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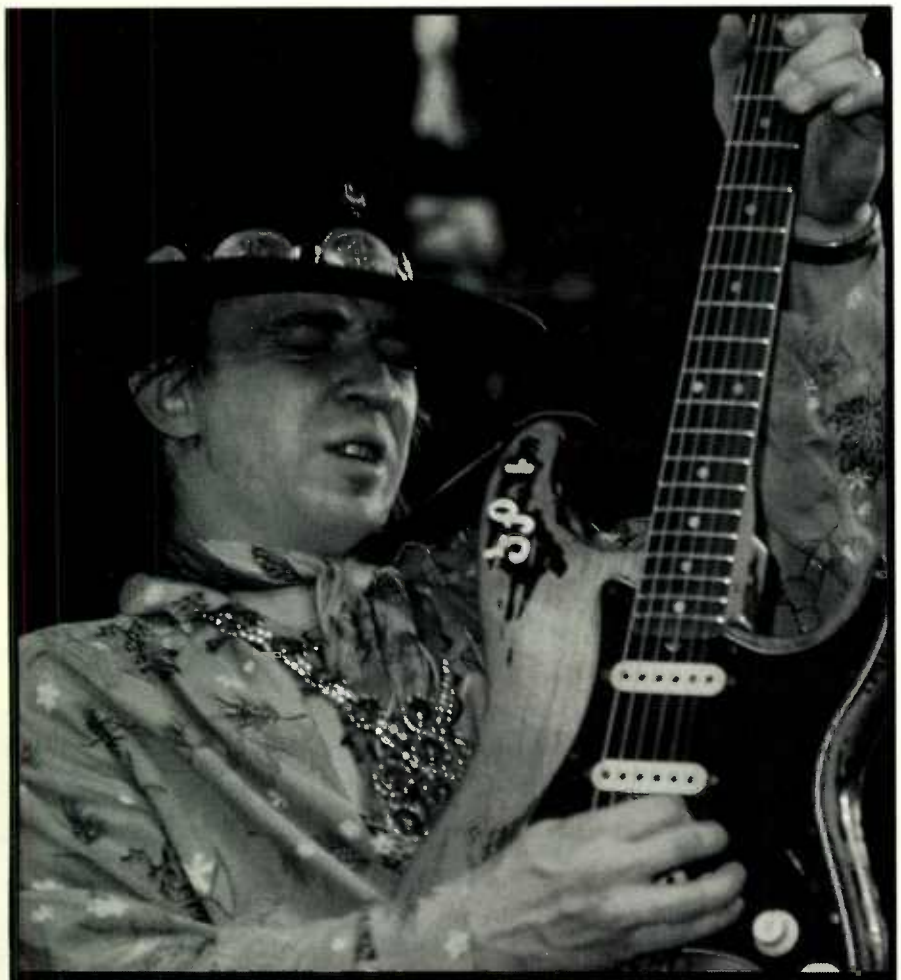


Includes:

Testify
So Excited
Voodoo Chile
Pride and Joy
Tell Me
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Texas Flood
Love Struck Baby
Hug You Squeeze You
Third Stone From The Sun
Lenny
Wham

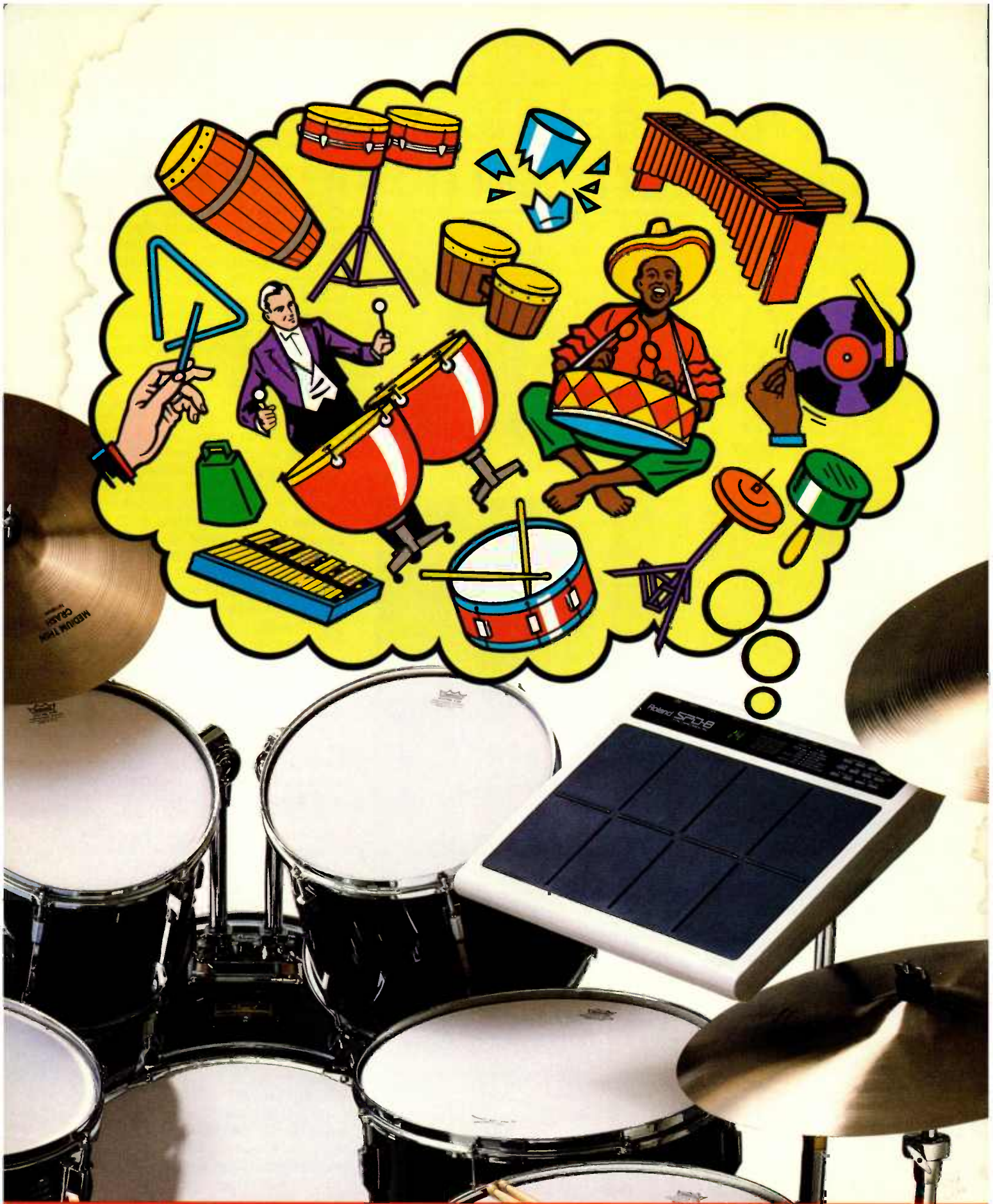
SMV

Creative Consultant: Jimmie Vaughan

As with any great artist, particularly those of the blues persuasion, Stevie Ray Vaughan was constantly taking chances, stretching out, discovering new possibilities even in songs he performed nightly. Brother Jimmie Vaughan hit the nail on the head as only he could: "He never played it the same way once, much less twice." As impressive as Stevie's too-brief studio career was, the records represent only freeze-frame stills of songs (and a guitarist) that were continually evolving. And like any self-respecting guitar-slinger, Stevie Ray's flamboyant, in-your-face style blossomed most in front of a live audience. Such was obviously the case one night in 1983 when Double Trouble played Toronto's El Mocambo. Luckily, the entire event was captured on film.

Drummer Chris Layton recalls, "It was just a straight live performance, there just happened to be cameras there." In other words, this wasn't a "studio audience": there were no re-takes, no fixing or sweetening after the fact. Clearly, the El Mocambo crowd witnessed an emerging guitar legend and his top-notch band on an extraordinary night. Even with bassist Tommy Shannon towering over him, Stevie appeared almost larger than life. Four of the songs included here were never released on LP in Vaughan's lifetime. The eight remaining titles include favorites from Double Trouble's early repertoire: "Love Struck Baby," "Pride and Joy," "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and Stevie's homage to his hero Jimi Hendrix, "Voodoo Chile." Another Hendrix vehicle, "Third Stone From the Sun," is a tour de force of acrobatics, both sonic and physical, while "Lenny" reveals the guitarist's lyrical, sensitive side. And his rendition of "Texas Flood" is without a doubt one of the most overwhelming recordings of Stevie Ray (or any guitarist) ever documented—a textbook (make that an *encyclopedia*) of incandescent lick streaming forth like a thunder shower. Like a flood.

—Dan Forte



A picture may be worth a thousand words, but in this case we might add six more. Roland. SPD-8. Buy one. Thank you. **Roland**

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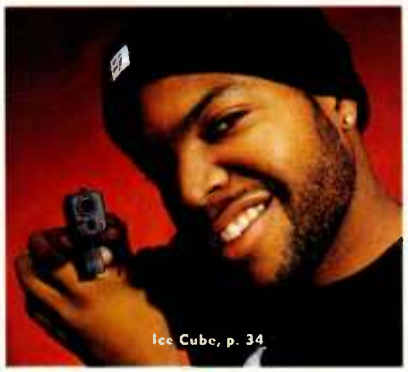

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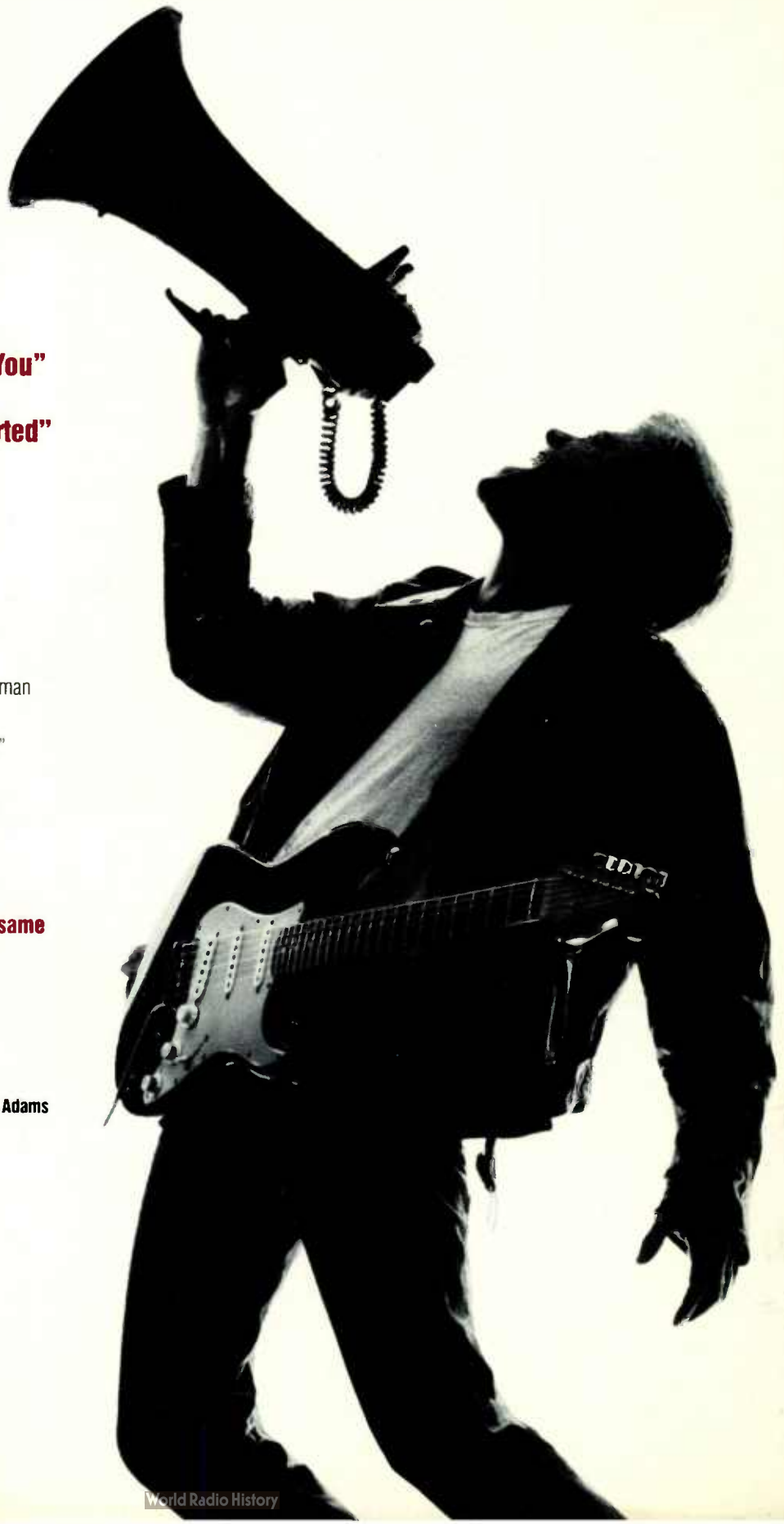
Cover: Ice Cube photographed by Louis Cahill, Atlanto, Georgia, December 1991. **This page** (from top): Steve Granitz, Louis Cahill, Linda Covello

BRYAN ADAMS WAKING UP THE NEIGHBOURS



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A&M RECORDS

Lou Reed

Your new album, Magic and Loss, *is about death and dying. Are you prepared for the emotional demands some people will make on you after they hear it?*

It did cross my mind. I came to realize from a couple of people I played it for how much it could mean to some people. I wrote a little thing that's on the intro to the album that says, "Between two Aprils I lost two friends, between two Aprils magic and loss." That's what happened. But you end up with a positive thing from it. These people I'm talking about were very great, positively oriented people. An album that wasn't positive would have been a disappointment not only to me but to them.

Was there any point after you started when you considered walking away from it?

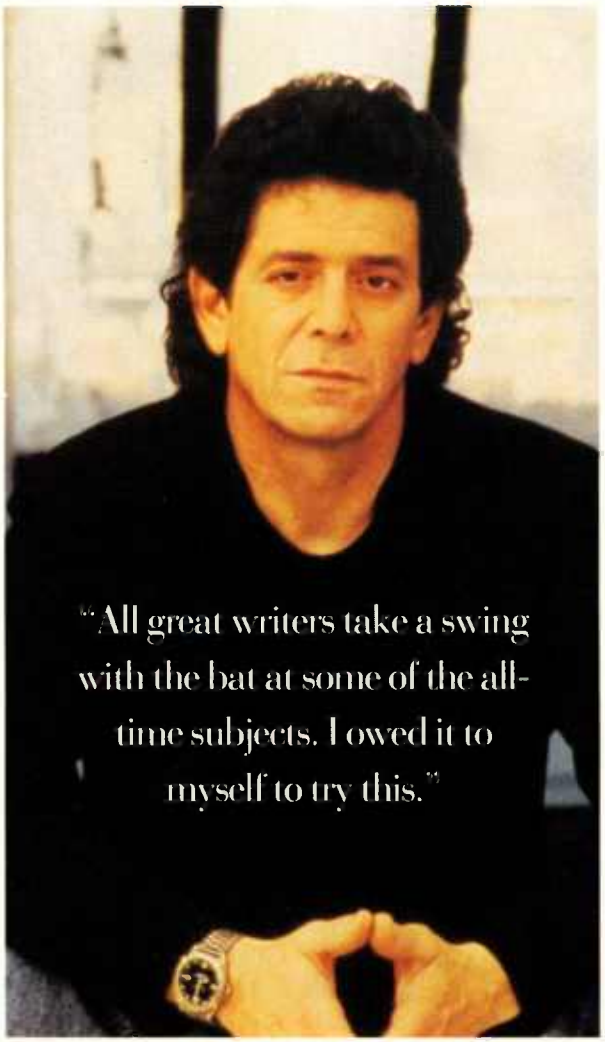
It's not a matter of choice. That's what had to be written about, so that's the ride. [*laughs*] What I could have done is written it and then not recorded it. But it meant a lot to me. I thought it was the best thing I'd ever done and I thought if it *could* be done, it'd be great to follow it all the way through. I didn't think of it as a depressing album. It takes you through it. It shouldn't be hard for people who've had friends who've been hurt by AIDS to find some relief in the album. I'm not the only person going through this.

Your last album was New York, *then you and John Cale did* Songs for Drella. *You're working on sustained themes.*

I very much like doing thematic albums with a beginning, a middle and an end, as opposed to 12 or 14 disparate thoughts. That keeps my attention up and *my* interest. You can kind of follow a line between *New York*, *Drella* and this. This is further along the development of that approach to making an album, which I find interesting enough to pursue. All great writers take a swing with the bat at some of the all-time subjects. And that's what this was. I owed it to myself to try this.

Will you perform the songs in concert as one piece?

I'd like to perform it as a set piece. That would be the show. That's what I want to do with my life. That's where I think my kind of rock 'n' roll shows are going—if it's still being called rock 'n' roll. When I did *New York* I did most of the album and then a second half. I didn't do the whole album because I didn't have the physical strength to do the whole album *and* a second half. Then when John and I did *Drella*—which was only here in New York and in Japan—it was *just* that. That's what I want to do with *Magic and Loss*, 'cause I can't see watering it down. The full thought is the point.



Actually, there'd been some talk about performing *Drella* elsewhere, but all the people who talked to us immediately said, "Oh, you've got to do some Velvet Underground songs after it." So John and I agreed, "Well then, we won't do it." So it didn't get performed in L.A., didn't get performed in Chicago, didn't get performed in San Francisco, which I think was sad both for us and for other people. They didn't get to see an entire thought 'cause the expectations were for pieces and bits. That's a real shame. But on *Magic and Loss* I've made it clear that's what I'm going to go out and do. I guess we'll see what happens. And the audience that doesn't want that, that's okay—you can't please everybody.

"The Power and the Glory" reminds us that there are people in the world who accept magic as part of everyday reality. Is there any room in your own philosophy for the supernatural?

Well, I definitely won't know that until I'm gone. Then all these questions will be answered. So far nobody's reported back, so they must have very strict rules about it.

"Warrior King" is about the intense anger dying people go through.

Right, if you met cancer in an alley you'd stomp it to death. That's what "Warrior King" is about.

You know, Lou, this album will be around when we're gone.

Well, I don't think of my records as disposable. I'm always in there trying to make the one that will really live, that you go back to 10 years from now, 200 years from now, that is not encompassed or attenuated by some fad or circumstance that's purely temporal.

"Cremation" could stand as your elegy. When you die radio stations will play that.

When I die they'll play "Walk on the Wild Side."

—Bill Flanagan

Photograph: Diego Uchitel

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ISSUE NO. 160

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EDITOR

MATT RESNICOFF • TONY SCHERMAN
SENIOR EDITORS

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(310) 273-7040
WEST COAST EDITOR

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RUTH MAASSEN
TYPOGRAPHER

FINELLA TAORMINA
ASSISTANT TO THE ART DIRECTOR

MAIN OFFICE/PRODUCTION/RETAIL SALES
33 COMMERCIAL ST.
GLOUCESTER, MA 01930
(508) 281-3110

ADVERTISING/EDITORIAL
1515 BROADWAY, 39TH FL.,
NEW YORK, NY 10036 (212) 536-5208

JOAN MASELLA
CIRCULATION MANAGER

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LETTERS

Frank Talk

THERE HAVE BEEN FRANK ZAPPA RECORDINGS that did nothing for me, but all his tunes come with a guarantee carved in granite: that every note will remain true to his music and himself. A quarter-century and a million riffs' worth of music for music's sake.

Dave Farrell
York, PA

WHEN I THINK OF ZAPPA, I THINK OF three things: *Music is the best, absolutely no overdubs* and *register to vote.* Thanks, Frank! Thanks, *Musician*!

Todd R. Logan
Churchville, PA

FRANK ZAPPA CONTINUES TO AMAZE and outrage. His stance as an unrepentant music-industry maverick is the antithesis of the stale, flaccid state of rock, and that includes the continued lionization of Hendrix and all his wanna-bes. If all you want to do is sell magazines, hell, why not just slap Elvis on the cover? Since it seems that you care about music, how about putting a living legend out front next time?

Thomas P. Saul
Madison, WI

UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR WRITER WAS correct about Zappa's cancer. In this case, I wish your magazine was wrong.

Victor Przysiezny
Chicago, IL

PLEASE TELL FRANK THAT WHEN HE is feeling better he should remix *Sleep Dirt* and put it on CD.

Mike Mazyck
Marion, SC

Hey Yo

IN "JIMI HENDRIX—IN HIS OWN Words" (Nov. '91), Jimi states that "Hey Joe" is a traditional song written about one hundred years ago. Those of us who know Billy Roberts, the author of "Hey Joe," think he may be older and crisper than he used to be, but he is by no means over one hundred years old! He's alive and well and living in Northern California, trying to keep his head above water. Jimi just didn't know about the real author of "Joe," although he is right—it is a traditional song.

Kathy O'Brien
Petaluma, CA

WHY DIDN'T SCOTT ISLER INCLUDE Hendrix's viewpoint on Dylan? I guess I have longer to wait. Jimi did do more than one of Bob's songs, you know.

Santa Fe Jack
aka R.T. Stewart
Santa Fe, NM

Cool

THANKS FOR THE ARTICLE ON DUANE Eddy. People occasionally forget what a great influence he was on so many guitar players. In the Beatles' first interviews in 1964, they listed as influences people like Roy Orbison, the great Motown vocal groups and, of course, Duane Eddy. Fogerty was right on the money saying how impossible it is to imitate Duane. You can get only so close before you realize...it must be in his DNA.

I grew up in Phoenix, and was lucky enough as a grade-school kid to spend many an hour standing behind Audio Recorders listening to Duane record. You could hear the leakage from the echo tank in back of the building—yes, it *was* an old water tank. If you think his records sounded good, you should have heard the *sound* coming out of that old echo tank. It was religious.

Duane Eddy is still the coolest.

Mike Condello
Santa Monica, CA

MR. FOGERTY, YOU ARE TOO HUMBLE. You helped form the way I (and a million other players my age) sound today. Sparse as it may be, your material is a staple for almost every player I know. Furthermore, I can understand your enthusiasm to interview Duane Eddy. It would be a memorable day in this player's life to just meet John Fogerty. I also agree that Duane Eddy is indescribably cool—I listened to him right after I read the interview. Cool.

Ian Ballard
Covina, CA

Johnnie B. Wrong

YOUR JOHNNIE JOHNSON ARTICLE (Nov. '91) repeats a common misconception apparently held by a number of writers. Specifically, Jon Pareles mistakenly credits Johnnie Johnson with the piano work performed on the original Chuck Berry recordings of "Johnny B. Goode" and "Sweet Little Sixteen." As any number of Berry discographies clearly indicate, the credit for the spectacular piano playing on those tunes rightfully goes to the late Lafayette Leake. Additionally, it should also be noted that Leake was the piano player on "Reelin' and Rockin'," another seminal Berry tune. Please do not misconstrue this letter as a slight upon the work of Johnnie Johnson. Johnnie is indeed a fine player who is finally receiving some well-deserved recognition.

Robert J. Lohr
St. Louis, MO

Gabba-Gabba Hey

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER OR NOT George Kalogerakis ("The Proper Gabba Gabba," Nov. '91) was a music major in college or not, but he certainly sounds like one. Judging from his article on the Ramones, I would guess that he is an elitist, narrow-minded snob who has delusions of grandeur. I would also venture to guess that his record collection (oh, wait, it would be CD collection) does not extend much beyond Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. Lastly, he seems to feel that if song lyrics do not carry some profound, symbolic meaning (not to mention big words) then they aren't worth blowing your nose at. Now, if Kalogerakis *was* a music major, then I understand that this is a genetic defect common to most music majors. If not, however, then I advise him to get a life.

Patricia Barker
Cedar Knolls, NJ

Being Reviewed

IF ANYONE OVER THE LAST DECADE has defined a "rock 'n' roll" attitude, John Mellencamp is it. I'd like to know where Kristine McKenna gets off saying, "At age 40, he hasn't figured out that we are all the system" (*Recordings*, Nov. '91). Should he change his ideas and feelings about his surroundings just because he is 40 now? How stupid. What does she want from the guy? More stupid pelvic cliché?

Tim Smetana
Scottsdale, AZ

Errata

DUE TO AN EDITING ERROR, THE story on soundalike suits (Dec. '91) incorrectly stated that Yvette Marine had settled her vocal credit suit against Paula Abdul. In addition the article should have stated that New York has no *descendible* right of publicity, rather than no right of publicity at all.

Special apologies to Nirvana, who were given each other's names (Dec. '91) in their photo IDs. The imp responsible has been forced to say his name backwards and sent to the fifth dimension for 90 days.

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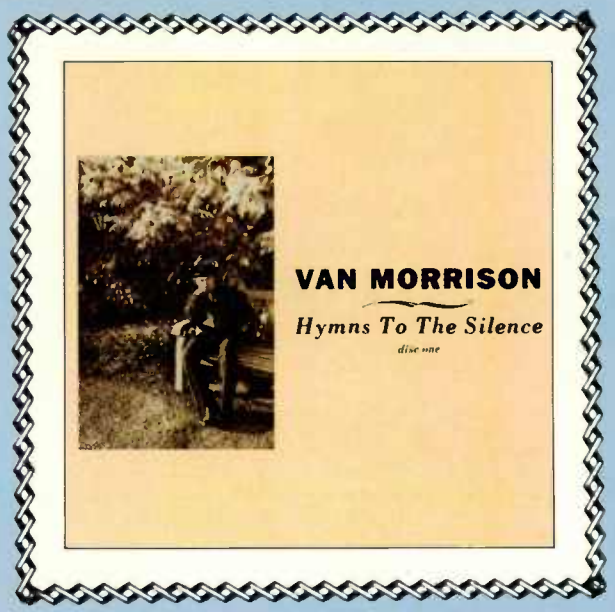

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- Jay Cocks, Time

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- Elysa Gardner, Rolling Stone

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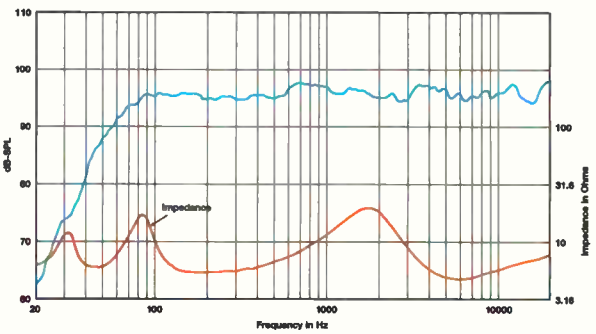
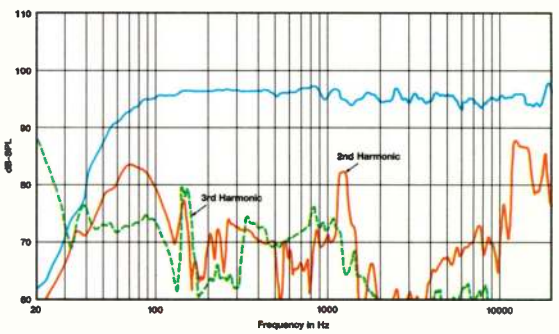


Frequency Response (Model 4206): 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels



Distortion vs. Frequency (Model 4208) 96 dB at 1 m, typical console listening levels (distortion raised 20 dB)

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JULES SHEAR

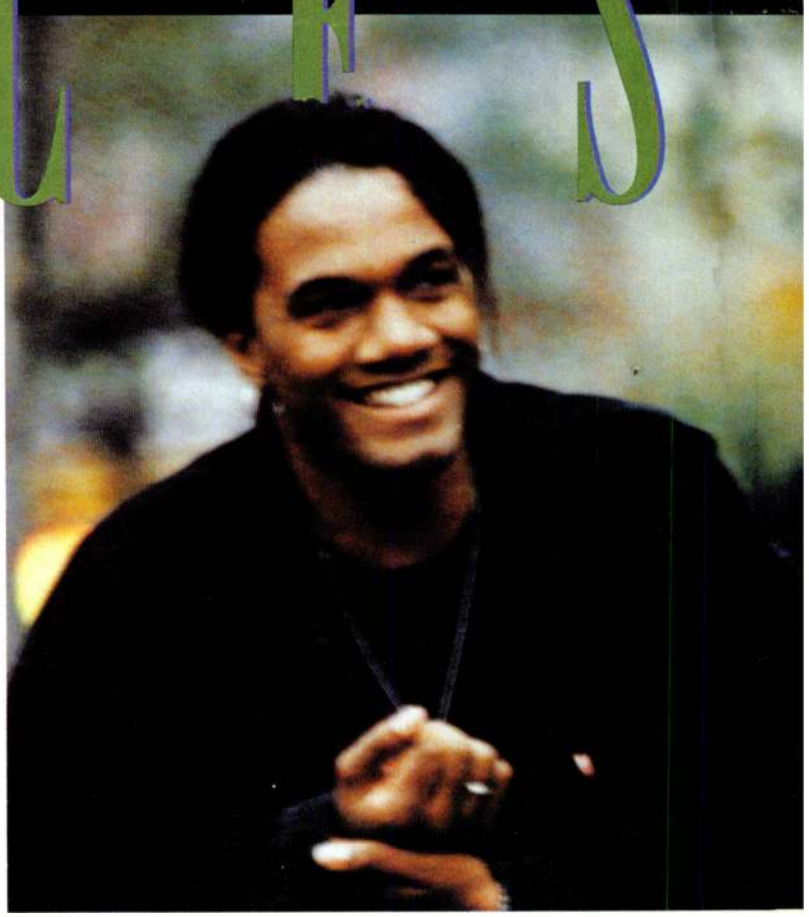
Picking Up the Pieces

"Each of my records seems to be a reaction to the last one," says Jules Shear, regarding *The Great Puzzle*. He's right. The new album finds the ace tunesmith fronting a full band featuring such cool cats as Tony Levin, ex-Funky Kings mate Richard Stekol and fellow Polar Bear alum David Beebe. The prior opus was *The Third Party*, a no-frills duet between Shear and Church guitarist Marty Willson-Piper. And the one before that was the Reckless Sleepers' rockin' *Big Boss Sounds*, on which he shared songwriting duties with three session players.

"It's very difficult to keep your creativity and enthusiasm at the level you'd like over the years," he notes. "One way is to introduce odd situations." Besides these varied offerings, he's produced mento band the Jolly Boys and Canada's Jitters, continued to write with all sorts of folks, including the Band and Marshall Crenshaw, and hosted the first 13 editions of MTV's "Unplugged." In fact, the series evolved from plans for a special to promote *The Third Party*. Shear bailed out when it became more of a superstar showcase and less of an off-the-cuff venture.

Shear and co-producer Stewart Lerman aimed for a clean, in-your-face attack on *The Great Puzzle*. "I don't like it when you listen to a record and hear the studio. Everybody uses a lot of digital reverb these days, and that makes everything sound the same. We tried very hard to keep a certain naturalness all down the line—there's almost no processing on the vocals."

Progressive? Regressive? Shear can't say. "Sometimes I listen to the record and think it's right on the money," he says. "Other times it seems hopelessly out of fashion." In any case, Shear grins, "It's best to stay with what you believe in. If you compromise and it doesn't sell, you have nothing. If you do what you want to do, at least you go down hanging on to something you think is great." JON YOUNG



JEFFREY GAINES

SENSITIVE IN HARRISBURG

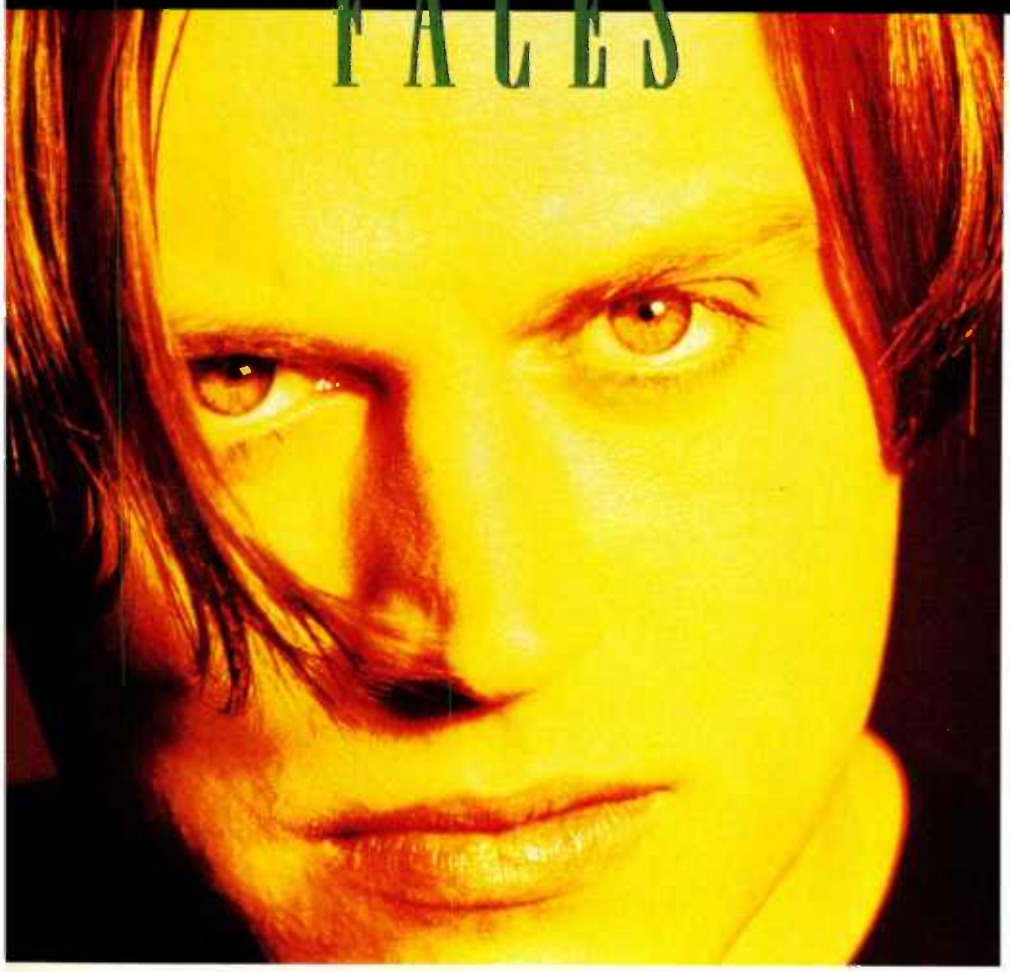
If a lot of socially conscious singer/songwriters scour the globe for issues, 24-year-old Jeffrey Gaines finds plenty of inspiration in his own backyard. "I wouldn't go and write about a rain forest without writing about my neighborhood trees," says Gaines, whose debut album deals with dramas of everyday life—alcohol, unwanted pregnancy and other crises of plain ordinary people. Ask Gaines about his own home life while growing up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, though, and he'll insist that "I choose to see the positive in it"—a hardworking father and a mother who is "the strongest person I know."

If Gaines' raspy baritone and penchant for lean acoustic arrangements evince Elvis Costello's influence—it was a 1978 Costello concert that sparked Jeffrey's musical ambition—the singer has since built a list of influences from Otis Redding to Rush to XTC. "I might take a vocal line from Olivia Newton-John and put it with a Black Sabbath–like bassline. There's too much out there to say, 'I'm not gonna hear that.'"

Having sung and played in numerous bands prior to landing a contract as a solo artist, Gaines is excited about facing audiences on his own. Still, he's not ruling out a group in the future. "It'd be like, here are my ideas, I'm way open for better ones...very much like the Attractions." ELYSA GARDNER

Photographs: Linda Covello(left); Bradford Walker Evans Hitz (right)

FACES



MATTHEW SWEET

The Up Side of Self-Loathing

"The year before the album came out was really hard," says Matthew Sweet cheerfully, recalling how nobody wanted his third record. "I thought I might have to find another career or get a job at the 7-Eleven. I even considered going back to school."

Finished in September 1990, *Girlfriend* was to be Sweet's second time around with A&M, but the label decided to pass. "I felt I had something really good," he says, and rightly so: Compared to its predecessors (*Inside* and *Earth*), the new album has a tougher edge, thanks in part to guitarists Robert Quine and Richard Lloyd, without sacrificing the luscious pure pop that makes Sweet a worthy successor to Big Star and the dB's. After months of "devastating" rejection by various ignorant companies, he found a home at Zoo, where *Girlfriend* quickly made hay on the alternative charts.

A "tiny bit of success" is enough to keep Sweet satisfied, he insists. "I'm not dying to be huge. My goal in life is just to keep making records." For two years in the early '80s he was part of the Athens, Georgia scene, releasing an indie EP with Buzz of Delight before migrating to the Big Apple and solo travails. He's also played with the Golden Palominos and contributed bass to buddy Lloyd Cole's albums.

Despite *Girlfriend*'s pop punch, Sweet admits that self-loathing usually colors his outlook. "Some days I'm happy, others I'm weighed down and crushed," he laughs. "I've always regarded it as a valuable asset that I don't feel good about myself. I'll keep striving to do better."

JON YOUNG

CHAD WACKERMAN

THE MAN TO BEAT

Where lies the median between Zappa and Streisand? Draw the line as a single stroke and it should resemble Chad Wackerman: thin, kinetic and leaning toward perfect. Chad's dazzling drumming gets him all the prime calls—today he's considering a one-off show in Tibet with L. Shankar—and after 10 years he's finally ready to go out under his own banner. As a composer.

A composer? "I always wanted to do a record," says the perennial drum magazine coverboy of his debut *40 Reasons*, "but didn't see much point in doing someone else's material. I also didn't want it to sound like I was showing off chops, because that doesn't mean anything to me. Music has to come first." Good thinking, since the tunes range from hard and funky to absolutely free, powered by bassist Jimmy Johnson and the keyboards of Jim Cox, a schoolmate of Chad's who helped land the drummer some of his first big sessions. Chad's secret weapon is his own longtime employer Allan Holdsworth, whose influence helped shape Chad's tack as bandleader.

"Allan *never* tells us what to play in his band," Chad says. "Frank's just the opposite: He's like a policeman. Sometimes each drum is written out. But on *40 Reasons* the players have so much personality in their playing that it makes for a really individual sound. I like the attitude. So many records, especially in instrumental music, sound like they're really playing it safe. I like a lot of adventure, a lot of contrast. If you're not worried about the radio," he laughs, "you make a record like this."

MATT RESNICOFF

Photograph: Susan Goines (bottom)

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THE BEVIS FROND

A Lucky Accident

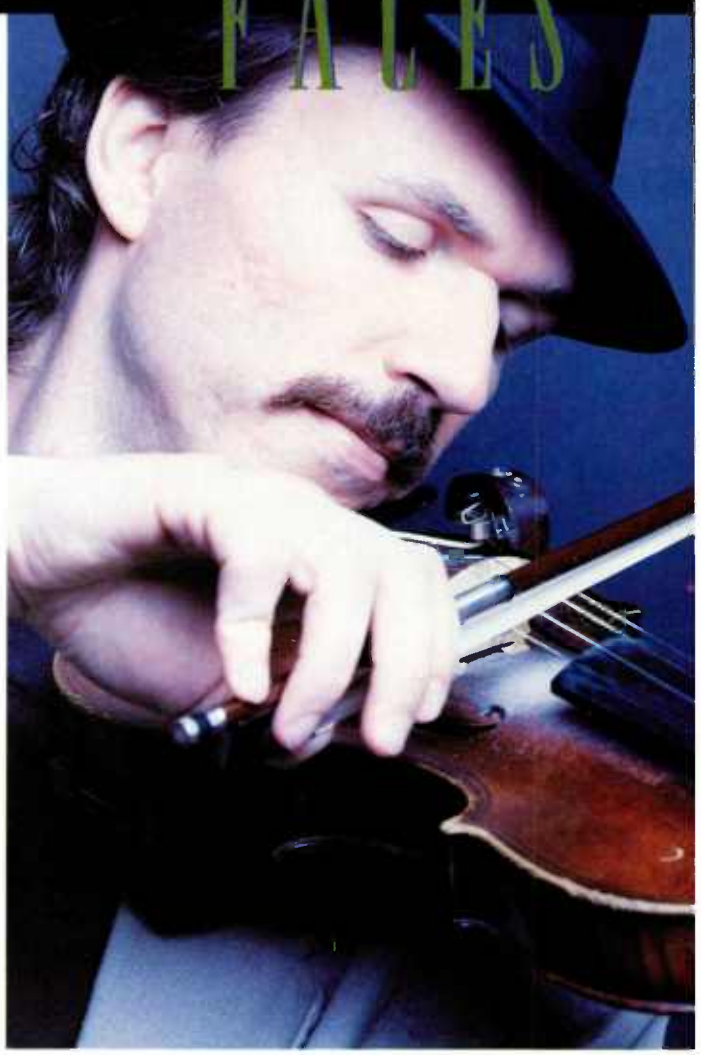
Nick Saloman owes his new career to a hole in London's Camden Road. One night in 1982, on his way home from a soccer match, Saloman ran his motorbike into that hole, fracturing his elbow in eight places. After three years of legalities, the Camden Borough Council awarded him £20,000 in compensation. Once the debts were paid, Nick had just enough left to buy some musical gear and set up a four-track studio in his bedroom. Unable to

work, he puttered around making tapes. "It's ironic," says the veteran of countless dead-end '70s groups. "The first time I stopped trying and decided, 'I'm never going to get anywhere, I'll just do what I want,' was when things started to change."

Nick's one-man-band creations got a warm reception from friends, so he released them on his own label under the name the Bevis Frond (a moniker suggested to him in 1968 by boyhood buddy and future film director Julien Temple). Thanks to "a word-of-mouth, fanzine, record-collector's-listing kind of thing," the albums started selling. In '88, Reckless Records added Bevis to its roster. On Bevis' latest, *New River Head*, we find Saloman recording in a "proper" 24-track facility with several guest players, but the result is as always: Brain-pummeling rockers full of flailing guitars and '60s garage ethos coexist with delicate ballads of peculiarly English humor.

Nick suffers from stage fright, but that hasn't stopped him from touring Europe with considerable success. A U.S. tour may be a long time coming, however: "I'd love to meet all the punters over there who send me mail, but I simply can't afford it right now." Until that changes, be content with the recordings, and the attitude, of the Bevis Frond. As Saloman says, "Most people my age [38] have gone into godawful, no-balls country or folk. I still want to make a horrible noise."

MAC RANDALL



MARK O'CONNOR

PLAYING FOR THE BOSS

"I'm going to put this boy on the Opry with me tonight." That was country music legend Roy Acuff's first reaction after Mark O'Connor obliged his request for the old fiddle tune "Tom and Jerry." That impromptu performance in Acuff's dressing room led directly to O'Connor's Opry debut and, by the end of the weekend, his first record deal. Not bad for a 12-year-old. "At that point I had played fiddle for a year-and-a-half," O'Connor says, "and I think he thought I sounded very mature, not like just a hot kid, but with some depth in the playing." Now, at the ripe old age of 30, with 12 albums, countless Nashville sessions and a couple of fresh CMA awards under his belt, the fiddle virtuoso is finally getting a chance to return the favor by playing a tribute to Acuff at the White House. Still, there's something special about those backstage performances. "Every time I go visit Roy he asks me to grab the fiddle and play him some tunes," O'Connor says. "It's an important feeling."

PETER CRONIN

Photograph: Empire Studio (top)

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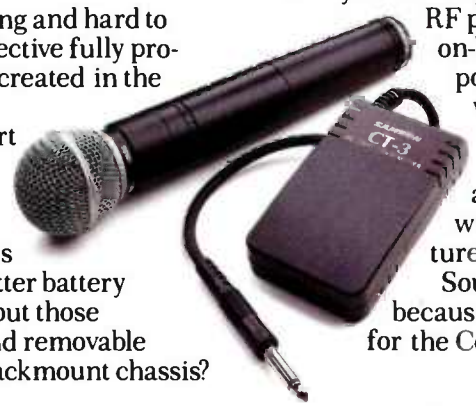

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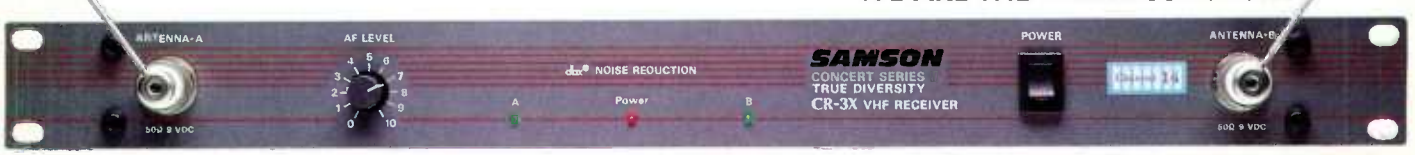

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THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

Top 100 Albums

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

1 • 1	**Garth Brooks**	*Ropin' the Wind*/Capitol
2 • 90	**Hammer**	*Too Legit to Quit*/Capitol
3 • 43	**Nirvana**	*Nevermind*/DGC
4 • 2	**Guns N' Roses**	*Use Your Illusion II*/Geffen
5 • 89	**Ice Cube**	*Death Certificate*/Priority
6 • 4	**Metallica**	*Metallica*/Elektra
7 • 11	**Michael Bolton**	*Time, Love and Tenderness*/Columbia
8 • 12	**Boyz II Men**	*Cooleyhighharmony*/Motown
9 • 5	**Mariah Carey**	*Emotions*/Columbia
10 • 3	**Guns N' Roses**	*Use Your Illusion I*/Geffen
11 • 7	**Garth Brooks**	*No Fences*/Capitol
12 • 10	**Prince**	*Diamonds and Pearls*/Paisley Park
13 • 9	**Natalie Cole**	*Unforgettable*/Elektra
14 • 6	**Bryan Adams**	*Waking Up the Neighbours*/A&M
15 • 9	**Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble**	*The Sky Is Crying*/Epic
16 • 13	**Bonnie Raitt**	*Luck of the Draw*/Capitol
17 • 15	**Color Me Badd**	*C.M.B.*/Giant
18 • 8	**Mötley Crüe**	*Decade of Decadence*/Elektra
19 • —	**Genesis**	*We Can't Dance*/Atlantic
20 • 29	**Paula Abdul**	*Spellbound*/Captive
21 • 79	**Various Artists**	*Two Rooms: Songs of Elton John* Polydor
22 • 27	**Reba McEntire**	*For My Broken Heart*/MCA
23 • 14	**Public Enemy**	*Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black*/Def Jam
24 • 24	**Amy Grant**	*Heart in Motion*/A&M
25 • 19	**Harry Connick, Jr.**	*Blue Light, Red Light*/Columbia
26 • 18	**Ozzy Osbourne**	*No More Tears*/Epic Associated
27 • 45	**Jodeci**	*Forever My Lady*/MCA
28 • 17	**Naughty by Nature**	*Naughty by Nature*/Tommy Boy
29 • 36	**Marky Mark & the Funky Bunch**	*Music for the People*/Interscope
30 • 23	**Travis Tritt**	*It's All About to Change* Warner Bros.
31 • —	**U2**	*Achtung Baby*/Island
32 • 21	**C&C Music Factory**	*Gonna Make You Sweat*/Columbia
33 • 33	**Garth Brooks**	*Garth Brooks*/Capitol
34 • 22	**Red Hot Chili Peppers**	*Blood Sugar Sex Magik* Warner Bros.
35 • 16	**Soundtrack**	*The Commitments*/MCA
36 • 20	**Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band**	*The Fire Inside*/Capitol
37 • 25	**Van Halen**	*For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* Warner Bros.
38 • 26	**R.E.M.**	*Out of Time*/Warner Bros.
39 • 44	**Firehouse**	*Firehouse*/Epic
40 • —	**Richard Marx**	*Rush Street*/Capitol
41 • 39	**John Mellencamp**	*Whenever We Wanted*/Mercury
42 • 47	**James Taylor**	*New Moon Shine*/Columbia
43 • 30	**Extreme**	*Extreme II Pornograffitti*/A&M
44 • 32	**The Geto Boys**	*We Can't Be Stopped*/Rap-A-Lot
45 • 62	**Vince Gill**	*Pocket Full of Gold*/MCA
46 • 34	**Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers**	*Into the Great Wide Open*/MCA
47 • 42	**Luther Vandross**	*Power of Love*/Epic
48 • 28	**Dire Straits**	*On Every Street*/Warner Bros.
49 • 41	**Trisha Yearwood**	*Trisha Yearwood*/MCA
50 • 46	**Queensryche**	*Empire*/EMI
51 • —	**Bette Midler**	*Music from "For the Boys"* Atlantic
52 • 78	**P.M. Dawn**	*Of the Heart, Of the Soul & Of the Cross*/Gee Street/Island
53 • 57	**Rod Stewart**	*Vagabond Heart*/Warner Bros.
54 • 37	**Alan Jackson**	*Don't Rock the Jukebox*/Arista
55 • 49	**The 2 Live Crew**	*Sports Weekend*/Luke
56 • 38	**D.J. Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince**	*Homebase*/Jive
57 • 35	**Rush**	*Roll the Bones*/Atlantic
58 • 74	**Michael Bolton**	*Soul Provider*/Columbia
59 • —	**Queensryche**	*Operation: Livecrime*/EMI
60 • 81	**Digital Underground**	*Sons of the P*/Tommy Boy
61 • 31	**Bell Biv DeVoe**	*WBBD—Bootcity! The Remix Album*/MCA
62 • —	**Michael Jackson**	*Dangerous*/Epic
63 • 54	**Skid Row**	*Slave to the Grind*/Atlantic
64 • 72	**Original London Cast**	*Phantom of the Opera Highlights* Polydor
65 • 50	**Mariah Carey**	*Mariah Carey*/Columbia
66 • 53	**Soundtrack**	*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* Morgan Creek
67 • 51	**The Black Crowes**	*Shake Your Money Maker* Def American
68 • 48	**Ricky Van Shelton**	*Backroads*/Columbia
69 • 87	**George Winston**	*Summer*/Windham Hill
70 • 59	**Scorpions**	*Crazy World*/Mercury
71 • —	**Poison**	*Swallow This Live*/Capitol
72 • 73	**Madonna**	*The Immaculate Collection* Sire
73 • —	**Enya**	*Shepherd Moons*/Reprise
74 • 67	**Eric Clapton**	*24 Nights*/Duck
75 • —	**Lisa Stansfield**	*Real Love*/Arista
76 • 68	**The Judds**	*Greatest Hits Vol. Two*/Curb
77 • 55	**Heavy D. & the Boyz**	*Peaceful Journey*/MCA
78 • —	**Soundtrack**	*House Party II*/MCA
79 • 75	**Barbra Streisand**	*Just for the Record...*/Columbia
80 • 64	**Clint Black**	*Put Yourself in My Shoes*/RCA
81 • 69	**Erasure**	*Chorus*/Sire
82 • —	**Salt-N-Pepa**	*Black's Magic*/Next Plateau
83 • 88	**Scarface**	*Mr. Scarface Is Back*/Rap-A-Lot
84 • —	**INXS**	*Live Baby Live*/Atlantic
85 • 80	**Dolly Parton**	*Eagle When She Flies*/Columbia
86 • 60	**Stevie Nicks**	*Timespace: Best of Stevie Nicks* Modern
87 • —	**Gloria Estefan**	*Into the Light*/Epic
88 • —	**Keith Sweat**	*Keep It Comin'*/Elektra
89 • 58	**Jesus Jones**	*Doubt*/SBK
90 • 93	**Tanya Tucker**	*What Do I Do with Me*/Capitol
91 • 66	**Reba McEntire**	*Rumor Has It*/MCA
92 • —	**D.J. Magic Mike & M.C. Madness**	*Ain't No Doubt About It*/Cheetah
93 • 84	**Nine Inch Nails**	*Pretty Hate Machine*/TVT
94 • 85	**Big Audio Dynamite II**	*Globe*/Columbia
95 • —	**Alabama**	*Greatest Hits, Vol. 2*/RCA
96 • —	**Soundtrack**	*Beauty & the Beast*/Walt Disney
97 • 61	**Randy Travis**	*High Lonesome*/Warner Bros.
98 • 40	**Tesla**	*Psychotic Supper*/Geffen
99 • 99	**Roxette**	*Joyride*/EMI
100 • —	**Phantom of the Opera**	*Original London Cast*/Polydor

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 November. The concert chart is based on* Amusement Business *Box Score reports for November 1991. All charts are copyright 1991 by BPI Incorporated.*

Top Concert Grosses

1	**Gloria Estefan** *Sydney Entertainment Centre, Sydney, Australia*/November 11–12, 14–15	$1,135,267
2	**Barry Manilow** *N.E.C., Birmingham, England*/November 1–3	$929,217
3	**Rod Stewart** *Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, NY*/November 12–13	$909,400
4	**The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber Featuring Michael Crawford** *Fox Theatre, Detroit, MI*/November 19–24	$906,539
5	**Rod Stewart** *Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI*/November 23–24	$854,005
6	**Jose Carreras** *Sydney Entertainment Centre, Sydney, Australia*/November 26	$791,549
7	**Frank Sinatra, Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme, Corbett Monica** *Madison Square Garden, New York, NY*/November 16	$775,333
8	**Michael Bolton, Francesca Beghe** *The Paramount, New York, NY*/November 19–20, 22–23	$696,710
9	**Frank Sinatra, Steve Lawrence & Eydie Gorme, Corbett Monica** *Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, NY*/November 15	$636,310
10	**Paula Abdul, Color Me Badd** *Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI*/November 8–9	$607,433

Addicted to Numbers

Okay, you're in for a second round of number-crunching now that we're cruising along in the Soundscan Epoch. Before we start, a word on where the rankings in these monthly *Musician* charts come from. Our chart simply combines the results of four or five weeks of *Billboard*'s Top 200 Albums chart. This month's, for instance, is taken from the November 23, 30, December 7 and December 14 *Billboard*s; those charts, in turn, use sales data for the four weeks of November–December 1.

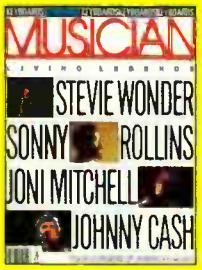
So...supplicating ourselves before the Soundscan oracle, we came away with this for y'all: Continuing its bizarre hegemony (though it's been toppled from number one in *Billboard*), Garth Brooks' *Breakin'*, oops, *Ropin' the Wind* ran through 725,000 copies in November, or 181,000 a week. Slowin' down? Not yet—in fact, *Ropin'* whizzed through 200,000 units the last week of November as Xmas shopping set in. Hammer's *Too Legit to Quit* displaced 560,000 CD-weights, while Nirvana's surprising post-post-punk *Nevermind* rang up 400,000. That's the big three for November. Want a cellar dweller's figgers, for perspective? Happy to oblige. Number 99, Roxette's *Joyride*, moved 45,000 units: smash, bestseller numbers for a hardcover novel (or a jazz album).

For the knuckle-biters at Sony, first-week returns for Michael Jackson's *Dangerous* were inconclusive to bum-me-out: 325,000, or way below *Use Your Illusion II*'s record first week of 700,000 (though Mike's tally didn't include discount-store record racks, which report every two weeks. Soundscan's Michael Fein estimated *Dangerous*' actual first-week numbers at closer to 450,000). How about U2, which hit a week earlier? Some ballpark: a little under 295,000. 'Bye, little chartheads. —TS

BACK ISSUES

. VSOP, Jarreau, Mingus
. McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard
. Chick Corea, avant jazz, Big Joe Turner
. Brian Eno, Talking Heads, Weather Report
. Bob Marley, Sun Ra, Lydia Lunch
. Tom Petty, Dave Edmunds, Wayne Shorter
. Grateful Dead, Zappa, Kid Creole, NY Dolls
. Black Uhuru, Bill Wyman, Rickie Lee Jones
. Willie Nelson, John McLaughlin, the Motels
. Stevie Wonder, X, Was (Not Was), Ornette
. Peter Wolf, King Crimson, Sly + Robbie
. Heavy Metal, Dream Syndicate, Tina Turner
. John Fogerty, Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
. Jeff Beck, Alison Moyet, John Hiatt–Ry Cooder
. Peter Gabriel, Steve Winwood, Lou Reed
. Jimi Hendrix, The Cure, Prince, .38 Special
01. Psychedelic Furs, Elton John, Miles Davis
02. Robert Cray, Los Lobos, Simply Red
04. Springsteen, The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
08. U2, Tom Waits, Squeeze, Eugene Chadbourne
12. McCartney, Stanley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
13. Robert Plant, INXS, Wynton Marsalis
15. Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash
16. Sinéad O'Connor, Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
17. Jimmy Page, Leonard Cohen, Lloyd Cole
18. Pink Floyd, New Order, Smithereens
19. Billy Gibbons, Santana/Shorter, Vernon Reid
20. Keith Richards, Depeche Mode, Steve Forbert
21. Prince, Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
22. Guns N' Roses, Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns
23. Year in Music '88, Metallica, Jack Bruce, Fishbone
24. Replacements, Fleetwood Mac, Lyle Lovett
25. Elvis Costello, Jeff Healey, Sonic Youth
26. Lou Reed, John Cale, Joe Satriani
27. Miles Davis, Fine Young Cannibals, XTC
28. Peter Gabriel, Charles Mingus, Bob Mould
29. The Who, The Cure, Ziggy Marley
30. 10,000 Maniacs, John Cougar Mellencamp, Jackson Brown/Bonnie Raitt
31. Jeff Beck, Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
32. Don Henley, Rolling Stones, Bob Marley
33. The '80s, Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
34. Grateful Dead, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Paul Kelly
35. Aerosmith, NRBQ, Richard Thompson, Max Q
37. George Harrison, The Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
38. Tom Petty, Lenny Kravitz, Rush, The Silos
39. Paul McCartney, Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
40. Robert Plant, Suzanne Vega, Soul II Soul, Drums
41. Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie, Bob Clearmountain
42. Sinéad O'Connor, John Hiatt, World Party
43. Steve Vai, Michael Stipe, Malmsteen/McLaughlin
44. INXS, Neville Bros., Lou Reed/Vaclav Havel
46. Slash, Replacements, Waterboys, Pixies
47. Robert Johnson, Bruce Hornsby, Soul Asylum
48. Pink Floyd, Neil Young, Art Blakey, Black Crowes
49. Jerry Garcia/Elvis Costello, NWA, Pink Floyd
50. R.E.M., AC/DC, Top Managers, Jim Morrison
51. Eddie Van Halen, Fishbone, Byrds, Chris Isaak
52. Stevie Ray Vaughan, Morrissey, Drum Special
53. Bonnie Raitt, Tim Buckley, Sonny Rollins
54. Sting, Stevie Wonder, 15th Anniversary Issue
55. Paul McCartney, Axl Rose, David Bowie
56. Dire Straits, Jesus Jones, Paul McCartney
57. Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Primus, Eddy/Fogerty
58. Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
59. Rock Money, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
P1. Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones
P2. Masters of Metal, Metallica, Def Leppard, more

33
The Clash



115
Stevie Wonder

130
10,000 Maniacs

151
Van Halen

142
Sinéad O'Connor

132
Don Henley

104
Bruce Springsteen

122
Guns N' Roses

128
Peter Gabriel

112
Paul McCartney

141
Jimi Hendrix

150
R.E.M.

117
Jimmy Page

118
Pink Floyd

113
Robert Plant

127
Miles Davis

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Grateful Dead

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INXS

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Aerosmith

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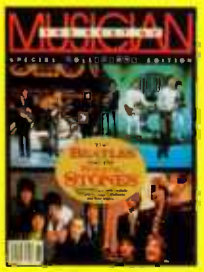
John Fogerty

105
John Coltrane

123
Year in Music

143
Steve Vai



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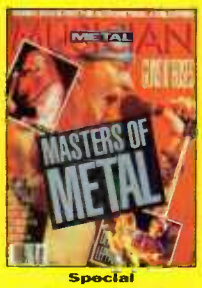
Beatles & Stones



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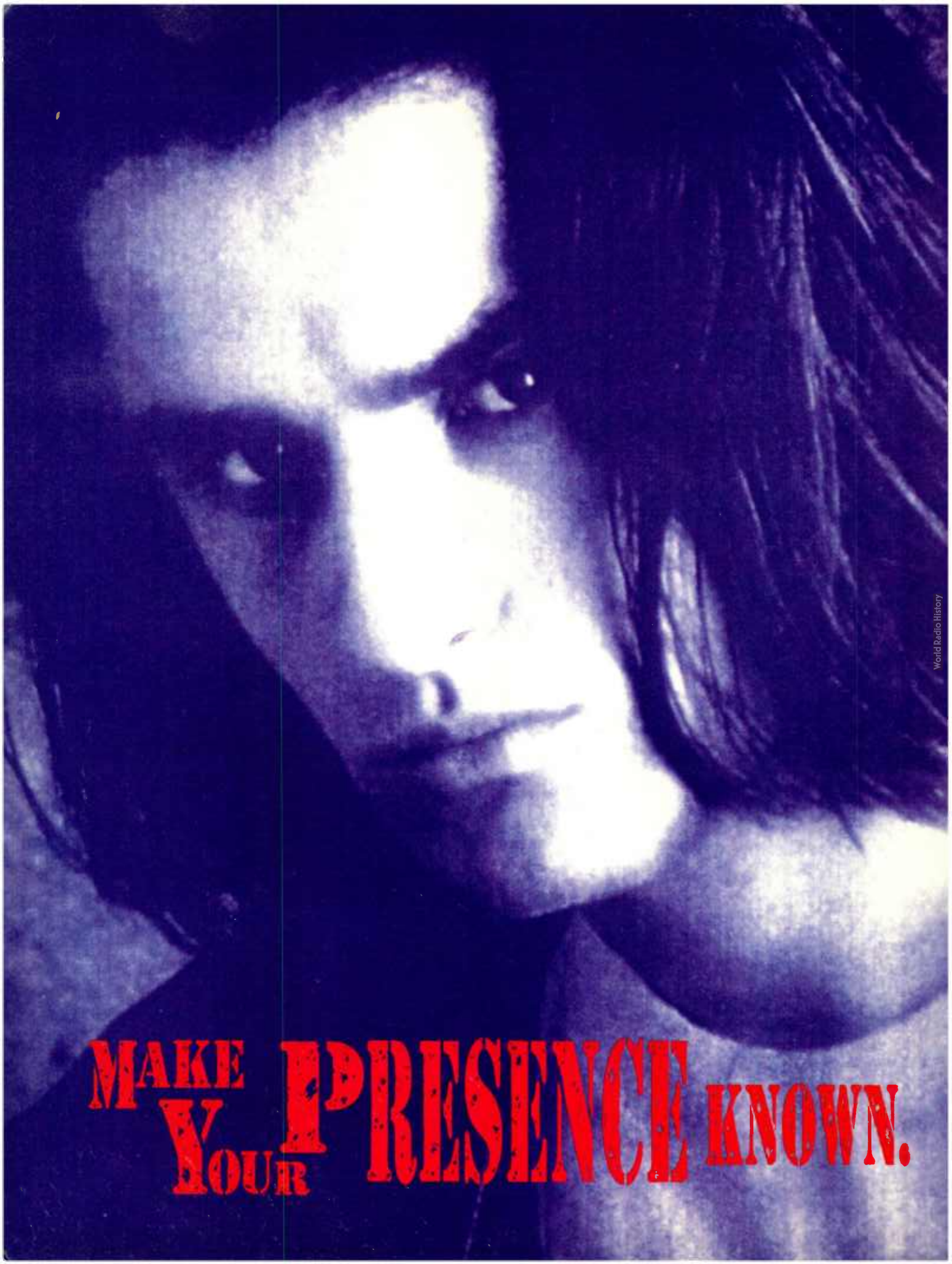

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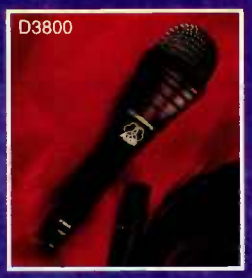

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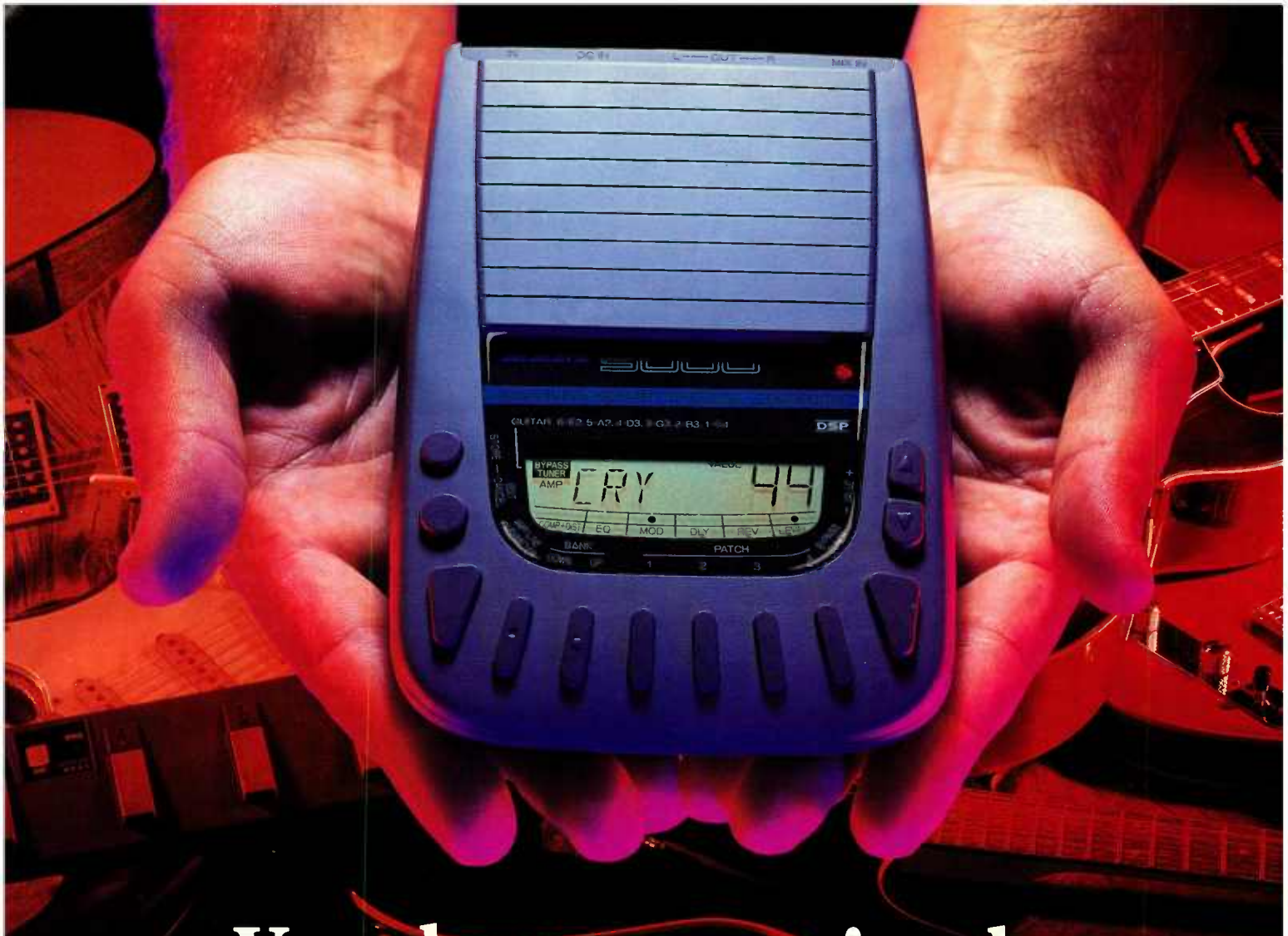

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Trip Shakespeare's Sweat Rock

PLAYING LIKE A NATURAL DISASTER

By Mac Randall

ASK TRIP SHAKESPEARE ABOUT their live show, and one word's bound to come up: sweat. Sweat running down guitar necks and soaking through stage clothes, sweat corroding metal and shorting out pickups, sweat as a constant source of equipment damage. On this cold November night, at the Cubby Bear in Chicago, the first casualty is guitarist Matt Wilson's wah-wah pedal, which protests the humidity with loud crackling noises. It's quickly taken offstage to have its pots oiled. And this is only soundcheck.

"Our genre of music is 'sweat rock,'" says Matt. "We sweat more per town than any band." "It's ridiculous," adds bassist John Munson. "We were playing First Avenue in Minneapolis recently, and the level of my bass started going down. I had this incredibly powerful amp turned up to 10... and I *still* had trouble hearing it. I put on another guitar, and whoa, way too much level. So I turned the amp down, and slowly the pickups got filled with sweat and the same thing happened."

All that sodium chloride in the works could be avoided if the band didn't rock out so intensely, so *athletically*. But Matt isn't going to stop just for the sake of a pickup. Though it's 20 degrees outside, he's sweating more than ever, careering around the stage, playing solos in a precarious, bent-backwards, splay-legged position. And his audience loves it. They've packed the Cubby Bear three nights in a row, drawn by the showmanship and the music it serves: crafty, guitar-driven, hook-laden pop, heard to best advantage on 1991's *Lulu*.

The Trip Shakespeare sound has roots in early-'70s AM radio, which mesmerized brothers Matt and Dan Wilson and pal John Munson when they were growing up in the Twin Cities. Matt comments, "When you're a 12-year-old, the music that's slaying you is the same stuff that 25-year-olds listen to and say, 'Oh, man, the radio is covered with filth.'" The future members of Trip Shakespeare existed for the trashy hits of the time, and they remain unashamed (though if you stick with them long enough, you'll also hear paeans sung to Mingus, Beefheart and Ronald Shannon Jackson).

Dan Wilson, Matt Wilson, John Munson and Elaine Harris

Dan and Matt started playing around the same time; Dan, older by two years, stuck to guitar and piano, while Matt, originally a drummer, moved to guitar only when the songwriting bug hit. The Wilsons played in Minneapolis bands as teenagers, but eventually both left home. Dan headed to San Francisco to pursue a painting career, supporting himself with the occasional carpentry job. "I'd gotten sick of the heartbreak of music," he says. "But I still brought my guitar along."

Matt traveled east, to Cambridge, Mass., where he enrolled in Harvard and met percussionist Elaine Harris. Three years into the curriculum, he realized that music was more important than Harvard, and quit. He'd also sussed that the Boston music scene was less than ideal. "Things were very conservative, lots of mimics—the Cars had just about finished it off. Scenes have to die out completely, and all the scouts have to go away before things happen. That's when cool bands come out, when no one's watching. No one had a hope of being seen in Minneapolis." This being the case, Matt urged Elaine to head home with him.

Around this time, Matt and Elaine devised the unorthodox drum setup that Trip still uses—every drum, including the bass drum, on stands—no pedals. Elaine stands up, Maureen Tucker–style, and lets her hands do the work. Matt explains, "If you get on a regular drum set, it asks you to do certain things. But change the ground rules, and that forces different solutions. It's no use just putting a little whipped cream on something that's already been cooked. If it sounds regular, then we want to twist it to say something new. Elaine is the biggest proponent of that approach in the band."

Photograph: Paul Natkin

"The new setup was really hard those first few gigs," Elaine confesses. "I could barely keep the basic patterns going. I had to stop leading with my right hand. I am close to being ambidextrous now, though."

After auditioning countless bassists, Wilson and Harris decided on old friend John Munson, and Trip Shakespeare was born. A few local gigs ensued, followed by the release of the trio's debut album. 1986's *Applehead Man* featured the concert staple "Fireball" and the ingenious "Beatle," which incorporates quotes from "Taxman," "Ticket to Ride," "Lucy in the Sky" and other Fabs classics. Matt had been sending tapes regularly to Dan in San Francisco, begging him to join up; the first record finally convinced the elder Wilson. "When Dan came back, we flowered," Matt says. "Before, we'd been long on concept and long on bass player, but that was about it."

Trip became a quartet, and toured relentlessly. "We bought a van and went to Kansas City over and over again," explains John. The schedule was broken up only by sessions for the next album, *Are You Shakespearienced?*, a marked improvement over the first. In 1990, A&M signed the band and released *Across the Universe*, signalling another rise in the quality of Trip's playing and writing.

For their next record, the band took a different tack. "We wanted it to sound like the live band we'd become over years of touring," says Dan. A crucial feature of that band is spontaneous improvisation. ("We get compared with the Dead just because we jam," Elaine remarks, mystified. "I guess it's something that stands out because so few bands attempt to do it.")

All *Lulu*'s basic tracks were recorded live, with everyone in the same room; even the intricate vocal harmonies were done without overdubs, sometimes using only one mike. Dan explains, "Our engineer, Justin Niebank, just laughed and said, 'Leakage is our friend!'"

The tactic worked; *Lulu* is Trip Shakespeare's best by far. The [*cont'd on page 90*]

SHAKESPEARE PLAYS

DAN WILSON's fave axe is a custom job, a Modulus Black Knife graphite neck married to a Schecter body. During the *Lulu* tour, one of its pickups shorted out, a casualty of the band's heavy sweat factor, so Dan carried on with a 1990 Fender Strat. Brother MATT is a Gibson SG freak, but also strums a doctored ESP Strat. Both Wilsons play through two ProCo Rat pedals for various levels of distortion—"the gnarliest of the gnarly," says Matt—into 45-watt Marshall Bluesbreaker combos. Matt uses a Tycho Brahe Parapedal (no joke) for "gulping" effects. For acoustics, the brothers favor a Gibson JC-50 and Martin Shenandoah 12-string. Dan pounds away on a Korg SG-1 Sampling Grand.

JOHN MUNSON plugs his Benedict's Groovemaster fretless bass, complete with ebony fingerboard, into an Ampeg SVT. ELAINE HARRIS' drum setup is mix-and-match: the 22" bass drum and 12" rack tom are Yamaha, the 18" floor tom is a Ludwig, and the snare is an old Slingerland. Cymbals are mainly Sabian, though Elaine singles out her Paiste Accent for special praise—"a little disc that makes an amazing sound." Pro Mark is the stick of choice.

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Grooves with Cellos

HANK ROBERTS' MUSIC OF THE SPIRIT

By Gary Chapin

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HANK Roberts was playing classical music, rock and jazz; listening to concertos, Led Zeppelin and John Coltrane; practicing electric guitar, trombone and cello. Well, what's a multi-instrumentalist to do? Roberts settled on the cello. "It's really the most flexible of the three," he asserts. "And it was the one I had the most technique on. Anyway," he shrugs, "the amount of sounds you can get from a cello is amazing. I could do anything with it."

Slender, blond, with wide eyes and an open, fresh-from-Indiana kind of face, Roberts looks like most people's idea of what a cellist should not. That's appropriate, since his cello makes sounds that many people think a cello could not. It can be haunting and impressionistic, noisy and vulgar, disconcerting and endearing—but it's always his sound. The effect is due in part to subtle uses of electronics, partly to the way Roberts uses his voice as foil and companion to his instrument. But mostly, one suspects, it's because Roberts is that rare cellist who never really abides by the rules of the game.

Roberts' Arcado String Trio, for instance, which includes bassist Mark Dresser and violinist Mark Feldman, worked with West German's Kölner Radio Orchestra, in a format in which each Arcado member was commissioned to write a full concerto for orchestra and string trio. With Miniature (featuring Tim Berne on saxophones and Joey Baron on drums) Roberts puts on his avant-jazz shoes; meanwhile, Roberts' *Birds of Prey* sets aside the abstract for a decidedly funky beat, accented by socially conscious lyrics (Roberts is also a surprisingly strong singer). In other words: Have cello, will travel.

Each of these projects is alive and kicking. *Birds of Prey* appeared last year to glowing reviews; the Arcado Trio has a new record due this spring, along with Miniature's *I Can't Put My Finger on It*. What links them is Roberts' sense of experimentation and his devotion to improvisation, which manifests itself differently in each context.

"With these concertos we wrote for Arcado and the orchestra," he explains, "each of us had to come up with a way of working improvisation into a larger setting. That's what makes us Arcado. But there are all kinds of improvisational energies that I can use, depending on the situation. There's something about improvisation that's really life-giving; there is magic in there. You don't know where it comes from sometimes. You have a sense of creating something yourself. It's an adventure land."

Roberts has always preferred routes of self-discovery to formal academics. "I went to Berklee in '73 for one semester," he says, "but I didn't study cello, I studied improvisation. Then I quit school. So a lot of my thing is self-taught. I learn from people, and I still remember some technical things, though my technique is pretty far down in terms of any classical standard. But I can *feel* my sound. That's what I made up."

Much of his music, he goes on, derives from extramusical concerns, notably a lifelong fascination with Native American culture and spirituality.

"I've been to a couple of sweat lodges with a Lenape medicine man who lives up there," says Roberts, who lives in upstate New York. "And I've read a lot about it. The Native American folk weren't perfect—there was bloodshed and warfare that was, perhaps, unnecessary—but a lot of their stuff is really together. The whole idea of the Sweat Lodge, of purifying yourself and coming back to the womb—I hold a deep respect for these ideas."

With *Birds of Prey*, Roberts brought this aspect to the fore. Songs like "Seven Generations" and "Hear Me!" explore the European/Indian conflict from both sides of the frontier. "Pretty Boy Tom" refers to Roberts' great-great-great uncle, who walked 40 miles to fight in the Battle of Tocumsa. But beyond that, the sheer variety and originality of Roberts' [*cont'd on page 30*]

WHAT DOES THE ENVIRONMENT HAVE TO DO WITH ROCK & ROLL?

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Curve: Underground Impressionists

LENNOX AND STEWART, '90S STYLE

By Mat Snow

TONI HALLIDAY AND DEAN GARcia, the core duo of Curve, may have exotic lineages; they pride themselves, however, on a very British attachment to the everyday. Garcia, half Hawaiian and half Irish, had knocked around in little bands when he auditioned for Eurythmics. "It was brilliant: One week I'm on the dole, the next I'm playing with Eurythmics, who'd just got to Number One with 'Sweet Dreams.' Dave and Annie got me out of trouble and took me 'round the world." Dean hates the term "session musician" and claims to be "very choosy, like when Dave asked me to play on Dylan's *Empire Burlesque*. I said, 'No, I don't want to do it. He means nothing to me.'"

Toni was brought up in France, Italy, Spain, Malta and Greece, which was where she, her two sisters and mother were abandoned by the father of the family—"a rogue, a pirate. We never heard from him again. My mother hadn't written to my grandmother for 10 years, but we just turned up on her doorstep and said, 'Here we are—take us in.'" So at the age of eight Toni found herself in bleak northeast England, learning the language and discovering her vocation precociously early. "My grandmother had a ritual every Sunday lunchtime when she'd make us kids sing. Once I overheard her tell my mother I had a lovely little voice. From the age of 11, I knew that I would sing." Toni's first band was the happily named Incest. "We were very naive. I did my first gig when I was 12, and had a solo record deal at 14. I did 10 dreadful tracks, and thought, 'Fuck that, I'm going to London.' The first day I got a job as a waitress, and the second I got a lawyer to get me out of that dreadful contract." This followed advice from Dave Stewart, whom she'd met after he had read a rock magazine interview with her in which she praised his pre-Eurythmics band: "I was listening to the Tourists' B-sides where Annie Lennox, who already had that cold, cutting honesty, would sing alone to her organ, like Nico; I was also

madly into *Chelsea Girls* and the fucked-up glamor of Edie Sedgwick, that whole scene. When I met Dave he had a dreadful cold; I was convinced he was a heroin addict. He was sniffling all the time, and I thought, 'This is what my mom warned me about, I've seen *Lady Sings the Blues*!' In fact, his cold was so bad that three months later his lung collapsed."

Introduced backstage at a Eurythmics gig, Toni and Dean formed a band they called State of Play. But they found themselves mere pawns of a technically expert drummer and, frustrated, they acrimoniously broke up the band. Dean persuaded Toni to reunite in a new project to be called Curve. Stewart signed them to his Anxious label, and Curve's three EPs, all released in 1991, turned the U.K. alternative rock scene on its ear.

Their debut album *Doppelganger* doesn't let up the intensity. Pushed by throbbing bass and drums ("Rhythm to us is about sex"), Curve's songs at first assault your sensorium as a dam-burst of densely overloaded guitar and icy siren vocals. On deeper acquaintance, however, captivating melodies and an old-fashioned sense of song emerge. "The way we work is that Dean comes to my place in the morning and we'll have three cups of coffee, and sit around talking about what happened the previous day, like his baby woke up at five in the morning or I'd had an argument with the accountant," says Toni. "Then we go down to my basement where I have a 16-track Fostex B16. We use it as our gauge of whether we have a song worth working on. Our preoccupation is to become better songwriters, but we proceed according to mood. Dean might set up a drum loop, and I'll say, 'That's too fast—I'm not feeling up.' So we'll slow it down or change it until we find the tempo of the day. Dean talks about music very impressionistically—he'll talk about the 'desert bit' or the 'air bit,' and from that I suss the vibe. We're not techni-

Photograph: Jillian Edelstein

The Judds at Poplar Creek Music Theater, Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

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SHURE BETA

cal. Dean will play a one-fingered root note and I'll start singing absolutely anything, often off the top of my head, even if it's not to be kept. We follow up accidents and go with the flow."

A British rock critics' sensation, Toni's lyrics have been scrutinized for the faintest hint of Patti Smith–style confessional poetry. "I'm very honest and confrontational," she says. "It's got to the point where women can say who they are and express themselves. I'm not going to let that opportunity pass me by." Ⓜ

The Gear Bit

CURVE uses an Akai S1100 sampler, a Fostex B16 tape recorder, a Studia 440 Sequential Circuits drum mochine/-sampler (samples courtesy of Public Enemy, Blapps Posse, U2, Led Zeppelin and the soundtrack to Green Card), an Eventide Ultrahormonizer H3000, an SRT AT sample generator, a Fender Jazzmaster guitar (pre-CBS) with o Morley Power Woh and a Zoom box, a Coloursound Wah, o MusicMon bass and Sonor drums.

ROBERTS

[cont'd from page 26] musical settings suggest a quest for self-expression that's spiritual at its core. "It affects my music," he agrees, "in ways mysterious and not. It's all 'one.' I've had dreams about people who had some kind of spirit song. It's all about sending your voice up and connecting with that spirit. The tunes become familiar friends. We're into each other." Ⓜ

Birds of Play

HANK ROBERTS ploys a mid-nineteenth-century Boulier cello, made in Mirecort, France, and slightly smaller than the stondord cello. He uses o Stefan Schertler pickup to plug into o t.c. electronics parametric equalizer, an Alesis Microverb reverb unit and a Gallien-Krueger 200MB amp. For his voice, Roberts uses whatever house micraphone is lying around, occasionally augmenting his sound with o Boss Pitchshifter and o DOD DFX9 digital delay. His home recording ond composing set-up consists of a Tascam 234 four-track recorder, a Stroud piano and his son's Yamaha PSS-790 keyboard.

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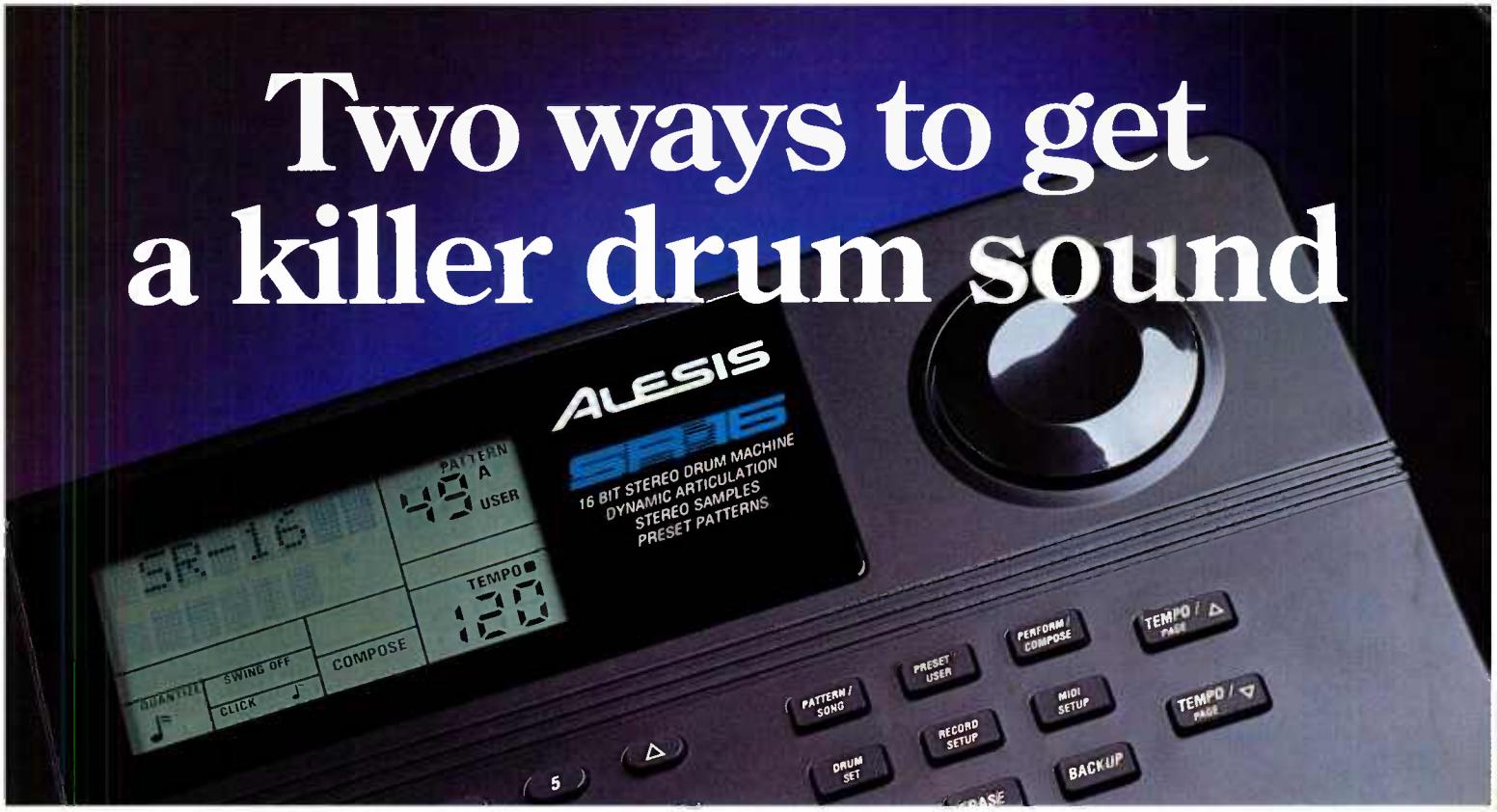

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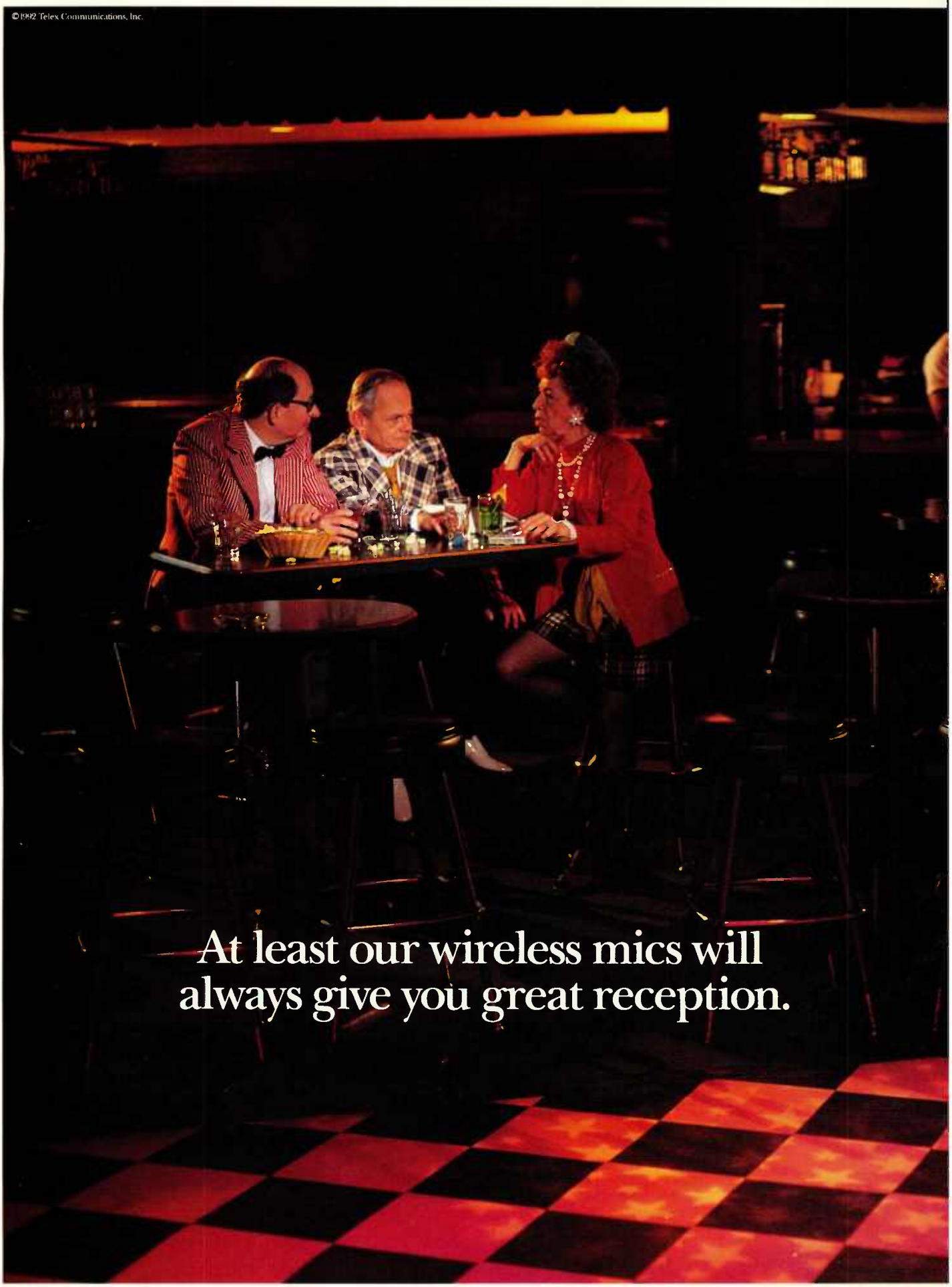

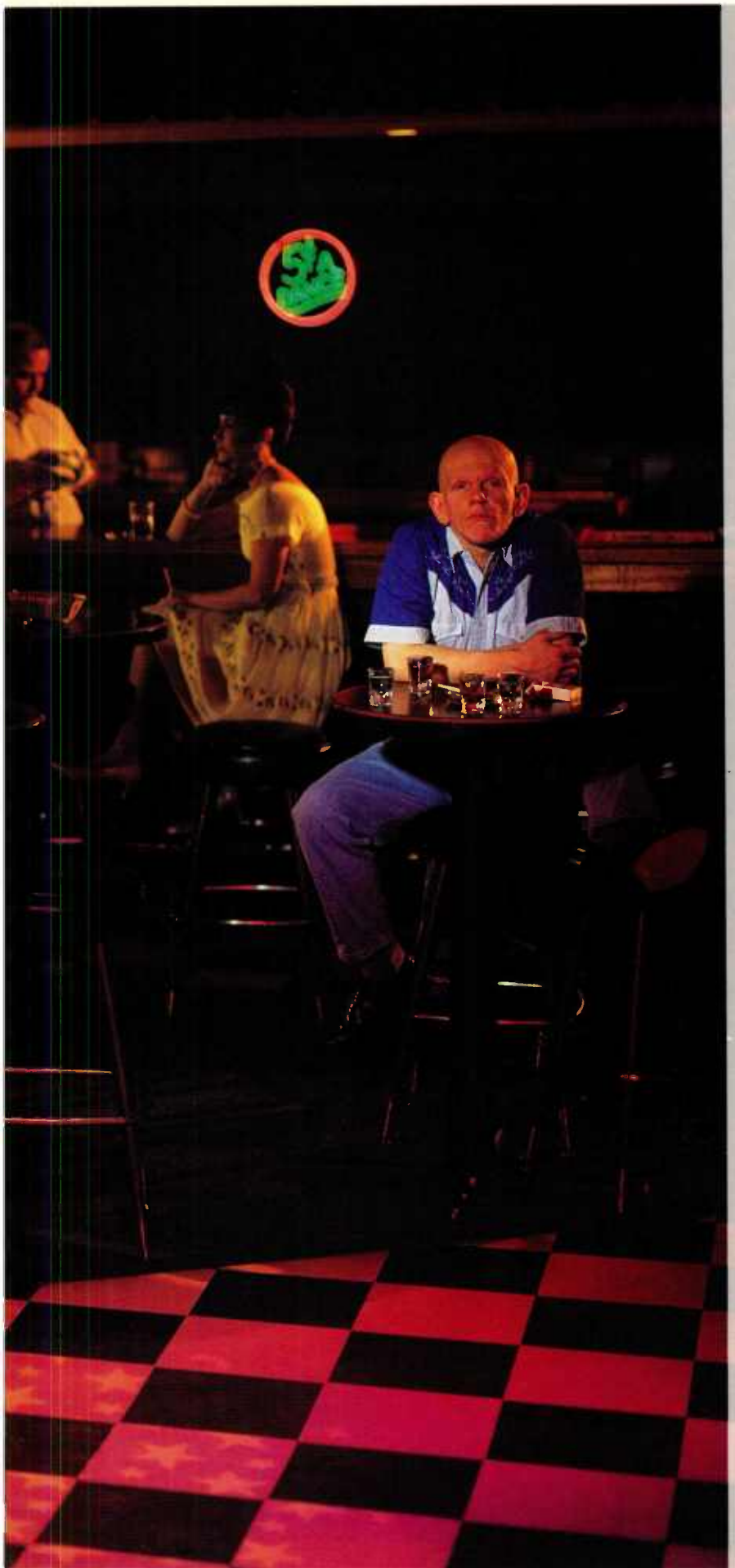

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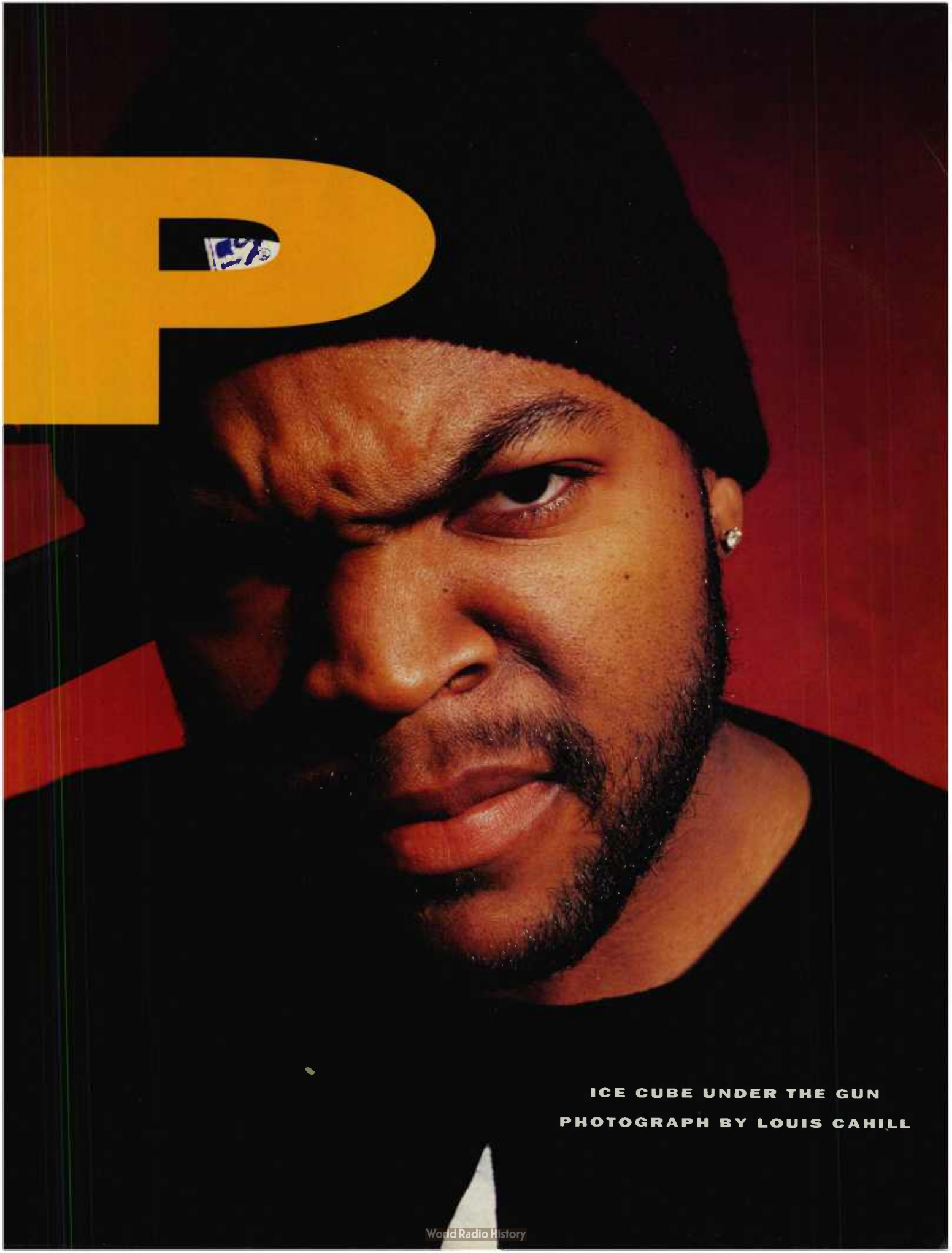
FEAR OF A RA PLANET

THE BIGGEST STYLE OF THE LAST DECADE HAS A PROBLEM WITH ATTITUDES

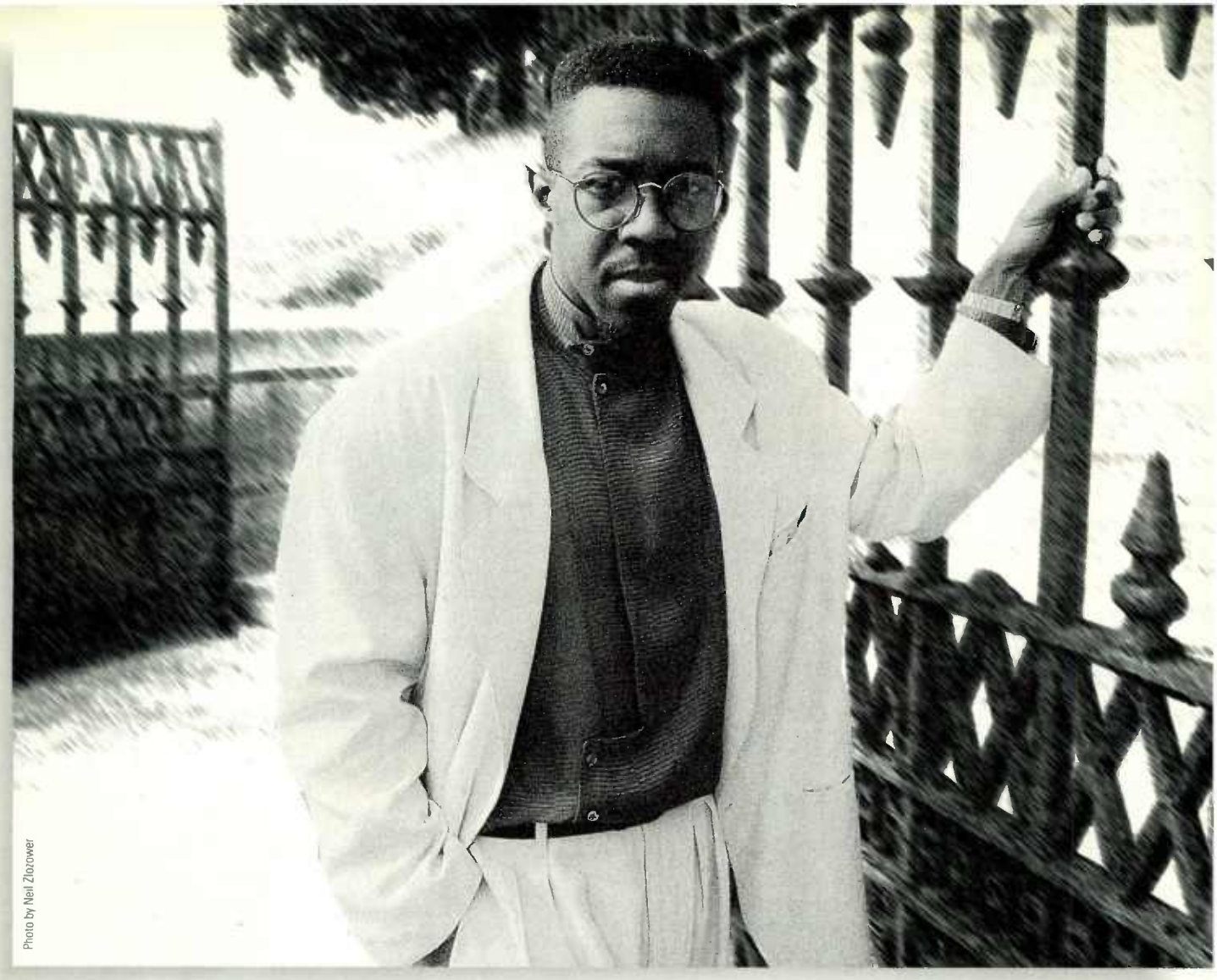
BY J.D. CONSIDINE

IN THE 12 YEARS SINCE "RAPPER'S DELIGHT" burn-rushed the Top 40, it would seem that rap has developed an unshakeable grip on popular culture. It's heard everywhere—on MTV, in movies, in advertising, even in Saturday morning cartoons, where Hammerman just replaced Kid 'N Play as the networks' favorite animated rapper. ¶ Granted, a lot of people don't particularly *like* rap. They aren't down with "O.P.P.," have no memories of bliss concerning P.M. Dawn, and don't want to talk about sex—or anything



ICE CUBE UNDER THE GUN

PHOTOGRAPH BY LOUIS CAHILL



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else—with Salt-N-Pepa. These are the folks for whom rap is just noise with a beat, and they feel the same things their parents felt about rock 'n' roll: disinterest, distaste and disgust.

But fear? Who could possibly be afraid of rap?

Well, Bob Greene, for one. In his Chicago *Tribune* column last month, he wrote about a mugging in New York which happened to have been videotaped by the perpetrators themselves. Although he reports that police, who eventually arrested two teens, were "puzzled" by the event, what sparked this not-ready-for-prime-time crime was no mystery to Greene—rap music made them do it. Or, to be specific, rap videos, which, writes Greene, "are purposely glorifying armed violence and criminality. Most Americans probably have not seen these rap videos. But they are broadcast day and night by various cable channels, and they are frightening."

But not as frightening as the rap audience itself. Just ask all those radio stations that not only refuse to play rap records, but actually boast about it, courting listeners with slogans like "All the Best Music—And No Rap." Some are so petrified that they'll even excise rap-like passages from recordings by non-rap acts, as WLLZ-FM in Detroit did recently when it cut a few bars of unsung rhyming from "Roll the Bones" by Rush.

If you really want a sense of how deep this fear of a rap planet goes, however, check out the mass media, for whom rap seems to be a never-ending source of scare stories. When a white New York investment banker was beaten, raped and left for dead in the celebrated Central Park "wilding" incident, it was widely (and, apparently, erroneously) reported that the suspects after their arrest were happily chanting Tone-Loc's "Wild Thing"—the implication being that the rap had somehow inspired the rampage. Indeed, when *Newsweek* published its 1990 cover story lambasting rap culture, the magazine made sure it was Tone-Loc's face that was framed by the "Rap Rage" headline.

Then, after N.W.A.'s *Efil4zaggin* entered the *Billboard* album charts at number one (the first rap album ever to do so), the *New Republic* ran a cover story suggesting that rap, described in a subhead as "The 'black music' that isn't either," isn't even listened to by blacks. According to the *TNR* story, rap's primary audience is suburban white kids, and N.W.A.'s sex-and-violence posturing is little more than minstrelsy, cartoonish blacks doing their best to entertain thrill-seeking Caucasians.

And now there's the controversy over Ice Cube's *Death Certificate*, which has been denounced by anti-defamation activists, Korean citizen groups, syndicated columnists and even the editors of *Billboard*. Granted, Ice Cube has provided his critics with plenty of ammunition, what with lyrics that characterize Korean store owners as "Oriental one-penny-countin' motherfuckers," that insist "true niggas ain't gay," and that suggest his former bandmates in N.W.A. dispose of manager Jerry Heller:

Get rid of that devil real simple
Put a bullet in his temple
Because you can't be a Niggaz 4 Life crew
With a white Jew telling you what to do.

It's ugly, sure. Angry, too. But Ice Cube refuses to consider the quatrain quoted above to be anti-Jewish. "I'm really surprised that people would take that record so out of proportion," he says. "The record is not geared towards Jerry Heller or the Jewish community; the record is geared towards the group who attacked me. In most cases I felt that Jerry Heller attacked me—in the *Rolling Stone* inter-

view, and the *Spin* articles.

"They even attacked me on the record, and said that when they caught me, they was going to cut my hair and fuck me with a broomstick. Now, I've seen them a couple of times after that record—they haven't cut my hair, and they definitely haven't fucked me with a broomstick." In other words, it's all just "woofing," with both sides making outrageous verbal threats they have no intention of following through on.

"So why are you taking rap music literally?" he asks, rhetorically. "It's stupid to take anything that literally, other than news. This is a form of *entertainment*. People keep forgetting that. I'm not a schoolteacher or a professor at any university. I'm a rapper. I entertain."

The question is, are you amused? Or are you afraid?

IT'S A BLACK THING, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND

ASK PUBLIC ENEMY'S CHUCK D WHY PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF RAP, AND AT first he just shakes his head. "That's ridiculous," he says, "because we don't tear up hotels, we don't tear up arenas." It isn't, after all, as if he and his fellow rappers are inciting youths to riot on a nightly basis.

Chuck D's no dummy, though, and it doesn't take him long to come up with the real answer. "Anything that comes from a black point of

"IT'S GOING TO TAKE YEARS AND YEARS OF BARRIER-BREAKING FOR THINGS TO CHANGE"
—QUEEN LATIFAH

view that the establishment doesn't have full control over or understanding of, they view as being offensive," he says. "And now even more so, since that point of view is coming across to white kids."

That's not to say Public Enemy's audience is entirely white, mind you. The crowd of young Baltimoreans he plays to this evening, for example, is almost 95 percent black (don't they read the *New Republic*?). But overall, the audience P.E. attracts is as broad as it is big, and that, as the establishment sees it, makes the group doubly dangerous.

"I look at this country as being a predominantly white male–dominated society," Chuck says. "It has never even given a black male his chance or his due, because we are seen as being not even part of that whole structure. It's a white male structure versus everything else.

"Now, some of the frustration is coming across. This stuff is coming out from all different angles, but the media have been built by white men, and the first maneuver when you can't control the play is to attack it."

If that seems a little paranoid from where you're sitting, it makes perfect sense from Public Enemy's perspective. After all, this group has spent much of its recording career articulating the black community's anger and taking flak for its efforts. First it was lambasted for endorsing Louis Farrakhan in "Bring the Noise," then for anti-Jewish remarks Professor Griff, its former Minister of Information, made in an interview with the Washington *Times*. The current controversy, for those keeping score at home, stems from a gay-bashing rhyme uttered by Flavor Flav in "A Letter to the New York Post"—"ask James

Cagney/He beat up on a guy when he found he was a fagney."

Chuck shrugs off the "Letter" controversy. "I mean, you really can't take it that serious on Flavor," he says, "because he just found something that rhymes." Beyond that, though, he says he's more concerned with the motives behind these attacks than with what his attackers have to say. "I don't judge criticism, I judge the critic," he says, adding that as far as he can see, the only thing these anti-rap diatribes are meant to do is maintain the status quo.

"You have certain defense mechanisms up to keep things the way they are supposed to be and maintain order in this structure," he says. "That's because you have a lot of people who are paranoid, with no really full grasp of what they believe in, and they feel that they have something to lose. They lose belief in themselves and in their structure. They feel like they'll lose a grip on their future.

"In our view, that's not necessarily so. The black race is just trying to get a grip on itself to survive. I mean, the thing with black people in this country is they're real beat-down people. And it's really more serious than a lot of white people take to heart, because we have everything to lose—and we lost a lot. I try to tell our people, 'There's no time for making excuses, we've got to make the best of it.' But many of them are damaged goods, you know what I'm saying?

"To make a long story short, white people have to understand that black people already have respect for [them], because we've been trained to do so. We just don't have respect for ourselves. When a level of self-respect comes, then you'll see that it gets better. But self-respect has never been taught, so right now, black people are still slaves to that."

Unfortunately, what some rappers see as their efforts to uplift the race, their critics take as attacks on others. Ice Cube, for instance, explains in the liner notes to *Death Certificate* that the album is divided into two parts, with the "Death Side" being "a mirrored image of where we are today," while the "Life Side" pictures "where we need to go." But it's disturbingly easy to translate that message as "Let's stop destroying ourselves, and start destroying others."

Which, Cube says, is dead wrong. "They figure when you're pro-black, you've got to be anti-whatever," he says. "But see, that's guilt from the pain that they inflicted on blacks. We aren't pro-black to be anti-white or anti-Korean, anti-Jewish. We're pro-black so we can look back at history and make sure that it doesn't repeat itself."

Being pro-black doesn't necessarily mean articulating your ideas as violently as Ice Cube does. Take the Afrocentric movement. Although the Allan Blooms of the world consider it a threat to the very foundations of Western Civilization, Afrocentricity as expressed by the likes of Queen Latifah is simply a means for young blacks to learn who they are, and have some pride in that knowledge.

"It's very hard, because we're brainwashed in this country in a lot of ways," she says. "It's like when a little black kid grows up, what do they see on TV? They see so much white. What are they supposed to connect to? They connect to what this white thing is. So they think their hair is supposed to be long and their eyes are supposed to be light and their skin is supposed to be light and it's not, and they feel low about it. When they go out with the girls, all the guys want to talk to the light ones, or the one with the long hair.

"We have a lot of stereotypes to fight, a lot of barriers to break down. And it's hard, because nobody's perfect. Nobody can just change all this stuff in one day. It's going to take years and years of barrier-breaking for things like this to change."

RAP ISN'T MUSIC

"I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH RAP," ADMITS GUITARIST Al Di Meola. "It's not music. It's not like I'm hearing an instrumentalist play, with some harmony and a good vocalist. Where are the people who've learned to play their instrument?"

"I'm really bored with this rap music," says fellow fretboarder Lita Ford. "I think it's about time that it was on its way out. It sounds like gang music to me."

"I'm a believer in melody," says singer Ozzy Osbourne. "Rap I can appreciate, but it drives me nuts after about an hour. I mean, if you haven't got a melody..."

When musicians talk about what they don't like about rap, the points that come up rarely concern racial politics; instead, it's the rap musical value they question. *It hasn't got a melody. They don't play instruments, they don't have any ideas, they steal everything. It's just not music.*

Rappers, naturally, counter that such talk is just so much sour grapes. "It's not *their* instrument [on the record], so it's not music," laughs Russell Simmons, president of Def Jam Records. "Drummers are the same—they say there's no live drummers on it, so it's not real, it's not a record. 'Course, now that live drums are back, drummers think those same records are fine. I think they're ridiculous."

"A lot of people don't like that we could take a song that's been done before and probably sold 300,000, and do 1.5 million with it," adds Ice Cube. "Like Hammer took 'Super Freak,' and made it into a bigger hit than Rick James did. That's why I think people get mad at us. They've got to understand that we took something and just made it better. The talent we put on top of it was better than the talent that was on it originally."

Not that it takes a sampler to steal a groove. A decade ago, the pioneering rappers at Sugar Hill all recorded with a live rhythm section. But as Matt Dike, whose production credits include Tone-Loc's "Wild Thing," points out, "What they were doing was playing grooves from other records, that they had stolen. Like the bass

in 'White Lines' was from a song by Liquid Liquid, this underground New York band. They were ballsier than anybody! They just replayed the whole thing, and acted like they wrote it."

Besides, if it takes no talent to make rap records, Ice Cube has a simple question: "I say, 'Why don't *you* try to do a hit rap record?'

"They'd be lost, in most cases."

Maybe so, but rap's critics do raise some valid questions. For instance, given that rap vocals rarely change pitch (and certainly aren't "sung" in any conventional understanding of the term), is it fair to say that rap records don't have any melody?

No way, answers producer Bill Laswell. "That's just people who have been conditioned into thinking a certain chord sequence ending on middle C is the absolute concept of melody," he argues. "If you're familiar with Asian or African music, you realize that a lot of the melody is inherent in the drumming. In African drumming, you hear all kinds of melodies and phrases, and there's as much melody in hip-hop and rap as in African drumming—and that's a lot of melody. You just have to listen."

True enough. Even a seemingly simple rap record, like Naughty By Nature's "O.P.P.," reveals unexpected complexity if you know where to look. Sure, it has the "ABC" piano hook, looped right off the original, which is probably the only "melodic" element anyone noticed when it first came up on the radio. But there's also a reggae-style bassline churning up a nice rhythmic cross-current with the syncopated kick drum, a fair amount of percussive interplay (check out the parallelism between the two-note piano part that sets up each two-bar phrase and the two-beat cowbell accent that leads into three each measure), and, of course, the raps themselves, which spin clever variations on the bassline's cadence—sometimes stretching across the bar, sometimes double-timing the beat, sometimes pulling up short to add to the track's rhythmic tension.

Even though they use samplers, sequencers and drum machines instead of guitars, bass and drums, rap acts orchestrate their rhythm frameworks as thoughtfully as any rock act would. Take Public Enemy, for example. "They're the only rap group I know of that can take five or six snippets of a record, put it together and make it sound like one band," said Branford Marsalis after contributing a tenor solo to "Fight the Power."

"They're not musicians, and don't claim to be—which makes it easier to be around them. Like, the song's in A minor or something, then it goes to D7, and I think, if I remember, they put some of the A minor solo on the D7, or some of the D7 stuff on the A minor chord at the end. So it sounds really different. And the more unconventional it sounds, the more they like it."

On the latest Public Enemy album, *Apocalypse 91...The Enemy Strikes Black*, the group extends that approach. "We've taken a lot of instruments and processed them through computers," says Chuck D, who explains that the P.E. approach often relies on playing the samples on a keyboard to lend more of a live feel to the tracks. "The only difference between sampling and live sound is change," he says. "When a bass player plays bass, he makes mistakes sometimes. But he fixes the mistake so quick that it's just a change in the pattern, an ad-lib. But your programming is not going to program a mistake. So what we try to do is, we don't program it so much. We play the keys. Like 'Homey Don't Play That' from the Termina-

tor X record; I played the bass on keys."

Then there's the rap itself. Those who don't rap often assume that rap lyrics are little more than simply metered rhyming doggerel—which, to be honest, a certain amount of them are. But the best rappers take as much care with their cadences as they do with the rhythm beds, so that the words flow along with the music instead of just hammering home the beat.

Chuck D, for instance, won't even start writing until he has a groove to work from, and often sketches out his rhythmic ideas with nonsense syllables before filling out his raps. "I'll have a groove that inspires me, do my vocals in a certain way and then fill it with words," he says. "And if it doesn't fit the groove, I'm not going to fuck with it."

Ironically, once he's finished recording, Chuck then has to go through the laborious process of relearning what he has written. "I have a bad memory for remembering words," he laughs. "People say, 'Didn't you write it?' I say, 'Yeah, I wrote it, and it's on a piece of paper. Is it in my head? It came out of my head, but now I have to relearn it.' A lot of people don't understand that.

"You know who's got a crystal-clear memory? Ice-T. Ice-T recites records from back in 1981, line for line. He can recite every single one of his records line for line, word for word. Ice Cube is the same thing. They're like Michael Jor- [cont'd on page 97]

Locking in Loops

The tools of rap are relatively few. The first key implement is a drum machine, which is used to program beats and play them back. Current favorites include the E-mu SP-1200 and Akai/Linn MPC60. The other essential item is a sampler, for capturing grooves from records and looping them so they repeat rhythmically. Today's samplers of choice are the Akai S1000 and its more downmarket cousins, the S950 and S900. But since both the SP-1200 and MPC60 have some onboard sampling capability, a separate, dedicated sampler sometimes isn't even necessary. In any case, the art of rap production lies in combining these simple elements into one massive, jam-tight groove. Timing is everything. Maybe that's why Public Enemy's Flavor Flav wears that big clock around his neck.

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SMPTE time code, which is recorded onto one track of the master tape. "It's imperative to have a clock that doesn't waver," says engineer/producer Rod Hui (Public Enemy, Run-D.M.C., Kurtis Blow). Hui goes on to outline his own technique for locking the tempo in: SMPTE from tape is fed to a Roland SBX-80, which sends MIDI timing data out to the artist's drum machine. From this, Hui derives a click track which he records onto another track of tape. This becomes the audible guide track for the session.

"Rap is less technical than pop," says Hui, who's engineered his share of high-gloss sessions with Paula Abdul and the Family Stand. "You don't get huge piles of keyboards and Macs in rap." No fancy external software is used in editing the sampled loops, which are taken from either CDs or vinyl—whatever is available. "When they record a sample, the artists will generally cut it close to the tempo that's on tape. From there, they loop and truncate it to fine-tune it to the tempo. It only takes about 15 or 20 minutes, sometimes half-an-hour, depending on the difficulty of the sample."

The drum machine is typically used to trigger the sampler, "firing off" the loops at the tops of measures. But sometimes, says Hui, "when you take a sampled loop off a record with a live drummer, the two and four are not consistently on beat." This can clash with the robotic perfection of the drum machine pattern. Enter another device: the Russian Dragan, named for its ability to fix tempos that are either rushin' or draggin' (gag gag), as Hui explains:

"It's a piece of equipment that measures the tempos of any two audio signals that are fed into it, showing where one is 'off' in relation to the other. Based on this, you can program offsets into the SBX-80 to make the two beats go bullseye. Or, if you like, move one a little forward or behind the other till it sounds right."

But what about those two signature sounds of rap: DJ scratching of vinyl records and the old Roland TR-808 drum machine, with its earthquake-inducing bass drum? Both sounds are based on old-hat technologies. But fear not, they live on via sampling. "A lot of times nowadays, the scratch itself is sampled," Hui explains. "Then the artists put it into the track where they really need it." As for the mighty 808, "there are tons of samples of that. It's like a cockroach. You can't kill it."

—Alan di Perna

"YOU ARE NOW SPEAKING TO LAZARUS"

BY *Jon Young*

Smokey Robinson's life after Motown

Photograph: ***Aldo Mauro***

It's like bacon without eggs. Or flowers without honey. Or yin without yang. The idea of Motown without Smokey Robinson is nearly inconceivable. An essential part of the company since its birth three decades ago, he performed and/or helped write many of the eloquent love songs that made the label so special, including "The Tracks of My Tears" and "Shop Around" with his Miracles, as well as a host of hits for others, among them "The Way You Do the Things You Do" (the Temptations), "My Guy" (Mary Wells) and "Ain't That Peculiar" (Marvin Gaye). But these are changing times, and nothing signifies the new world order better than the fact that he's left home for SBK Records, the residence of everyone from Vanilla Ice to Wilson Phillips to Jesus Jones. Why, Smokey, why?

"After Berry Gordy sold Motown, it just wasn't the same for me," explains William Robinson cheerfully, holding court at his new label's Manhattan headquarters. "I wanted to stick it out because I'd been there from the very first day. I felt a sense of loyalty. I wanted to see Jheryl Busby, a black man who'd become the president of Motown, succeed, because it seemed like he'd been handed something that was almost programmed to fail. But in the end I felt it wasn't happening, for me or for Motown itself. My contract was up, so I was free to go."

Why SBK? "One of the main reasons I'm at SBK is that they promote like mad. I think there were hits on all my Motown albums, but they weren't promoted properly. Now I have the comfort of knowing my music will be promoted to the hilt, and that's rekindled my enthusiasm."

Just meeting Smokey Robinson is enough to dispel a common misconception about the man. While the sweet delicacy of his vocals might suggest a fragile, timid soul, he's anything but. Solid and self-assured, with blazing green eyes, he's the epitome of easy grace, hardly a shy violet. Likewise, his new album should prove an eye-opener for anyone who thought his spotty chart record in the '80s meant he was a spent force. *Double Good Everything* boasts catchy, radio-friendly delights ("Why"), breathtaking ballads ("I Love Your Face"), and, unexpectedly, a funky shot of social commentary ("Skid Row"). It's predictably tuneful and full of small surprises, the work of an unassuming master who doesn't have to strain for effect.

We'd have been in for a bigger surprise if the original plan for the album had come to pass. Recalls Smokey, "The first thing Charles Koppelman [the K in SBK] suggested to me was a country-and-western record. That's the hottest music in the world right now, and he wanted me to take it to the R&B scene. At the time, I'd already started work on *Double Good Everything*. Charles tried to hook me up with Jimmy Bowen and then Peter Asher, but we could never get our schedules to match. So I continued with this album and we put the country record on the back burner. It's still a possibility.

"I look upon songwriting as a gift from God. It's what He would have me do, evidently, because there's hardly a day in my life when I don't write at least part of a song. I jot them down on matchbooks, plane tickets, scratch paper, whatever I can get my hands on. My manager has me saving all that stuff now. He says that if I had all the other things I wrote at the time of 'My Girl'"—*he didn't save them!!!*—"they'd be invaluable today. But I never looked at it that way before. I don't have a set approach to writing. Sometimes the melody comes first, sometimes the words. Either way, I eventually end up at my old Fender Rhodes piano."

Having passed the half-century mark in 1990, Smokey has been actively redefining himself in numerous ways recently. He's in the midst of composing the score for a stage show entitled *Hoops*, ultimately intended for Broadway, that traces the history of the Harlem

Globetrotters. "I always thought they were from Harlem, but they were actually from Chicago. Originally they were known as the Savoy Five, after the Savoy Club in Chicago, but they named themselves for Harlem because it was the most renowned black area in the world. I've written 22 pieces so far. I want this to be like *South Pacific* and produce several hits. The title track is a funk thing that I can envision being a halftime song for the NBA."

Is *Hoops* a bid for respect from sectors that normally wouldn't give him a second thought? Sort of, says Smokey. "I look at Broadway like I look at Las Vegas. There was a time I never wanted to play Vegas. The first act Motown ever had there was the Supremes and they had to doctor themselves. They did their hits, of course, but they also had to sing these hotsy-totsy standards. Finally Vegas opened up to the point that I could go there and just be me, so now I love playing there. That's kind of the way I'm approaching the stage."

> "If the world lasts until the 22nd century, I hope they're still playing my music."

While *Hoops* promises to reveal another side of Smokey, his 1989 autobiography has already exposed other startling aspects of the artist, including some not suitable for the faint-hearted. Written in collaboration with David Ritz, whose previous credits include a book on Robinson's late, great friend Marvin Gaye, *Smokey: Inside My Life* documents everything from his family history and the early days of the Miracles to his extramarital affairs and, most striking, a graphic account of two years in thrall to cocaine in the mid-'80s.

Why supply these intimate, even embarrassing details? "I wrote it because it was God's will," he answers promptly, "not so much for the personal things, but to talk about drugs, which are the scourge of our lifetime, especially cocaine. I was saved from drugs in 1986 when my pastor prayed for me. I never went to rehab or to a doctor. It was a miracle healing from God, so that I could carry the message about the perils of drugs. At the time I was saved, I was already dead. You are now speaking to Lazarus."

Inside My Life is also Smokey's attempt to set the record straight on two of the most important people in his life: ex-wife Claudette and Motown's main man, Berry Gordy. Robinson was embroiled in bitter divorce proceedings when the book was being written, lending an extra poignancy to the sometimes reverential account of the couple's happier days. "She'd been my girlfriend since I was 14 and my wife since I was 19—I was concerned that I was writing something that might hurt her." He admits that he didn't get Claudette's blessing to spill the beans, however, but hastens to add, "I'm happy that we're friends again now."

As for Gordy, Smokey abandons his courtly decorum when he considers the way his friend has been treated by other authors. "Those unauthorized books really piss me off!" he exclaims, voice rising. "Nobody's perfect, but so many erroneous things have been written about him, it's really a drag. I was watching a talk show the other day and one of *those guys* who'd written one of *those books* was on. He said that when Florence Ballard was fired from the Supremes, she found out right before a show, and Berry held a gun to her head and threatened to blow her away if she went onstage. But Berry wasn't even in the same city at the time. And Florence had developed a drinking problem. She was her own worst enemy.

"When everything was going well, people thought he was a great guy, but the minute something went wrong, it was all his fault. I feel bad about that because I look on him as one of the heroes of our time. There have been many attempts to bring people together across racial barriers, by politicians, ministers and so forth. Well, Berry Gordy took music and united the world. That was his dream, his plan.

"I'm knocked out when a kid comes up to me in an airport and says, 'I'm from Liberia, and I love your music.' This man is responsible for that, okay? And when people talk about him I want them to recognize the fact. The writers of those unauthorized books don't know anything."

Meanwhile, Smokey Robinson just keeps rolling along. Given his long list of achievements, it's not totally out of line to wonder why he continues to bother. What's left to prove?

"I tried retirement when I left the Miracles in 1972. I never wanted to record or perform again. I only did my first solo album because the A&R people wanted me to. But I just couldn't cut the office thing every day; after three years of being a vice-president, I was bored to death. I just wanted to make a record. So I'm not planning on retiring again, ever."

In fact, Smokey does have something left to prove. Although he may call the standards "hotsy-totsy," Robinson admits he would like to be taken as seriously as Cole Porter. "Absolutely! I want to be like Beethoven. He's from the eighteenth century, but they play his music more than ever today. If the world lasts until the twenty-second century, I hope they're still playing my music."

Dreams of immortality: the late-blooming fantasies of a middle-aged man? Smokey says he's always felt that way. "I first met Berry Gordy in Detroit in 1957 when we were auditioning for Jackie Wilson's manager; he'd already written songs for Jackie and was submitting 'Lonely Teardrops.' After the manager turned us down, Berry and I struck up a conversation.

"I was a great rhymer at the time, but my songs didn't make sense, and I'll never forget what Berry said when he looked at the looseleaf notebook of things I'd written. He told me songs should tell a story and mean something. From that moment on, I wanted to write things that would make sense a hundred years ago, or a hundred years from now.

"I'm seeing the fruits of that today, because people are still listening to 'My Girl' and 'Ooo Baby Baby' nearly 30 years later. I feel I've accomplished what I set out to do." Ⓜ

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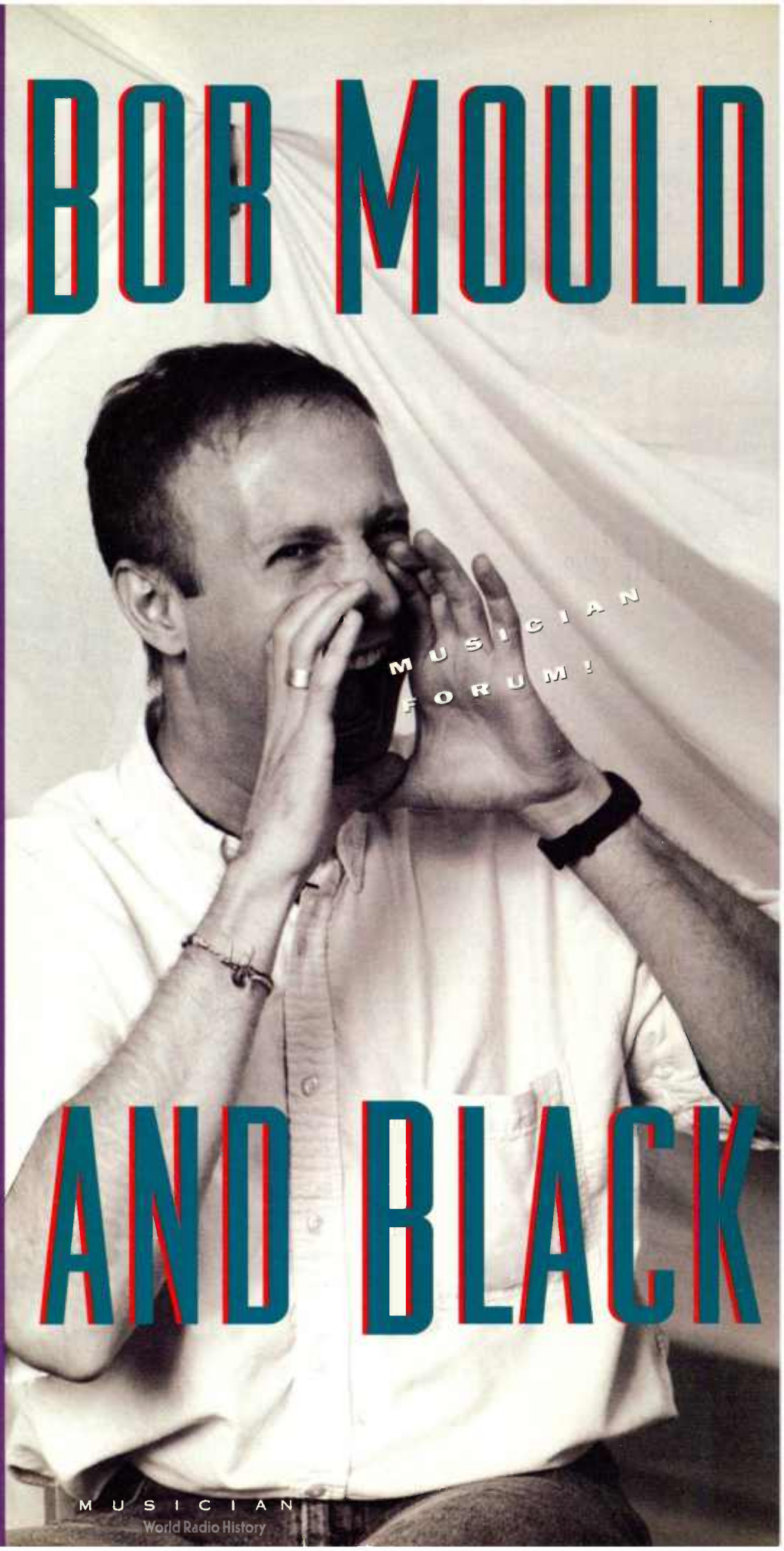
BOB MOULD AND BLACK

BY JIM MACNIE

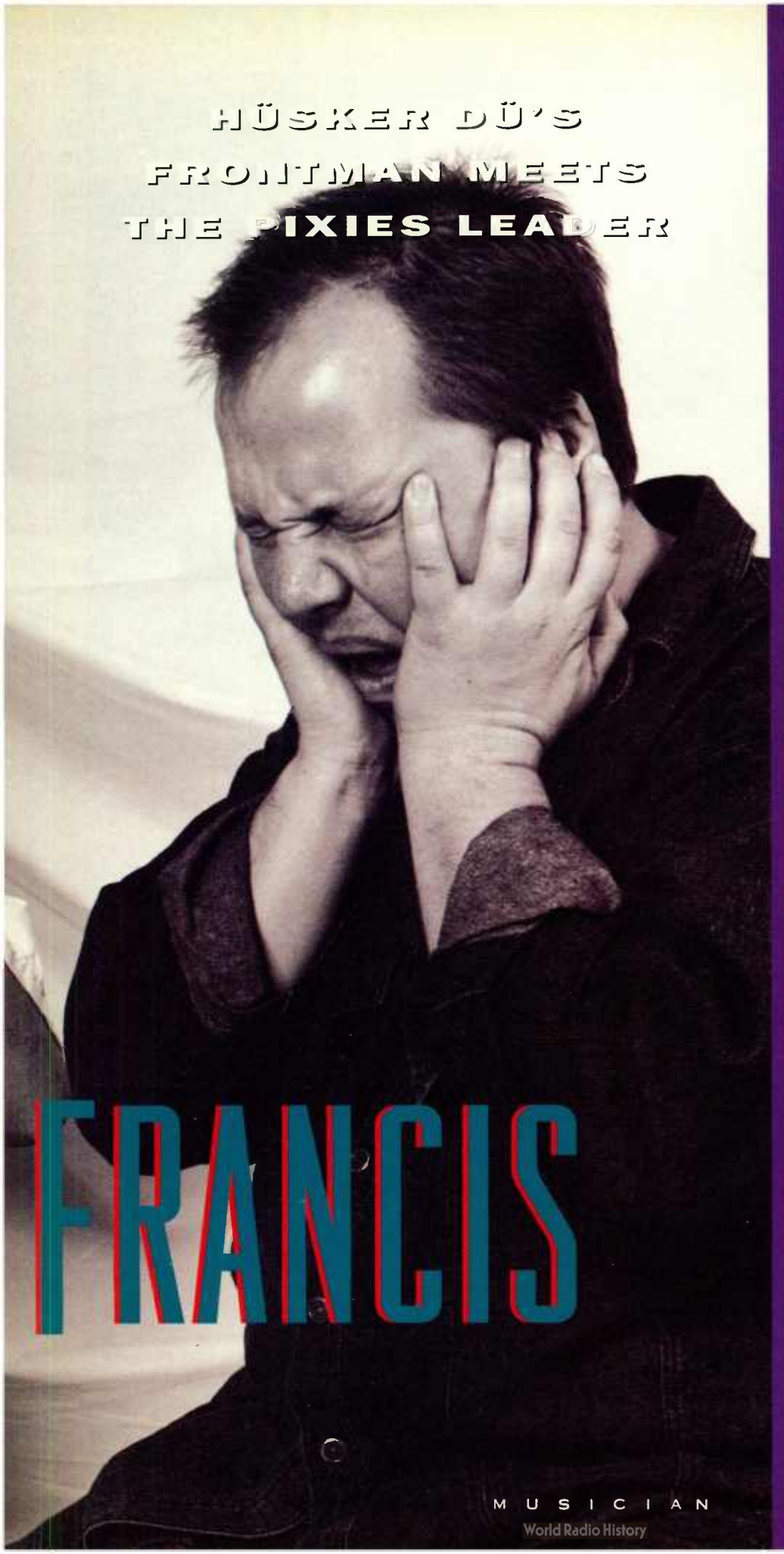
Times Square is teeming with holiday bustle, but Black Francis has got his reasons to be tired. Last night his band, the Pixies, were in Baltimore, slapping around the tunes from their latest album, *Trompe Le Monde*. Francis (Charles Thompson to his friends) fled the gig, got in his rental car and headed up I-95 to New York for a sold-out show and a *Musician* interview. Static and chatter from the CB helped him steer clear of Smokey, but it didn't give him much sleep.

Almost every review has cited *Trompe Le Monde* as a return to form, albeit a thoroughly crazed form. It's true: The album's shoes are untied and there's some spit that flies out of its mouth when it roars. And it roars constantly. The Pixies earned their status as post-punks who could wax articulately in the shattered guitar language of the early '80s. Unlike many of their peers, they weren't against embracing some kind of professionalism or orthodoxy. By employing classic structures—surf melodies, pure pop—they continue to grab listeners; the gargantuan wall of guitar sound is bolstered by a genuflection to structure. On their previous record, *Bossanova*, the spiky fragments that stuck out of their past work got covered with production cream. *Trompe Le Monde* lets it all hang out again, taking pride in its wooliness.

Speaking of wooliness, walls of sound and lots of hooks, Bob Mould has been doing a scad of acoustic gigs around the globe of late. We figured the man who led Hüsker Dü's guitar charge would



HÜSKER DÜ'S FRONTMAN MEETS THE PIXIES LEADER



FRANCIS

know more than a few ways to make a solo performance sound like an army coming through. Mould's two after-Dü discs, *Workbook* and *Black Sheets of Rain*, proved that his views on music were anything but monolithic. They went from fanciful melodies like "Sunspots" (often used during thoughtful pauses on public radio's "All Things Considered") to "Stop Your Crying," where the guitarist tore down anything that wasn't nailed to his psyche. Currently shopping for a new label, Mould can be heard on the Golden Palominos record, *Drunk with Passion*. It's his track that sounds like a man is being boiled alive: sweeping fuzz guitar intro, pain and misery lyrics, relentless push. If the Plastic Ono Band was still together, they'd probably let him sit in.

Here comes Bob around the corner in Times Square, too, bright-eyed, chipper, with a coffee in his hand.

"I brought the guitar," says Black Francis, "I hope you brought the pick."

MUSICIAN: *Do either of you get nervous before going onstage?*

MOULD: Every night for me. I'm always nervous. And I don't know where I switch off. Thirty seconds in or somewhere. It's like, "What if I forget the gift, or the command or whatever I've got?" It's not like those guys with all the scarves, the singers who do the dance of the seven veils. And if there was a night where I went up there and I was totally sure, I'd probably quit. I like the mystery; I don't want it to be a routine.

MUSICIAN: *Charlie, you're not nervous?*

FRANCIS: Maybe it's the suppression

"AT THE START OF THE PIXIES I ONLY HAD FOUR OR FIVE ALBUMS AND HÜSKER DÜ WERE TWO OR THREE OF THEM."

–Black Francis

of nervousness. Sometimes in the middle of a set I kinda feel like, "Am I here? Am I really seeing what I'm seeing?" I quickly try to get rid of that stuff. I find the exit sign in the back quite soothing. I look right at it, do my thing.

MOULD: I like watching you, 'cause you look up a lot. It's really neat.

FRANCIS: Well, it's the 20-yard stare in the 10-yard room. "No one home."

MOULD: You're such a focal point.

FRANCIS: That's what it is. I think, "I'm just a fat dude with a guitar and I don't want to be here."

MOULD: Have you ever done a gig where you let go of the guitar and just sang? Just held the mike stand?

FRANCIS: No, but I should.

MOULD: That's the weirdest feeling. I've done it, thrown the guitar down and taken the mike. It's, "Am I Iggy Pop?" It's like people at a party saying, "C'mon, let's dance." I can't dance to save my life. The only thing I can dance with is a guitar. It's like you've got a blanket up there with you. Linus.

FRANCIS: That's probably how it all started. It's fun to play, but I wish I was Iggy, too. Joey Santiago's brother came out with us on auxiliary guitar once and I did some solo singing. It was cool.

MOULD: You have no idea why you try things that you shouldn't, and that's what makes it cool. It's the difference between being an artist and a performer. Maybe that's too lofty a term, but I didn't decide to play guitar because I wanted to be in a band, it just happened upon me. I'm sure there are guys who can play circles around either one of us, but do they know what the instrument means? All the hammer-ons and shit. A friend asked, "Can you play like that?" and I said, "Yeah, but that's not what I feel." *Deedledeedeedledeedeedledee.* How many notes I can play isn't the boundary I try to cross while playing. I'm trying to take the dark wart that's floating in your mind and make your hands do something with it. Technique sort of sucks. I was listening to the new Pixies record. I thought that some of the guitar things were so unorthodox and I could never do that because, unfortunately, I learned to play the instrument. Playing by feel is great. But it's hard to unlearn once you've learned.

FRANCIS: We definitely feel like ordinary guitar players in our band. We feel okay about it, but sometimes wish we could do a little hammer-on once in a while, for the sake of the moment.

MOULD: Like those descending bends, totally beyond technique. It's not a form, like modal blues or something. It says so much more than the intro to "Dust in the Wind."

FRANCIS: Part of the beauty of the guitar is that it's somewhat easy, accessible. Everyone knows a couple chords, and if you don't, you can learn a couple chords quickly.

MUSICIAN: *Are you interested in becoming a better guitarist?*

FRANCIS: I make it more of a joke than I probably should, but I just want to be honest about it. Joey and I started out quite rudimentary. Thankfully my mother's sister taught me G-B-A. But yeah, we try to get better. Joey works at it more than me. He gets to stretch his fingers wider. We had a rehearsal space at a heavy metal place this year. It was either Ratt or Ozzy next door. You inevitably pay attention to them after a while. And they look at you. Of course you're not playing things you're good at, that you already know. You're rehearsing and you feel silly. But we did go for the drop-D tuning so we could riff with a little bit of heaviness for them. It gave us an

Photographs: Linda Covello

"WHEN I HEARD THE NEW PIXIES RECORD I WAS KIND OF JEALOUS. IN ITS FIRST FOUR MINUTES IT LAYS OUT MORE IDEAS THAN SOME BANDS DO IN THEIR CAREERS."

–Bob Mould

extra foot or so of breathing space.

MOULD: I got to a point where I was so bored I started changing all the tunings and it made a big difference. I was just tired of playing all the barre chords and cowboy chords—I'd used them too much. There must be more than that. I was hearing something more Celtic or Indian. Traditionally in things I've been involved in, I've been the only guitar player. But when writing, I've got to play two parts at once, like Townshend used to do. "Okay, now I've got to learn how to play the chords and the riff at the same time." I used the dulcimer for inspiration, and tried to figure out ways for the guitar to sound like a dulcimer. You get into that tuning where it's just Ds and As.

FRANCIS: *Oh yeah!* I just learned that! Jim Jones from Pere Ubu taught me that the other day! All Ds and As.

MOULD: I think that David Crosby is the guy to talk to about all the weird tunings. But you guys have some amazing guitar work on the new Pixies record.

FRANCIS: It was having Ozzy next door, I'm sure of it. We had our Marshalls out and just kept going over it.

MOULD: You have to be disciplined. I know people who scoff at the you-have-to-play-every-day theory, but if you don't have an instrument around to translate that, if you're not rehearsing a lot, you're lost. How many times are you just sitting there lollygagging with a guitar and then all of a sudden a brainstorm comes out? If you'd been drinking beer or fucking around it wouldn't have happened.

FRANCIS: I don't use notebooks or write anything down. Part of the fun of strumming the guitar is remembering that little chord change from two months ago. Catalogue the riffs. You lose one or two now and then. I'm paranoid that it will go away if I get too organized with it. But I do understand why certain musicians keep a tape recorder at their bedside. I guess there's been the occasion where I've been stoned, driving around in the car in a relaxed state of mind, and hear music in my head. "Oh, shit hot, that's great, that's great! I'm going to remember it tomorrow." No way. I'll never see that song again.

MOULD: You'd be surprised. They come back at ya. I just heard one in my sleep the other day, horns and strings, the whole works, real tripped out. I've spent the last two days working on it, and I've gotten it out; I'm relieved. Very bizarre though. Like talking in foreign languages in your sleep.

MUSICIAN: *Let's talk about how you both constructed such drastic styles. Real huge sounds.*

FRANCIS: I grew up in L.A. when bands like Black Flag were around, but I never listened to them. I was buying used records for 50 cents, and didn't socialize, really; I was lost in headphone-land. I did get to see a Hüsker Dü show when Joey and I dropped out of school and said, "Let's start one of these groups." And I saw an excellent show by the Hüskers at the Paradise in Boston, where you did "Ticket to Ride" for an encore. Fantastic show, so I knew that Hüsker Dü was a tape I needed to get. I had those albums, a couple of Iggy albums, one Captain Beefheart and a tiny studio apartment. That handful of stuff got me through that particular season. I used to play "Green Eyes" [from Hüsker's *Flip Your Wig*] over and over. A classic chord progression. Same thing with Iggy's "The Passenger"—one of those repeat songs. At the start of the Pixies I only had four or five albums and the Hüskers were two or three of them.

MUSICIAN: *How did the Hüskers develop such a drastic approach?*

And what made such a whomping sound so attractive?

MOULD: I think it puts off a lot of people and that's the attraction. When the Hüskers were first going we really knew we could put people off with it. It's like extreme jazz; it's so painful that it's curious. The faint of heart are driven away, but those who stay get to see the emotions really tapped. There were only three of us, so we thought we had to fill a lot of space. The speed was a challenge—who could keep it together at that speed? Not many. When we got going fast, there was no other band that could cut a swath like that: double-time stuff that had an almost swing jazz feel beneath it. I think the main reason people put bands together is because they're incredible music fans and so frustrated with what they hear around them. You want to fill the void.

FRANCIS: The key phrase is "fan." Many people who make records don't act like they have that attitude. You're either passionate about it or not. If you are passionate, chances are good that you won't be boring, and even if you are boring, at least it's damn passionate.

MOULD: A record can be deceiving. A band could be the hottest deal going, but then you go to see them live and in 30 seconds you find out that they just don't care. Then you can see some trashy band of kids with equipment falling apart and you go, "Man, they're dying for this shit. Watch this one."

FRANCIS: I also become offended at the old cliché that says "Rock music is sex." Maybe it is to some people, but I was only eight years old when I first said, "What is this great stuff?" It was just a little world I could enter if I wanted to.

MOULD: There are moments in your life where you hear something and say, "I know that person," or "I understand the root of their aesthetic, where their happiness or pain comes from." Whether it's the Germs or the Pixies. You say, "Wait, that's the voice of reason in my life." When I heard the new Pixies record I was kind of jealous. In its first four minutes the record lays out more ideas than some bands do in their careers. Pixies records are a big challenge. You've really got to dig in. A 6/8 break with a walkie-talkie? Critics might hone in on that, but I'm not sure if everyone gets it. And there's this great turn, a phrase, it's kind of like the "Popcorn" break, it just comes along at a perfect time.

FRANCIS: Yeah! We've got another song called "The Surf Epic," three songs strung together by the "Popcorn" break.

MUSICIAN: *The Hüskers brought that post-Spector wall-of-sound thing into punk.*

MOULD: After you've been making eight-track demos and then get to 16- or 24-, your first tendency is to fill up all that open space. Then you take it away a bit. Then you realize that you really liked it all up there. My problem has always been trying to translate ideas to a producer, which is why I finally learned to do all those things. "This song sounds like ash, I want it to sound like redwood." They go, "Huh?" Then after practicing with that digital reverb or whatever, you find out how to make that river into an ocean, or make the river run upstream.

I was making a demo at home, making feedback with the guitar and a $60 amp. It barely sounded like guitar. It just sounded like somebody blowing something up. I fried $500 worth of equipment

in three minutes, but I got the sound. Now when I do the record I've got to bring that channel on digital tape to the studio, because I'm not ever going to get it that way again.

FRANCIS: There's an attraction to volume. Sheer volume is a good thing. I've developed a lot of ear wax, but it's neat.

MOULD: You can realign people's physical chemistry with sound, and that's a great thing. Music is supposed to be beyond articulation and expression. Volume can affect people. When I would go to see Neubauten, I felt like I'd been run over by a truck. I didn't go to watch them, but to find out what it would do to my body. Like getting a massage of the weirdest kind.

FRANCIS: Tell us about the one-note encore you did.

MOULD: Norman, Oklahoma, 35 minutes. Playing at an agricultural hall in '82 or '83. It was one of those nights that really polarized everything. We thought, "What comes next?" You have to deal with all the elements of a show: resonance of the room, what comes at you, and the vibe. So we thought, "Variations on one note."

FRANCIS: You whittled 'em down to about seven kids?

MOULD: Yeah, they were either totally mesmerized or totally disgusted. That's drama: Who's going to hang with this one? It becomes a mantra.

MUSICIAN: *Are there parts of metal music that you steer toward?*

FRANCIS: Maybe a little tiny bit, but I certainly don't listen to any metal. Someone gave me the new Metallica and I was on a long trip and once I got to learn the patterns I didn't mind it. Diddida-dump diddida-dump diddida-dump. That stuff is wild.

MOULD: I like the guys who play the double bass drums faster than snares, and then do all that straight shit on top. That's funny.

FRANCIS: I can see the attraction, almost like playing a video game in a way. Here we go: left turn, right turn, straight.

MOULD: It's like that math jazz. Pick a number between five and eight, put it in one bag. Then pick six, 12 and 16 and put it in another. Oop! Here's a section to play 7/16, here we go! Don't get me wrong, I love it when people change tempo, but only if it's in the context. Maybe it is. All those kids that play metal grew up in the suburbs, and they're constantly figuring how to get out of the cul de sac. Bouncing their bikes off the cornerstones. Garbage comes on Thursday, look out! All indicative of the society you live in.

MUSICIAN: *What did you think about Nirvana's surprise hit? Pretty unorthodox compared to what's right next to it on the charts.*

MOULD: You really think it's unorthodox, even compared to what's right next to it?

MUSICIAN: *A mountain of pretty damn raw guitars? Definitely.*

FRANCIS: Does the hot video have something to do with that? The most records that we ever sold in a week was when one of ours got a little bit warm for a second. They liked the video for "Here Comes Your Man," they showed it, we sold.

MOULD: The music television channels have become so genre-specific that there's no mystery involved anymore. Now, when MTV flash the name of the blocks up there, I wouldn't go as far as to say that it smacks of racism, but in a sense...to me the allure of music was hearing the word of mouth about a band, or reading about a

band from a writer whose opinion I trusted. Or hearing a record at a record store I trusted. Now, you've got something in everyone's household telling you what kind of music it is in 20-minute intervals. Where do the Pixies fit into that? Alternative ghetto, or maybe metal. It's as if the change between the rap and the metal sections is the changing of the channel. No one's being surprised anymore.

FRANCIS: Plus, you're exposed to the guy's face for three minutes. It's not the world of sound, it's the world of pictures. I was just flipping through last night and saw Nirvana and checked it out a bit. But overall there's nothing there to keep my interest. And it's not as if my standards are too friggin' high. I'll take some good old mainstream crap, but...

MOULD: I don't mean to dis video, I just don't see many people doing anything with it. It all reminds me of commercials. You've got to do 'em and it eats up time and money, and it puts you on the back side of your vision, which isn't right either.

FRANCIS: And you don't get time to practice them. I practice before a tour, doing a record, writing songs. And I don't mind being around the video stuff. Cameras, film. That's fun. But I have no idea about what the art of music television should be. And I think someone should: Set up something to aspire to and go for it. But it's usually like, "Okay, we got a week, let's go." And we just slap something together. We've blown a lot of money on something that didn't get the payback, that's for sure. The record companies are charging you for half of it. It's paid advertising, but they're not taking care of the whole bill. I think the next time I sign a record contract, it's going to be, "Look, if you're going to twist my arm to do videos every time I do a record, then you have to pay for those damn things."

MOULD: I think the deal that I'm about to close says that I have to pay for them out of my own pocket; they just release them. If they make me do one, it'll be, "Yeah, sure, I'll do it...for $1000 with a couple of friends, and I'll be on both sides of the camera." The thing about paid commercials is that on music television there's no guarantee that your commercial's going to get aired.

FRANCIS: And then you hear things about Joe Fuckin' President of Video saying to Joe Fuckin' Record Company Guy, "Oh, you got two bands over there, which one you want to be hot?" You hear that and you go, "Gee, why am I working so hard?"

MOULD: If a band can't play live, I don't care how good their video is. At that point it crosses the line from being music to being a Broadway musical. Charlie can't cop out: If your voice is shot, you still play. Me too. I've got to use my imagination when that happens. How can I humor these people when everyone in the room knows my voice is a bag of shit? What other talents do I use to make my performance worthwhile? I'm sitting in a chair, I can't fake it.

FRANCIS: In the space we rehearsed at in Hollywood we could hear them loading their samplers for all the background vocals. It was, "Oh man, just be off key one night please." No balls at all.

MOULD: Live performance is supposed to be live. I rarely walk out of a show disappointed. If it's a band that I like and they weren't that good, I'm not never going to listen to them again. There are things you have to take into account when you go to see live bands. Certain

Black Sheet Music

BLACK FRANCIS uses a Soldano head. And the Pixies currently all use Marshalls. "Kim, our bassist, actually has a Peavey Combo. I play two Telecasters onstage. GHS .010 strings are easy to find, so I stay with 'em. We have a fake 12-string thing we do—read about it in Musician, actually. Keith Richards was talking about getting rid of the high E, he drops the E to B. So if I break a high E, I'll leave it off for a while. Sounds cool.

"We have a few songs—'Allison,' 'The Happening,' 'Stormy Weather'—that are tuned up a half-step, capoed up like the Who, just for fun. And we've got to keep going back to those guitars that are tuned up a half step because they ring better."

"I'm still using D'Addario, I've got a few packs left over from my deal," says Mould wryly. "I use .010s on my Strats and then I use McCabe's house 12-string strings, which I think are also made by D'Addario. Extra Lights on those. When I write at home, like yesterday, I was using a Schecter Tele that Ed from fIREHOSE gave me, just because it was there. My Fender, Strat and Jazz Boss were also out. But the Tele was plugged in when the idea came."

What about acoustics? "The Yamaha EPX-12 is the only one I've got. Lowden wanted me to do a thing with them, but even at cost they're about $1300. They smell great, like a cedar chest. All the seams are real tight. Everything about them feels smooth." And his home amp? "I go direct. I got a Groove Tubes speaker emulator. There's one guy I've got to get an amp from: He makes the best amps in the world. It's called THD Electronics, in Seattle. The Stones use them. The guy hand-builds all of them; he's got a little factory in an old fire station. Amazing. They could power a Marshall cabinet. I still have the same signal-processing stuff: dbx compression, and either Yamaha or Roland equipment to make it stereo.

"I can't buy another thing," says Mould, shaking his head. "I'm living in Brooklyn and I'm saving room for a studio. I've got virgin power that I can pull up from the basement. It's not tied into the elevator or refrigerator or anything. As clean as New York power gets. You still get gypsy cabs coming through the compressor."

"We got a good one on our new record," Francis says. "We were doing a take and it was still in record, and it's some trucker saying, 'Well, that's the way I learned it.' We had to keep it."

things are choreographed: There's a set list written, cues reacted to. But there's so much latitude. Someone's tired, someone's drunk. That's what makes a gig a gig. It's a reflection of what the performers and support people went through that day. You're summing up a day.

FRANCIS: That's absolutely correct.

MOULD: All the falsity means you have no life, that you eat biodegradable plastic, that you just shit it back out at 10 o'clock every night. If I'm in a pissy mood I just tell people, "Sorry, my day sucked. I've got a cold, speeding ticket, someone smashed my window. The next hour-and-a-half is going to reflect that." Why hide it? Except that it's taboo to break the illusion of happy performer.

People seem to have very rigid lives, sitting in front of computers. I would hope that people abandon that shit when they come see me. Check it at the door. Bring your soul with you. That's the cool thing about live music. "I've got you now, and it's not necessarily going to be entertaining. It's going to change again, get away from visuals, and there are going to be a lot of casualties." Ⓜ

ERIC CLAPTON

HEARTBREAKS AND BLESSINGS

by JOE JACKSON

Eric Clapton's heartbreak began on August 27, 1990, when the helicopter in front of the one he was riding in—the one carrying his bodyguard Nigel Browne, his booking agent Bobby Brooks, his assistant tour manager Colin Smythe, and his friend Stevie Ray Vaughan—crashed after the all-star finale of Clapton's set in Alpine Valley, Wisconsin. Clapton's heartache turned to nightmare on March 20th, 1991, when his only son, Conor, fell to his death from the window of a Manhattan apartment. Clapton's life had been scarred with periods of poverty, drug addiction and romantic loss—but nothing could prepare anyone for such tragedy.

Now Clapton has returned with a new crusade—on the first day of December he and old friend George Harrison began a concert tour of Japan. Clapton hopes that Harrison will find the experience pleasant enough to justify continuing the tour in Europe and America in 1992.

Before leaving for Japan, Clapton sat down in Milan, Italy to talk about his state of mind—and the state of his art—after his trials.

MUSICIAN: *You're touring with George Harrison!*

CLAPTON: The whole idea is that George should go, with my band, and perform songs that he's been famous for for nearly 30 years, from the time of the Beatles onwards. He hasn't done live shows for nearly 15 years. And despite working with the Wilburys he considers himself to be retired from the music business because he's so disillusioned with it all. But I told him that everywhere I played last year people were asking, "Where is George Harrison? What is he doing?" and we started talking about doing some shows together. He was very nervous so I said, "You can have my band, my lights, my sound and we'll go somewhere where people are not too critical, like good music and are hungry and enthusiastic—like Japan." And we are. So if that works, if he enjoys it, maybe we will do another tour of Europe and America.

MUSICIAN: *So is it largely a "rescue George Harrison" tour?*

CLAPTON: Sure. It's certainly not for business. I've been concerned about George. I love touring, it's my favorite experience and I keep telling him that, yet his response is a cynical "Really?" He can't believe it because 15 years without touring is a long time. And all the experience he had in his early days with the Beatles was bizarre because they were playing for 10-year-olds through a set of, say, 40 minutes, knowing no one could hear them, then hop in a helicopter and be gone. So that's his abiding memory of touring. And then when he did a solo tour 15 years ago he lost his voice on the first night! That left him determined never to do it again. So those are the barriers we have to break down and I hope we do.

Photograph: Carl Studna

"WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE DEATH THERE IS NO CONTROL OVER IT. WHATEVER YOU CONSTRUCT AS A THEORY AS TO WHY THESE THINGS HAPPEN IS, FINALLY, NONSENSE... I LEARNED THAT FROM MY SON."

MUSICIAN: *You haven't exactly been a prolific composer over the past few years. Why is that?*

CLAPTON: I was having problems composing of late, that is true. I don't compose songs in a normal day. It's not something I particularly enjoy. In fact, I only compose songs if I'm in an emotional state, if I'm experiencing extreme happiness, extreme sadness or grief. *Then* I compose because I have to fix myself. I compose to heal myself from damage. At the moment I'm writing because I've had a very bad year. Terrible things happened so I'm forced to compose. But when we made *Journeyman*, for example, what was happening in my life? I had a love affair. Big deal! [*laughs*] I wrote one song about that love affair. That's all I could manage because it wasn't that big a deal to me. Unless it's like the love of your life it doesn't really inspire me. But I have started composing songs for the next album. There are already six songs which I've started recording in Los Angeles. The songs are about my son. I've three on tape and there are three more. And every day I start to work on other ones. It's happening all the time. I'm writing continually because *I need to*. This is the way I repair myself, recover from the tragedy.

MUSICIAN: *Are the new compositions blues songs?*

CLAPTON: Actually, no. They come out as their own entity. If you're writing a blues you have a 12-bar base so all you can add is a lyric. The music is already there. And because I know blues so well it is easily accessible to my emotions. I can sink into that quickly. But if I'm *composing* a song, as I am with regard to my son, then I construct something in such a way that the construction, and *not* just the lyric or performance, hopefully has the quality of true expression. For example, the way one chord moves into another chord evokes the sadness as much as the way I sing it. Whereas in a blues it's basically the way you perform it that makes the difference. But what I try to do when I'm composing is give the emotion to the *structure* of the song. But sometimes other forces take over. One of the songs I wrote for the movie *Rush*, called "Tears in Heaven," turned out to be a song about my son. Now that I realize that I want to change it, yet it's too late because they needed the song within two weeks of my finishing it. But songs do take their own shape and form. And at times it may not even be anything you recognize musically. The first song I wrote about Conor was a samba and I don't understand why. But you have to let whatever is in you come out as it has chosen and respect it and finish it to the best of your ability. *Then* when you finish it you decide whether you like it or not. And when I finish a song I always think, "Now people have a right to hear this," and let them make up their minds about it for themselves.

MUSICIAN: *Aren't you afraid that however therapeutic writing songs about Conor may be for you, those songs may end up as too personal for public consumption, or that releasing them may in some way violate your relationship with your son?*

CLAPTON: That *is* difficult. Where do you draw the line? I don't know. My attitude towards my son is that I owe it to him. I've lost him. What am I going to do? I have to pay my respects to that boy, in *my* way, and let the world know what I thought about him. I don't want to make it a secret. And I do *need* to play these songs I've written about Conor, for example, on the next tour. They're not going to be on record, so the audience won't know them, but that, in itself, is a challenge. And my belief is that Conor will somehow hear these songs. I don't know how that is. How it works is a mystery to me.

Photograph: Steve Granitz

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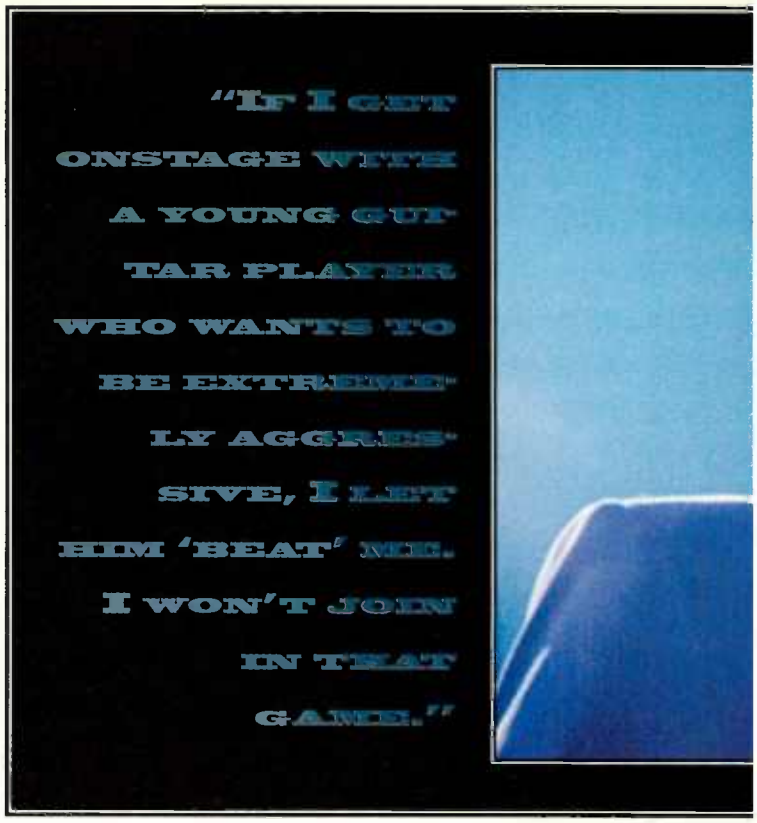
But I feel that. And when I play the songs I evoke him in my mind and in my heart. So I would like to share that. That's the reason I'll be putting these songs out on record and doing them in concert. I need to. And I do talk about it a lot because if I didn't I might as well lock myself in a dungeon and throw away the key. I'll talk to anyone, anywhere about it because that helps me to get over the death. And writing songs helps me. And I know that people in England, say, who are dear fans, want to know what I think and feel about Conor's death.

MUSICIAN: *Seven months after the tragedy, what is your predominant feeling?*

CLAPTON: Bewilderment. When you experience death you find there is no control over it. And whatever you think or construct as a theory as to why these things happen is, finally, nonsense. Because no one knows which of us will be gone tomorrow, or why. I learned *that* from my son. Because there is *no* explanation for his death. If I really wanted one then I could fabricate the most awful guilt for myself. For example, that I must have done something so bad in my karma that I deserve this. But what would I get seeing things like that? What would I experience through that kind of self-pity and self-indulgence? That, to me, would be a sickness, a spiritual and mental sickness. That's all that could result from seeing things that way. So to be philosophic about it I'd have to say I don't understand. To be totally honest about it, I *don't* understand.

MUSICIAN: *Do you fear that as a reaction you now may make the mistake of expecting too much from his music, make it the emotional*



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center of his universe?

CLAPTON: That would be *disastrous*. But it is a possibility. I did find that when I made that tape of the three songs I've finished, I suddenly was chilled by the thought that I'm never going to have to play them anymore. And now I have got a void. It's like if I do an album of these songs and just put them away it will be like letting go of Conor. It would be a form of musical burial. So that, too, is part of the reason I have to perform them.

MUSICIAN: *Yet mightn't there come a time when you don't want to be reconnected so directly with the memory of your son's death?*

CLAPTON: Time deals with that on its own. I consciously remember the date and I go to the grave every Thursday when I'm in England. But yes, there may be a time when it will all slip. Maybe in 10 years' time I will have a family myself. But the pain will never be gone.

MUSICIAN: *What's your response to those who suggest that drink and drugs can be an aid to creativity?*

CLAPTON: All I learned in those days was a lot of bad things. I learned how to be unreliable. I learned how to be negative, how to hide and how to insult people, all the worst things in life. And I've spent the last four years trying to undo all that. I now don't subscribe to anything that I think you can get out of a joint, a bottle or a vial of pills. I don't think there is anything there that you can really make of use to humankind. There are certain things that will be triggered in your brain, for example, if you take a line of coke or smoke some mescaline. Certain things do happen to

your brain that are pleasurable for yourself alone. But to try to communicate that to other people is usually a waste of time. If you read a book by someone who's written that under the influence of mescaline, does it make sense? It's interesting to know it's written that way but beyond that, what are you going to gain from such work?

MUSICIAN: *Yet countless musicians do swear that greater music can be played under the influence.*

CLAPTON: There is always a period at the instigation of an addiction where it does seem to balance out. Your creative impulses are heightened by whatever you're taking in. Yet that's a very short time span. And the price you pay is that if you keep that up you end up just passing out, usually. I can remember night after night after night when I'd have a cassette machine and a bottle of brandy and the morning after there would still be the cassette machine empty and the bottle empty. And that's usually the result. Is it worth it? I know some people can ascribe creativity to taking pot and there is some proof it can heighten consciousness or open doors. And a lot of people who are non-gregarious and shy meeting people or being in front of an audience, even after one drink become party animals. But that doesn't last long and it's just not the way I choose to do things anymore.

MUSICIAN: *Which of your old songs seemed to be helped by drugs?*

CLAPTON: "Bell Bottom Blues" was written on Mandrax, lying on a floor! But am I right to say that song couldn't have been written without it? I don't think I'm prepared to make that judgment.

MUSICIAN: *Some blues nuts believe that like Robert Johnson and maybe even Stevie Ray Vaughan, you have to travel into the deepest darkness of the devil's music in order to pay his dues.*

CLAPTON: That's a good little fantasy for young people but the point about Stevie Ray, for example, is that he had been three years sober before he died. He was living a great, honest life, being a fantastic human being. And again, there was no *reason* for his death. He was up the ladder very high, musically. There was no one near him. *That* was my first thought. Maybe it was time for him to go because he couldn't get any better as a musician. I'd rather think that than the Robert Johnson syndrome. But how the hell do I know? How the hell can I say that? In fact he could have gotten better and better and better. So I really don't think it's wise to try to surmise why these things happen—Conor's death or Stevie Ray's death.

MUSICIAN: *Even two of the musicians who*

Stage Brew

CLAPTON's guitar tech Lee Dickson assures us that "not much has changed." Eric's still playing his Eric Clapton Model Strat through Soldano Amps and Marshall 4x12 cabinets with EV speakers. His customized Pete Cornish pedalboard is full of effects that go unused onstage, the major exception being his Dyna-My-Piano Tri-Stereo Chorus. Clapton's other live effect is a Jim Dunlop CryBaby wah-wah pedal. He's singing into a Shure Beta 58 microphone and he's hooked up to a Somson Wireless. His strings (and picks) are Ernie Balls. The PA on his current tour of Japan with George Harrison is a Showco Prism system and a (what else?) Harrison Console.

played with you on Layla *are now dead. Do you ever stop and ask yourself, "Why didn't that happen to me? Why am I so blessed?"*

CLAPTON: Why am I so *blessed*? Yes. Because I clearly am. There is a reason, but I don't think I'm supposed to know it. If I was given even an inkling of why it wasn't me I'd probably go insane. If you want to *see* everything and know the truth about everything, your mind would fry. So the simple way of me looking at this question is to think that because it wasn't me, I do have a responsibility to express my gratitude for still being alive after everything I've experienced. And the best way I can do that is by making music and doing my best to make it accessible to people that enjoy it.

MUSICIAN: *Do you still believe in a God-force, despite the recent tragedy in your life?*

CLAPTON: I do believe in a higher power, yes, and that has helped me through all of this, every day. But as a positive, practical way of living, I think I only started really praying about four years ago. In the sense of, what do I do at the end of the day? I go down on my knees and say, "Thank you for the great things that have happened despite *everything*." But I don't know who I'm talking to. I don't go into a church. It's not like I'm inside a building. It's just something I do because I don't know any other way to do it. But it works for me and that's what matters.

MUSICIAN: *Looking back, do you feel you had to compromise your musical vision, sell out in any way, if not to the devil or God then to the dollar, in order to be one of the most popular recording artists in the world?*

CLAPTON: I have made compromises, yes. But I don't know that the popularity I have is a result of that. I hope the popularity is a result of a kind of consistent struggle to just keep going. The thing I hear most from fans that have been around a long time is that old Slowhand just carries on. And I do. And I don't try to change too much. The best advice I ever got in this business was when Muddy Waters told me to keep it simple and to be true to myself. That's all I ever tried to do. And that's exactly what I'm going to keep on doing. And as for fame and money, they *don't* take away despair or any of that stuff, believe me. They can add to it because there's a lot extra to contend with. The more people I employ, the more responsibilities I have. I almost have to work to feed mouths, almost have to put on a show because I have a staff of people who depend on me to do that. And in the process I make money, and I *like* to make money because I like to spend it. I don't have a businessman's approach to life. I don't want to amass money. I don't want to get involved in investment. But because I originally came from a poor background I *enjoy* money. But I sure as hell know from experience that this isn't going to remove me from the emotional hardships of life. In fact, I learned the hard way that if you look to that for support and for security and for love you won't find it. At the end of the day, or night, playing music still is what gives me the greatest pleasure in life.

MUSICIAN: *How would you describe the evolution of your style as a guitarist?*

CLAPTON: I don't *really* ever know where it's going! But I do feel that as you get older you have more respect for your instrument. Also, in living a different kind of life and not being into drugs or drink now, my focus has come back onto the serious aspects of what I do as a guitarist and to try to improve that without [*cont'd on page 91*]

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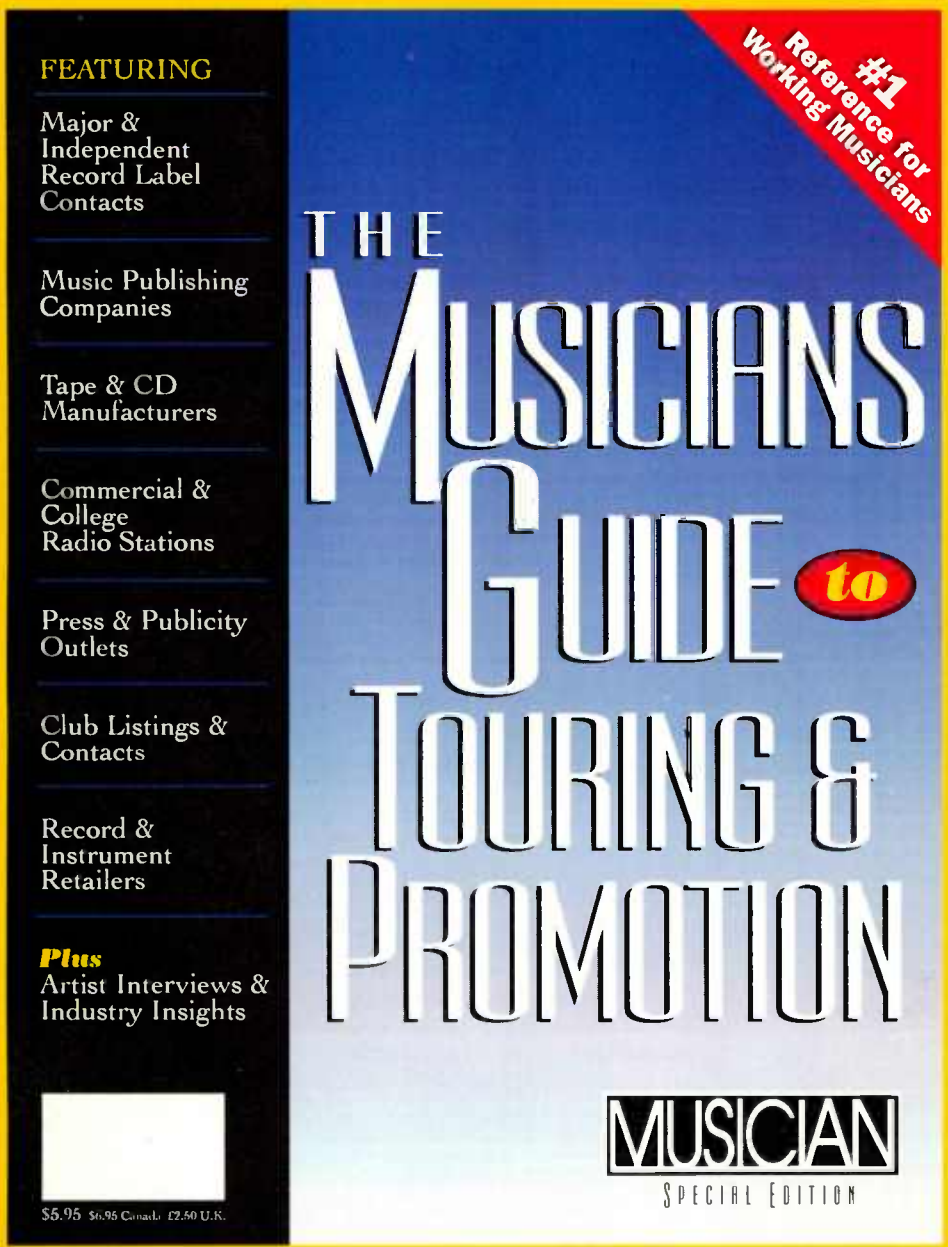

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MUSICIAN MAGAZINE • FEBRUARY 1992

Bass

Rhythm, Tone, Melody, Harmony

Nathan East on the bass' place

By ALAN DI PERNA

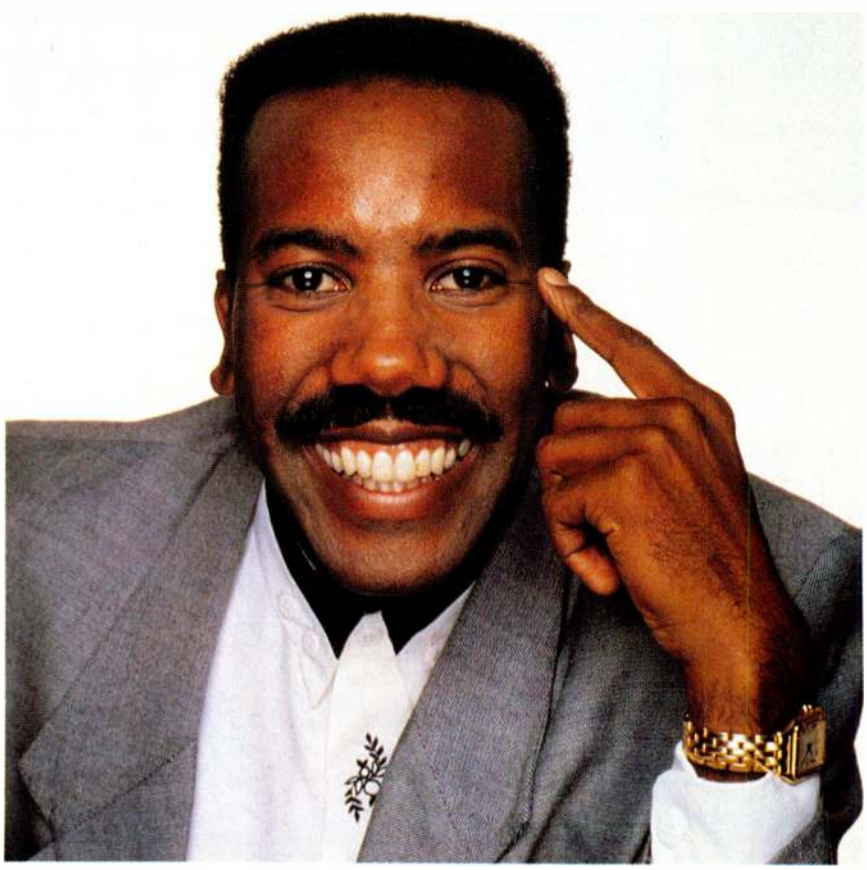
NATHAN EAST SITS IN HIS HOME studio, fiddling with an old four-string bass he hasn't touched in a while. "It feels strange," he laughs. "I'm so used to playing five-strings and six-strings these days."

Just as the bass' tonal range has expanded in recent years, Nathan East's career has stretched all over the map. He's just back from Spain, where he jammed with Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, Brian May and Joe Walsh at the Guitar Legends concert. His next gig is in Japan with Eric Clapton and George Harrison. For the moment, though, East is home in L.A., discussing the debut from Fourplay, his soft jazz group with Lee Ritenour, Bob James and Harvey Mason. The record marks Nate's first appearance as a full-on bandmember, after more than a decade of playing ace sideman to everyone from Smokey Robinson to Dolly Parton, from Barbra Streisand to Judas Priest. What's the key to fitting in with all those different musical personalities?

"I never looked to the flashier styles of bass playing," East says of his early influences. "I was more into the anchor players like James Jamerson, Chuck Rainey, Peter Cetera or Paul McCartney. Of course, I always loved more outgoing bassists like Stanley Clarke and Jaco Pastorius. But there's a lesson to be learned from the story about how Jaco once sat in with somebody who said, 'Fantastic! Now all we need is a bass player.'"

East is inclined to use tone and melody, rather than pyrotechnics. For tone, he relies strictly on his fingers and his bass. Redirecting his attention to the four-string in his lap, East reviews his right-hand style: "I'm a two-finger man: first and second. I'll play with one finger and add a bit of my fingernail for percussive attack. That's for lighter stuff like Fourplay. On a Clapton tune I'll use the flesh of the finger: that good old school of solid bass."

East is wicked at popping with his thumb, but he cautions that there are better strategies for making notes jump out: "When you attack the note with your thumb, you don't get as much of the fundamental as you do with your finger. So I often end up using my finger to attack the note and then popping



it an octave higher using my second finger underneath the G string." As for left-hand technique, East always keeps his fingers exactly parallel with the frets. "A lot of people wrap their thumb around the neck, and their fingers will angle. But I always keep my fingers directly over the notes, ready to play at all times."

East uses a simple left-hand exercise to keep in shape: an eight-note pattern on the first and third frets of each string, ascending then descending (F, G, Bflat, C, Eflat, F, Aflat, Bflat, Aflat, F, Eflat, C, Bflat, G, F). Start by using your first and second fingers. Then the first and third, first and fourth, second and third, and second and fourth.

"Get comfortable using that fourth finger," East reprimands; "it'll give you 25 percent more access. I'm fascinated by the way the fretboard is laid out. You can play a whole melody from one position."

The opportunity for melodic playing is one thing East likes about quartets, whether it's Fourplay or the four-piece ensemble on Clapton's *24 Nights*. "With Fourplay there's a bit of freedom," he says, "because we're not putting down a pad for someone to overdub to later on. This gives me and Harvey Mason the opportunity to be melodic as well as rhythmic. Every now and then I like to intertwine with the melody."

Fourplay's "Bali Run" provides a succinct lesson in East's ability to make the bass play many roles in a single song. He starts with an atmospheric drone, then moves to an introductory bass riff with percussive fingernail attack. But it's his underpinning of the melody that contributes most to the song's flavor. His line works Zen-simple variations on an E minor scale. In the second four bars of each verse, it's stated as E, F#, G, B, A, B, F#, G, F# (with a trill to G), D, E. The first time around, East plays a harmony beneath this, starting on the sixth: C, D, E, G, D, low G, rest, E, B, low E.

"But what's fun about the bass," he adds, "is that there are always several ways to go. You can put two different notes under a chord and get a different color from each." The same melody from "Bali Run" takes on a baroque feel as East plays an alternate harmony: A, B, C, B, D, G, rest, E, B, low E.

In the final choruses Bob James gets tricky, whacking substitutions beneath the simple melody. East's now moving chromatically: C#, C, B, B-flat, A, D, G, C, F#, B, low E. "But here too there are other ways to go," East smiles and re-harmonizes the first part of the riff: D, D-flat, C, F#, B, E. "It works from D and from C#. It's interesting that so many notes work with the same melody."

Replaying the four lines, East repeats the mantra for all good bassplaying: "The challenge is to come up with a simple line that's interesting enough to keep people guessing."

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NATHAN EAST plays a Yamaha Motion LB 1 five-string bass, a Yamaha TRB six-string, a Clevinger acoustic and a Fodera. Strings are Yamahas, D'Addarios and Elites from the Bass Center in L.A., in gauges from .125 on the low B to .040 on the G. Nate runs direct, live and in the studio, but has used Trace Elliot, Yamaha, SWR and Hartke amps for onstage monitoring.

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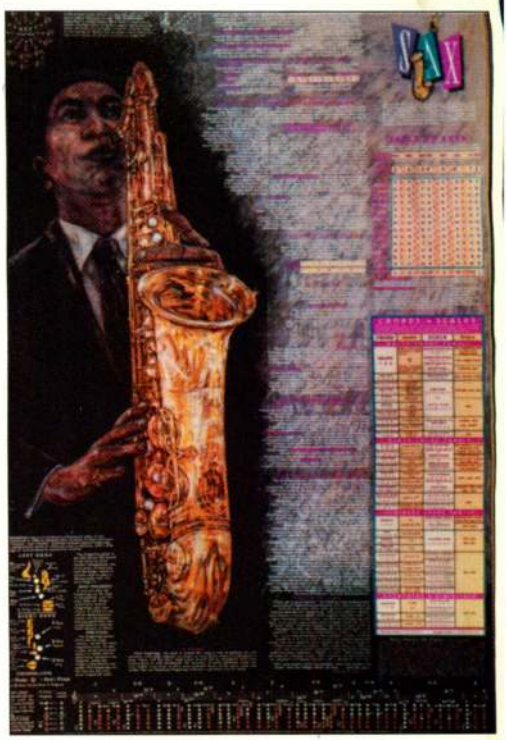

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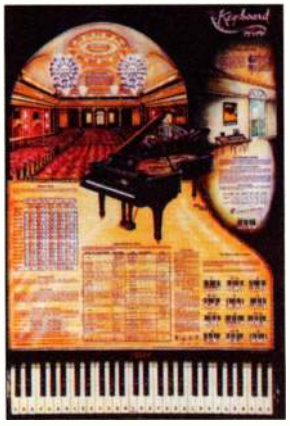

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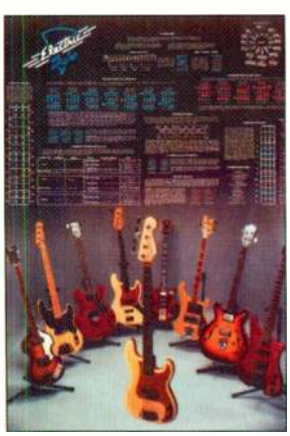

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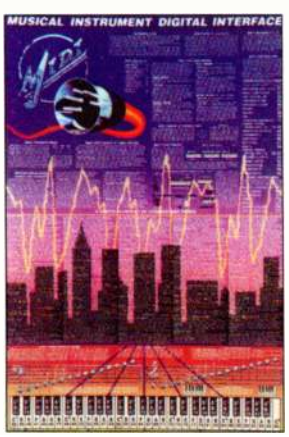

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Joni Mitchell on Tunings

The creative temperament ❖ By Matt Resnicoff

"I'M ALWAYS OPTIMISTIC THAT THE MUSIcians I use in the studio will discover something about themselves—that I can get them to play something they wouldn't ordinarily play." It's self-realization the Joni Mitchell way. "I give a lot of metaphorical instruction, because I'm a painter first; I see music diagrammatically and architecturally in my head. I still don't know what key I'm playing in, and I don't even have the numerical system—you know, play the ii chord, iii chord—because there's 50 different ways I tune my guitar. There's nothing stable at all, so I need to play with musicians that my detractors call 'slick players' because they can read and transcribe these complex inversions created by the tunings."

The inversions in question are chord voicings other than the standard root-third-fifth-seventh structure you learn through first-semester piano. Mitchell's music makes good use of low-string detunings that lend lush texture to her acoustic guitar accompaniment. The voicings are spacious enough that other instruments—particularly Wayne Shorter's soprano or Larry Klein's airy bass—can move freely through the arrangements. Her collection of tunings was recently transcribed and analyzed for her by an associate who spent weeks poring through dozens of her records.

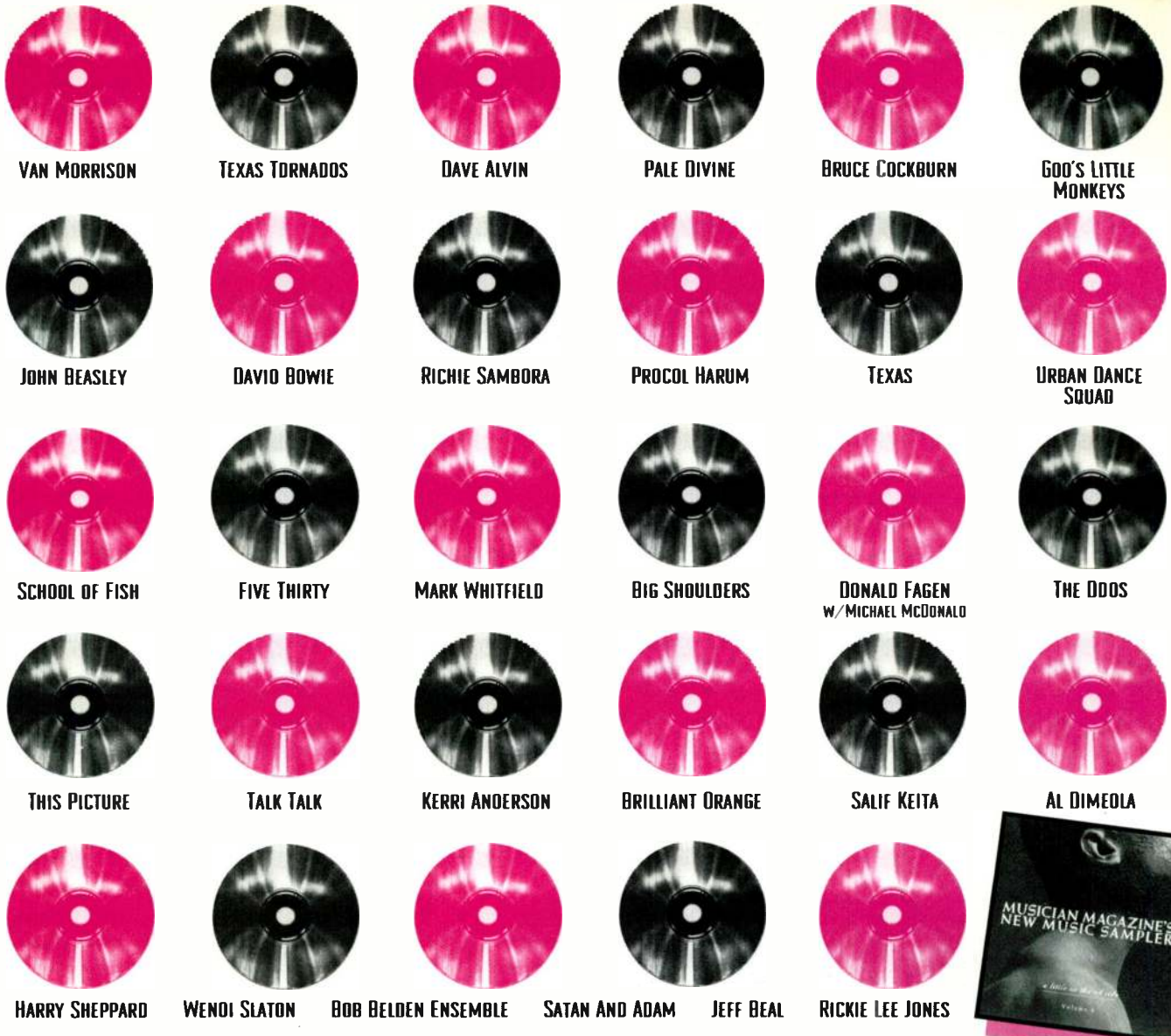
"The black blues guys played a lot in open-G and open-C, and those tunings were all kicking around the coffee houses in the early '60s," recalls Joni. "There was drop-D also, just taking your bass string down to D, and then there was a D modal, in which both the Es went down to D. I knew the D modal, but Eric Andersen showed me open-G, I think. Keith Richards uses open-G a lot. That's coming out of a black blues tradition; nobody showed them Spanish tuning, so they just tuned to a major, by ear. And there's a slack-key tradition started in Hawaii. Buffy Sainte-Marie got a *little* further into it. I don't know if she ever showed me a tuning, but I remember showing her some, because she learned a couple of my songs and was intrigued by the chords.

"My left hand is not that facile. My right hand has a lot of agility," she continues, "but the joints are weird in a couple of fingers on my left hand, and I could never hope to play chords that I heard in my head, chords that came out of Gershwin and Frank Sinatra—a lot of '40s pop had some really sophisticated harmony, and it was popular too." Go figure.

When she tours, Joni carries six guitars, tuned in families, some set up to accommodate a drop-C, the slackest she gets. "When I played coffee houses I had about 20 tunings and built my set so that I'd start with two strings detuned, and for the next songs I'd be dropping one more down and for the next be dropping one or two *more* down."

Joni likes seconds because of their dissonance. "Every day there's a hum of frayed nerves around you, and to me music is a diagram of the time you live in," she says. "A lot of people have an inarticulate aversion to my harmony, but it's becoming more infused into other players' work now, so it's not as strange as it was. A girlfriend of mine told me she *hated* my harmony on 'Ethiopia.' Years later I asked why, and she said it was the parallel seconds: She had taken a music lesson and could analyze a chord, and the teacher told her that parallel seconds are a no-no. Millions of people think that way. And all theory being hindsight, parallel fifths were also a no-no, in Beethoven's time, but he played them anyway. You can say, 'I don't like that chord,' but I don't think there is a wrong chord at this point. They all depict emotion." Ⓜ

Photograph: Norman Seeff



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Slaughter's Blas Elias ❖ *By* RICK MATTINGLY

REACHING HIGH ABOVE HIS HEAD on the scaffold-like hardware that surrounds his drums, Blas Elias whips his right arm forward as though serving a tennis ball. Just before impact with a cymbal, he makes a flick of the wrist; as the cymbal bursts into sound the drummer's arm snaps back, lets the stick twirl flashily, then swoops down to the snare drum for a crackling backbeat.

"From the outside I may look like a thrashing, headbanging drummer," says Elias. "It may appear I'm just stupidly hitting drums as hard as I can. But I'm trained and I've studied. If it was just senseless bashing, I wouldn't have lasted nearly two years of touring, and I wouldn't be able to play with any accuracy."

Lots of what he does, Elias concedes, *is* for visual effect. "When people come to a concert they want to see a show as well as hear it. So I do things that would be considered wrong technique by a lot of drummers—a lot of arm motion, using my whole leg when I'm playing bass drum. But though I'm moving my arm, the actual impact is *with a snap of the wrist*. I'm using proper technique."

The same principle applies to Elias' feet. "The notes I play and the accuracy I get is from the ankles. To get extra power I weight them with my legs. But when I practice, it's all ankle. The main reason I keep my heels off the pedals is for balance, not power.

"My approach to the bass drums has been to treat them like a pair of hands. I practice rudiments on the bass drums, especially paradiddles and double strokes. I never use them in the songs, but they're good for getting the endurance of your feet and legs up for a show."

Each note Elias plays is precise and forceful. One is reminded of the powerful, clean execution of drum-corps percussionists. "I got a lot of my training in corps," confirms Elias. "One of the most important things I learned was that a double-stroke roll is not a stroke and a bounce: It's two actual notes, and you have to play it that way to get accuracy and power."

So projecting across a football field with the corps is not unlike projecting through an arena with an amplified rock band. "If you're going to cut through that guitar volume, you can't play half-assed notes. One technique I use in practicing double strokes is to accent the *second* note instead of the first. That keeps my hands from getting lazy and bouncing it." (It's not just corps drummers who've benefited from that exercise—jazz great Elvin Jones has long applied the technique by accenting the swung eighth-note upbeats in the traditional jazz ride cymbal pattern.) Elias uses the technique in solos. "I do a lot of double-stroke snare drum things, with accents on the toms and cymbals.

"I also use rudiments on my hi-hats. To avoid emphasizing the right hand, I practice everything in triplet form, so that the main beats are moving from hand to hand, and I also practice starting everything with the left hand."

Despite his almost perpetual motion during a show, Elias seems totally at ease, with no visible tension. As they flail away, his arms appear to be made of rubber. "When you extend your arms to hit a cymbal mounted high up, it's not a stiff motion. It's very fluid."

Nevertheless, those cymbals are awfully high—surely the principle of wasted motion comes into play. "I was told by early teachers that the right way to set up drums is to have everything within reach of a wrist snap, so you don't have to move your arms at all. That's fine for the studio, but rock 'n' roll is supposed to be visual. So I try to give people a bit of a show.

Photograph: Gene Kirkland

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"But there's another reason. I've talked to a lot of drummers who have back problems, and I've read about posture. So I set my snare up completely flat, my toms are almost flat and the cymbals are high. My stool is low, so it forces me to have almost perfect back posture. That also helps with breathing and keeping up alertness and energy. Behind a normal setup, where you have to lean into it a little bit, I don't feel the same energy."

With all that movement, how does Elias last through a show, much less a tour? "If you're not pacing yourself and using proper technique, you burn out. The discipline I get from practicing rudiments definitely pays off in playing rock music.

"If you're going to get through a show, one thing is to keep your muscles relaxed. I do a lot of stretching before I go on. I always warm up, too, using rudiments. But I never start with hard, fast exercises. I do light tapping on my leg or in the air just to get my arms moving. Then I move to the pad and do real exercises. But it's not a set ritual. I just play anything I feel like playing to get the muscles warmed up and stretched out."

Elias stresses that warmup time is not practice time. "The main thing is getting the blood flowing, and you don't need elaborate exercises to do that. It can be as simple as single strokes, and it doesn't have to be at breakneck speed. As soon as you start playing something that feels uncomfortable, you're doing the opposite of what you're supposed to be doing: You're tensing your muscles, not relaxing them."

He's also gotten into the habit of doing some non-drumming exercises. "I take my bicycle on the road with me; if I'm not able to ride, I run. Playing those high-energy sets every night is very physical, and it takes a lot of work to build endurance. I don't believe you can do it just by playing drums."

Implements of Slaughter

BLAS ELIAS uses Sabian AA cymbals, a Ludwig Super Classic drumset and DW pedals. His drums are fitted with Remo heads, and he sticks it to ya with Pro Mark 2S drumsticks.

Piano

Don Pullen's Splash & Burn

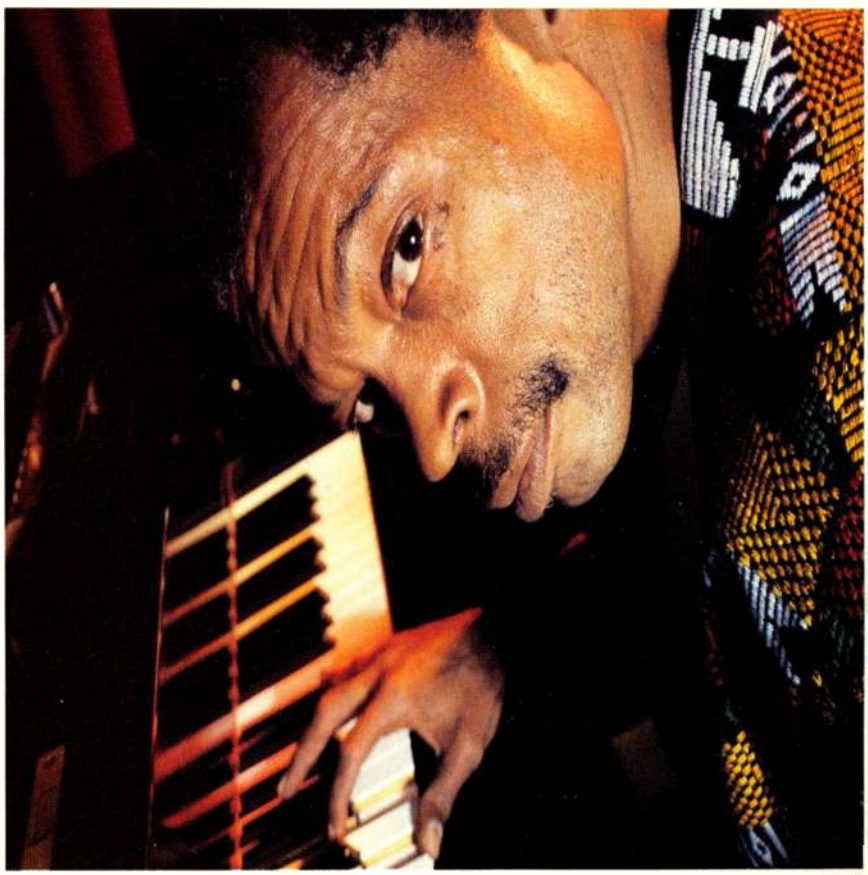
Taking it *out* ❖ *By* GEOFF OSSIAS

SITTING BEFORE A BEATEN-UP BABY grand that dominates his small living room, Don Pullen stares at the score for "Endangered Species: African American Youth," a tune off his album *Random Thoughts*. His hands, bitten by mistreatment and pocked with ashy discolorations, are poised over the keyboard like a maestro frozen between commands. One of the most deceptively simple questions a musician faces—how do you do what you do?—has him stumped. When his hands finally hit the keys with an answer, the kitchen-sink crash is so sudden and so loud it brings his 14-year-old son running from the other room. "Now I've got to find my way out," Pullen says over the jarring chord, still vibrating. "Maybe I can, maybe I can't, but the first step is in understanding that this sound is legitimate."

That maxim has informed much of Pullen's career, from his early years with freeform jazz purveyors Albert Ayler and Milford Graves through his tenure with Charles Mingus to solo releases culminating in an African- and Brazilian-influenced collection. Almost all that work bears his trademark: dazzling chromatic right-hand riffs and splashes backed by a rhythmically steady, chordally simple left hand. At its best, it transforms sonic maelstroms into dreamy musical kefs. It makes Pullen, in an era notable for musical hegemony, perhaps the most recognizable stylist in modern jazz piano.

"If I don't look at a chord as a limitation, then anything is acceptable," he says, smashing the keys again. "You've got to find a way out of the formal structure of a piece."

Ironically, it was the pianist's fidelity to form that encouraged his break from the free scene in the '60s. Pullen, fresh out of



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college, was frustrated by endlessly self-indulgent jam sessions. "We played as free as we wanted, until it got to where I wanted to make sense out of it," he recalls. "It was frustrating. A lot of players said, 'You sound good,' but I would say to myself, 'This is shit.' "

Pullen's challenge lay in adapting the energy of free improvisation to music with structural integrity. "One issue was making a connection between the things I knew, because the idea was that things that went before us were of no value—what we cherished was worthless and we should start from today. And that's an impossibility: Beginning afresh doesn't work." Pullen bristles at the suggestion that he shrunk from free jazz, responding with an unintentional pun: "I didn't pull back, I pulled on."

Pullen spends a lot of practice time translating into notes the sounds he hears in the world or in his imagination. This led to his idiosyncratic splashing sound, an impressionistic technique comparable to a painter's use of "tache," or bright dabs of color. "I kind of roll with the back of my hand," he says. "It's a combination of finger action and the roll, I can create a scene, different textures. I just started doing it one day. My wife—I was married then—thought I was crazy, and that was my signal to keep going. I learned to control it. It's part of my language. It's not something I purposefully do; it's just part of what I hear now.

"The piano can sound however you want," he continues. "What I hear is not actually in tune with the piano, so I have to get as close as I can. I often sing into a tape recorder and translate that. Eastern instruments are closer to the way I hear. If I hear 'woboduddudbedu,' I'm going to try to play that.

"Another exercise is playing outside a chord. I might play an A major in my left hand, and in my right play anything *but* the notes within that tonality. The left hand keeps it focused: I'm still playing the changes, but I'm free and loose. You can come back in, but the idea is to expand the mind so eventually you start hearing things you never heard before."

Pullen insists his art can't be distilled into a convenient recipe. "How do you do *anything*?" he asks. "I don't know how things happen in improvisation, 'cause I play things I don't know how to play. My eyes are closed and I don't see, I *hear* what I'm doing. The idea and the playing of the idea have to be simultaneous. When you start to think about it, it's gone, it's too late."

Pullen puts theory into practice on "Endangered Species," which opens on Eflat7, then moves up chromatically to Bflat7 before the first recapitulation. "The changes over the notes are arbitrary," he says. "I was writing this for my left hand and for the bass player. Here we want the feeling of 7/4, but not necessarily the harmonies. The solo in the improvisation section has no chords; what it does have is a 7/4 rhythm. So I'm playing in seven *and* retaining part of what the melody suggests. It wasn't written with a chordal constant because I heard it without one. That way I'm free to use the melody any way I want, and harmonize it with my left hand just as freely."

That liberality does not hold true for the piece's balladic bridge, a marked contrast to the tensely spare chromatic first theme. The 4/4 rhythm also sets it apart from the tense exposition. "Pretty conventional," Pullen laughs. "Here we're talking about the conventional part of [*cont'd on page 90*]

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Musician? Need a Lawyer?

Broke? Call the VLA! ❖ By Fred Beckley

HERE'S A TEST: YOU'RE A STRUGgling musician. You're thinking about the necessities of life—shelter, food, lawyers (maybe not in that order)—and how you can swing them when your day job doesn't even cover your income taxes. You can probobly afford which of the following: a) a suite at the Ritz; b) the blue-plate special at a local soup kitchen; or c) an attorney who charges more per hour than the Mayflower Madam?

Had enough time? If you chose "A," it's probably time to think about getting your life savings out of that S&L and back under your mattress. "B" is a good choice, but if you play your cards right, "C" could be one (local) phone call away.

How? Simple. Call the nearest Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts Association. VLAs have been around since 1969, when the New York City VLA became the first group founded to provide legal services to needy artists. Since then, VLAs have sprung up independently in 42 other cities ranging in size from eight or 10 attorney members to upwards of 1800. You don't have to live in a huge metropolis to have access to a VLA lawyer: Augusta, Missoula and Wichita—to name a few—each have one.

To land your own lawyer, your income's got to resemble a good game of gold—that is, if your take at the end of the year is low enough, you win. Most VLAs don't like to release their actual income caps (because then everyone qualifies), but the maximums range from $8000 to $15,000 a year for an individual (more for families).

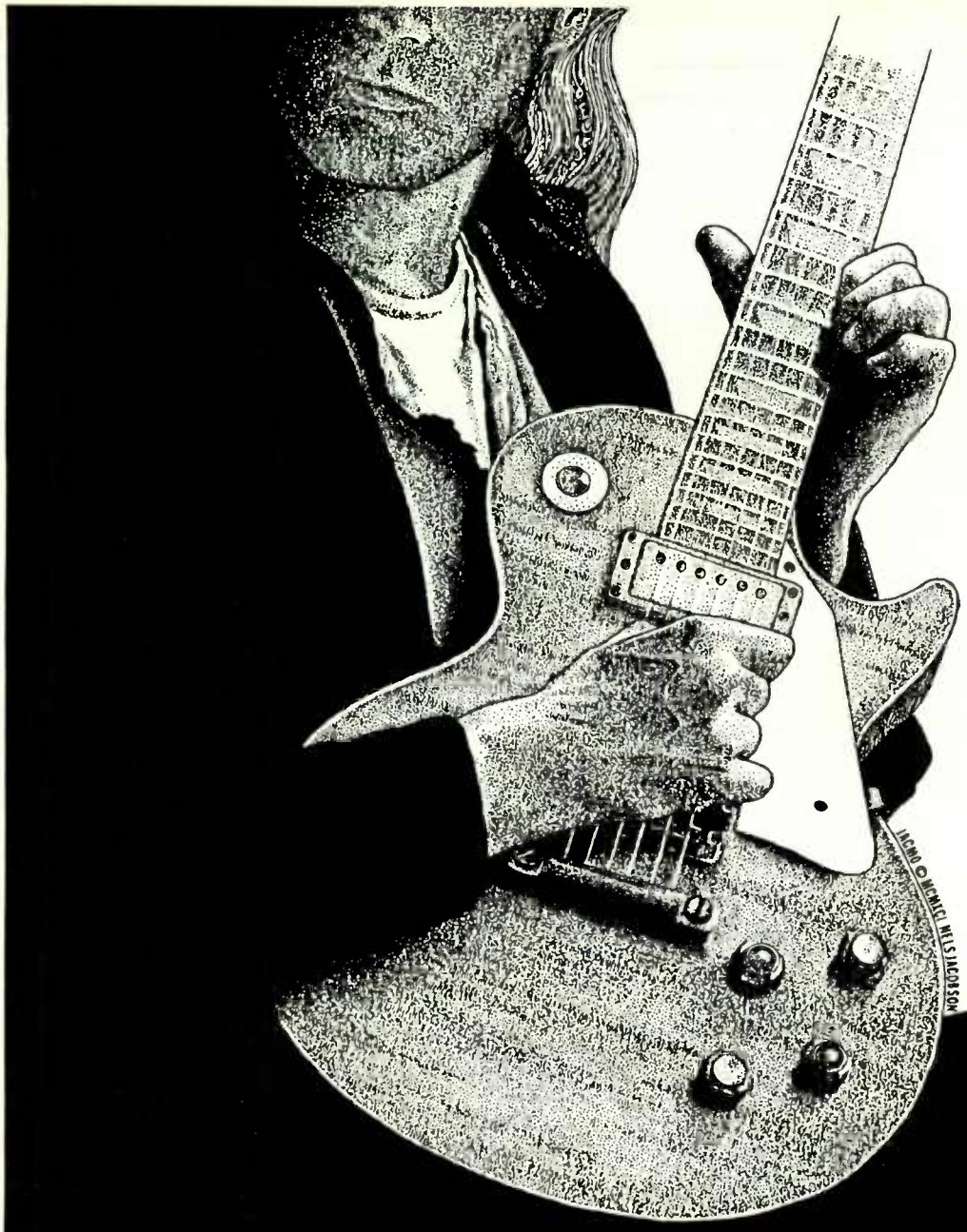
Don't worry if you're too rich, though; you probably won't be turned away. Many VLAs refer you to attorneys willing to work for a reduced rate. The Utah Lawyers for the Arts (or ULA—lawyers *love* acronyms) allow their moneyed clients to negotiate fees with their attorneys. Lawyers sometimes charge for out-of-pocket expenses (telephone, photocopying, postage), or work on a sort of contingency-fee basis. Eddie Seville, a Connecticut songwriter, will compensate his volunteer attorneys out of up to 15 percent of the proceeds from the recording deal they're trying to land for him. A VLA lawyer salvaged Seville's hopes of having a career in music. "With a full-time day job, I couldn't find time to go through the necessary channels, let alone have access to them. This is the one concrete thing I have other than my songs and talent—it's the one thing I can touch that keeps me going."

For many musicians, VLA attorneys provide more than just hope. Essra Mohawk wrote a song in 1985 called "Catch a Comet," hoping to cash in on Halley's return. She took it and another original, "Change of Heart," to Philadelphia producer Walter Kahn. He took Essra into the studio to make a single. But Mohawk and Kahn could not agree on publishing terms, and by April '86 both Halley's comet and Kahn were gone, leaving Mohawk with a half-finished recording of her songs.

About a month later, Mohawk played "Change of Heart" for her friend Bonnie Ross; Ross in turn played it for *her* friend Cyndi Lauper. Bingo. All seemed well until—the wrath of Kahn. Sensing potential royalties, the producer took both Cyndi and Essra to court for allegedly breaching the oral contract he claimed to have had with Essra. He also notified BMI and the Harry Fox Agency to withhold royalties on "Change of Heart," claiming that he owned the copyright.

Essra contacted Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (PVLA), who assigned the case to the law firm of Dechert Price & Rhoads. Sharon Erwin and John Luneau, two intellectual property lawyers there, took to trial a series of claims and counterclaims more complicated than the programming instructions for a Synclavier. Erwin and

Illustration: Bonnie Timmons



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Luneau persuaded the federal district judge to rule that Kahn owned no interest in "Change of Heart," and to direct the release of the royalties. Essra took her share of the 1.6 million sold and bought a house.

Ted Williams, a Florida-based producer, also used VLA attorneys to recover approximately $15,000 in royalties from Bedrock Productions, Inc. for R&B hits (including "Gotta Get You Home Tonight" and "Don't Say No Tonight") scored by his brother-in-law Eugene Wilde. Initially, Williams approached a number of lawyers, but couldn't find anyone even to look at his case before collecting a sizable fee-advance. He also tried for a year to get a royalty audit from EMI Music Publishing; without a contract, he failed. Ari Gabinet, his volunteer lawyer, got him the audit within two weeks. Without Gabinet, according to Williams, his claim "was a joke. It's an artist's dream to have someone who can fight like that for them. With Ari, I was able to fight a giant."

VLAs do more than provide personal representation. Many of them publish extensively; the New York VLA's catalog includes titles ranging from *VLA Guide to Copyright for Musicians and Composers* to *The Artists' Housing Manual: A Guide to Living in New York City*. California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA) goes a step further with housing and operates ArtHouse in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco, which helps locate affordable living and working space for artists. Nearly all VLAs sponsor educational seminars. CLA has offered programs like *From Demo Tapes to Recording Contracts* and *Overview of Copyright*.

On the quick-fix front, CLA conducts weekend copyright clinics in the ArtHouse cities for drop-in consultations on issues ranging from registration to infringement. The New York VLA operates Art Law Line, (212) 977-9241, staffed with Columbia law students who consult with VLA staff attorneys to answer arts-related legal questions; nearly 5000 people dialed Art Law Line last year.

But you're suspicious, right? What's in it for the lawyers? For many, donating time to a VLA is a way to get hands-on entertainment law experience. Many would do charitable work anyway, so why not for someone with an interesting job? Many VLA attorneys are frustrated artists themselves. Just remember, legal advice is worth only as much as you pay for it—unless, of course, you're too poor to pay for it at all.

Performance

Acoustic Kinks

By Ted Drozdowski

RAY DAVIES' CAREER AS AN ACOUSTIC PERFORMER WAS BRIEF AND INGLORIOUS. AT 16, HE PLAYED HIS first coffeehouse gig; as he sang and strummed, a patron threw up all over him. End of career. In the 31 years since, Davies put his spattered past behind him, becoming one of rock 'n' roll's most witty, erudite songsmiths and, not coincidentally, the frontman of the Kinks, the band he's shared with his guitarist brother Dave since 1964.

WHAT
Ray & Dave Davies
WHERE
Boston Garden
WHEN
November 22, 1991

It took the safety of a high stage—and a good cause, the fight against Tay-Sachs disease—to lure an acoustic-guitar-fitted Davies out in public again. But for the first time since that digestive disaster, Ray, joined by Dave, sidled onto the boards sans bond. Ray raised his beer bottle like Lady Liberty's torch, and both Davies boys lit into "Low Budget," easily cajoling the Depression-pinched, half-filled Boston Garden crowd to their feet as Dave slipped nimbly through guttural blues licks.

Suddenly, it was 1971: Women screamed, so did Ray as he waved the bottle over his head and dribbled spots of foam on his thinning-but-impressive pompodour. A quick slug of brew and they launched into "Alcohol," a Kinks staple from *Muswell Hillbillies*, then turned sharply into "Dedicated Follower of Fashion," pounding out sloppy chords on their Ovations like garage-rock louts—which they still are, at heart.

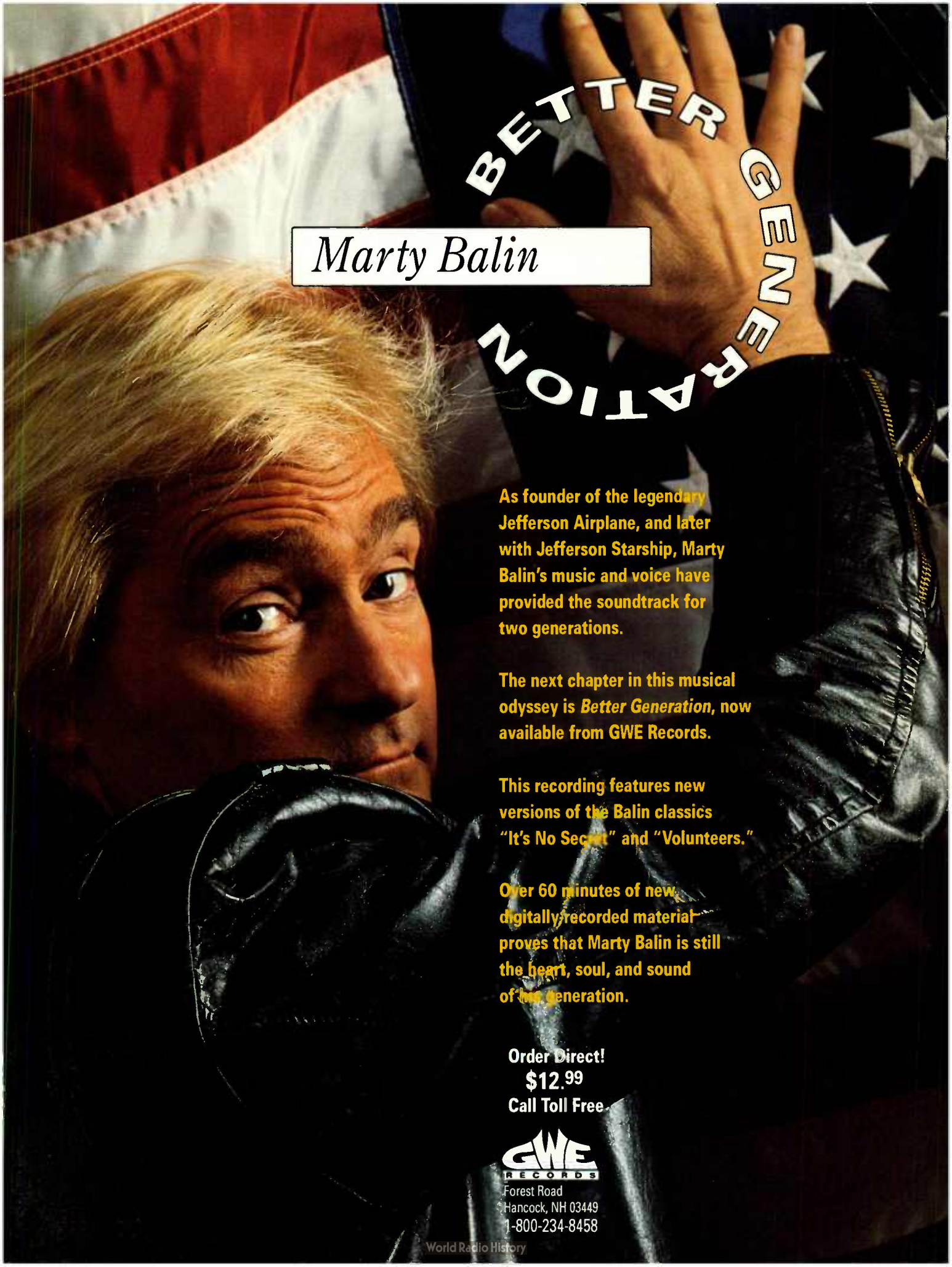
Ray explained they'd just rerecorded their late-'60s ballad "Days" for a five-song EP, *Did Ya*, on their new label Sony, which in March will release the album the Kinks are completing in London. Keeping the playing simple, the brothers brought their trademark uneven harmonies to the fore for "Days," "A Well Respected Man" and "Celluloid Heroes," the lyrics traveling from sentimental to skewering and back. "It's a celebration; let's hear it for Bill Graham," Ray borked cryptically before breaking into "Apeman."

Like Dylan before them, going electric was inevitable. Dave cracked a crocodile smile as he was handed a black Stratocaster and plugged into a dirty little MESA/Boogie amp, spanking out the opening chords of 1977's "Sleepwalker." Ray dropped his guitar to lead the singalong, bounding through the song's finish and striking up a call-and-response of "WAY-O" that somehow became "Lola."

Damned if Dave's guitar didn't sound like a whole band—whoops—up went the curtain and there were the Smithereens, pounding out the goods and leaping around with the brothers Davies until Dave kicked into a power-strumming Big Rock Finish. The house roared; Dave grinned crookedly and ripped into two of rock's most recognizable chords: the G-A intro to "You Really Got Me." The Smithereens and Kinks played as if they'd almost rehearsed, boshing along with raggedy abandon while Ray pogo'd behind his microphone. They ended in a sweat, Dave splay-legged and nearly sprawled in front of the drum kit, the Smithereens wearing poker-hand smirks.

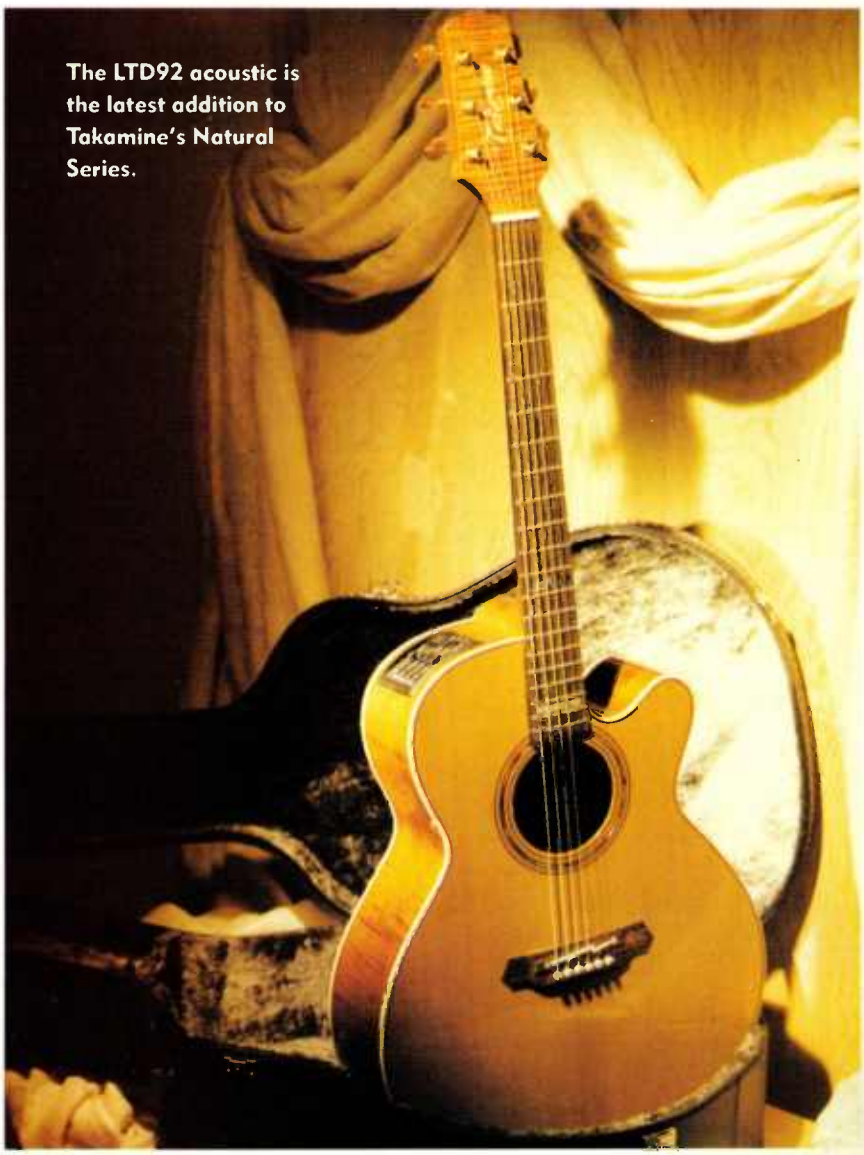
When Smithereens bossist Mike Mesaros followed Ray and Dave offstoge, his eyes were shiny with teors. "That was like playing boseball with Mickey Mantle," he said.

Photograph: John Atashian



NAMM PREVIEW: WHAT'S HOT AT THE BIG SHOW

Interesting developments are brewing in the world of guitar amps as we prepare for the 1992 NAMM show at Anaheim. First off, high-watt headmaster **Paul Rivera**'s company has been purchased by **JBL**. Among the new pieces Paul is reportedly preparing for the show is a chameleon-like 4x10 speaker cabinet. It's divided into two separate chambers (two 10s each) which can be run in stereo, or all four speakers can be run in mono. The top chamber is further variable for either open-back or closed-back operation. A stack of sonic options from a single box—pretty cool. With **DOD/Digitech** *and* Rivera in their camp, JBL are positioned to get a heavy grip on the guitar market.



The LTD92 acoustic is the latest addition to Takamine's Natural Series.

And from England, we hear that **Trace Elliot** have taken the plunge into full-fledged guitar amps, no doubt heartened by the success of the acoustic guitar amp they introduced a while back. The new Trace Elliot guitar amps will come in both combo and head/stack configurations. They'll have all-tube front ends with three separate preamps (clean, crunch and lead). Power stages are reactive MOSFET/output transformer circuits, designed to emulate tubes. And there's some clever cabinetry in store for the signal as it hits the speakers: three 12s arrayed in a compact tri-axial projector cabinet.

Also from England comes the news that **Marshall** will unveil a new programmable tube amp, the JMP-1, at NAMM. Two 12AX7s, 100 presets, MIDI mapping, a stereo effects loop and speaker emulation make up the package. Also look for a special tweaked-out 30th Anniversary version of the Marshall JCM900 and a new stereo chorus-style addition to the Valvestate line.

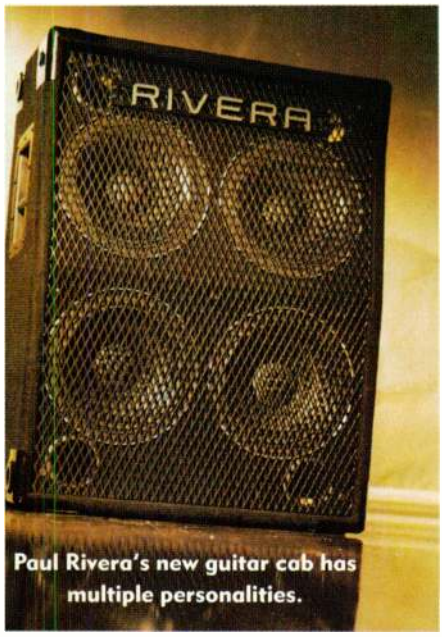
As part of **Ibanez**'s typically colorful NAMM product rollout, they'll have two new affordable bass lines: a traditionally styled range of basses called the TR Series and a zippy El Moderno line called the Contemporary Series. Also on display should be the new 542 guitar: a variation on that shredder's delight, the Ibanez 540R. Finally, a few new American-designed pickups are slated for Ibanez's NAMM spread. And over in acoustic guitarsville, **Takamine** is readying a small jumbo-body, single-cutaway addition to its natural series, called the LTD92. As the name implies, it'll be a limited-edition model with koa back and sides and a solid cedar top.

And what about high-tech gear? This NAMM will witness

Photographs: Susan Goines

TimeLine's entry into the musician/project studio market. A leading maker of SMPTE synchronizers for major recording studios, the company is now venturing into relatively more affordable ($2495) waters with the new Micro Lynx synchronizer. A full-featured little guy, patterned after the company's Lynx synchronizers, the Micro Lynx generates both SMPTE time code and MTC; it does SMPTE-to-MIDI and one unit can synchronize/resolve two transports. TimeLine has also gotten together with **Digidesign** to create the Pro Tools Interface, a video clock card that can synchronize Digidesign's Mac-based digital audio workstation to audio or video tape.

In an inevitable—but welcome—move, the **Korg** 01/W keyboard workstation has blossomed into a whole big digital family. The original 01/W has 61 keys. But the new 01/W Pro has 76. And the 01/W Pro-X has a full, weighted 88. Both new units boast bigger, bolder percussion samples, acoustic pianos and other tempting soundbite hors d'oeuvres. But if you don't need another keyboard around the house, you might check out the new rack-mount version of the 01/W. And if you don't need another keyboard or sequencer—but you like those 01/W sounds—you might dig the 03/W, with 128 ROM and 100 RAM programs and provision for even more sound expansion via 2 Mbyte PCM cards. All in a one-rack-space unit.



Paul Rivera's new guitar cab has multiple personalities.

NAMMsters will get to see **Ramsa**'s latest take on low-cost/high-power, under-a-buck-a-watt power amp design. It's called the WP-1000 series: cool-running, Class H overachievers that feature Ramsa's low negative feedback design for mega efficiency. Also new from Ramsa is the WR-S4400 series of PA mixers. They're four-buss boards in 12-, 16- or 24-channel configurations with three-band sweepable mid EQ, "big boy" 100 mm faders and lots of features from Ramsa's higher-end WR-S840 series.

Last, but not least, **Rane** will be showing two eminently practical new pieces. First there's the ME 60 Stereo one-third-octave graphic equalizer. This is the one for serious tweez-o-philes: 30 bands per channel of Rane's own Constant-Q filters, ± 12 dB per band. Also new from Rane is a two-channel line transformer, the FLT 22, for converting line-level inputs to squeaky pure and clean isolated balanced outs.

Hope everyone has a squeaky-clean time at NAMM. For those who can't make it, we'll be back in the April issue with a report on the highlights.

ALAN DI PERNA

TAYLOR'S AFFORDABLE 410

Taylor's been making highline acoustics for years, and they've made themselves a tough act to follow. Their most affordable ($998) guitar is the new 410, and while it's not necessarily a stripped-down ghost of their more recognizable models, the comparisons come easy—some favorable, some that may leave you hanging.

The 410 is a dreadnought featuring a solid Sitka spruce top, mahogany back and sides and a mahogany neck fitted with a rosewood fingerboard. The guitar is light in weight and comfortable to play, and has one of the most comfortable feels of any acoustic whose manufacturer didn't secretly long to load up with electronics and hang in the racks alongside the electric hotrods. Though some minor truss-rod adjustments were necessary after a sharp turn in the weather, the 410 stayed reasonably true in intonation and general tuning, no doubt aided by the rosewood stop-style bridge which uses no cumbersome pegs to plant the ball ends.

A physically appealing instrument, graceful to the touch, but can it sing too? The 410's got a lot of snap, but it's a predominantly toppy guitar, with a nice mid and not much bottom; the tone stays on an even keel across the neck and between registers, but is more satisfying as a lead sound. For unaccompanied chordal work, the voices are well-defined within an undistinguished whole. Again, though, it's not the top of the line. The finest acoustics age gracefully and their tone improves with time. If you're in the market for a fine acoustic, you'd do as well to spend for one rather than wait for one to grow into a serious Taylor.

MATT RESNICOFF

The Emperor's New Nose

Dangerous
(Epic)

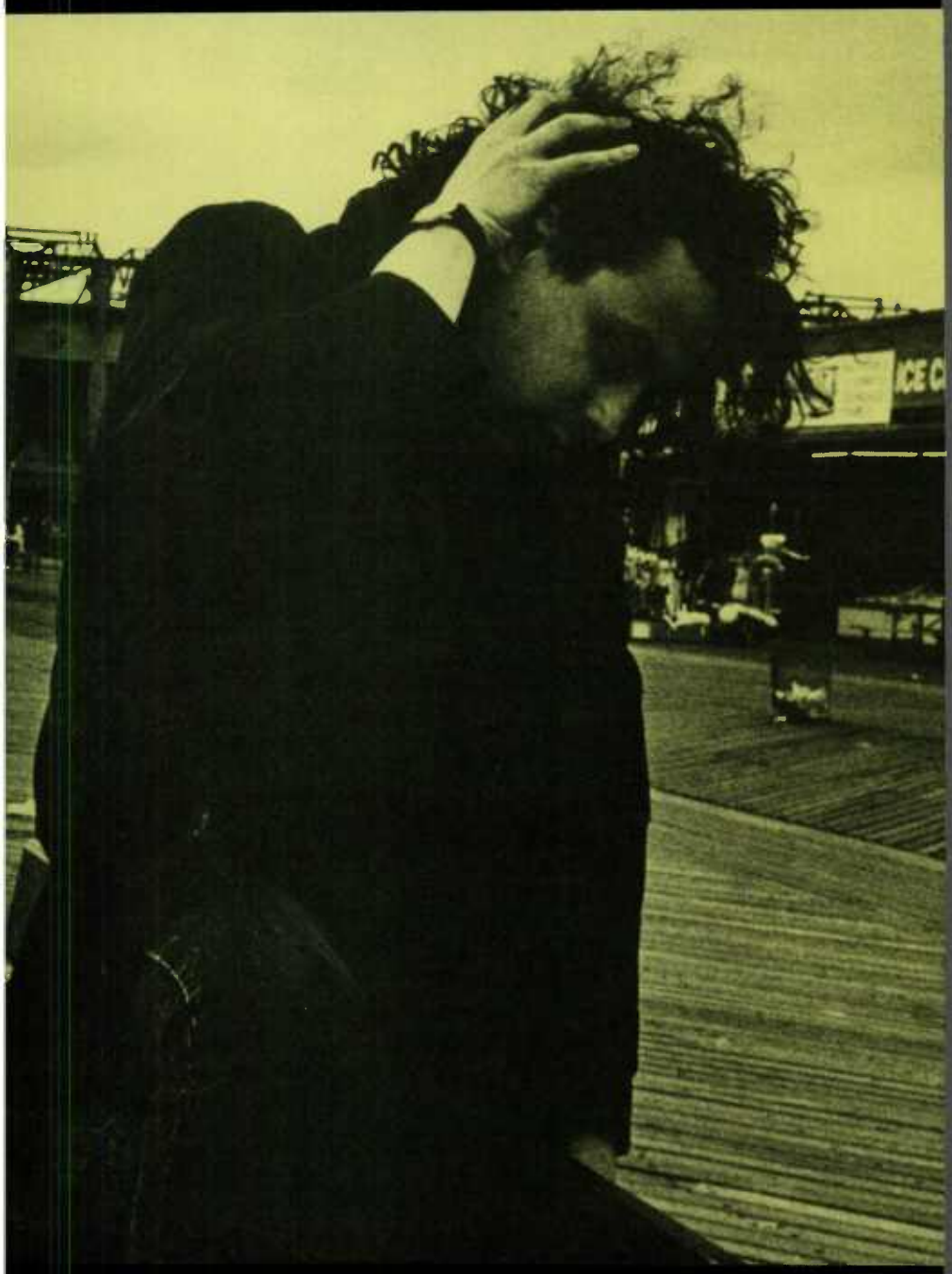
LET'S START WITH EVERYONE'S FIRST EXPOSURE TO *DANGEROUS*, THE video for "Black or White." The opening scene of a small boy (Macaulay Culkin) rebelling against a tyrannical father (the fat guy from "Cheers") who's telling him to turn down the stereo is so boring that it's shocking. It's so boring that the brain resists thinking about it, writing about it, reading about it. It's so boring that you'd rather kill yourself than wait for the brazenly telegraphed, brazenly stolen (from Twisted Sister) punchline. In fact, I think I will kill myself rather than finish this review...

Nah. I'd rather complain some more. The next scene, less brazenly stolen from an early "Saturday Night Live" film, actually enhances the song, which needs enhancing, because the riff is a snore. Happy dancers from different cultures mix their steps in a plea for racial harmony. Happy faces of different races blending into each other also make contextual sense. Then a black panther transmogrifies into Michael Jackson, who smashes a car with a crowbar, grabs his crotch and transmogrifies back into a black panther. To what end? Why is he angry? Is this a conscious revivification

Illustration: ***Jonathan Rosen***

Jules Shear

The Great Puzzle



WHEN MUSIC MAKES SENSE

From the songwriter who gave us "All Through The Night," "If She Knew What She Wants" and "If We Never Meet Again"... Jules Shear, an artist of unparalleled ability. "THE GREAT PUZZLE" is an album of 11 classic Shear songs - passionate, intelligent, irresistible. Featuring the first track, "THE SAD SOUND OF THE WIND."

Available on Polydor Compact Disc and Cassettes.

JEFF

of militant symbols from the '60s? Is he saying it's okay for the poor and/or angry to riot? If so, why did he subsequently censor the video and apologize for grabbing his crotch? If not, in what way is he dangerous? Is Michael Jackson so out of touch that he thought he could manipulate his genitals in front of several hundred million people without inspiring a few complaints? Does he want to be defiant *and* inoffensive?

Yes. Which makes him inane. Which makes him just like every other public figure in the world. Big facade, small substance. A moonwalking John Chancellor. He's terrifically talented, so it's a dazzling facade, but what he stands for is pillaging the Beatles catalog for commercial jingles and selling to children junk food that he wouldn't eat himself.

He isn't the worst superstar in the world. Compared to a bloated emotional cripple like Elvis Presley, he's Mother Theresa. Compared to John Lennon, who risked life and career to oppose the Vietnam War, he's Elvis Presley.

So does Jackson's facade, at least, hold up on *Dangerous*? No. In the past, he could get away with the inanity because he was so stunningly sincere, so genuinely naive. He seemed to be blessed the same way Brian Wilson was blessed—both were reclusive songwriters creating a myth about a culture they'd never experienced. But lack of experience eventually catches up to an artist. He runs out of ideas. The myth that once resonated begins to clank.

The clank is particularly audible in the music here. Most of it sounds mechanical to the point of being inhuman. Even when the riff is quite catchy and the words have some engaging twists in "She Drives Me Wild," you don't get much sense of Jackson and his producer Teddy Riley (of Guy) having massive fun in the studio. The approach seems not to have been "Let's press this button and see what it sounds like." It seems to have been "Let's be precise." The relentlessly synthesized repetition gets annoying as you realize you've heard both lyric and riff too often. The only transcendent moment comes in "Give In to Me." Slash plays some virtuoso heavy guitar and Jackson gets equally inspired on the vocal. The result is a power ballad that is indeed powerful.

At other points I just want to grab Jackson and shout, "Wake up!" In "Why You Wanna Trip on Me," he insists that there are more important things to think about—like poverty, addiction and violence—than Michael Jackson, and then he spends most of "Who Is It" asking us to guess who broke his heart. Okay, why *do* you want me to trip on you, Michael? And after you figure that out, read some books, so when you venture into politics and sociology ("Heal the World") it doesn't sound like the most vapid end of new-age philosophy.

The other day I got on the subway and noted that the man sitting next to me was grabbing his crotch. He was homeless, penniless and probably schizophrenic. The people around him did not approve. Yet he persisted in the only physical pleasure he had left in life. When he got to his stop, he left the car and did not apologize.

—Charles M. Young

The Nat King Cole Trio

◆

The Complete Capitol Recordings of the Nat King Cole Trio
(Mosaic)

MOSAIC'S BOXED SETS ARE MORE ARCHIVES than albums. These 18 CDs aren't, and aren't meant to be, your typical listening experience. (The $270 price tag also targets its audience.) Only the demented devotee will try to take it in with a few gulps. It's a collection to sip from and savor over time. For any set this size gives you plenty to think about.

Cole's swing-era trio marked a major nexus in pop music. Until it appeared, small groups were mostly subunits of big bands trotted out for specialty turns within a show. The trio's instrumentation was odd by any standard of the time—guitar, bass, piano, vocals. The arrangements often collapsed distinctions between foreground and background; instead, they'd create a web of moving lines, with voicings that anticipated, then reflected, new trends like bebop and cool. Cole's combo became a model for chamber-jazz groups like the Red Norvo Trio and the Modern Jazz Quartet. Their fondness for novelty tunes in a jump-blues vein was raw material for the likes of Louis Jordan, who in turn had an enormous impact on rock 'n' roll founders like Chuck Berry.

Gems from two decades of Cole's tragically foreshortened career stud this box: silkily swinging trio dates like "Sweet Lorraine," trio-smothered-in-strings pop chartbusters like "The Christmas Song." (Even by the elastic definition of "trio" used here, late singles like "Rambling Rose" don't qualify.) Alternate takes and previously unreleased cuts don't throw much new light on the trio's interplay; with only three instrumentalists, however incisive and engaging, and the emphasis on arranging, the Trio risked ruts. How often that happened gets disconcerting at times, especially if you listen in big chunks. All those mid-tempos, blues and ballad forms, novelty/sentimental love lyrics and crafted charts can pale in such relentless laser light.

An accompanying 64-page booklet amasses first-rate historical and discographical data, but its stabs at interpretation are often off the mark. (Using

the trio's pithy, hyperarranged pop-jazz as an aesthetic club to beat rock 'n' roll with, for instance, is dumb, since it's among rock's grandparents.) But as an archive, this handsome collection is hard to fault. Of course true Cole lunatics will want to supplement it with the trio's outstanding Decca recordings and World War II V-disc radio transcriptions, the sometimes fascinating sessions collected on *Nat King Cole: The Jazz Collector Edition* (Laserlight), late Capitol hits like "Rambling Rose," videos of his TV shows, copies of "Cat Ballou"...

—Gene Santoro

Bruce Cockburn

◆

Nothing but a Burning Light
(Columbia)

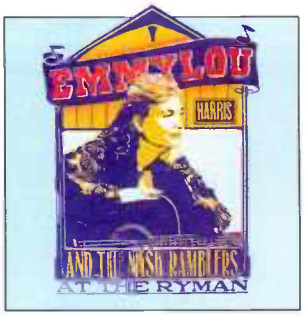
BRUCE COCKBURN COULD SO EASILY BE AN OVERall pain in the butt. After all, there are many, lots of us, who mentally gag at the thought of giving a sober listen to a Canadian neo-folkie who sings righteously indignant songs about our (?) beastly treatment of the Indians, in this instance ("Indian Wars") with Jackson Browne doing backup vocals, fer Chrissake. It's not just that a verse like "Noble Savages on the cinema screen/An Indian's good when he cannot be seen/And the so-called white so-called race/Digs for itself a pit of disgrace" sounds like a cross between Professor Griff and someone who hasn't seen a movie in 30 years. It's preaching to the choir—few people over the emotional age of 12 have ever been shamed into changing their mind about anything. Bruce, baby, you're not helping the cause....

As I was saying, *could* be an overall pain. Two things lift this album, still dripping slightly, from the slough of moral goopiness—the music and Cockburn's ability now and then to phrase a decent lyric. The sound of the album is perfectly swell: Though there's a couple of guest vocalists and organist Booker T. Jones supplies an essential color, the core is basic guitar, bass and drums (the hand of producer T-Bone Burnett is discerned). Cockburn demonstrates once again that he's an excellent guitarist, with a tastefully sure hand that calmly fleshes out the music—e.g. on Blind Willie Johnson's "Soul of a Man," where he lays down some low-keyed and flowing blues.

Lyrically, Cockburn is best when he keeps it simple, as on "One of the Best Ones" (if you allow simple to include passing references to the old TV show "Naked City" and Arthur C. Clarke) or "Somebody Touched Me." But he's also good when he subverts expectations, as on the ickily titled "Cry of a Tiny Babe" which, before it turns into a Christmas card in the third verse, depicts a Virgin Mary with a lip on her, and a Holy Land that's a cross between the Wild West and modern-day El Salvador.

Such original touches are rare—one should also mention the instrumental "Actions Speak Louder," originally written for a (don't scream) Greenpeace documentary but which, with its tacky foursquare teen-rock drums and Beach Party guitar, sounds more like something from a '60s exploitation flick—but overall this set is assured, filled with small pleasures and almost painless.

—Richard C. Walls



Emmylou Harris

◆

Emmylou at the Ryman
(Reprise)

SINCE HER STAR ROSE FROM THE ASHES OF GRAM Parsons' career over 15 years ago, Emmylou Harris has done her mentor proud, championing hard country music while at the same time giving country radio a much-needed shot of rock 'n' roll with her now-legendary Hot Band. That outfit nurtured talent—Albert Lee, Ricky Skaggs, Vince Gill, Rodney Crowell, Tony Brown, for instance—that would fire up Nashville for years to come. Lately, however, Harris' slender voice has gotten a little lost in the crowd of neo-trad singers she helped pave the road for, and her record sales have been reflecting that. Happily, rather than dig through some publisher's catalog for more songs about Mama and Home, Harris has turned for inspiration to bluegrass music, the same place she found the hottest of her Hot Band alumnae.

Enter the Nash Ramblers, an all-acoustic quintet, anchored by the upright bass of Roy Huskey, Jr. and the vocal and multi-instrumental chops of former Newgrass Revival leader Sam Bush. Where the Hot Band sometimes rocked harder than her smoky soprano could handle, the Ramblers give Harris room to relax and wrap her slightly road-weary voice around some great songs. Springsteen's "Mansion on the Hill" and the Creedence classic "Lodi" sound right at home here next to more traditional selections

STEVE

like Stephen Foster's "Hard Times" and Bill Monroe's "Scotland." (Monroe's presence hangs over this album.) Bush's jackhammer mandolin rhythm and drummer Larry Atamanuik's "door jamb" brushwork fuel the effortless chug of Stonewall Jackson's "Smoke Along the Tracks," and the band invests cuts like Hank Williams' "Half as Much" and Johnny Cash's "Guess Things Happen That Way" with an irresistibly lazy, back-porch swing.

This live album is part of a taped-for-video and TV package that was recorded at one of the true shrines of country music, Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. In the hands of a lesser artist this "event" might have come off looking like another Music City marketing move. Harris makes it seem as natural as her flowing silver hair and emerges from all the hoopla with some of her most spirited music.

—Peter Cronin

Digital Underground

Sons of the P

(Tommy Boy)

Raw Fusion

Live from the Styleetron

(Hollywood Basic)

WHAT DECADE IS IT, ANYWAY? BACK IN THE '70s, George Clinton and other righteous dudes transformed funk into a holy calling, wherein the shaking of the booty took the brain to a higher plane. Unfortunately, hip-hop's reliance on the soul originators has typically resembled pillaging more than homage. Not so Digital Underground's swell *Sons of the P*, a joyous celebration of the Parliament/Funkadelic legacy. From the album's title, to "Tales of the Funky," which declares, "George is my father," to the liner notes thanking the "Fathers of the Funk" for "a mission that we shall carry out and cherish," the denizens of Underground boldly proclaim themselves the true, reverent keepers of the faith.

Continuing the tradition means more than crafty Funkadelic samples, of course. This hour of power pulses with fat, spacious grooves, the kind you feel from head to toe. D.U.'s suave swarm of rappers, numbering more than a dozen, creates a loose, swinging vibe, mixing nimble rhymes with loopy chants. In the Clinton spirit, the Underground has its own tripped-out mythology, complete with a funk delivery system called the Dolio-Flow Shuttle and cool characters like Humpty Hump.

Anybody expecting more of the party started on "Doowutchalike" may be surprised by these subtexts, however. Humpty, the cat with the major honker, uses the wickedly catchy "No Nose Job" to mock the idea of changing your looks—meaning, denying your roots. "Heartbeat Props" bemoans the lack of respect for black heroes from Josephine Baker to Malcolm X, and even the radio-friendly throwaway "Kiss You Back" advocates common decency. Throughout, funk serves as a truth ray, zapping racism and hypocrisy with thumping beats. Quoth the Underground, "Fuck that frontin'!"

Just as the P-Funk empire spawned endless subsidiaries, *Live from the Styleetron* features D.U. mainstays DJ Fuze and Money-B. Although Raw Fusion doesn't attempt the Underground's cosmic sweep, pleasures abound; the tracks rock hard, and Money-B. is an extremely appealing MC. "Throw Your Hands in the Air," a snappy tale of woe that deserves to be a hit, contains this curious aside: "Police brutality is an everyday thing where I live/But it made me kinda hungry...." And "Ah Nah Go Drip" takes hilarious aim at jheri-curl disease. Given these early returns, we may be witnessing the start of a dynasty. May the jam go on forever!

—Jon Young

Majek Fashek and the Prisoners of Conscience

Spirit of Love

(Interscope)

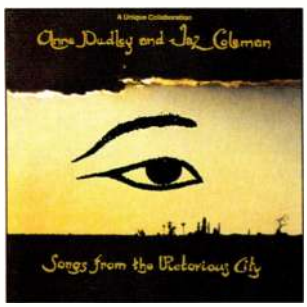
THOUGH HE'S NOT THE ONLY POP SINGER TO BE regarded as a prophet, Majek Fashek must be the first to include "rainmaker" among his credentials. During a prolonged drought in his native Nigeria a few years ago, massive downpours began while Fashek performed his signature tune "Send Down the Rain," during several concerts in various regions of the country. Beyond the hocus-pocus, Majek and his Prisoners of Conscience band stir an enticing potion of righteous reggae (the dominant sound in Nigeria these days), fecund West African rhythms and Hendrix-inspired guitar wail.

One major contributor to the success of *Spirit of Love* (Majek's second U.S. release) is producer Little Steven Van Zandt's vibrant mix. Talking drums converse fluently during juju breakdowns on sev-

eral tracks, the voracious basslines on "Majek Beware" and "Holy Spirit" threaten to gobble up weak woofers, keyboards are textured and effervescent and Majek's uneven-bar vocal routine earns a 9.5.

Like other gifted morality singers, Majek rails against the crimes and injustices foisted on the suffering multitudes by corrupt politicians and power-brokers without embracing any specific ism or schism—his platform of freedom and unity is couched in a syncretic, ecumenical spirituality. Neither Rasta nor Muslim, Christian nor Buddhist, but professing tenets of all, his attempts to heal the divisions among these religions parallel his music's attempts to merge or transcend category. In Majek's millennium, an omnipotent Godhead promises not destruction, but a spirit of love and fulfillment of the human potential. That's harmony.

—Tom Cheyney



Anne Dudley and Jaz Coleman

Songs from the Victorious City
(TVT/China)

THIS YEAR SPAIN, THE U.S. (IF WE CAN AFFORD IT) and some other countries are celebrating the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' getting lost. "Colonialism" has long been one of the dirtiest of politically incorrect terms. How does one separate the desire to explore—one of humanity's better traits—from the desire to exploit?

That's the double-edged sword Anne Dudley and Jaz Coleman sharpen on *Songs from the Victorious City*. The city is Cairo, where the two reportedly studied the "Oriental sounds" (press release quote) they brought back alive for this album. Theirs are the only Western names listed in the personnel—which heavily features a Cairene string orchestra—but Art of Noise co-founder Dudley and Killing Joke alumnus Coleman take credit for composing, arranging and producing.

The resulting "'Oriental sounds'" construct a sonic Sphinx of cultural ambiguity. The ingredients may be Egyptian but not the result. Dudley/Coleman invariably begin their 10 aural postcards with a snatch of "authentic" solo playing or on-site ambient noise (marketplace, chanting). Then they assert themselves via insistent ostinati, often allied with electronic keyboards and/or percussion.

This isn't Egyptian music, of course, despite the surface resemblance. It *is* a musical Rorschach: What you hear is what you get. Some might think of James Bond chase sequences (Dudley has done her share of film scoring); others could use *Songs* as disco exotica. Perhaps its most beneficent use would be as a halfway house to the purer stuff as heard on recent collections, either pop (Mango's *Yalla/Hitlist Egypt*) or traditional (Realworld/Virgin's superb *Musicians of the Nile*). With their "'"Oriental sounds"'" Dudley and Coleman reveal themselves as unlikely descendants of Sir Richard Burton. He must have had good intentions too.

—Scott Isler

King Crimson

Frame by Frame
(Caroline)

THE PAST: THERE WERE FOUR WORKING, LIVE versions of King Crimson: 1969, 1971–72, 1972–74 and 1981–84, three world-class and two of them—the first and last—arguably the best live rock outfits in the world. For a short time.

The early groups supplied founding members to Emerson, Lake & Palmer (Greg Lake), Foreigner (Ian McDonald), Bad Company (Boz Burrell) and UK and Asia (John Wetton). Bill Bruford left Yes to join King Crimson in 1972, and is the only musician to have played in the English progressive triumvirate of King Crimson, Yes and Genesis. Robert Fripp is the only musician to have played with King Crimson, King Crimson, King Crimson and King Crimson, said no to Yes and no to Genesis.

The fourth King Crimson (1981–84) was the first Anglo-American Crimson, and more song-based than the earlier Crimsons. It could also rock out and shred wallpaper at three miles.

The present: This is a four-volume boxed set with a 64-page scrapbook of photos, press cuttings, reviews, information, chit-chat and commentary, four hours, 22 minutes and 26 seconds of music—an average of 65 minutes and 37 seconds per CD.

The first three volumes are comprehensive compilations of the studio albums from 1969 to 1984. The fourth volume is of unreleased live material from the entire period of Crimson's life to date, save for one track ("Asbury Park" from the deleted *USA*). Every track is remastered and/or remixed for CD.

This is all the music Fripp, the executive producer, considers necessary to convey the essence of

DUCK

LEO

King Crimson, which he defines in the Scrapbook as "energy, intensity, eclecticism." But then, he always had a pile of words.

Some might complain that "Islands" is not here, "Starless" is only the song version, or "Fracture" is abbreviated. For them the complete catalog is available, remastered for CD, on Caroline. Here, Fripp worked to a technical deadline of 72 minutes per CD with the aim that each volume work in its own right, as well as belonging to the set.

For anyone new to the world of King Crimson, this is all you need to know. For anyone whose emotional life in rock involves one of the Crimson incarnations, this is a must. If only for the music, if only for the scrapbook, if only for the artwork.

Some diehard Crimheads figure 1969 was the Crimson classic period. Others go for 1973, and a few prefer the traditional period of 1970 when Keith Tippett was de facto Crimson pianist. But a genuine Crimhead knows you can't limit it that tight: Each period worked in its way, or not. You may like it or not, but classic Crimson is timeless. With Crimson you knew you were getting their best shot, whether it flew or crashed, whether it succeeded or not. Here it does and here it is.

This sets the standard for reissues in quality, quantity and commitment. The work in the scrapbook alone matches the work in the records. And the design work for the package, by Bill Smith, is stunning. This is *not* repackaging by numbers.

The Abbreviated King Crimson is a tasty, humorous 25-minute little sucker of a CD released in tandem with the box. Conceived originally as a radio-friendly promotional tool for the set, Fripp liked it so much he persuaded Virgin to release it as the first in a new series of Crimson specialist issues. For those who like a good song in the mainstream of rock life, here are edited short takes of "Schizoid," "Crimson King," "Heartbeat," "Elephant Talk" and "Matte Kudesai." A barbershop chorale by Tony Levin introduces the classics and a strange medley finishes it off. Recommended.

The future: The next incarnation of King Crimson is together and in place for the next period of its work. Rehearsals begin in the spring of 1992. If experience is any guide, Crimson is always the same and always different. Experience would also suggest you catch it when you can.

—Robert Fripp

TRIP SHAKESPEARE

|*cont'd from page 24*| songs, mainly by the two Wilsons, describe the mundane exploits of ordinary Midwesterners, yet their tone—the pathos of "Today You Move," the whimsy of "Down My Block"—makes them universal. Particularly effective is the way the high Wilson tenors contrast with Munson's gruff, dramatic baritone. The loopy jams on "Jill Can Drive" and "Patricia" are inspired and extremely un-Deadlike. And the band's live energy—yes, that sweat again—is captured at last on disc.

Which brings us back to the Cubby Bear. Tonight's performance is the end of the tour; tomorrow the band heads home to Minneapolis. Trip takes the stage shortly after midnight. As usual, some equipment's down. One of Elaine's crash cymbals broke a few gigs ago, and a replacement hasn't been found; Munson's amp has failed, and he's borrowing another that, by his own admission, "sounds like a two-by-four." John's also nursing a knee injury, sustained during this afternoon's basketball game (basketball's a daily ritual for John and Matt). But the band remains exuberant, and gives the crowd its money's worth. Two and a half hours, two encores, much condensation.

During "Reception," Matt and Dan join Elaine behind the drums for a percussion breakdown. "Toolmaster of Brainerd" (featuring the line "He played guitar like a natural disaster") stops in the middle for an impromptu monologue from Matt on the subject of milking cows. A cover of the Zombies' "Time of the Season" is the springboard for a dual guitar solo by the Wilsons; the brothers lurch crazily around the stage as the feedback builds. By now, it's close to 3. The crowd still wants more.

And then the topper: "Snow Days," from *Across the Universe*. Munson leans toward the microphone. "We must be casting a spell on your town," he tells the crowd. It's the truth. Look out the window—snow is falling on Chicago. Elaine shakes the sleigh bells, and the whole audience joins in the refrain. "It's coming down, it's coming down." And, like Trip Shakespeare, it's starting to stick. Ⓜ

PULLEN

|*cont'd from page 76*| someone's life, the pleasant times. When it moves into 3/4 [in the final part of the piece], it's because it's odd, as if something is missing in your life. It's a transition, I'm moving back into 7/4. That's why in this piece the chords in the bridge are important, so I play those very conventionally. In other areas, it's not important. The left hand gives it character."

In Pullen tunes, rhythm, not melody or harmony, is the overarching component. But the composer points out that nothing is

set in stone. "The elements of the avant garde are still there—the music is free to move—but the musicians move with me. You have to trust your creative instinct. Take chances. I'm always reaching for stuff I can't hear. I don't have the technical ability to do it, but I've got to try."

CLAPTON

[*cont'd from page 65*] going over the top. People call me a purist and I think that's true. I'm very self-critical and, as much as I try not to be, I've got a very, very tunnel vision. I'm very specific about what I like to play and even what I like listening to. And musically the criterion, for me, is that something either has or it hasn't got soul. Music in general. If it doesn't move me then I just ignore it. And as it was from the beginning, I still have to get a similar feeling from playing the guitar.

MUSICIAN: *On the live album* 24 Nights *there are moments when you seem to be attempting to burst not just beyond your own body boundaries but beyond the physical capacities of your guitar.*

CLAPTON: *That* is a conscious attempt to go as far as I can with the limited technique I have. That's why I like working with musicians that challenge me in some way. I did a thing with Kate Bush recently. When she originally asked me to play for her I said to myself, "*Where* do we meet, musically?" I love her music but I can't see myself *in* it! So I end up going to a studio to try to find a place to put myself into her music. I find that difficult but it's good for me, because I know that I will learn something from what they want of what I have! Or learn something about my own limitations in terms of what I can use in that framework. And it's not always a pleasant experience. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *Could you give me an example of when it's not a pleasant experience?*

CLAPTON: Working with Cyndi Lauper, when she asked me to do a session a while back and said she wanted me to play my part exactly like I did on "White Room"! *That* angered me. What about the music I'm making now? How did I play that then? I didn't remember how I played on "White Room" because that was so long ago! And I didn't want to have to listen to the original recordings just to find out how to play that session!

But what such an experience is good for is my ego, because it knocks me right down and I have to be a working musician just to get the job done. But even so, in that context, I do feel the need to put my own signature on something like that. Not so much because I want to do it but because it is my sound they are expecting. But it is so difficult because you have to pick the brains of the person you're recording with to find out exactly what it is they want. But it's good for character-building. [*laughs*]

MUSICIAN: *So how would you describe your own guitar style in 1991?*

CLAPTON: It's inspired by Stevie Ray Vaughan, that's for sure. The album he made with his brother had some of the finest guitar sounds I've ever heard. And it had something to do with being on an amplifier very, very low so you can *hear* the string on the fingerboard, almost. I've been trying to play like that more.

On the score for *Rush*, which I've just finished, I've been playing very, very quietly so if I hit a note and hold it with vibrato you can hear it just sizzling against the fret. But not very loud. You have to strain to hear it. And I love that. It's different from the big, big sound people are more used to.

MUSICIAN: *What's your response to the "Let's-see-who-is-the-fastest-dude-in-town" approach to guitar playing?*

CLAPTON: I've never belonged to that school of thought. When I started to play there were very few playing like me and we became the role models for the people that came after us. Van Halen says he learned to play by listening to my music slowed down! But when I hear his music I don't hear me at all! So I'm afraid I can't be held responsible for that! [*laughs*] And as much as it may be good, I don't feel I'm part of that.

The only time I feel I'm in a so-called rivalry setup is when I'm with someone who is in the same territory as me. Like Buddy Guy or Robert Cray. But the great thing then is that then there is no real sense of competition. It's *fun*.

I don't think we would ever play anything to hurt someone else or to make another guitarist look foolish. If it started to be like that we'd stop. Whereas I know that there are guitar players in the younger school who like to do that, and I let them because I won't join in that game. So if I get up onstage with a young guitar player who wants to be extremely aggressive, I would let him "beat" me, if that's all he's after.

JIMI

DINOSAUR JR.

Fossils [SST]

This eight-song collection of singles and B-side-only tracks is strictly for the devoted. Only four of the cuts aren't already available on CD or LP. Of the remaining, only their cover of the Cure's "Just Like Heaven" stands out, with its razor-cut edits and typically and suitably whiny delivery. "Throw Down" lasts a laughable 45 seconds. "Chunks" features the screaming vocals of former bassist Lou Barlow to remind listeners of "Don't" on *Bug*, for some a pleasant experience. As a mop-up it's useful, and since Dinosaur Jr. are a band to take note of, this should complete your collection.—*Rob O'Connor*

KALEIDOSCOPE

Greetings from Kartoonistan...We Ain't Dead Yet

[Gilthorse/Curb]

The fabled '60s band of musicological gypsies doesn't reunite every decade, so don't miss this one. *Greetings* is even more wide-ranging, and livelier, than their last album 15 years ago. Kaleidoscope's facility at a variety of ethnic musics—not to mention cross-breeding new ones—not to mention steamy rock 'n' roll—transcends mere grandstanding; they obviously believe. Only problem: Too short!—*Scott Isler*

FEAR OF RAP

[*cont'd from page 43*] dan or Magic Johnson. I guess I'm like [Charles] Barkley—I gotta work for everything I got.

"The only thing that might be natural about me is my voice. But a voice doesn't mean nothing if you don't know how to use it."

"It all comes with style," explains Ice Cube. "A lot of raps that come straight on the beat were written without a beat, know what I'm saying? They put a beat in their head and just write from that. Then they get the music and the music isn't exactly what they had in their head, but they can come down on every beat and make it work. I choose to have my music first. I'll write a rap that fits it like a glove, or at least try to. I can take breaths here, I can slow down here, I can speed up here, and just try to throw some style and flavor on it without sounding so robotic."

As for material, Ice Cube says there's never any shortage of things for him to write about. "Living just gives me records to do," he says. "I just finished *Death Certificate*, and I've thought of three topics that I might want to write on for my new album.

"I just live life, man, however it comes. When things come up that I think need to be talked about, then I do it. I just start writing."

Tony Scherman and Matt Resnicoff contributed reporting to this piece.

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"FOR THOSE WHO HEAR THE DIFFERENCE"

SHORT TAKES

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

VARIOUS ARTISTS
I'm Your Fan: The Songs of Leonard Cohen |Atlantic|

If Jennifer Warnes' *Famous Blue Raincoat* meant to show what a good voice could add to Cohen's songs, what's the point here—that new-wave stars can make him hip? If so, it won't be by virtue of their insights, since most play it cover-band straight, right down to the near-inept singing. R.E.M.'s dark, droning "I'll Take Manhattan" helps break the monotony, but is hearing it worth enduring Nick Cave's deconstruction of "Tower of Song"?

SMOKEY ROBINSON
Double Good Everything |SBK|

This may be Robinson's first-ever recording made outside the Gordy empire, but a break with Motown it ain't—not when there's such a sense of tradition to tunes like "Be Who You Are," "I Can't Get Enough" and "Double Good Everything." Who that tradition belongs to—Motown or Robinson?—is another matter, but there's no doubt who owns *these* grooves. From the get-down blues of "Rack Me Back" to the classical-meets-gospel sound of "When a Woman Cries," the man hasn't sounded this good since *Where There's Smoke*.

YANNI
In Celebration of Life |Private Music|

Just what we needed, the new-age answer to Up with People.

JERMAINE JACKSON
You Said |Arista|

With the LaFace team providing the rhythm beds, melodies and ambience, this is Jermaine's most pop-friendly album in ages. It's also the most anonymous, as Jermaine's voice, never a particularly commanding instrument, wholly surrenders to the arrangements. While that adds to the impact of dance tunes like "You Said, You Said," it makes Jackson's insistence that he's a "rebel" more risible than anything his brother ever sang about being "badd."

LINDA RONSTADT
Mas Canciones |Elektra|

Tempting as it might be to shrug off Ronstadt's non-rock recordings as mere dilettantism, the fact is her singing on these *mariachi* albums ranks among the finest of her career. Why? In part because she grew up with the music, but mostly because it affords her the full range of her vocal abilities, from the brash exuberance of "El Toro Relajo" to the gentle shading of "Siempre Hace Frio."

BOGEYMEN
There Is No Such Thing As |Delicious Vinyl|

Though the name suggests a taste for retro-rock and hotrod blues, the mojo this band works is actually closer to the post-acid rock of early Black Sabbath. Except that where the Sabs took this stuff seriously, the Bogeymen revel in ridiculousness; they get to play their licks and laugh at them, too.

ROGER
Bridging the Gap |Reprise|

This is pure groove music, funk built from the backbeat up, and while that hardly prevents Roger Troutman, of Zapp fame, from indulging in an occasional melody (or even a ballad or two), it does tend to limit his music's focus. But if you think that means these songs are one-dimensional, think again; when it comes to rhythmic chemistry, Roger understands the art of instrumental interplay better than anyone this side of George Clinton, and thus can add depth to even the deepest grooves.

SHAKATAK
Open Your Eyes |Verve Forecast|

Despite a pronounced tendency toward fuzak (that is, fusion muzak) on the instrumentals, the vocal numbers are another story. While the band's Latin-tinged rhythm arrangements add sparkle to tunes like "You'll Never Know" and "Whispers in the Night," the real eye-opener is Jill Saward, whose supple, jazzy delivery blends the brash power of Basia with the breathy charm of Astrud Gilberto.

SCATTERBRAIN
Scamboogery |Elektra|

Between the Robert Williams cover art and the Mozart cover tune, these guys can't seem to decide if they want to embrace trash culture, or trash the culture they embrace. Either way's fine with me, so long as their albums continue to be like this one—funk-edged, thrash-hard and hotter than any Chili Pepper.

ASTER AWEKE
Kabu |Columbia|

Singing in Amharic and sounding like a cross between Dionne Warwick and Youssou N'Dour, Aweke isn't the likeliest of pop idols. But as a few listens to *Kabu* make plain, you don't have to be Ethiopian to appreciate the majesty of her singing, or the power of her music. It helps, of course, that most of the songs here are blessed with a rhythmic vitality that owes not a little to R&B. But mostly, it's the muezzin clarity of her voice that does the trick; music that goes straight to the heart, it needs no translation.

BY CHIP STERN

ABBEY LINCOLN–STAN GETZ
You Gotta Pay the Band |Verve|

The thrust of Abbey Lincoln's art, like that of Billie Holiday's and Nina Simone's, is essentially *dramatic*. Abbey is not a thrush but a mourning dove, a poet, and I defy you to find any living singer (alright, Carmen McRae, let's not quibble) who could transform "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" into anything other than period camp. Abbey makes this plaintive testimony into something painfully contemporary and universal in the age of Bussssshhhhh, and on what are traditionally referred to as "love songs" she reveals—revels in—the apparent contradictions between the vulnerability and assertiveness of a

strong, independent woman. In addition, the lyric interplay between Abbey and the late Stan Getz (along with ringers Hank Jones, Charlie Haden and Marc Johnson) marks *You Gotta Pay the Band* as one of the more perfect jazz recordings of 1991.

MAX ROACH

To the Max [Mesa/Blue Moon]

A big statement from a drummer/composer who has made a career out of big statements. Featuring his working quartet, string quartet, percussion ensemble, chorus and two striking examples of his solo art, *To the Max* is like a résumé of the great drummer's world view. This double CD varies between all-out frontal assaults in the post-Coltrane mode and percolating pan-ethnic workouts that bridge the gap from hip-hop to world beat, and point out the enduring modernity of this most innovative percussionist. Certain solo sections could benefit from some editing, but clearly the point was to provide an insight into his groups' working methods, straight no chaser.

FOURPLAY

Fourplay [Warner Bros.]

Suave, engaging contemporary jazz that ingratiates itself into your bloodstream without necessitating massive doses of insulin. At the heart of this Bob James conception is an easygoing feel for keyboard textures that mirror the simple thrust of the melody without gushing into the garish realms of "Look Ma—I'm an Entire Orchestra" pomposity or "happy jazz" airiness. Bassist Nathan East and studio drum mandarin Harvey Mason get a lot of credit for keeping things focused and dancing, bringing out the unadorned sweetness of Lee Ritenour's lines and James' orchestrations. Perhaps next time they'll stretch the envelope a bit.

WALTER DAVIS JR.

In Walked Thelonious [Mapleshade]

Unlike some of the "bebop" pianists who mine the Bud Powell/Monk tradition, the late Walter Davis Jr. never treated their compositions as classical warhorses to be dusted off for the rubes or to demonstrate one's dedication to some sort of tipsy artistic purity. As a result, this solo recital is a striking evocation of Monk's spirit. Splendidly recorded on an ancient Steinway, *In Walked Thelonious* evidences the elusive rhythmic subtlety, spare pianistic understatement, emotional weight and giddy melodic twists that elude most of today's virtuosos—who can't get past the surface of Monk's themes, save as perfunctory chordal outlines for some effusive blowing that has nothing to do with Monk's essence. (2301 Crain Highway, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 [301] 627-0525)

GEORGE WINSTON

Summer [Windham Hill]

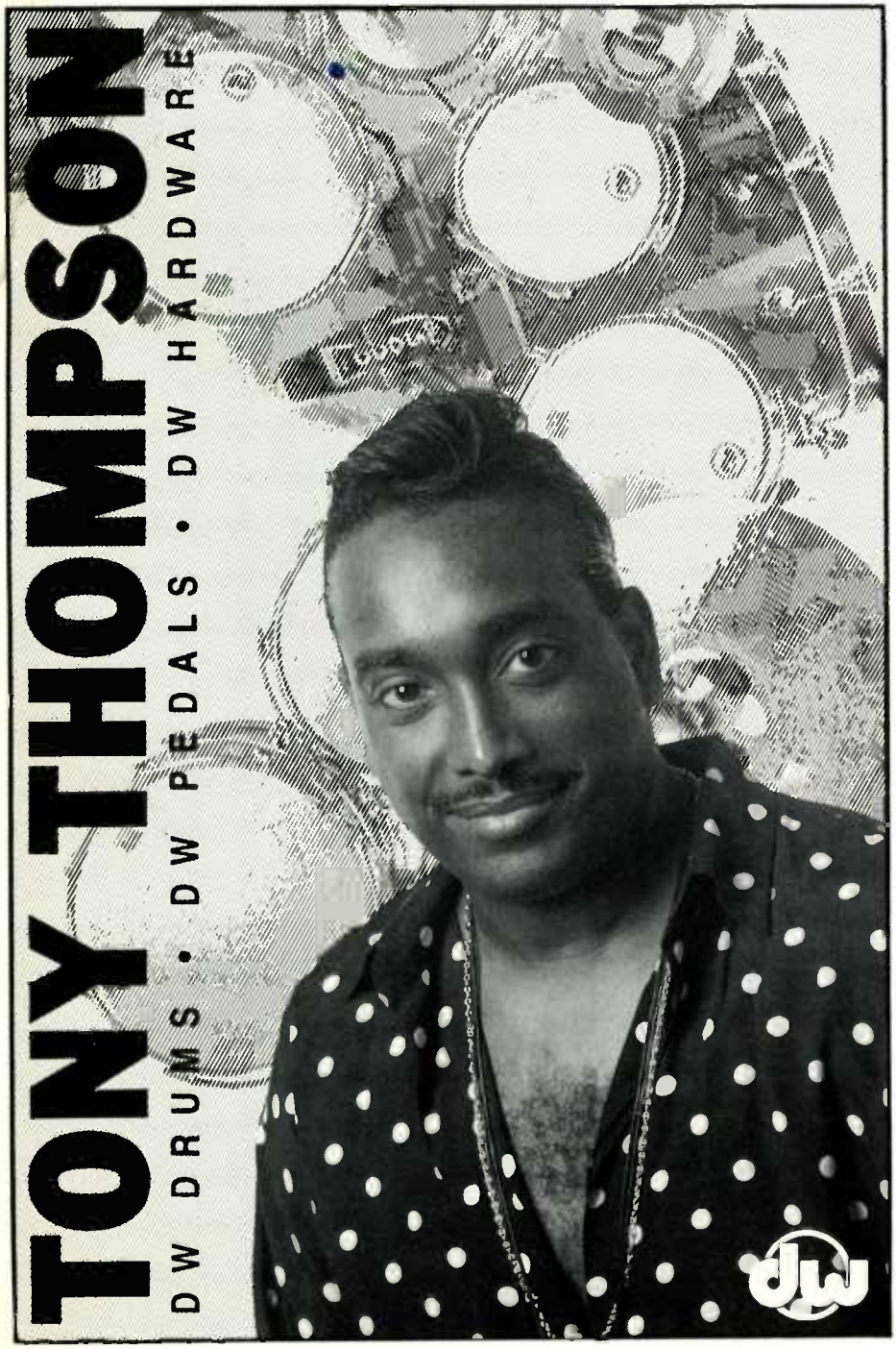
I know it's common critical practice to dismiss George Winston as an off-brand Keith Jarrett—it's easy, it's fun, you can do it at home. But it's dangerous to dis someone simply because they're popular, and on this, the most translucent and upbeat of Winston's four recorded seasonals, his charm and appeal as a solo pianist rings through with quiet grace. As for comparisons with Jarrett, where Keith's work reflects his interest in classical music and the modern harmonies of people like Paul Bley, Bill Evans and (in earlier incarnations) Cecil Tay-

BUDDY GUY & JUNIOR WELLS

Alone & Acoustic [Alligator]

Partnered onstage and on record from the late '60s through the early '80s, guitarist Guy and harp player Wells more often distinguished themselves with rounds of sloppy showboating than with any revelatory blues expositions. But this intimate set, cut in 1981 and first released by France's Isabel Records, is a sweet departure from the average Guy–Wells mess-around. The acoustic duet performances find the pair in subdued (if unsedated) form, and they wend a cozy way through some originals and tunes associated with Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker, among others. Considering the excesses of most of their collaborations, this is a little treasure worth unearthing; it's also an earthy correlative piece to Guy's current comeback *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues*.

—Chris Morris



THE ARANBEE POP SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Aranbee Pop Symphony Orchestra [Sony Music Special Products]

Stop here for proof that the '60s could be supremely silly. Crediting Keith Richards as producer—although Andrew Loog Oldham supposedly did the real work—this 1966 curio renders Beatles, Stones and soul faves in a solemn orchestral format, with a single fleeting vocal by Mick Jagger, on "I've Been Loving You Too Long (To Stop Now)," added for spice. Although the ridiculous pseudo-classical flourishes seem like a spoof of the kitschy taste of 101 Strings and their ilk, the liner notes insist, incredibly, that Oldham envisioned the record as a way to get the Stones some respectability. Then again, who knows? That such a goofy project would come to pass is pretty amazing in the first place.—*Jon Young*

MC5

Kick Out the Jams [Elektra]

Ain't hindsight wonderful? What seemed dangerous for a few minutes in 1968 now sounds like the opening act for the New York Dolls. Which is not to deny the perfervid self-righteousness of "revolutionary" rock 'n' rollers who knew enough to crib from the Troggs. Thanks to CD indexing, you can now zap the jivey spoken song intros and go directly to the guitar grunge. It doesn't connect as consistently as the band's humbled follow-up album, but *Jams* remains as nostalgic, harmless and inaccurate as "American Pie." Bet you wish you could hear this for the first time.—*Scott Isler*

CARPENTERS

From the Top [A&M]

This four-CD retrospective proves that, once you got past their goody-four-shoes image, the Carpenters made some of the classiest pop music of the '70s. Hits like "Rainy Days and Mondays" and "Superstar" constituted easy listening with an edge; musically and vocally, they were packed with power. The key to the duo's appeal was Karen Carpenter's warm, listener-friendly voice. Like a female Nat King Cole, Karen had pure tones and an effortless, conversational style. She was a superbly gifted and criminally underrated singer.

But this collection doesn't fully do her justice. It's undermined by penny-pinching packaging, two skimpy, 46-minute discs and some misguided song selections. In a strange and sad way, it's appropriate that *From the Top* is a let-down. Though Karen had the talent to compete with any pop singer, she was hamstrung by an out-of-date image, lackadaisical management and a producer who was, after 1975, in a musical rut. Based on this half-hearted boxed set, the second-class treatment of a first-rate talent continues, nearly a decade after her death.—*Paul Grein*

LEFTY FRIZZELL

The Best Of [Rhino]

Such was the magic of Frizzell's voice that he could turn material as hokey as "Always Late with Your Kisses" into not only hit records, but country classics. Such are fame's quirks that the hits dried up a year later and Lefty looked like a has-been by his mid-20s. Eight years on, his reading of "Long Black Veil" not only revived his career, but remains one of the most perfect recordings in all of country music. Both of the above are included in this col-

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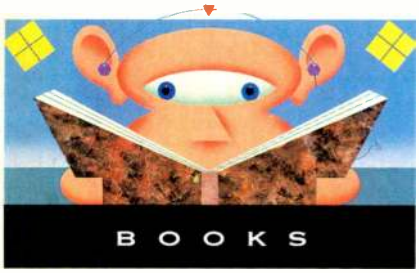

A HEART AT FIRE'S CENTER

Steven C. Smith

[University of California Press]

By all accounts Bernard Herrmann was an irascible, even pricky kind of guy, a raging eternal infant, the bane of three wives and countless friends. He was also the undeniable genius of media music scoring (films, TV and radio), perhaps the only one whose work can often be identified after hearing just a few bars. Creating in a genre where indirect impact is the point, he was the master of a certain non-melodic emotionalism, tonal colors that settled uncomfortably in one's consciousness—whether abetting such masterpieces as *Citizen Kane* or *Psycho* or devising the only worthwhile aspect of clunkers like *Beneath the 12-Mile Reef.* (An unusually high percentage of Herrmann's output was for worthy directors—from Welles, Hitchcock and Mankiewicz through Truffaut, De Palma and Scorsese.) Smith has written a biography that captures the maddening man, lingering over each score long enough to make a few insightful points, and making this a good reference book and an interesting tale.—*Richard C. Walls*

INGRAM MARSHALL

Alcatraz [New Albion]

Among New Music composers, Ingram Marshall has always been one of the more successfully enigmatic. He expertly wallows in a kind of foggy, far-off dimension, with a distant appreciation of both the real world and musical norms, in a way that can be hypnotic. What better source of contemplation than Alcatraz, the legendary ex-prison, ex–Native American sanctuary which now sits dormant in mysterious splendor in the middle of the San Francisco Bay? Marshall's eerily elegant music reflects Jim Bengston's ghostly photographs of the island, seen in the CD booklet. In Marshall's strangely entrancing tone poem, we hear a compendium of musical ideas—here a swatch of minimalistic pulse-making, there a "field recording" of clanging doors from the bedeviled island—woven into a lovely sounding, quite lovely package.

—*Josef Woodard*

BACKSIDE

PARACHUTE WYMAN AWARD

Did Bill Wyman quit the Rolling Stones? At Christmas of 1990 Wyman told *Musician* that the group had met the day before and "certain members of the band—I was not one of them—said that they don't want to work for at least a year, maybe two." In January 1991 the Stones assembled to cut two new songs, "Sex Drive" and "Highwire," with Wyman—but when it was time to make the video the bassist was nowhere to be found. "I'm wondering myself," Keith Richards said in March. "I've sent him a couple of messages. I'm really not sure. He's had a rough time of it. I don't know if it's just menopause." Keith speculated that Bill might be depressed about his divorce, then added helpfully, "Maybe he's gone mad!" When the Stones signed their new $30 million record deal in November, the plucky bassist was nowhere to be seen. Asked if Wyman was in or out of the band, Richards said, "With Bill you can't tell. I'll wait until I get in the studio and see if he's there or not."

BEST SHOT AT AN UNRESPONSIVE AUDIENCE

James Taylor: "I didn't know Jonestown was on the itinerary."

PARTY POOP AWARD: SOUNDSCAN

The record biz convulsed when *Billboard*'s charts switched from their old method of tabulation (polling record stores by phone) to the Soundscan system (in which sales are recorded at the cash register by each album's bar code). The new charts are far more accurate—and much tougher to manipulate—so the labels hated them. It was good news for rap and country acts, who, it turns out, sell a lot more albums than anyone realized, and bad news for mainstream rockers like Bob Seger, Tom Petty and John Mellencamp (whose chart positions dropped precipitously). It was also humbling to realize that we live in a country where more people buy old Meat Loaf and Steve Miller albums than buy Fishbone or World Party.

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AMERICA'S FAVORITE FAMILY AWARD: THE JACKSONS

While Janet and Michael competed on the financial pages to see which could get the biggest record contract in the world, sister La Toya showed up on every talk show hawking her book about how rotten her family was, while brother Jermaine *accidentally* released a song making fun of brother Mike. Jermaine insisted the song was not meant to be heard by the public—it was just a way of talking to his next of kin. As Grandma Jackson used to say, the family that plays together betrays together.

SIXTH ANNUAL MADONNA'S DONE IT AGAIN AWARD

To Madonna—for the controversy surrounding "Truth or Dare," an entertaining documentary in which she mimicked oral sex with a water bottle, embarrassed a nervous childhood friend on camera, made fun of Kevin Costner behind his back and referred to beau Warren Beatty as "Pussyman." She also took off her shirt.

SPECIAL GULF WAR SECTION

Goofiest Anti-War Song
Lenny Kravitz and Sean Lennon's rewrite of "Give Peace a Chance"

Latest Anti-War Song
The Rolling Stones' "Highwire," released the day the war ended

Wishy-Washiest Pro- or Anti-War Song Depending on the Polls
"Voices That Care"

Luckiest Old Song Taken as a War Song
"From a Distance"

Horrible Song That Won't Stay Dead
"Tie a Yellow Ribbon"

COWARDLY LION AWARD: THE CD LONGBOX

The wasteful cardboard longbox only exists because retailers refuse to spend the money to refit their old record racks to accommodate jewel box–only displays. Pretty cheap, considering that a) retailers did it for eight-tracks and cassettes and b) they've made enough money off CDs in the last five years to afford all the new shelves in the world. Of course, if record companies refused to put the CDs in longboxes, the stores would have to swallow it—but no record company has been willing to take the heat for being first. So it's been up to the artists to lead the charge—and the artists ain't all that anxious to sacrifice sales for ecology either. Among the committed, Sting and Bonnie Raitt released their latest albums in non-disposable cardboard eco-packs. U2 split their release between eco-pack and jewel box–only. The bravest of the brave have been those willing to send their latest albums out only in jewel boxes, and damn the lost sales from boycotting retailers. Who has been that courageous? Peter Gabriel and children's artist Raffi.

A human voice harmony processor that actually sounds human.

The Vocalist from Digitech

Finally a voice processor that really sounds like human voices, not like chipmunks.

The Vocalist™ from Digitech® delivers *real* voice harmony and pitch correction. It even remembers every song and never gripes about rehearsal time.

The Vocalist is perfect when you need one or two harmonies for back-up, or when you need up to five harmonies to save time in the studio.

No other harmony processor can give you natural sounding, human voice harmony and can compensate for off-key voices. The Vocalist from Digitech. It's about time.

TECH STUFF:

- *Up to 5-part harmonies.*
- *Vocoder mode.*
- *Pitch correction.*
- *Pitch randomizing.*
- *On-board synth and keyboard for cue-in tone, harmony editing and selection.*
- *Programmable vibrato-speed, depth, and attack.*
- *No delay time between patch changes.*
- *Built-in mic preamp and headphone jack.*
- *Simplified harmony programming.*
- *Full MIDI implementation.*
- *Real time key changes.*
- *128 user-definable programs and 128 factory presets - each with 4 variations.*
- *And much more.*

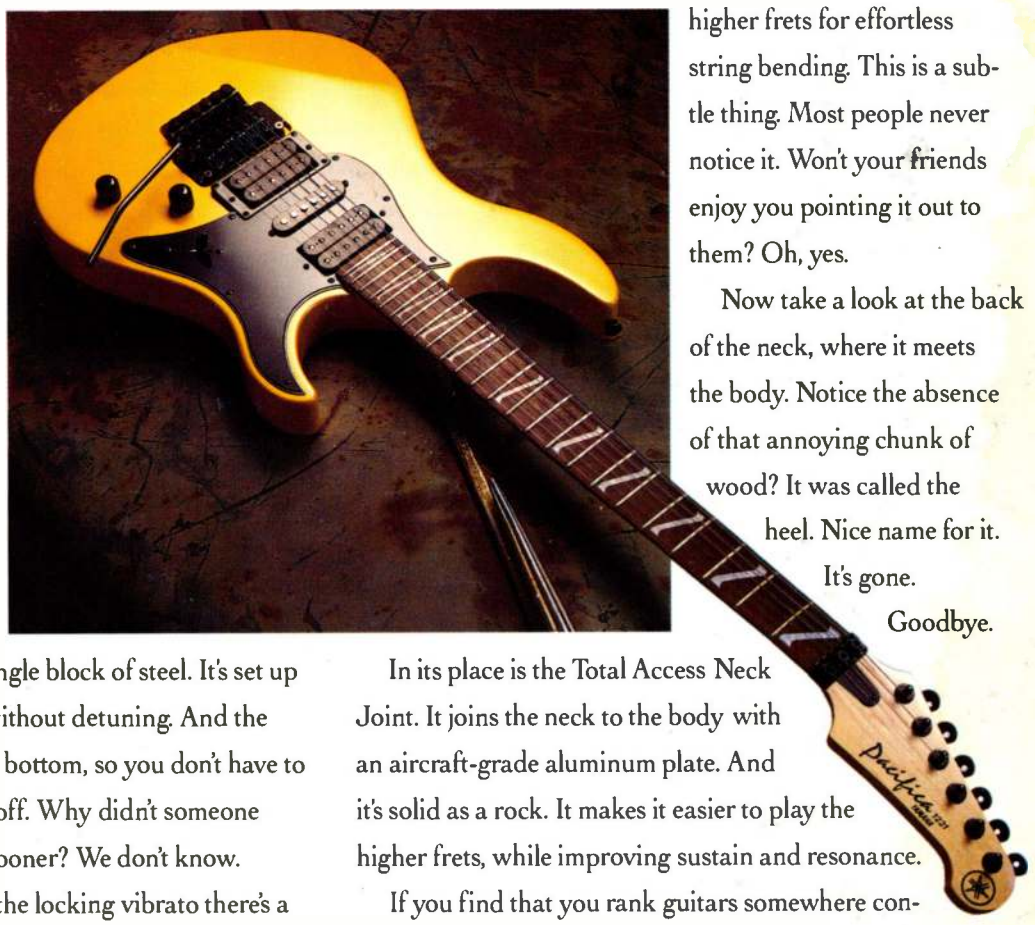
Send $10 for the Vocalist Video Demo.

DigiTech®
The Sound of the '90s
A Harman International Company

TO SURVIVE YOU NEED FOUR THINGS: FOOD. SEX. SHELTER. GUITARS. MAKE THAT TWO THINGS.

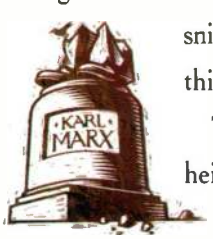
This is the kind of thinking that's going on right now at Yamaha. Scary, huh? Well, we got this way from listening to a lot of guitar players.

It was for them we designed the Pacifica. A guitar so rich with the features guitar players love, that lo and behold, guitar players love it. Look at the picture there.



Look at the pickups. Those are genuine DiMarzios. They're custom-designed and made in the USA.

Look at the vibrato. It's a Floyd Rose licensed locking vibrato system. It has a low profile bridge milled from a single block of steel. It's set up so you can adjust intonation without detuning. And the strings can be loaded from the bottom, so you don't have to snip the balls off. Why didn't someone think of this sooner? We don't know.



A Good Rule: Give the people what they want.

To go with the locking vibrato there's a height adjustable locking nut. So you can fine-tune the action without a trip to the repair shop.

Check the neck. It's slim. Real slim. Ultra slim, you might say. And it's reinforced with carbon-graphite rods to keep it straight and true. Forever.

The fingerboard has 24 jumbo Dunlop frets. And it has a compound radius. So it's slightly more curved in the lower frets, for easier chording. And it's slightly flatter in the higher frets for effortless string bending. This is a subtle thing. Most people never notice it. Won't your friends enjoy you pointing it out to them? Oh, yes.

Now take a look at the back of the neck, where it meets the body. Notice the absence of that annoying chunk of wood? It was called the heel. Nice name for it. It's gone. Goodbye.

In its place is the Total Access Neck Joint. It joins the neck to the body with an aircraft-grade aluminum plate. And it's solid as a rock. It makes it easier to play the higher frets, while improving sustain and resonance.

If you find that you rank guitars somewhere considerably higher than all-beef franks, you should go right now to your local Yamaha Dealer and play a Pacifica.

Or just call 1-800-879-1131, ext. 100 and we'll send you information about Pacificas in a variety of pickup configurations, body styles and colors.

Look at the picture again. Think about the important things in life. Go play one.

YAMAHA®
Pacifica