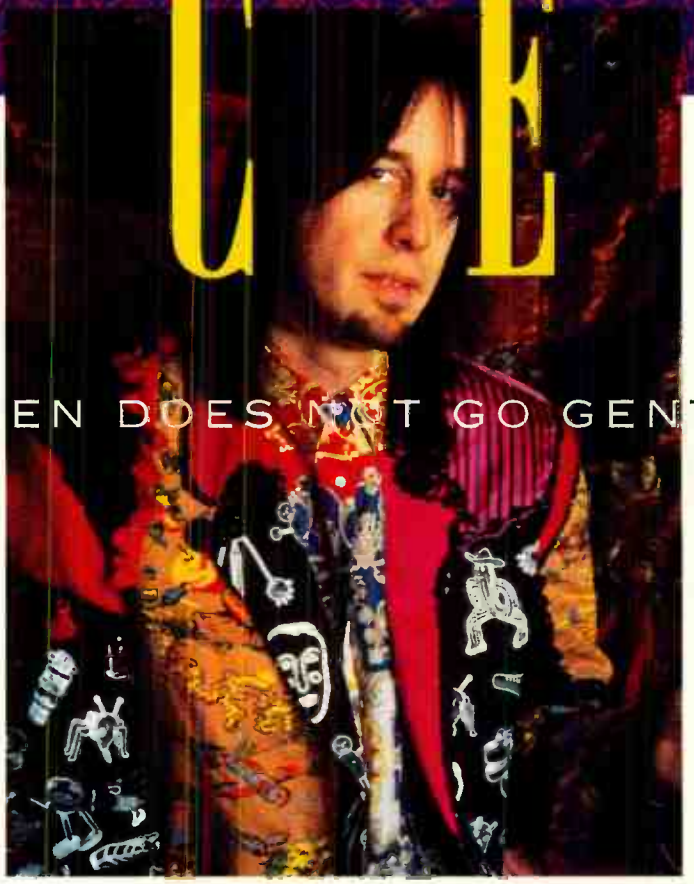

TODD RUNDGREN DOES NOT GO GENTEEL

TODD RUNDGREN: A TEXTBOOK CASE of an artist who balances out working in the marketplace and venting his own creative urges. For 20 years, the former prodigy has banked on his production and scoring acumen while also making a steady stream of poppish, often quirky albums.

"I make my records from an essentially selfish standpoint," Rundgren admits. "That's the only way I can get motivated; I can't get motivated by a pollster's standpoint. That way, if the record isn't commercially successful, at least I satisfied myself. If it *is* successful, I'm satisfied on both counts."

After working alone much of the time, Rundgren the bandleader reemerges on *Second Wind*. A mix of R&B–tinged vamps and Broadway show aesthetics (including tunes from his musical *Up Against It*), the album lives up to its title.

"Of course, it's a runner's term which can be applied to anything where endurance is required," he says. "I think it's my version of 'My Generation' 20 years later. Pete Townshend didn't die. He got old.

"You have two alternatives: You can become crystallized and settle into this survivalist mentality, just waiting for the reaper to come knocking on the door. The alternative is to rail against the failing of the light."

JOSEF WOODARD

Bernard Jackson, David Townsend and David "Pic" Conley

Surface

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

I FEEL I WAS PUT ON THIS EARTH TO SPREAD A POSITIVE MESSAGE," SAYS SURFACE LEAD SINGER BERNARD Jackson. "We all know about people that cheat on their boyfriends and girlfriends, but I choose not to sing about that. This is an alternative."

After three albums and a slew of hit singles, Surface has quietly become a leading exponent of the creamy romantic ballad. Chart faves like "The First Time" and "Shower Me with Your Love" epitomize their golden formula, with David Townsend and David "Pic" Conley laying down lush textures to support sweet, dreamy vocals.

Jackson calls their sound "good clean music with a mood. We've had couples say they stopped fighting when they heard us, and people have played our music in the delivery room when their baby was being born. I never heard another group get those kinds of compliments."

For all the new age overtones, Surface has roots in the old order. Conley, a Mandrill alumnus, and Townsend, an ex–Isley Bros. sideman and son of Marvin Gaye collaborator Ed Townsend, had been through numerous failed projects together when they recruited cover band vet Jackson in '84. Though a recording contract was two years away, the partnership flourished immediately: The threesome wrote the breakthrough hit "Happy" their first day as a unit.

Jackson admits the wholesome approach has left Surface a little weak in the identity department, noting that one of their goals is "to become a group with a face. But being the type of guys we are, this is probably the only way things could have happened." Anyway, he adds with cheerful defiance, "I like nice stuff. Jesus was nice and a lot of people liked him. If half as many people liked us, we'd have lots of fans!"

JON YOUNG

Photographs: Danny O'Connor (top); Christopher Buck

World Radio History

FACES

The Horse Flies

A THOUSAND SHADES OF GRAY

THE HORSE FLIES ARE DOING THE PROVERBIAL NEW YORK CITY PUBlicity day, but the stories they tell aren't about that last crazy groupie or rehabbing with Ringo. These are upstate stories. "Have you ever been to Ithaca?" asks violinist Judy Hyman. "Well, a woman I know asked one of her kids what the color of the sky was. 'Gray,' he said. And it's true. Gray is a major part of our lives."

This Ithaca band began as four musicians with a spectacularly wide background in world beats who played "acoustic primitive American fiddle music," according to vocalist and founding member Jeff Claus. In the mid-'80s, they went into the studio, technological virgins, and began setting their original songs to a techno beat. "The producers would run through the various sequences and patches, and we'd listen and yell, 'Yes, that's it—that one!'" laughs Hyman. The sound mixed storms of new age dissonance with a fast, pinging backbeat, droning voices that seemed pinned across the chords and sweeping assaults from violin and accordion.

Gravity Dance, the latest album, moves easily from pogoing comic numbers to lean, hurting ballads. The ballads' subjects are what good roots music is about: hunger (the Cajun-derived "Starvation Waltz") and loneliness ("Two Candles"). "I saw the connection between what the minimalists were doing and early American music," says Claus. "But the one thing that's always missing with the minimalists is the soul, and we didn't want to lose that." Hyman nods: "We wanted to set out a groove and appeal to the body before the mind. I want people to feel enveloped and drawn in."

STEPHEN TALTY

Mark & Scott Batson

ART TATUM & HI-TOPS

It's not surprising that Mark and Scott Batson became musicians. The sons of an opera singer and a classical guitarist, they both began to play piano at age four; now in their 20s, they are accomplished classical and jazz pianists. But it's not for Mark's residency at the Smithsonian, nor for the brothers' collaboration with Geri Allen on the upcoming Jimi Hendrix Project album, that they are likely to get known: It is as the rap group Get Set (V.O.P.).

Raised in Brooklyn's Bushwick Projects, the Batsons heard rap in its earliest, block-party days. "At the time, the radios were real strict about what you could hear," 24-year-old Scott says. "You couldn't hear nothing with that soul beat in it, that African polyrhythmic type of feeling. So as a revolt against what was being played on the radio, rappers were finding true revolutions of that beat. We heard hip-hop and fell in love with it." The two began rapping in the parks themselves. "It had nothing to do with money or records," 21-year-old Mark says. "All you wanted to do was rock the crowd."

Get Set's Afrocentric and anti-crack raps maintain those ties to the community—V.O.P. stands for Voice of the Projects. "There's a good side of the projects, of living around black people, that people don't talk about," Scott says. "There's a spiritual vibe black people have that's beautiful. I wouldn't give that up for the world. We had a ball until we became 16. There's a systematic process in America designed to destroy black boys as they reach manhood. We fought for our lives."

Their adopted names—Scott is King Kool Kwabene the Triumphant, Mark the Infinite Hyperactive Kundalini—are part stage moniker, part newfound identity. "We've earned our names," Kwabene explains. "It's a constant life-and-death struggle to maintain who we are. As you look at us now, you see warriors, still fighting."

EVELYN MCDONNELL

Photographs: Aldo Mauro (top); Kip Lott

World Radio History

FACES

TAD ADDS SOMETHING LACY TO THE GRUNGE


Kurt Danielson, Tad Doyle and Gary Thorstensen

SPAWNED IN THE SAME FERTILE NORTHWEST UNDERGROUND THAT PRODUCED SOUNDGARDEN, MOTHER LOVE BONE AND MUDHONEY, TAD HAS BEEN SUBJECTING THE WORLD TO ITS IDIOSYNCRATIC BRAND OF LUMBERJACK GRUNGE FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. BUT WITH ITS LATEST ALBUM, 8-WAY SANTA, THE SEATTLE-BASED FOURSOME TEMPERS ITS THICK SONIC VORTEX WITH CAUTIOUS HARMONIES AND MEASURED MELODICISM. NOT ONLY CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ALMOST EVERY WORD OF THESE ANGST EPICS, BUT YOU CAN EVEN HUM ALONG WHILE YOU THRASH.

"WE WANTED TO EXPERIMENT WITH A LITTLE BIT OF MELODY INSTEAD OF JUST ALWAYS NOISE," FRONTMAN TAD DOYLE SAYS. "WE BELIEVE YOU CAN MAKE THE BIGGER, NASTIER PARTS LOOK BIGGER WHEN YOU PUT SOMETHING PRETTY AND SMALL AND TINY AND LACY NEXT TO IT."

Sandy Masuo

John & Mary BUFFALO BREADTH

JOHN LOMBARDO AND MARY RAMSEY ARE A COUPLE OF QUITTERS. AFTER A lifetime of classical discipline on the violin and viola, Ramsey left the symphony and moved to Buffalo. On the other side of the spectrum, songwriter/guitarist Lombardo was just beginning to taste success with 10,000 Maniacs when, dissatisfied with the band's direction, he resigned and shuffled off to you-know-where.

"Buffalo's a small city, so everything is really accessible," says Lombardo. "If you check out the listings in the paper, you can generally catch just about everything." One listing led Lombardo to a coffee house where he was knocked out by the sound of Ramsey's viola. "I was just getting familiar with my instrument in a way that I never had before," Ramsey says, "because for years I'd been just trying to reach this *goal*."

John and Mary began playing gigs "at the drop of a hat" around town, and Ramsey discovered her voice. "I hadn't done much singing," she says. "My passion is with my viola, so whatever I've learned to sing came from hearing that instrument right under my ear." *Victory Garden*, their debut, weds Lombardo's haunting, left-field folk songs with Ramsey's sensual melodies. "Neither of us is very theoretical about this music," says Ramsey. "We both play what we feel from our hearts." It's a musical marriage made in, well, Buffalo. PETER CRONIN

Photographs: Charles Peterson (top); Linda Covello

World Radio History

THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

Top 100 Albums

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month.

1 • 1	**Mariah Carey**	*Mariah Carey*/Columbia
2 • 13	**C&C Music Factory**	*Gonna Make You Sweat*/Columbia
3 • 6	**Wilson Phillips**	*Wilson Phillips*/SBK
4 • 3	**Sting**	*The Soul Cages*/A&M
5 • 11	**The Black Crowes**	*Shake Your Money Maker* Def American
6 • 2	**Vanilla Ice**	*To the Extreme*/SBK
7 • 15	**Chris Isaak**	*Heart Shaped World*/Reprise
8 • 7	**Gloria Estefan**	*Into the Light*/Epic
9 • 4	**Whitney Houston**	*I'm Your Baby Tonight*/Arista
10 • 5	**M.C. Hammer**	*Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* Capitol
11 • 8	**Bette Midler**	*Some People's Lives*/Atlantic
12 • 34	**Queensryche**	*Empire*/EMI
13 • 14	**Tesla**	*Five Man Acoustical Jam*/Geffen
14 • 66	**Enigma**	*MCMXC A.D.*/Charisma
15 • 9	**Madonna**	*The Immaculate Collection*/Sire
16 • —	**Soundtrack**	*The Doors*/Elektra
17 • 10	**The Simpsons**	*The Simpsons Sing the Blues* Geffen
18 • 12	**AC/DC**	*The Razors Edge*/Atco
19 • —	**Great White**	*Hooked*/Capitol
20 • 21	**Guy**	*The Future*/Uptown
21 • 25	**L.L. Cool J**	*Mama Said Knock You Out*/Def Jam
22 • 18	**INXS**	*X*/Atlantic
23 • 48	**Oleta Adams**	*Circle of One*/Fontana
24 • 16	**Paul Simon**	*Rhythm of the Saints* Warner Bros.
25 • 24	**Garth Brooks**	*No Fences*/Capitol
26 • 79	**Another Bad Creation**	*Coolin' at the Playground Ya' Know!* Motown
27 • —	**R.E.M.**	*Out of Time*/Warner Bros.
28 • 30	**Trixter**	*Trixter*/Mechanic
29 • 35	**Warrant**	*Cherry Pie*/Columbia
30 • 23	**Bell Biv DeVoe**	*Poison*/MCA
31 • 33	**Harry Connick, Jr.**	*We Are in Love*/Columbia
32 • 19	**Damn Yankees**	*Damn Yankees*/Warner Bros.
33 • 17	**Janet Jackson**	*Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation*/A&M
34 • 20	**Phil Collins**	*Serious Hits...Live!*/Atlantic
35 • 26	**Nelson**	*After the Rain*/DGC
36 • 75	**Divinyls**	*Divinyls*/Virgin
37 • 31	**Digital Underground**	*This Is an EP Release*/Tommy Boy
38 • 27	**Poison**	*Flesh and Blood*/Enigma
39 • 39	**Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti**	*Carreras-Domingo-Pavarotti in Concert*/London
40 • 37	**Queen**	*Innuendo*/Hollywood
41 • 22	**George Michael**	*Listen without Prejudice Vol. 1* Columbia
42 • —	**Londonbeat**	*In the Blood*/Radioactive
43 • 36	**Clint Black**	*Put Yourself in My Shoes*/RCA
44 • 32	**ZZ Top**	*Recycler*/Warner Bros.
45 • 60	**Timmy T.**	*Time After Time*/Quality
46 • 41	**Cinderella**	*Heartbreak Station*/Mercury
47 • 28	**Ralph Tresvant**	*Ralph Tresvant*/MCA
48 • —	**The Doors**	*Best of the Doors*/Elektra
49 • 96	**Jesus Jones**	*Doubt*/SBK
50 • —	**Joni Mitchell**	*Night Ride Home*/Geffen
51 • —	**Soundtrack**	*New Jack City*/Giant
52 • 38	**Keith Sweat**	*I'll Give All My Love to You* Vintertainment
53 • 40	**Slaughter**	*Stick It to Ya*/Chrysalis
54 • —	**Amy Grant**	*Heart in Motion*/Chrysalis
55 • 56	**Steelheart**	*Steelheart*/MCA
56 • 45	**Roger McGuinn**	*Back from Rio*/Arista
57 • 51	**Alexander O'Neal**	*All True Man*/Tabu
58 • 43	**Jane's Addiction**	*Ritual de lo Habitual*/Warner Bros.
59 • —	**Morrissey**	*Kill Uncle*/Sire
60 • 44	**EPMD**	*Business as Usual*/RAL
61 • 42	**New Kids on the Block**	*No More Games/Remix Album* Columbia
62 • 47	**Soundtrack**	*Pretty Woman*/EMI
63 • 53	**Tony! Toni! Tone!**	*The Revival*/Wing
64 • —	**Gerardo**	*Mo' Ritmo*/Interscope
65 • —	**Hi-Five**	*Hi-Five*/Jive
66 • —	**Teddy Pendergrass**	*Truly Blessed*/Elektra
67 • 52	**Peter Gabriel**	*Shaking the Tree—16 Golden Greats*/Geffen
68 • 57	**Black Box**	*Dreamland*/RCA
69 • —	**Rude Boys**	*Rude Awakening*/Atlantic
70 • 29	**David Lee Roth**	*A Little Ain't Enough* Warner Bros.
71 • 46	**Deee-Lite**	*World Clique*/Elektra
72 • 73	**Styx**	*Edge of the Century*/A&M
73 • 58	**Scorpions**	*Crazy World*/Mercury
74 • 85	**Reba McEntire**	*Rumor Has It*/MCA
75 • 49	**Ice Cube**	*Kill at Will*/Priority
76 • 50	**Candyman**	*Ain't No Shame in My Game*/Epic
77 • 61	**Stevie B**	*Love & Emotion*/LMR
78 • 63	**Father M.C.**	*Father's Day*/Uptown
79 • 95	**Cathy Dennis**	*Move to This*/Polydor
80 • —	**George Thorogood & the Destroyers**	*Boogie People*/EMI
81 • 68	**Bad Company**	*Holy Water*/Atco
82 • 77	**Michael Bolton**	*Soul Provider*/Columbia
83 • 54	**Urban Dance Squad**	*Mental Floss for the Globe*/Arista
84 • 100	**Celine Dion**	*Unison*/Epic
85 • —	**Rick Astley**	*Free*/RCA
86 • —	**Firehouse**	*Firehouse*/Epic
87 • —	**DJ Quik**	*Quik Is the Name*/Profile
88 • 55	**Yanni**	*Reflections of Passion* Private Music
89 • 91	**Soundtrack**	*Dances with Wolves*/Associated
90 • 62	**Vaughan Brothers**	*Family Style*/Associated
91 • 74	**O'Jays**	*Emotionally Yours*/EMI
92 • 71	**Garth Brooks**	*Garth Brooks*/Capitol
93 • —	**BulletBoys**	*Freakshow*/Warner Bros.
94 • 78	**Johnny Gill**	*Johnny Gill*/Motown
95 • —	**Vince Gill**	*Pocket Full of Gold*/MCA
96 • 69	**Winger**	*In the Heart of the Young*/Atlantic
97 • —	**Drivin' N' Cryin'**	*Fly Me Courageous*/Island
98 • —	**The Rembrandts**	*The Rembrandts*/Atco
99 • 76	**The Charlatans U.K.**	*Some Friendly*/Beggars Banquet
100 • —	**Living Colour**	*Time's Up*/Epic

The Musician album chart is produced by the Billboard chart department for Musician, and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the Billboard computers in the month of March. The record company chart is based on the top 200 albums. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for March 1991. All charts are copyright 1991 by BPI Incorporated.

Top Concert Grosses

1	**Billy Joel** *Sports Palace, Mexico City, Mexico*/March 19–20, 23–24	$2,772,853
2	**Grateful Dead** *Capital Centre, Landover, MD*/March 17–18, 20–21	$1,400,052
3	**Gloria Estefan & Miami Sound Machine, Chas Elstner** *Miami Arena, Miami, FL*/March 1–2, 6–7	$1,191,996
4	**Grateful Dead** *Knickerbocker Arena, Albany, NY*/March 23–25	$1,023,418
5	**ZZ Top, the Black Crowes, Michelle Malone & Drag the River** *The Omni, Atlanta, GA*/March 24–26	$769,098
6	**Paul Simon** *Worcester Centrum, Worcester, MA*/March 29 & 31	$615,500
7	**ZZ Top, the Black Crowes** *The Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA*/March 11–12	$598,230
8	**INXS, the Soup Dragons** *Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, IL*/March 15–16	$596,295
9	**Scorpions, Trixter** *Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, Laguna Hills, CA*/March 8–9	$572,242
10	**New Kids on the Block, Perfect Gentlemen** *Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, KS*/March 6–7	$518,029

Top Labels

1	Columbia
2	Warner Bros.
3	Atlantic
4	Capitol
5	SBK
6	Geffen
7	A&M
8	Elektra
9	MCA
10	Arista
11	Epic
12	EMI
13	Sire
14	Mercury
15	Atco
16	RCA
17	Charisma
18	Reprise
19	Def American
20	Uptown
21	Motown
22	Virgin

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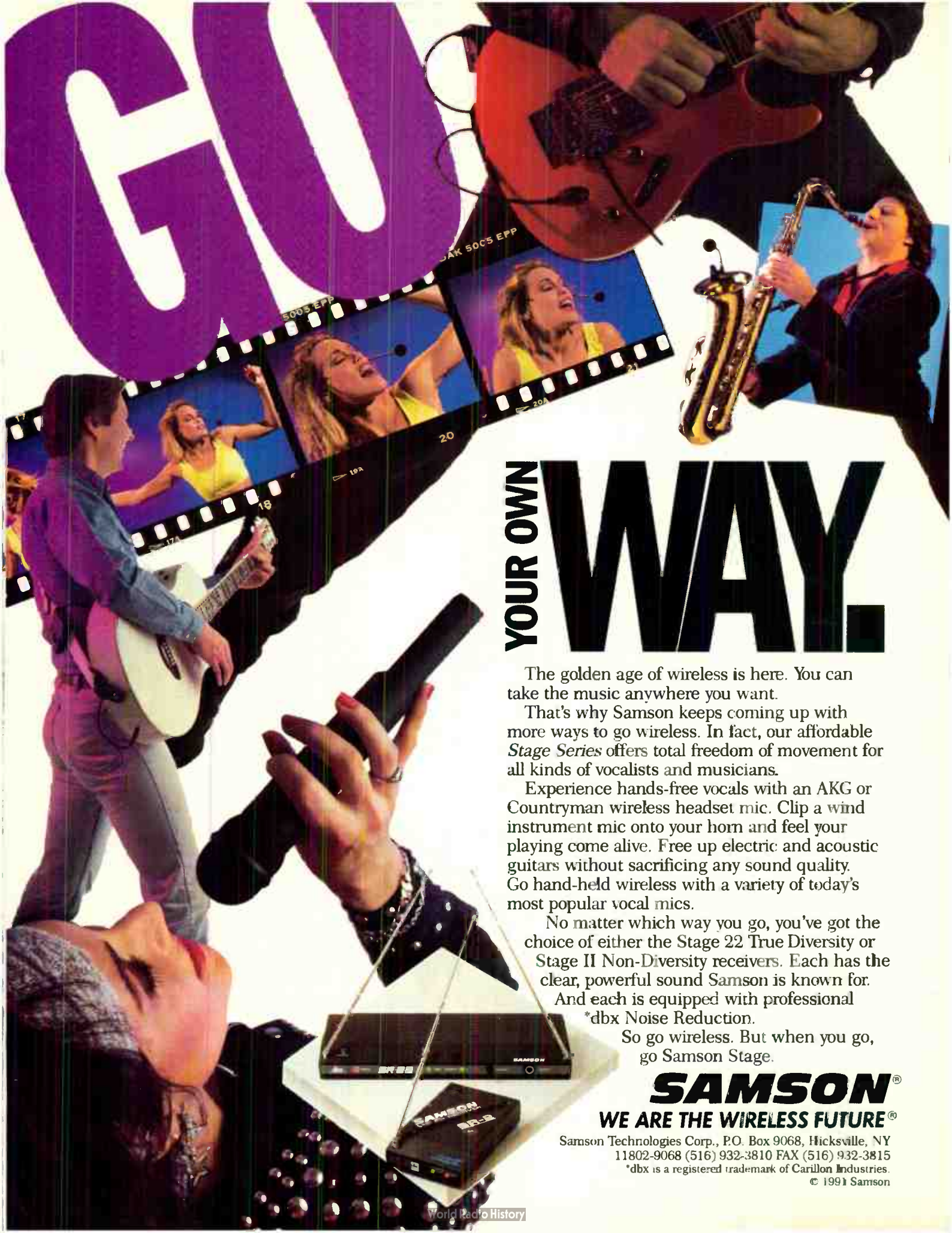
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By Mat Snow

Superstars in Britain, Innocents Abroad

MAY 5, 1990 MARKS A SMALL BUT, HE WOULD like to think, significant event in the career of Ricky Ross, singer, songwriter and leader of Deacon Blue. Down from its home base of Glasgow, Scotland, the band was in Liverpool to sing "A Hard Day's Night" for "Imagine—The John Lennon Tribute," a less-than-impressive all-day event blessed by Yoko herself.

"That day," Ricky Ross smiles grimly, "was the final nail in the coffin of being with other pop stars. The only people who came out of it well were the Christians, who were really nice. The Americans were just so brash. At the press conference you wouldn't have known you were in Britain. The most obnoxious was Natalie Cole. During the press conference she answered all the questions 'John and me...' I actually *left* the rostrum."

DEACON BLUE (L TO R): VERNAL, MCINTOSH, KELLING, ROSS (SEATED), VIPOND & PRIME

Like many British pop stars—okay, Brits, period—Ricky Ross feels a little ambiguous about America. *Loves* the music—he's a fan, no, disciple of Bruce Springsteen; his band has recorded a mini-album of Bacharach-David tunes; he even named Deacon Blue after a Steely Dan song (though they rank way down his list of influences). But he's not so sure about the people. The other paradox is that while with the band's third album, *Fellow Hoodlums*, he has every intention of duplicating in America the chart-topping success its predecessors have enjoyed in Britain, he deplores the nakedness that comes with fame, and he deplores it with all the sincerity a Scottish Christian Brother of waxing years can muster.

"You have to entertain people, but you entertain people when you give them a record. You don't have to constantly be Sinéad O'Connor," says Ricky during a break from rough-mixing *Hoodlums* at the band's studio in a converted church in Glasgow's Victorian heart. "I really admire Sinéad O'Connor, I think a lot of what she's said is great—two fingers up to the Americans. I think it's absolutely admirable. But I don't think I listen to her album without thinking of all that luggage, which is unfortunate."

Lorraine McIntosh, Ricky's wife and co-vocalist: "When she was first out and said all those negative things about U2, I thought, 'This is really horrible, so ugly.' Since then I've been so impressed by her naiveté yet strength of character. She's been willing to make mistakes in public and do what she believes is right. But I've been disappointed to read recently about how she lives in L.A. and has been to Prince's house for dinner."

Wouldn't the Rosses go if invited?

"We can answer that question honestly," Ricky answers: "No, we wouldn't." It seems that a celebrity invite *has* been received, yet declined. Lorraine is bursting to tell me from whom; Ricky prefers to draw a dignified veil over the subject (while he's momentarily distracted, she silently mouths at me what look like the words "loose windscreen").

"You've got to keep your dreams, your fandom alive," Ricky says; "there will never again be anyone who means as much to me as pop stars did when I was a teenager. If you're a pop musician you can see how things work—there's no magic. You *know* why someone's big.

"I could have walked in here and made quotable quotes, but it's just not important. In fact, I'm convinced it detracts from what you do. You can't expect your songs to be listened to without prejudice. The fact of the matter is, George, people *won't* listen without prejudice—because you were in a god-awful group in your early days, and you made awful records. And still do. There's

Photograph: Jillian Edelstein/Katz-Outline

World Radio History

nothing other to say than we're doing a gig or making a record, and the whole thing about doing interviews now is you end up making that statement a hundred times!"

The bristling Ricky Ross was born in Dundee; as a teenager he became convinced there was no job more desirable than that of singer/songwriter. His upbringing in the austere Christian Brethren, however, led him away from showbiz temptation and down the paths of righteousness—or at least to teaching English to children with behavioral difficulties. After work he played keyboards for a go-nowhere post-punk outfit called Woza. When they split, Ricky devoted himself to writing songs, only forming a band when required by the publisher who signed him. Thus Deacon Blue, whose lineup coalesced in 1986 as Ricky, Lorraine, bassist Ewen Vernal, guitarist Graeme Kelling, keyboardist Jim Prime and drummer Dougie Vipond. 1987's *Raintown* was the band's debut; CBS Records worked out a complex sales strategy, including a healthy touring subsidy.

Though in hindsight overblown and exhausting, Deacon Blue's three-hour marathon shows sold them to the U.K. audience. "We came out of trying to vibe up student audiences," Ricky recalls. "You'd work for five songs to get them from the bar closer to the stage. If you lost them for a couple of minutes, it was over. All the skills I learned as a performer, I learned in student unions. They're all quite vulgar and brittle skills. It's like being a stand-up comic or in vaudeville. But going from those shows to the Wembley Arenas without a gap made me want to reappraise what I do. Our shows became a monster and a lot of the songs unsingable." In '88, the single "Real Gone Kid" went Top 10. Ricky confessed it was inspired by the stagecraft of Lone Justice's Maria McKee, though he also says, "That's a bit of a myth—it's more to do with my wife here." In April '89 Deacon Blue's second album, *When the World Knows Your Name*, supplanted Madonna's *Like a Prayer* at the top of the U.K. charts, in Scotland outselling the nearest rival eight to one.

According to local wits, Glasgow didn't enjoy the Swinging '60s until the '80s. Last year a great deal of money was spent hyping it as the "European City of Culture." Deacon Blue's contribution was free: headlining the so-called Big Day, where a quarter of a million young Glaswegians turned out to see the cream of the city's musical talent. "Pop music is probably at its best when siding with people, doing benefits," reckons Ross, "a bit of good rabble-rousing. I think there's a place for getting people into a common spot and saying, 'We all feel bad about this, don't we, so let's have a good old moan about it.'" The band, however, resists becoming known as a pillar of Glasgow's artistic—or even rock—community.

"We actively seek out people *not* involved in bands or the music business," says Lorraine. "No offense, but it's a bit unhealthy to go home and hang with Wet Wet Wet or Love & Money or Hue & Cry. It's nice when you bump into them, but the idea of these people becoming *friends*...."

"Our families live here, we're comfortable here," Ricky says. "It's like Woody Allen not going to California to make his films; you could happily see another 50 Woody Allen films set in New York." The new album, he says, "is very focused on this part of Scotland." Lorraine differs slightly: "We've all had it up to here with Glasgow at the moment. The themes in the songs are universal: people living and dying and going to heaven. All people in Glasgow will get extra is, 'Ah, I know that street.'"

And what will Americans get? After two low-key mini-tours, Deacon Blue is determined to make it this time. "*Fellow Hoodlums* is a brilliant album, and we can't keep making brilliant albums yet do nothing in America," Lorraine sighs. "He's getting old—thirty-*three*—and we don't want to keep doing this forever. So if it doesn't happen this time, then fine, it wasn't meant to happen."

"Maybe," muses Ricky, "I'd better bring a flight case for my toupée."

CHURCH KEY

DOUGIE VIPOND plays Pearl MLX drums with Remo heads, Zildjian cymbals, Roland's Octapad and 626 drum machine and Akai's S900 sampler. Keyboardist JIM PRIME plays Roland's RD1000, JX10 and DSSO, an E-mu piano module and Korg's M-1 through Celestion SRC-1 speakers; he's also got a Hammond B-3 with a Leslie cabinet. EWEN VERNAL plays Warwick Streamer and Thumb basses, a Ken Smith six-string and a Fender Jazz fretless through Trace Elliots. RICKY ROSS plays Hohner blues harps, and GRAEME KELLING's axes are Levinson Blades (Strat and Tele style), Fender Strat and Tele and a 12-string Rickenbacker; he uses DOD, Boss and MXR distortion pedals, a Roland GP8 effects pedal, an Alesis QuadraVerb and MESA/Boogie cabinets.

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6/25 Naperville Music, Naperville
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INDIANA
6/18 Far Out Music, Jeffersonville
6/27 Rubino Music, Portage
KENTUCKY
6/13 Buddy Rodger's Music, Florence
LOUISIANA
6/6 Vince's Backstage Music, Lafayette
6/10 Sound Chek Music, Metaire
6/12 Be Bop Music, Baton Rouge
MARYLAND
5/30 Bill's Music House, Baltimore
MASSACHUSETTS
5/21 Daddy's D.J. Price, Boston
5/23 Falcetti Music, Holyoke
MICHIGAN
6/11 Farrow's Music, Kalamazoo
6/12 Arnoldt Williams, Canton
6/13 Music Box Studios, Mt. Clemens
6/18 Marshall Music, Lansing
6/19 Farrow's Music, Flint
6/20 Farrow's Music, Grand Rapids
MINNESOTA
6/5 Marguerites Music, Moorehead
6/6 Knut Koupee Music Store, Minneapolis
MISSISSIPPI
6/11 Mississippi Music, Meridian
6/12 Mississippi Music, Jackson
6/13 Mississippi Music, Hattesburg
NEVADA
6/11 Pro Music & Drum, Las Vegas
NEW HAMPSHIRE
5/22 Daddy's Junky Music, Nashua
NEW JERSEY
5/20 Dave Phillips Music, Phillipsburg
5/28 Long & McQuade, Parsippany
6/4 Keyboard World, Ledgewood
6/6 Music City, Cherry Hill
NEW YORK
5/29 Alto Music, Monsey
5/30 Alto Music, East Middletown
6/5 McNeil Music, Ithica
6/6 McNeil Music, Binghampton
6/11 Onondaga Music, Syracuse
6/12 Unistage Inc., Buffalo
6/26 Sam Ash, Carle Place
NORTH CAROLINA
5/22 McFayden Music, Charlotte
6/19 McFayden Music, Fayetteville
6/20 McFayden Music, Wilmington
OHIO
6/11 Music City Associates, Steubenville
6/12 Coyle Music, Lancaster
6/19 Ace Music Superstore, Dayton
6/20 Lentine's Music, Cleveland
PENNSYLVANIA
5/28 Robert M. Sides Music, Williamsport
5/29 Ford Music, Altoona
6/4 Louie Cossa's Keyboards, Scranton
6/13 Osiecki Brothers Music, Erie
6/25 Stephen Nicholas Music, Lancaster
6/27 George's Music, Springfield
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5/23 Express Music, Spartanburg
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World Radio History

The Pleasure of His Accompany

By Karen Bennett

Pianist John Hicks—stylish in any setting

AT A RECENT TRIO ENGAGEMENT AT CONDON'S in New York, pianist John Hicks was playing the ballad "Say It (Over and Over Again)." About midway through the tune, he failed to complete an arpeggio, missing maybe two notes. Sitting close, you could hear him give an agonized sob and watch him configure his face into a look of disgust—without missing another beat. It was a gesture more touching than the lost notes would have been, and as beautiful as the rest of the song.

It also provided a key to understanding why Hicks has a reputation as a jazz pianist's pianist. His credits tell part of the tale; he's worked alongside singers like Dionne Warwick and Betty Carter—with whom he spent six years—and with players from Little Milton to Pharoah Sanders to Dizzy Gillespie. More to the point is the intensity with which Hicks approaches his music. "What this is really about is a true commitment to doing the stuff as best as you possibly can," he explains, speaking in a deeply quiet half-drawl that simultaneously elicits ease and restlessness. "Giving all you can give...and more. I don't think there's any other explanation for doing this."

A man of formidable bearing as well as technique, Hicks appears capable of taking his instrument apart in the course of each solo, physically as well as musically. It's not his size so much as his demeanor, which suggests a volcano of uncertain dormancy. Occasionally his voice erupts in a laugh that could unseat a Zen master, a guttural "aah-aah" that sounds almost like a caricature.

Onstage, his style is so expansive and distinct that it nullifies the term "accompanist." And yet an accompanist is precisely what Hicks aspires to be, a role he sees as the musician's ultimate challenge.

"To be a band piano player, in a band with horns and be a good comper," he says, "I've always loved that. You have this really open area, where, harmonically, you can make something else happen. But you need a certain knowledge to do this. You get a hint from the bass, from the tenor, and you listen for things that they would like to extend themselves. You don't want to push anything out of the basic concept of what they're doing, but you can take it to another plane. That's why I feel so strongly about the role of the accompanist: It's gotta be one of the heaviest things to do in music."

As a child Hicks moved from Atlanta to Los Angeles before settling in St. Louis, Missouri. There was a piano at home which he got attached to early on, and "of course," he says. anticipating the question, "I played the organ in church." His minister father used to take him out to the theater, where he used to see "some of the doo-wop groups and bands like Count Basie and Duke Ellington. My parents were big band fans anyway; they danced to Jimmy Lunceford and Fletcher Henderson."

Hicks matriculated at Lincoln University in Jefferson City—his roommate was Ronald Shannon Jackson. He wanted to play in the band, but since it was a marching band he ended up on trombone. "Well, I didn't want to play *bells*!" he laughs. Mostly, he holed up in the practice room at the piano. "I was majoring in political science, but spent all of my time in the music department, so I decided, 'Well, I'm going to have to step over.'"

He began working what he calls "highway gigs" with blues bands, mostly with Little Milton. Often the sax player, Oliver Sain, "would bring his vibes on the gig. I would take a piano solo, playing some blues in guitar keys; then Sain would say, 'Take a chorus on the vibes.' It gave me insight into the percussion side of playing."

Hicks admits he's still partial to drums; not surprisingly, drummers are also partial

Photograph: Chris Carroll

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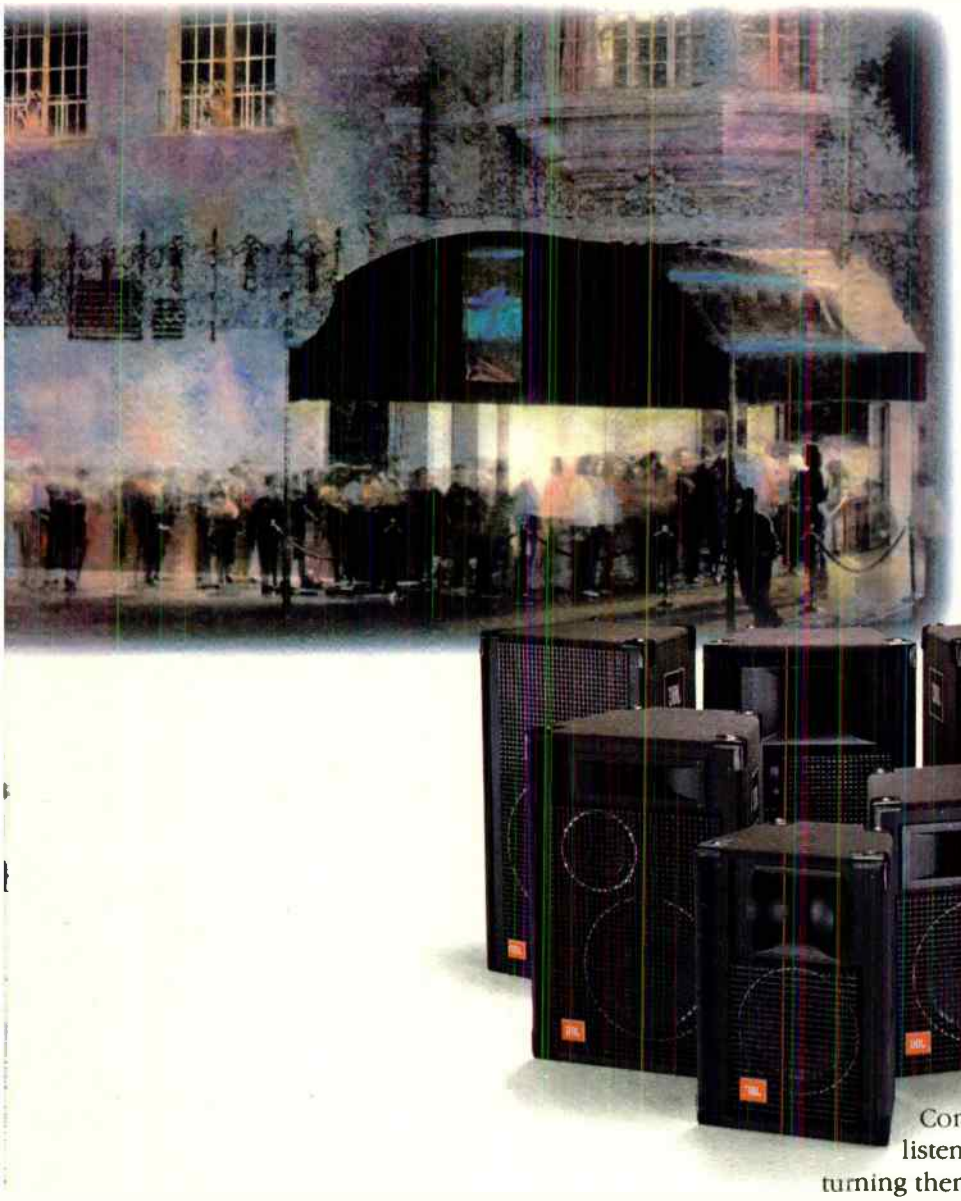

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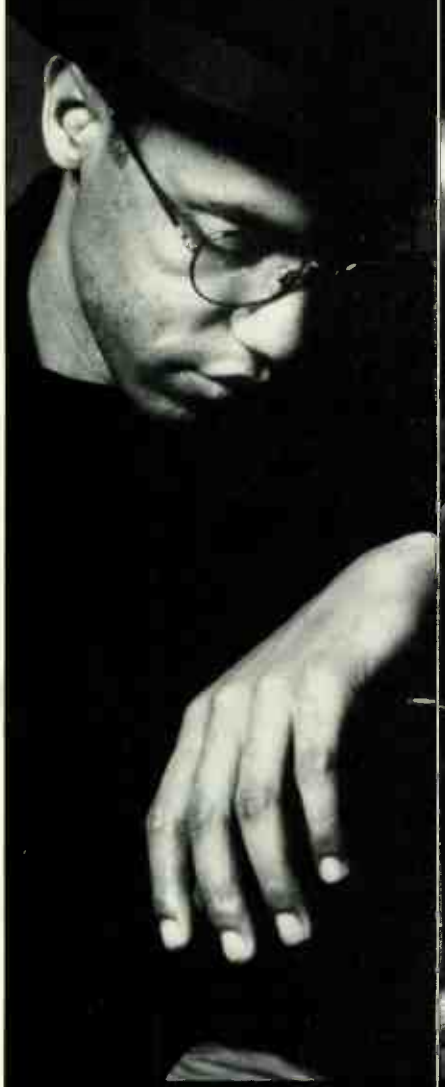
BILLY CHILDS

his april touch



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BOB SHEPPARD

Tell Tale Signs

Produced by Walter Becker

Bob Sheppard's playing credits include Freddie Hubbard, Rickie Lee Jones, Michael Franks, Akiyoshi/Tabackin Band and numerous others. His debut album, *Tell Tale Signs*, is all the evidence needed to solidify this fiery saxophone artist's reputation as one of the most inventive players in jazz today. Produced by Steely Dan cofounder Walter Becker and featuring Peter Erskine, Billy Childs, John Beasley, and Tom Brechtlein.

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to Hicks. "John's left hand is one of the best in the business!" exudes Victor Lewis, a frequent bandmate. "I spent a week at the Vanguard with another piano player after working with John the week before, and I kept wondering, 'What's wrong?' And I realized this piano player didn't have the left hand I had gotten used to with John, to support the bass. John's left hand is a band in itself; it makes it easier for the drummer to make an impact, because the sound is so full."

In 1963, Hicks made the move to New York. He went to a jam session his first day there and got a gig with R&B singer Big Maybelle. He took over the piano chair from Cedar Walton in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. He performed at the Titans of the Tenor concert with Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane and Coleman Hawkins, among others. He went on the road with Woody Herman, gaining experience writing and arranging for large ensembles. After three more years teaching back in St. Louis, Hicks returned to New York for good. In 1975 he began anchoring the backing trio for Betty Carter, an association which did wonders for the reputation of both artists.

"Betty was a great influence on me," he says, "just by her singing a ballad so *slow*. I don't care what instrument you play—you have to breathe with those phrases in order to be right there. That's something people have a hard time getting together."

Hicks' work has increased exponentially since then. Just in the last year, he's appeared on recordings by Gary Bartz, Roy Hargrove, Peter Leitch and David Murray; Concord has released his first solo piano album, part of the label's prestigious Maybeck Recital Hall series; Timeless has put out a Hicks trio record (with Ray Drummond and Idris Muhammed) and Candid has released his two-piano date with Kenny Barron. He'll also appear on releases by Elvin Jones and the Mingus Dynasty.

For all his facility and wealth of ideas, Hicks suggests that "you don't want to do things just for the sake of saying, 'Well, I can do that.' People are always amazed, especially on piano, by technical displays. But working with guys like Little Milton, playing long slow shuffles and stuff, has always given me a certain feeling about keeping the blues in mind. A lot of people say, 'You've had classical training, haven't you?' I mean, okay, I did that, it's cool. But I don't think that is as important as the feeling that you get from some good old down-home swing."

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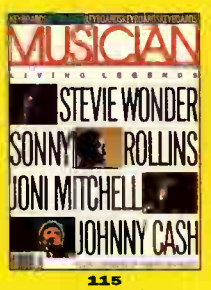

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The Ballad of Vinnie James

By Kristine McKenna

"HEY, HAVE YOU HAD A HUG TODAY?" INQUIRES Vinnie James as our morning interview winds to a close. Gee, as a matter of fact I have, but there's no stopping this emissary of brotherly love. "Well, you're about to get another one," he informs me with a grin as he clasps me to his chest.

Having spent an hour talking with James, whose debut album *All American Boy* has just come out on RCA Records, I've come to understand that James considers it his personal duty to spread a little sunshine everywhere he goes.

"Yesterday some kids in a van recognized me from the 'Voices That Care' video and I thought to myself, 'Wow man, these kids are already seeing something here,'" he marvels. "I'm really accountable to them. In every walk of life I have to be accountable to people—and I never let people down."

If zealous idealism of this sort is uncommon, well, so is James. For starters, he's a black artist who lives in Orange County—Southern California's bastion of white conservatism—and his main influence is Jackson Browne. Traces of Graham Parker, Bob Seger and John Mellencamp can also be heard in his music, a sophisticated blend of folk, rock and pop that explores racism, drugs and the plight of Native Americans, among other themes.

Thirty-one years old, James cites '60s music as the foundation of his style. "I love the Association, the Mamas and the Papas, the Hollies, and Tommy James & the Shondells," he enthuses. "I love rock 'n' roll too. I'm talking about real rock," he adds, mentioning Led Zeppelin and the Who. He draws the line, however, when it comes to the black roots of rock. "I'm not influenced by the blues and I have no interest in playing them," he sniffs disdainfully. "For me that would be contrived."

James tethers his pure pop musical stylings to philosophical lyrics which he says are largely based on Socratic philosophy. His favorite book is Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, and the film *Billy Jack* influenced him profoundly. "I totally relate to the character of Billy Jack," he explains. "He took care of people who were being discriminated against and was completely dedicated to what he did, and I'm the same way. I see myself as a heroic figure."

Born in Newark, New Jersey, James was the middle child of three in a nomadic family. James' mother was a stenographer at IBM, "which is like being in the army—they move their people a lot. My dad was only around intermittently and I got in a lot of fights, and though I never got into running drugs, I definitely took my share. I didn't fall prey to the drug scene, though, because I come from a really solid family."

He also looked to music to keep him on the path of righteousness. "From the time I was six years old I was singing in a Baptist choir," he says. "From the Commodores to opera to Wes Montgomery, my mom exposed us to all kinds of stuff."

James began writing poetry at the age of 10; when he was 13 a friend showed him a riff on a guitar and the die was cast. "I bought a guitar book and taught myself to play; I was totally serious from the start." Dropping out of high school in tenth grade, he married at 17 and fathered a daughter (now 13), but the marriage broke up after 10 months. He spent the next 10 years bumming around America and Mexico, finally settling in Huntington Beach, California in 1984.

James recorded *All American Boy* with help from T-Bone Burnett, bassist Bob Glaub, drummer Kenny Aronoff, keyboardist Al Kooper, guitarist David Williams and producer Thom Panunzio. He says he's thrilled by the response he's getting. "Everywhere I go the reaction's great—it's like, 'Whoa! This guy's great, plus he's a really nice guy, let's go listen to him!'"

Nor has James' grueling travel schedule put a crimp in his writing. "I never have writer's block," he says. "There are over 400 songs in my catalog."

James plans to do a 10-city tour, for which he'll put together a band. Till then he'll be writing, working out (martial arts and shadow boxing) and radiating good vibes.

VINNIE JAMES PLAYS GUILD JF65 AND TAYLOR 750 acoustics, with D'Addario strings. He sings through an AKG 414 mike. His home equipment includes a Tascam MIDI Studio 688, a Boss EG 151 graphic EQ, Audio Logic stereo compressor/limiter, Alesis QuadraVerb, a Korg FC6 foot controller, a Roland R8 drum machine and a Furman PL8 power conditioner and light module. He hears the results through Sony MDRV7 headphones.

Photograph: Deborah Samuel

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MORRISSEY SUFFERS THE CURSE OF THE REASONABLY UNIQUE

The hipster line on Morrissey, one of the most reviled and adored figures in the history of pop, is that he's become something like a character out of one of his more doleful songs—like "Little Man, What Now?"—the one about the erstwhile child star who turns into a walking anachronism. But if some of the singer/songwriter's acolytes have jumped ship with his latest record *Kill Uncle*, citing a diminishment of their idol's creative powers, Morrissey also seems to be on the brink of snagging a new American audience. Laudatory reviews have appeared in unlikely places (*Entertainment Weekly*), profiles have been popping up in major U.S. magazines and Morrissey's been invited to make several TV appearances, including "The Tonight Show." He's even planning to perform in the States this summer, something he hasn't done since 1987, when his last tour with his seminal post-punk Brit band the Smiths crashed and burned, with the group parting ways soon after.

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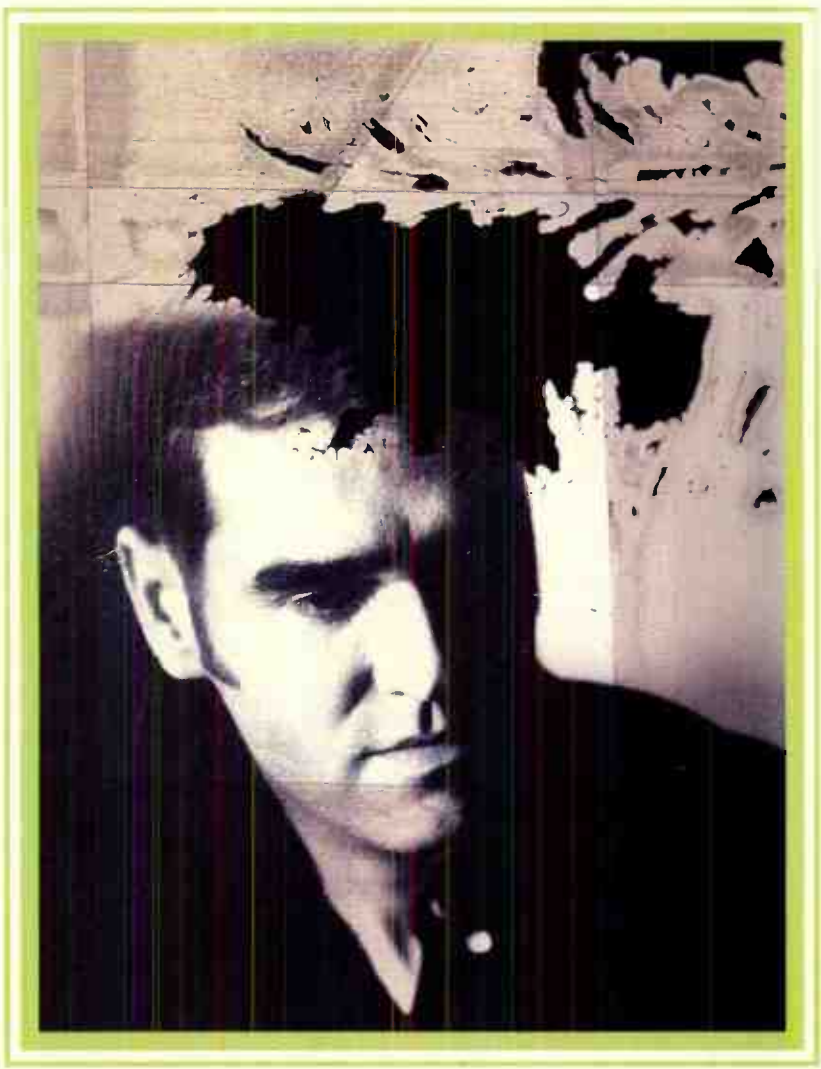


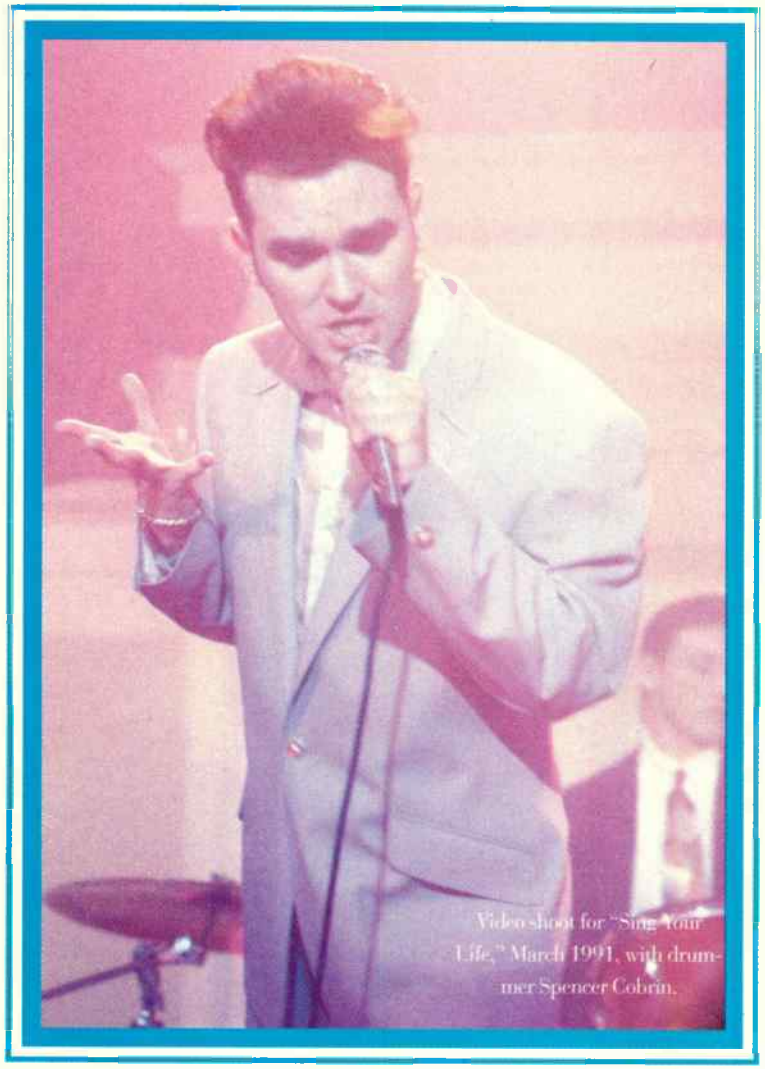
By Katherine Dieckmann

Photograph by The Douglas Brothers

World Radio History

Never quite forgiven by devout followers for that bitter breakup, Morrissey has plunged onward to forge a solo career that tests the genre-bending possibilities in the swooning vocal, acerbic turn of phrase and camp synthesizer solo. First came 1988's stunning *Viva Hate*, a collaboration with Smiths engineer Stephen Street that both recalled the impassioned Smiths guitar sound of Johnny Marr and pumped up the quirky orchestration and strings that have become the hallmark of Morrissey's solo work. Last year's *Bona Drag*, a fitfully brilliant singles collection, was widely received by detractors as a stalling measure until Morrissey could gather up enough material for a new release—a perception that overlooked that record's numerous strengths, including the bold "November Spawned a Monster," which set an unsentimental vision of a wheelchair-bound child to a spunkily irresistible beat.

Morrissey split with Street and hooked up with Mark Nevin (formerly of Fairground Attraction) and Madness producers Clive Langer and Alan Winstanley to make *Kill Uncle*, a record far breezier than the first two. The lyrics reveal little of Morrissey's usual penchant for thick puns and adverbs—though there is, of course, the occasional killer couplet ("your frankly vulgar/ red pullover"). Instead, the songs offer a more direct route to their subjects, which, despite the lighter sound, prove quintessentially Morrissey: a racially motivated beating, the bullying of a female crime witness, the (perhaps thankful) state of life outside coupledom, and the singer's blunt unwillingness to procreate.



Video shoot for "Sing Your Life," March 1991, with drummer Spencer Cobrin.

Steven Patrick Morrissey ascended to cult status as a mordantly witty, inextricably English, depressive genius. But now, on the verge of turning 32 and seeming more serious about the state of his career than ever, that joke, to borrow a Smiths title, isn't funny anymore. The rock press always tends to reduce its key players to monodimensional types, and Morrissey's been pegged a dreary whiner. While he's hopeful that there might be a wider audience waiting for him in the States—as hopeful as a confirmed pessimist can be—he's still faced with the overwhelming negativity surrounding his image.

But Morrissey remains our greatest self-cancelling pop riddle, at once pompous and humble, famous and failed, ironic and utterly sincere, sensual and repressed, allegedly celibate and yet a brazen purveyor of playful homoeroticism (with special attention to the nude male torso). In his slightly clumsy and usually hilarious music videos, he's both mocked and indulged the mythos of his celebrity in a manner befitting a former nerd who probably still can't quite believe his late-blooming popularity.

Spied across a hotel lobby in downtown Manchester, Morrissey sits, legs crossed, recessed in a blue leather chair shaped like a hair drier. From this distance he's all jutting angles—the sharp features, heavy brows, geometrically shaved sideburns and minor-league pompadour. Close up, he is softer, and his manner is soft, too. Even his trademark biting quips tumble off his tongue more gently than they read in print.

Yet there is something about Morrissey that is, inexorably, pure icon. So when he strides down a quiet Mancunian street on this drizzly Sunday afternoon, it seems completely natural that a pubescent boy should materialize seemingly out of nowhere and approach him, a cassette of *Kill Uncle* shakily outstretched for an autograph. It is delivered with extreme solicitude.

"I've done so many interviews here over the years, and once you've run the gauntlet, or whatever the expression is—no, it's not gauntlet, it's—" Gamut. "Right. Where do you go?" Morrissey lifts a hot chocolate to his lips from a table designed for people 5'2" and under, which forces anyone over that height (and Morrissey is quite tall) to slump. He is explaining why he decided, midway through 1989, to stop speaking to the British press, who have breathlessly recorded his every utterance since the Smiths first emerged late in 1982. "But of course they got very angry, because they feel they giveth and they taketh away, and to say no is a snub they find very hard not to take personally. And revenge shortly ensues."

But if Morrissey has clamped down on one outlet, he's opened up to another, giving a number of interviews to the American press despite the fact that he's clearly a little exhausted by all this public self-examination. "I think most of us have only one view on most subjects," Morrissey offers. "And if you're repeatedly asked the same questions, which I am, it becomes very dull. But one is not allowed to suggest even slight boredom with what one does, because it destroys every-

Photograph: Steve Double

World Radio History

thing. Especially, I believe, for the person who listens to your records."

At this juncture, George Michael's voice swells on the piped-in sound system. There's really no point in asking Morrissey his opinion on George Michael, however, because he's already delivered it in a recent interview: "If George Michael had to live my life for five minutes, he'd strangle himself with the nearest piece of cord."

Certain leading questions practically beg a classically snide Morrissey retort, which at this point he actually seems a little reluctant to deliver. He seems well aware that verbal whippings take their toll, both on himself and others. He frets about having recently been approached by a sweet, overeager lad who identified himself as "a Happy Monday," a band Morrissey had slammed in print. As one might expect, Morrissey has no threshold for the Manchester scene, blaming London journalists "who look upon Manchester like some strange psychiatric unit" for creating a false hype, then abandoning it, a situation he finds "basically witless and therefore unforgivable."

As bands like Inspiral Carpets and Charlatans U.K. rule the alternative charts, however, many people have charged that Morrissey's sound has become, um, monotonous.

"Well, that's a very kind way of using the word 'monotonous,'" Morrissey chuckles, not at all miffed. "Believe me, people have always said that, people have always accused me of it, even with the Smiths. Yes! The Smiths were not, as is considered now, years past their, er, death, ever truly the darlings of the press as is commonly thought. There was a great deal of hate, there were accusations, and one was that the Smiths were always much weaker musically than they were lyrically. There's always somebody somewhere pointing the finger and saying, 'Yes, but—'"

"VERY CLOSE TO BLIND ADORATION IS CREEPING JEALOUSY. AND THE SLIGHTEST MISCALCULATION ON THE PART OF THE ADORED IS A BASIS FOR A DREADFUL PUNISHMENT FROM THE ONE WHO ADORES."

Another frequent complaint is that Morrissey's vocal range is limited—but a careful listen reveals he's become quite an accomplished crooner, caressing the most biting remarks, clipping his syllables dramatically and luxuriating over a vowel only to turn it into a curdle of contempt.

"I agree that my voice has improved," Morrissey says, not immodestly. "It was true, initially, with the Smiths that I was very limited. But I think it's just improved and improved and improved. I don't know whether it's just healthier living." You mean your habits are cleaner? Morrissey looks horrified. "What a terrible expression!" Why? "It just implies that 10 years ago I was tramping the streets in an old overcoat covered with phlegm."

One aspect of Morrissey's songwriting that seems to get subsumed by his quippier-than-thou skills is his ability to telescope acute pain without a smirk—like on *Kill Uncle*'s lush dirge "Asian Rut."

"Sometimes I do have a great physical need to be reasonably blunt, which most people find quite taxing," Morrissey replies without a trace of sarcasm. "That's the side of me which is unmarketable, totally unpromotable, the thing that makes people see me as a reasonably exclusive commodity and not for the vast adult world, which simply isn't true. Nonetheless, for most people it's hard to digest, and I recognize that.

"But I've become very dissatisfied with my own spluttered descriptions of the songs in an interview situation. Because I can never quite describe them, or the reason for their being, in an interesting way. It's something I can scarcely understand, personally." He pauses, then continues, "But the songs, and the album title, and the sleeve, and whatever else you might wish to investigate, are simply..." (a pregnant pause) "me."

Suddenly the strumming guitar chords of yet another George Michael song fill the room. "As if on cue," Morrissey laughs. "But it is simply what you see before you. I don't sit down and deliberate and say, 'Now it's time to write. Now it's time to shape an album, and tomorrow maybe I'll go skydiving.' I mean, if I said to you, 'How do you explain yourself? How do you explain your reason for living? How do you explain your character?' you might presumably find it very hard. Because you're presumably a multidimensional person." Morrissey smiles. "I'm being very kind."

Yes, but then there's the matter of the Morrissey image that is put before the world. Take the home video collection *Hulmerist*, which stitches together Morrissey's videos—directed by Tim Broad, with whom the singer is about to embark on a feature film depicting his life, "God forbid that anybody should be subjected to it"—with footage of Morrissey clones in Smiths T-shirts bellowing for their idol. Or the fact that Morrissey's taken to being photographed, epic-style, from below.

"I think the question is, 'Below what?'" Morrissey laughs, then adds, "Within England at least, I have curiously and accidentally become a type, and whether it is a question of a string of photographs where I'm reaching skywards, or whatever, I will unavoidably be referred to, attractively or unattractively, as a specific type."

But isn't it more a question of having invented a persona that's been imitated? "Well, I didn't crawl into the broom cupboard and find a bit of string and a bit of glue and a bit of paper and create this image," he says with slight irritation. "I find that most personalities within pop music are in actuality so shallow, or not really worth investigating, that if you have even a vague angle about what you do, it instantly seems that you have an, inverted commas, 'image.' You've labored harder than the rest to attract people's attention. Which in my case is

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absolutely not true."

Except that you seem well aware that you've established an image that's all about being adored. "Yes, but what is very close to that blind adoration is a creeping jealousy, a creeping envy," Morrissey replies. "And the slightest miscalculation on the part of the adored is the basis for a dreadful punishment from the one who adores, shall we say. But people who are famous, or who have minor fame, still live very basic lives, really. They may have larger bank accounts than the rest of the world, but they still fray at the edges. And it gets increasingly difficult when your audience is somewhat large and so many sectors of your audience expect different things from you. Some of them expect you to be funny, others expect you to be political. And others expect you to be neither one. Therefore it's very difficult when you meet people face to face to understand why it is exactly that they are attracted to you."

Do you think your songwriting is political? "I think it's all political. I think my very being is political in some untapped way," Morrissey replies. "Certainly in England my name is synonymous with danger." So you feel like you still have the power to startle people? "Yes, yes, I do. They lead me to believe I do, at any rate. I don't do it with a very crafty, cunning...eh...I don't plot nastiness. Quite the reverse. I find that, not at all by design, I am considered subversive. I always was considered such. It has always been considered slightly anarchic to have any vague interest in vegetarianism, for instance. And to sing about it is considered pure insanity. So I rest my case. I suppose I feel, for better or worse, reasonably unique," he adds, suppressing a smile. "And I know I'm making your stomach churn as I say those words, but I do feel like a one-off. You can hate the sight of me, or you can cherish every word I've uttered. But I do feel reasonably unique, I do." Then he says, semi-convincingly, "It's a terrible, terrible curse. I wish I could just blend in."

The likelihood of that, however, is next to nil. For one thing, Morrissey is, just as one might suspect, extremely hermetic and given to spending hours on end alone, indoors, listening to music and reading. (Abiding passions include Nancy Friday books and biographies.) He says occasionally he'd like "the opportunity to go out and just talk to someone alone about drivel and get drunk and throw up," but that public appearances tend to provoke scrutiny, and that he's never been even remotely prone to excessive behavior anyway.

At least not certain kinds of excessive behavior. When he moved back to his native Manchester in 1989 after nearly four years spent living in London, Morrissey bought an old Victorian house outside of town, "which meant that I could finally play music at the most unbearable human volume. When I was young, we lived in such a tiny house that whatever record I played would be heard by the entire family and I would always—I mean, the chorus of my youth was 'Turn it down!' I woke up this morning and put the music system on just painfully loud and I felt the thrill of a 13-year-old. That still happens to me. I'm still making the biggest mistake of believing that music and records and so forth is life."

Oh, it might not be such a big mistake. "It is, really," Morrissey insists. "It's fine if you can dip into music and then have a social life, and then

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you have another portion of your life, perhaps a place of work or college or et cetera. But for me it was never that way. I was always absolutely embroiled and totally, inescapably, 24-hours-a-day, I would have to have music. Which is like skidding on very, very thin ice because sooner or later you're going to have to meet the rest of the world."

Is it strange to be in your 30s and still feel like a teenager? "Yes, because I always had a high expectation that I would go through magical transformations into adulthood and on to less trivial things, shall we say. But unfortunately, that hasn't happened. I think your seventeenth year stays with you for the rest of your life, for better or worse, and you just learn how to cope with that. We all of us carry an image inside ourselves of how we'd like to be. But sadly, that image is always unreachable, totally unreachable."

One might say that Morrissey's own image, willfully developed or not, stems from his happy enslavement to popular music: He rehearsed for stardom by studying it thoroughly. His knowledge is dauntingly encyclopedic, and his otherwise becalmed demeanor disappears when he speaks of favorite records and books, reciting titles with the uncontrived fervor of the truly obsessed. He bought his first British single when he was six (Marianne Faithfull's "Come Stay with Me"), and became caught up in American pop music in the early 1970s when he was still a preteen—including collecting the most treacly 45s.

"I remember buying the Starland Vocal Band single 'Afternoon Delight' and absolutely loving it despite myself," he recalls, "but realizing that that was kind of the first germ within my body, and I was slowly being infiltrated with something terribly devious. In general, though, I always liked the American artists that weren't all that popular in America, like the New York Dolls, Patti Smith, the Ramones. And I would collect music magazines from America, such as *Hit Parader* and papers covering the New York scene, like Wayne County. And I would become very excited by people like Wayne County when he had the Dave Clark 5 in his hair."

Excuse me? Morrissey looks surprised. "You don't know Wayne County? He was an extraordinary figure in the early '70s—well, he still exists, only he's altered his gender and now his name is Jane County. But he made records like 'I Am Man Enough to Be a Woman,' and 'It Takes a Man Like Me to Know a Woman Like Me,' and 'Are You a Boy or Are You a Girl?' with brackets around 'Well, You May Be a Boy but You Look Like a Girl.'" He laughs. "And he'd put the words Dave–Clark–Five"—Morrissey gestures it out in his own not-unformidable coif—"in his bouffant in rhinestones. And, you know, compared to what was happening in England at the time, this was really...personality! But the center of it all, of course, were the New York Dolls, who completely destroyed and changed my life."

Why destroyed? "Because, naturally, if you liked the New York Dolls in England in 1973, and you were 13 pushing 14, you were bound to be faced with national unpopularity. England absolutely hated the New York Dolls, they thought they were the most absurd rock creation ever. They considered them to be clamorous transsexuals, which of course was not acceptable, and which of course they weren't, anyway. But English music, apart from David Bowie and Marc Bolan of T. Rex, was so unchangeably staid [*cont'd on page 95*]

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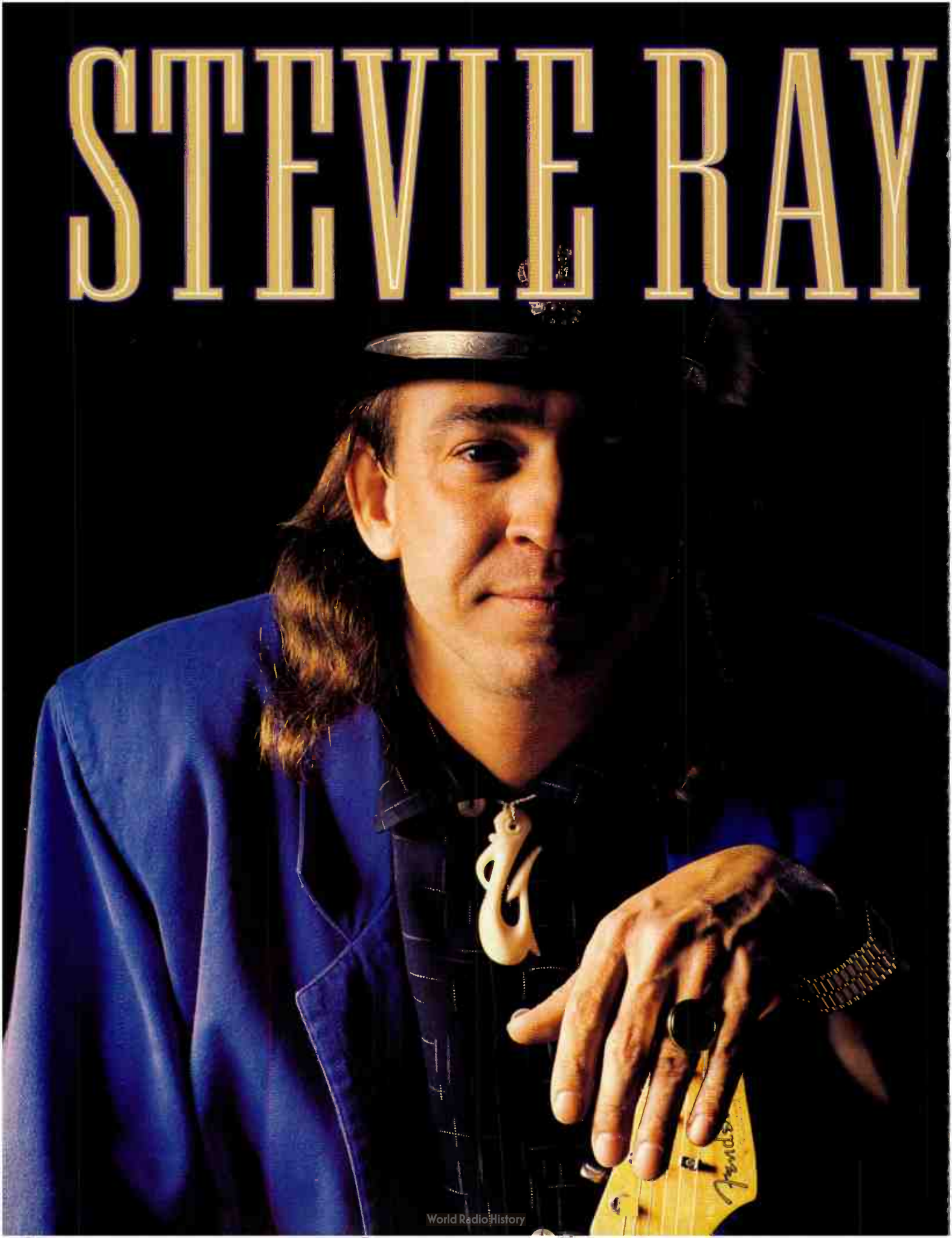
STEVIE RAY



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VAUGHAN

Talking with the Master

By Timothy White

It was a kind of World Series of archival cutting contests. Stevie Ray Vaughan, hunched over his "sweetheart" axe, a chocolate brown '59 Stratocaster with a '58 Gibson jumbo bass neck, sat in a semi-darkened Manhattan studio trading licks with the greatest heroes of yore. He swapped lacerating Robert Johnson–derived lines with Elmore James on "Goodbye Baby," merged growling riffs with Howlin' Wolf on "Moanin' at Midnight," barked out a shifting cadent blues alongside John Lee Hooker on "Boogie Chillen" and huddled with Lightnin' Hopkins to share a tart Texas shuffle on "Gimme Back That Wig (I Bought You Babe, and Let Your Doggone Head Go Bald)."

Stevie Ray's musical cohorts were present in spirit courtesy of a vintage Kent Records compilation album called *Underground Blues*, but the fact that Vaughan could accompany these legends, duet-style, on a blink's notice, spoke volumes about the kind of artist—and appreciator—he surely was. This interview with Stevie Ray Vaughan took place in October 1989 at Sound On Sound Studios on West 45th Street. The entire conversation unfolded with Vaughan's guitar cradled in his arms. The encyclopedic grasp he had of his heroes' myriad individual styles was further deepened by a unique tenderness toward their individual intentions. Stevie Ray was as understanding of the reasons *why* a person played the blues, the needs and desires behind the notes, as he was of the end results. A student of humanity, he also knew that it's the amateurs who usually make the most history by inventing their own place in it.

As the last strains of *Underground Blues* faded away, Stevie Ray looked up from his guitar, smiled broadly and said, "Man, that album is a journey—just fantastic. You got any others like that

Photograph by Jonnie Miles

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here?" No, he was told, but we had *him* as a resource to continue the trek through the living musical heritage he so loved. This talk with the late, great Stevie Ray Vaughan is a moving reminder of how much we lost when we lost him, and how much he left behind for us to learn to appreciate.

"If you try to cover up those things that are really hard to look at, they end up coming out like razor blades in our lives and tear things up."

MUSICIAN: *"Riviera Paradise" has a beautiful bittersweet quality. But no matter what you're playing, fast or slow, you never crowd your notes and phrases. Everything's rounded out, right on the dime. Is there a philosophy to that sort of attention to detail in your playing?*

S.R.V.: What I'm trying to do in those things is find that clarity, when I can let go of whatever it would be, ego or self-consciousness. Since I can't read music, I find I do the best when I just listen to where I'm trying to go with it and where it *can* go. And not try to rush it. Not try to make up things as I'm going necessarily, but just let them come out. Then I'm a lot better off. If I start trying to pay attention to where I am on the neck and the proper way to do this or that, I end up thinking *that* thing through instead of playing from my heart. When I've played from my mind I get in trouble.

MUSICIAN: *There's a nice sense of intuition in your playing. It's the idea that you feel so close to your instrument, you're trying to think out loud with it.*

S.R.V.: I don't know if it's *think* really, but just feel and express. I've spent many years married to these guitars, especially this one... I found this one in '73, I believe, at a store in Austin. I had my first Stratocaster at about that time and I was having problems with the intonation and it was driving me nuts! I went to get it worked on, but as I walked up I saw this guitar just hanging there in the window and looking at me, and I was looking back. I walked straight up to the counter and handed the guy my guitar and said, "Will you trade me this guitar for that one over there?" He said, "Yes." And I said, "Even?" and he said, "Yeah" and I said, "Give it to me!" and I picked this one up and went and plugged it in and it sounded just like I wanted it to, just like I thought it would. It felt just perfect for me—had it ever since.

MUSICIAN: *"Riviera Paradise" is like good brandy going down. How did you come to write it?*

S.R.V.: It's actually like an extension of the style of "Lenny," off the first album. Originally I came up with it about '84 and I was looking for those same qualities—there were some rough times going on at home. A lot of us go through really drastic up-and-down hardships between relationships, when we don't know really how to love someone right. "Lenny" was written to soothe, and "Riviera Paradise" comes from the same place. I wasn't wanting to just copy myself, I was wanting to go ahead and say something with the song and it was down to where if I couldn't find the chords I needed, I started just sticking my hand on the neck, pushing my fingers down and saying, "What's that sound like?" The song went through a lot of different meanings between '84 and now. Finally I got back to where I was coming from originally, which was looking for the willingness to make things right with the people that had been hurt in these relationships. That's really where it comes from.

MUSICIAN: *Yeah, it seems to come from a very humble, very compassionate place, wanting to build those bridges and keeping those bridges strong.*

S.R.V.: Yeah, building bridges instead of tearing them down, that's exactly what it's about.

MUSICIAN: *Your vocals on "Crossfire" were as strong and new as your playing had always been.*

S.R.V.: Well thank you, man. The way I see it, it's a learning process every time I go in the studio, actually every time we do a gig or I'm just walking around the house or in the shower or whatever, trying to learn how to sing. I've always wanted to work that out. It's something that doesn't come quite so easily as guitar playing to me. And a lot of the direction that I've had has been of course through records and through contact with a lot of the people that I've really looked up to all of my life. But a lot of it really goes to Doyle Bramhall who I had the pleasure of writing a lot of the songs with on *In Step*. I've known him since I was about 11, 12 years old and always really liked the way he sang, and his influences were a lot of the same singers that were mine. Everybody from Ray Charles, Bobby Bland, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters. I've always liked how they sang and I've always liked how Doyle sang, but for me it's just taken a lot more work.

MUSICIAN: *It's interesting where you pick up these bits of inspiration both from people who are right there in the fabric of your own life, like Doyle, and from the old records. People might not realize that even old heroes of yours like Magic Sam learned to play the blues by listening to Muddy Waters and Little Walter records. So many people did that; even back to the earliest days when they were playing the oldest Robert Johnson 78s, that was a tradition.*

S.R.V.: Yeah, and you can also go and *see* the people. But by listening to the records you can sit at home and start it over, find where you're coming from. It's a real neat deal! And you can dress up like you want to in your room and nobody knows! [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *"Let Me Love You, Baby" is so focused, both Buddy Guy's famous 1963 live approach on* Folk Festival of the Blues *and your modern interpretation of it. His music obviously brings out a lot of spirit in you. It's a good place to build from because it's so direct.*

S.R.V.: It's the simple direct things that seem to get to the point, and it's not all polished over with over-production or anything. I don't know what I would have done if I'd had to start off my learning process in music with so much production going on. I wouldn't have known what to do. I'm really glad that my crystal radio worked real well to get Ernie's Record Mart [in Gallatin, Tennessee] and things like that! And back in the time when you'd hear B.B. King and Jimmy Reed and Buddy Guy, things like that on Top 40 radio—I was just real fortunate in that way.

Lettering: Dennis Ortiz-Lopez
Photograph: Tracy Hart

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MUSICIAN: *I know a big influence on Buddy Guy when he was coming up was T-Bone Walker. How would you contrast their approaches?*

S.R.V.: T-Bone was aggressive. Buddy can go from one end of the spectrum to the other. He can play quieter than anybody I've ever heard, or wilder and louder than anybody I've ever heard. I play pretty loud a lot of times, but Buddy's tones are just incredible. But Buddy's style is not necessarily such a technical style, it's just more like raw meat in a lot of ways. A lot of his earlier records seem to be really toned down and to-the-point.

MUSICIAN: *Like "One Room Country Shack" with Junior Wells?*

S.R.V.: Yeah! And part of the tone thing has to do with, the way he puts it, that he was *told* to turn down for those records—they wouldn't let him go crazy. [*laughter*] He may or may not like this, but from a guitar player's standpoint I'm really glad I got to hear him that way as well because he pulls so much emotion out of so little volume. Buddy's just got this cool feel to everything he does.

MUSICIAN: *He's got a real proud style, a strut quality.*

S.R.V.: Oh yeah, and when he sings, it's just compounded. Girls fall over and sweat and die! Every once in a while I get the chance to go and play with Buddy, and he gets me every time, because we could try to go to Mars on guitars but then he'll start singing, sing a couple of lines, and *then* stick the mike in front of me! What are you going to do? What is a person going to do?! [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *Another tradition in the blues is cutting contests. Years ago at Chicago's Blue Flame Club Buddy Guy walked off the street and Otis Rush and Magic Sam were there and he just got up and played in what was essentially their style! That was the beginning of his reputation in Chicago. Have you ever had the chance to get together with Buddy in this kind of cutting contest?*

S.R.V.: Yeah! Not too long ago, I got to do it at his new club called Legends in Chicago, and before that it's been times at the Lone Star [in New York City] or at various different Antone's—it's moved several times—around Austin; and we've gotten to do it at the Chicago Blues Festival quite a few years ago. Every time I get to run into Buddy that's pretty much what we end up doing. We go for the throat, and I just love it! But then he always starts singing again [*laughs*] and then it's all over, you know?

MUSICIAN: *Was your first guitar the Gibson Messenger you got in '63?*

S.R.V.: That was my first electric, yeah. That was Jimmie's first electric as well, and he just handed it down when he got a 330 and later on he probably changed to Les Pauls and Telecasters. Gave me a '51 Tele, a cross between a Broadcaster and a Tele that I rebuilt and ended up letting someone talk me into selling and I'm still kicking myself! Still looking for it, by the way! So if somebody finds a guitar that says "Jimbo" on the back and it's the right one, it's the real deal—you can come *rape* me for it, or my pocketbook anyway!

MUSICIAN: *Do you recall the first song that you worked out on electric guitar? Maybe that '51 Tele?*

S.R.V.: A lot of the stuff I was learning early on had to do with Jimmy Reed kind of things. Early on Jimmie and I did learn something that I ended up playing with Dick Dale not long ago.

MUSICIAN: *Dick Dale from the Del-Tones, the surf guitar king?*

S.R.V.: [*Plays some surf guitar lines*] Yeah, those things were popular then, but it was just a lot of fun to learn that stuff—Ray Sharp and the Razor Blades. It's the real simple things, you know? Then of course the Beatles came out and we heard about the Bluesbreakers, and at the same time we were starting to hear about Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, Buddy Guy, B.B. King, Freddie King and Lonnie Mack and on and on. "Wham" was the first record I bought. Somebody was in the right corner upstairs on that one 'cause I finally ended up getting the chance to work with Lonnie. Things like "Why" still kill me. And then on Lonnie's *Strike Like Lightning*, the song "Stop" was just a killer. Nobody can play a wang-bar like that.

And then along came Albert King records. It's funny, because when I was about 12 I had been a dishwasher for a while and part of my job was to clean out the trash bin. That involved standing on these big 55-gallon barrels with wooden lids on them, where they'd put all the hot grease. And one day I was out there cleaning out the bin, having a blast, and the top broke and I fell in. Just as I finally got out—I'd been up to about my chest in grease—they came with two fresh hot vats of boiling grease and I got out just in time. If I'd taken a break later I would have been a fried guy! The woman fired

SRV

"Music used to be based on everyday occurrences, like a train going down the track, a horse walking. That's where these rhythms came from."

"Third Stone from the Sun": SRV's last date at Fitzgerald's in Houston, June 20, 1983

Photograph: Tracy Hart

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Spring Break 1985: South Padre Island, Texas

me because I broke the lids on the barrel and right then and there I decided, "Wait a minute, this is not what I want to do. I want to play guitar like Albert King!" And that's the last job I've had other than playing guitar. So, thank you Albert for helping me there. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Talking about Albert and B.B. King and these kind of high-bent string-squeezing single-note lines—a song on* Soul to Soul, *"Ain't Gonna Give Up on Love," has a bit of that flavor.*

S.R.V.: Some of my favorite stuff, man, is to play Albert King things and be able to do 'em in 1989 or whatever, 2010! I hope that style of music and the reality of blues—everybody goes through those ups and downs—never leaves our music. Hope we don't decide as a mass to get rid of all the real things and just put in the synthetic hypnotic music and leave those things alone. I hope that *never* happens.

MUSICIAN: *Let's go through a little personal history and weave a little Texas blues history into it. You're the second son of Jimmy Lee and Martha Vaughan and you grew up in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. What is the Oak Cliff area like?*

S.R.V.: It's not like J.R.'s joint! It's more of a down-home neighborhood. It was actually another town separate from Dallas for many, many years and Dallas grew around it. In another part of Oak Cliff, across the tracks I suppose, was where T-Bone Walker was from, and Leadbelly. All these people were from there: Charlie Christian, Freddie King. Oak Cliff was a breeding ground for a lot of music, lots of culture that's been torn down to make room for sky-risers.

MUSICIAN: *What was your first instrument?*

S.R.V.: My first instrument was shoe boxes and pie pans, with clothes hangers for sticks. And then it was when Jimmie got a guitar, and then my parents got me a lap steel which I had *no* idea what to do with. And then I got an acoustic guitar, one of those little Roy Rogers models made out of Masonite, and it wouldn't tune, so we took half the strings off and struck it more like a bass and tuned it down. Jimmie kept playing his guitar—I believe it was an Airline box acoustic—and over the years I kept trying to fool around with drums here and there.

Jimmie plays drums better than I could. He's one of those guys who, when he picks anything up it just sounds right, you know? And it doesn't look like he's doing *any*thing! [*laughs*] He kept on playing guitar and picked up several types of instruments, everything from steel guitars to cornet, fiddle, '51 Chevys [*chuckles*]—*and* he's a great bass player as well. I played bass for a while in Jimmy's band called the Texas Storm. It was just a few months, but I learned a lot there, mainly steel guitar, little bit of drums.

MUSICIAN: *You were about 10 when you were in a group called the Shantones. And then in junior high, you were in a group called Blackbird. What did those bands sound like?*

S.R.V.: Well, in the Shantones, we thought we had a band and we finally played a talent show and realized in the middle of our song that we didn't know the whole thing. [*laughs*] We weren't together very long! We went through different bands and really started learning what was going on. Blackbird went through so many different people, like one of the springboard deals: I learned how to

Photograph: Mike Beroff
Austin American-Statesman

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play with someone until the energy was gone and before it was a really deadbeat kind of thing, we would have the sense enough to go ahead and change members so we could keep fresh. It was a real neat growing experience.

Blackbird ended up moving to Austin New Year's Eve of '72. It was great. We decided to move there on the *way* there and I moved into a club called Rolling Hills that a friend of mine owned. I slept on the pool table, the stage, the floor, whatever the weather permitted. And to tell you the truth, it was some of my favorite times. I didn't have a dime, but who cares? I was doing what I wanted and around people I wanted to be around and it was *always* good music. A lot of other bands had gone to Austin because in Austin you could play what you wanted and that was all there was to it. You didn't have to go by some club owner's idea of what you ought to sound like or play this list of songs that he handed you. You might as well have had a quarter slot in your ear, you know? The whole scene in Austin was when someone needed a fresh bit of energy in their band—kind of like every three to six months, something like that—all the bands would just shuffle the cards of players. Everybody learned a whole lot, and eventually everybody found slots with other musicians that they really wanted to stay with.

MUSICIAN: *You were roughly 17 or so in '72. Wasn't it a little on the cold side that winter in Austin?*

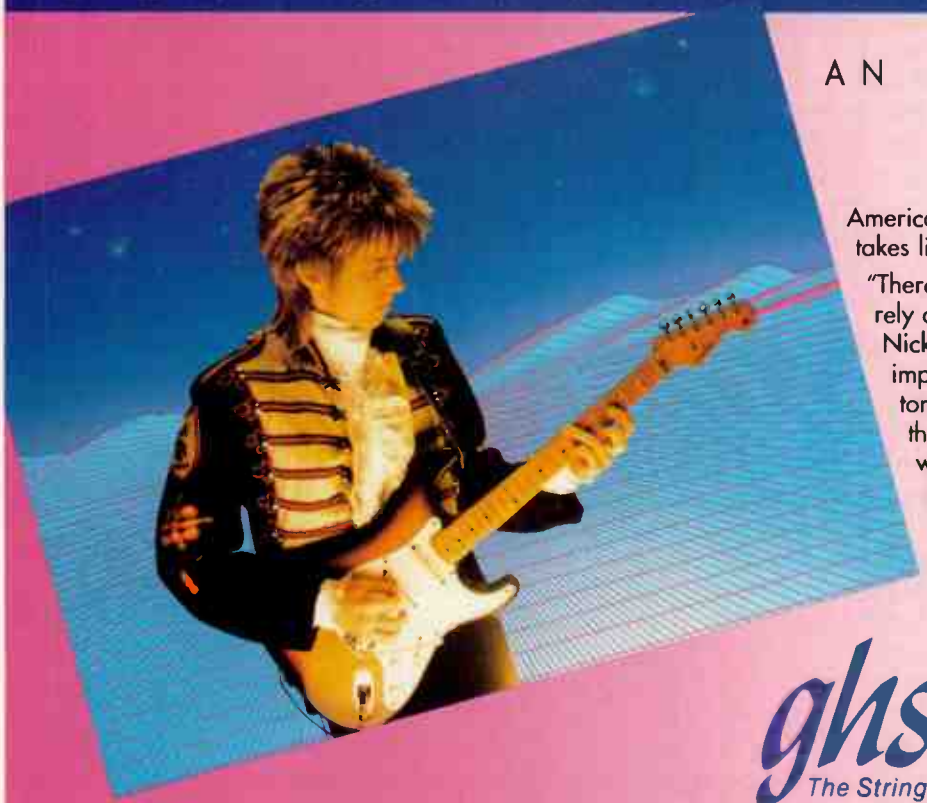
S.R.V.: Yeah, it didn't bother me, though. I don't know. I don't think that I really want to lose everything right now, but it was a real neat thing for me, a real growing experience, and it's something I never could regret.

MUSICIAN: *People know Austin as a place where rock and country kind of got together in the '60s, places like Threadgill's Bar, Armadillo World Headquarters. But there's also a real rich blues and R&B tradition coming out of that town, a lot happening in the R&B bars on Sixth Street.*

S.R.V.: There always has been. W.C. Clark's one of the people who's been involved in that for years and years, as well as the Jets and Bill Campbell. There was a real rich deal. Like you said, it's been going on for years and years before I knew about it, obviously, but that's where Jimmie had moved, probably late '60s I guess, maybe as late as '70. He had been involved with a lot of that. It's still going on there. There's a new phase of it, a lot of young kids growing up and doing the same thing. Now Sixth Street, even though it can be a little bit, uh...I don't know...it seemed as if it was going to turn into more than a Bourbon Street and get out of hand for a while. But now it seems there's a lot of clubs lining Sixth Street and you can just walk up and down the street and hear all kinds of young cats playing what they're really trying to find home with. It's happening all again. It's a great thing. But in Dallas blues clubs like the Cellar, if you were black you could not get in! Thank God we got to get out of Dallas and go down to Austin, where that whole hypocritical deal wasn't so evident.

MUSICIAN: *Was there any song that you put together in those*

G H S & E R I C J O H N S O N



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early years that turned up on one of your albums later?

S.R.V.: "Pride and Joy" was kind of funny. I'd written the song in the studio, recorded it right then and brought it home to the girlfriend that I'd had at the time. I don't know what the problem was but she didn't think it was really about her and we got into this big argument, so I got back in the car and went back into the studio and rewrote some words to the song—I'm crying for the demo where I'd put these different words over the same track—and brought this home and went, "Here." [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *Songs While-U-Wait!*

S.R.V.: Songs While-U-Wait—you got it! I'm glad to say it ended up going back to the original version. [*laughter*]

MUSICIAN: *"Rude Mood," another song from* Texas Flood, *is like a crash course in modern Texas guitar technique. It's got fast shuffles on it, tight picking, those slippery chord combinations. If someone wanted to get the whole textbook in one place, or at least a good chunk of it, that would be a good song to start.*

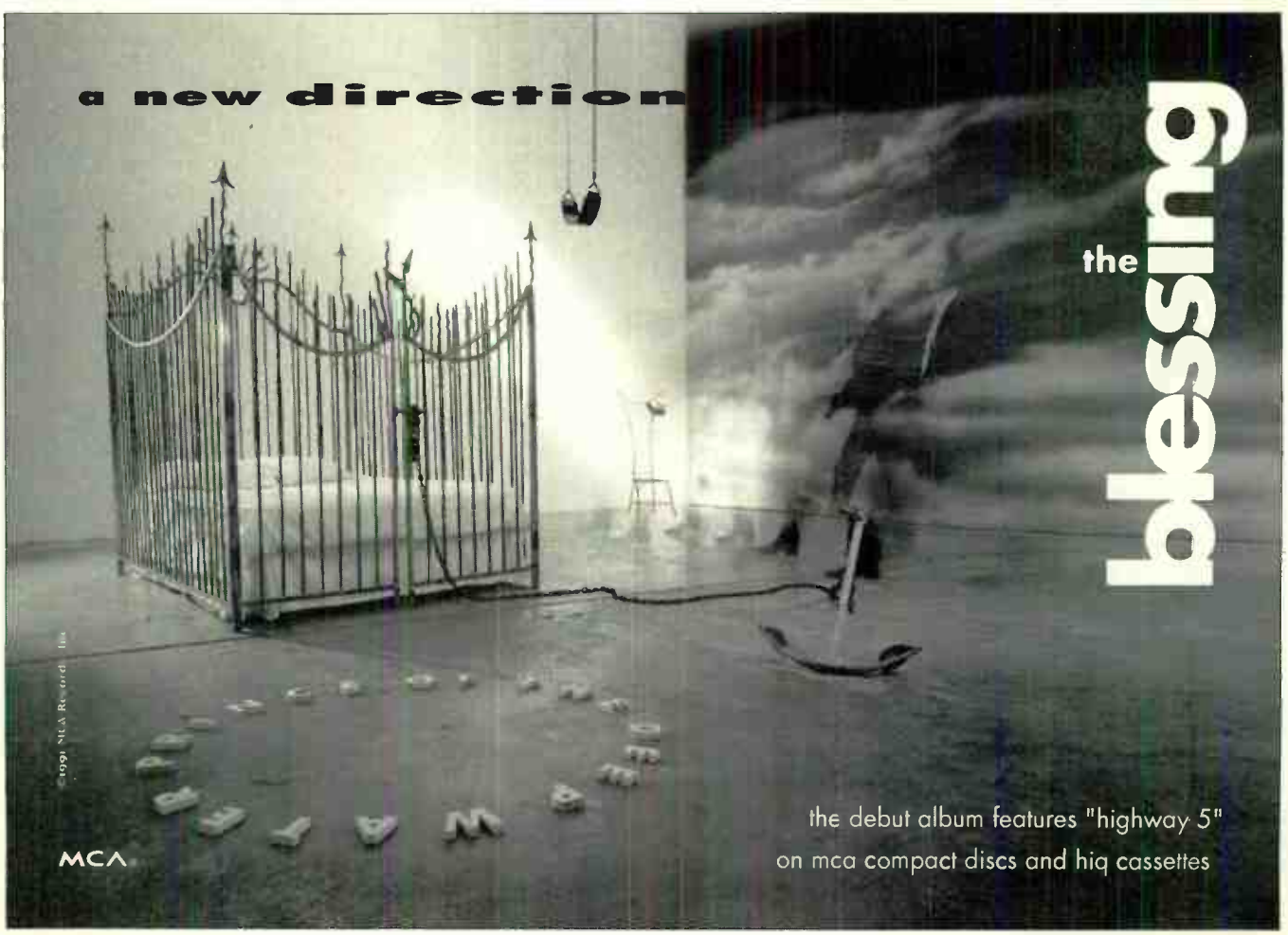
S.R.V.: Well, it's actually like an extension of something I'd heard years and years ago of Lightnin' Hopkins called "Lightnin' Skyhop," and it's just me trying to not only remember what I'd learned from his styles, but to carry that on and take the song further. It's faster and it's got a few more tricks in it and this and that, but it's basically a take-off of that song.

MUSICIAN: *Jimi Hendrix is obviously a hero of yours. You've kind of embraced his style but found new applications for it.*

S.R.V.: Well, his tone, his touch, his application of chords, his rhythms, his taking the idea of blues songs and turning them into modern-day things. Like "Manic Depression"—to him, that was a modern blues song even though it was a waltz. [*starts strumming languid, moody Hendrix-type chords*] That's pretty inventive kind of stuff to me, and the way he used a wang-bar was completely different than anybody I had heard do it. His soft, clear touch, you know...

MUSICIAN: *It was a very tender touch that wasn't happening in rock 'n' roll, certainly not at that point in the '60s.*

S.R.V.: And I believe he took tones a lot further than anyone had. If he couldn't get it out of a straight guitar he would find an effect. I think he opened up all of those doors. For instance, the use of what's called an Octavia. He opened all those doors by being able to tell someone what he wanted and making use of fuzzes. What he ended up doing with all that was the same thing that people go for. Listen to "The Star Spangled Banner"—if that's not where people got the idea to try and go for synthesizer sounds, I'm not sure where it would be from. Imagine what that's opened up for everyone! I think he just continued to try and take things further and he wasn't afraid of talking about spiritual things in his songs and trying to grow. Even though we sometimes defeat our own purposes by our lifestyles, or the different myths that we believe.... Like his dying because of drugs—some people think he was trying to. I think it was a mishap that happens to some of us when we get up in that whole deal. But it's obvious to me that he was trying to grow spiritually, and I think that was a new thing



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in rock music. He stretched all the boundaries.

MUSICIAN: *There's a wonderful song on* Soul to Soul *called "Say What" that's got really eloquent wah-wah work in it. There's a nice shading of Hendrix inspiration in it.*

S.R.V.: Well, it was definitely inspired by him. If you listen to a lot of his stuff, you could hear the roots coming, a lot of the sounds sounded old and brand-new at the same time. The emotions seem to be not dated at all. And I think that's what he was tapping into as well when he headed off into jazz areas, and what he was trying to do towards the end. I say "at the end"—who can call it that? I get the idea that all he experienced is kind of like what fusion's supposed to be, you know? I mean, he seemed to not only play guitar on guitar, but he played *everything* on guitar. I don't know what else to call it. He just played music. No matter how many walls he knocked down to get there.

MUSICIAN: *Let's talk about Texas R&B and blues, about Texas music as you experienced it. The backbone of Texas music is the blues shuffle.*

S.R.V.: One of my favorites has always been [*starts playing some shuffles*] Freddie King's "Hideaway," things like that. Albert Collins' "Don't Lose Your Cool." A lot of music that came out in years gone by, I don't know that it's so much this way now, but it seems to me that music used to be more based on common everyday occurrences, like a train sound going down the track, someone walking down the street, things like that. A horse walking, you know? That's where these rhythms came from.

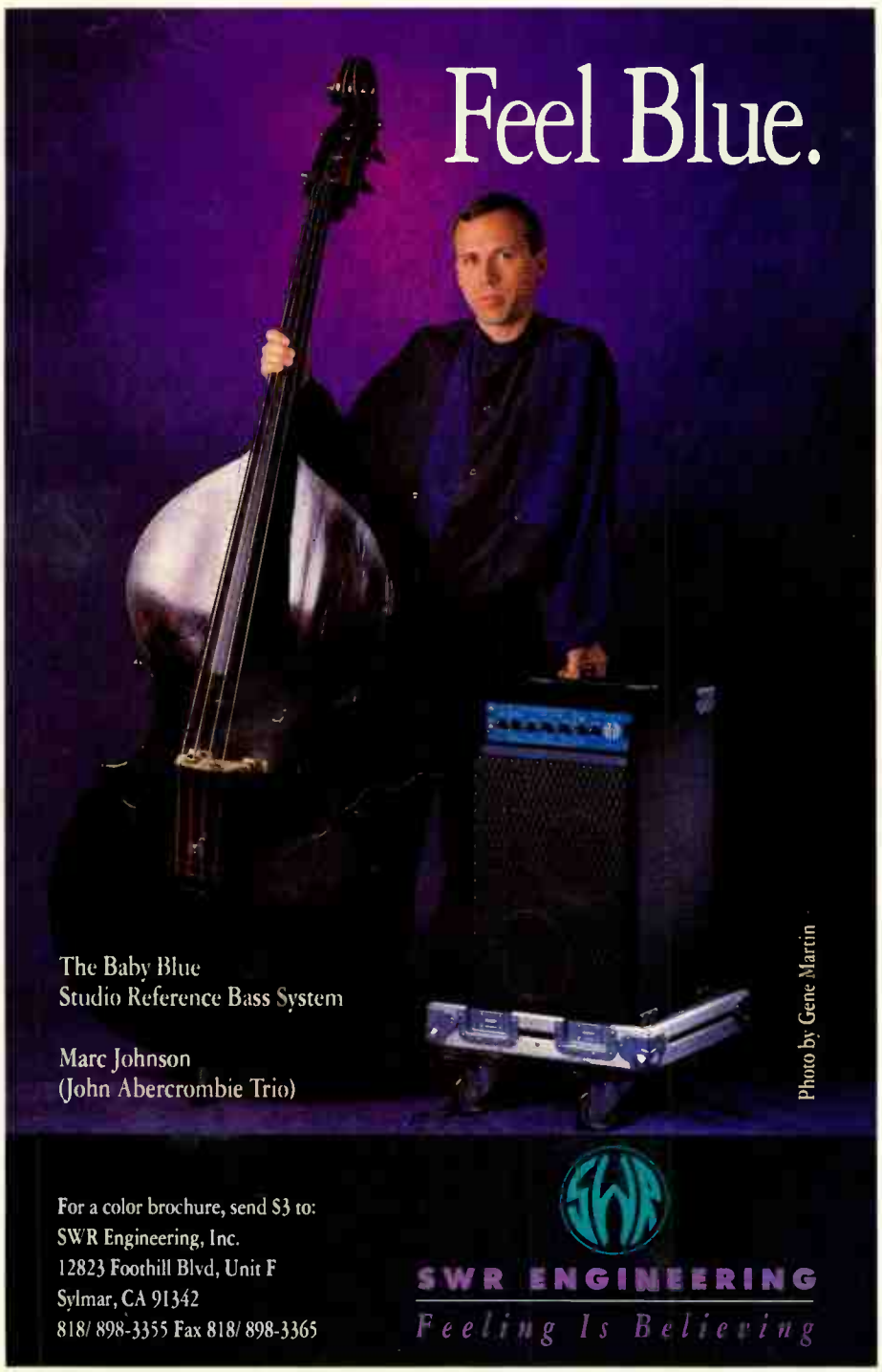
MUSICIAN: *People take this stuff from life. Jimi Hendrix used to say he got some of those sounds from his days as a paratrooper: The door of that plane would fly open and* whooooshh, *and he'd go, "Whoa, let me think of a sound that makes me feel the way I feel right now before I jump." And in listening to you play those various shuffles, there's such a hopeful sound to it. It's like, "What's next? I'm ready for whatever comes around the corner." Such a thing of optimism in those great Texas shuffles.*

S.R.V.: Even though Texas music in a lot of ways is rough-and-tumble, it also seems to me to be about feeling better. Like there's always a good time in it. Even if it's a real down blues tune. Albert King described something to me one time that really made a lot of sense: No matter whether it's a real down song about everything going wrong or whether it's the upside of it—found something new or got it together with my woman, or whatever—it's all to soothe, the blues is all to soothe. Whether you got to get mad first or you've already been mad, it's all to *soothe*. And I think that's one thing that a lot of people miss about blues.

MUSICIAN: *One of my favorite songs from* Couldn't Stand the Weather *is "Scuttle Buttin'." There's so much energy! How did that come about?*

S.R.V.: Actually, that's me trying to say thank you to Lonnie Mack, basically. "Scuttle Buttin'" came out of me trying to figure out how to play "Chicken Pickin'." [*laughs*] It wasn't like I was just trying to steal him blind or anything, it was just like me kind of trying to say thank you. And we ended up doing it a lot of times if we got to run into each other.

MUSICIAN: *People may know the name*



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of your band comes from the great Otis Rush song, "Double Trouble." Otis is from Philadelphia, Mississippi, but is best-known as one of the kingpins of the post-War Chicago blues sound. It's interesting how Texas and Chicago have shaken hands in so many ways in your music.

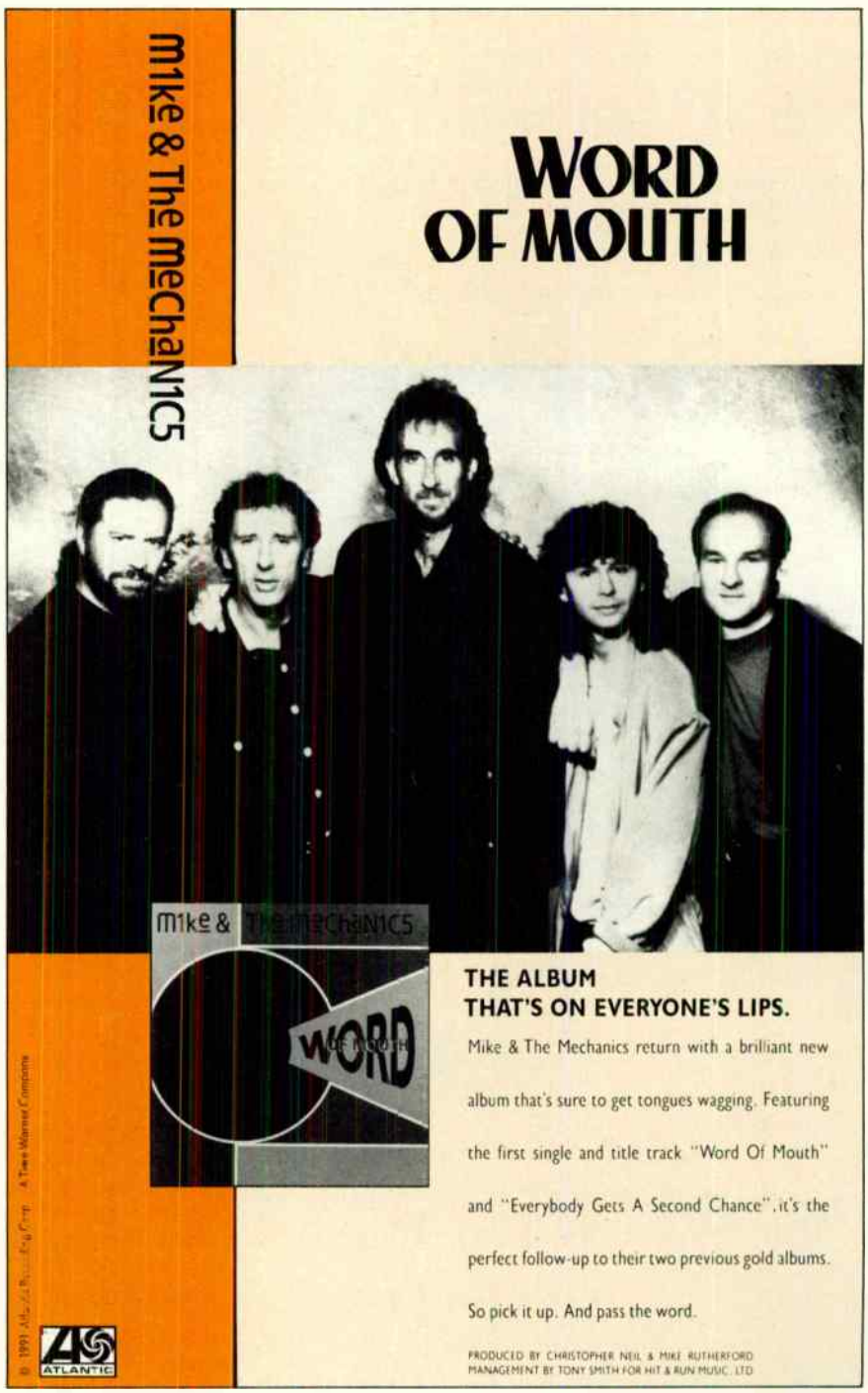
S.R.V.: You know, the tie between Texas, Louisiana and Chicago, all those areas had a lot to do with train lines, railroad tracks, and I think there was always a lot closer connection than a lot of us realized. Because it was always a migratory route. Freddie King made it in Chicago in a lot of ways. The two styles of music are a little bit different, but these days it's a lot more intertwined, and I'm really glad I've gotten to know a lot of those people, like Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, gotten a chance to play with them. I don't think I've seen anyone caress a guitar and hug it and play it like Otis Rush. And then he opens his mouth. He's another one of those people who opens his mouth and you just...shudder...Because it's so to the bone. [*Starts playing "I Can't Quit You," and singing*] I'm glad I remembered the words! [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *How did you record Stevie Wonder's "Superstition"?*

S.R.V.: One day while we were rehearsing for the *Live Alive* album we started playing around with "Superstition" and one of the crew members got all excited and said, "If y'all do that song it'd be a hit." It felt real good and two or three days later we recorded it. And then as we were trying to find the right mixing studio, a friend of mine told me that we ought to just call Stevie, call up Wonderland and say, "Hey man, I'm a fan of yours and really looking for a studio....Is yours available?" We finally did and it was just incredible. They welcomed us in, gave us a better rate than anybody else around, treated us well, gave us the studio for 24 hours a day. I had met him at the Grammies or wherever, different places over the years, and all of a sudden I would get these great phone calls in the middle of the night. Imagine this: being dead asleep, picking up the phone and Stevie Wonder is singing to you! Making it up as he goes! It's continued like that and I finally got the chance to play on one of his records. There's nobody like the man—to just sit there and watch him write these things on the spot. And the funny thing is he'll do this while carrying on a conversation on two different phones and with a couple of people in the room, while he's playing a couple of different keyboards as well. Plus he's programming his computer to play the song that he's fixing to play in a few minutes! And he's doing all this at the same time, cognizant of everything going on. You get up and start to tiptoe out of the room and he goes, "Where you going?" It's like, who needs eyes, you know? And he's so full of love and so full of truth, it's a real neat thing.

MUSICIAN: *You've played with Jeff Beck too. Is there a Jeff Beck song that you've played over the years, in a band here, a band there?*

S.R.V.: [*Starts playing "Guitar Boogie"*] This was actually a Chuck Berry song that Jeff took and re-did, called it "Jeff's Boogie." All the gunslingers in the world had six strings on their guns. Every time you'd walk into a club like the Cellar, if somebody new walked in it was like, time for everybody to pull out their gunslinging material, and everybody would play "Jeff's Boogie." You'd play it part of the way, then



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double-time it and double-time it again. It was just kind of a staple of what I grew up with. [*Starts playing "Jeff's Boogie"*] Actually, Chuck Berry's version was a lot more tame, but Jeff Beck took it and it had *wild* guitars and echo and the whole bit. He's another one of those guys that could play incredibly beautiful and incredibly...just *mean*, you know?

MUSICIAN: *Like an explosion.*

S.R.V.: Yeah! Very much. And he can play some of the weirdest stuff I've ever heard and make it completely work. I don't know whether he's riding a wave or if he can think that quick to think it out first, but it doesn't really matter, you know? Incredible.

MUSICIAN: *There's a lot of personal wisdom in "Wall of Denial."*

S.R.V.: The musical part of it started off as me just trying to find a new way to play a 6/8 kind of a feel. The more I played with it the more I started looking for something I could use lyrically that really *meant* something, instead of just..."got a new car" or "got a lot of money in the bank"—who cares? I started looking through lyrics that I'd come up with and ideas that I'd found that had really helped me in my life, and pulled these pieces and parts together. Not necessarily in a song form, but as pieces and parts of something that could grow. Doyle and I went over the thing at one of our get-togethers, which was basically he and I would sit down and talk about what was going on in our lives for a few hours and boil it down to the real and what we could use—we would write it down. I pulled out these pieces and parts of songs that I'd had, or just ideas that we had written out but not tied together, and a lot of the things we came up with were things that were really helping us. We would just insert them and the whole thing would start coming together and there'd be a song. We didn't have a title. Doyle was driving home, pulled out his little pencil and just wrote "Wall of Denial" on top of the piece of paper. And he came back and said that to me. I was talking to my manager on the phone telling him what-all we'd gotten done and what we were going to work on next. I said, "Well, I think we're going to work on..." All of a sudden Doyle goes, "A wall of deniyallllll..." and I went, "I'll see you later," hung the phone up, turned around and said, "What?!" And we went from there, started the very first part of the song and I pulled it out and said, "Here's the first verse—you got the chords." And then we got back to the "wall of denial" part and put in the second verse and it all fell together just like that.

MUSICIAN: *There's a really beautiful couplet in there: "We're never safe from the truth, but in the truth we can survive."*

S.R.V.: That's something I learned just looking, you know, *looking* for things that really could help me, and just *anyone*, in recovery with addiction and drugs. The idea is out of a real spiritual book called *The Course* that's been real helpful to a lot of people. The principle is just as plain as it can be: We always—well, many times—try to hide from the truth, thinking we can; that we'll be safe by covering something up when in fact if you try to cover up those things that really are too hard to look at, they end up coming out like razor blades or explosions in our lives and tear things up. And the sooner we can learn to go back to the truth we'll be a lot better off; then it sets us free.

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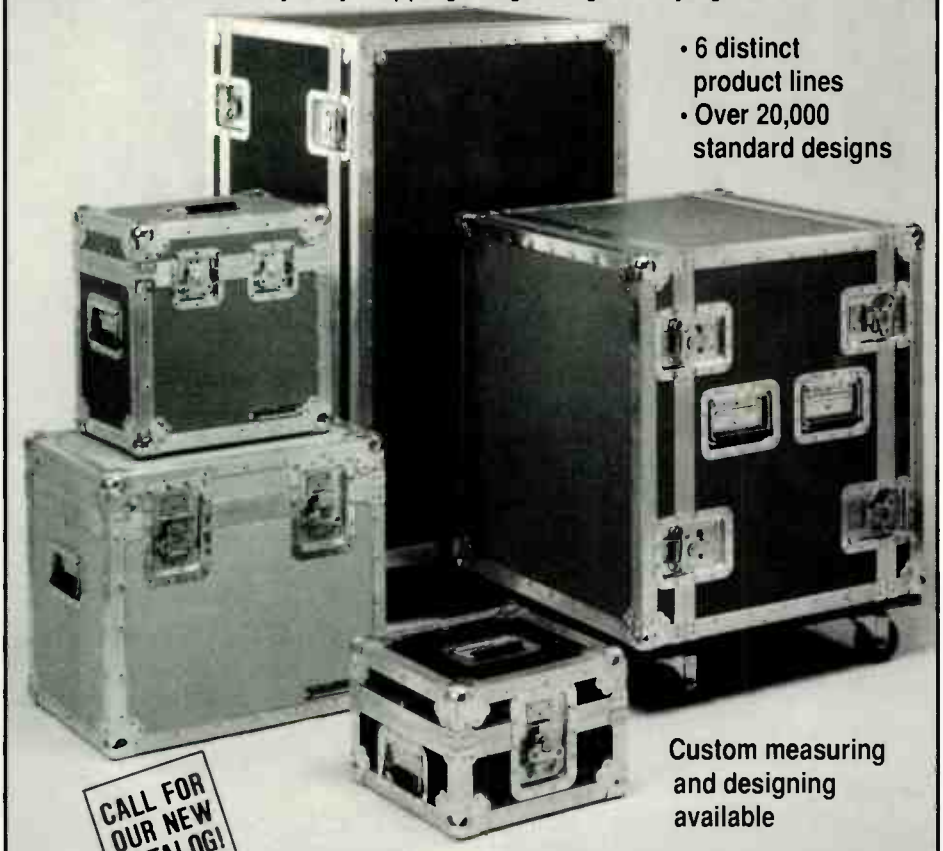

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Tony Williams Reinvents Himself

Can't stop worrying, can't stop growing. The world's best drummer turns to composing.

By Tony Scherman

Photograph by Michele Clement

"This may sound self-aggrandizing, but playing the drums was always easy for me. From an early age, it was so easy to figure stuff out, it was almost embarrassing. I needed to prove to myself that I was deserving of all the praise, needed to feel that I'd accomplished something—that *I* had accomplished something, the person that I am. I needed to tackle something that was hard, that wasn't God-given, and to see it grow. That's what writing music has been, and is, for me. I had to go get a teacher, I had to study composition for seven years. That was work. Writing music, that's work. Drumming has never been work, it's always been fun. It's still fun. So I could never put the word 'work' in my life, and how can you be a success to yourself if you've never had to work?"

As he enters middle age, Tony Williams looks less and less African-American, more and more exotic, near-Eastern: Persian, Lebanese, ancient Assyrian. In profile, his nose hooks luxuriantly. His big almond-shaped eyes are sleepy, liquid; their blank stare can be unnerving. He wears his hair semi-straightened now, brushed back into a stiff little ducktail, and with his

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lazy, rolling gait and odd-shaped body—thick biceps, thick waist—he looks like an ill-tempered Buddha.

Tony Williams—a handful. He plays like the rushing wind, like an avalanche, like a natural disaster. People look at each other and start to laugh—he's so good, so *loud*, so unapologetically in their faces. There's nothing polite about Tony Williams' drumming, nor anything overly diplomatic about him. He's testy, suspicious, self-involved. Still, the gibe I've heard more than once—"the only thing bigger than Tony Williams' talent is his ego"—strikes me as far from true. Beneath the aloof manner flickers a real vulnerability: unhealed wounds, maybe, from his days as a 17-year-old prodigy, or even earlier. I'll bet he's easily devastated. Something gnaws at this guy, some basic insecurity, and if it makes him difficult and defensive, it's also made him hungry to learn. How many drummers can write a fugue? Compose for string quartet? Organize a spectacularly tight five-man jazz group and write every bit of its 30-song repertoire: sinuous, muscular, haunting pieces? Williams' composing hasn't yet approached the level of his playing—how many drummers could you non-fatuously call "the world's greatest"?—but his achievement is pretty amazing: He's willed a new facet of himself into being.

Do it my way: Tony Williams rehearses the Kronos Quartet (plus Herbie Hancock on keyboards) for his "Rituals" last fall in San Francisco.

BACK IN 1965, TONY WAS ALREADY working hard, if somewhat in the dark, at composing. "When I was a kid I thought this was what you did: You worked at whatever there was to get better at. Being a good musician meant to keep studying, keep learning. You didn't just specialize. Even back then, the thing that drove me on was wanting to do more, to have a say, to create an atmosphere."

Herbie Hancock, a former prodigy himself, was a suave 23 to the kid's eager-beaver 17. "Tony was always calling me up: 'Hey man! What's happening!' and I'd think, 'Aw kid, don't bothah me!' and try to gracefully get him off the phone." Callow or not, the kid was an astonishing drummer. When the pair joined the Miles Davis Quintet that spring, says Herbie, "I very quickly went from thinking of Tony as someone who was a real good drummer for a kid to realizing he was a great drummer who happened to be a kid." Thirty years later, Hancock is still an intrigued Williams-watcher. "Tony Williams," he says, "is one of the most intelligent people I have ever known."

When Tony wrote the songs for his first album, 1964's *Life Time*, he played piano with two fingers—"one on his right hand," says Hancock, "one on his left. No chords really, just two lines, and I had to write out the notes for him. His writing was very raw. But I wasn't about to dismiss something because it was a two-fingered composition; knowing the kind of mind Tony had, I just wanted to not get in his way, to help him realize whatever he had in the back of his head. And I still think the compositions on those first two albums [*Life Time* and *Spring*] were great.

"Today he's mastered the vocabulary, but without losing the beauty of that rawness. He's got a full palette now, from angular and surprising to very singable, very beautiful in the conventional sense. My feeling is, he has really got the compositional approach down. He doesn't need to study with anybody—at least not for a long while! I'll put it this way. Wayne Shorter and Stravinsky are my favorite composers of all time. Tony is developing so quickly as a composer that he's already one of my favorite jazz composers, and maybe moving towards being one of my favorite composers, period. I absolutely like his pieces that much."

Miles liked them too—the Davis Quintet's classic '60s albums are dotted with Williams tunes like "Pee Wee" and "Hand Jive." But for Tony, "writing always felt hit-and-miss: 'Maybe this'll work, maybe it won't, why won't it?'" He had taken sporadic private lessons in theory and harmony since the mid-'60s; 1979, however, was a turning point. He'd left Manhattan for the San Francisco Bay area (where he still lives) "feeling in a hole, in a rut; I felt like I wasn't doing what I had the talent to do: write music, have a band, have better relationships." He thought about quitting music. Instead, he started private lessons in composition, mostly with Robert Greenberg, a young composer and University of California lecturer.

"It was a regular course of study, like at a university. You do a lot of analyzing of other people's work: Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms. I started with species counterpoint, went to intermediate forms of counterpoint, like canons, then invertible counterpoint, like fugues, and on to larger forms of composition—minuet and trio, theme and variations, rondo, that type of thing. It's all about learning how to weave structure and melody into a composition." When a recharged Williams launched his quintet in 1986, some of the band's best pieces came straight from his exercise book—"Arboretum" was an assignment in counterpoint, "Clear Ways" in voice-leading. Tony left Greenberg (now at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music) three years ago; "the band started working so much, I couldn't do

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my lessons. But I plan to go back and pick up where I stopped."

Before 1979, he says, "I knew everything there is to know about harmony and theory. What I mean is, I had a good solid grounding in all that stuff. But I didn't know how to organize. You might know emotionally what you want to say, but then it becomes a matter of getting the material to move where you want it to. It's problem-solving. For me it was like, 'I know there's a problem here, but I don't know what it is.' How can you solve a problem when you don't even know what it is? When I come up to a problem now, I can pinpoint it. On *paper*. I can look at it on paper and say, 'Oh, that's the problem and it's because of this, this and this, so if I adjust this, take that out, move this in'...problem solved."

What kind of problem—how to resolve a chord? "No, not how to resolve a chord, that's easy. How to expand an idea; how to make it go somewhere and then return. My big problem used to be that I agonized over things. I'd get an idea and not know what to do with it. Now when I get an idea, I know what to do. Writing is just being able to, as Bob Greenberg used to say, push notes around. Make the notes do what you *want* them to do.

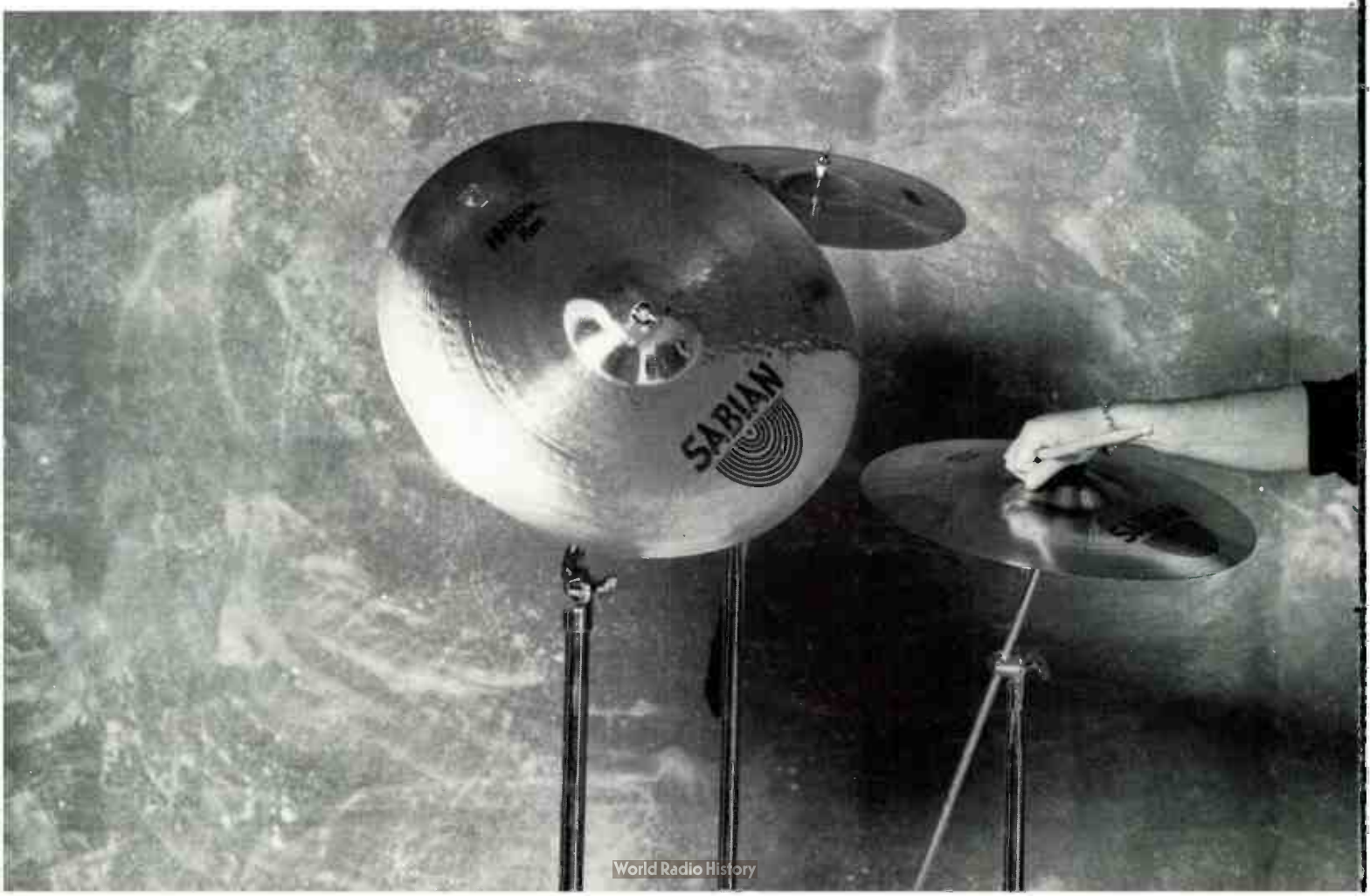
"Sometimes when I was studying I'd wonder, 'What the hell am I doing? Will there come a time when I'll use this stuff and say, "Oh, this is why you've spent these six, seven years staying up and writing these lessons out and driving back and forth to Berkeley three times a week?"' But my insides would tell me, 'This is what you should be doing.' And now I can say, 'Yes! *This* is why I was doing it.'"

"What's the payoff?"

Long pause.... "The fact that you're here—how's that? See, not only am I not just a drummer; I'm not just a musician either. I'm a person. You see? A lot of things that are valid for me aren't only in musical terms. The fact that you're here and we're talking about what I've written, it tells me all those lessons have paid off, are bringing me attention, it shows me I've done things people are interested in."

WILLIAMS TELLS

TONY writes on a Baldwin grand piano "or on a plane." He plays the same fire-engine yellow Gretsch drums he's used for years; in fact, Gretsch calls the color "Tony Williams Yellow Lacquer." He owns a half-dozen identical kits, including one he keeps in Europe. The snare is 6½" deep, the rack tom-toms are 9"x13" and 10"x14", the three floor toms are 14"x14", 16"x16" and 16"x18" and the bass drum is 14"x24". Tony's Zildjian cymbals—all K's, except for the hi-hat—are 18" and 20" crashes, a 16" light ride and a 22" medium ride. The hi-hat cymbals are 15" heavies. Though he hasn't used a drum machine since borrowing a Linn for "Geo Rose" on 1987's *Civilization*, he owns a bunch: an E-mu SP1200 sampling drum machine, Simmons SDS 5 and SDS 7 electronic drums, a Simmons MTM MIDI trigger, and "an old Oberheim [a DMX] and an old Roland drum machine." Add an E-Max digital sampling rack, E-mu Emulator II sampling keyboard, Macintosh SE and Mac Plus computers, a Sony TV and a 1990 535i BMW, and you've got the very model of a well-heeled quasi-hedonistic turn-of-the-century jazz artiste.



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"Well, I like the songs. They stay in my mind."

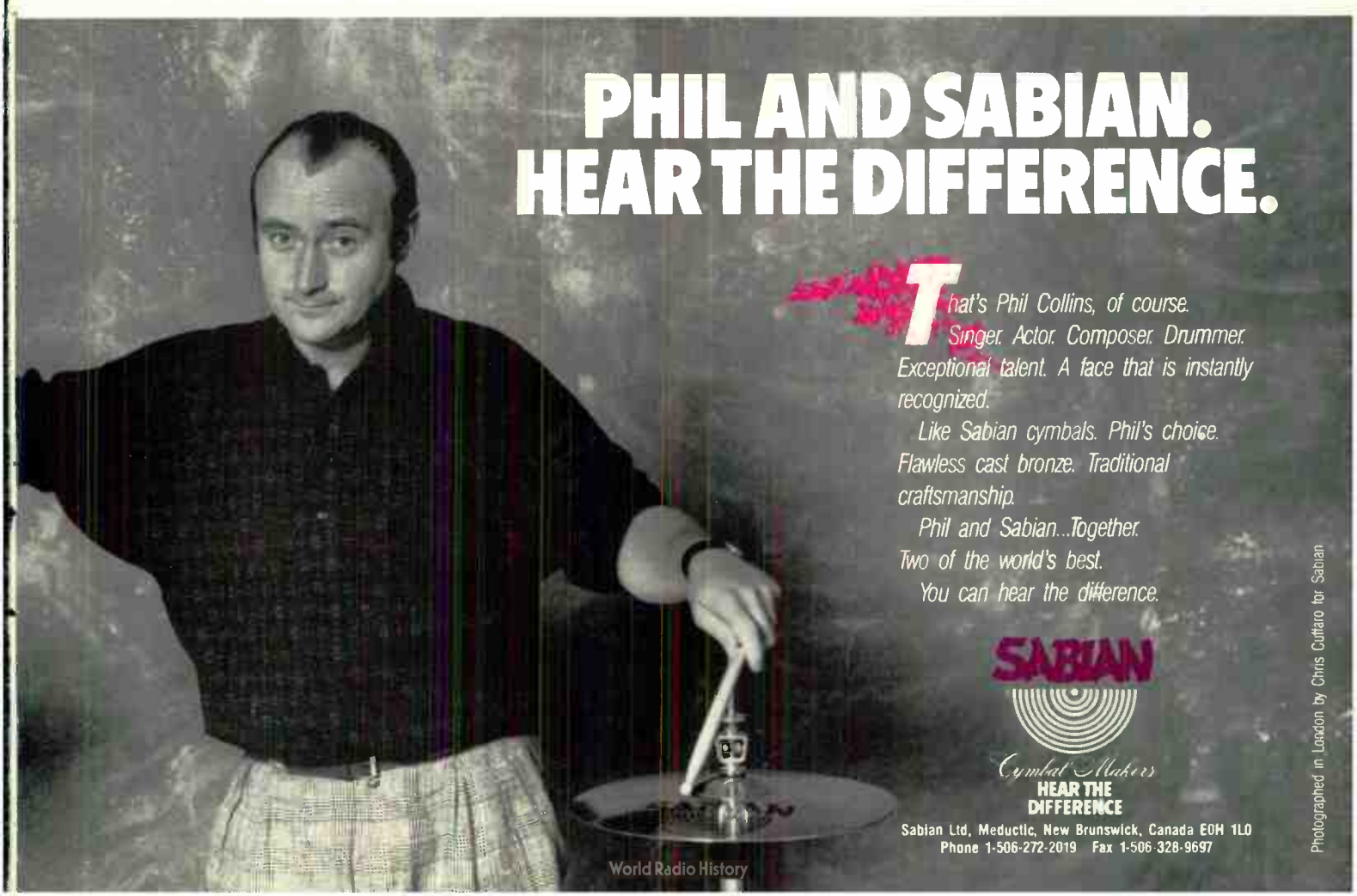
"I'm *glad*. And that's why I wanted to study. I wanted to be able to write songs the way I knew I could, to present music my friends would like to hear, that would make people feel different things.

"So making the decision to study was easy—I make that kind of decision a lot. Moving to California was another of those things my insides told me to do. And after I got to California I decided to take swimming lessons. ["He did? Tony learned to swim? Aw, that's beautiful!"—Hancock.] I wanted to be able to go to a swimming pool and not just stand and wade, I got tired of going by the deep end and being scared. Now I can dive into the deep end. When I was in New York I was in therapy. In California, I have a therapist. It's helped me look at parts of my life I need to look at. It's the same kind of process—I'm always challenging myself to get better."

"TONY'S COMPOSITION 'SISTER CHERYL,'" SAYS HERBIE HANCOCK, "—THE first time I heard that tune [in 1982, when he and Williams played it on Wynton Marsalis' debut] I was shocked." Suddenly there was no more guesswork; Tony could really write chord changes. "But what amazed me was that it was in a style that had eluded him for a long time. You know what Tony once told me? That he wanted to be able to write a tune anybody could sing, like a very natural kind of pop melody. Not that 'Sister Cheryl' is pop, it isn't, but it's catchy. Tony was always asking me what I thought of this or that tune that he wrote. See, I can write melodies people can sing. Tony could never do that, not till then. In many ways—though it's not at all the same, and it's definitely Tony's writing—'Sister Cheryl' reminded me of 'Maiden Voyage.' It's one of my favorite compositions ever.

"The way he wrote it, you just move the bass line and the chord will change radically. It starts on a B-major chord, but using the second instead of the third. It's B, C-sharp, F-sharp. With so few notes in the chord, you get lots of flexibility. From B-major it goes to A-flat minor 7—and everything from that first chord fits with the second chord. Then you go to A with a B-major on top, then plain A, then F-sharp minor 7 and back to B-major. That's the theme. Now, all these chords fit with the B, C-sharp and F-sharp of the first chord, so by changing the bass line you've changed all the chords, but kept the harmony hanging over from that very first chord. The melody moves, the bass moves, but the harmony stays the same; the outer part changes, the inner part doesn't—it's a real interesting piece of work."

"Tony's harmonies are like a breath of fresh air," says the Williams Quintet's fine pianist, Mulgrew Miller. "Remember, we're talking about a jazz composer who isn't himself a harmonic and melodic improviser. So his progressions may be a little unorthodox—Tony didn't learn jazz writing by playing 'Stardust.' The standard iii-vi-ii-V-I turnaround, there's none of that. You won't hear many 32-bar choruses either: As long as the song needs to be, that's how long he writes 'em. And the keys he chooses are somewhat unusual. 'Sister Cheryl,' that's in B major. Outside of practicing scales, I'd never even played in B-major; it's mostly sharps. A piano player might fool around with something in B and say, 'Hmm, I like this progression, I think I'll move it to down to E-flat.' Not Tony—it's B.



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"He's got a tremendous set of ears and he loves harmony; he loves the color of complex chords. Catchy melodies *are* one of his traits, but catchy melodies with complex harmonies. The chord progressions and chorus lengths are almost always unconventional. And that goes back to Wayne Shorter. Listen to Wayne's 'Nefertiti.' Most of his pieces with Miles were like that: simple melody, complex harmony. A piece of Tony's like 'Two Worlds' is so melodic, if someone heard only the melody, they'd have no idea what harmonic convulsions, what explosions, are going on underneath. Of all Tony's pieces, that's probably the meanest ("Every time I call 'Two Worlds,'" says Williams, "I see at least one guy scrambling for the sheet music")—a lot of changes at a fast tempo, and they're complex changes, like G 9 to A-flat major 7 to B-flat 11 to B-minor flat 6th. The challenge to the improvisor is finding the continuity in all these changes that don't relate!

"I just think Tony hears something different from most people. He's got influences—Wayne and Herbie, contemporary classical music—but mainly it just comes from being an inventive person. It's the same thing that lets him play the way he does. From what I hear, Tony was challenging the accepted forms right from his earliest days. Listen to those records with Eric Dolphy. It's clear that even at the age of 18, he was an advanced thinker."

TONY WILLIAMS LIT HIS THIRD FAT CIGAR IN TWO HOURS. "IT'S A MARK of a good song when anyone can play it, when it's so well-placed on the paper that it doesn't need a special interpretation, a great artist, to make it sound good." Brushing back the hotel-room curtain, he stood surveying Central Park West. He was beautifully dressed in a loose shirt, baggy winter pants and gorgeous two-toned shoes; circling his comfortable middle was the same metal-studded belt he'd worn the day before for his maiden voyage on the Letterman show.

"It's like when you hear a hit song being played by some guy in a Holiday Inn bar and you say, 'Yeah, that's a great song.' Last night Paul Shaffer played 'Sister Cheryl' and it was a real turn-on; the song sounded so good. Those are good players, but what I'm saying is, the song translates easily from one group, one medium, to another. It doesn't take my band to play it.

"Or there's 'Native Heart'—the fact that I wrote that song [it's the title track on Williams' newest album] just knocks me out. It's like someone else wrote it and I'm getting a chance to play it. I worked on that song four, five months, playing it every day on the piano. It was *crafted*, like fine leather, like shoes."

"Could you analyze it for me?"

"No, I don't think I'd like to do that. Anyway, I can't. I write the songs and then I forget about them. It's up to the other guys to learn them. I don't need to—I'm playing the drums. Unless I'm working on a song, I can't tell you its chords; I'd have to go back to the piano with the music and I'd be able to play it after an hour or so. Besides, when you're writing, you have certain little things inside that tickle you, and you don't want to give them away. They wouldn't feel special if you flaunted them; it's like saying, 'Ooh, look how clever I am!' These things are private, they're little kinda gems to me."

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"But they're what's interesting—the things underneath."

"Yeah, and I'm interested in keeping them underneath. All I did in 'Native Heart' was invert the idea."

"Of the melody?—"

"Sort of."

"—or the chords?"

"Right."

"*Which?*"

[*Coyly*] "I don't want to give away all my secrets here! They're precious things!" Finally he relents. "Okay, what happened was, I had this idea"—he sings a simple little eight-bar version of the melody—"and I wanted to make a song out of it. In itself, it was just an idea, just a real short thing. So first of all, I had to weave length into it." For starters, he broke the phrase into two-bar chunks and put a one-bar rest between each. More important, he rewrote it, introducing a subdominant in the 11th measure so the tune didn't resolve itself so quickly. "All I did was put in a few new notes. And then the second time the phrase comes around, you go right to the five chord, the dominant—bang!—and it resolves. So I aired it out, fleshed it out, by writing in the subdominant.

"Okay, now I had to figure out, 'Where is this song going?' I had this two-note thing happening in the melody [D to G, a fifth]. Now, I deeply wanted the song to sound organic. So what I did was, I took that two-note phrase and gradually stretched it [to a sixth, F to D and then G to E] while slowing it down. Then I compressed it [accelerating it as it descends towards the tonic]—and when you compress a figure, it brings a sense of resolution. So that was the work I did [in bars 25-33] to give the song a middle part, a so-called bridge, that sounded like it belonged, that was part of the opening melody." Just to strengthen the connection, Tony took a phrase from the fourth and fifth bars of the opening melody, turned the notes—B, C, D and B—upside down, and made this the last two bars of the middle: "a mirror, a reflective callback," as he puts it, of the opening melody.

All he needed now was an ending. "I was going to end it one way, with a little phrase that kind of drifts off. I decided that was too protracted, even though I liked the phrase." So he wrote another ending: the opening melody, but with a few new intervals and one brand-new note, an A-flat: "It's a piece of music, and a note, that's never been heard in the song before, so it really puts a cap on things. And then I said, 'Hey, wait a minute'—and I took that first ending, the one I'd loved but hadn't used, and made it the intro and outro. It was perfect there." And he had his song: a sultry, moodily swirling 45-measure composition, patiently teased from an eight-bar scrap.

"I think more about these kinds of things than I do about drums. 'Cause like I said, the drumming has never been a problem for me. *That* was the problem. I felt like all everybody wanted was this drummer, that Tony Williams was not there, that I didn't matter. And it caused me a lot of emotional pain.

"I'm not talking about fans, I'm talking about people I worked with. That was the pain—that if I weren't this drummer, I wouldn't have these people as my friends. And I realized that was true. Everything that went on told me that. There I was in New York by myself—17, 18,

World Radio History

19—and the only reason I was here was because I played the drums as well as I did. It was strange, very strange. In Miles Davis' band I was the youngest, the smallest and, as I felt, the least educated. I didn't feel good about myself. So that's to answer your question why would a person who's good at one thing want to be good at something else, too. And those are valid reasons.

"I'd like to write things I wouldn't have to play. I'd like to write for certain orchestras. I've never been the type that needed to play drums in order to feel like a person. I *choose* to play, it's my *desire* to play. I'm not the kind of guy that goes around with drumsticks in his hands beating on things. I could live without drumming. There was a couple of years when I didn't play at all; I just hung out, lived off the rent from a house I own uptown here. Because I don't need the drums, I think I play better. I respect them too much to use them as a crutch. When I sit down at the drums, it's because I want to; it's like, 'I'm here to be your friend.'

"The drums *are* my best friend. The drums are the only thing I've been able to count on totally, except my mother—and sometimes when she gets pissed off, boy, she can give me a *look*.... If it weren't for the drums, I wouldn't be here. But I can listen to the drums in my head. I mean, I rarely, in the last 10 years, get the feeling to just go downstairs and play drums. I never practice. I can not play for a year and it'll only take me a night or two to get back to where I was. After 36 years, there's a certain level you won't never go below."

Which leaves him free to chase his new passion. Last autumn, in "one of the most thrilling experiences I've ever had," Williams performed his first extended composition, the 15-minute "Rituals: Music for Piano, String Quartet, Drums and Cymbals," with the Kronos Quartet and Hancock; he's working now on getting it recorded. He's sniffing out the world of soundtracks: "I'd do basically anything, movies, TV, jingles, just to see how it came out." The quintet, finally getting its due as one of the best—maybe *the* best—of jazz's small groups, is always digesting some new Williams piece, and he's also writing for an electric band—saxophone, guitar, keyboards, bass and drums—he plans to start. Later this month, Tony and keyboardist Jan Hammer will team up for a short tour; the compositions will be a mix of Hammer's and Tony's.

"The more I write, the easier it comes. And it's really a pleasure to be able to write something, have it make sense, and then *play* it: to have it be not just an exercise but something the other guys enjoy playing. That's more important to me than just being able to say 'I wrote this.'

"I'm really surprised I've had the emotional stamina to stay resilient. Especially considering how burnt out I was feeling maybe 15 years ago. It took courage to put a band together when no one else was doing it, and to write all the music. I've had to put myself out there for the scrutiny of everyone, to write songs everyone would scrutinize and criticize and review and critique. That's something that's very scary. To have done it, and to have gotten the reaction I've had, has been very, very, very wonderful."

"But it shouldn't have been scary—you'd been writing for years."

"What do you mean 'shouldn't have been'? It just was. Like I said, my writing was not the kind of writing I would have wanted it to be. Now it is. But I had to trust that. So now, I've finally gained trust in these other parts of myself. I'm not just 'Tony Williams, drummer.' And that feels pretty neat." Ⓜ

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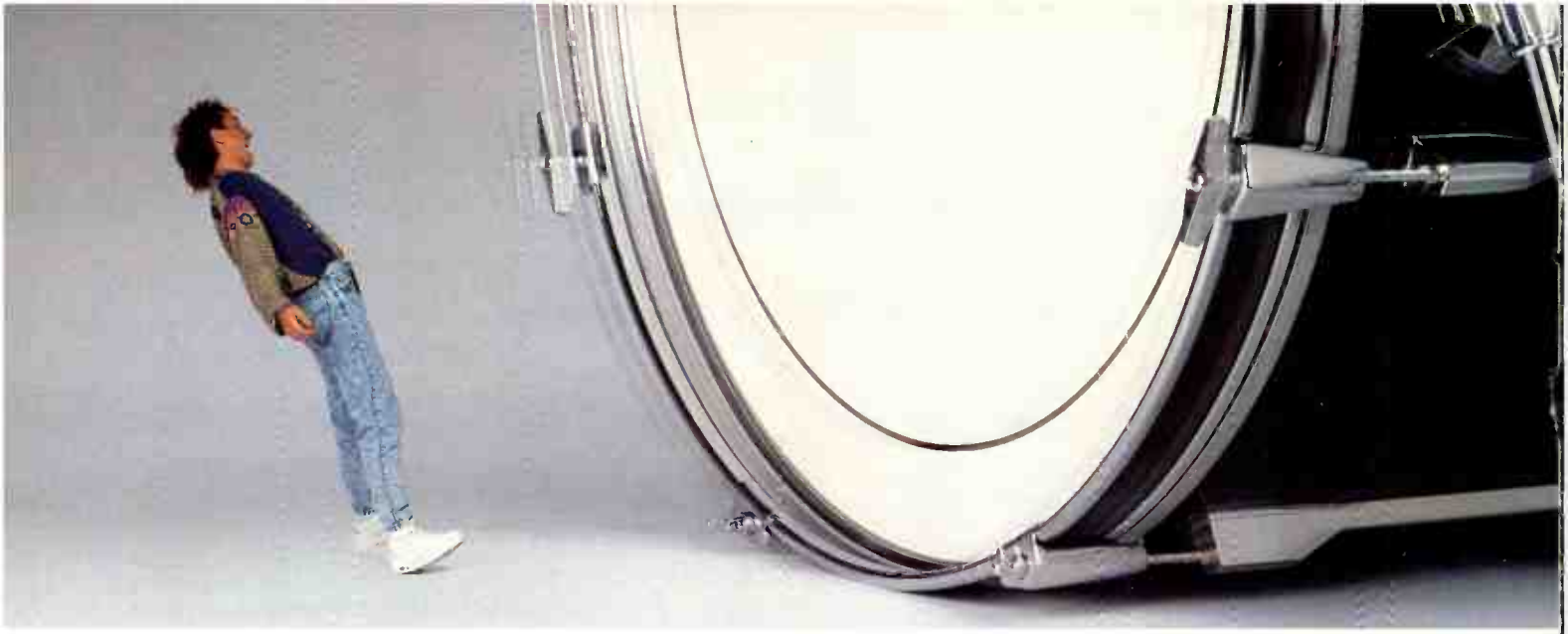

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Kenney Jones Faces the Law

He's watched drumming change, but it's still only rock 'n' roll

By **Rick Mattingly**

"DRUMMING HAS BECOME POLished," Kenney Jones says, shaking his head sadly. "Rock 'n' roll needs more rough edges. But you've got to make records for the times. You have to wear a sensible hat."

In 25 years, Jones has worn his share of hats, starting with the Small Faces, who became the Faces when Rod Stewart and Ron Wood joined, and then with the Who after Keith Moon's death (Kenney also played drums on the Rolling Stones' "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll" single). His newest band is the Law, of which he and former Bad Company/Firm vocalist Paul Rodgers are the only permanent members, with other musicians to be hired solely on a per-project basis.

Kenney is particularly pleased with his playing on the Law's debut. "I was able to be slightly more inventive again," he smiles, "like I was in the Small Faces. In the '60s, everything was a little bizarre, if you like. You could actually get away with certain things."

In fact, he credits the Small Faces with being the first band to use phasing: You can hear it on the drums at the end of "Itchycoo Park," recorded in 1967. "The way we did it," Kenney says, "was by looping the tape 'round the tape machine and around the back of a chair. That big tape loop created phasing." A later brush with technology came when Jones joined the Who, where he was often required to sync up with a sequencer. "It makes you more precise—you have to really lock in there." Once he got used to it, he enjoyed it, and on a couple of the Law tracks he plays along with sequenced percussion. "Percussion tracks are great to play with," he says. "I admire the way Phil Collins plays to programmed percussion, which is what I did. It worked really well."

While much of the current emphasis on metronomic timekeeping can be attributed to the influence of drum machines and sequencers, Jones says that many '60s drummers got their feel from a much freer source: jazz. "Whenever I'm just playing on my own, I generally play jazz. It goes back to my early influences. I learned to play drums to a record called '12th Street Rag,' and then I got into Jimmy McGriff and people like that. It's great, free form for a drummer, and you can do what you want technically. It's the only form of drumming where you get to use all your paradiddles and bits and bobs. I recommend practicing jazz, because it does help your feel and gives you a bit more style."

During the past three decades, Jones has seen average tempos go through cycles. Music was faster in the '60s and slowed somewhat in the '70s; after speeding up again in the '80s, it now seems to be pulling back. "Which I think is good.

Photograph: Mark Allen

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You can get more power in a song if it's at a slightly slower tempo, provided you've got the right singer and the right dynamics and you keep it simple. And you need a lot of light and shade in there, which is something I like to do." But he likes to keep the music danceable. "We tried to get interesting tempos on the new album, and if people haven't been dancing, we aim to make 'em. 'Heard It Through the Grapevine' and those sort of songs were great dance records. That's what we need more of."

The size of the common drumset has increased since Kenney started out, and his own kit has followed suit. "I started with a basic Ludwig kit with three toms, then added a tom-tom and then a floor tom. I pretty much stuck with that in the Faces, although I added some cymbals and a set of timbales, which I quite liked, actually. But the drums themselves were larger."

When he joined the Who, Kenney added another bass drum—without a pedal attached to it. "I just used it as a bloody tom-tom stand," he laughs, "but the kit looks nicer with two there. I got very self-conscious that I had this bass drum there and never used it, so I've been playing a lot of double-bass drum stuff lately. But using two bass drums can force you to put the snare in a different place, and that's what I don't like about it."

Nor does Kenney tend to use his large assortment of toms. "I try to keep it simple and just play on the three basic tom-toms, and maybe whack one of the others now and again just for an effect. I might use them for a special fill, but otherwise you can tend to get too busy. When that happens the best thing you can do is strip the kit back down to three tom-toms."

Comparing Kenney's records from the '60s to his playing on the Law's album, one notices that hi-hat and snare were more evenly balanced earlier on, whereas now the hi-hat is somewhat subdued and the snare more upfront. Is he playing differently? "No," he answers, "that's purely in the mix. It's a sign of the times. I love hi-hat work, personally; I think it's very important to the snare drum, and when I'm actually playing, the level of the hi-hat and snare are both quite up.

"Another of the new approaches I find hard to cope with is putting a click on the bass-drum sound. They do that for radio or disco music or something. I don't like that; I like the bass drum fat and big. But you go with what the producer wants; otherwise there's really no point in having a producer."

Even though there have been vast improvements in miking and sound reinforcement over the past 25 years, Jones says his basic approach to striking the drums hasn't changed. "I've always been a hard-hittin'

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drummer. I haven't changed that. If anything, I'm getting stronger." But he's quick to distinguish playing with conviction from merely having a high-speed collision with the instrument. "There is a definite way to strike drums, and there is a very fine line. My son is a drummer, and when he plays my kit he dents all the skins. I really lose my temper with him. You don't need to do that. You can strike the drum the right way with a flick rather than making it a strength thing. You can appear to be smashing the fuck out of them, but you're not. You're just putting your emotion into it.

"Over the years I've had a lot of people tell me it must be great being a drummer because I can take my frustrations out on the drums. No *way* do I ever do that. The minute I get angry, I stop. I pride myself on playing an acoustic musical instrument. It's not something to get your anger out on."

THE 1991 DRUM SPECIAL

Ringo Starr — Backbeat Boogaloo

"Greatest rock drummer" gets back to work

By Bill Flanagan

"YOU KNOW WHAT'S FUNNY?" Ringo Starr asks. "Aside from getting people saying, 'Because of you I started playing drums,' I'm now getting children saying, 'Because of you my dad plays drums.'" Ringo laughs and then adds a zinger: "'Why didn't you play guitar?'" Almost 30 years after he joined the Beatles, Ringo still plays Ludwig drums and Zildjian cymbals. As he was in L.A. assembling a second edition of his All-Starr Band for a summer tour, we asked Ringo if he'd like to talk about drumming itself. "Drumming itself," Ringo smiled. "Something I know just a bit about."

MUSICIAN: *The idea of what rock drumming should be has changed in the time you've been influential. Do you ever say, "Sure glad we got through* that *period"?*

RINGO: No. If it's in a period that I don't enjoy I just don't get into it. What's exciting to me, as far as I can see what's happening out there, is bands actually playing again. And I'm from that old school. Everyone thinks I was born and suddenly I was a Beatle. They forget all those years in between where I was playing nightclubs, doing 12 hours between two bands a night. So you really get your act together. I came in with rock 'n' roll. That's what changed my life, and I decided, "This is what I want to do." I didn't know at the time it was going to get so huge. I was just joining all the best bands I could because that's what my life was about.

And I played the style I play, which is pure and simple rock 'n' roll. People call me for sessions and I have to say every time, "Look, don't call me if you want any jazz, I'm not a jazz player. I play rock 'n' roll and I play the best rock 'n' roll in the world." Because that's what my life is about. That's my drumming, that's my influences, that's all the style I want to play. That's as far as I go.

MUSICIAN: *When John and Paul would come in with something as strange as "She Said," "Tomorrow Never Knows" or Rain"...*

RINGO: I love "Rain." "Rain" is one of my all-time favorites for the parts I played on that record. The drumming is totally different on that one track. I don't know what happened and I've never got it back. I'm not really looking for it. But if you played all the music, I don't know where the style that I played on "Rain" came from. I feel that's a total departure.

MUSICIAN: *Those are unusual songs and you found unusual drum patterns.*

RINGO: Well, I used to work it out. You play the intro, you've got a verse—you find out what's great for that. You've got a chorus—you find some way to change it. The drum is pretty limited. It's not melodic. I always had a rule that if the singer's singing you don't have to do too much but hold it together. The other thing was, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by three frustrated drum-

Photograph: Neal Preston/Outline

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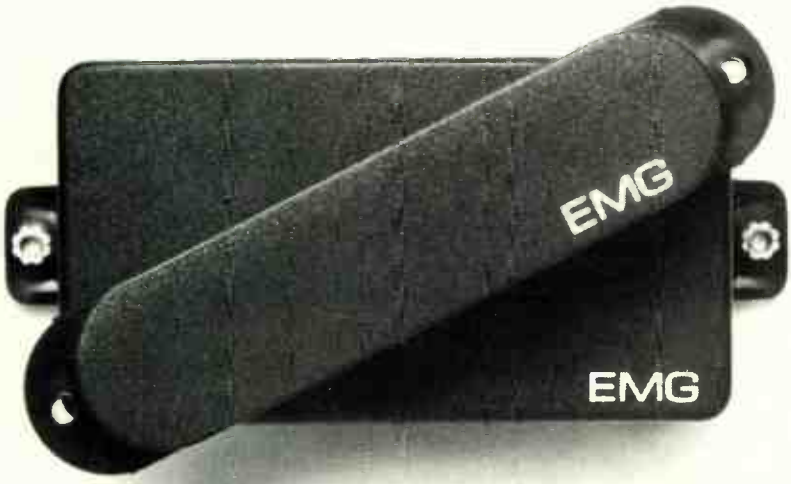

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mers. And each of them thought I was an octopus. They forgot I only had two hands and two feet. I remember John once coming in and playing a record and saying, "Oh, Ringo, I'd just love you to play this." I said, "But John, there's two drummers on that!" "Oh no, you can do it!" So then I would have to do whatever I could do to get close.

MUSICIAN: *Right after the Beatles split you and John and Klaus Voormann made the* John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band *album as a trio.*

RINGO: That session was fabulous. Mainly, John had the melodies and not all the words. A lot of them, he had the whole song. And after the count-in we just did it. It took a very short time to make that album. It was back in the days when you knew you could play and "What's your song?" and it's a trio and "Okay, let's do it." I love that album, actually. I loved the songs and the emotion that John gives. And here's an interesting question for your readers: What ever happened to Klaus Voormann? He was playing with us all and anyone he could. Then he went to Germany and he produced a lot of hits there, I believe. I haven't heard from him in years.

MUSICIAN: *You did a lot of records with John and George in the early '70s.*

RINGO: And then with the *Ringo* album Paul joined in.

MUSICIAN: *Then you played on several of Paul's albums in the early '80s and made the* Broad Street *movie with him. Was it awkward for you two to play together again?*

RINGO: No, you can't just disregard all those years we were together. Back to the Beatles [*hums "Twilight Zone" theme*], we would work things out, locking in the bass and the bass drum. We did that for most of the Beatles records. We would try and find a great combination for both of us. And Paul is still the most melodic bass player I ever heard. He does his melodies around the melodies around the melody. He's a brilliant bass player.

MUSICIAN: *Your first All-Starr Band included Jim Keltner and Levon Helm—what do you three have in common as drummers?*

RINGO: We all know how to hold sticks. [*laughs*] That's about it. If you look at the styles, Jim is the ultimate professional, the most versatile drummer—I believe—in the world. Also my favorite drummer in the world. I'm the greatest rock drummer in the world, and Levon likes to boogie. It was fabulous—and with Levon we had the bonus of him playing mandolin and singing.

MUSICIAN: *You and Keltner have been playing as a team since the Bangladesh concert.*

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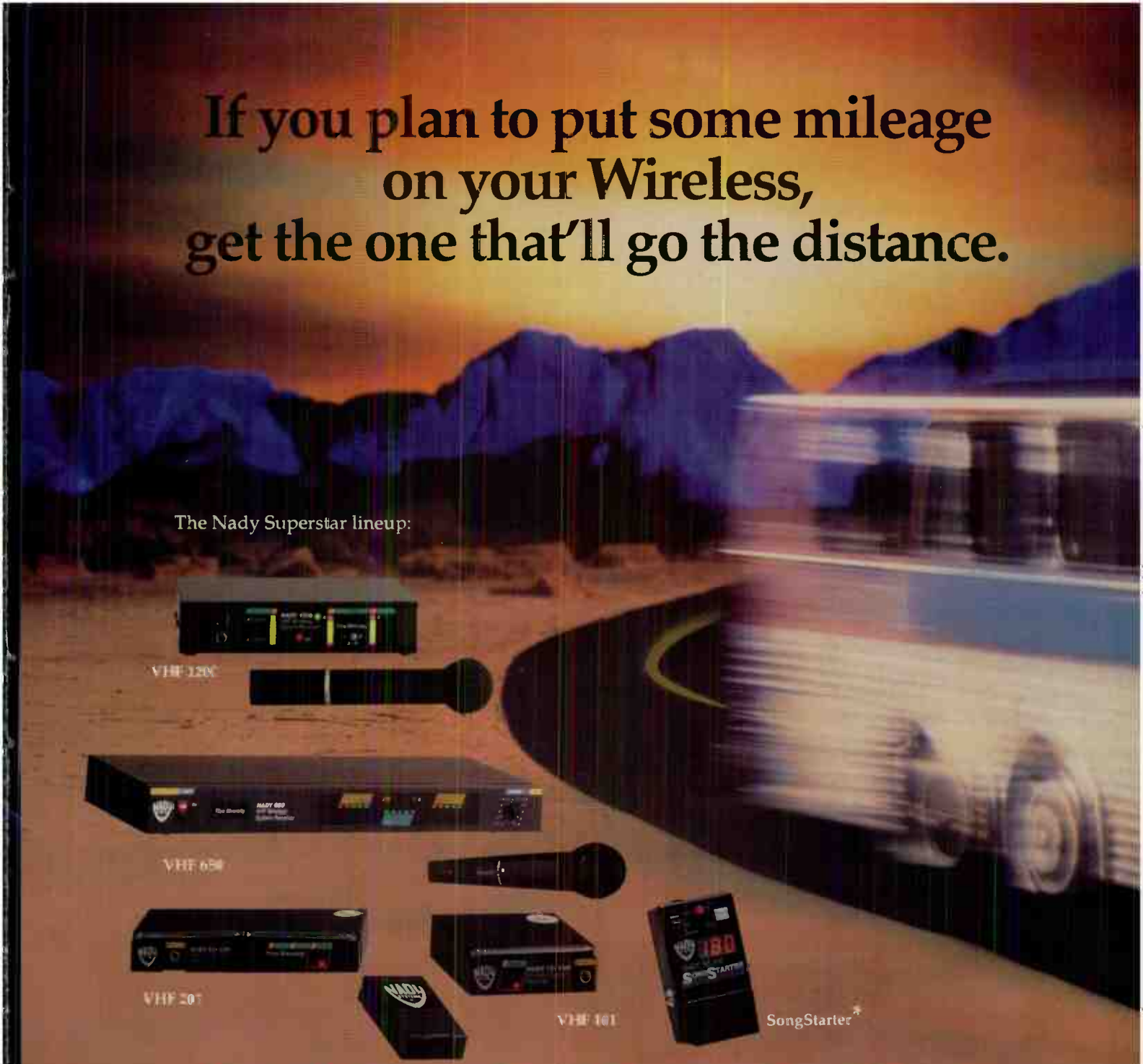

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RINGO: Yeah, that's where it started. In America, with the musician's union, I couldn't put an American out of work. When I was making records in L.A. they didn't mind me singing, 'cause no one else could do that [*laughs*] as we all know! But I couldn't put a drummer out of work. That's how we started with the two-drummer thing and we've kept it up for the last 20 years. I've played with other drummers and it's just not the same, because a lot of them are trying to prove something. But Jim and I are such good friends and we're so sympathetic to each other that if he does a fill, we both know I get the next one. Well, we know that 75 percent of the time—sometimes we both just dive in.

MUSICIAN: *Then it sounds like Keith Moon.*

RINGO: No, no one sounds like Keith. Actually there's a Harry Nilsson record, *Pussycats*, that John produced with Jim, Keith Moon and me on it. If you want to hear drum boogie, go and buy that, folks.

THE 1991 DRUM SPECIAL

Mickey Hart Rides the Beast

The Grateful Dead drummer builds a crosscultural digitized monster

By Connor Freff Cochran

NO MUSICIAN COULD ASK FOR a better career. Tick it off: Mickey Hart's first book, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*, had sold 80,000 copies by late March; the album associated with the book, *At the Edge*, has nested all year near the top of the new age charts, and Rykodisc has brought together 15 of Hart's eclectic productions under the title *The World*, with more to come. This fall, Mickey will publish his second book, *Planet Drum*.

All that and he still gets to blast off into percussion heaven as part of the never-ending rock-and-whatever-else-works quest the world knows as the Grateful Dead. It's second-set time at the Oakland Coliseum, and Hart and fellow Dead drummer Bill Kreutzmann have taken over the stage for the "Drums in Space" section of the evening. For the next 15 minutes it's the Mickey & Billy Show, and the only thing that matters is taking a seat on the beat and riding it out to the edge.

Mickey's vehicle is a self-devised, ever-evolving percussion assemblage known only as the Beast. If Hart's sit-down drumming is done behind a more-or-less conventional kit, the Beast doesn't look like anything you've ever seen onstage. That's not surprising when you learn something about its birth. It was first developed for the airstrike sequence in *Apocalypse Now*. "When Francis Ford Coppola came to me," Mickey says, "and asked me to do the percussion, I realized that we needed giant drums for the airstrike and all the other dark moments in the film. So Bill Graham gave me access to his shop, I bought some steel, rolled it, then put together a frame and suspended drums from it. That's where it started, with sounds that were needed to create Francis' image, that real dark image, the big bombasto thing. All of the instruments that were associated with the Beast then had to do with that image of war and of suspense."

Over time the animal evolved. Its first incarnation can be heard on Rykodisc's re-release of *The Apocalypse Now Sessions*. A later, even larger version can be heard on Rykodisc's re-release of *Dafos*, an exquisitely recorded 1984 collaboration between Hart and Airto Moreira.

Today the Beast has sprouted microchips. If it seems simpler at first glance, looks can be deceiving. Suspended in air, at the center of the frame, are three immense double-headed drums patterned after the Brazilian *surdo*, a small wooden drum worn at a dancer's waist. Mickey's relative monsters are made of steel, and the largest, which Hart calls "home plate," is 28 inches deep and wide (the other two are 24"×24" and 20"×24"). Its sound has the brutal impact of a cannon shot.

Directly below this thundering trio is the Beam, which is exactly what its name says: a 10-foot-long, eight-inch-wide aluminum beam strung with 12 stretched piano strings and equipped with a pickup. The strings are all tuned low, around 30 Hz, in pure unisons, fifths and octaves. Hart plays the Beam with either his hands or a two-foot section of aluminum pipe; from time to time he has been known to kick it. Technically, the Beam is just a big metal version of a common ancient instru-

Photograph: Ron Delany

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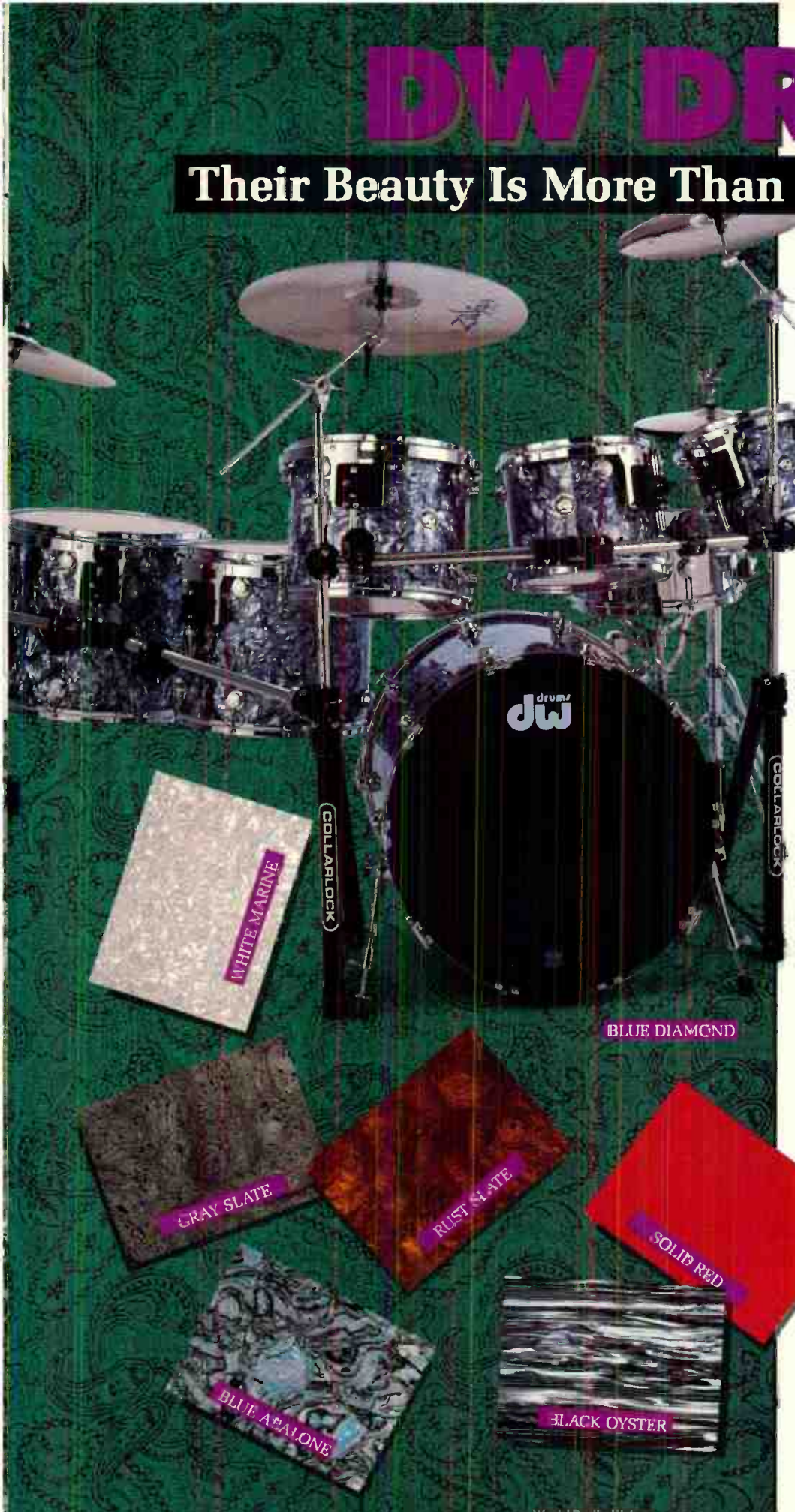

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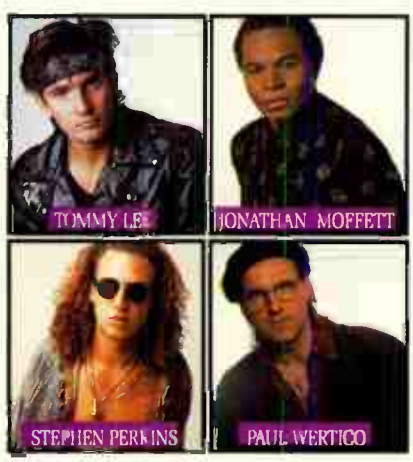

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ment called a monochord (it's also been described as a giant pedal steel guitar). Sonically, it runs the gamut from ethereal hum to explosion. After all, what other monochord has been tied into 170,000 watts of amplification, getting up to 130 decibels? The Beam's also got a 2½-foot-long whammy bar. When Mickey leans into it too hard, the giant strings have been known to pop.

"The Beast has been many different things. Right now it's both acoustic and electronic. I have the big drums, and a set of eight Roto-Toms, but I also have all of my percussion collection sampled and with me on disk. I'm using thousands of sounds. Before the evening begins I decide which disks I would like to use, based on where I think I might like to go, and then I play them from four Akai S1000 samplers that I'm triggering from two different Roland Octapads. I've got a control onstage for selecting what sound I'm playing, and if I need to change sample disks then Bob Bralove, our electronics tech, handles it.

"I've got so many sounds, I like to switch them around and keep it fresh. The idea at Dead shows is not to be predictable. If you're trying to recreate something, this is the wrong place for that. This is a creational band. This band thrives on the transformational moment."

Mickey started playing drums as a kid; his mother—a champion rudimental drummer herself—introduced him to both Gene Krupa and Folkways Records' huge ethnic series. "When I was eight years old I thought everybody listened to Iturbi rainforest music; I had no idea that the guy next door didn't."

He tells his own story in *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*, but the greater part of the book deals with the world history of the drum. What Mickey began as a private quest to understand the roots of his own fascination with rhythm turned into a 10-year research project involving hundreds of musicians, researchers and others. The final result makes inspiring reading for anyone; for a drummer, it's like being handed the first book of the Bible.

"What's in the book is our legacy as drummers. This is what happened. We know that rhythm has been involved in ritual from prehistoric times, that the mother-goddess cultures of west Africa were driven by large barrel drums. In the West we were part of the brotherhood of the drum, but we didn't understand where that brotherhood came from, or why. All the information is out there, written up by anthropological scholars, but it just lay there in archives all over the world until we dug it up. It turned into one hell of a story. This book is like we really came together and played music, like we danced. You know what this book really is? This book is a drum solo."

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Will Calhoun on Creative R&R Timekeeping

Don't just play time, says Living Colour's drumming star—play with it

By **Tony Scherman**

WILL CALHOUN WOULD RATHER not play it straight. Just because he's in a hard-rock band doesn't mean he won't drop a beat, add a beat, halve the beat and three-quarter it, play across the bar, hide the downbeat. He will play a beat so solid you can eat off it, and pull the tablecloth out. Will's got a lot of jazz in his background (he's a 1986 graduate of the Berklee College of Music), and if you were being very serious you might argue that he's striving to bring to rock drumming the freedom, the multi-limbed polyrhythms, of great jazz drummers like Elvin Jones. If you weren't, you'd say he's just having fun. The truth, as Will would probably agree, lies somewhere in between.

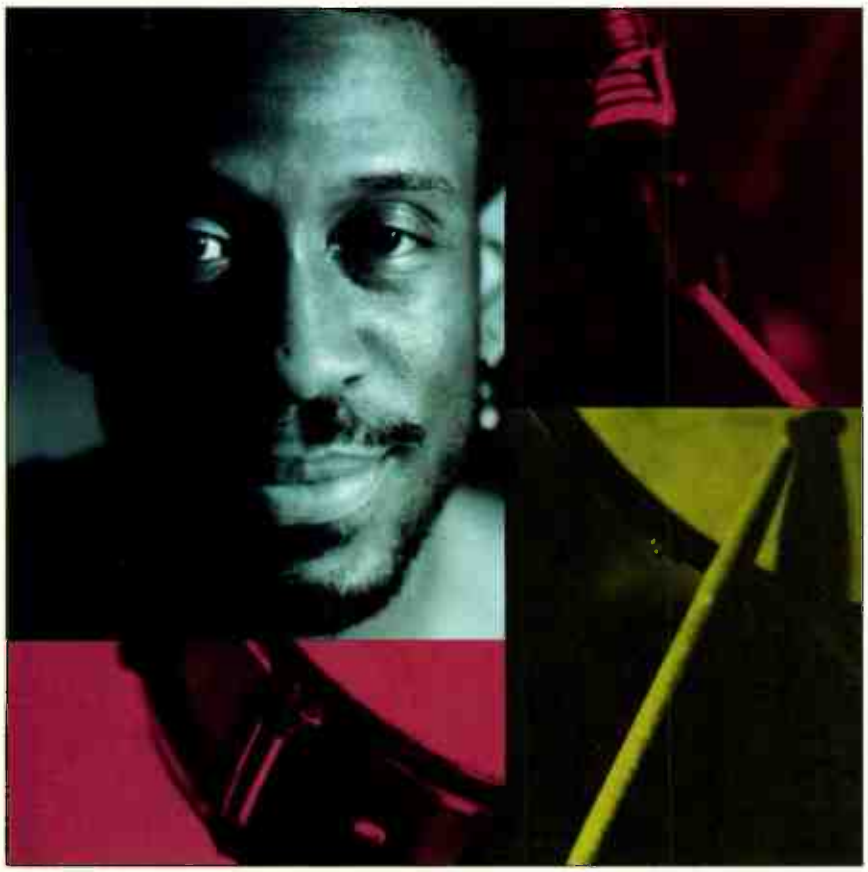
"Playing solid time is crucial," said the 26-year-old recently, sitting behind a rented kit in a Manhattan rehearsal room. "But I don't think in terms of traditional drum parts. I don't think about the kick drum or the snare having to be in a certain place. It all depends on the music."

So how does Will make rock 'n' roll timekeeping creative? First, he avoids routine beats. "Eliminate the *expected*. A lot of the weird things I do aren't planned, but a lot of them honestly do come from sitting down and saying, 'I don't want to do it the normal way.' On *Time's Up*, the second of Living Colour's two albums, listen to the title song's double-time sections, especially the beginning of the guitar solo. Instead of a cut-and-dried thrash 4/4 with the snare on 2 and 4, Will hits his snare on 2½ and 4. The neat little variation staggers the beat; it's thrash with a twist. "The last thing I wanted to hear from people was 'Living Colour does thrash!' So I took that relentless 2-and-4, 2-and-4, and went somewhere else with it. It's taking the real obvious thing and shifting it just a little bit; maybe I can make people cock their ear and go, 'Huh?'

"Or when you go to the ride cymbal, instead of just playing 2 and 4 on the bell—that's a real popular funk beat—or playing straight eighths, why not put 'em together? That's what I did on 'Memories Can't Wait' [from *Vivid*]. The lyric's going, 'There's a party in my mind and I hope it never stops,' kind of a frenzied thought, so I wanted the ride cymbal to sound like something's spinning around in your head." He plays his cymbal, scattering eighth notes between the steady, syncopated 2 and 4, and slowly works the other drums in. "Hear that? There's no steady 1-2-3-4 anywhere, the beat is constantly shifting." Despite its complexity, the pattern is funkily propulsive.

A second way Will enriches timekeeping is by messing with a pattern's usual drum combination. "During a show I try to play at least a few bars left-footed. I'll know if it's not strong enough 'cause the guys turn around: 'Hey, what happened to the kick drum?'" Or he might reverse his hands: "'Under Cover of Darkness,' that's a left-handed beat. The song is about safe sex, a topic people are uncomfortable talking about, so [singer] Corey [Glover] wanted the beat to kind of skitter, to dance around. Originally, I was just going to do this"—he plays a standard, crossed-hands hi-hat/snare beat—"but then I tried reversing my hands, playing the hi-hat with my left hand and the snare with my right"—and his snare drum bursts into chattering eighth notes that would normally be on the hi-hat.

Or he might play the beat on his hi-hat, avoiding the snare. "On 'Funny Vibe' the bass drum is straight-up funk, but I wanted to avoid straight eights or fours on the top. 'Funny Vibe' and its rhythm made me think of tap-dancing; I thought, 'How can I make this song groove like a hip-hop street thing



Photograph: Brian Barnaud

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with a tap-dancing vibe? So I did this"—and he uses both hands for an intricate sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern, whacking the snare only on each bar's third beat. ("Did you know Steve Gadd was—is—a great tap dancer? Louis Bellson once told me, 'William, nine times out of 10 it'll make you a better drummer to learn tap dancing.'")

The third way Will plays with timekeeping is with his explosive, asymmetric fills. The typical Calhoun fill wrenches you off-balance, leaves you groping temporarily for the downbeat. At the end of the guitar solo on "Funny Vibe," Will cuts across the 4/4 grain with a powerful triplet figure; just when you get your bearings, he sneaks an extra beat into the final triplet and the rug's out from under your feet again. "Unorthodox thinking, that was the concept there. I didn't just want to make people go, 'Huh?'; I wanted them to go *'Whattt?!'*"

A big part of freeing yourself from stock beats is gaining a mastery of what drummers call *independence*—the ability to play varied patterns with one (or more) of your limbs while the rest of you—say, your hi-hat foot—keeps a steady pulse. Will's got a favorite independence exercise:

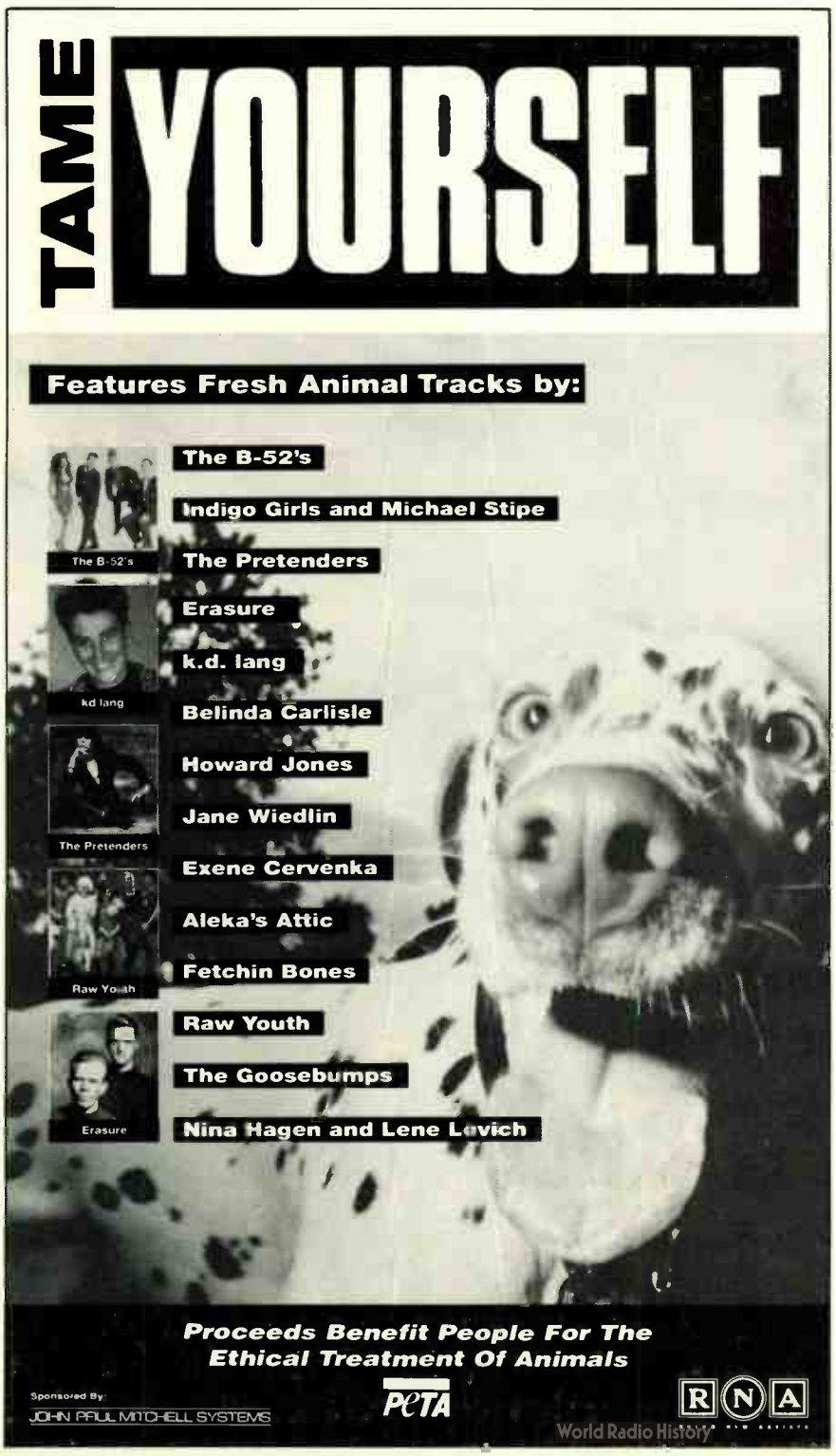
"Start with a dotted-eighth jazz pattern on your ride cymbal. Add 2 and 4 on the hi-hat. Take a melody you know—'Three Blind Mice'—and play it rhythmically on the snare and toms. Don't even play the kick drum. At Berklee we'd do this kind of stuff all night long; see who could play the most difficult TV theme song, 'Hawaii Five-O,' whatever, while keeping time. Try it with 'Popeye'—that's got a lot of triplets. Now play the melody on the hi-hat with your foot, while keeping cymbal time and playing 2 and 4 on the snare. Then try it on the kick drum. Now do the exercise with a rock feel, using straight eighths on the ride instead of the dotted-eighth swing feel."

You can also assign the basic beat to a machine—not, strictly speaking, an exercise in independence, but one that'll still help you learn to play around with the beat. "Put a drum machine on 2 and 4, just kick-snare, kick-snare, no hi-hat: 'bank cash,' we call it. Then play to it: Play behind it, play around it, and your personality will start to come out. If you don't come up with anything, keep doing it. Play 50 bars directly behind the beat, then 50 bars just ahead of it. Tape yourself and listen back. Play in 3 or in 5 while the machine plays in 4—you'll meet up at some point. The idea is to separate yourself from the machine." And you'll get better at playing to a bass line without thinking about it, at playing across the bar, at playing odd meters without constantly counting—better, as Will puts it, at playing "all kinds of crazy harebrained things."

But breathing life into your timekeeping isn't only a matter of technique; it's just as important, says Will, to flex your listening muscles. "Open your head: Don't get used to hearing your hi-hat play eighth- or only quarter-notes. Listen to different kinds of music. There's a Japanese dance where I love the rhythm of their feet—you can play

UGLY HEADS

WILL plays maple Pearl CZX Customs: bass, with a Tama double-bass pedal; two floor toms; and three rack toms. He switches between a half-dozen snares, including his CZX, a Brady, a '59 Ludwig and a Valley Drum Shop five-inch; he also uses a Pearl piccolo. Cymbals are Zildjians, K's and A's, including two hi-hats.



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anything on top of it. Listen to bebop drummers. Those cats play the changes, just like the sax, the guitar. They play *form*, they make up something different for the bridge, which I always try to do with Living Colour.

"And use the lyrics to shape your drum part. If the lyric's about your girl leaving, don't be playing some hip thing. People are always asking me who's my favorite drummer, what equipment do I use.... Sometimes drumming is not that for me. On 'Under Cover of Darkness,' I'm *playing* the *relationship*. On 'Love Rears Its Ugly Head,' the woman is unchanging, she's cool; the guy is freaking out. So the beat goes back and forth between a solid, pocket feel—that's her—and a crazy part [*where Will's smashing his half-open hi-hat*]—that's him. Just because you're a drummer, that means you can't play emotions? Who says? Who says you can't play love on a kit?"

THE 1991 DRUM SPECIAL

Dallas Taylor's Beat Goes On

CSN&Y's drummer has déjà vu all over again

By **David Handelman**

TO MOST OF THE CROWD in New York's China Club, it was just another jam. Though the assembled frontmen were impressive—Ratt's Warren DiMartini, Michael Schenker, Charlie Sexton and Tin Machine's Tony Sales—their raggedy versions of "It's All Over Now" and "Kansas City" weren't about to be remembered as rock's answer to Bird and Dizzy at Massey Hall. But the brief set was an historic occasion for the band's senior member: drummer Dallas Taylor, grinning from ear to ear behind an impossibly cramped kit. Taylor, who joined Crosby, Stills and Nash at 20 and was rich at 21, was now—clean, sober and 43—playing his first gig since his life-threatening April 1990 kidney transplant, and his joy was infectious.

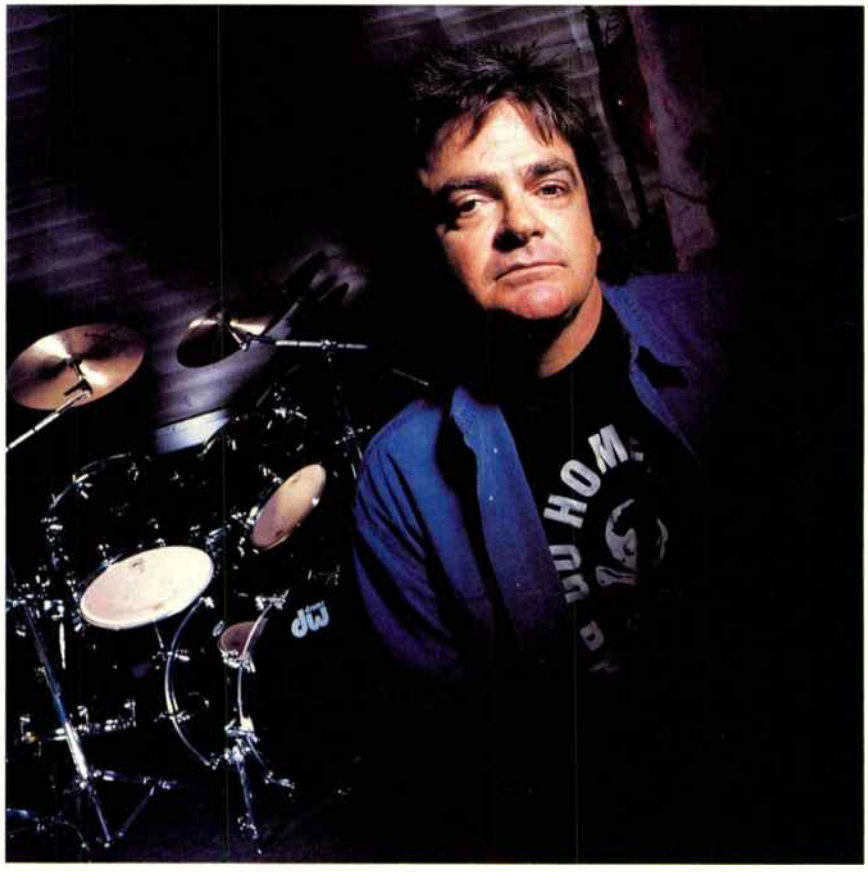
In the late '60s and '70s, Taylor backed CSN&Y, John Sebastian and Manassas, and encountered, either in the studio or live, Clapton, Hendrix, Dr. John, Van Morrison, Gregg Allman, Sammy Hagar and Sly Stone. Taylor inspired two Sebastian songs, "Black Satin Kid" and "Rainbows All Over Your Blues," and Laura Nyro wrote another called "Beads of Sweat," but he was kicked out of CSN&Y before 1970's *Four Way Street*, and by 1981 he'd stopped recording.

"I was more famous as a junkie than as a drummer. People think I died." He almost did in 1984 when, during an alcoholic blackout, he stuck a butcher knife in his abdomen. After a three-month hospital stay, he emerged sober and in love, married his therapist, Betty Wyman, and became a drug counselor himself.

But his chops were never the same. "I'd audition and people would say, 'Dallas, what happened?' I thought I'd just lost my ability. I was resolved that this was sobriety, and I'd have to accept it. I discovered my liver had affected every part of my body—muscle tone, coordination, energy."

Unable to afford a transplant, he got help. The Santa Monica Civic Center hosted a benefit in March 1990: a rare live set by CSN&Y, Don Henley in an even rarer second billing, and Chris Hillman's Desert Rose Band; Taylor himself managed to drum on "Wooden Ships" and "Teach Your Children." Within weeks he entered the hospital for an 11-hour operation, and donated the leftover money to children with failing kidneys.

Taylor hasn't wasted a moment of his new lease on life. He's written a book called *P.O.W.—Prisoner of Woodstock*, part memoir and part fiction, "because there's a lot I don't remember"; while a New York book agent shops it, Taylor is already working on a film, with Judd Nelson reportedly eager to play the lead. Dallas is scoring a movie about Hollywood street kids called *Where the Day Takes You*, and has hooked up with Jeff "Skunk" Baxter for an album-to-be called *Dallas Taylor and Friends*. Nash, Crosby, Sly



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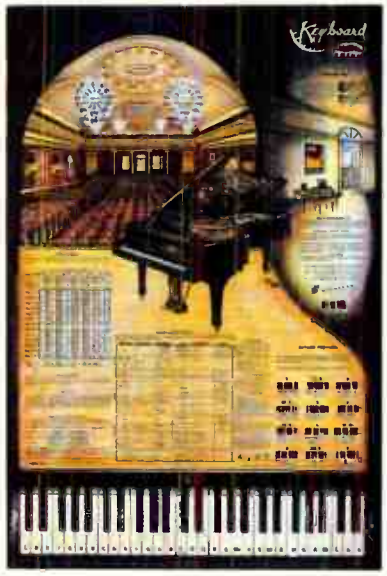

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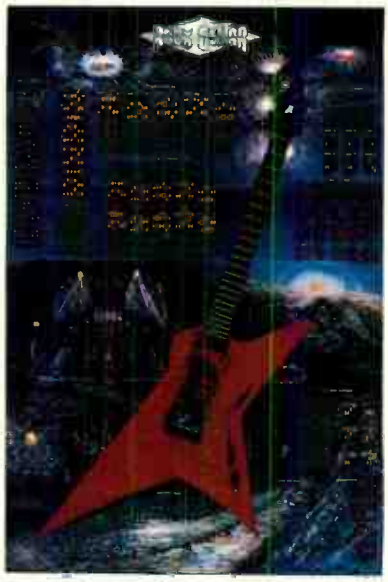

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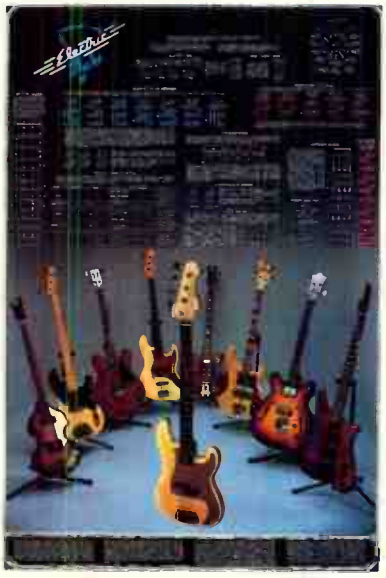

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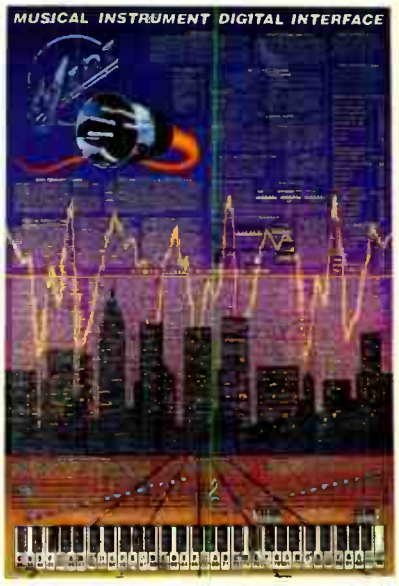

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Stone, Lee Sklar and Schenker are some of the buddies who've agreed to appear.

At 11, Taylor says, he worked an entire summer in his native Texas loading a crop duster to earn his first Slingerland kit. Married and a father by 16, he worked seven-hour sets at a San Antonio strip joint called the Frisky Au Go Go. He soon hooked up with a band called Clear Light (named after the brand of LSD), that recorded with Elektra before vanishing.

John Sebastian, making his first solo album, heard Dallas, hired him and introduced him to Graham Nash. Taylor had already met David Crosby and knew Stephen Stills. "But Steve and I had gotten off to a rocky beginning. He didn't pay me for some sessions, and I turned him in to the union."

A few months later, Taylor ran into the nascent CSN en route to their first sessions. Although they'd planned to do a folk record, they started to jam with Taylor. "The way Stephen and I played together was magic; the two of us sounded like a whole band."

On that first CSN album, Taylor's attentive style helped bring drums to acoustic music. By the second album—*Déjà Vu*—Neil Young was aboard, the band was huge and Taylor was drowning his insecurities in cocaine. "I was always feeling less than, not part of. I remember sitting at my drums after a show; watching them pack the guitars I felt this overwhelming sense of envy, wishing they could put me in a road case and take me out when it was time to play. Everything else was terrifying."

As old tensions between Stills and Young revived, bassist Greg Reeves was fired. "Greg was really getting out there," says Taylor. "He was doing magic—he'd have to cast a spell over you before you could come into his room. And his bass playing was not the best. Stephen, being a great bass player himself, was real sensitive to that, besides the fact that he didn't like having spells put on him. So we threw things together with another bass player, Fuzzy Sanders, and went on in Denver. It sounded dreadful. Neil walked offstage and refused to work with Stephen anymore." First the band was going to continue as CNY; then there was a big pow-wow at which, according to what Stills later told Taylor, then-co-managers David Geffen and Elliot Roberts plus Atlantic Records head Ahmet Ertegun told the band, "You're going to finish the tour as CSN&Y or you'll never work again." "Firing me was kind of a compromise," says Taylor. "The word was, Neil said, 'If I have to work with Stephen, Dallas has to go.' Because Stephen and I were so close. And my addiction was probably affecting my playing."

Today, after 160 hours of clinical training, Taylor tries to save others, mostly kids. And he's an important hub in a growing number of clean and sober musicians in L.A. that includes former cronies [*cont'd on page 97*]

THE DALLAS SKINS

DALLAS plays a seven-piece Drum Workshop kit—"they're the best—handmade, like Martin guitars." He uses Zildjian cymbals and Remo heads. Taylor's able to produce songs on his dining room table using a Mac Plus, a Tascam 246 Portastudio, a Yamaha RX15 Digital Rhythm Processor, a Yamaha DX7 and Casio CZ-101, backed by a Roland TR-505 Rhythm Composer. "I use drum machines to write with, but I'd never record with one." He plays six- and 12-string Guild acoustics, a Steinberger bass and a Fender Strat.

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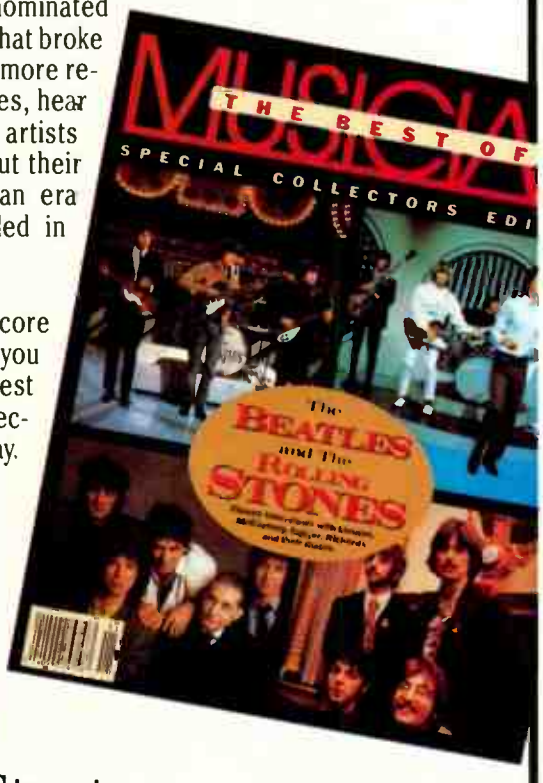

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Techno-beat Meets Retro-bop

In drum gear this year, past and future collide

By Alan di Perna

IT'S PRETTY AMAZING. PEOPLE have been beating drums since the dawn of civilization; yet they're *still* thinking of ways to improve the things. This year we've seen drum gear move fearlessly into the future while also harking back to the glorious past. So let's hear it for the timeless joys of bashing inanimate objects.

Electro Beat: The problem with conventional drum machines and modules is they've always been so finite. You get 16, 64 or even a few hundred sounds that essentially *never change*. So no matter how great the sounds, you eventually get sick to death of them. Drum boxes that let you load up new sounds via cartridge, card or computer disk are a step in the right direction. But we're seeing a trend toward something even better: modules that let drummers custom-program their own sounds just as keyboard/synth players have been doing for years.

Kawai was first out of the box with the XD-5 Digital Percussion Synthesizer, a product that's just starting to hit its stride on the market. It pretty much set the pattern: a slew of 16-bit sampled sounds that can be stacked and processed through the usual roundup of synthesis blocks: digital filters, envelope generators and LFOs. Last month we reported on **Yamaha**'s RY30 Programmable Rhythm Synthesizer, which ups the ante by adding a real keyboard-style mod wheel. And this month we had opportunity to check out **E-mu**'s new Pro/cussion module. Even as a plain old sample playback unit it's pretty hot stuff, with 1000 16-bit sounds laid out in 128 kits, all at the "buck-a-sound" price point E-mu established a while back with the Proteus. But for the drummer who wants to get into serious sound programming, this is a good place to start. The pitch and amplitude of the sampled sounds can be modulated by a healthy number of sources including a thorough LFO section and some nice little three-stage envelope generators. Up to four sounds can be stacked and velocity curves applied. It *would* have been nice to have some filtering facilities, but let's not get anal about it. As it is, the Pro/cussion offers big-time programming power and butt-kicking sound.

KAWAI'S XD-5 DIGITAL PERCUSSION SYNTHESIZER

Need something to trigger all those smashing self-programmed sounds? Yamaha's got a new triggering system, the DTS70. Going for a crisp $945, it aims to be the only trigger box you'll ever need. Which is to say it lets you mix both MIDI and trigger inputs and outputs. Forty-eight performance configurations and 32 chains can be saved to memory. Meanwhile, **ddrum** is set to undrape a new controller called the Pad Station. Picture five 6" pads, arrayed like the Olympic Games insignia. Heads are **Remo** Ambassadors for a real drum feel. Like the Beatles' old suits, the collars are low-profile, so you can play this thing with sticks or your hands. A MIDI version of the Pad Station will be the first to appear, at $1490 list. A non-MIDI version is also planned.

DDRUM'S PAD STATION

Retrobeat: So you thought the current wave of '50s/'60s nostalgia was just for guitarists? Guess again. **Drum Workshop** has a new line of drums called FinishPly that will be available in a range of '60s finishes. But the main reason for the FinishPly process is sonic rather than nostalgic. By using a prefinished outer ply, says DW, they can make a drum that sounds just as open as their lacquer-finish models, avoiding the "choked"

Photography: Susan Goines

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TAMA'S 4x14 CAST-WOOD SNARE

sound you can get by putting a plastic covering over a drum. As an extra bonus, though, drummers can once again get those great marbleized and sparkle finishes favored by Ringo, Buddy Rich and others during the '60s.

Also, Tama reports that a significant number of drummers are moving away from modern "power toms" back to the shallower standard-size toms drummers used in the '60s. You get better attack with them, many percussionists argue. So Tama has started offering standard-size toms as an alternative to power toms on their Artstar II kit.

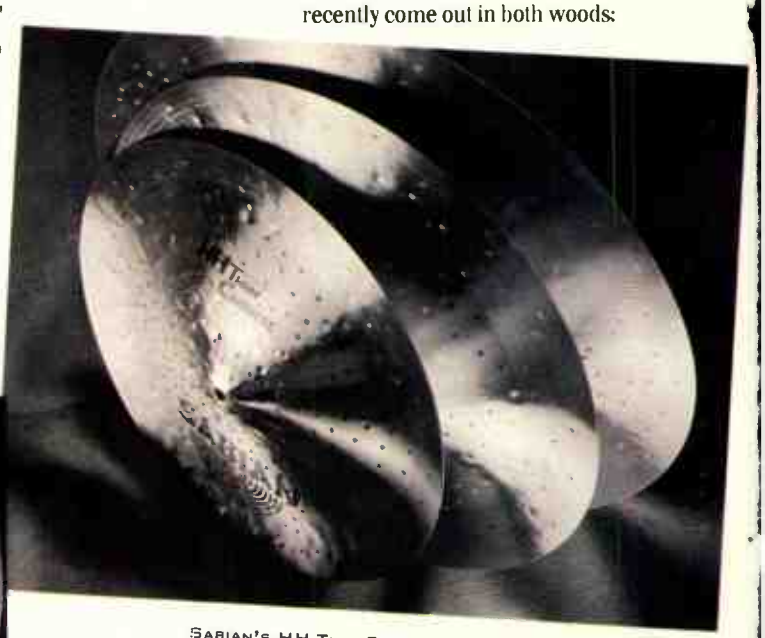
ZILDJIAN'S PRE-AGED CYMBALS

And who ever said guitar pickups are the only things that can be aged to produce a vintage tone? **Zildjian** has come up with a process for aging cymbals to create a more "played-in" timbre. The first Zildjian Pre-Aged cymbals are a range of Dry Light Rides in 18", 20" and 22" sizes. But maybe you're in the mood for something "dark, raw and trashy"—that's how **Sabian** describes their new ultra-slim HH Thin Chinese cymbals. They've also added 16" and 20" cymbals to their Carmine Appice line. And oh, when talking about Chinese cymbals, "trashy" means *good*. Just ask Carmine.

The ongoing vogue for piccolo and soprano snare drums was one of the earliest retro crazes to hit the musical instrument world—recalling, as it does, the thin, high snares used by dance-band drummers of the '30s and '40s. **Pearl**'s new 3"x13" 513-P soprano models, in brass and maple, are a revival of a design over 50 years old. But this year's big trend in piccolos and sopranos tends to be toward deeper drums that have more punch, while still retaining a smaller diameter than conventional snares for a higher-pitched tone. Pearl, for instance, is bringing out a 7"x12" soprano EFX snare and **Ludwig** has introduced a 6"x13" "Power Piccolo" model in maple. Tama has taken a different approach: a new 4"x14" cast-wood snare with the wood plies running vertically like a conga instead of horizontally as on most snare drums. The result is a small drum that punches like the big boys.

PEARL'S 513-P SOPRANO SNARES

A Word on Wood: Maple, birch...what's the difference? The general consensus is that low, mid and high frequencies are equally present in maple, making for a mellow, rounded tone generally favored by jazz drummers. Birch, on the other hand, emphasizes highs and lows (not mids) for the cut and whoomph rock drummers tend to dig. Why are we telling you all this? Because new kits have recently come out in both woods: Yamaha's Maple Custom Series, and Pearl's CZX Studio Series, a thick-shelled birch kit. "Anything that's prominent in a birch drum becomes even more prominent in these drums," a Pearl spokesman says.



SABIAN'S HH THIN CHINESE CYMBALS

Biz Beat: We'll close with two items from the world of drum marketing. U.S. distribution of **Sonor** drums recently passed from **Korg** US to **Hohner**. And Drum Workshop has acquired **Collarlock** of Canada. The high-end drum rack line will now be manufactured at DW's California facility. Ⓜ

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(Countless superstars throughout the world depend on Harry's magic tube amp modifications and exotic specialty designs.)

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THOMPSON TWINS

By Tony Scherman

DURING THE 1970 WORLD SERIES, IN WHICH BALTIMORE THIRD BASEMAN BROOKS ROBINSON stifled the Cincinnati Reds with play after dazzling play, Pete Rose is supposed to have pointed upwards and said, "Brooks Robinson plays in a higher league." I got just that feeling watching Richard Thompson perform solo on a cold March night, 75 miles north of Manhattan.

WHO
Richard Thompson with David Byrne
WHERE
The Town Crier, Pawling, NY
WHEN
March 7, 1991

Sort of solo. If the crush of music-bizzers was more appropriate to the Bottom Line than to an exurban folkie joint, it was because word had gotten out of an appearance by David Byrne, reportedly a big Thompson fan.

Not a hard thing to be. Over the years, Thompson has deepened and sharpened his almost miraculous guitar playing ("I'm a better player harmonically than I was 10 years ago," he said after the show; "I've got better ideas and I execute them better"). He's much more personable onstage, too, finally comfortable with his acerbic uptightness. Still, a good Thompson show's as cathartic as it is entertaining—the songs, and Thompson's intensity, take care of that.

He started with a new one, an olde English death-ballad about a '52 Vincent motorcycle. Then we got "Shoot out the Lights," its guitar solo a shimmering flurry of bent notes, harmonics, octave runs, blindingly swift hammer-ons. At the heart of Thompson's virtuosity is his mastery of simultaneous flatpicking and fingerpicking, which he typically downplayed: "I never really thought about it. It came, really, from being lazy; I couldn't be bothered to put the pick down."

And it was on to "God Loves a Drunk"—the latest Thompson waltz/dirge—and a John French song about the economic benefits, to a rock star, of being dead. Thompson toyed with the idea of doing "Monster Mash," thought better of it, hit full stride with "Two Left Feet," "Wall of Death," "When the Spell Is Broken," kept going, and churned into a solo during "Valerie" that just got better and better, the room bursting into applause before he was even back into the verse—almost a showstopper, but the show was over.

Byrne's cameo was a different-order phenomenon: not so much a matter of musical talent as a visitation of Big Pop Fame upon the little upstate room, like seeing Jackie Onassis hailing a cab. Taped for the English TV show "Rock Steady," the five-song Thompson/Byrne duet was a one-shot "stirred up by a mutual friend," says Thompson, "though I wouldn't preclude doing some recordings with [Byrne]." The latter sang off-key on "Who Were You Thinkin' Of?" and "didn't necessarily know" (Thompson, charitably) Plastic Bertrand's "Ça Plane Pour Moi" (RT: "We didn't have an encore number, so we went out and did that"), Thompson hilariously screaming in French, one shoelace untied, red-faced and demented-looking. Byrne looked kind of exhilarated coming off. "Considering the time we had to prepare, it was definitely spirited," said Thompson; "I'm sure if we had a little more time we could evolve things like arrangements." His verdict on his own show: "It was okay. I'd say it was kind of average." Was he there the night I was?

Photograph: Linda Covello

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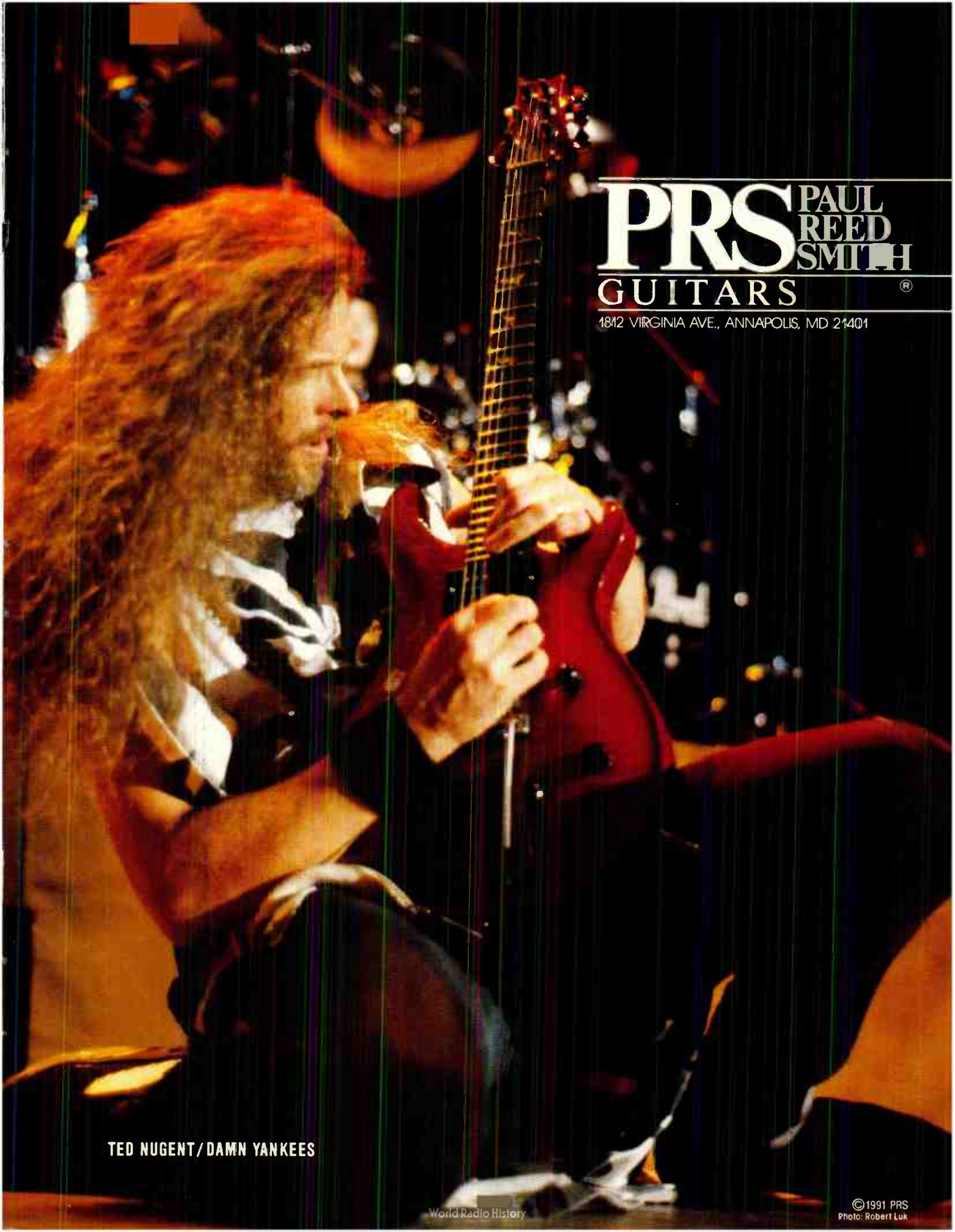

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Photo: Robert Luk

Richard Thompson Wins Again

Rumor & Sigh
(Capitol)

RICHARD THOMPSON HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM BEING THE guitarist/singer who added a knowing rock edge to Fairport Convention's reinvigorations of British folk music. He's a long way even from the dour-voiced half of the husband and wife team whose love and life vignettes, laced with Richard's subtle but tart guitar, established him as a perennial cult item. Following the divorce that ended his duet phase, Thompson has pursued a solo career just out of range of the popular spotlight, his musical sound and conception toughening into a solid pop/rock punch, his voice gaining in expressive reach, his lyrics expanding in sarcastic breadth. Risking the imprecision of comparison, one could say that his albums now bring to mind the Elvis Costello of old, barbed and intelligent, though without El's penchant for private word play.

Rumor & Sigh even suggests El-like fecundity—a 14-song set running over an hour, and nary a toss-off in the bunch. Thompson has too much on his mind to plug into some songwriting formula—there are still scores to be settled, points to be made, frustrations to be pinned. His most familiar song-character, the spurned

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courtney PINE

within the realms of our dreams

If you haven't seen him live . . . this new album will drive the point home!

A Hard Blowing date with a stellar rhythm section of

Kenny Kirkland • piano
Charnett Moffett • bass
Jeff Watts • drums

Produced by
Delfeayo Marselis

Although Courtney honed his formidable skills as a jazz musician on the other side of the Atlantic, both young *jazz lions* and established jazz artists from the U.S. have been awed by this young artist's meteoric development.

With **Within The Realms Of Our Dreams,** Courtney is finally matched with a group of his peers, both age-wise and playing-wise . . . from this side of the Atlantic.

Look for him on tour. . .

May 15-18 • Los Angeles, Catalina Bar & Grill
May 19 • Half Moon Bay, Bach Dancing
May 20 • Santa Cruz, Kuumbwa Jazz Center
May 22 • San Francisco, Slims
May 23-26 • San Diego, Elario's
May 28 • New Orleans, Tipetina's
May 29 • Austin, Top Of The Mark
May 30 • Dallas, Caravan Of Dreams
June 1 • Houston, Rockefeller's
June 2 • Charlestown, W. Virginia, Radio Show
June 4-9 • Toronto, Bermuda Onion
June 10 • Washington DC, Blues Alley
June 12 • North Hampton MA, Iron Horse
June 13 • Boston, Regatta Bar
June 14 • Philadelphia, Mellon Festival
June 15 • New York, Bottomline
June 17 • Detroit or Ann Arbor, MI
June 18 • Chicago, Cubby Bear
June 19-20 • Minneapolis, Dakota
June 21 • Denver, CO
June 24 • Seattle WA, Jazz Festival

charlie HADEN
carlos PAREDES

dialogues

Charlie Haden • Bass
Carlos Paredes • Portuguese Guitar

A duet recording of unsurpassable beauty and emotion!

"I first heard about the legendary Portuguese guitarist **CARLOS PAREDES** in 1978, while playing at the Avanti Festival in Lisbon. One night I was invited to play with him at a local club, where he was playing with another guitarist who was accompanying him. They were playing as one musician, each anticipating and knowing where the other was going. All of the compositions were written by Carlos, and were played from memory as neither musician was reading music. His approach to music (voicings, melodies, chords, rhythms) was so original that it reminded me of another musician with whom I love to play music; **Ornette Coleman**. The wonderful thing about playing with Carlos is that he takes you in his incredible and unpredictable musical journey full of passion, depth and beauty."
Charlie Haden

Two universal musicians like **CHARLIE HADEN** and **CARLOS PAREDES** combine all the necessary qualities to reveal new, unsuspected horizons to those of us fortunate to listen.

peter APFELBAUM
and
the hieroglyphics ensemble

signs of life

THE HIEROGLYPHICS ENSEMBLE, a daring fifteen-piece big band led by composer and multi-instrumentalist **Peter Apfelbaum**, is taking the World Beat idea into even more creative musical realms. This ensemble of horns, guitars, keyboards, drums and percussion uses dance beats and polyrhythms from such sources as Nigerian, Afro-Cuban, and reggae music, and layers them with intricate arrangements and cross-melodies to explore expansive spaces through jazz improvisation. The result is a new form of big band that starts with Duke Ellington and travels freely East and West, into territories inspired by Fela Kuti, James Brown and Sun Ra.

"Those who have followed Apfelbaum's career came to realize long ago that he is a genius."
Philip Elwood,
San Francisco Examiner

"It is his dedication and his creativity that draws me to Peter. He is one of the people who is truly moving the music forward."
Don Cherry

fred WESLEY

new friends

Appropriately titled, **New Friends** enlists the help of some of the best established artists currently working in jazz . . . Featured are vocalist **Carmen Lundy,** pianist **Geri Allen,** fellow trombonists **Steve Turre** and **Robin Eubanks,** trumpeter **Stanton Davis,** bassist **Anthony Cox** and drummer **Billy Stewart.** Also on board, the funky horns of **Maceo Parker** and New Orleans young blood **Tim Green.**

Fred Wesley is well known as the trombone player from James Brown's band and more recently, as the third link with Maceo Parker and Pee Wee Ellis in the funky revival of the James Brown horn section
—The J.B. Horns!!

What some may not know is that Fred Wesley's jazz roots run as deep as his funk roots and have included stints with one of the funkier big bands of all times—
The Count Basie Orchestra!

New Friends will delight both jazz and R&B fans alike!

All of these titles are available only on Antilles cassettes and compact discs.
Antilles, an Island Records Inc. company

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or thwarted lover, is sometimes presented ironically, as in "Read about Love," where the poor sap can't understand why his textbook knowledge of sex has limited real-life applicability ("so why don't you moan and sigh/Why do you sit there and cry?"), and sometimes with defiant sadness ("Why Must I Plead," "Keep Your Distance"). At their most extreme, Thompson's love-seekers resort to violence, like the young punk who associates exacting vengeance with breaking hearts ("Feel So Good"), or more passively, like the hero of "Backlash Love Affair," who has fallen under the spell of a dominatrix.

At times he goes over the top. "Behind Grey Walls" has the unfortunate swain committing his catatonic "darlin'" to an insane asylum. It's a morbid song reaching for a heavy-handed metaphor—though, typically, it rocks, mitigating the gloom factor. "God Loves a Drunk" is a bit of a wallow, rather old-fashioned in its romanticizing of the sodden. And "Psycho Street" is a genuine curio, partly sung and partly spoken, a queasy mix of jet-black humor and cute whimsy which never congeals.

Still, that leaves 11 good ones, including the amusing record collector's plea "Don't Sit on My Jimmy Shands" and a better-late-than-never blast at Thatcherism, "Mother Knows Best." Given his not inconsiderable knack for appealing melodies, his preference for a beat often heavy enough for radio, his tendency to articulate guitar judiciously while holding back the folk influence for occasional coloration—well, if this one doesn't give Thompson that long-deserved wider audience, then they probably just don't deserve him.

—Richard C. Walls

Joe Jackson

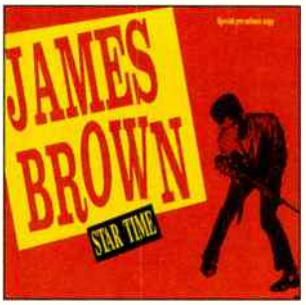
Laughter and Lust
(Virgin)

EVER SINCE *NIGHT AND DAY* HIT BIG FOR singer/songwriter Joe Jackson back in '82, he's done his best to fill his fated role of world-weary romantic pop singer, polished tunesmith and tell-it-like-it-is social critic—the first pose mitigated by that snarly drawl that served him so well doing his new-wavy beginnings but just won't go away, the second by his frequent forays into vamp heaven and orchestral hell, and the third by his flat-footed lyrics and obvious targets.

Given all this, *Laughter and Lust* is the best thing he's done since *Night and Day*. Arrangemental indulgences are kept to a minimum, the hubris is dealt out sparingly, even the lyrics seem to have been given a little more care. The first side, especially, zips along nicely, highlighted by the clever "Hit Single," complete with Farfisa organ, pure pop hooks and Jackson doing a credible impersonation of a Brit Invasion–era, Hollies-cute crooner; a succinct cover of the old Peter Green–edition Fleetwood Mac's "Oh Well" and the McCartneyesque "Stranger Than Fiction."

It's the second half that seriously bogs down, weighted by its six-and-a-half-minute centerpiece, "Trying to Cry." Nothing wrong with the premise—a typically repressed male trying to let go of his feelings after a lifetime of being told not to—but its lugubrious pace and the Yma Sumac vocal spot at the climax pretty much blunt the impact. It's a failure that points out Jackson's fatal flaw; rather than follow the whims of his modest talent he insists on trying to paint on a larger-than-life scale, confusing bloated music with deeper meaning. He should heed the implications of "Hit Single"'s subtext, which is its running time: three minutes and 37 seconds.

—Richard C. Walls



James Brown

Star Time
(Polydor)

UNH! *GOOD GAWD*, MAKE IT FUNKY NOW... James Brown's prolific career has been extensively documented by a number of hefty Polydor retrospectives in recent years (readers are directed to *In the Jungle Groove*, *Roots of a Revolution* and last year's *Messing with the Blues*), but *Star Time* is the big enchilada—an ambitious, vast and largely successful four-CD salute to Soul Brother Number One.

And quite the career it was, as the 71 tracks here attest. The Georgia native burst onto the scene in 1956 with the supplicating "Please Please Please" on King Records; nine years of gritty, exhortatory, gospel-inflected hits and manic stage shows followed. Brown changed the face of soul music in '65 with the demonically supercharged crossover "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag." From that point out, the Godfather's music clambered onto a modal limb, charting new terrain in the Land of a Thousand Trances and plumbing a lyrical stream of consciousness as deep as Molly Bloom's.

Blow, Maceo...

Star Time includes 52 of JB's chart hits, seminal performances all; it's hard to think of a soul vocalist of the time who could rival Brown for rhythmic authority and sheer feeling in the raw. The listener also gets an in-depth look at the development of Brown's astonishing bands, which included such brilliant team players as Maceo Parker, Pee Wee Ellis, Fred Wesley, Jimmy Nolen, Clyde Stubblefield, and Bootsy and Catfish Collins. Those stop-on-a-dime groups of the '60s and '70s set the propulsive standard for artists as diverse as George Clinton (who enlisted many of Brown's men for his P-Funk thang) and Miles Davis.

Can I take it to the bridge?

One can quibble with some of the song choices on *Star Time*: I particularly miss the original single version of "There Was a Time" (a hyperkinetic unreleased live version from '68 supplants it), and might have preferred the rousing "I'll Go Crazy" cut at the Apollo in '62 to its logy single take. Sadly absent are JB's two biggest hits of the '80s, the number four pop sensation "Living in America" and the number two R&B smash "I'm Real." But a number of bona fide rarities (including the hitherto unheard uncut take of "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," slowed down and stretched o-u-t) more than make up for these deficiencies. Even by the most demanding standards, *Star Time* is a stirring tribute, and an excellent welcome-home gift, to soul's authentic genius.

Let's hit it and quit it, boys. *HIT IT!*

—Chris Morris

Electronic

#26387
(Warner Bros.)

Jack Frost

Jack Frost
(Arista)

IF SOMEONE HIRED ME TO ARRANGE THE ENTERTAINment for a convention of neurotics, this is the double bill I'd book. Electronic, featuring New Order's Bernard Sumner and Smiths grad Johnny Marr, makes misery-soaked synth-pop, while Jack Frost's brooding folk-rock reflects its principals, the Church's Steve Kilbey and Go-Between Grant McLennan. Mixing insights with self-conscious excess, both transform the tedium of obsession into a sometimes amusing, sometimes irritating spectacle.

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PHOTOGRAPH MIKE RYAN

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Highlighted by cheesy, chattering synths and Sumner's wan vocals, which suggest a blank stare and a shrug, *#26387* wallows in the debris of shattered relationships. The nastiest track, "Reality," is a distasteful masterpiece. Amidst harsh putdowns ("There's nothing in your head"), Sumner sighs, "If you understood/You'd clean up this mess," and shirks responsibility with the ease of a sleazy politician, cooing, "I don't like this hatred/It just isn't me." Heart of stone! Other songs continue the lurid saga of a passive-aggressive personality, including "Gangster," a convict's lament, and the witty "Patience of a Saint," one of two co-authored by Pet Shop Boy Neil Tennant, himself a master chronicler of twisted emotions.

Jittery textures and crummy attitudes haven't stopped Sumner and Marr from creating some great pop. "Getting Away with It," a minor hit last year, "Tighten Up" and the hip-hopping "Feel Every Beat" betray the commercial sensibilities behind the angst. Guitar freaks may lament the scarcity of Marr's luscious fretwork, but *#26387* boasts a rancid charm all its own.

On the other hand, waves of guitars cascade gently through the stately grooves of *Jack Frost*. Kilbey and McLennan pile on layers of evocative sound to augment their somber voices, making this a sort of Phil Spector for introverts. Usually the goal is a glassy-eyed trance, with "Providence" and "Even as We Speak" striving to mimic a numbing drug. Elsewhere they transcend the stupor. The stylishly weary "Geneva 4 a.m." would be perfect for Bryan Ferry. And "Didn't Know Where I Was" not only rocks impressively, but has the gumption to rhyme Wisconsin and Charles Bronson. The lads should make a habit of rousing themselves—they're more fun than they care to admit.

—Jon Young

The Art Ensemble of Chicago with Amabutho

The Art Ensemble of ~~Chicago~~ Soweto
(DIW)

BEGOTTEN IN THE '60S, THE ART ENSEMBLE OF Chicago are Afrocentric in their belief that music should be functional to the lives of their audience. Thus they have always tried to teach self-determination through their art. Your work doesn't have to follow fashion or rules; whatever you want to do *is* music, say the AEC, as they punch through the free jazz envelope.

In that respect, *Soweto* is a natural outgrowth of the AEC's spiritual/musical direction. The album combines mbaqanga's heavy bass line and township jive horn charts with post-modern dissonance and the deep Zulu style that the vocal group Amabutho shares with Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Meantime, song titles like "Fundamental Destiny," "Fresh Start" and "The Bottom Line" cue the listener that this is a set attuned to issues of morality and philosophy. In "African Woman," the choir engages in call-and-response with the trumpet, then keyboards introduce somber, loping horn charts, as the horns play both melody and rhythm. Alternating Zulu words with ululating cries, the singers praise African women, warn that they must control their children's violence and suggest that African men also have work to do. "Black Man" is a sly warning, at once forceful and subtle, to a man casting voodoo on the singer's house.

Soweto is still recognizably an AEC record. It has the sound of Roscoe Mitchell's trademark use of space, and fellow saxophonist Joseph Jarman's open singing horn lines. In all, it's a dynamic workout that evokes the Art Ensemble's delight in play, and in playing together. **—Celestine Ware**

Various Artists

Brazil Classics 3: Forró Etc.
(Sire/Warner Bros.)

Various Artists

The Best of Rio Carnaval
(EarthBeat!)

Olodum

From the Northeast of the Sahara to the Northeast of Brazil
(Sound Wave/WEA Latina)

SO YOU DON'T LIKE "BRAZILIAN MUSIC" BECAUSE you've heard the Muzak version of "The Girl from Ipanema" in too many dentists' offices? That's like slagging off "American music" because of Kenny G or Bon Jovi. There's far too much music going on in our huge neighbor down south to ever generalize.

Samba, for instance, is the tumescent 2/4 surge coursing like hot lava through Rio de Janeiro during Carnaval, its ever-present squeaky *cuica* friction drum ranging in sound from a solitary chortle to a pack of hyenas in stitches. *Best of Rio Carnaval* presents *samba enredos*, or story sambas, from the 1970s as well as brief *batucadas* or street sambas. Except for subtle tempo shifts, the variety springs from the melody, singing arrangements and use of instrumentation. On "O Segredo das Minas do Rei Salomão" ("Secret of King Solomon's Mine"), acoustic guitar and *cavaguinho* (smaller guitar cousin) start things off, are quickly joined by the chorus and effervescent *bateria* (percussion section), and finally by the throaty *puxador*, or lead singer. It's a masterful combination of pacing, drama (a key *samba enredo* element) and dynamics—made all the more amazing when you consider that thousands of members of the Academicos do Salgueiro samba school performed and danced to this tune.

Those familiar with the rainy-season-thunder drums rolling through Paul Simon's "The Obvious Child" have experienced Olodum. While samba often floats, Olodum's drum corps pound out a bass-heavy, almost martial tattoo, with West African–style call-and-response vocals redolent with black pride, resistance and the plight of the sufferers. (It's not surprising that João Jorge, executive director of the musical group/community organization, cites Bob Marley as a major influence.) Although more serious and rebellious than most carnaval sambas, this *bloco afro* is just as infectiously danceable. The eight-beat cycle of the bass *surdo* drum on "Olodum Resistencia" is an incessant hip-gripper, while the haunting interpretation of the African National Congress' anthem finds sax and spoken word vying over the rumble of 20-odd percussionists.

While samba and *bloco afro* revolve around the drum, the various styles from Brazil's rough-and-tumble arid northeast grouped under the *forró* label roll along on squeezebox power. Musical cousin of Tex-Mex, Cajun, zydeco and Colombian *vallenata*, *forró* is party music meant to be danced to after a hard day or week working for the Man.

The late Luiz Gonzaga, whose *baião* tunes rivaled samba in Pan-Brazilian popularity in the '50s, has four tracks on the latest David Byrne *Brazil Classics* compilation. These include the electric guitar–energized "O Fole Roncou" ("The Bellows Roared"), which demonstrates Gonzaga's willingness to innovate beyond the standard *sanfona*—accordion/triangle/*zabumba* (bass drum)—format. Like some square-dance caller, Jackson do Pandeiro spits out his humorous satire on Yankee cultural imperialism, "Chiclete com Banana" ("Chewing Gum with Bananas"). Dominguinhos' goofy accordion riff on "Querubim" ("Cherub") reveals a master on a par with Flaco Jimenez or Clifton Chenier.

These three albums hint at the diversity of Brazil's real roots musics; taken together, they present a proletarian's ear-view of some of its best. (EarthBeat!, Box 1460, Redway, CA 95560)

—Tom Cheyney

World Radio History

SOUND OFF!

MUSICIANS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

Speaking out against censorship in *Musician* magazine feels a bit like preaching to the converted. But I suspect there are many in our musical community who are still ambivalent about the oppression of ideas. As a species, we tend to come to action only after a major crisis.

We are living in an era that exalted Wall Street greed merchants (only to knock them off the pedestal just as quickly). These money-grubbing scum, with implicit government support, engineered many hostile corporate takeovers. We the taxpayers are, as usual, shouldered with cleaning up these messes.

This climate of quick fixes and fast bucks (i.e. no hope, no compassion, no sense of history) has created a forum for semi-informed, nervous puritans who would like to live out their Orwellian brain police fantasy. Artists are always easy targets. We air our dirty laundry in public.

I love a good argument, the movement of ideas that stirs up emotions and questions systems of belief. It's okay if some people don't like what I do, or even get upset about it. My job description includes shaking things up. But I'm angry about being threatened or legislated into a corner by people looking to hurt me because of a thought, a picture or a note of music floating in the air. Are they afraid of making peace with those of different backgrounds?...or needs?...to agree or disagree? Doesn't our constitution support a mobile melting pot?

Good ideas, be they constitutions or not, need real, willing and able humans to carry them out. This is why we must all, in our own ways, speak up.

The officials we elect, and others with more money or power than they can possibly use, will *not* be the protectors of our individual rights. They are too busy perpetuating their own little worlds to have any time for us.

What we take for granted as freedom is actually a precarious balance of issues. It is not available to all of us at all times. Whoever has the muscle makes the rules. The only way we can avoid dictatorship is to actively support justice. This is equally important even when times are "good." When the shit really hits the fan, it's already too late and any sense of fair play has lost ground.

Concerning this past year's legal proceedings, I find it unfortunate that some folks really believe that seeing, listening to, touching or smelling art can lead humans to outrageous crimes.

- What records were the crusaders of the middle ages listening to when they went off to kill in God's name? Judas Priest weren't born yet!
- Had Sirhan Sirhan seen some "objectionable" sculpture at the L.A. Museum of Art before he shot Robert Kennedy?
- Did 2 Live Crew whisper something into the ears of Charles Keating and Neil Bush that forced them to manipulate a major national financial disaster?
- Maybe Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of body builders inspired Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait.

The point is, if Ozzy Osbourne comes up with a gun and shoots me in the head, that's bad. If I listen to one of his songs and then shoot myself, that's stupid.

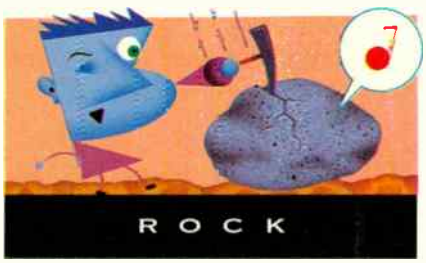
The success of democracy depends on an informed populace. Does the recent resurgence of legislated censorship indicate that we, as a nation, have given up on being intelligent, and will cave in to rules that control our choice-making?

As a first step, it may be smart to "fight the power." But ultimately, it could be more significant to develop your own.

Michael Blair
Percussionist/Producer
(with Lou Reed, Elvis Costello, Tom Waits)

MUSICIAN
Where the Players Do the Talking
World Radio History

SHORT TAKES



BY J. D. CONSIDINE

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Deadicated [Arista]
MILTON NASCIMENTO
Txai [Columbia]
Two albums with but a single thought: Let's save the rainforest. *Deadicated* takes a typically American approach and makes its act of charity seem more like entertainment, the hook being an all-star set of Grateful Dead covers. It has its moments, particularly when the performances are illuminating (Lyle Lovett's "Friend of the Devil"), irreverent (Midnight Oil's "Wharf Rat") or unexpected (Burning Spear's "Estimated Prophet"), but the slavish loyalty of selections like Dwight Yoakam's rendition of "Truckin'" is a Dead drag. *Txai* is more low-key, making do with local talent (including Amazon Indian musicians) and the lyric beauty of Nascimento's tunes. Yet it makes the stronger statement, because the best of these songs—"Coisas da Vida," "Que Vira Dessa Escuridao," "Txai"—satisfy the listener while evoking the sound of the rainforest itself. A timely and irresistible album.

PAT BENATAR
True Love [Chrysalis]
Lady slings the blues.

ROD STEWART
Vagabond Heart [Warner Bros.]
Strictly speaking, you can't make a comeback record without first going away. But how else to describe this astonishing return to form? Stewart doesn't just recall his glory days here—he brings 'em back alive, ripping through rockers like "Moment of Glory," baring his soul with "Broken Arrow," even out-singing Tina Turner on the Marvin Gaye/Kim Weston hit "It Takes Two." And though it's been ages since Stewart evoked Sam Cooke the way he does on "Go Out Dancing," the thrill is still the same.

ICE-T
OG [Sire]
Ice-T knows how to tell a story, and any one of this album's street crime vignettes comes across as vividly as a scene from *New Jack City*—maybe even more so, given the breathless urgency of Evil E's backing beats. But it's his candor that really draws blood. Ice doesn't try to be politically correct or socially responsible, just honest. That's the reason his raps hit so hard, because no mere story can pack the punch of this kind of reality.

THE LAW
The Law [Atlantic]
Strong songs, good players and a solid grounding in blues-based rock make this Paul Rodgers/Kenney Jones collaboration a perfect piece of superstar product. Unfortunately, the key word here is "product."

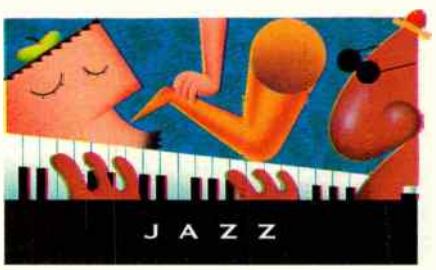
SUE MEDLEY
Sue Medley [Mercury]
Medley has all the makings of a good country singer, but instead applies them to rock 'n' roll. It works, too. Where someone else might have reduced "Maybe the Next Time" to power-ballad schlock, Medley pulls dynamics and drama from the song, while her rockers strike a fine balance between authority and abandon. Best of all, she writes the way she sings—like a natural.

SHEILA E.
Sex Cymbal [Warner Bros.]
Forget the title tune; like the album's other dance numbers, it's there to dazzle, not seduce. If you really want to fall in love with this album, start in the middle, where the groove goes Latin and the timbales take over. From the salsafied funk of "Droppin' Like Flies" to the percussive pop of "Private Party," it's enough to make you forget Gloria Estefan ever happened.

NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN
Mustt Mustt [Realworld]
Given the sacred nature of Qawwali singing, it may seem a mite sacrilegious to find Nusrat's vocalizing flanked by funk bass and rock guitar. That is, until you hear it. Producer Michael Brook understands the difference between augmenting a groove and overpowering it, and by observing that boundary makes this most astonishing voice accessible without sacrificing any of its power.

CHRIS REA
Auberge [East West]
Rea's taste for the dramatic can be misleading. His songs may be full of grand gestures and moment-of-truth emotions, but his husky, world-weary voice inevitably cuts things down to size, making any crisis seem like the sort of thing he sees every day. His guitar, on the other hand, never lies, and whether it whispers the blues ("Looking for the Summer") or screams into overdrive ("Set Me Free"), you'll find yourself hanging on every note.

GANG OF FOUR
Mall [Mercury]
These days just a Gang of Two, Jon King and Andy Gill pick up pretty much where they left off, trying to pull pop tunes from screaming guitar and acerbic social criticism. But the Gang is out of practice; not only have the Red Hot Chili Peppers long since one-upped Go4's punk-funk approach, the commentary seems dated. I mean, making fun of Cadillacs and cable TV? Hell, even the Republicans do that now.



BY PETER WATROUS

GARY THOMAS
While the Gate Is Open [JMT]
Big Boss Tenor time: Thomas is a Booker Ervin figure, tough, brawny and a bit limited. But you have to admire his dedication, pushing the changes (or ignoring them) on a bunch of standards, reworking tunes until they rise out of the wreckage as something entirely different.

World Radio History

Illustrations: Chad Draper

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OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

1. All entrants must be U.S. residents and 21 years of age or older as of July 12, 1991. 2. Size of group must be between 1 and 7 members. Non-playing vocalist(s) must be counted in group number. 3. The "Tanqueray Rocks" talent contest is a competition for rock-n-roll bands. 4. Entries must be submitted in audio cassette form no longer than 20 minutes in length, clearly labeled with the name of the band, the band's leader/spokesperson, address and daytime and evening phone numbers. All music and lyrics must be original. A clear black & white photograph depicting all band members must be submitted as well. The same members on the tape must appear with the group if they place in the semi-finals and finals. Proof of age for each group member must be submitted with entry. 5. All artists retain the rights to their music except as provided in paragraph 12. 6. Entries must be postmarked no later than Friday, July 12, 1991 and must be accompanied by an official entry blank or reasonable facsimile signed by the leader of the group. Only one entry per group is allowed. Tanqueray is not held responsible for lost, late or misdirected mail. 7. Semi-finalists and finalists will be chosen by a panel of independent judges. Judging will be based on musicianship, creativity, technique, originality and performance potential. The decision of the judges will be final. By entering this contest, each group member acknowledges that Schieffelin & Somerset Co. shall have the right to use each entrant's name or likeness in any promotional activities relating to this contest without compensation or obligation to the entrant. 8. Tanqueray will use cassettes sent in only for this contest. The cassettes will not be reproduced for any purpose. Cassettes will only be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. 9. Three semi-finalists will be chosen to perform in each semi-final city. Contestants must indicate which semi-final contest they wish to enter. Semi-finalists will be notified no later than August 1st. Semi-finals dates and locations are Los Angeles–Aug. 22, Chicago–Aug. 24, Nashville–Aug. 27, Orlando–Aug. 29. 10. One finalist from each semi-final city will be chosen to compete in the final competition in New York on Sept. 4. 11. If any entrant is unable to appear at either the semi-finals or final, an alternate will be chosen. 12. Each entrant acknowledges that his/her performance may be filmed, video taped, recorded, and/or photographed by Schieffelin & Somerset Co. The film, videotape, recording and photographs of this performance may be used for any purpose whatsoever, including the commercial sale of same, without payment of any compensation to entrant or securing of any additional permission from entrant. The filming, videotaping, recording and/or photographing may include the final competition in New York and/or the semi-finals in Nashville, Los Angeles, Chicago or Orlando. By entering, each entrant represents and warrants that the musical routine performed by each band is original and will not infringe upon or violate the rights of any third party, and that entrant's participation in this contest will not violate any pre-existing recording contract with any third party. Each group member by entering this contest agrees to all terms of this competition. 13. Grand prize: $10,000 and a limited edition, custom Fender Stratocaster guitar (approx. retail value $700). 14. Employees and their families of Schieffelin & Somerset Co., Tower Records and their affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising and public relations agencies, as well as licensed alcoholic beverage wholesalers and retailers are not eligible to participate. Contest is void wherever prohibited by law. Contest is not open to MS, TX, or UT residents. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. The winner and/or entrants will be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility and Release. 15. Federal, state and local taxes on prize money are the sole responsibility of the winners. 16. Semi-finalists are responsible for travel and accommodation arrangements to their chosen semi-final city. For appearance at final event in New York City, each band will be provided airfare, hotel accommodations, plus $1,000.

Name of Band _____

Leader's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ # Band Members _____

Evening Phone ( ) _____

Daytime Phone ( ) _____

I/We wish to enter the semi-finals in (check one):

( ) Los Angeles ( ) Nashville

( ) Chicago ( ) Orlando

I have read the rules and affirm that this entry is in compliance with them.

Signature of leader _____

Mail to:
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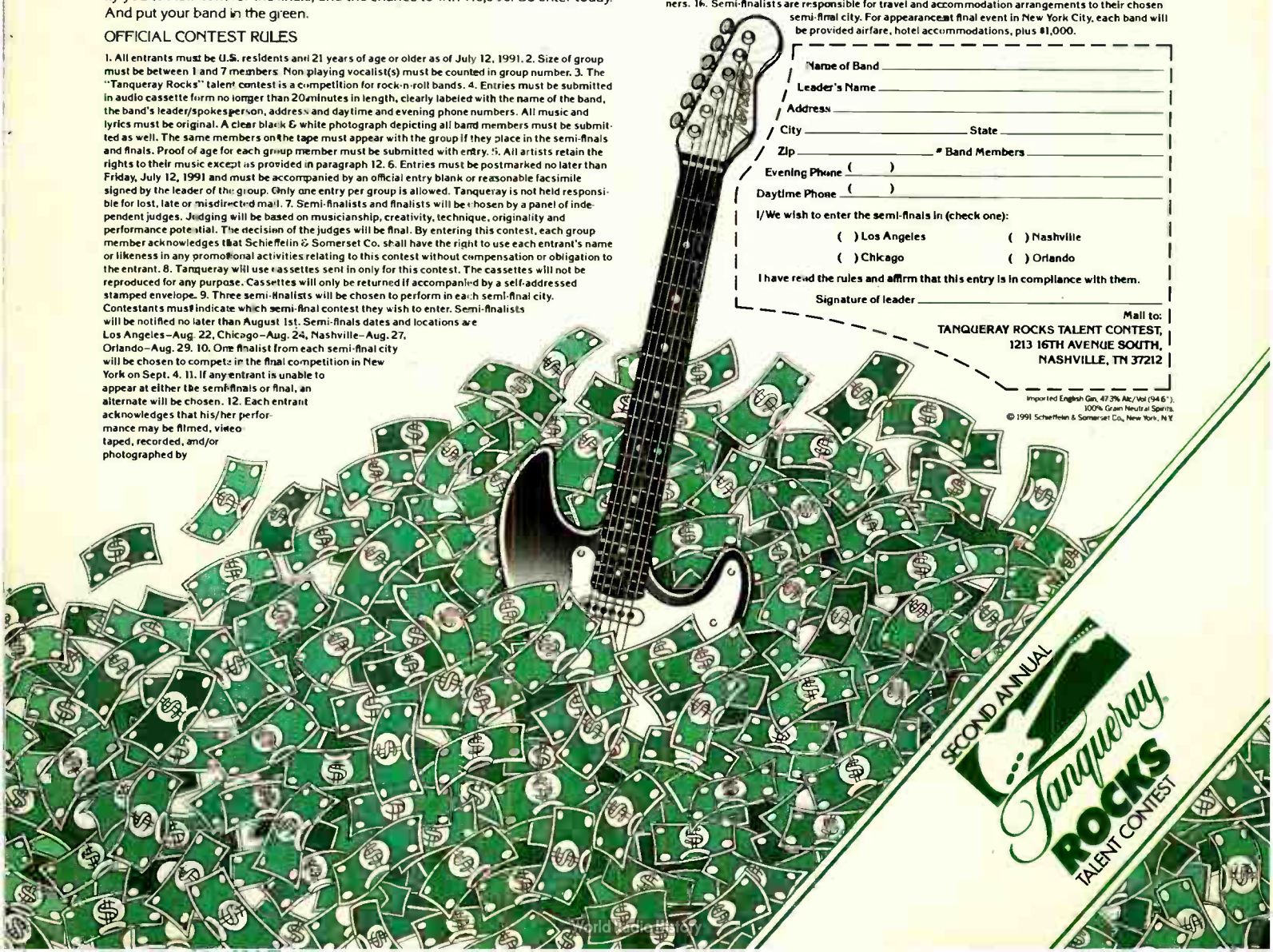

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Using a flexible rhythm section, including Renee Rosnes, Kevin Eubanks, Dave Holland, Anthony Cox and Dennis Chambers, he takes on "Star Eyes," "Chelsea Bridge," "Epistrophy" and more, turning each tune into a real workout; "Strode Rode" may be the most intense jazz piece recorded in the '90s so far, nasty and unrepentant.

JOHNNY GRIFFIN

The Cat [Antilles]

What do you know?—a masterpiece. Enticed to do some writing, Griffin, using Curtis Fuller on trombone and Steve Nelson on vibes along with his regular rhythm section of Michael Weiss, Dennis Erwin and Kenny Washington, mixes a hard blues and bebop sensibility in the arrangements with careful blowing. He's often been taken for granted; best to listen to him as an eccentric, someone who mangles notes by bending them, coats some in cotton, turns others into a knife.

MARLON JORDAN

Learson's Return [Sony]

A slippery little album that at first comes off sloppy, not well-produced and kind of off-handed. Get into it a bit and there are discoveries: clever writing with time changes, shadow melodies and more. People aren't dismissing the Wayne Shorter, Miles and Coltrane axis as much anymore, which is where this is coming from; what had seemed offensively derivative really is additional, using the sources for a base and adding details. One of the big details on this album is tenor saxophonist Tim Warfield, who (live especially) suggests grittier sources, dropping honking low notes and mauling the harmony.

JOHN SCOFIELD

Meant to Be [Blue Note]

The guitar is the site of all sorts of conflict between warring traditions. But like Bill Frisell, Scofield posits an idea that those influences are all value-free, that traditions, given enough time, weigh the same. In some hands that might be a dumb idea, but for Scofield it works, and *Meant to Be* is a wonderful album. With Joe Lovano on tenor saxophone, Marc Johnson on bass and Bill Stewart on drums, the pieces—all written by Scofield—move from aggressive and funk-tinged to cry-a-tear ballads, even a calypso. At times his improvisations overwhelm, as if a dump truck had unloaded a pile of tulip petals in your living room; other times, he snakes in and out of the changes.

PAUL MOTIAN

Bill Evans [JMT]

Evans was about elegance and grace, so it's no surprise that the album, which runs through a series of his pieces, is a smooth one. Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano take the solos. Frisell, minimalist and glassy, hesitates, as if afraid to raise his voice; where Lovano is tough and assertive on the John Scofield album, here he's Stan Getz in the early 1960s—rounded, unperturbed and casual yet involved. There's more old-styled beauty to these reinterpretations—and they're really reinterpretations—than a poor little heart can stand, with lots of open space and stillness surrounding the easy notes.

REBIRTH BRASS BAND

Rebirth Kickin' It Live! The Glass House [Rounder]

It's hard to believe that anything regional can still exist; that there are enough high school music programs to turn out a brass band of kids; or that a local American culture still has use for live music outside of standard weekend rituals. But here it is. Since part of the New Orleans brass bands' pleasures come from the sonic richness of massed horns, it's too bad this was recorded in lo-fi. But the music rocks, with howling, vocal trumpets that quiver and shake only to give way to saxophone solos that bounce and writhe over the roil of the drumming. Euphoria doesn't come cheap nowadays, and this album provides more than its share.

THE WORLD OF SKIN

Ten Songs for Another World [Young God]

Music that almost manages to be soothing yet can't quite resist the temptation of illness, as perpetrated by two members of the Swans. It takes a while for the show to get going, but once it does the atmosphere of the abyss is enchanting. Michael Gira's ultra-Gothic (and ultra-limited) singing style is much like Peter Murphy's, though the way he deadpans lines like "Go, fat parasite, go, but be sure to be obscene" has its own special humor. Jarboe's breathy vocals lend "Dream Dream" and "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes" an ethereal tone, while the cover of Nick Drake's "Black Eyed Dog" is a masterpiece of barely controlled fear. There are a few moments that never should have gotten past the pretense police, but since when did a little bombast hurt anyone? Bonus for Pere Ubu fans: Tony Maimone guest-stars on bass. (Rough Trade, 611 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)—*Mac Randall*

KIT WATKINS

Early Solo Works 1980–82 [Linden]

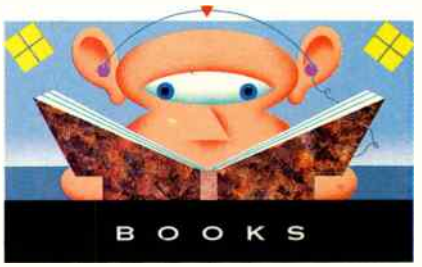
Thought Tones Volume One [Linden]

Following his stints with '70s art-rock bands Happy the Man and Camel, keyboardist Kit Watkins has been hunkered down in an increasingly sophisticated home studio in Linden, Virginia, producing a series of albums that occupy a middle ground between the progressive rock of old and contemporary new-age stylings. *Early Solo Works* favors the former, including a track that would later be reworked by Camel and another left over from the Happy the Man days. The purely ambient *Thought Tones*, on the other hand, consists of five static "tones." It makes for soothing background noise, and may even be useful for meditators, but unlike the best ambient music—say, Brian Eno's *On Land*—it is two-dimensional and doesn't reward attentive listening. (Box 520, Linden, VA 22642, distributed by Wayside)—*Michael P. Dawson*

MOUTH MUSIC

Mouth Music [Ryko]

A collision between Martin Swan's techno-Druidism and Talitha MacKenzie's mastery of a centuries-old Scottish vocal style creates this sonic wonderment. *Puirt-a-beul* translates from Gaelic as mouth music, or a cappella singing for dance. Swan explores MacKenzie's unadorned neo-traditionalist warblings in search of centering rhythms; once found, he exploits them with electronically driven polygrooves, samples and an occasional flute, fiddle or bagpipe. "Seinn O!" is a raucous excursion into the Afro-Celtic continuum, as MacKenzie twists tongue and Swan launches shimmering dub salvos. Together, the two musical adventurers fabricate a rare blend of the ethereal and the funky, the ancient and the orbital.—*Tom Cheyney*



GOOD ROCKIN' TONIGHT

Colin Escott with Martin Hawkins

[St. Martin's Press]

Who can blame Escott and Hawkins for being obsessed with Sun Records—the small Memphis label that launched Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Roy Orbison? *Good Rockin' Tonight* is the third version of a work first published 15 years ago, and a total overhaul of the last edition. The intervening decade has dispelled various myths regarding Sun and its roster, leaving owner Sam Phillips' achievement as impressive as ever.—*Scott Isler*

FAMILY BLOOD

David Ritz

[Donald J. Fine, Inc.]

This tale of the sleazy underside of the music industry could have been subtitled *Hit Men, the Novel*. Someone was bound to write it, and fortunately David Ritz, author of biographies of Ray Charles and Marvin Gaye, took on the task. Through his association with Gaye, Ritz got a strong taste of today's music biz (and a writer's credit for "Sexual Healing"), and his novels have the kind of plot twists and hooks that pull you along like the best pop songs. Despite a somewhat pat ending, *Family Blood* is a lot of fun, and it lends the hard, cold facts of *Hit Men* a human perspective.—*Peter Cronin*

THE COMMITMENTS

Roddy Doyle

[Vintage paperback]

A small wonder of true Dublin slang, sex and rhythm. The Commitments are working-class teenagers who form around an aging trumpet player who tells them that Ireland needs soul and they are to be the messengers. Doyle stays close to the joys and grief of playing in an amateur band, from the shredded throat of a singer trying to learn "Night Train" to the aphrodisia of a low bassline in a small room to the manic elbowing for a bit of fame. Doyle is a playwright, and his characters are built out of talk and laughter. His ear for street wit and the quartz-accurate timing of his prose carry

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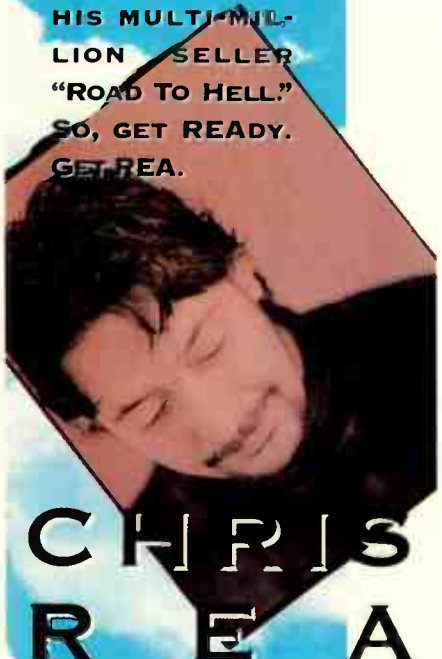

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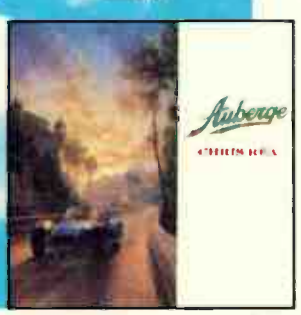

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The Commitments into the tiny library of imaginative rock novels.—*Stephen Talty*

BAT CHAIN PULLER: ROCK & ROLL IN THE AGE OF CELEBRITY

Kurt Loder

|St. Martin's Press|

Okay, the very idea of this book's existence holds a novelty appeal for me—MTV's newscaster writing a book on rock 'n' roll in the age of celebrity. Loder's collection of mostly *Rolling Stone*–published rock star interviews from the last decade often reveals sincere enthusiasm for Kurt's faves (even if some aren't in fashion currently) and a lot of imagination, e.g. his non-interview with Prince and humorous attitude toward Mick Jagger. The punk and new wave interviews especially interest in light of subsequent events, for example Iggy Pop on MTV. Okay, Kurt, now I'll go listen to a Captain Beefheart LP (for the first time).—*Jill Blardinelli*

THE L.A. MUSICAL HISTORY TOUR

Art Fein

|Faber & Faber|

Subtitled "a guide to the rock and roll landmarks of Los Angeles," this is the paperback equivalent of a Hollywood celebrity tour. But with admirable fealty to rock 'n' roll's funkier spirit, this one includes gravestones, diners, dingy hotels, the ice cream stand in Hawthorne where Brian Wilson gleaned inspiration for "Fun, Fun, Fun" and of course, MacArthur Park—with photos and street addresses provided. Chronicled with a good ear for trivia and dry wit by jack-of-all-rock-trades Fein, it's ultimately a mosaic that convincingly positions L.A. as rock's natural mecca—twin peaks of ephemeral pleasures and sun-baked nostalgia. Fun, fun, fun indeed.—*Mark Rowland*

MORRISON: A FEAST OF FRIENDS

Frank Lisciandro

|Warner Books|

If you already know everything about the Doors, you might enjoy these interviews with Jim Morrison's (mostly non-professional) friends—which exclude by definition his fellow band members. Otherwise this reads like raw and barely organized transcript. Since the book is almost half photos anyway, you may not care whether you ever read it at all. Not recommended to initiates in the court of the lizard king.—*Scott Isler*

THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

The Makropulos Case |Video Artists International|

Czech composer Leos Janácek's 1926 opera, based on a play by fellow Czech Karel Capek (of *R.U.R.* fame—the play which gave us the word "robot"), has the kind of *Dorian Gray*–variation plot which could barely carry one's interest through a half-hour "Twilight Zone" episode 30 years ago, let alone a two-hour tone poem today. But no matter, because with Janácek the music's the thing—an anxiety-filled, alternately sad and sinister music, whose use of repeated short phrases and quick-shifting harmony, as well as more conventional melodic effects, makes it seem a bridge between the deathswoons of romanticism and the modernist ambiguities of Schoenberg (and beyond). That Janácek's odd inflections grow out of the Czech language one has to take on faith—but that it's both other-worldly and emotionally affecting is apparent. When the denouement lifts the story from melodrama into eerie fantasy, complete with sickly green lighting, grotesque make-up and ghostly chorus, we're already well-primed for acceptance. Stephanie Sundine—statuesque, saucer-eyed and regal-voiced—does a lovely turn as the 300-year-old heroine.—*Richard C. Walls*

CECIL TAYLOR

Looking Ahead |Contemporary/OJC|

In a way, *Looking Ahead* is really a final backwards glance in the direction of people like Monk, Bud, Horace Silver, Erroll Garner, Herbie Nichols and Duke Ellington, even as they're atomized into the mortar for Cecil's ultimate pianistic synthesis. Recorded in June 1958 (and does it ever swing and sound good on CD), *Looking Ahead* sums up Cecil's greatest achievements with bassist Buell Neidlinger and drummer Dennis Charles, who anchored his original working groups through the '50s and early '60s. Neidlinger's warm, flowing acoustic lines are gloriously clear and resonant, setting off Cecil's bell-like clusters and percussive polyrhythms in sharp relief. But what really makes *Looking Ahead* special is the presence of doomed innovator Earl Griffith, the Lester Young of the vibes. Griffith's tolling, serpentine melodies and quiescent touch lend each tune a carillon air of stillness and contrapuntal reflection. From the serene contemplation of "African Violets" to the dancing sorcery of "Wallering," *Looking Ahead* is the most mysterious and enchanted of C.T.'s early works.—*Chip Stern*

XTC

Rag & Bone Buffet |Virgin|

Most of these 24 tracks, some dating as far back as 1978, were overlooked the first time they came out, even by XTC fans. It's not hard to see why; cropping up on B-sides and obscure movie soundtracks, under pseudonyms like The Colonel and the Three Wise Men, they were asking for oblivion. But *Rag & Bone Buffet* proves they deserve better, and that the tunes these guys throw away are worth more than some bands' careers. "Tissue Tigers" and "Pulsing Pulsing" are minor classics, while Colin Moulding's "The World Is Full of Angry Young Men" is far superior to any of his songs on *Oranges and Lemons*. An ideal way for the XTC junkie to pass the time until the next "real" album.—*Mac Randall*

BOB WILLS & THE TEXAS PLAYBOYS

The McKinney Sisters |Kaleidoscope|

The CD cover cautions "for collectors only," as if to distance it from Kaleidoscope's amazing Tiffany Transcriptions series, arguably the best collection of Bob Wills

World Radio History

music ever recorded. Featuring the same band over roughly the same period (1946–47), this set brings together 23 tunes which spotlight the honeyed vocals of Dean and Evelyn McKinney, a harmonizing style that owes more to '30s big bands than the lone prairie. Arrangements vary wildly, from a strictly cornball "Hawaiian War Chant" to a sweetly swinging "Blue Skies." But while the material is a bit tamer than the Playboys' usual fare, there's enough hot moments to make Bob holler, with crack solos by Millard Kelso, Joe Holley, Junior Barnard and the late, great Tiny Moore. Take it away gals, take it away. (Box #0, El Cerrito, CA 94530)—*Mark Rowland*

BARRY & THE REMAINS

Barry & the Remains [Epic/Legacy]

They were formerly known as the Remains, but you can't accuse singer/guitarist Barry Tashian of getting on a star trip; his group's been dead for 25 years. The reason they haven't been forgotten is amply demonstrated on this 21-track CD. Northeasterner Tashian may have smiled like Gerry Marsden but his singing and songwriting evolved from barely concealed Beatle-envy to rougher Stones-ish sneers. Toeing the line between Brit-beat and punk-rock, the Remains' classy musicianship (electric-piano/guitar front line) gave them a considerable edge in horsepower over the competition. This nicely packaged collection, with excellent sound, makes a fitting tribute.—*Scott Isler*

SAMMY DAVIS JR.
LAURINDO ALMEIDA

Sammy Davis, Jr. sings, Laurindo Almeida plays [DDC Compact Classics]

JULIE LONDON

The Best of Julie London [Rhino]

Go ahead, laugh. We all have a soft spot in our heart of hearts for the late, lamented Sammy Maudlin, but understated sincerity is not the first facet of his personality which comes to mind. Of course that is precisely what is demanded here, as moody standards like "Here's That Rainy Day" are set against the spare, thoughtful backdrop of Laurindo Almeida's acoustic guitar. And while the results may not bring tears to your eyes, understated sincerity is precisely what Davis delivers. At times you'll swear you can feel him straining to repress his penchant for theatrical flourish, but maybe it's simply the formal grace of his diction, or the surprisingly mellow timbre of his baritone. So much of Sammy's legacy is based on showbiz glitz, it's nice to discover he could hold his own in musical settings devoid of artifice.

So could Julie London, a '50s-era crooner often mistakenly lumped with brassy white-bread stylists like Doris Day. As a singer, London's range was limited, but her expression was so naturally relaxed, sultry and intimate that at her best, surrounded by combos led by the likes of Barney Kessel and Bud Shank, she could invest songs like "Cry Me a River" or "In the Still of the Night" with decidedly erotic hue. Some of the big band arrangements here recall the feathery Nelson Riddle charts Linda Ronstadt more recently marched over. Julie London knew what to do with them. (8300 Tampa Ave., Northridge, CA 91324 [818] 993-8822)—*Mark Rowland*

THE RASPBERRIES

Capitol Collectors Series [Capitol]

Eric Carmen's hair has always looked silly, but his music wasn't always dippy Top 40 fodder, as this deserved compilation demonstrates. In the early '70s, Carmen joined forces with fellow Ohioan Wally Bryson of Cleveland's legendary Choir ("It's Cold Outside"); their quartet made some of the zestiest pop of its day, fusing Beatlesque hooks with hearty Beach Boys–styled harmonies. This 20-track CD collects their best, including the lubricious "Go All the Way," the hard-rocking "Tonight," the marvelous neo–Brian Wilson car song "Drivin' Around" and the collection's raison d'être, "Overnight Sensation (Hit Record)," at once a monument to rock 'n' roll ambition and a monumental Jimmy Ienner production job (the fake fade'll slay you every time). Great ear candy all the way.—*Chris Morris*

THE BALFA BROTHERS

Play Traditional Cajun Music—Vols. I & II [Swallow]

The Balfas have been making music, Cajun style, for decades—Dewey's even been honored as a National Heritage Fellow by the NEA's Folk Arts Program. This hourlong disc compiles the Balfas' first two LPs for Floyd Soileau's label. It's full of undiluted, often 120-proof Cajun commotion recorded in the early '70s before the tragic passing of brothers Will and Rodney in 1979. The vocals' sweet, mournful French twang tells of broken hearts, drunken quests and other working folks' woes. Yet the celebratory upsurge of tunes like "Straw Cove Two-Step," "Mardi Gras Dance" and "Bury Me Not" is a potent reminder of the hope that a good time can bring. (P.O. Drawer 10, Ville Platte, LA 70586)

—*Tom Cheyney*

MORRISSEY

[*cont'd from page 35*] and impenetrable. Bowie at that time was despised, which made him absolutely lovable to me. I first saw him in '72, and it was an amazing vision, but it was not popular by any means. In retrospect, people consider such artists as Bowie and the early Roxy Music to be much more popular than they actually were at the time."

So when did that attitude change? "It simply changed when Bowie began to wear suits and Mott the Hoople broke up and Bryan Ferry went to Hollywood and the New York Dolls were history. And then, you know, it's quite safe to be affectionate about something that isn't really there anymore. That's the absolutely classic case in British pop, that we must mourn what we didn't comment upon at the time of its existence. We must mourn what we made no effort to save when it was dying."

There seems to be an inevitable leap here, and sure enough, it comes. "I mean," Morrissey says, "if I were knocked down tomorrow by a passing train, I would be considered the most important artist ever in the history of English pop music, which today I am not considered to be."

He chuckles dryly, but not bitterly. "That's just a rough guess."

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(Gramavision 79451)

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Phœnix 90

French Jazz Violinist **Didier Lockwood** debuts his first Gramavision/JMS collection with an exciting mix of jazz, fusion and rock-influenced compositions and improvisations for a very contemporary and uplifting sound. (Gramavision/JMS 79463)

ALLAN HOLDSWORTH/GORDON BECK
With A Heart In My Song

Acclaimed guitarist **Allan Holdsworth** teams up with keyboardist **Gordon Beck** for a fascinating set of duets that falls into the realm of improvised music. From the tastefully sublime to some intensely orchestrated jamming, "With A Heart In My Song" is a thoroughly engaging collection of contemporary jazz music. (Gramavision/JMS 79464)

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Issue	Deadline Date
July 91	May 5
August 91	June 7
September 91	July 8
October 91	August 9
November 91	September 9
December 91	October 7
1992	
January 92	November 11
February 92	December 9

TAYLOR

[cont'd from page 76] like Crosby, Nilsson and Starr. "The days of drooling on your guitar are over—the record companies can't afford to pay for it."

In an era of machine dreams, Taylor sees a shift back to his plain style. "For a while drummers were hurting. But drums are a lot more upfront in the mix than they used to be. Still, this year, the really tight snare is in, so everyone has it, and you can't tell if it's a machine or a person.

"I come from the old school of drumming. The 26 basic rudiments—long roll, triplets, that sort of thing. A lot of drummers hold their sticks like bats; I use the traditional grip, left hand up, right hand down, and it gives a lot of wrist control. You can play very soft or very loud."

Cheerful and warm, Taylor is probably unrecognizable to people who knew him in his dark ages. He's a proud grandpa now: "Steven's three, and he's a little drummer. I bought him a little kit, and he plays the shit out of it. He's going to be a drummer." Grandfather knows best. Ⓜ

AD INDEX

The following companies are more than willing to fill you in on their products. Call or write them, and tell 'em you saw it in MUSICIAN.

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The Musician Guide to Rock Star Hats

IN 1984 WE WERE IN A GREENWICH VILlage tavern with a group of about eight people, including Adam Clayton and Bono of U2. Two women we had met the weekend before joined us at our table. We introduced everyone and one of the women said to Bono, "Bozo? Your name is BOZO?" She grabbed Bono's black pillbox *Unforgettable Fire* hat off his head and put it on. "Hey, everybody! Don't you think this hat looks a lot better on me than it does on BOZO?"

It occurred to us then that a hat that looks perfectly normal on a rock star when we know he's a rock star can look a little goofy when we see it on a normal human being. You can tell a lot about a musician from his records, from his stage performance and from his interviews. But over the years we've realized that you can tell the most about a musician from his hat (when it came to people making fun of his hat, Bono was no stuffed shirt). What follows is a guide to some of the most impressive—and influential—hats in the rock pantheon.

THE TEN GALLON STETSON: A badge of attitude if not authenticity, the Hoss hat connotes back-to-basics C&W values. Whenever an interviewer asks Lyle Lovett about his high hair, Lyle says that all country singers have hair like his—it's just that the other guys cover it with their Stetsons.

THE REVISIONIST COWBOY HAT: Made popular by the Band, this Butch Cassidy number is less childish and more serious than the wide-brimmed Stetson. After *Music from Big Pink*, back-to-the-barn rockers from McGuinness-Flint to Lynyrd Skynyrd donned this backwoods lid. Note that for the *Big Pink* photo session, Richard Manuel (center) had to fake it with an Irish walking hat. By the time of the second Band album, Manuel had stolen Rick Danko's hat.

THE ZORRO HAT: Van, Van, Van, Van, the fox so cunning and free. Van, Van, Van, he makes the sign of the V.

THE KNITTED HAT: Mike Nesmith only wore his tolk in the first season of "The Monkees," but he started a revolution. Marvin Gaye often wore a wool chapeau, and many rastas found a big roomy knitted hat perfect for containing those tumbling dreadlocks.

THE LEGEND: Jimi Hendrix's black bad-guy hat made him a dashing figure in '60s London. After Hendrix died, his guitar mantle—and his signature brim—was adopted by Stevie Ray Vaughan. Whoever wears that number next is going to have a big crown to fill.

THE DO-RAG: Simple, street-smart and snazzy, the do-rag has been popular at least since Aunt Jemima Pancakes appeared, but it is most closely associated with Little Steven Van Zandt. In his early Miami Steve days, Van Zandt wore cheap little men's straw hats that made him look like Donald Hollinger. But when he wrapped his head like a pirate, Little Steven became hip. The Edge has occasionally donned the do-rag, and Axl Rose has appropriated it for his own.

A WORD OF CAUTION: It is often assumed that any rock star who always wears a hat must have something to hide. And we don't mean the mark of the beast. While we would not deny that there are a few bald heads under those stylish toppers, the fact is that the rock stars who are *really* worried about being bald are the rock stars who wear wigs. More than a few becapped cats are just mildly receding. For such headliners a hat may be just a hedge against the future. Ⓜ

Photographs: Photofest; "Big Pink" art courtesy Capitol Records

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