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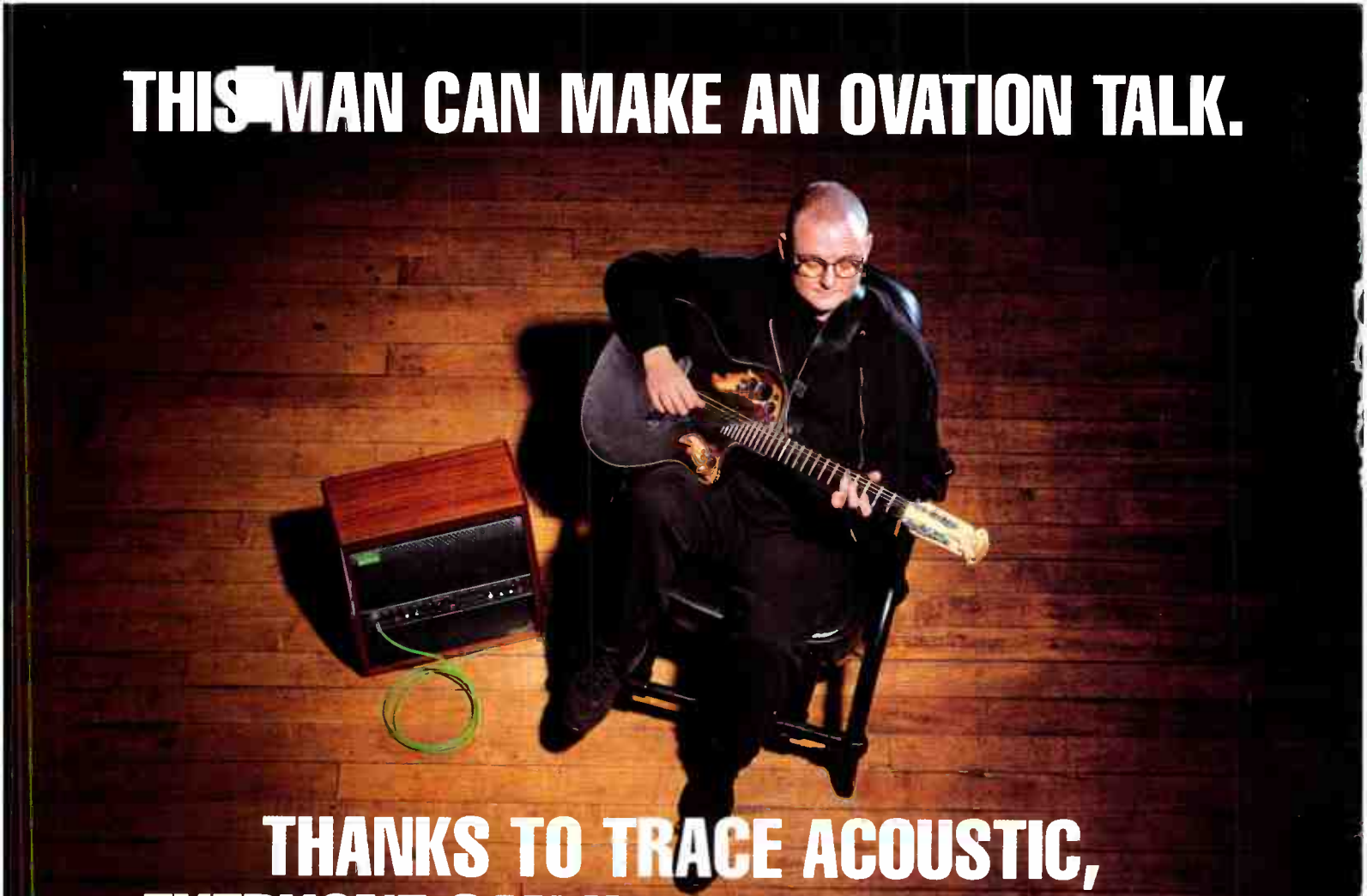

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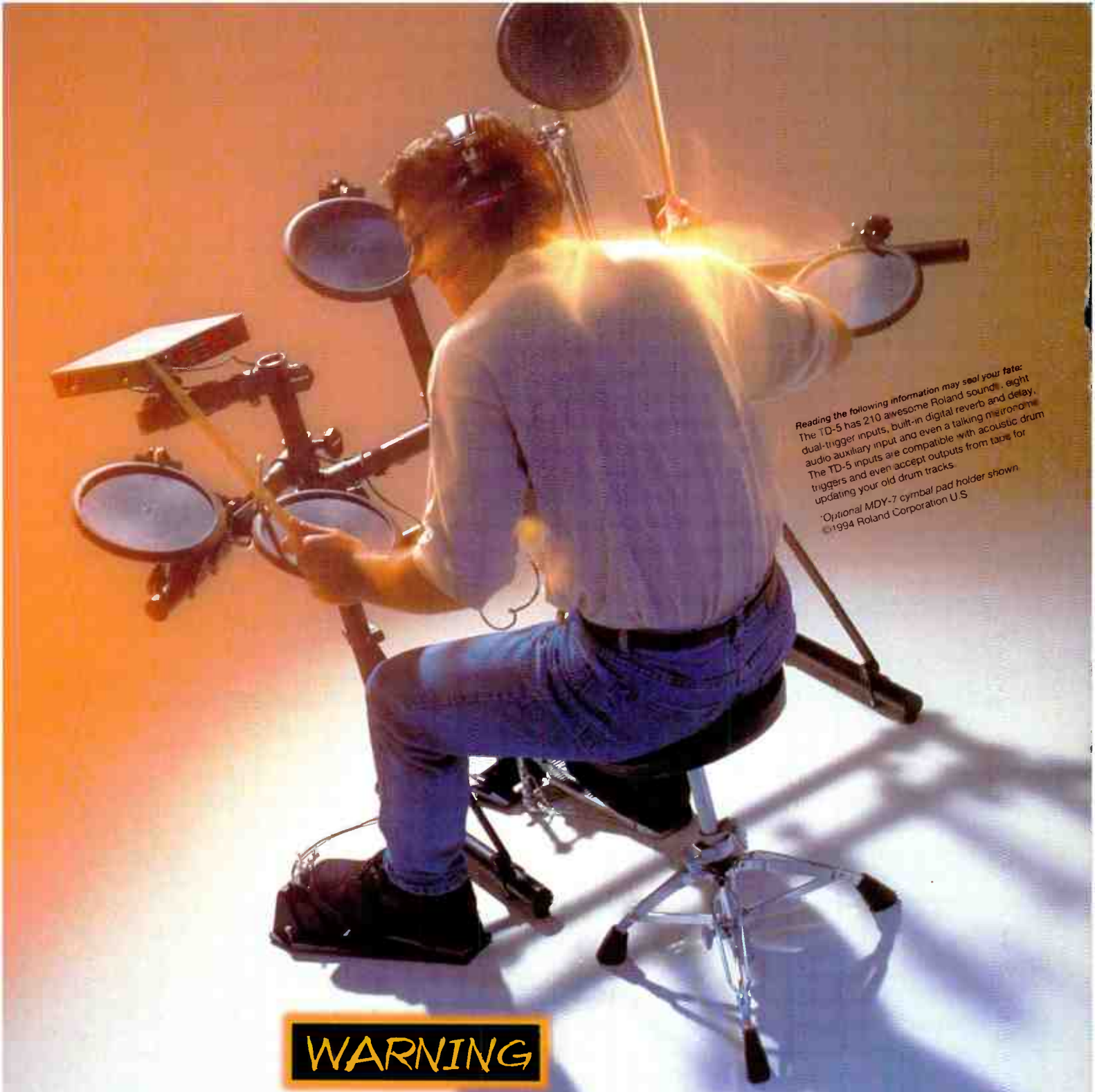

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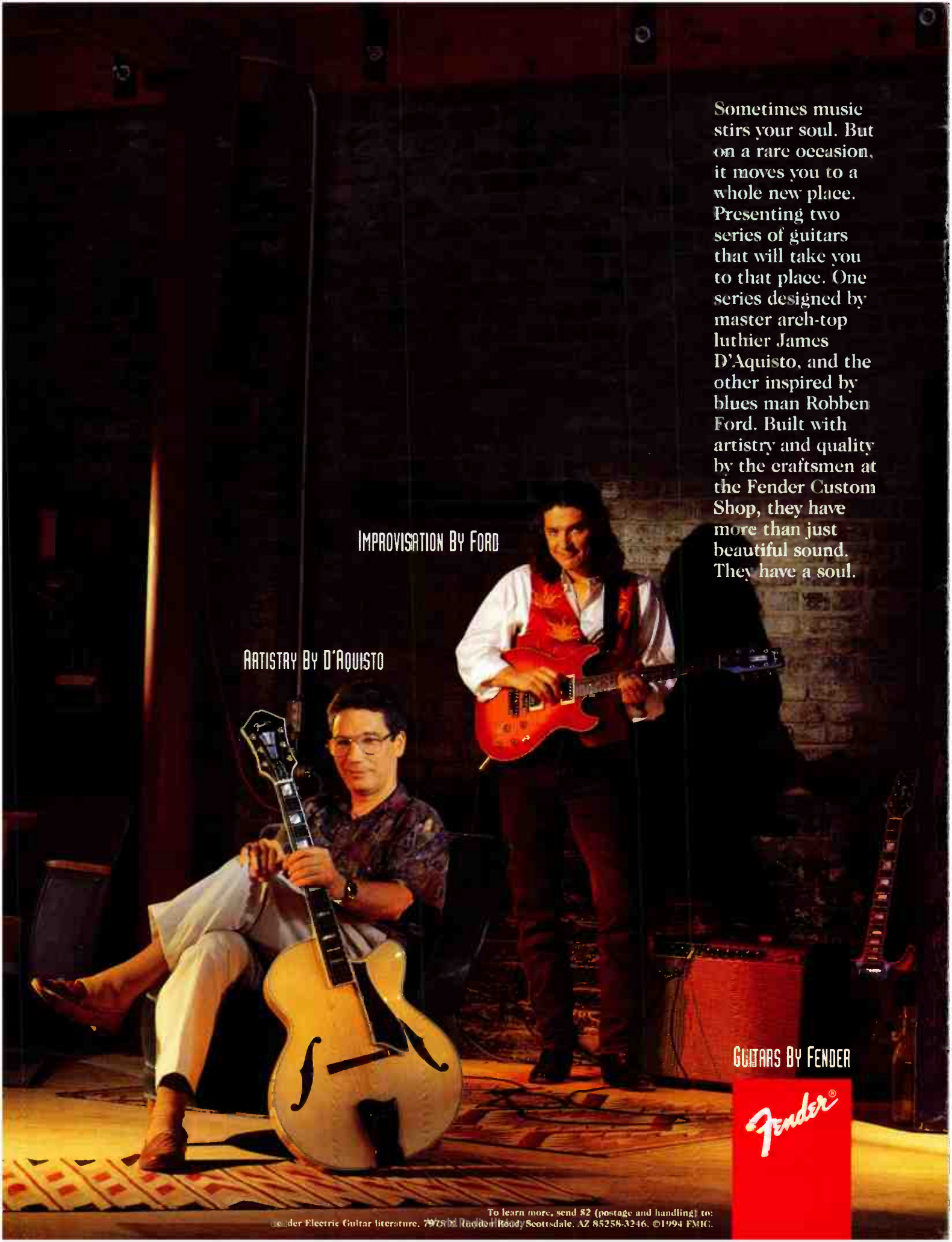
COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID JENSEN; CONTENTS PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEF [illegible]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ROBBIE ROBERTSON

You recently released an album of soundtrack music from the TBS series, "The Native Americans." What prompted your involvement with this project?

My mother was a Mohawk and my introduction to music as a child was at the Six Nations Indian Reservation. All my cousins and uncles played a mandolin or sang or played drum, and that was the first time I saw music being made up close—I could hear the breathing and the fingers moving on the strings. I thought, this gives me shivers—how do I get in on this?

What did you learn about yourself on this project?

That I'm one of the most fortunate musicians on the planet because I get to do whatever I want to. I can do this kind of record, or music for *Raging Bull*, or music with Eric Clapton [the two are presently writing and considering recording together], or a solo album—I get to do it all, and don't have to play this pop game everybody else has to play.

"When your leaders are being assassinated, you've got a lot to work with."

What's the most one can hope for in life?

To learn from the past. People say the '60s were a wash, but my experience in the '60s was tremendously valuable to me. A war was stopped and we learned that powerful political figures can be taken down by young voices. Unfortunately, the young voices that came later had nothing left to say. When your leaders are being assassinated and there's a war going on, you've got a lot to work with. Now people are at Woodstock asking themselves what are we here for? The mud? Are we supposed to get stoned? What are we doing?

So you think young people today have less opportunity to be heroic because the enemy isn't as clearly defined?

Yeah, I do. There's so much anger and frustration in many young musicians today, and it's aimed at nothing—it's aimed at themselves. You can hear it in their voices. You hear "I could hurt myself—all my friends know that," and it's very obvious in their music. What are they hungry for? For something to happen.

How does the music you made with the Band sound to you now?

In the healthy periods we had some amazing moments, and we shuffled the deck and opened up a whole new path for a lot of other people. I feel very proud of the work we did, as well as the work we did with Bob Dylan—which was booed around the world at the time. We didn't change a note and the world came around. That was nice too.

How has your relationship with music changed?

The idea of being in front of millions of screaming people doesn't appeal to me now and there was a time when it did. I remember playing Watkins Glen, which was the biggest concert in the history of the world—there were 650,000 people. We were playing on the highest stage I've ever been on in my life and kids were clinging to the edge of it. Bill Graham kept going over and stepping on their fingers—you'd hear them scream as they fell back into the crowd. I said, "Bill, don't do that when we're playing," and he said, "Robbie, you can't smother them with love all the time." At that point I realized the summer of love was over. I'd played thousands of shows, and I thought there's nothing left for me here other than more money and adulation. *The Last Waltz* is about the danger of life on the road and knowing when it's about to lead to a kind of insanity. I could sense people were gonna start dying around me, or it was gonna be me dying, so I got off the bus.

Most people assume you're estranged from the other members of the Band; are you?

I have no bitterness, I have no walls up and I have the same phone number. I talk with Rick and Garth, and I talked with Levon a while back on the phone. I have tremendous respect for those guys' musicality, but something told me it was time to not do that anymore. I haven't read Levon's book but I'm told it's very bitter. I'd hate to be carrying around that anger and feel sorry for him that he has to feel that way. I started to read the other Band book [*Across the Great Divide*, by Barney Hoskyns], but there were so many inaccuracies! This guy is guessing about what went on in a room and he wasn't there. I read 30 pages and put it down.

Do you ever miss performing?

Here and there I do it. Do I miss going on the road on a bus? No. I was 16 years old when I started playing with Ronnie Hawkins, and watching those Burma Shave signs go by I thought, I'm just now starting to breathe. But no, I don't miss it now.

But isn't it true that a band that plays together regularly gets to places musically that can't be gotten to any other way?

I've been to that place. I'm there already, believe me. It's like riding a bicycle—once you get there, you remember how. That's my theory.

KRISTINE MCKENNA

PHOTOGRAPH BY MOJGAN B. AZIMI

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LETTERS

BODY SLAM

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for nearly 15 years and have looked forward to its arrival every month with anticipation. But that all ended when I came across the picture of Ice-T with his Bozo mate sticking a gun down his throat. Why would a music magazine such as yours print a picture like this? Cancel my subscription immediately.

Jesse Samsel

Hey, Body Count! The only shit I ever shoved in your face was the hard-earned money I laid down for your discs. Could you, Springsteen and Phil Collins just go back to your mansions and leave us alone? But before you go, could you throw my $30 worth of shit back in my face? Yeah, I didn't think so.

Dave Farrell
Ephrata, PA

I've never listened to Ice-T's music because I agree with what he says, but because *he* believes what he says. When Ice-T writes what he knows, the honesty of his convictions comes through on the recording. And when that honesty is conveyed to people who relate to the imagery in his recordings, Ice-T's popularity base grows. Ice-T becomes a public figure. No doubt Ice-T is smart enough to realize controversy sells, and that if child killers and wife beaters are still controversial subjects to be tucked away from those wanting to live in ignorance, well, he's not the first who has used such topics to cash in.

Maybe there are other people out there like me who aren't huge Ice-T fans, but who accept him as a necessary counterbalance to rhetoric flung with equal force from rightists Robertson and Limbaugh. Ice-T surely recognizes us as an audience too. But despite his insistence in interviews that we have to understand how much hatred *he* feels in order to change conditions and alleviate his hatred, maybe it is enough just to know that his type of hatred persists. At least he is capable of change—the anti-homosexual bias in his lyrics has disappeared. Cross your fingers that Ice will read Billy Altman's review and see past the comparison to Nazi hate and realize "Necessary Evil" is not "an appropriate response."

Craig Krauss

BURNING GREEN

What bugs me about Green Day is that it seems like they just go out of their way to rip off the Clash. There's a fine line between influence and imitation, and these guys crossed it a long time ago. Listening to their album, one gets the feeling that nobody has had an original idea since 1977. It's depressing.

Charlie O'Lanahan

Green Day in *Musician* (Sept. '94)? Isn't that an oxymoron? Why is it that thousands of truly talented people struggle to pay their bills and are thankful to be working *at all* while three spoiled, lazy potheads get sycophantic treatment and product endorsements? As someone who is paying his bills by playing music and working the occasional "day job" when necessary (without having to smoke pot to cope), I find your article to be a slap in the face to myself and others who can play more than three chords and have to deal daily with idiots who shout out drunken requests as we "pay our dues."

Matt Scharfglass
New York, NY

I am an avid bootleg collector and thoroughly enjoy the product and the adventure of the hunt. How is the average Hendrix fan supposed to expand the Hendrix catalog when all that's available (at least through the '80s and early '90s) were constant repackages of existing material or, more recently, poor remixes of previously booted material? What about the lack of new Zeppelin material? If the record industry wants to fight the bootleg industry, then they should release these tracks (live cuts, alternate takes and unreleased cuts) as strictly historical documents. Bootleggers! Roll your tapes!

Jose Sosa
Burbank, CA

MORE BOOTS

My most recent bootleg purchase (among more than 60 bootlegs I brought back from London) is a four-CD set of Neil Young concert recordings titled *Rock N'Roll Cowboy* on the Italian label Great Dane. Why did I buy it? Because Neil would rather jerk his fans around with endless (broken) promises of a boxed set of vault material, and with endless postponements of CD reissues. Young's disdain of nostalgia is artistically healthy, but burying perfectly good songs and recordings is simply stupid.

Mr. Phil Cohen
Bay Harbor, FL

B.U.B. WINNERS

Musician is pleased to announce the winners of our latest Best Unsigned Band Competition: Karen Savoca (Syracuse, NY); Zen Cowboys (Los Angeles, CA); Patsy Foster Band (Philadelphia, PA); Monica Pasqual & the Planet Ranch (Berkeley, CA); Speed of Sound (San Diego, CA); Jimmy Wilgus & the People (New York, NY); Alex Ballard & Sugarfoot (Milwaukee, WI); L.J.S. (Charleston, SC); Bitoto (San Diego, CA); Ken Siegert (Somerville, MA); (tie) Theodore & Rebic (New York, NY) and Ted 302 (Pleasanton, CA).

ERATA

Although I was thrilled to see an article on bass special effects units in the August issue, any credibility the author had was dissolved in the second sentence. Every real bass player knows James Jamerson played a Precision!

R.M. Mottola
Newtonville, MA

First, many thanks for the inclusion in your "On-Line Services" article (Aug. '94). One correction: Crescendo's address is P.O. Box 5208, Laurel, MD 20726. If anyone wrote me and I did not respond, please have them send their material again. Your readers can also reach me at (800) 372-7230 (voice) and (410) 792-7792 (fax).

Roger Wood
Crescendo
Laurel, MD

Due to a production error, Dwight Yoakam's name was spelled wrong on the October cover.

Send letters to: Musician, *1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.* Musician *magazine now has an e-mail address. Letters to the editor, subscription inquiries and other messages can be sent to: musician.mag@sonicnet.com.*

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Electronic Musician, March, 1994

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Joe Gore, Guitar Player, March, 1994

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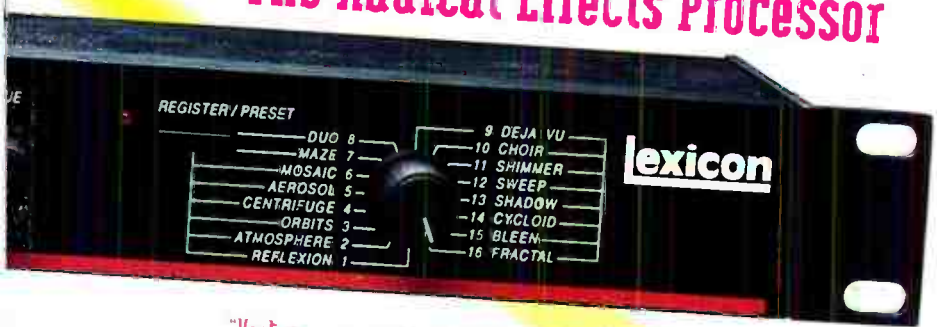
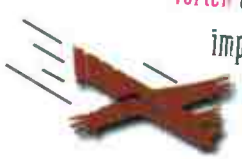


"Vortex can yield effects that are difficult enough to envision, let alone impossible to achieve with a conventional signal processor."

Bob Ross, Recording Magazine, September, 1994



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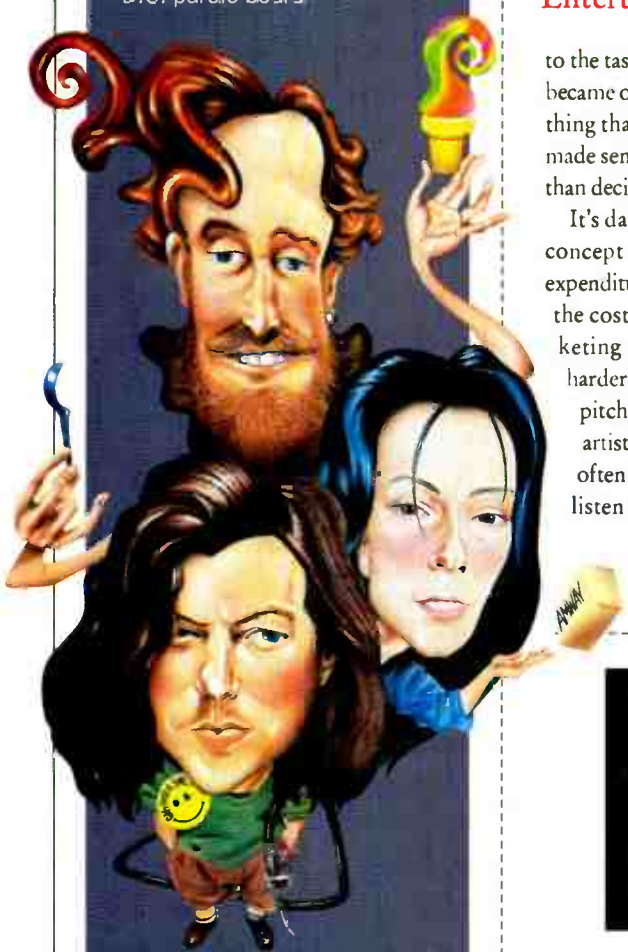


Kevin Martin (Candlebox) Sold shoes
Lowen & Navarro Singing waiters
Jim Ellison (Material Issue) Dug roads
Les Claypool (Primus) Worked in a tire shop
Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails) Janitor
Eddie Vedder (Pearl Jam) Pumped gas
Ozzy Osbourne Tuned car horns
Lindsey Buckingham Telemarketer

ILLUSTRATION BY RANDY PALMER

ILLUSTRATION BY JAY LINCOLN

The A&R Challenge: Listen to Your Heart

by Bud Scoppa

AS A RECORD reviewer in the '70s and '80s, I got no greater kick than discovering an exceptional album, figuring out what made it great and telling the world about it. When I became an A&R rep for Zoo Entertainment, I assumed I could apply the same processes to the task of building a roster. But it soon became obvious that I couldn't sign everything that appealed to me; deciding what made sense to sign was a lot more difficult than deciding what albums to write about.

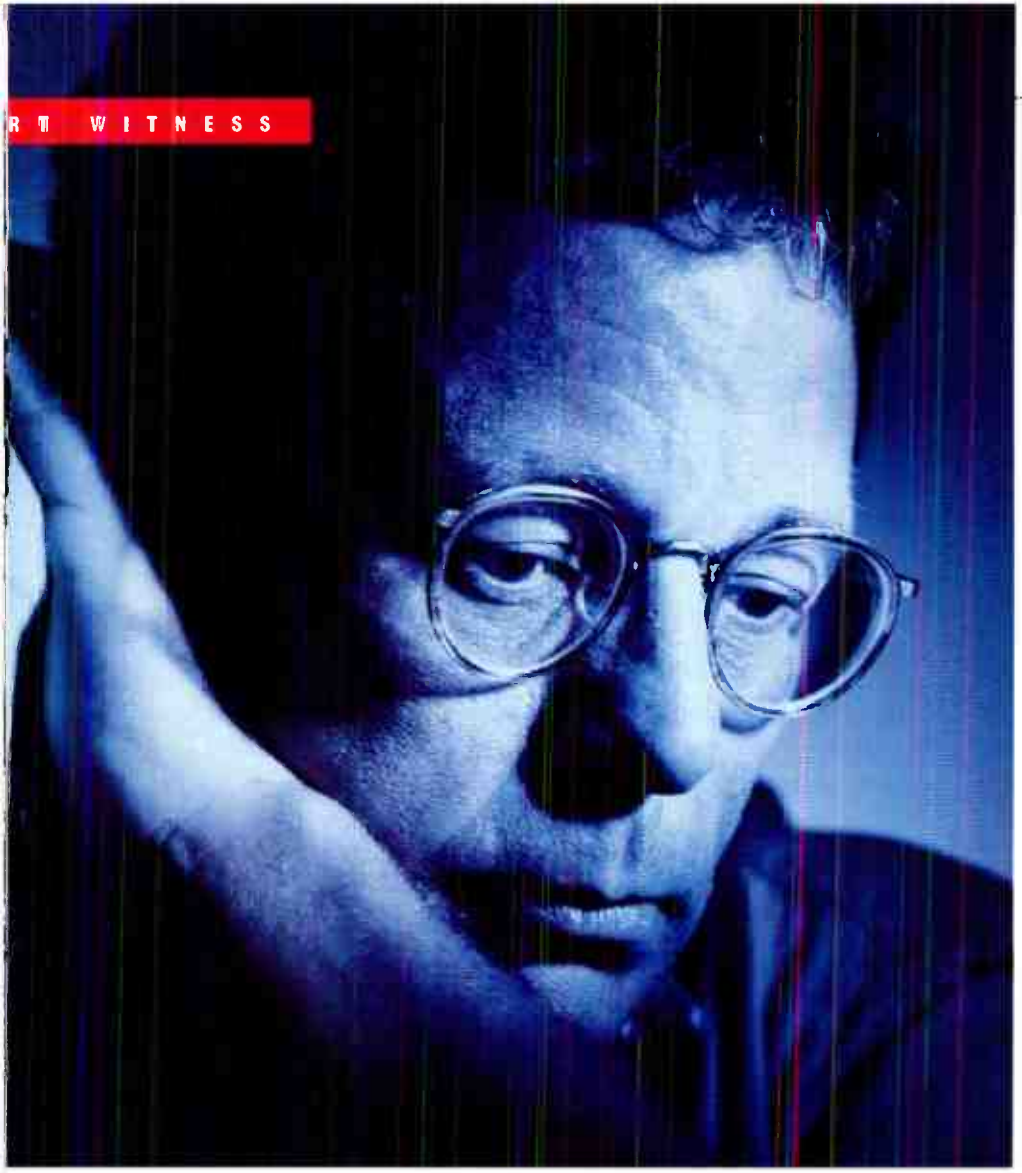
It's daunting coming to grips with the concept that signing an act can mean an expenditure of $250,000 or more, between the costs of making an album and marketing it. You get used to that. What's harder is being on the receiving end of a pitch from a manager, attorney or the artist him/herself. Having to say no so often tends you harden you. Or try to listen to something in the office, with the phone ringing, several recording projects to stay on top of and a bunch more demo tapes to get through. I can't imagine an environment less conducive to being truly receptive. Once all this sinks into your consciousness, you can hardly hear a tape or see a band play without immediately wondering, how is my label gonna market this act? If these concerns kick in too quickly, they can hinder the experience of hearing the music in the first place.

After the Super Bowl, then–Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson said his big revelation in scouting talent was learning to draft with his head rather than his heart. I'd learned a similar lesson with my first signing, the reunited Procol Harum, whom I'd raved about in print two decades earlier. As good as I felt the album, *The Prodigal Stranger*, to be, I'd grossly overestimated the band's

ROUGH

I NEED A COVER

When is a hit not a hit? John Mellencamp and Me'Shell NdegéOcello's duet on "Wild Night" was packaged as a cassette single at the irresistible price of 49¢. Result #1: Mellencamp's first top-five single in many years. Result #2: Despite that hit and rave reviews for his live show, Mellencamp's new album *Naked* is barely hanging inside the Top 40—his worst showing in many years. The Winners: NdegéOcello, whose exposure has made her name increasingly pronounceable, and Van Morrison, raking in publishing royalties for his 20-year-old classic.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC TUCKER

core audience and album rock radio's willingness to get the album exposed.

On the baby band level, I'd selected an impressive Vancouver-based rock group called the Odds, expecting my former colleagues in the rock press to share my enthusiasm. Two albums later, the Odds' success has been confined to Canada. If I couldn't get to first base with artists I knew to be superior, how was I to do my job?

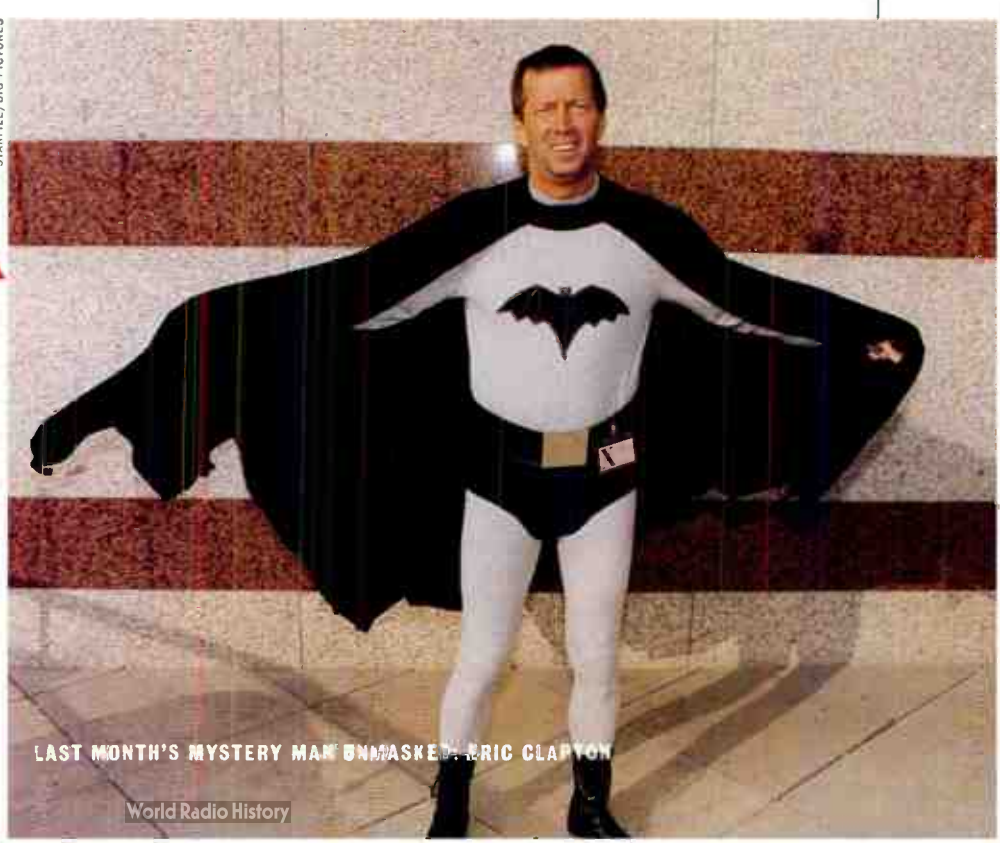
These were the issues I was struggling with one midsummer afternoon in 1991 as I hit an enormous traffic jam heading south on the San Diego Freeway. Realizing I wasn't going anywhere for a while, I decided to settle in with some music. I reached for the cassette on the seat beside me: The spine read "Matthew Sweet: *Nothing Lasts.*"

Fellow Zoo A&R rep Scott Byron had sent me the tape several months earlier, and now it made me a believer. Sweet had made the record for A&M, and it was available for a modest price. But according to our research, his previous album, *Earth*, had sold a measly 7000 units. Why should we pick up an album by an artist with no base, an album A&M (and every other label) had already passed on?

So I'd given up the battle. But listening to the tape again from start to finish in freeway gridlock [*cont'd on page 20*]

MIX

STARFILE/BIG PICTURES



LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY MAN UNMASKED: ERIC CLAPTON

POWER TOOLS

A Federal Tax Court ruled recently that musical instruments—violin bows in this particular case—are tools of a trade rather than works of art, and are thus eligible for a depreciation deduction. Two violinists for the New York Philharmonic were under investigation by the IRS until the Court stepped in.

ROUGH MIX

EXPERT WITNESS

TIGHTEN UP

A London company called Cerberus offers online music distribution via the Internet with a twist: Their data compression/decompression scheme makes downloading nearly ten times faster. Cerberus' music files are compressed before transmission; on the other end, proprietary software decompresses the files in real time as they play back through a PC-based sound card. The company claims to deliver a five-minute song in only 12 minutes while maintaining audio quality indistinguishable from that of a CD.

TALKIN' MACINTOSH BLUES

Reps for both Bob Dylan and Apple Computer have confirmed that the singer filed suit against the computer firm in late August for commercially misappropriating his name. How? By allegedly dubbing a new software package "Dylan" —and by going so far as to attempt to patent it. "I don't think any artist can afford to allow the dilution of their name or the good will they built up in that name," commented Dylan attorney Joseph A. Yanny at the time of the suit's filing. Deceased Welsh poet Dylan Thomas (1914–53), on the other hand, had nothing to say whatsoever.

ILLUSTRATION BY RICK SEALOCK

PHOTOGRAPH BY TERRY DOYLE

Tips for Guerrilla Musicians

by David Torn

1. ABSORB ALL the media-generated "information" you can. 2. Ignore all the media-generated "information" you've absorbed. 3. Live a goddamn life, and show it. 4. Hone your craft, relentlessly. However, a hiatus from practicing is probably called for when your inner voice nags that you're becoming a music player instead of a musician. There's a difference: A music player's goal is mastery of the craft of *executing* idiomatically correct notes and beats; a musician's goal is to breathe his/her perceptions right *through* them.

5) Do not avoid, bypass or obliterate your musical idiosyncrasies; these oddities are likely the keys to your most personal expressions. Amplify them. Distort them. Delay them. Turn up the reverb.

6) Grow your own musical idiom. Feed it with the preexisting idioms that you love most. Play from it, regardless of the context in which you're working.

7) Do your damnedest to skate your psyche neatly around—or, squarely and smack dab into—folks who listen exclusively to this or that "kind of music." If your music happens to fall even nominally within the confines of "their kind" of music, they may not take kindly to having their comfortable notions challenged. (On the other hand, they might just wanna lionize you as the new Godmother of Soul.)

8) Are you primarily seeking Fame? Do the musical community a favor and become a Hollywood celebrity instead. If Glory is number one on your priority list, why not simply martyr yourself for a religion? Should your deepest desires revolve around the acquisition of Power, seek your just rewards via a career in politics. Is Big Money what you're after? Well, you could engage in *any* of the aforementioned pursuits.

Granted, these goodies are possible side effects of a life in music. But, as primary goals, they're ticks primed to suck the blood from your creative body. So sit down, order your priorities and define the word "success" for yourself.

9) Subscribe only to myths of your own devising. Don't let the Myth of the Luminous Rock God guide you or divest you of a potentially life-long love affair with music. Faced with a choice between making a living and keeping my dignity intact, I'd opt for the latter. That way my love for music would remain unsullied, and I wouldn't lose myself as a bit player in someone else's myth.

10) Forget the "music industry" whenever you can. It's a whole goddamn *planetload* of frightened mothers out there.

11) Remember your first magical immersion in music? Revel in that human animal innocence, and bring *that* to the gig.

12) Listen.

Guitarist David Torn's latest release is Polytown *on CMP Records.*

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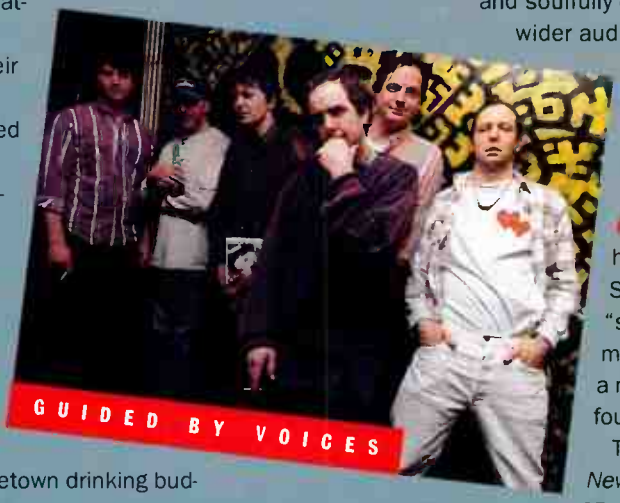
TALENT

GUIDED BY VOICES "It's the biggest, hardest decision I've had to make," confesses 36-year-old Robert Pollard. As the guiding light behind Dayton, Ohio's unlikely lo-fi buzz band of the year Guided by Voices, Pollard is trying to choose which label to sign with. Not only does the band's thirty-something age range defy the rules of alternative rockdom, but their charmingly sloppy first- or second-take, four-track-or-less approach ("We've used all four tracks before and it's sounded too slick," says Pollard) is hardly the stuff of major-label signings. But with an uncanny ear for hooks and melody, they pull it off.

"I think that just comes with being older and growing up in the '60s, back when melody was *melody*. Kinks, Yardbirds, Herman's Hermits, I love all that stuff," enthuses Pollard. These, along with a hundred other reference points from '70s glam to early-'80s post-punk, are in evidence on their latest release, *Bee Thousand*, and their past catalog of mostly self-released records.


GUIDED BY VOICES

With their major-label debut in the can (and again recorded in the basement), fans need only worry about the *next* record, to be produced by Kim Deal (of their hometown drinking buddies, the Breeders).

"We're thinking about disappointing people and going into a real studio," reveals Pollard. But, he reassures, "we'll do it in the same manner as we have in the basement."

WINSTON WALLS Fifty-seven-year-old jazz organist Winston Walls makes his recording debut *Boss of the B-3* on Schoolkids Records, a live battle royale with the legendary Jack McDuff. Listening to him kick out the jams with world-class panache, bopping and weaving with an offhanded virtuosity one moment, breathing new life into those old showboating funk organ clichés the next—and managing to wipe the floor with fellow organ master and longtime pal McDuff in the process—the obvious question is what took him so long to make a record?

"Oh, I just never cared about recording," he says. "I just like to go somewhere, play a gig, have some fun... I could have recorded in the '60s but I wasn't interested. I was satisfied on the circuit and playing in church, you know. CBS approached me in the '70s but I wasn't interested then either. I'm *still* not interested, really," he laughs. He should be. Anyone who can bring fresh voice to the old Hammond organ combo thing—and soulfully croak a few tasty ballads as well—deserves a wider audience. "But you know," he confides, "I'm a much better player than what you hear on the record." Really? "Yeah, well, I held back a lot...giving McDuff his space. You know how it is..."


ALLOY ORCHESTRA

ALLOY ORCHESTRA Their itineraries are exotic, hopping from Telluride to Pordenone, Italy, to Slovenia and Bombay, yet they're always the "support act." And they mount shows with heavy metal junk—truck springs, bedpans, horseshoes, a mono tape deck that feeds back on itself—not found at your average headbangers ball.

They're Boston's Alloy Orchestra, and they make *New Music for Silent Films*, the name of their debut CD for Accurate Records. Prodded by a movie exhibitor to create a new score for Fritz Lang's refurbished classic *Metropolis*, the keys-and-percussion trio formed in 1992. Keyboardist Caleb Sampson and Concussion Ensemble drummers Ken Winokur and Terry Donohue have since composed soundtracks replete with rolling thunder effects, melodic lilts and an organic immediacy for six more silent flicks, including *The Lost World* (the first dinosaur photoplay) and the 1902 sci-fi short *Trip to the Moon*.


WINSTON WALLS

"We see it as a collaboration with the directors," Sampson says. "It's not like a rock show where our egos are onstage."

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ROUGH MIX

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NEW SIGNINGS

Jerry Lee Lewis A whole lot of shakin' going on...and on .. (Sire)

Paul Kelly Aussie songwriting whiz returns from Down Under (Vanguard)

Southern Culture on the Skids There's trash rock in them thaar hills (Geffen)

Vocal Sampling A cappella salsa from Cuba (Sire)

Foetus England's nasty little ultrasound (Columbia)

This month's Rough Mix was written by Dave DiMartino, Ted Greenwald, Tristram Lozaw, Ken Micallef, Mark Rowland, Chris Rubin, Dev Sherlock, and Richard C. Walls.

[*cont'd from page 15*] gave me the opportunity to *really hear it*, without distraction, and I realized that this was an *amazing* album. It was the kind of record that could put a new, artist-oriented label like Zoo on the map, if only we could get people to discover it for themselves.

Why hadn't I fought harder? The answer was suddenly apparent: I hadn't allowed myself to fully experience the album in the first place, and all the baggage I was carrying around was affecting my ability to make a valid judgment. If I'd been truly receptive to the music's multileveled appeal—and to my instincts—I simply wouldn't have been willing to take no for an answer. How ironic that the people who are paid so well for their sensibilities so often wind up making decisions without giving themselves the opportunity to use those sensibilities effectively. I had to get stuck on the freeway with a record I *thought* I'd heard to figure that out. Duh.

The album came out that October, retitled *Girlfriend*. The press was astounding, the album got considerable in-store play, and thanks in part to a small army of alternative promotion people has gone on to sell nearly 450,000 units domestically. It's still selling.

In the end, all an A&R person—or a rock critic—can depend on is the capacity to be affected by something and to formulate and express an opinion based on that experience. If your circuits are jammed and you don't give yourself a chance to let the music get through to you in the first place, you're less than useless. You're toast.

Erstwhile rockcrit Bud Scoppa is Zoo's VP of A&R.

PRIVATE LESSON

ADRIAN SHERWOOD

Long before the onslaught of techno, producer Adrian Sherwood helped establish the concept of "mixer" as band member, working with Tackhead and Ministry. Sherwood now produces dub-heavy material for his own London-based label On-U Sound, but he recorded his first dub album on an overworked four-track.

"When you're working with a four-track you're quite limited, but you can take care of that in the mixing process," he says. One approach is to send the track through a speaker placed at the end of a hallway with a mike at the opposite end. "This will give the impression of the whole band suddenly playing inside a big auditorium when you bring it up on the mixing desk."

Sherwood also offers advice for spicing up cheesy-sounding electronic drums. "Say you've recorded in your front room with a cheap little drum machine—you could amplify it through a pair of headphones, completely overloading them. When you mike the phones—this also works with vocals—you get a [distorted, industrial-sounding] Mark Stewart–type effect," he suggests.

"There's a lot of things I've always fancied trying, but never have. Why not run the drum track through a wah-wah and a delay, then try moving the wah up and down in time with the hi-hat—that would make a great sound. Ha, then phase the whole thing to tape!" he laughs. "That's an option, isn't it?"

BY PETER WATROUS PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEF ASTOR

The Adventures of Bootsy Collins

In 1979 Bootsy Collins, starchild and musical architect for James Brown and for George Clinton's P-Funk, quit playing music. He put down the star bass, put away the star glasses, unplugged the phone and went fishing. He'd simply had too much fun.

"With George, we had all the groupies in the world, and anything you could think of would go on. It was heaven. It would be happening all the way to the gig, it would be happening *at* the gig, and the only time it wasn't happening was when we were onstage. That was splendid. Great ain't enough. It was splendid."

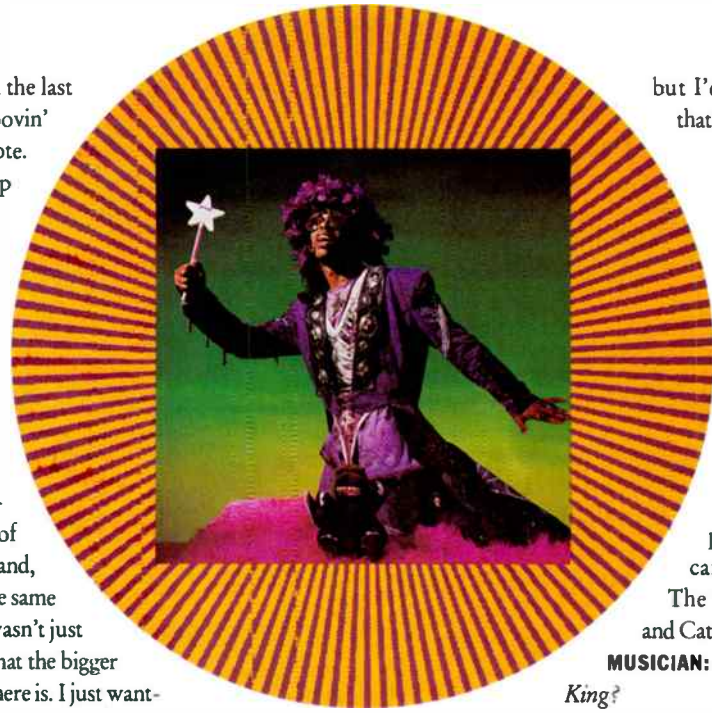
The drugs weren't so bad, either.

"One night we was playing, I think it was in Evansville, Indiana. Was it Indiana? It was Evansville something. And these chicks had brought us some purple haze, and all of us did it, everybody but my brother Catfish, 'cause he was an alcoholic. Everybody was gone. I don't even remember what happened on the show, but I remember at the end me and the drummer was playing so much stuff, I saw his body sitting there straight up and his hand whirling around his body, and we were jamming! Then I see George, he walks out on the stage and pulls up this sheet he's wearing and he's totally nude, and it's like 'Yah!!!!! We rule! We rule!'

Then we're getting ready to end the last song, and we're groovin' and groovin' and we're jamming on the last note. Next thing you know, we look up and nobody's in the place. Everybody had left. Security, audience, police, everybody. Except the groupies."

What could possibly go wrong?

"Well, in the middle of 1978, it was beginning to start being too much. We were doing too many albums, with Parlet, Parliament, Funkadelic, the Brides of Funkenstein, Bootsy's Rubber Band, and trying to be on the road at the same time. I just got tired, because it wasn't just gigging anymore. I never knew that the bigger you get the more responsibility there is. I just wanted to get onstage and play and make people have fun.



"So I quit. And I didn't care what happened after that. I was through with being Bootsy. It was about survival. I was feeling like if I didn't stop I was going to do something stupid. So I went home, fished a little bit, went huntin'. I stopped using coke and just tried to clean the old lifestyle up."

But Bootsy is back. Indeed, in an age of sampling, '70s-o-philia, reissues and funk mania, Bootsy never really left. Certainly it's no accident that Deee-Lite, whose nose for style is as big as the Ritz, pulled Bootsy into their orbit, using him on their tour and in their videos. *Back in the Day: The Best of Bootsy*, a reissue of his strongest material for Warner Bros., has just been released, along with *Blasters of the Universe*, a new double album of hard funk for Rykodisc. He's also on seemingly hundreds of recent Bill Laswell–produced CDs, including projects like *Illumination* and *Hallucination Engine*. The starchild is all over the place.

"Laswell reassured me of who I was really," explains Collins, who arrives for this interview wearing '70s stacked shoes, star glasses, a star earring, a gold and black doo-rag and a huge cowboy hat. Some gray sprinkles his beard. "I started off being a musician and that's the thing I had been trying to get back to. Playing with all these different people, just being a musician, got me back in sync. I loved it."

Bootsy Collins, 43, grew up in Cincinnati. Home of King Records, which recorded James Brown, along with all sorts of rhythm and blues, blues and country artists, it's a city that draws on Appalachia, and a black population, for its music. A child prodigy, Bootsy was making gigs for King at age 14.

"There was a lot of music around," he recalls. "Lots of clubs to play in, not fantastic clubs, but just places where bands could get to go and play. You got a chance to develop your craft. We used to play for gas money and wine.

"I was the kid brother—'Out of the way, boy, you bother me.' So I was always trying to learn, always watching Catfish and his band rehearsing at our house. They'd pull the shades down and lock me out, but I'd put my ear to the door, and that's the way I picked it up."

MUSICIAN: *How'd you settle on the bass as your instrument?*

COLLINS: I wanted to play with my brother and *he* played bass. The band was playing at a club one night and the guitar player couldn't make it. So I said, "Here's your guitar player, right here." I was 13, I only knew two songs, and you can only play that so many times, I don't care how drunk the people are. The band couldn't take it anymore and Catfish and I swapped instruments.

MUSICIAN: *What sessions did you make for King?*

COLLINS: I played on dates by Bill Doggett, Hank Ballard, Arthur Prysock and a lot more. To be at King was great. We had the opportunity of meeting James Brown's band and James Brown too! It was heaven just to hang around. We tried to be over there every day, even when we didn't have a session, just hang around in case something came up.

MUSICIAN: *Who were you listening to at the time?*

COLLINS: James Jamerson. You know, Motown. Everything he did was so magical you can never play it exactly like him. And we were listening to James Brown. Around there he was baddest and the tightest. Copying James was pretty much how the band I was playing in at the time, the Pacemakers, began to get a reputation.

MUSICIAN: *What kind of gigs would you be making?*

COLLINS: We played in serious dumps, smoke-filled, everybody drunk and lying on the tables. We were playing stuff that was on the radio, then as we got more confident we did original stuff. But first we were doing Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Archie Bell and the Drells.

MUSICIAN: *Was it fun?*

COLLINS: It was lots of fun, and at that time it was like the best thing that could possibly happen to somebody. We never looked at it as if this was going to be our future, we just took it a day at a time. And you know, the more we did it, the more we got hooked, and the more we couldn't get away from it. So it kind of became a part of us.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me about hooking up with James Brown.*

COLLINS: It was pretty much from just hanging around over at King Records. James' band would come in the side door where everybody parked at. And James' office was in the front of the place. So we never knew when he came in; we thought we'd never meet him anyway. Our main thing was the band, trying to get information from them and how it feels to be with James. And we finally got a chance to meet Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker and Bobby Byrd.

We was playing a club called the Live Wire and Bobby Byrd called and he said they needed a band to play *tonight*, and James wants you all to come on down. "Okay, so what do you want us to do?" "Well,

"George had a half moon shaved into his head and he looked crazy."

You're the WARM UP for a band *no one's ever heard of.*

Your MANAGER just decided he could *sing.*

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And, yes, that's a PRODUCER in the audience *tonight.*

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I'm on the way there, in the jet, and we're going to pick you all up and then we're going to hit tonight." And I'm saying okay, but I'm thinking how in the heck are we going to play tonight? I told the guys and they said, "Yeah, yeah, right, right." Nobody believed it.

But then he actually showed up to pick us up, straight from there to Columbus, Georgia. I mean, we were wearing what we had on, all we had was guitars. And once we got there, the crowd is kind of angry because James was supposed to be onstage and here comes the band in the front door and they're like "Damn them mothers, come on, you all, come on! Come on! Come on!" And we're like "God, we ain't have nothing to do with this."

We'd walked right into a mess we didn't know was going on. So we moved on to the dressing room and it was like "Okay, Byrd, what the heck is going on?" Then he explained to us that the band had got upset about James not paying them, that kind of shit. We was happy to be there but the band were like our heroes and we were saying, "My God, we going to walk in on them," and we start feeling like we're crossing the strike line. We really love these cats. We can't do this. And at the same time we want to play with James.

So James called us in the room and he said, "Guys, fellas, I'm glad you're here. We're going on tonight, we're going to tear this thing to death. How much do you all want?" And we looked at each other and it's like, how much do we want? "I thought we had to pay *you*." He said, "Okay, you all go out and talk about it real quick because we got to go on." So we went out of the room. All we was making was five or six dollars apiece, and he's talking about getting paid, we didn't have no idea. So we went back and said, "Okay, how about $200 a week?"

He started laughing, and said, "Son, I'll pay y'all $400 a week." And when he said that it was like *whoa!* Man, we ain't never seen no $400 a week, we didn't even heard of $400 a week. So it was like, "We're on." We hit the stage and he just said, "Whatever I call out, when I drop my hand, just hit the song." And as soon as he dropped his hand we was on it. Because we knew all the songs.

MUSICIAN: *Tell me what was good about working with James.*

COLLINS: The discipline and the order. It was like being in the army. Report to duty. I'm ready. And I liked that, because I think that's probably what I missed by not having a father. It did a lot of things for me, that I didn't have a clue of then. But I know now.

MUSICIAN: *Did it help you with business?*

COLLINS: A lot of times he would have business talks with different people on the airplane, and he would say, "Come on, sit down, check this out," and I'd just sit in on it. I didn't know what the heck was going on, I just knew this mug is on it. So he just wanted me to see, I guess. I didn't know what I was learning.

MUSICIAN: *How about the music? What was good about the music?*

COLLINS: I think it was the simplicity of it. The rhythms of things, the way he would cut things off, the hits with the drums, the bass guitar, horns at the same time. He was just a perfectionist at what he was doing.

MUSICIAN: *Did he do the arranging?*

COLLINS: Fred Wesley would pretty much do the horn arrangement. The rhythm, we would have to figure out his body language because he would hum stuff, and we'd say, "Oh yeah, like this, dodododo, yeah, that's it, that's it." We were the interpreters of what he was trying to say. He kind of respected us in that area too, because we were young and he was trying to get the young sound. So he gave us even more freedom.

MUSICIAN: *Was there a generation gap in the band between you all and him?*

COLLINS: Definitely. At that time I think he was like 37, 38. I was 16.

MUSICIAN: *Didn't that eventually lead to some problems?*

COLLINS: Definitely. Because *bands* were coming up to the front of the stage, the hippie thang had came in. So here we are with James Brown, loving it but at the same time wanting to get out and be freaky. And the more we went to places like Europe, the more we felt confined. They had this clothes style, hot pants, and chicks were wearing the chains and no bras, and it was like oh! We could take that onstage back in the States and it'd be brand new. That's pretty much where we got the idea of the clothes.

MUSICIAN: *But James wasn't into this, right?*

COLLINS: Oh, no. He was definitely precision and suits. I mean a uniform, which was great for what it was.

MUSICIAN: *So what would you all talk about behind his back?*

COLLINS: What we're going to do when we get a chance to be our own band. We knew we was going to leave, we just didn't know when. A movement was coming on for bands to be up front and be colorful and everybody to be singing, so that helped. Sly Stone, Chicago, Blood Sweat and Tears, all these groups were coming up. We were tight, we knew the formula, we could take this concept, take those clothes and our sound and go out here and freak people out. So we started getting ideas.

MUSICIAN: *How did you all get out of it?*

COLLINS: It was a few things that happened like over in Africa. The band would always want to send me to ask for more money, I guess maybe because I was a kid and didn't know no better. One time we was invited to dinner by the president of Zambia, and the band said, "Okay, Boots, it's time, go on there and tell him!" So I gets up from the table—we're getting ready to eat dinner—and whisper in his ear, "The fellas have been talking about we need a raise." He rolled his eyes, that's what he did. And what else he did that was deep, he said, "Uh! Wait a minute, come here, son." He brought me over there to the president and said, "Repeat what you just said." So I did it and he said, "Okay, son, we'll talk about this later." So we went on with the dinner but he was highly upset.

Then I had to ask for the money at the Copacabana here in New York because the first week we was going to get half pay. We started hearing how many trunkloads of money James was making, so everybody got together and said, "Boots, you got to go do it, man." No problem. Right in there, laid the bone. He said, "It ain't going to work this time, son. It ain't going to work this time." So that was the gig. James had to cancel and we went back to Cincinnati. We were through. Because we had to stand up for what we had said.

"The band would send me in to ask James for more money 'cause I was a kid."

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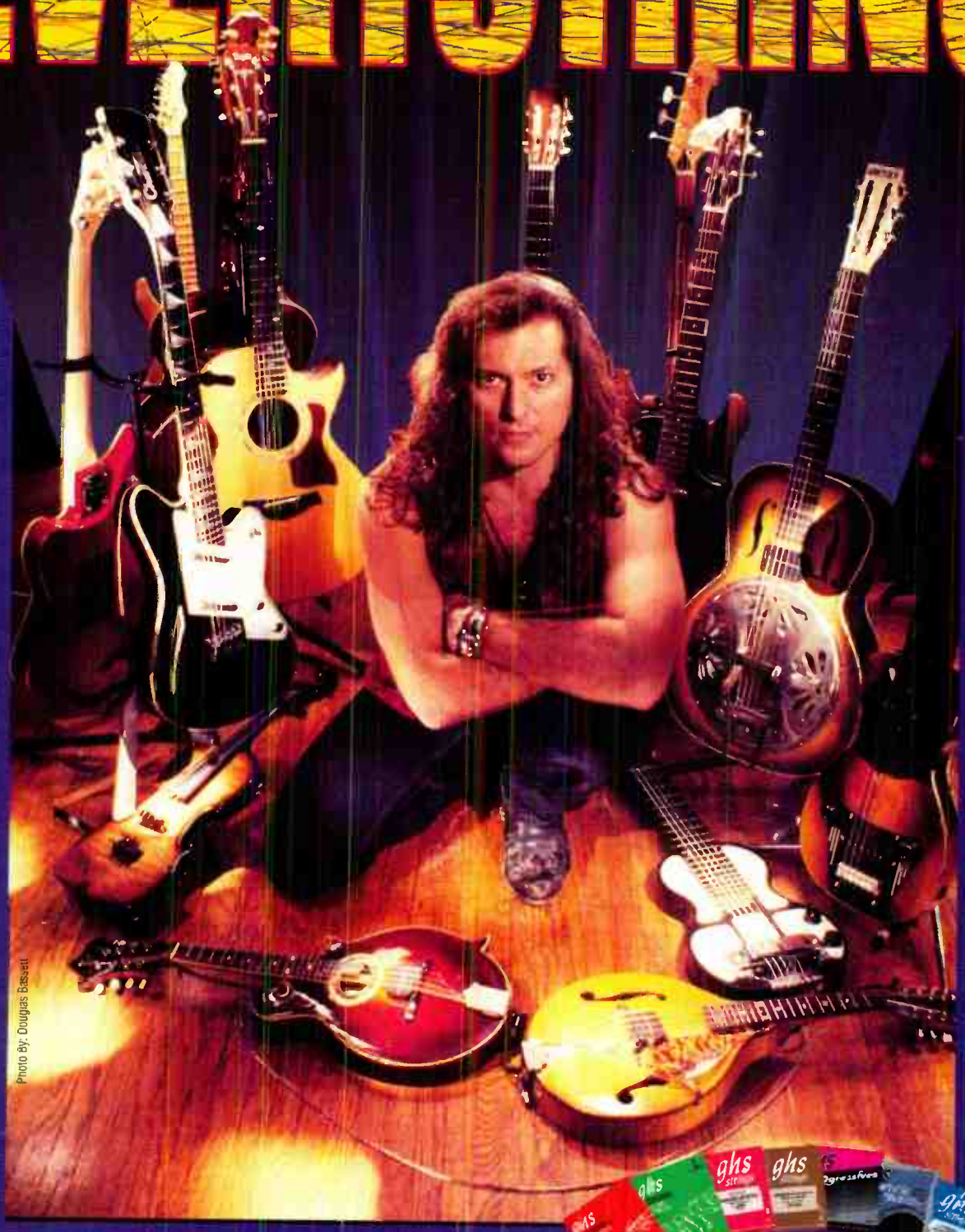

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MUSICIAN: *What did that feel like?*

COLLINS: It felt terrible. And once we got to Cincinnati we kind of realized, "What do we do next?" Two days have passed, no gig, no more wine money. We all had about four or five Lincoln Continentals, I had one with the pink vinyl top. Oh we were fly, man. We was trying to figure out how to pay for them suckers.

MUSICIAN: *What name were you using for a band?*

COLLINS: House Guests, formerly the JB's. We went to Tennessee, Georgia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, all around. Then we start thinking about going to Detroit for a recording career. We revved up the rides, headed out to Motown, knowing we going to get this record deal, you know. No problem. We walk into Motown and we looking crazy—I mean because it's those hippie days. As soon as we walk in the door at Motown they got all these cameras up so they can check you out. We walk in and they say, "All right, what do y'all want? Who are y'all?" "Oh, we're the House Guests and we want to see anybody about a record deal and we're trying"—and the next thing I know security comes out, and they say, "Sorry, fellas"—they kind of help us along—"sorry, fellas, but if you all don't get out of here we're going to escort you out the door." God, we never knew Motown would be nothing like that.

Then we started looking for a gig, and the next thing I know we ran into this club called the Love Club, and they had lots of bands playing and the band that would win would be the house band and could make money. So we went on and after we came off, nobody else wanted to go on. Club owner hired us—we had a gig. Then we ran into Mahlia Franklin, who was a singer, and she had knew George Clinton because George was dating her sister. So she was raving about, man, you all got the same vibe as Funkadelic, and we had been hearing about Funkadelic but we had never actually seen 'em. She said, "Come on, I'll introduce you to George." I said, "Great," and we went over there. George was sitting over in the corner on the floor in his guru style. He had his sheet on and he had a half moon shaved into his head and he looked crazy as I don't know what, and as soon as I seen him it was like, yeah, love at first bite. This is going to be it. This boy is gone.

MUSICIAN: *So then what happened after that?*

COLLINS: We gigged with George.

MUSICIAN: *But what did he do with Funkadelic?*

COLLINS: They just kind of dispersed. Everybody was kind of beat up. Bernie Worrell was probably the only one who wasn't really drugged out. Between the road, the business and the heroin.

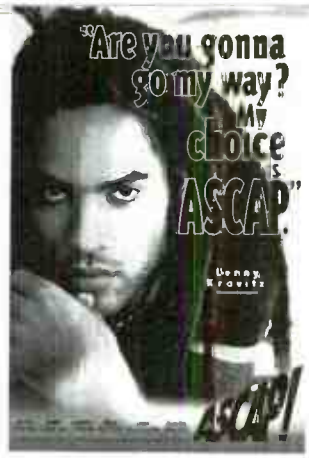
I think I had a chance because I came from the school with James Brown, and I got a chance to get the tightness of it—I had a chance to see both sides. The cats that were there with George never had a chance to see both sides so they was always loose and always gone. I went through my thing too but I think in the end I had something to kind of hold on to to snap me out of it.

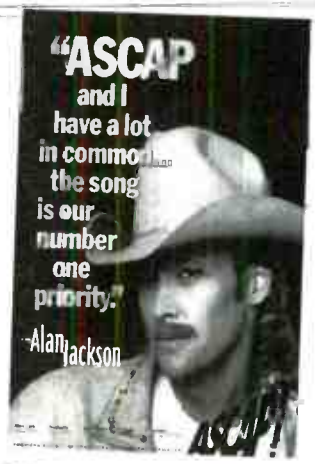
MUSICIAN: *What sort of a boss was George?*

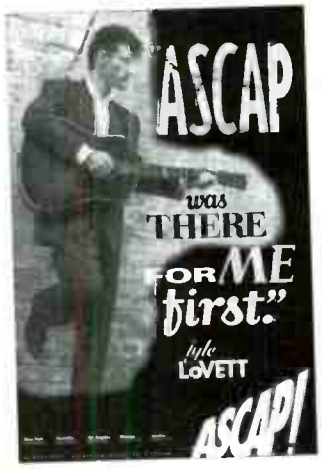
COLLINS: He was more like a referee. We got a chance to be ourselves. We just wanted to be onstage and dance from one side of the stage to the other and not be constricted. Get out of the way, boy, you bother me I'm comin' across. Look out. You can go offstage, you can act the fool, you can stand back there by the drummer, any way you want. The stage is my party and I can fry if I want to. So it was all fun.

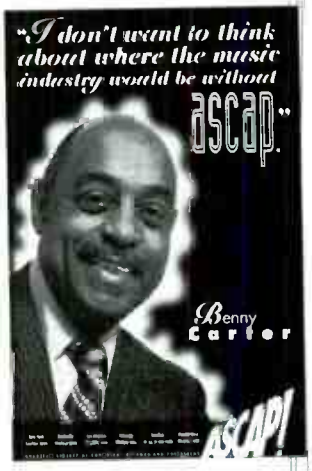
MUSICIAN: *Before you hooked up with George, had you been using rock in the music?*

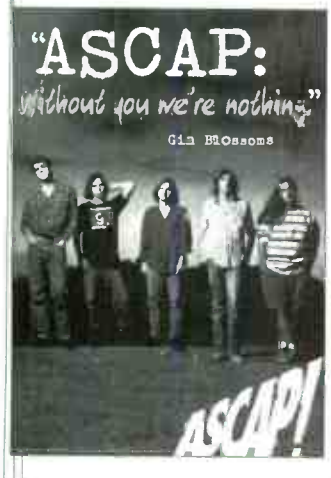
COLLINS: Listening to Jimi Hendrix did it,

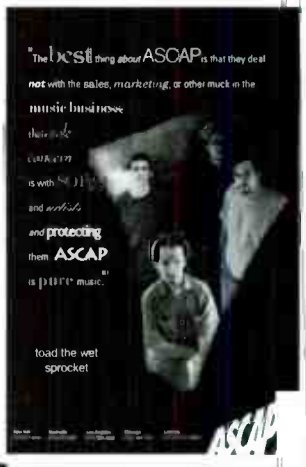












'nuff said!

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'cause he had become pretty big when we started. Black Sabbath, and the acid kind of thing because that's what was happening, we kind of grew up on that.

MUSICIAN: *What was life on the road like in the early years?*

COLLINS: It was like an underground cult going on. The way we really got started, some people invited us to do a showcase for a bunch of college promoters. So we all get together for a serious talk 'cause this means our gigs for the rest of the year, maybe the year after that. So we sit down and everybody kinda says, "Okay, George, only thing we *can't* do is pull your sheet up and do the nude thing, let everybody see your nub. We cannot do that, George. Okay?" "Aw," he says, "no problem. I'll never do that again." "You sure, George?" "I'm positive, you know?"

So showtime comes, they call us out and everything's great, we jammin', everybody's like yeah! We gettin' the gig. Then here comes my pal George, right? He runs off across the stage off to one side—this is the last song—he runs across the floor and nobody pays him no attention. Next he's standing up in the middle of the audience out there, he done got on a chair and lifted off his sheet and is showing his nub to everybody. After the gig, everybody was saying, "George, how could you? How could you do this to us?" And really it worked against us for the first month. But after that, they were calling us all the time, and we got bigger dates. It *worked.* A little later we were playing stadiums.

MUSICIAN: *What was it like to quit playing?*

COLLINS: After about a couple of years, I wanted to start trying to record again. I didn't want to have nothing to do with the road though. Because I couldn't handle it. But I figured I could handle the recording end, because I love that part of it. And that's what I started doing. Fortunately I ran into Bill Laswell.

MUSICIAN: *But you toured with Deee-Lite; how was that?*

COLLINS: I loved it. That was the first thing that showed me that, okay, you can be accepted as going out this way too. I was scared about the fans not liking me for going out and doing this kind of music. But after I got out there, I started seeing a whole other audience, and some of them knew me and some of them didn't. Then some of the metal people started coming to the gigs with the long hair just to see me. I was like, wow, this is neat.

MUSICIAN: *Both the Laswell records and hip-hop are sort of introducing you to people who are a lot younger.*

COLLINS: Yeah. We get all ages now. Teenagers, 20s, 30s, black and white. It's a real good mixture. In this last run for Bootsy's New Rubber Band we did in the West Coast, there were lines around the places. It was really deep. So it's a whole new energy going on.

MUSICIAN: *You still like playing?*

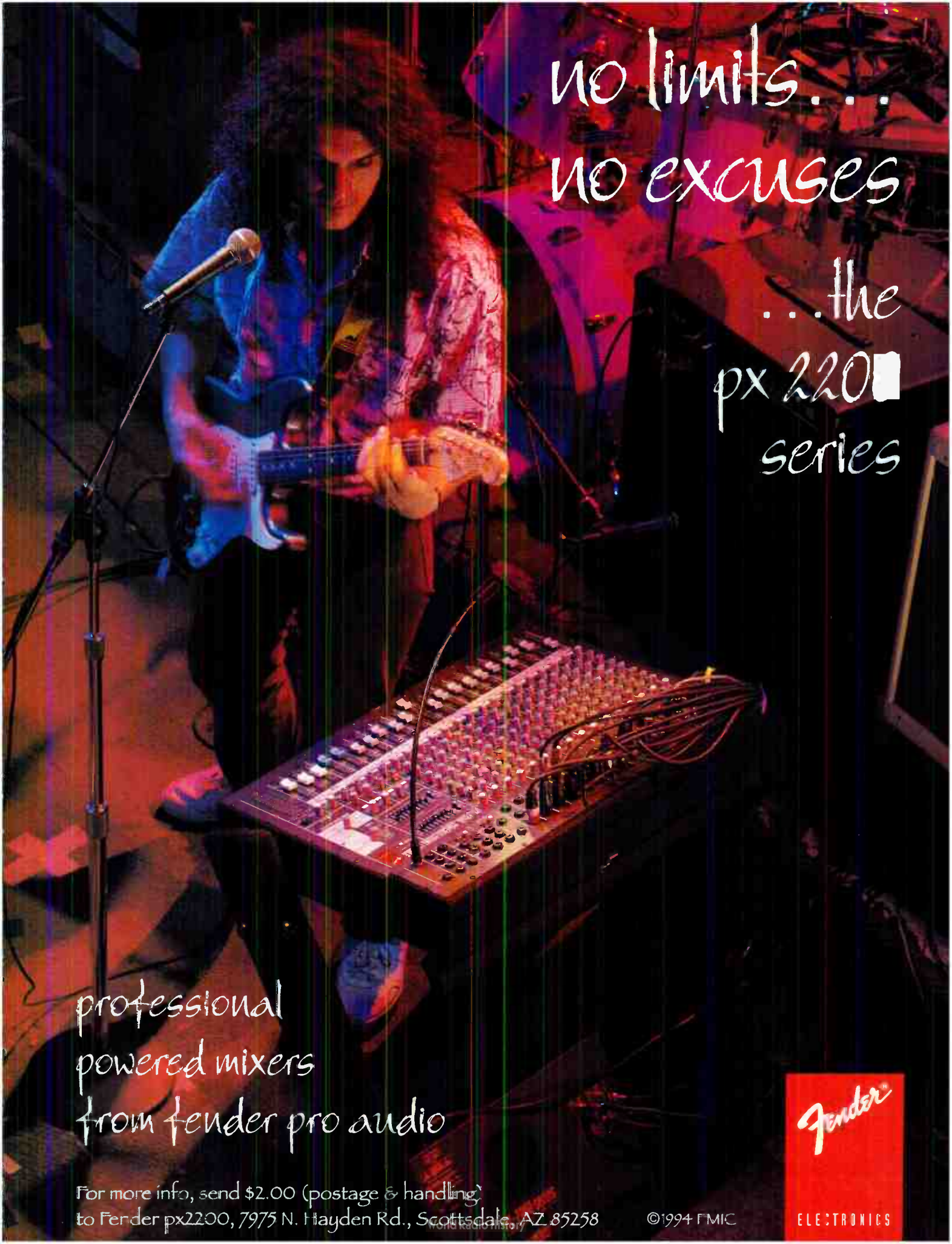
COLLINS: Oh yeah. I sample myself now. Kind of got the Bootzilla rehab studio setup for that, you know. It's like I sampled myself playing guitar, the drums. I mean I mean they sampled us anyway, why not sample yourself?

MUSICIAN: *Could you imagine doing anything else besides playing?*

COLLINS: Yeah, I could imagine being in this scene, just being around the creativity of kids doing their thang. Like songs, music, dance, video, all that kind of stuff. I want to be in there with that.

MUSICIAN: *So there's a lot of stuff to do.*

COLLINS: Oh there's looooads of stuff left to do. Loads of people that I want to play with. New music is going to evolve, and that's what it's all about—new sounds, new ways of looking at it. And that's what life's all about. But you know, to me a bologna sandwich is cool.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JAZZ

PAT MARTINO'S

BY CHIP STERN

NOTHING QUITE PREPARES you for the experience of being in Pat Martino's presence. Over the phone he has one of those octave-down, quiet-storm kind of mojo voices, with a basso profundo quality that makes you think he's around six-eight, sleeps in a bunk bed, gargles with Pine Sol and employs a custom anvil case to transport his testicles. ★ The reality is quite different. He is not exactly frail, but slightly built, rail-thin à la Abe Lincoln, with beautiful Michelangelan hands and soft, black-crow eyes that radiate mystery and dimly remembered hurts. While he can speak in a straightforward manner, more often than not he'll jump around in an elliptical, mystical style that suggests Buckminster Fuller, Ornette Coleman...or one of his own airborne solo flights.

ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICK BLACKWELL

On first impression he reminds me of Travis, the tormented misfit from Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, who emerged from a desert of forgetfulness to reclaim his past and reconstruct a legacy for his loved ones. Pat Martino has also emerged from a glen of forgetfulness, the residual effect of brain surgery. But where Travis was consumed by passion for one he longed to possess, Martino is consumed by music, pursuing the ineffable with a monastic fervor that seems oddly out of place in the late twentieth century—let alone in the neat blocks of row houses that comprise his South Philly neighborhood.

You see, young Pat Azzara had left Philadelphia at 15 to go out on the chitlin circuit, leaving home in the back of organist Charlie Earland's black hearse. "There was no room for me," he recalls, "so I laid on top of a Leslie cabinet and plucked on a ukulele all the way to Buffalo." Known on the street as "The Kid," he eventually became part of an extended family within the Harlem community, sharing the life, lore, food, family, women and gamesmanship. In the process he was afforded a rare perception of day-to-day sharing and survival, enriching his music with life experiences few of today's young players will ever know.

"That whole '60s scene was demolished," Pat shrugs wistfully between sips of wine, as his tone becomes more distant, his connections more oblique. "Still, I'd rather not promote the idea that it was any better than it is now. Survival is the only thing that's

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHEL DELSOL

RHYTHM & HUES

consistent. Survival of the fittest, no matter what the conditions might be." And survive he did. In fact, by the time Pat Azzara returned to Philly in his early 20s, he'd taken his father's stage name and become Pat Martino—among the greatest musicians in the history of jazz guitar.

Pat smiles mischievously. "Guitar? Guitfeathers! As a young man I had great expectations. Johnny Smith, Wes Montgomery and Jimi Hendrix were my archangels. Then I reached the point where I realized that they experienced ordeals just like everyone else. So you're good as a child, the so-called leader of your generation, a formidably gifted individual amongst others in your field of endeavor. You get no reward for that," he laughs. "Instead, you get tarred and get feathered. It's like, 'What have you done for me lately?' The greatest thing that I've achieved in life is tomorrow morning. To awake to the sunshine. To feel neutral to all that has happened. To have no expectations."

No expectations. There was a time, not so long ago, when the world of Pat Martino seemed as limitless as his talent. For a new generation of guitarists, he was a wonder of nature, the Dizzy Gillespie of modern guitar. Here at last was a guitarist with the velocity, endurance and imagination to match the whirlwind flights of modern jazz giants such as John Coltrane and Clifford Brown. Many fine guitarists preceded him. But from his sideman days with Willis "Gatortail" Jackson, Don Patterson and Sonny Stitt, through his first recordings as a leader, it was clear that Martino was in a class by himself.

He knew all the hippest voicings, and his chord substitutions were thoroughly modern and logical. He could pivot off any note in mid-flight and resolve into tense, flowing melodic passages of epic duration, extending his lines into infinity with flowing syncopations, supple octaves and offbeat chordal accents. His tone was a velvety shade of sapphire blue, each note cleanly picked and clearly articulated—all on a guitar with

"I DIDN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING.

prohibitively high action and heavy strings, giving his amplified sound a dusky acoustic quality. Rhythmically, he could routinely double and triple up at tempos that would make most pickers plotz, motoring along with that Harley Davidson of a right hand, perhaps the most driving attack since Django's.

No less a master than George Benson delights in telling of his first encounter with the slight young guitarist on Phil Fallo's compelling video biography *Open Road*: "You know, I was feeling pretty good about myself when I was 19 years old, and I'd come to New York, and everyone was raving about me as a player. They would say, 'Yeah, I heard about you. You that new guit-tar player that played with Jack McDuff. They say you a bad cat.' I was feeling good, thinking I had conquered New York, and I walked into Small's Paradise and saw this young kid on the guit-tar, thinking, 'Oh, what's he going to do. I should get up there and show him how to play.' And all of a sudden they came to a break in the music, and this guit-tar *leaped* out of nowhere playing some of the most incredible lines I had ever heard! It had everything in it, great tone, great articulation, and the whole crowd—and it was a black audience—they went crazy. I said to myself, 'If this is a sample of what New York is like, I'm getting out of here.'"

Martino laughs long and hard. "The organ trio was *the* bar group, and it still is, to me. That was the group that would get people off their seats and dancing on top of the bar—if you were good enough. I grew up within that generation, and I miss it. Don Patterson was, in my opinion, the greatest B-3 player there ever was, and I played with *everybody*: Jimmy Smith, Groove Holmes, Jimmy McGriff. 'Duck' was the chief—the baddest of the bad, but also the most fucked-up in terms of life itself. I miss Don Patterson so much, no one will ever know.

"Those were great years. We used to play at Basie's on 135rd and Seventh, and the place would be packed. Kenny Burrell used to sit in, although after the first time he brought his own guitar, because it disturbed him to play my guitar, and he put it down in a hurry. Then we'd go to Small's Paradise and different clubs uptown to jam with people like Grant Green. Finally I made enough money to live for six weeks at the President Hotel on 48th between 9th and Broadway. I went to the corner and bought a little record player, and had just enough left to purchase subway tokens and one album to listen to in private—Elliott Carter's *Variations for Orchestra*.

"I took the AA to 116th and began walking to 135th—because there was a riot going on, and the subways were under siege. And I strolled to the gig with my ES-175, and no one bothered me, I had so many friends. I think after my operation, that was the biggest loss—all the memories I had of living in this community. I would stop at one house and eat some greens, and make it up to the gig eventually. By the third set, Les Paul would be there. Then, kaboom, I'd take Les by to introduce him to a really great guitar player, otherwise known as Wes Montgomery. And Wes would say, 'Wow, man, that's my idol. I never thought I'd have a chance to meet this man.' And I'd say, 'Listen, guys, I got to get back, 'cause Gatortail'll kill me if I'm not on time.' Then on the way back I'd walk by Small's Paradise where Malcolm X was talking shit," he laughs. "Great days, man. All gone."

All gone? Perhaps. But as James Joyce suggested in "The Dead," the departed walk among us, never more than a shadow's breath away. The spirit of Pat's father, Carmen Azzara, is resonant throughout this house. The push and pull of their psyches seems quite real to me. With each recollection, Pat struggles to define that which is *my* will, *my* path, *my* delight. Running through these changes, the guitar remains less an end than a means—a prism of perception, a symbol of freedom.

"I was born on August 25, 1944. Curiosity drew me to the guitar. I

NOT EVEN WHO MY MOM WAS."

remember crawling through my parents' bedroom when I was around two years old, looking for my father's guitar under the bed—a big beautiful Epiphone arch top. I opened the case and began strumming it, playing with the low E string and observing the rainbow that came from the string's vibrations. Lacking calluses, I cut my hand. I didn't experience pain, but color, perception, an expansion of imagination. I became immersed in imagination and my own blood, and began painting away at the floorboards. My parents got very excited: This was something I was never to do again. For me, the injury was not the cut, but the backlash. Praise and blame are neutral in context, but the end result was an interruption of the creative process: Rules and regulations were enforced, and I didn't get to deal with the guitar again for another decade."

While the sight of their little boy's blood must have upset his parents, in a sense, Pat's Italian/Arabic father was playing his trump card. First he hid the guitar to make his child look for it; then he gave it a forbidden aura, until Pat begged his pop to play it. I know I can do it. Okay, but don't you *ever* put it down. "He was a smart guy, alright. He'd play guitar around the house, strumming and singing, and would tell me, 'No, this isn't for you. You're one of the kids. Go out and play baseball with them. They're going to think you're a nobody. Go out and play—and you better play good.' He really put me through the childhood syndrome.

"In a sense he used me to be a professional guitarist, because that's what *he* wanted to be. As a youngster he took a couple of lessons from Salvatore Massaro, who was better known as Eddie Lang. So that's part of my legacy, too—all in the same flow. But my dad couldn't afford to be involved in the outside world as a player, because he had to take care of his own survival. There were 11 brothers and sisters in my dad's family. When he was eight years old, his father said go out and get a job. He worked in a tailor's shop, wasn't a musician at all. But he made sure I didn't have to succumb to that kind of existence."

When he finally convinced his father he could be a guitarist, Carmen Azzara backed him all the way, with a gold top Les Paul and a stereo Gibson amp. Six months later, Carmen began schlepping his little Amadeus to all the local joints to hear the top jazz guitarists and show him off. "When I finally picked up the instrument, I'd already worked out a lot of things in my mind, and knew what I had to do in terms of muscle development to build up my hands to execute what I wanted to hear.

"And the first thing I attempted to do was pull the wool over my pop's eyes. He took me to a guitar teacher, name of John Hall, who gave me all these books to learn how to read. No magic at all—nothing but rules and regulations. I had no interest in acceding to this stranger's demands. My pop would come home from work, sit down on the sofa, read his newspaper and have me play what I was practicing. I'd stand there instead and play as many notes as I could with my eyes on the page. There and then I learned how to improvise, without even knowing the process. My father was under the impression that I had the lesson down pat," he laughs.

"I never had a good teacher. I had Dennis Sandole, but I studied *him*, not what was he selling. Van Gogh and other great painters were represented on his walls, and he had a piano in his studio—that was interesting. But I had no interest in sight singing or modes—*nothing* but the heart. I was possessed with practicing, and copied jazz solos off of records by ear, because I had near perfect pitch, and a near photographic memory. And while I never really had a teacher, I always had someone to place my back against the wall, for survival alone. If you can't do this, you ain't worth shit! Ergo, sure, I *can* do that. I can do ten times as much as that—try this. Boom.

"My primary inspirations were Johnny Smith and Wes Montgomery. Smitty was the ultimate musician in terms of academics. He seemed to me, as a child, to understand everything about music. Wes was the opposite—Wes had enormous passion. Let me put it to you this way: Smitty was *step time* and Wes was *real time*. Between them they gave me a total view of the possibilities on the guitar."

At the time, Pat was known around Philly as singer Rickie Tino. "This was at the very beginning of the whole Dick Clark era of rock 'n' roll. Bobby Rittoreli was my drummer—later known as Bobby Rydell. Frankie Avaloni played trumpet. We'd sit in as the band behind Ernie Evans, who became better known as Chubby Checker. Jerry Blavat was my manager in those years—the geetar with the heater. He once had me climb down off a helicopter with my guitar, into a schoolyard full of teenagers rompin' and a bompin'.

But he was inexorably drawn to Afro-American music. "I met Wes at the age of 12, with mom and dad. They took me to a place called Pep's in Philly to see the Montgomery Brothers. And I was absolutely shocked when Wes came over to the bar where we were sitting. Shocked because, you see, my father was an alcoholic, and to sit at the bar required so much endurance for him. When Wes walked over, my dad said let me buy you a drink, and Wes said just a glass of orange juice please—and that floored me. It was like, he was everything for me at that age. We were romantically melted into the kindness and graciousness of this wonderful, humble giant."

He dropped out of school in the tenth grade to go on the road, and within two weeks he was invited to join Lloyd Price's revue. "It was a dream come true. I wanted to begin to live my own life, but also to please my pop. Perhaps I left high school and shot out to Harlem to get away from him. I was being used as a puppet, for his dreams. I don't know what to say...I'm thankful for what he did. My parents experienced marital problems from the get go, so I guess all of this acted as some sort of trigger, in terms of my commitment to whatever I set out to do, even at an early age."

He remained with Lloyd Price, off and on, for five years. "It was an unbelievable education: an 18-piece jazz band. Onzie Matthews and Slide Hampton wrote charts. Stanley and Tommy Turrentine were in it. Charlie Persip was playing drums. We'd play for an hour before

Lloyd came on—then it became an R&B band for 30 minutes. It didn't matter that I couldn't read, because I could pick it all up, lines and chords. It was nothing but ears, and my ears were super-sensitive—a fast way in.

"Talk about racial hassles. We were out on the road in the early '60s, on our way to Mississippi in a 1949 bus, when there was a flat. As small as I was, I rolled it to the gas station to get it fixed. Want to stop for food? I'd take a list and get everything—43 hamburgers, please. So I learned a lot about people, the real way. To be honest with you, the most difficult thing for me was to come back into white culture; you have no idea how difficult that's always been. My insights into music were formed in a different kind of way. It's not like you can go to Berklee or G.I.T. and learn this. You can learn how theoretically, but that has nothing to do with its sources."

Word got out about this gifted young guitarist, and eventually he felt compelled to learn how to read and write—to better communicate with guitarists who sought his guidance. But Martino's solo recording career began on an inauspicious note. "When I was burning out Harlem as a teen, Vanguard Records signed me to a $500 contract to get me off the street—they'd already invested in Larry Coryell. I recorded a killer album with Ron Carter, Tony Williams and Tommy Flanagan. Great fucking album—but Vanguard never released it."

Instead, Pat Martino began his recording career for Prestige. *El Hombre, Strings!* and *East!* are all first-rate efforts, but the guitarist was beginning to chafe at the grits-and-gravy conventions of funky jazz and hard bop. With *Baiyina (The Clear Evidence)*, Martino spread his wings as an improviser and composer, drawing upon Indian and Arabic modalities, odd time signatures and unique chordal colorations to create an innovative, non-Western harmonic palette for guitar. The creative birthing of *Baiyina* seemed to energize him. Martino followed with some ferocious hard bop on *Desperado* (featuring a memorable uptempo jaunt on "Oleo"). His breakthrough recordings for Muse—including *Footprints* (an out-of-print tribute to Wes), *Live!, Consciousness* and *Exit*—redefined the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic parameters of modern jazz guitar. In the late '70s, Bob Krasnow signed him to Warner Bros., leading to *Joyous Lake*, a polymetric, synthesizer-inflected quest far removed from boppish triumphs of the past, which has yet to be released on CD.

But a series of troubling mood swings were overtaking this gentle man, signaling a deep emotional withdrawal. The psychological changes were symptomatic of undiagnosed physical traumas, and when headaches progressed to seizures, he underwent a CAT scan in 1980, which revealed a massive brain tumor. Pat Martino had two days to live. Returning home to Philadelphia, he underwent a pair of complex operations, and when he awoke, his creative prism had faded to white. All gone.

"No, it wasn't gone," Pat corrects me. "Creativity is love, and I was surrounded by love when I awakened...dropped cold, empty, neutral, cleansed...naked. I'd lost a good deal of memory. I didn't remember anything. I didn't remember who my mom was. I didn't know who I was, you know. It was three years before things really began to come back.

"I think more than anything, it was a social recovery. I didn't remember any of my friends. Each of them kept touching upon the idea that I was a guitarist. I'd see the guitar in this house, but I had no relationship to it. I wanted social interaction, to come out of my seclusion. I was recovering in isolation. The only ones to fill that gap were Mom and Dad, but they were dissipating at that point, and by 1983, they started to really slide down. That stimulated my need for interaction with other people, to focus upon the main topic of discussion in my presence, which was always music. Suddenly, yeah, I wanted to participate, and that caused me to get back into it.

"I had no muscle memory of the instrument. None whatsoever. I think the one thing that did remain constant for me was the magic of the number 12. If I went to the corner to buy some eggs, I bought a dozen eggs. If I went to church, they referred to the 12 apostles of Christianity. The four seasons were based upon 12 months. No matter what, there was always a 12 involved. I found that very interesting coming in from blank. The 12 frets before you got to the octave. In everything there was the number 12."

Like the chromatic scale.

"The chromatic scale is extremely Western, which is a reminder that the guitar is not Western at all—it's an Asian instrument. The piano is governed by Bach's system of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and being tempered, is strictly Western. The guitar is a *hexagram*. The guitar

TRIBUTE

I FIRST SAW PAT at the Bottom Line, and he just blew me away—I was spellbound. People used to give me a hard time as a banjo player, and tell me you shouldn't play all of your notes—you should bend some and slur some. And I said, well, Pat Martino doesn't. He very rarely did anything but play the note, and yet it was so rhythmic, and so commanding, and so wonderful, it gave me a vision of how the banjo could play that music. I always wanted to play those challenging melodies and his improvisations just took me out. He had a way of playing up on the front edge of the beat that was very intense: a straight eights kind of feel against the swing beat that made the whole thing...locomote. It was like being a rhythm player as a soloist, which is very much what banjo playing is about—holding a grip on the rhythm in your right hand. I've been rediscovering Pat Martino's music regularly for a long time. At times I'll put on *Live!* and it just restarts my engines again, and I'm able to play more like that for a little while.

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has 64 hexagrams. Six lines. The greatest example of that is the Book of Changes, the *I Ching*. It's five thousand years old, and in the entire Book of Changes, there are six lines full, and six broken, and everything in between. Those six lines are six strings, and that's the secret of every possible string group on the guitar. Perhaps that's why guitar players speak of *playing the changes*.

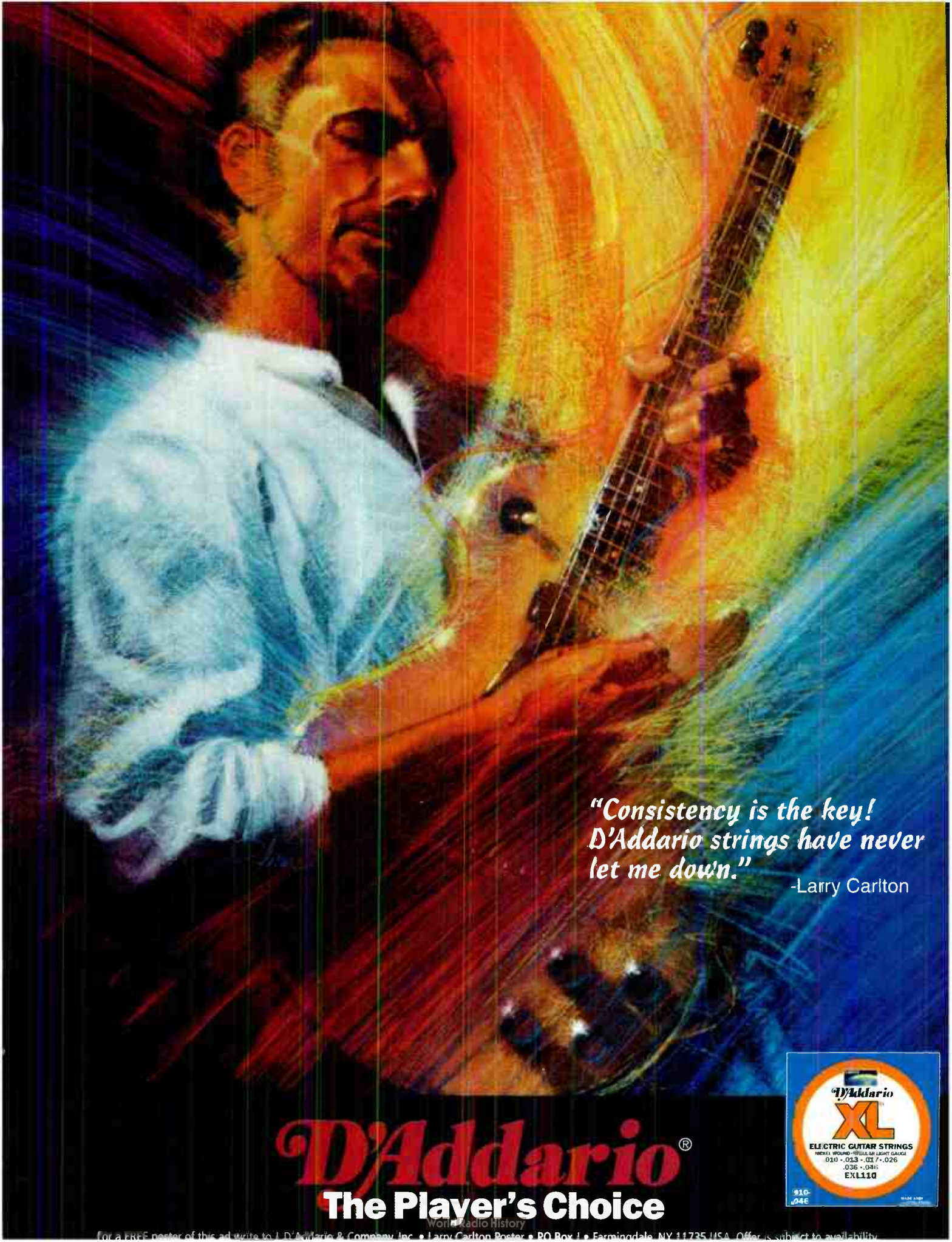
"The guitar itself is divided into four and three. The difference between the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the guitar is that the *Well-Tempered Clavier* is ruled by basic arithmetic. Seven white keys, five black keys—7 + 5 = 12. By the same logic, the guitar is ruled by multiplication—3 × 4 = 12, and 4 × 3 = 12. Three refers to the augmented, four to the diminished. *Basically that is the secret of the machine.*

"This is something very basic and logical. It's how I taught myself to play—it made sense to me. This gave me access to every key center of every dominant seventh chord. Once you've mastered the dominant seventh as far as bebop, hard bop, fusion and other jazz forms are concerned—major seventh chords, minor seventh chords and all the alterations included—then you're free with regards to a repertoire of forms that coalesce, that give you fluidity and dexterity up and down the neck. That's why it's important to have all the key centers together, so that the entire fingerboard becomes one topic. Then you'll find the guitar itself reduced to logic: logic that has nothing to do with well-tempered rules and regulations or the major scale. It has nothing to do with the pentatonic intervals, even though the black keys are guitaristic to the max, especially in the rock idiom. *The guitar is ruled and governed by the augmented and diminished chords—no more, no less.*

"Let me show you how simple it is. Play a diminished chord on the 4-3-2-1 string group on the second fret. You'll play three diminished chords in a row before you get to its second inversion, which is a mirror-image of it fingering-wise. These are the two things on the guitar that are totally automatic. You don't change your fingers when you go through all the augmented and diminished inversions. Simply move your hand, holding the same fingers down, in the same position—automatic inversion.

"The augmented chord has three notes in it. They invert themselves every major third—every four frets. The diminished chord has four notes in it. They invert themselves every minor third—every three frets. And every three of them give you all 12 keys, automatically, which is a *long* story. Nevertheless, this is the foundation of the guitar.

"Now you have four notes in any diminished chord, and three in any augmented, but it has no single name—these are your *parental* forms. Play that diminished chord for me at the second fret. You can call it an E diminished, a B♭ diminished, a D♭ diminished or a G diminished—all the same chord. Every chord that ever was will emerge out of these two parental forms. If I lower the D♭ to a C in our diminished chord, we now have a C7. If I lower the E to an E♭, E♭7; if I lower the B♭ to an A, A7; and if I lower the G to a G♭, G♭7. So there you have four inversions of the seventh chord within this one parental form—therefore, four keys: E♭, A, C, G♭. Therefore, three diminished chords in a row will give you 12 keys—the fourth one is the second inversion of the first. It divides the entire fingerboard of the guitar into four divisions, 12 keys in each, 48 altogether—*like the four seasons.* But of course, keep in mind that this is only one string group: 4-3-2-1.



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The same thing now takes place with the 6-4-3-2 group, 5-4-3-2, and 5-3-2-1.

"Now, take any of your four inversions of the C7 chord, and raise the dominant seventh (the B♭) to a B natural—you now have a C Maj7. If you lower the third of the C7, you'll have a C Min7. And then you can alter the fifths, for flat 5s and sharp 5s. And you didn't need a teacher—*logic was the source*. In this way the guitar becomes a personal endeavor for you *and you alone—it will then reveal all of its secrets, and open all its doors.*"

These concepts, and many other rudiments of chord chemistry and improvisation, may be found in Martino's *Creative Force, Parts 1 & 2*, which are available as either a video presentation or in book form with an accompanying cassette/CD from REH Video (distributed by CPP Media, 15800 N.W. 48th Ave., Miami, FL 33014). They signal an autumnal bloom of renewed activity, including *Interchange* and the upcoming *Nightwings*, two solid hard bop epochs on the Muse label. Start with these two and work your way back into his past catalog, but be sure to skip over *The Return*, a botch job which never should have been released. Instead, check out the video *Live at Ethel's place*, a more coherent 1987 gig with drummer Joey Baron and bassist Harvie Swartz.

Meanwhile, Pat Martino continues to push the creative envelope, preparing himself for his next level. He smiles at the notion, as we ascend the stairs to his little [*cont'd on page 94*]

DRY MARTINO

I'm in a period where I'm trying out different string gauges on different instruments, but normally I use a .016 for an E, .018 for a B, .026 for a G, .036 for a D, .048 for an A and .058 for a low E. But now I've gotten the highest gauge of flatwounds I could possibly get. They're a lighter gauge, but I'm still using a .015 for an E, .018 for a B. Anything less than that and I would break the strings, because my right hand is sadistic. I have no control over it, attack-wise. I've gotten the best D'Addarios I could. I'm also quite comfortable with D'Aquisto strings and GHS. When I start performing again, I'll need boxloads of stuff, especially with flatwounds, because they just go dead after two shows. I always used heavy picks. Sometimes I would use pebbles I found at the beach. Now I'm using a Dunlop 2.0.

I started playing jazz on a Les Paul Custom, and I used a Black Les Paul Custom with two pickups in my early years. When I was with Jack McDuff, our van was robbed, and it was carved tops from that point on. The only thing it changed for me was the vibration of the instrument itself on my frame, on my ribs; the vibrations on the back of the guitar itself, which would pour through my body whether it was amplified or not. I got deeply involved with that. I began using the Gibson L-5 until other makers began to exceed their quality. I had two Koontz archtops with a round soundhole, one pictured on the cover of *Starbright*; the other I used all through the '70s and on *Consciousness*.

Subconsciously I always wanted a Les Paul again, because that was my baby. And when Abe Rivera said he wanted to build a guitar for me in 1985, I said, I'm not going to stop you. And that's Scepter, the sword in the mountain, because it's so heavy, it'll slaughter you with the weight, unless you have a personal relationship with it. The body is a laminate of curly maple and paduk and all sorts of exotic woods and bindings, but I get the sound of an archtop acoustic guitar from it anyway—more attack and less sustain. If you listen on *Interchange* and *Nightwings*, you'd swear it's an L-5. That's because of the types of strings I use, the touch, the dynamics, EQ. Because I pick every note, and mostly downstrokes. A very staccato attack.

I always went for a big, clean sound. In the early days all I used to play were double 12" Fender Twin Reverbs, and now the closest thing to a Twin Reverb to me is a Roland Jazz Chorus. Sometimes I'll use this Digitech delay unit if I'm coming through the Jazz Chorus for reverb. In the *Joyous Lake* period I had engineers design some modules for me: two cabinets with 6–12" JBL speakers and horns, alongside of rack-mounted EQ, and I think I was using Furman preamps and three full-level Crowns for power amps. The only way I utilized distortion was as part of my rock modules when I was traveling to support *Joyous Lake*, but never distortion through the amplification itself.

And that brings me full circle. I'm starting to get back into carved top F-holes again. Jim Triggs in Nashville made this beautiful 16" archtop for me, the dimensions of an ES-175, solid spruce and maple with a floating pickup. I named her Maya. And Abe Rivera just built a new one for me. It's gorgeous: a spruce top, and the most beautiful curly maple sides and back. He got real lucky with the wood. It's stockier than any archtop guitar you ever saw, like a cello or one of those South American instruments. The resonance kind of gets lost in the box and you get this amazing attack. Abe asked me to name it, so I called her Lamia, along the lines of Keats. And he said do you know that La Mia means "that's mine" in Spanish? So I said, okay, is it, Abe? And he said, yeah, it's yours.

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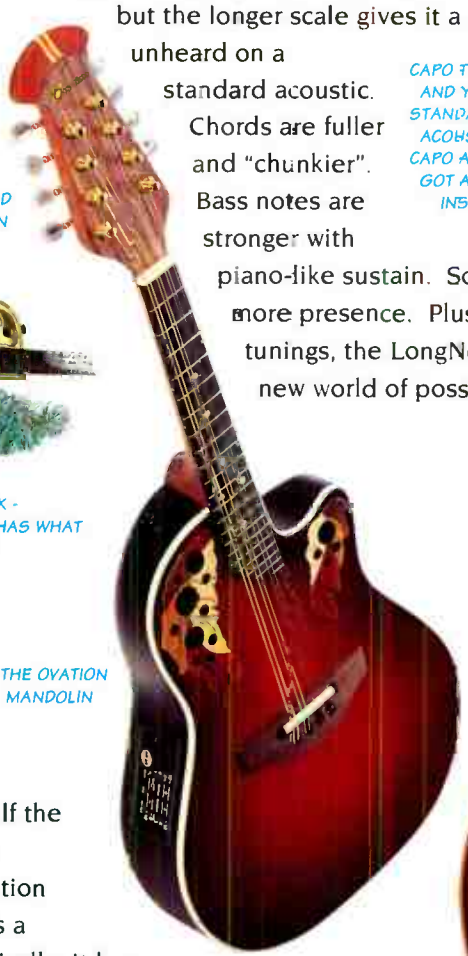

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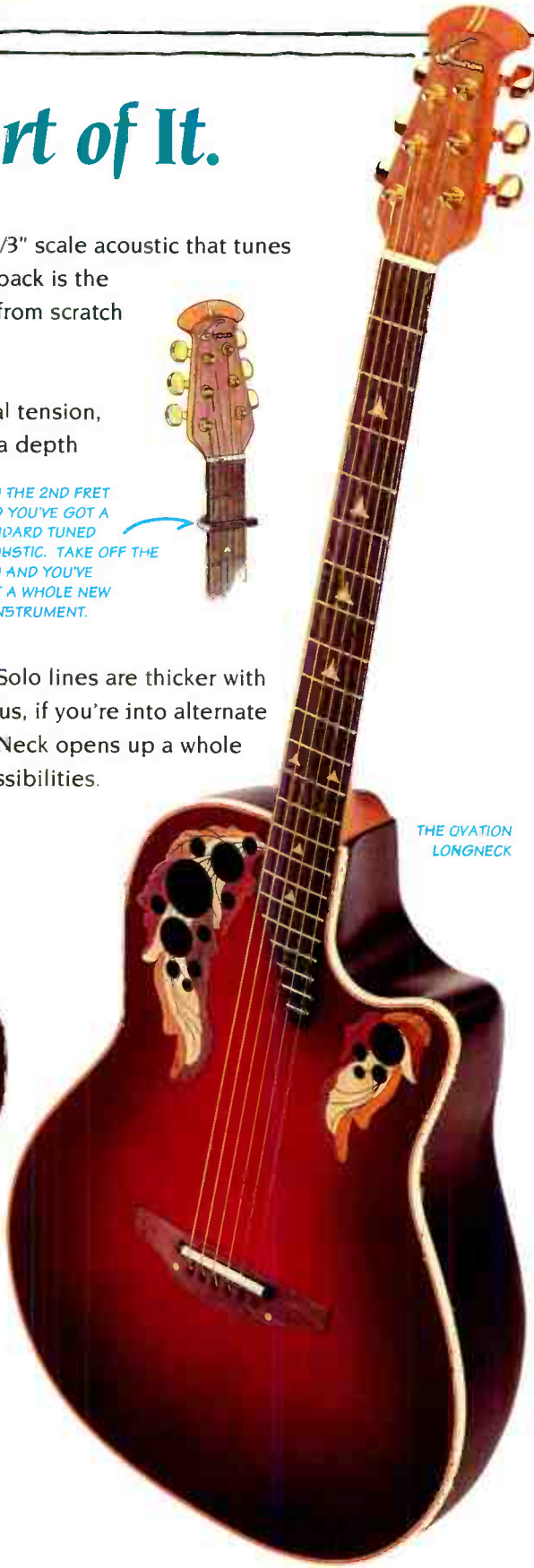

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JAZZ

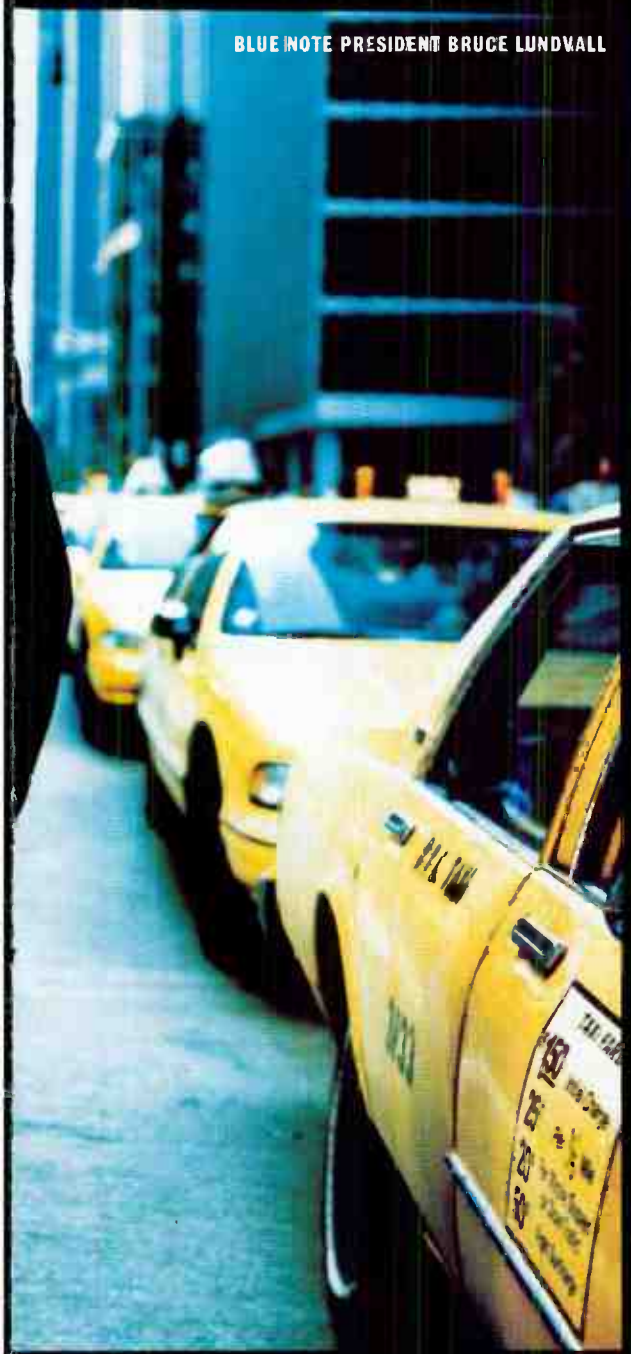
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE?

IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS WAY. Remember the young lions? Christopher Hollyday, Joey DeFrancesco and their peers? Those well-scrubbed youngsters who followed the lead of Wynton Marsalis and were celebrated in the press as the architects of a neo-traditional jazz future? They dressed sharply, played bebop or something recognizably similar and name-dropped all the right legends. Like Marsalis, they exuded youthful righteousness, and looked, for all the world, as if their careers would unfold with similar certitude. ★ Now, Christopher Hollyday is in his third semester as an undergraduate at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Dismissed by RCA after four albums, he's without a contract, a footnote to the history books. ★ Joey DeFrancesco has been dropped by Columbia and currently records on the independent label Muse. And

BY TOM MOON

JAZZ BE BIG

PHOTOGRAPH BY IMKE LASS



BLUE NOTE PRESIDENT BRUCE LUNDVALL

ECOMES BIZ!

after four critically well-received titles on Verve, the Harper Brothers—once the darlings of the neo-traditional pack—have broken up, with drummer Winard Harper planning a solo release for this fall.

So much for all that rhetoric about patient, step-by-step artist development. Trumpeted as the jazz innovators of tomorrow, these players and others are the dazzling discards—young lions who somehow got lost.

What went wrong? For Hollyday, who attends Berklee on a scholarship, it boiled down to simple economics: When his letters to other labels went unanswered, he was confronted with the prospect of becoming obsolete at age 24. "If you don't have a record contract you basically can't tour in the United States," he says. "I figured I could sit in my room and practice the same stuff and take whatever gigs came along, or I could go to school and study composition and arranging and be exposed to new things."

The young lions might have jump-started a sputtering jalopy, but now it's cruising along just fine, with or without them. An invalid ten years ago, jazz has hit a powerful stride. It is at the heart of million-dollar advertising campaigns for automobiles and perfumes. It's a new or renewed area of interest for Epic, Motown, Warner Brothers, Atlantic and other major labels. It is the music most respected (read: sampled) by the hip-hop nation, and the catalyst for a raft of interesting musical hybrids. It is used in an increasing number of feature films, with scores composed by the likes of Mark Isham and Terence Blanchard. If Wynton Marsalis' turbulent reign as artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center is any indication, it may be the next cultural battleground.

And from a commercial vantage, it is no longer assumed to be a young person's game. "When we saw Joe Henderson selling records, that was a major, major thing," explains guitarist John Scofield, 42, of Henderson's first Verve release *Lush Life*, the Grammy-winning collection of Billy Strayhorn music that has sold over 100,000 records. "Before that, it was just the young players getting the juice. If Joe can do it, maybe that just means great music can do it."

Well, gee, what a concept. No fancy gimmicks? No teenage hotshots? No frothy spreads in the *New York Times Magazine*? How positively radical: After years of signing any young thing in a suit, the major labels have grown discriminating. They don't just want technical brilliance from their artists. They've discovered, thousands of promotional dollars later, that there's little serious interest in ten-year-old piano-playing prodigies after all.

Call this the post–young lions era. Thank the kids for those half-baked history lessons from the bandstand, and prepare for more change: Led by increasingly disciplined major labels, jazz is reacting to a new, though not necessarily less restrictive, musical climate, a new set of market conditions and—they're betting—an expanding audience. As usual, it's a one-step-forward, two-steps back thing: More new jazz is being issued than ever before, but with the demise of KJAZ in San Francisco, there's not one commercial jazz station left in the U.S. to play it. There are more musicians on the road, but they compete for spots in fewer clubs and performance spaces.

"We are seeing the jazz business at a crossroads," says Kevin Gore, a marketing and promotions executive at

Columbia. "There are a number of us who believe that we'll either continue at the same audience level and market to a very defined niche, or we'll collectively blow it up. All the elements are there. The next year or so will tell."

THE SONG IS YOU

Hoo-boy. It's been quite some time since a jazz record executive sounded so chipper. What happened? How did this once-marginalized music begin to flourish?

Many observers begin by tipping the hat to Wynton Marsalis, not so much for his musical contribution, but for his work as a jazz advocate. "He speaks for the music," says Bruce Lundvall, president of Blue Note Records. "And we haven't seen someone like that in a long time. He's a figurehead in terms of the culture, and it's difficult to overstate his importance. What's happening now definitely stems back to him."

Beginning in the early '80s, Marsalis did what dozens of critics couldn't: He established the cultural relevance of the jazz canon, notably the work of Duke Ellington, and communicated a sense of responsibility toward the music. Not just anybody flapping their fingers could call themselves a jazz musician with Marsalis around. Though he could be doctrinaire, his message and those $1000 designer suits somehow penetrated the consciousness of mainstream America. His idea of jazz in many cases became the national consensus.

Marsalis' rise coincided with the compact disc boom. After years of sagging sales, labels began catering to avid collectors of jazz, who repurchased their beloved classics in digital form, and for a lot more money. Catalog development became a jazz-industry buzzword. Even second-tier artists have been given the retrospective treatment, partially because from a business standpoint, it's almost a can't-lose proposition: There are no recording costs, artwork and remastering and other preparation can be a minimal expenditure, and the artists (or late artists' estates) are happy to cooperate. Lundvall estimates that at least 50 percent of Blue Note's business comes from the catalog. Indeed, reissue programs help cover the expenses for new artists while they build *their* catalog. "When you sign a Jacky Terrasson or even a Joe Henderson, you have a number of almost-guaranteed go-arounds with these artists," says Lundvall. "If we lose money the first time around, we can be in profit the second. You're building a catalog all the time if you're signing the right artists. The stuff I signed in the '70s at Columbia has been the subject of major reissue programs over there."

For Chuck Mitchell, v.p. and general manager of Verve Records, the young lions helped to "focus the awareness of a lot of buyers, old and especially young. Musically speaking, a lot of stuff got worked out in public, but it did have an overall positive impact. It reasserted basic musical values that needed to be reasserted."

But while most everyone agrees on such values, there's much discord over the way they are expressed. When, for example, should a younger artist become a leader? A few short years ago, any sizzling newcomer with good management could write his own ticket on a major label. Now, executives, managers and artists themselves are thinking more about long-term development. "It does nobody any good to push someone out there who happens to be a hot name on the scene," says Robin Burgess, who manages Terence Blanchard and Kenny Garrett. "Much better to let those artists develop in a number of situations first. You get more mature records that way."

Then there's the issue of tradition versus original work. Richard Seidel, Verve v.p. of A&R, insists that the present is simply not an innovative era for jazz, and therefore current recordings should reflect more traditional values. "Customers can buy every classic recording that's ever been made," he points out. "You have to make something today that will hold its own and be memorable." Thirty-five years ago, he says, labels could afford to gather a group together and turn them loose in the studio. "Mainstream jazz was in a state of constant innovation and people were writing great material on the spur of the moment. We can't afford that luxury. The quality of songwriting isn't what it was, and one key to making great records is great material."

That may be true, but for record companies it's a self-serving argument. Guitarist Kevin Eubanks, who records for Blue Note, contends that the plethora of "standards" records coming out today are not only motivated by bottom-line thinking, they remove creative control from the musicians involved. "The pressure is from the labels and the media that you're not a quote-unquote young lion unless you're doing standards. You have to question this whole generation of musicians who are pursuing tradition as a future, because that philosophy makes the musicians interchangeable. To have to pursue sounding like Wes Montgomery just to bring attention to myself as a deserving guitarist is an unacceptable position."


CYRUS CHESTNUT

The labels want standards because they're easier to sell, Eubanks believes, and because they don't run the risk of missing what little airplay is available to jazz artists. But compositional work is vital to musicians: "You write your own music, that leads into publishing, which leads into new money, which means your decisions can be based on other things besides just how much the gig is paying. Every

PHOTOGRAPH BY KRISTINE LARSEN

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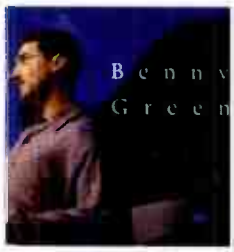

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A similar ploy is the seemingly ubiquitous "tribute album"—recordings built around a particular concept or artist. Verve led the way by resurrecting Joe Henderson's career via the music of Billy Strayhorn and Miles Davis. This year featured tribute albums to Billie Holiday by Abbey Lincoln, Terence Blanchard and Etta James. Columbia is planning a big push for the new record by pianist Marcus Roberts—playing the music of George Gershwin. Nice work if you can get it, and you're a record executive.


CHRISTOPHER HOLLYDAY

Some artists and labels find such restrictions chafing, if not insulting. Pianist Cyrus Chestnut recalls that when he was talking with various labels about his debut project, one executive handed him a list of songs. "I was actually given a list of tunes and told that this was what I needed to do," he says. "I couldn't believe it—it's got to be up to the artist to stand firm for what they believe in."

Epic v.p. of A&R Michael Caplan agrees. "With the records we're doing on Epicure, I'm rebelling a little bit against the theme mentality," says Caplan, whose initial signings include pianist Dave Kikoski and saxophonist Craig Handy. "The records that are coming out now are a little gimmicky."

"It's suffocating the music," concurs Tom Evered, v.p. of marketing for Blue Note. "I think there's a growing resentment of the overconceptualizing of jazz records. Where would we be now if that philosophy was in place when Ornette Coleman was at Atlantic Records in the '60s?"

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

Bruce Lundvall and his peers have a ritual at the annual Thelonious Monk Institute–sponsored jazz composition finals, which focus on a different instrument each year. As the field narrows, the executives get cagier, acting less like businessmen and more like pro scouts swarming a potential draft pick.

"I remember last year sitting there watching the finals," Lundvall recalls. "When they announced the winner, I looked over at Richard Seidel from Verve and Matt Pierson from Warner Brothers and said, 'Now the real competition begins.'"

Lundvall, had had a few meetings with winning pianist Jacky Terrasson, who is 29, and knew that the pianist felt good about Blue Note. But now there were other sharks in the pool, and money was being thrown around, big money. Lundvall had seen it happen with Joshua Redman, and has since expressed regret over not staying in the war over the celebrated tenor saxophonist. He didn't want a repeat.

"We paid a bit of a premium," Lundvall acknowledges, regarding the Terrasson deal. "It was high by mainstream jazz standards, but it wasn't crazy, it wasn't one of those things where you overpay. We did a three-album deal, and over time, which is how you have to look at these things, it's a safe deal." Lundvall says bidding wars have become an inevitable part of the business, a byproduct of increased jazz-record activity and an indication of the relative health of the music. "In most cases, the company that paid the price will end up making a profit or breaking even—after you factor in international sales and things like that."

When the jazz guys talk numbers, their break-even point is a fraction of the average pop record's sales. Because recording costs are usually much lower, a mainstream jazz title is successful if it sells 25,000 or 30,000 units, and is considered a smash-hit phenomenon if it breaks the 100,000 barrier. Still, the executives don't throw much money around: Contracts are for two or three albums at a time (in pop, contracts can run to six or seven albums), and advances often don't clear $50,000—which makes them better, certainly, than what leaders made in the 1960s, but hardly career-making sums. As Blue Note's Evered says, "Very few jazz people get rich off of record sales."

Very few artists, anyway: For the labels, jazz has become an area of responsible risk. An investment of $50,000 buys a solid finished product, and another $10–20,000 represents substantial marketing support in a field with a limited number of radio promotion targets and advertising opportunities. Figuring from a list price of $16.98, a jazz record that sells 30,000 copies—which most executives agree is a realistic figure—will gross $500,000. Profits are only a slice of that pie, but if a label believes it can sell a title for years, the initial investment can pay off handsomely. Add in one or two left-field hits such as US3's "Cantaloop"—at over 800,000 units sold in the U.S., it's the biggest seller in Blue Note history—and it's clear the business is more flush financially than it's been in years.

But is a blowing session that cost $10,000 to produce automatically inferior to a lavishly produced $80,000 studio opus? Joe Fields, president of the feisty independent Muse Records, compares what the majors put out versus his low-budget titles. His conclusion: The labels are crazy. "You look at the way they spend money and you have to wonder, how do they do it? Kenny Garrett, they spent quite a bit on him, and he hasn't really happened. You'll sell 10,000, maybe 15,000 pieces and you've spent something like $75,000—what kind of logic is that? They keep doing this, but one day they're gonna wake up and not like the results, and the whole deck of cards will come down."

The emphasis on hotly pursued individual artists can create other imbalances. Like any business, a label is likely to pour more money into its more expensive talent, via marketing, publicity pressure and promotion. That's bound to cause resentment from labelmates who surmise, along with manager Robin Burgess, that there's only so much room in the pool. "Jazz is a genre that can only stom-

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB VAN PETTEN

ach one persona at a time," he says. "They can only bestow the title of 'young jazz musician' on one person per year. That ends up obscuring the talents of a whole bunch of other people."

In this new, higher-stakes environment, of course, with more labels in the mix and a greater array of consumer choices, the real challenge is reaching that audience—any audience. Blue Note, Columbia and Verve each issue around 25 new titles a year, and though the labels have grown more efficient at marketing those titles, they're still vying for roughly the same dollars and same market share of five years ago. The difference is that now Joe CD Buyer can choose from three or four new piano trio or saxophonist offerings in any given season. (To say nothing of Kenny G clones and smooth-talking "jazz" crooners.)

Not surprisingly, there's disagreement about which demographic groups constitute the true jazz audience: Is it the older purists, the quiet-storm yuppies or the kids whose curiosity has been piqued by jazz hip-hoppers such as US3?

"When we started to investigate the jazz marketplace, they told us, 'You can't sell adult music,'" says Steve McKeever, v.p. of A&R at Motown Records and the driving force behind Mo'Jazz. "But we asked kids from Harvard Business School to do a demographic study, and what came back was the graying of America, how much older the average age was and would continue to be. What surprised us was how those people were still active with music, still listening and purchasing."

Other labels don't dispute those demographics, but believe that jazz will enjoy its sales bump from the other end of the spectrum: the youth market. "We're seeing a younger, more active audience," Bruce Lundvall reports, "and they want more than just US3. They're curious." Ed Gerrard, who manages Cassandra Wilson, agrees. "The number of young people who show up to Cassandra's shows is truly amazing. I don't know if they're better educated or just more open, but they're there and they are receptive. They look at jazz as 'alternative.'" Hey, can you say "Tony Bennett"?

An unconventional audience inspires unconventional marketing approaches. "We did this with the Gipsy Kings and it became

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incredibly successful, so we tried it with Cassandra," Gerrard says. "Rather than wasting our money on typical promotions, we sent probably 500 copies of the record to restaurants. You'd have people asking what they were hearing, pretty soon word of mouth spread, and there was the beginnings of a successful record."

Columbia's Gore figures that the future market for jazz will come from outside the current fan base, and thinks he's found a way to grow one. Last summer, at a series of mostly free jazz festivals, Columbia sponsored afternoon segments of programming, and handed out sampler cassettes of the featured artists. "We did seven or eight of them this year, we gave away 10,000 tapes in Chicago alone. And we saw sales spikes in each of those cities after the events. People are still intimidated by jazz—they need to be introduced to it in a nonthreatening way."

Other nonthreatening points of entry: soundtracks, scores and even videos. Historically ignored by the boob tube, jazz may soon find a home in the increasingly narrowcast world of cable. Black Entertainment Television's proposed BET on Jazz station, which was to have aired this fall, has been delayed due to slow commitments by local company subscribers. But Jeff Lee, an executive v.p. at BET, remains upbeat: "There's been nothing but excitement for it. When they survey people about various proposed channels, BET on Jazz has consistently ranked within the top ten. Not only are we getting the stereotypical upscale viewer, but if it's done correctly, there's a young audience that's interested too. That doesn't mean we're gonna play all of one kind of jazz or another. But we want to create a conduit through which all types of jazz can flow."

ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE

As jazz becomes more broadly defined and aggressively marketed, consumers may find their options shrinking. It's the paradox of big business. Even in increasingly massive retail stores, the jazz bins are already cluttered with more pop-jazz crossover than with Charlie Parker. The chain-operated stores don't go deep into the catalog and are increasingly reluctant to stock what they perceive to be marginal titles from the affiliated import labels like JMT and DIW, while often ignoring independent labels altogether. Says Fields: "Everything has gone to giantism. I used to have 25 distributors on

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- Fletcher Foster, Vice Pres. National Public Relations MCA Records

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San Francisco	March 10-12	Nashville	May 5-7	Chicago	Dates to be announced
Seattle	March 17-19	New York	May 12-14	San Diego	
Philadelphia	March 24-26	St. Louis	May 19-21	Minneapolis	
Los Angeles	March 31-April 2	Washington, D.C.	June 2-4	Dallas	
Houston	April 7-9	Boston	June 9-11	Denver	
Miami	April 21-23	Detroit	June 16-18	New Orleans	
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my list, and now I'm down to seven or eight huge outfits. The chains don't take a broad-spectrum look at jazz, and that means it's tough for an independent, you have less clout getting space in the stores."

Motown's McKeever believes jazz sales will jump as alternative delivery systems—audio on demand at home, via fiber optic cable—become a reality, whenever *that* happens. "Record stores are designed for the very young buyer. I'm sure it's an uncomfortable experience for a Barry Manilow fan, or even a Clifford Brown fan, in some stores. As soon as that buyer finds a more comfortable way to buy records, that will be reflected in sales."

Back when the jazz audience seemed limited and the record companies were less inclined to develop it, label heads squabbled over tiny increments of market share. Now, with the participation of more major labels and the music's corresponding higher profile, the executives are figuring it's in their better interests to work together for the mutually beneficial purpose of growing jazz's share of the marketplace. So they've developed a coalition. Modeled on the Country Music Association and involving representatives from each major label, this nascent organization met for the first time this fall to address issues of concern to the jazz industry. Agenda items include better representation on the Grammy telecast, a Jazz Hall of Fame, nationwide education programs—all moves that can help expand awareness of jazz, and, of course, sell records.

This spirit of cooperation, claims Matt Pierson, a jazz A&R man and staff producer at Warner Brothers Records, is an inevitable outgrowth of the music and its newfound momentum: "It's not just about the success of Joe Henderson, or the end of the young lions era. It's the sum total of all these things. You've got listeners tired of candy-ass New AC, sick of the direction rock was heading, and reaching out for something that moves them. I think it's the beginning of a trend toward real music, but it's not any one thing. It's the way these artists are marketed; it's growing awareness of the masters; it's the fact that these artists are being true to themselves. It's the breakthrough of Tony Bennett, which I think says a lot about jazz. It's all building, and it's all part of a continuum that defies point-by-point analysis."

Well, that *sounds* like a good thing. Or as John Scofield puts it, rather more succinctly: "Hey, anybody who gets famous playing good music is gonna help me."

JAZZ

OUR INTREPID CRITICS PICK THEIR FAVORITE JAZZ RECORDINGS RELEASED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

GINGER BAKER TRIO *Going Back Home* (Atlantic)
Bill Frisell was heard in many flattering settings this past year, but none more unlikely than this trio, which set his guitar atmospherics against the surprisingly supple rhythm of ex-Cream drummer Ginger Baker. Prodded by Baker, whose command of drum sonority was pretty advanced in the '60s and has deepened considerably since, Frisell locates the stored-up rage of his inner child, and together with bassist Charlie Haden, thrashes through Ornette's "Ramblin'," Baker's chantlike "I Lu Kron" and Haden's roiling "In the Moment," making every solo sound like the last word in a bitter argument. *(T.M.)*

JOEY BARON *RAIsed Pleasure Dot* (New World)
It would be easy for the resourceful drummer's oddball trio—trombone, tenor, traps—to break down, to be better in concept than in reality. That's why its achievements are stunning. This doozy makes it two in a row for Baron, who loves raucousness as much as he does refinement. He exploits the trio's peculiarities, but doesn't dismiss it as a novelty. *(J.M.)*

BLACK/NOTE *Jungle Music* (Columbia)
This L.A.-based quintet/sextet started as a bass/trumpet team and grew. Here they brim with energy and ideas—the 11 tracks are all originals. The ensemble playing is tight, the band swings and the bassist (Mark Shelby, who started the group) has a strong groove and *knows* how to play the bottom. Go 'head! *(K.B.)*

ED BLACKWELL PROJECT *"What It Is?"* and *"What It Be Like?"* (Enja)
The late, great New Orleans–born Blackwell played the whole history of the drums on his trap set, and he's the star of these two discs, though cornetist Graham Haynes and alto saxophonist/flutist Carlos Ward are consistently engaging interlocutors and bassist Mark Helias provides a big, fat bottom. *(A.G.)*

ABRAHAM BURTON *Closest to the Sun* (Enja)
The ex-Wailer (as in Art Taylor's) is a burner, always veering his horn into the zone where exclamation is king. The eruptions can be ornate, as they are in Jackie McLean's "Minor March," or simply frenzied, like the dust-raising gallop through "Corrida de Toros." Had it abandoned about 15 minutes of froth, it would have been a perfect quartet record. *(J.M.)*

ROY CAMPBELL *La Tierra del Fuego* (Delmark)
On his second album as a leader, trumpeter Roy Campbell continues to develop his synthesis of folk musics (mostly Spanish) and early-'60s jazz innovators (mostly Booker Little). Campbell wrote six of the album's seven tunes, displaying a gift for writing as mature as his playing. *(A.G.)*

JAMES CARTER *J.C. on the Set* (DIW/Columbia)
The young reedman's domestic debut is crammed with thrills and spills, like Evel Knievel rocketing over the Snake River or Earl Bostic playing Trane. It's all about lyricism and swing and the race to the boiling point of a tune. When Carter raises hell, everybody within earshot perks up. You don't know anybody who won't dig this quartet date. *(J.M.)*

CYRUS CHESTNUT *Revelation* (Atlantic Jazz)
So what if he grandstands a little. Pianist Chestnut and his two worthy young compatriots, Chris Thomas on bass and Clarence Penn on drums, set the bible of swing on the music stand and keep it open through 11 dynamically charged cuts. It's a "what you

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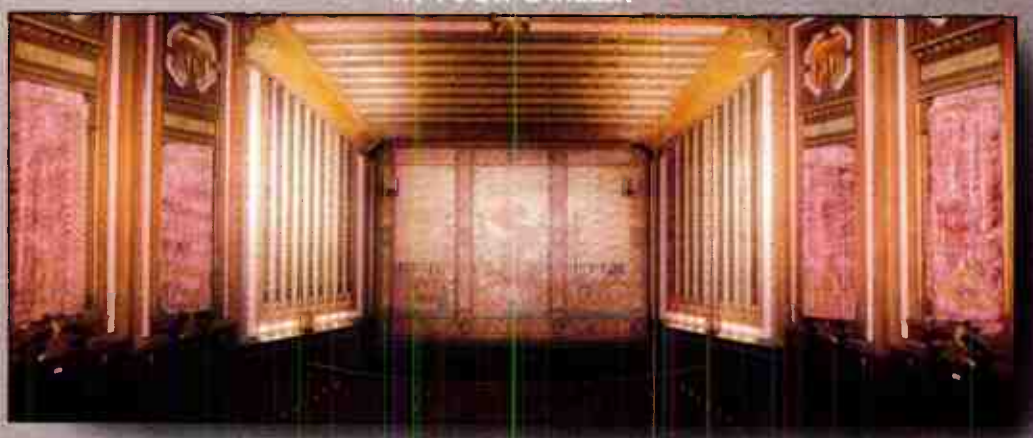

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hear is what you get" kinda thing. Solid. *(K.B.)*

ORNETTE COLEMAN *Beauty Is a Rare Thing* (Rhino/Atlantic Jazz)
This six-disc set contains virtually everything Ornette recorded for Atlantic between 1959 and December 1960—a period of dizzying creativity during which the visionary alto saxophonist crystalized his harmolodic concept. Heard all these years after the initial shock, what's amazing is the way Coleman, Don Cherry and the pianoless rhythm sections interact, racing through disassociative lines that blur together like steroid-fed bebop. Lovingly remastered and annotated with a memorable Robert Palmer essay, this isn't just the place to start for Ornette: It's the place to start for everything after *Kind of Blue*. *(T.M.)*

ROSEMARY CLOONEY *Still on the Road* (Concord Jazz)
If Tony Bennett's hip, why not Rosemary Clooney, since there's no better female pop-jazz vocalist in the business? Loosely organized around "road" tunes, from a gently swinging version of Willie Nelson's "On the Road Again" to a jaunty take on the Dennis-Adair chestnut "Let's Get Away from It All," this album is one of Clooney's more delightful recent Concord Jazz outings. *(A.G.)*

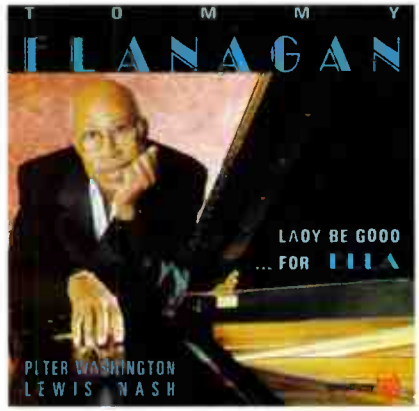
DAVE DOUGLAS *Parallel Worlds* (Soul Note)
This quintet date, from a leftie whose eloquence surely (and wisely) tempers some of his more abstruse ideas, conflates Webern and Weill, Ellington and Stravinsky. Douglas's voicings enhance themes that don't mind dissolving now and again. Solemn one moment, uproarious the next, it's a record at once reflective and demonstrative. *(J.M.)*

MARTY EHRLICH *Can You Hear a Motion?* (Enja)
Maybe the pun in the title is a jab at critics who've called clarinetist/saxophonist Ehrlich's music too intellectual. Truth be said, anyone who can't hear the passion in this exhilarating, kinetic quartet session just ain't got their ears open. Two tributes to the late virtuoso clarinetist and composer John Carter are a graceful tip of the hat to the master from whom Ehrlich learned how to structure complex ensemble improvisation. *(A.G.)*

TOMMY FLANAGAN *Lady Be Good...for Ella* (Verve)
This is what must be meant by the phrase "keyboard artistry." The peerless Flanagan

draws on his years of work with Ella to craft a tribute album that should be the benchmark by which that burgeoning category is judged. Drummer Lewis Nash exemplifies taste (much in the manner of Billy Higgins—the ultimate compliment) and bassist Peter Washington has brought his Jazz Messenger legacy to beautiful fruition. Bravo! *(K.B.)*

BILL FRISELL *Have a Little Faith* (Elektra/Nonesuch)
Is there any guitarist with a more idiosyncratic but coherent musical vision than Bill Frisell? From Aaron Copland's seven-movement "Billy the Kid" to a beautiful version of Dylan's "Just Like a Woman," Frisell remakes each piece in his own image. Listening to him shape solos with guitar's amazingly flexible, liquid sound is like watching a sculptor work with clay. *(A.G.)*



HERB GELLER *The Herb Geller Quartet* (V.S.O.P.)
One of the best alto saxophonists working on the West Coast in the 1950s, Geller has spent the last three decades living in Germany, refining his sound to diamond brilliance. He penned most of the tunes on this luminous quartet session, featuring Louis Bellson on drums, John Leitham on bass and Tom Ranier on piano (but Jimmy Rowles sits in on an ethereal version of his beautiful standard "The Peacocks"). (8426 Vintage Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95828) *(A.G.)*

EGBERTO GISMONTI GROUP *Música de Sobrevivencia* (ECM)
Hardly what Wynton Marsalis would term "jazz," these pensive Brazilian melodies and slowly unfolding excursions are full of group interplay, and built around themes far more resonant than the usual repetitive riff. The drumless quartet includes expressive cellist Jaques Morelenbaum, and its ability to enrich South American melancholy with improvised variations makes *Música* a delicate treasure. *(T.M.)*

STEVE GROSSMAN *In New York* (Dreyfus Jazz)
Though he's had his share of musical experiments, Steve Grossman, the tenor saxophonist who played with Miles and Elvin Jones, and now lives in Italy, reigns as a reformed master of the blowing session, an artist who can make even the most overworked phrase sound magical. Recording standards with McCoy Tyner, Avery Sharp and Art Taylor at Sweet Basil's in the fall of 1991, Grossman sounds hotter with every chorus. *(T.M.)*

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CHARLIE HADEN QUARTET WEST
Always Say Goodbye (Verve)
Haden's salute to the noirish and deco days of Hollywood is never hazy. This quartet builds their reveries around precise hard bop, while prone to giving ballads a hard-boiled intrigue. That's why the nostalgia trip—replete with splices of classic torch singers—transcends the smoky romanticism it obviously adores. Hero: Ernie Watts. *(J.M.)*

SIR ROLAND HANNA *Sir Roland Hanna at Maybeck* (Concord)
This pianist's blues and standards recital is marked by a balance of robust execution and instinctive aplomb. Though dignified, he can and does get down and dirty. *(J.M.)*

KEVIN HAYS *Seventh Sense* (Blue Note)
This pianist/bandleader thought out all the aspects of his domestic debut, prioritizing the exquisite at every turn. The references—there's always a few, right?—are the brain capers of Blue Note genii like Andrew Hill and Bobby Hutcherson. With its vibes, drums, piano rhythm section, Hays' way with shading dominates. He's a finesse man. *(J.M.)*

JOE HENDERSON *The Joe Henderson Years* (Blue Note) and *The Complete Milestone Recordings* (Milestone)
Henderson is one of those rare musicians able to apply all kinds of instrumental quirks to his compositions: Tunes like "Inner Urge" and "Recorda-Me" are intervallically tricky method-book exercises that somehow manage to sound lyrical, jaunty and fun to play. The four-CD Blue Note set captures many of Henderson's best-known works, but the Milestone eight-disc monster is equally essential, for it contains late-'60s electric-piano classics like *Power to the People* and *Black Narcissus*, capturing Henderson, Herbie Hancock and others at expressive peaks. *(T.M.)*

MILT JACKSON *The Prophet Speaks* (Qwest)
Lovely stuff from the 71-year-old "Bags," whose touch is sure and distinctly his own. Joshua Redman and Joe Williams make guest appearances here; the first-rate rhythm section consists of Cedar Walton, Billy Higgins and the too-seldom-seen John Clayton on bass. All this and a formidable repertoire, as well: It's a classic. *(K.B.)*

CLIFFORD JORDAN AND JOHN GILMORE
Blowing in from Chicago (Blue Note)
Both Clifford Jordan and John Gilmore were 25 years old when this date was recorded. I had the great fortune to become a friend of Clifford's, and it occurred to me that each of his solos was like an invitation to take a walk with him so he could point out something you hadn't noticed on your own (and never would). Follow the call on this CD and you'll also hear Horace Silver, Curly Russell and the supreme instigator, Art Blakey, in all his audacious splendor. *(K.B.)*

PETER LEITCH *A Special Rapport* (Reservoir)
Every member of this quartet is superb, and every cut on this CD has the ring of authenticity about it—one gets the feeling that the composer would have wanted the tune interpreted *just* the way guitarist Leitch plays it. Ballads played as ballads (!), for instance. John Hicks'

solo on "A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" is to die for. *(K.B.)*

JOE LOVANO *Tenor Legacy* (Blue Note)
Tenor Legacy is full of the intuitive leaps and imaginative bounds that have made Lovano one of jazz's most distinct and treasured voices. With Lovano and Joshua Redman spurred on by a first-call rhythm section—pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Christian McBride, drummer Lewis Nash and percussionist Don Alias—just file this one under "state of the tenor." *(A.G.)*

CHARLES LLOYD, CEDAR WALTON, BUSTER WILLIAMS, BILLY HIGGINS *Acoustic Masters I* (Atlantic Jazz)
Atlantic Jazz has given drummer/producer Lenny White license to develop a line of interesting acoustic meetings captured live in the studio. The first of these is built on the indestructible rhythm team of Buster Williams and Billy Higgins, and brings together tenor saxophonist Charles Lloyd and pianist Cedar Walton. Lloyd dispenses with the modal ruminations of his last few ECM sides to emulate Coltrane, Walton steps out of his bebop trick-bag, and the two find commonality in an invigorating hard-bop romp full of agitated ascensions and poised reflections. *(T.M.)*

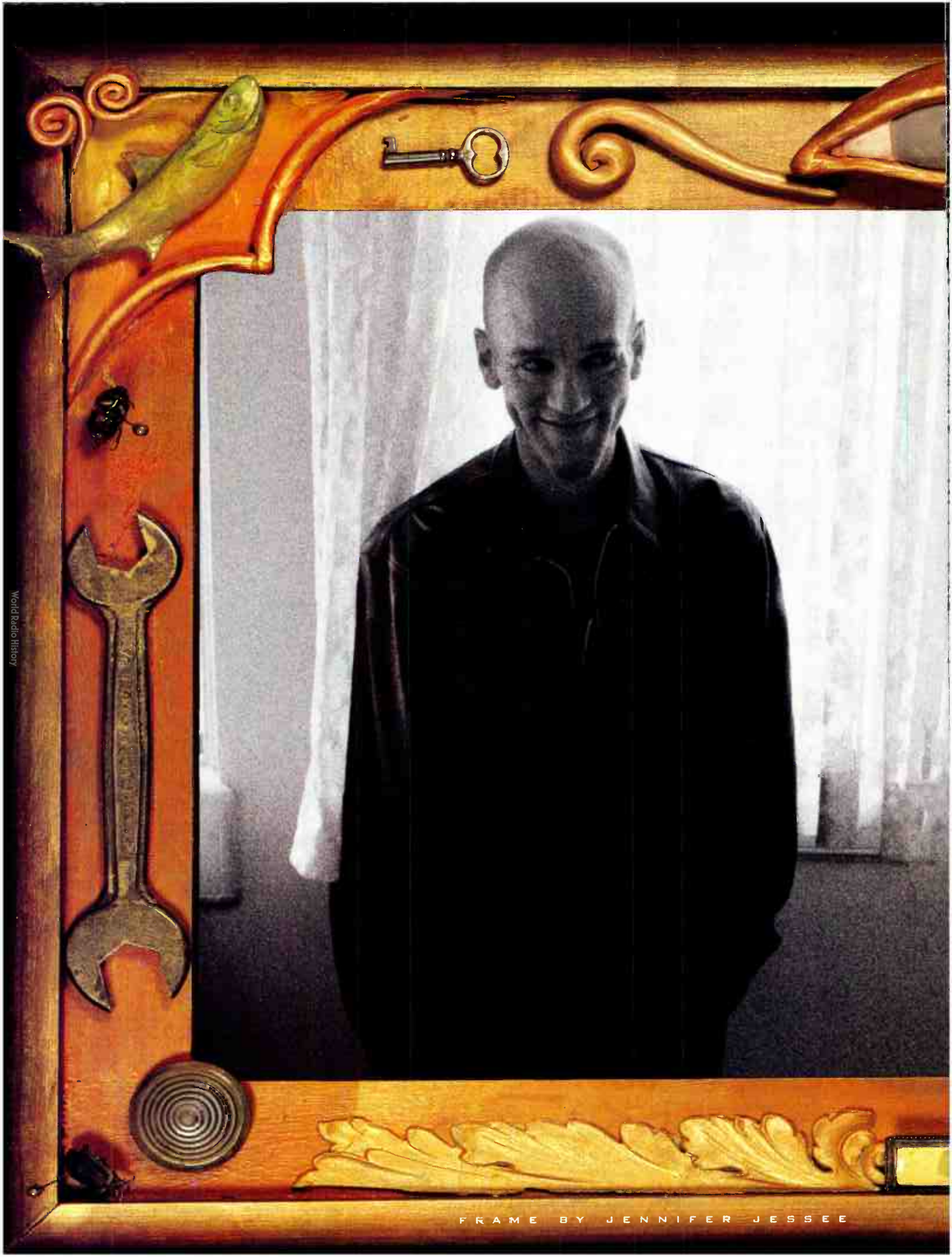
PAUL MOTION TRIO *Trioism* (JMT)
The Paul Motian trio, with guitarist Bill Frisell and saxophonist Joe Lovano, has reached the point where it doesn't matter what's on the set list. Everything works. The attention to textural detail is extraordinary. The shifts of emphasis are so subtle, it's often impossible to tell where the guitar solo ends and the tenor statement begins. *Trioism* is a triumph of triangularity, whether exploring tempoless rubato or working through sizzling swing. Arguably the most inventive group currently working in improvised music. *(T.M.)*

ORANGE THEN BLUE *While You Were Out* (GM)
This Boston big band's live set is the most vivid orchestral date of the year. Eclecticism is a staple of large ensembles these days, but as the OTB go to Scotland, Bulgaria and a couple of whorehouses, not to mention an Ayler parade and Braxton's garage, they're conversant with the language. *(J.M.)*

MARIO PAVONE *Song for (Septet)* (New World)
The New Haven bassist/composer's second outstanding date for New World displays an unabashed freebop scope. Ostinatos dominate, arrangements are central and the solos have nothing to be embarrassed about. Continuous invention and ardent delivery combine to make a brilliant effort. *(J.M.)*

BUD POWELL *The Best of Bud Powell on Verve* (Verve)
When I was in college, one of the other students in my workshop wrote a poem entitled, "Oxygen Gives Us Some of Our Courage," and that's how I feel about Bud Powell. He is afraid of nothing, it seems; the magnitude of his ideas combined with the raw power of his playing is astounding. Here are 17 cuts from various recordings issued between 1950 and 1955. The momentum is like a call to bravery. *(K.B.)*

JOSHUA REDMAN *Mood Swings* (Warner Bros.)
From the opening notes of his third album *Mood Swings*, Joshua Redman signals he won't be providing the typical barn-burning Young Lions jazz entertainment many no doubt expect from him. Rather [*cont'd on page 70*]



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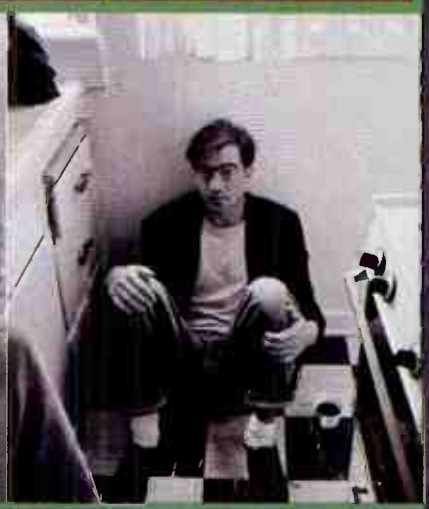


BY VIC GARBARINI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID JENSEN

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like books that are written in a foreign tongue. Do not seek the answers. Live the questions."

RAINER MARIA RILKE

"Do you really want me to say which is the deep end?"

MICHAEL STIPE

"Wait, I've got to stop here." Michael Stipe leans back in his chair at L.A.'s Chateau Marmont Hotel. He scratches his shaved head and clicks his jaw, lost in thought. "You really got me with that Turkish hologram thing. I need a moment to digest that."

While Stipe stares at the rug, relaxed in concentration, I'll take a moment to explain why R.E.M. is a lot like Plum Nelly. I was making the misty mountain hop from Nashville over the north Georgia hills about a year ago to visit R.E.M. in their hometown of Athens. A friend recommended I stop when I crossed the border to visit Plum Nelly, a little town where she claimed regional artists displayed their work on clotheslines. I figured she was pulling my leg—and what kind of a nonsense name was Plum Nelly. "Mos' logical name in the wurhl," she drawled. "After all, it's almost on the border—plum outta Tennessee and nelly outta Georgia." She laughed. "See, things down here make sense—if you look at 'em the right way."

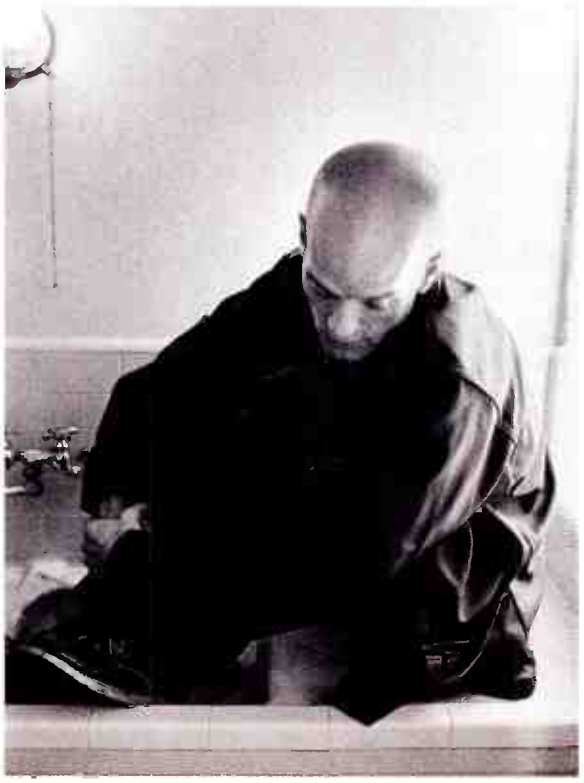
R.E.M. is like that. Accused at times of being more mystifying than mysterious, they actually use mystery as a doorway into fresh perceptions and perspectives, rather than to obscure or hide. They trust their senses to guide their music, lyrics, even career decisions. In an alternative universe where bands feel lucky to hold together 15 months, Michael Stipe, Peter Buck, Mike Mills and Bill Berry have evolved together for an astonishing 15 years, and the more they toss away the rockstar handbook and follow their own slippery muse, the more genuinely they've grown artistically and commercially, proving the two need not be irreconcilable. Since the turn of this decade, they've turned their backs on touring, concentrating on reinventing themselves in the studio, switching and adding instruments to create new textures and moods. In recent years, Stipe has refused all interview requests.

"The Green world tour exhausted me and the band on every level," he explains with a sigh. "I was completely strung out. It took me a year to get over that and then to be able to feel real again. So I just wasn't willing to tour on the next two albums, and I didn't want to talk about it. I figured fuck it, the records will sell what they'll sell, the band will get what they need out of it. I'm making videos, that's enough. Then the first records we never toured behind outsell our other albums three to one. I was in shock."

"We actually had to call a band meeting and try to figure out what was happening," laughs Mike Mills.

What was happening was a kind of critical mass of popular admiration, and, as 1990's *Out of Time* and 1992's *Automatic for the People* shot up the charts, partly on the strength of such gorgeous yet unlikely hits as "Losing My Religion" and "Man on the Moon," an unlikely consensus among boomers and busters that in some inexplicable way R.E.M. had become the band of two generations. Nirvana's Kurt Cobain held them up as role models, marveling at how their music could be so ethereal yet powerful.

It's sad that he can't be around to hear their monster of a new album, aptly titled *Monster* (Warners), which reverses that equation. Filled with crashing power chords and propelled by shimmering waves of tremolo and echoing delay, R.E.M. has produced a record of unfettered power that remains somehow ethereal. From the joyous, tumbling chords of the anti-media diatribute "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" to the New York Dolls by way of Velvets mock decadence of "Crush with Eyeliner," to the throbbing roar of "I Don't Sleep, I Dream" and the Nirvana-meets-the-Police echo and crunch of "Bang and Blame," R.E.M. has found another way to blend tradition and innovation, creating delightful kickass tunes crammed with obsession and grace, and weirdness redeemed by wisdom. It *is* a coincidence that Peter Buck recently moved to



Seattle. But then, there's usually a pattern underlying most so-called R.E.M. coincidence.

Which brings us back to Stipe and the "Turkish holograms." We were discussing world music, and I mentioned that Sufi Whirling Dervish master musicians I'd visited in Turkey were big Dylan fans, even though they didn't understand a word of English. They were listening to the meaning in the emotions, rhythms, tones and other currents created by the words. Stipe, of course, tends to do the same thing. He doesn't just use metaphors and symbols, he *lives* in that part of himself. Ask him a linear question and he answers by, in effect, drawing you a picture. Analyzing his own work is "like piling cinderblocks on my back," he says. "I can't think about it; I just do it." He brightens. "But that Turkish thing feels right. One of my favorite records that I play over and over again is called *I Will Not Be Sad in This World*. I want to say it's Armenian. There are these incredible voices and I have no idea what they're saying. But the feeling flowing from them, and the music, hit me like Patti Smith did when I was a teenager. I get upset and I can't sleep.

"The human voice and music are amazing enough," he continues. "When you inject ideas and philosophies and a direct point of view, it somehow ruins it. Even if they're really pure and completely along the lines of your thinking, it still taints it."

For Stipe, demanding a literal, linear approach to music takes a rich three-dimensional experience and flattens it into one. "It's always a little disappointing when you listen to something like that Armenian record of the Bulgarian women's choir till it becomes part of your daily experience and then you find out that somebody's translated the lyrics and your favorite piece is about how big the potatoes are this year," he laughs.

Of course, what you're picking up on in the first place is not the potatoes, but what the women feel about their work.

"Right, and she's laughing and having a good time with those potatoes, and that's what's legitimate about it, in the same way I enjoyed singing about the whole pop star syndrome with 'Get Up' or 'Pop Song 89.' That was my potato." He pauses. "My hot potato."

Stipe says he's more intrigued by recent discoveries about holograms made by cutting-edge physicists, who seem to be meeting the Sufis full circle. Shooting lasers through a tiny fragment of a holographic photo, the scientists discovered they had reproduced the entire photograph. Conclusion: The center of one thing is connected in some multidimensional way to the center of every other thing, like a cosmic Internet. And that each fragment contains the pattern, the DNA, of the larger whole. So a musician or artist playing a lyrical or musical "fragment" from their "center" shouldn't be surprised if that fragment carries something greater that resonates with an audience. Does Stipe sense that when he tosses out his often illogical but intuitively astute lyrics?

"Absolutely, I think that's true in terms of our intuitive senses, and I do trust that, and feel a lot of people will be able to connect with it." He searches for a moment. "I don't think I'm a channel for some mysterious energy that's pouring down out of the heavens necessarily, because that would put me at the sage level and I don't like being put on that pedestal. I don't like being the voice of a generation, even if it was six or seven years ago. I really believe in the original punk ethic, that you don't have to be a "special" person to be a musician—like Patti and Tom Verlaine said, anybody can do this. But I like what you said, and I do think it's kind of like being able to take a plastic straw and stick it into some dark corner of my brain that everybody has, and suck out something that's a common, shared human experience. You draw on that and put it into words, or into some kind of *sonic feeling* where people are able to say, Wow, I really know what that feels like.

"But I don't analyze stuff that much mentally. I just run with it, and that's that."

Peter Buck picks up the thread, delighted for once to talk about those aspects of R.E.M. that are too much for words. "People are just hyperrational, especially most journalists, who don't ever mention the music. A lot of what we do goes right past the thought process. Sometimes you pick words for the way they sound or trip out of your mouth. All Michael's songs are filled with a line or two that seems to be nonsense, just there to fill the space. Like on 'Crush with Eyeliner' on the new album when he describes a person as 'kiss breath turpentine.' Well, that doesn't really mean anything literally. But the way it's sung, and the particular place in the song he sings it, makes total sense."

After the years of relative isolation when wild rumors swirled—that Michael Stipe had AIDS, that Peter Buck would no longer tour, that the band itself was preparing to call it a day—the prospect of a new record and next year's long-awaited tour seems to have made everyone more agreeable to speaking candidly (even to talk about how hard it is to talk), and as the following free-wheeling two-part interview makes clear, few subjects are taboo. Then again, you'd expect R.E.M. to approach a conversation with the same high standards and creative charge they apply to their music. And maybe even enjoy it, too?

Sure, Michael Stipe agrees dryly. "Like throwing a leper in a salt bath."

MUSICIAN: *People like Sam Phillips have been saying how nice you guys are, and Kurt Cobain said you handled your fame like "saints." Are they missing anything?*



"I STILL WONDER WHY OUR REALLY SMART FRIENDS HANG OUT WITH US."

BUCK: Well, yeah. Actually, we're agents of Satan. [*laughter*] Quite literally, we've been accused of being guided by Satan because we helped a women's health clinic in Athens. And we're not even that radical! It's not like we called for revolution in the streets.

MUSICIAN: *That's the plight of the Southern artist. The North is more intellectually open and emotionally closed, while the South is the mirror opposite. You wouldn't hug someone at a party in New York unless you really knew them, but you wouldn't discuss abortion or gun control in Georgia with a stranger.*

BUCK: Definitely, you have to be careful who you talk to and what parties you go to. I was at a party and this woman was rambling on to me about prayer in schools. I was trying to be nice about it, saying that certainly if there's a God he doesn't care if you pray quietly or out loud. She insisted that no, you have to get down on your knees. *If you didn't get on your knees, the prayer wasn't real.*

BERRY: I don't agree that people are so different. I have great neighbors and they take care of my land while I'm away. I scratch their backs and they scratch mine. I really like that attitude.

MUSICIAN: *But would you lean over the fence and start talking about abortion without checking them out first?*

BERRY: No...I definitely wouldn't. It is kind of wild, they know I'm in a band and sell a lot of records, but they have absolutely *no* idea what we're really about.

STIPE: When I'm with my Northern friends I always wonder why they hang out with me, frankly. They're really smart and bookread and I'm not.

MUSICIAN: *You're kidding? Not all intellectuals are really insightful, and not all insightful people are intellectuals. Plenty of your friends would burn their books if they could have your artistic intelligence.*

STIPE: Well, I would never be so bold as to presume that about them. I will say I've always instinctively trusted my intuition, and the times I haven't I've fucked up. So I don't think about and analyze things too much. But I still wonder why my really smart friends hang out with me.

MUSICIAN: Monster *seems to be about breaking down polarities. Boomers and busters in "Kenneth," or dreams and waking truths in "I Don't Sleep, I Dream." Or even sexual roles. Musically too...*

STIPE: Yeah, "Kenneth" is about people playing into the bullshit about the media drawing lines among young people in this country—that group is about cynicism and this group are idealists. And yes, it's also commenting on how we go about trying to research and analyze things we don't understand, like people younger than ourselves, rather than using your intuition and figuring it out from that end. But even though that line may not really exist, if someone pushed me I'd say I'm definitely on the side with bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam and Tori Amos. Even though I'm 34 I recognize myself in them and what they're doing.

It's all so binary in this country, and that does include the way people look at sexuality. It's just totally black and white, like there's no in between, which is just ludicrous.

MUSICIAN: *The characters on this album seem ambivalent in a positive sense about their sexuality. Even your vocals seem to reflect that when you sing in such a high register.*

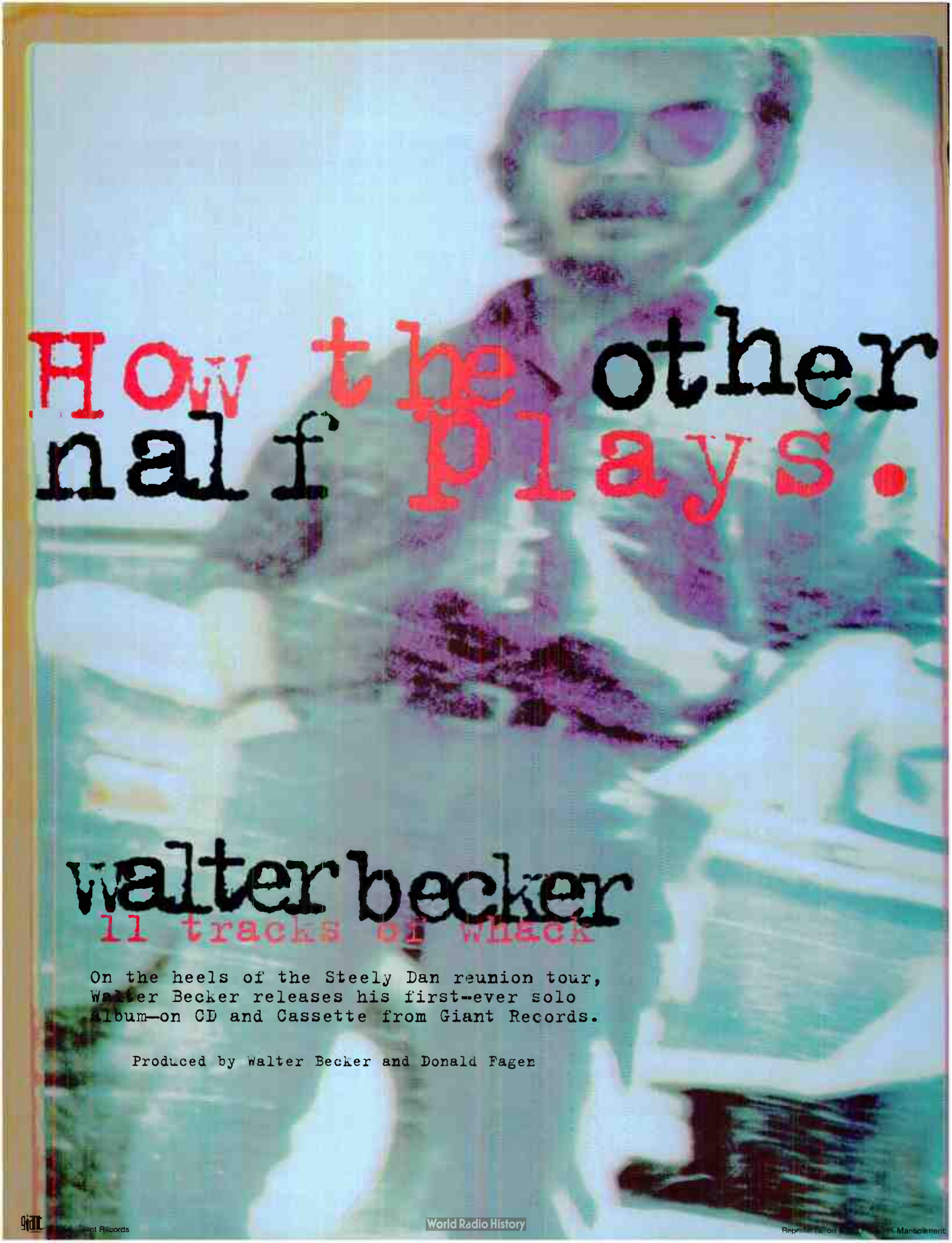
STIPE: Do I? I just thought my voice was getting better. That "soul" voice is something I stumbled on a few years ago and used on "Everybody Hurts" and "Strange Currencies"—though on "Tongue" I was just trying to sing like a girl. If Michael Hutchence and Roland Gift from Fine Young Cannibals can sing like that, why can't I? But sexually, yeah, that's exactly what I meant. I do think little categories have crept in where it's a bit too easy to say this is straight and this is queer or even this is bisexual. Again, I think where those lines are drawn is way too constrictive.

MUSICIAN: *Well, we're back to the idea of polarizing, drawing lines, rather than maybe seeing certain things on a sliding scale, various shades of gray that shift.*

STIPE: Exactly. Sexuality is an incredibly slippery thing. Probably we all move in and out of these things during our lives whether we want to or not, whether it's conscious or not. It might be in your dream state, or in your waking state. And I like fucking around with that, it's cool. One thing you can't do is infiltrate someone's dream world. People cannot tell me that I don't have erotic dreams about men or about women—or about some creature that's the combination of the two. Do you know what I'm saying?

MUSICIAN: *Well, rock has always been about reconciling the repressed feminine, intuitive aspects in all of us with the rational masculine, creating something more whole. And your name R.E.M. refers to that point in sleep when we process contradictory events and internally resolve them. In "I Don't Sleep, I Dream" you seem to say that the dream and waking creative states are linked.*

STIPE: Incredibly linked. I'm a little bit trepidatious myself about fucking around with my dream state. People have told me that you can train yourself to enter your dreams, stare at your hand, have a dream within a dream and all this stuff, and maybe that's fine for them. But I don't want to manipulate that.

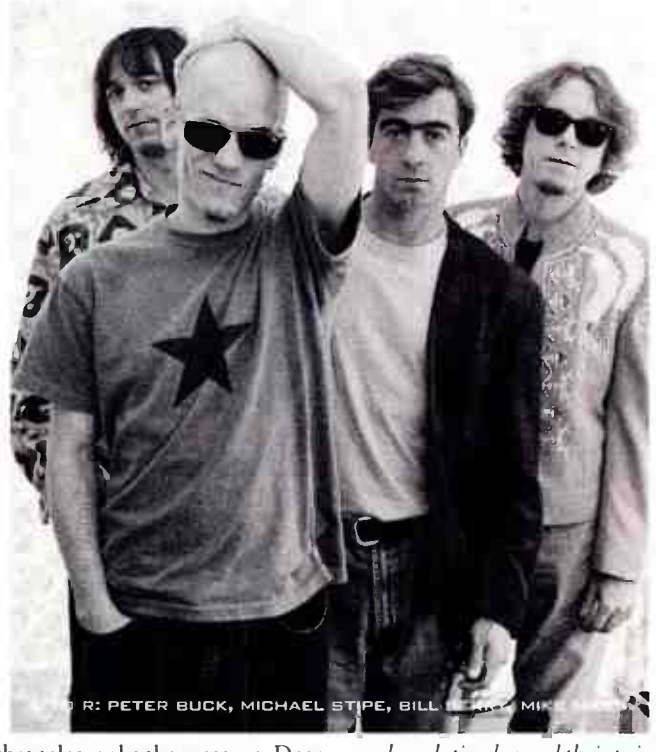


"YOU CAN BE CYNICAL AND STILL GROOVE AT THE SAME TIME."

MUSICIAN: *That's like pushing the river. Liz Phair told me recently that men try to control their emotions, instead of listening to them.*

STIPE: Sure. Personally, I feel like my subconscious and unconscious dreams are there, and they'll rise to the surface if there's something significant I should know in my waking state. I was talking to a friend recently about some tragic things, loss of friends, etc., and he suddenly said, "I don't want to *flatten* my experience anymore." And that really impacted me at the time. In terms of my emotions I feel really strongly now that if I feel like crying, I'm going to cry, and I'm not going to be embarrassed about it.

MUSICIAN: *Musically, even when you slam them out, those bright, folk-based chords are a positive counterpoint to the lyrics on "Kenneth" and a lot of the songs on* Monster. *You guys have a certain confidence and hope, and if it's not in the lyrics it's sometimes in the music. The point is the combination of music and words gives a fuller and more real-life emotional palette. Whereas a lot of '90s bands use ominous intervals, like tritones, that keep the music stuck in the darker end of the emotional spectrum.*



R: PETER BUCK, MICHAEL STIPE, BILL

BUCK: When you get four guys in a room just really blasting out loud music, which was our aim on this album, there's a certain type of energy that gets pushed along into the music that might be directly at odds with the lyrics. Yeah, a lot of new bands like to use things like E to F as a riff, and then F to C#, which gives that real stark kind of Black Sabbath meets Kiss by way of old bluesmen feel. And that telegraphs the message, Deep Heavy Subject. In "Kenneth" or "Man on the Moon," A and G and Bm aren't "heavy" chords. Every songwriter uses those kinds of blocks. I've always tried to recontextualize the Em chord, that whole folksong tradition that is part of our toolbox. I just got this record from the '50s and every song is about murder and death, and yet musically they're all kind of jolly. When you use those chords, it tends to undercut what goes on lyrically if you're singing about obsession or weirdness, which a lot of this record is. On the last record I played some feedback and discordant stuff on "Sweetness Follows" to give it an edge, or it could have been a bit sappy. I like to play the wrong notes consciously, and undercut things a bit, but only when everybody agrees the song needs it. *Automatic* was about passage and loss, but it's a positive record. I think Michael approaches the lyrics with the sense that the negatives don't have to be negatives. I mean, death is inevitable. But we're a bit older, we've gone through a lot of stuff and we're not going to do a "life is a drag" record because it's the only thing we've got to say.

MUSICIAN: *Do you ever think a song is just so nonlinear that people won't even pick up the vibe—we better go back and be more explicit?*

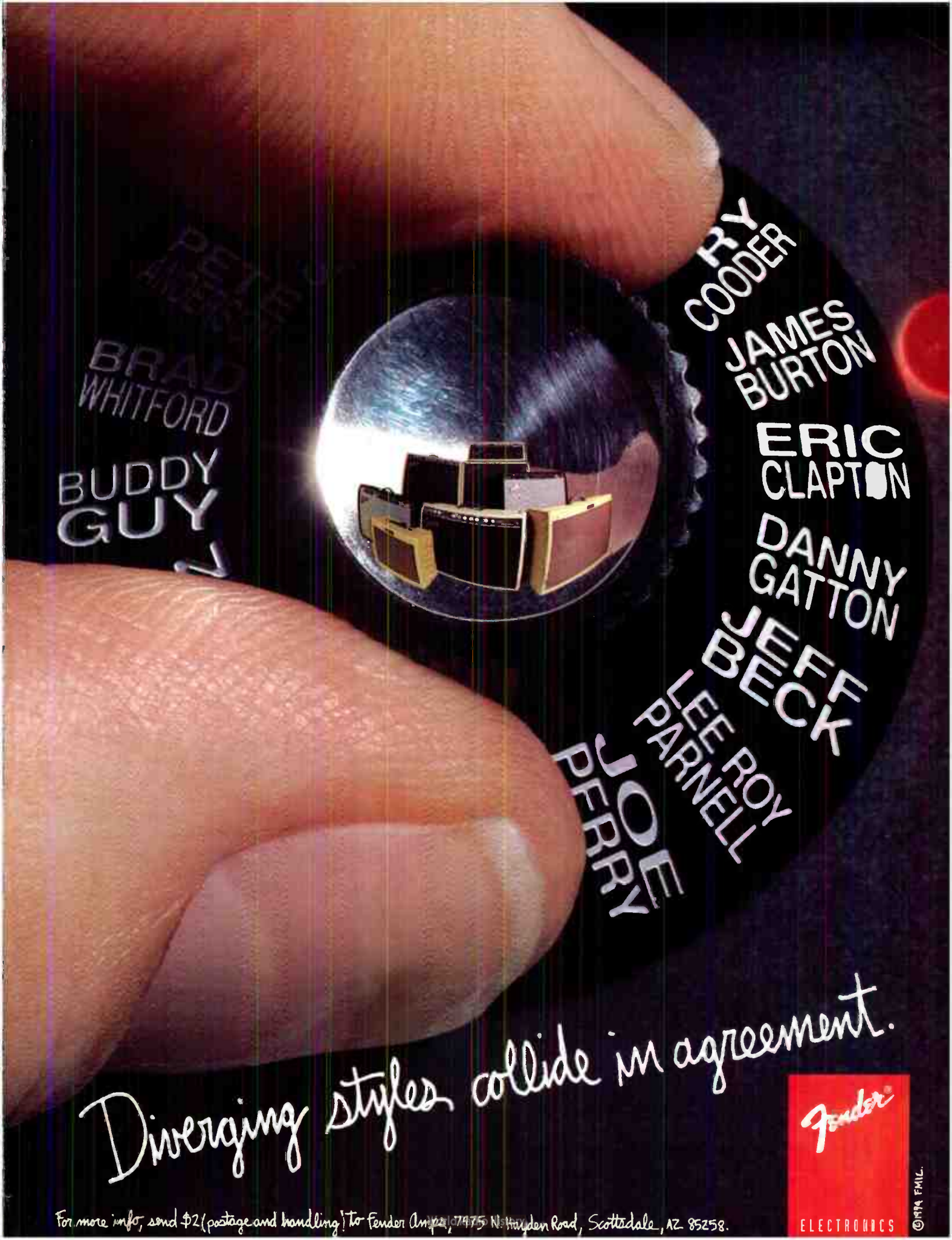
BUCK: John Ford once said that people like a message a lot better if they find it for themselves. I always took that to mean you don't have to beat them over the head with it. When we did "Flowers of Guatemala" on *Life's Rich Pageant* I remember having a conversation with Michael about whether we needed to say in the third or fourth verse something like "Where have all the flowers gone, the flowers are on graves," and we didn't think it was really necessary. I think people figured that out—all they had to do was look at what was happening in Central America in 1986. At least they understood it was a kind of elegiac song. I do like to think our songs aren't being misunderstood. Specifically, there's emotional truth and "real" truth. The latter is the truth of what happens every day when the sun comes up. But there's emotional truth too, and music is a great way to pass that along. People from other countries tell us that they get something out of our music that's more specific than just "It's got a nice tune and I can dance to it," without understanding the words.

MUSICIAN: *Many of the bands who look up to you as alternative role models were literally born into a world of disillusionment, both personally and socially.*

MILLS: Yeah, they didn't even have a Nixon to bounce off.

MUSICIAN: *They see and feel their own problems acutely in their early 20s, yet they haven't had many validating experiences that prove to them that there's some real resolution beyond their pains and confusion. Did you address that with Kurt Cobain?*

STIPE: Yeah, it does seem that everything has sped up. Emotionally they're still experimenting, trying to figure things out, yet in terms of input they're ten years ahead, as you say, and those two things clash. I feel much more in line with them than I do with many of my contemporaries. I just started a long time before they did. And the main thing is I've had the experience to be able to say, It's going to pass. It's going to be okay. Don't eat yourself alive, don't let it get to you. This is not an important thing. As a band, Nirvana was going to tour with R.E.M. next year. They'd been asking us over the course of the last two years, "Please go on tour so we can tour with you." And then they got to the size where it would be a dual headlining thing. It was pretty much a done deal, and then Kurt died. More specific to his death, I knew what was going on after Rome. I had been talking to him at home up until his death, up until he disappeared. And so his death in some ways was not as much of a shock to us as to everyone else. We knew he had been missing for seven days, and we knew a



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phone call would be coming at some point and we were hoping it would be a good one. And it wasn't.

MUSICIAN: *When you were talking to him, trying to tell him "this too shall pass," do you think he heard you at all?*

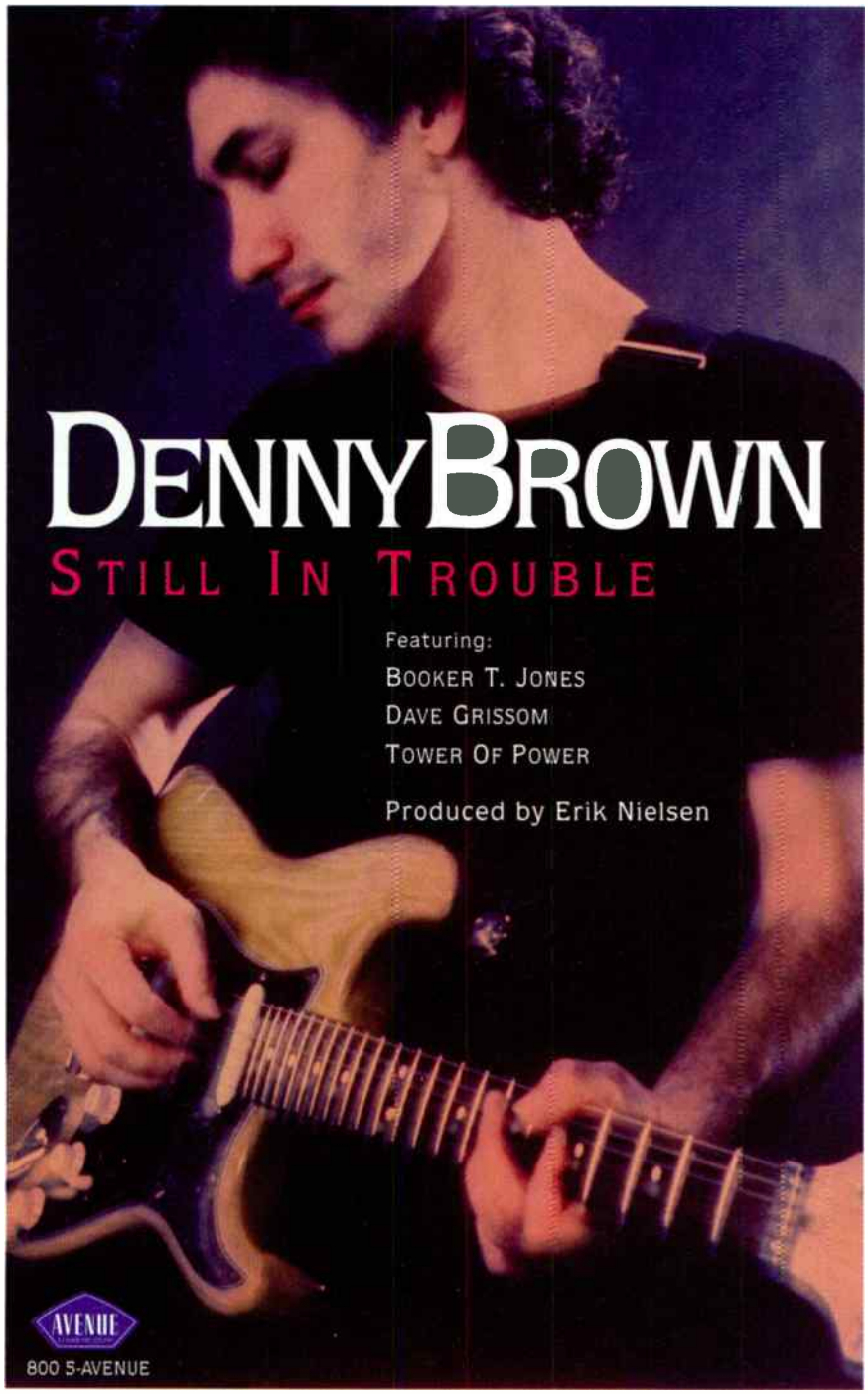
STIPE: Apparently not. It's really a shame. Kurt was a comrade on the front lines.

MUSICIAN: Monster *sounds a bit like Nirvana and the Velvets doing* Document. *But Mike told me last year during the sessions for the last album that you'd planned to shift gears and tour.*

MILLS: I remember telling you in Athens that we'd gotten to the point where it was too easy to write fast rock songs that sounded like something we'd already done. So after the last two albums, our challenge was to write fast rock songs that didn't sound clichéd and that had the energy and balls of a younger band.

MUSICIAN: *And the maturity you've gained. Otherwise the Spandex begins to stretch.*

MILLS: Yeah, we wanted to avoid that thing where an older band tries to write a fast, hard-rocking song and all you get is a whole lot of bad intent and nothing real coming out of it.



How often does a band like Nirvana come along that could do something fresh with four chords? Once every ten years? *Automatic* was going to be that way originally, but the songs didn't evolve that way. So we took the determination that we'd already had, and the desire to tour again, and made it a fact by basically playing only electric guitar on this record.

BUCK: When we did the chamber folky things on the last two records, it's nice because Bill can play bass, which frees Mike up to play organ and piano, and I can go to a mandolin or bouzouki. But when I'm sticking to electric guitar on *Monster* it pretty much means Mike has to stay with the bass and Bill with the drums. Although we all help with the composing a bit. Bill came up with the riff for "I Took Your Name," and that's Mike playing guitar on "Let Me In," with me picking out melodies on the organ. The basic guitar is the live guitar, and I made a point of not fixing one note. I wasn't going to punch. I hadn't played straight electric guitar in so long, I felt like an enthusiastic 13-year-old kid. I went straight for the fuzz pedals and the tremolo box.

BERRY: Yeah, his feet were more active than his hands! During the middle of *Automatic* we had this discussion where we said the next record can't be this way, with 12 overdubs on each track. It's time to be more spontaneous. And so we went in, turned the tape on and played. If later we felt the song needed something, instead of doing overdubs we'd take what was already there and whack it out a little bit.

MUSICIAN: *Was it a big adjustment coming back to a live sound after two studio-intensive albums? Is your musical process as natural as Michael's lyric writing?*

BERRY: You don't need a blueprint to make a song. A song pulls you into itself and tells you what it wants. When things happen, they happen. If they don't work you abandon it. We don't sit there and analyze or try and figure out where it's coming from. We just keep messing with it and let the song pull us in instead of trying to push it.

MUSICIAN: *Bill, Mike Mills told me you came up with the verse to "Man on the Moon," that C chord that slides from the first fret up to the third. In retrospect, was that a subconscious nod to Neil Young, who used the same technique in reverse on* Sugar Mountain?

BERRY: No, I'll tell you want happened. We were sitting around in our rehearsal studio and I hit that C chord on the guitar and then turned around to grab my beer, and my hand and the chord slid up to the third fret as you say, and everybody went, Oh, that sounds

great! Let's use that for the verse bit. [*laughs*] But I like your version better, I've got to remember to start using that instead.

STIPE: To me in terms of attitude and spirit, *Automatic is* a very punk rock album, in that it doesn't sound like anything that was or is being done right now. It's just not loud.

MUSICIAN: *Many younger bands who become successful aren't sure of themselves, yet are desperate to maintain legitimacy. And legitimacy begins to have politically correct sound, loud and raw, when maybe deep down it wants to go in another direction.*

BUCK: What kind of bothers me about whatever alternative is nowadays is that there's all kinds of assumptions and signifiers out there. A lot of guitar players equate shouting with passion. Or they think it means you're having a cathartic experience, when in fact you're often shouting because the guitars are loud. Probably the most intense record I can think of is that Nick Drake record, *Pink Moon*, and it's also one of the quietest-recorded albums I've ever heard. You can't even get it loud on your stereo.

STIPE: Go back and look at what happened to any band who's been lauded for their first album. *In Utero* is for all intents and purposes Nirvana's sophomore jinx record. And they did exactly what we did on ours, *Reckoning*, which was to record it quickly and with as few overdubs as possible. And that was totally about us reacting to *Murmur* being picked over Michael Jackson's *Thriller* as the album of the year. I mean, we were nobodies! The same thing happened with Pearl Jam, and I wish their record company had looked at it like that. They should have recognized what was going on and not just

MONSTER MASH

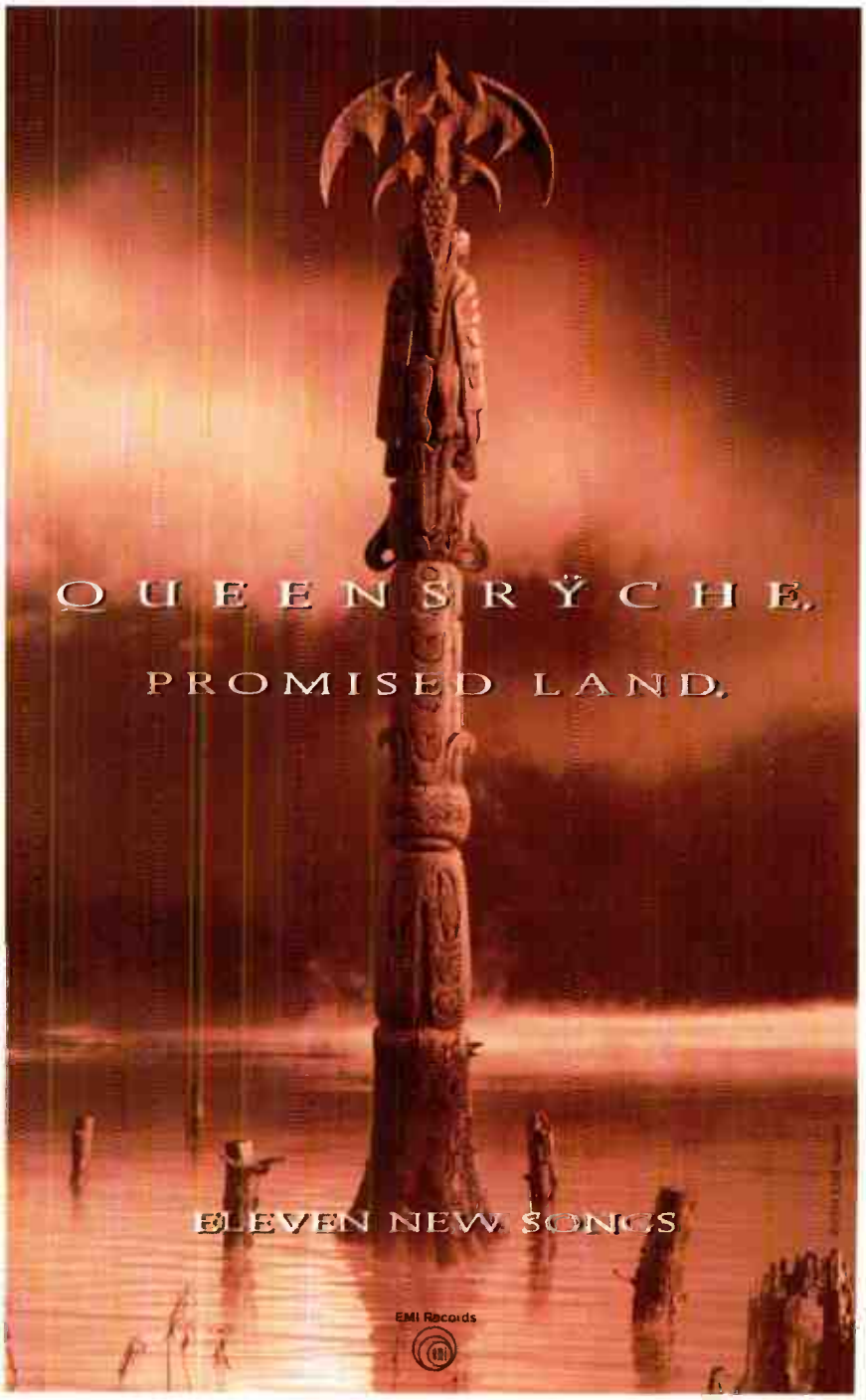
I finally got a Marshall stack," PETER BUCK announces, beaming. "Today I am a man." The stack matches a 100-Watt head and 4x12 slant cabinets. Mostly, though, Buck plays through a Vox AC-30. He's also fond of a Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier Tremoverb. "The Pearl Jam and Soul Asylum guys were using one at the MTV Awards," he explains, "and that's the genesis of the tremolo stuff on "Crush with Eyeliner" and "I Took Your Name."

Buck still uses his trusty Rickenbacker, but he can't remember the model number. Microwave, R.E.M.'s guitar tech, fills in the details: It's a 360, he reveals, strung with custom-made heavy-gauge Dean Markleys (.013 to .056). Buck also strums a Roger McGuinn signature Rickenbacker 370 12-string, a custom-built Paul Reed Smith, and reissues of a '59 Gibson Les Paul, '62 Fender Telecaster and '59 Fender Stratocaster. According to Microwave, there's only one acoustic guitar on the album, a Taylor 615 on "Bang and Blame." He stomps on a ProCo Rat distortion pedal, an old Electro-Harmonix Big Muff and an Ibanez Tube Screamer.

MIKE MILLS thumbs a '60 Fender Precision Bass through an Alembic preamp, a Mesa/Boogie 400 head and a Mesa/Boogie 2x15 cabinet. His strings are also Markleys, medium-gauge roundwounds. For the fuzzed-out tone on "You" and on "Ignoreland" from *Automatic for the People*, he chained the Big Muff to an Ibanez Tremolo pedal.

MICHAEL STIPE uses a Beyerdynamic M-88 vocal mike in the studio and a Shure SM58 onstage. For a "thin" sound, he switches to a Shure 520 Green Bullet; on "King of Comedy" his vocal track was played back through a Fender Twin Reverb amp.

Drummer BILL BERRY pounds a Pearl MX Master's Series kit with Zildjian cymbals and Zildjian 5-B sticks. The drums are miked using E-V RE20s and AKG D122s.



tried to sell as many. I shouldn't blame anybody's record company, but...

MILLS: If you're going to err on the second album, it's better to err on the side of minimalism rather than excess.

STIPE: I guarantee that Nirvana's next record was going to be like our third album, *Reconstruction*, was for us—bringing in a lot of new textures and instruments. I would guess that Pearl Jam in their own way will do the same thing.

MUSICIAN: *There's a myth that you guys never had to go through these teething experiences, that you floated out of Athens on a cloud of art-snob hipness.*

BUCK: [*laughing*] We were *massively* unhip! We were one of the few bands in town that had a full complement of six strings on our guitars and because...

BERRY: ...Mike and I had actually played in real bands before in Macon, so we were a rhythm section that actually worked.

MILLS: And I'd learned bass by listening to the radio like normal kids, playing along with people like Jim Croce and Three Dog Night and...*Seals and Crofts!*

BERRY: But I learned drums by listening to Queen. So that absolves me a little, doesn't it?

MUSICIAN: *I was more impressed that you had the courage and confidence to cover Lou Gramm of Foreigner's "Midnight Blue." That took balls.*

MILLS: But Michael loved that song, and at every soundcheck he would insist on singing it until we agreed to play it.

BUCK: The great thing about rock 'n' roll is that, as my grandfather used to say, even a blind pig finds an acorn now and again. And I thought Foreigner's singles were really great. But in the world of the hip cognoscenti, you would no sooner buy a Lou Gramm record than you'd buy an extra head. The fact is, he made a great record and we thought it would be kind of cool to shock people. I remember we played a Fleetwood Mac song in 1982 and people would just leave. Well, *Tusk* was one of the best records of the decade, and I still listen to it.

MUSICIAN: *The same hip segment of the audience that supports new music is often afraid to allow themselves to trust the innocent, naive or fun aspects of rock.*

STIPE: I understand that, though. When Blondie put out *Heart of Glass*, I was indignant and refused to listen to it. I did the same thing with the Gang of Four when they put out their disco record. I go back now, and both those records were pretty amazing.

MUSICIAN: *As long as you're doing something that you love and believe in, but that takes some self-knowledge and guts to begin with.*

STIPE: I saw Tori Amos in Atlanta a few weeks ago and she covered "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "American Pie." Now that's balls—to go in front of an audience like she has and do two songs like that was really amazing. On the other hand, Fugazi has never done a cover song in their lives. And that's pretty ballsy. I remember doing the video for "Pop Song 89." I was totally digging on being the shirtless, long-haired rock star shimmering with three naked women, and at the same time it was totally a commentary on that whole scene. It was just a stupid Bad Company kind of thing, and yet it was a commentary. So you can be cynical and groove at the same time. It was really, really fun. Of course, now that we're so popular, maybe R.E.M. is becoming a guilty pleasure for a lot of people who won't admit they listen to us.

Next month: R.E.M. Part II—more mystery and mayhem exposed. Plus "From Murmur *to* Monster: *A Zen Guitar Lesson with Peter Buck."*

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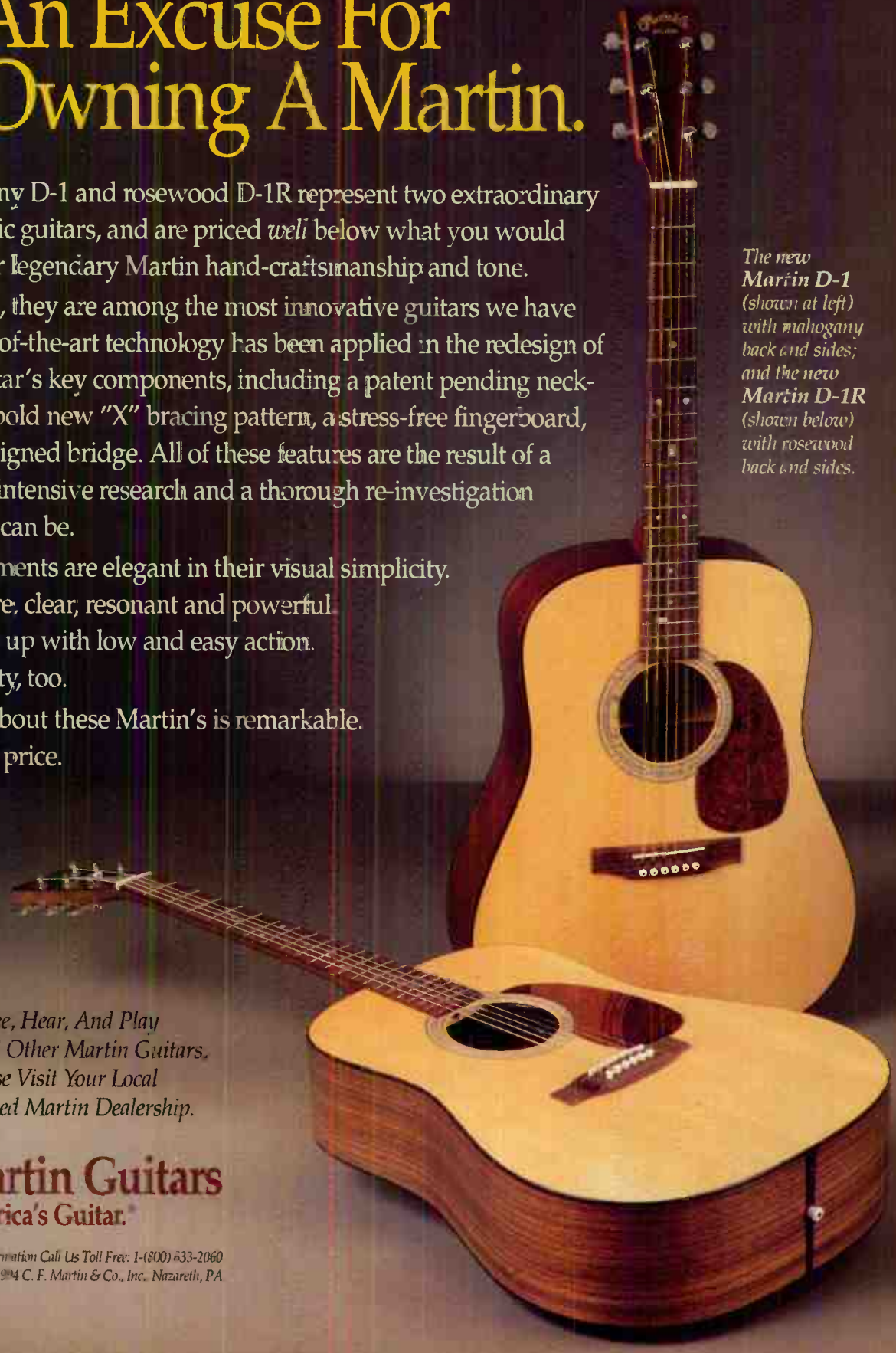
Especially the price.

The new ***Martin D-1*** *(shown at left) with mahogany back and sides; and the new* ***Martin D-1R*** *(shown below) with rosewood back and sides.*



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JAZZ RECORDINGS

[*cont'd from page 57*] than start by trying to impress, Redman begins with "Sweet Sorrow," a languid ballad with echoes of Coltrane's spirituality. It's a brilliant way to establish his priorities: As he surveys the slow blues and the brisk "Obsession," he is forever patient, more intent on realizing his compositions and uncorking improbable melodies than showing off his awe-inspiring technique. *(T.M.)*

WALLACE RONEY *Mistérios* (Warner Bros.)
The majestic sound of Roney's trumpet dominates this Latin-influenced CD, produced by Teo Macero. The orchestra (string and woodwinds) creates a mood, but it's Roney's mercurial lines that set the pulse racing. The selection of material (from the Beatles to Egberto Gismonti and then some) should give those who get embroiled in the "is it jazz" dispute some real agitá: good. *(K.B.)*

JOHN SCOFIELD *Hand Jive* (Blue Note)
It would have been stupendous enough had John Scofield invited the long-lost saxophonist Eddie Harris to simply record an album's worth of greasy guitar-and-organ-supported blues and standards. Instead, Scofield wrote a collection of hard-swinging songs full of sudden twists and unusual resolutions. The result: arty jazz compositions that expand your head while feeding your gut. *(T.M.)*

STEVE SWALLOW *Real Book* (XtraWatt)
A jazz concept album paying tribute to the mother of all fake books. With the help of an all-star cast—pianist Mulgrew Miller, drummer Jack DeJohnette, trumpeter Tom Harrell, saxophonist Joe Lovano—Swallow generates songs you might hear at an open jam. What makes it is the playing: Miller sounds more energized than ever on record, Lovano's explorations never feel technical, and Harrell spouts trumpet lyricism as though it were water. *(T.M.)*

TOM TALBERT *Bix Duke Fats* (Modern Concepts)
A veteran arranger/composer still active in L.A., Talbert contributed to the books of Stan Kenton, Claude Thornhill, Buddy Rich and Boyd Raeburn. Covering some of the same pastel territory as 1950's Gil Evans but with his own sensibility, Talbert did some of his best work on his own, as this reissue of his excellent but long-out-of-print 1956 Modern Concepts big band album shows. (Distributed by Sea Breeze Records, P.O. Box 11267, Glendale, CA 91226) *(A.G.)*

JACKY TERRASSON *Lover Man* (Venus)
Improvisation, that's the name of the game. Terrasson's chords are like splashes of color, often where you least expect them. Sometimes the arrangements get a little choppy (I'm not sure I like that sinister vamp in "Lover Man"), but Terrasson's ardor for the music is undeniable. He tears it *up* on Bud Powell's "Wail." *(K.B.)*

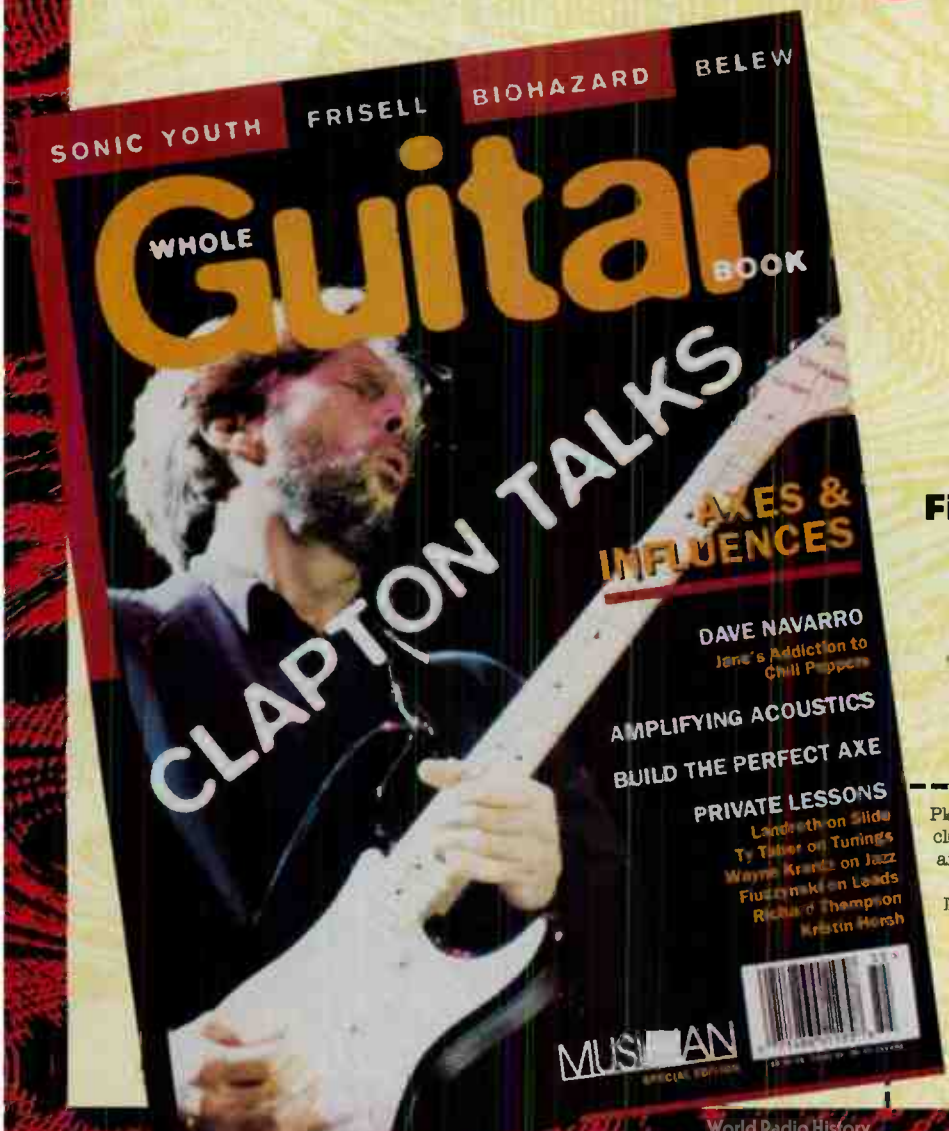
MCCOY TYNER/BOBBY HUTCHERSON *Manhattan Moods* (Blue Note)
Two masters engage in a supremely lyrical exchange and each shines. As Tyner frames an intro and then comps behind Hutcherson, one gets the sense of listening to a profound conversation. If their rendition of "(I Love You) Porgy" doesn't give you chills, you're hopeless. *(K.B.)*

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Mingus Big Band 93, Nostalgia in Times Square* (Dreyfus)
The best album of Mingus music to come out in years. Baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber opens the disc with a short reminiscence about jamming at Birdland with Mingus and getting a hug from James Moody for his efforts, perfectly setting the mood for an unbridled set that doesn't shy from Mingus' difficult works—i.e., a great Jack Walrath arrangement of "Invisible Lady" and a Sy Johnson arrangement of "Don't Be Afraid, the Clown's Afraid, Too." *(A.G.)*

SARAH VAUGHAN *I Love Brazil!* (Pablo)
Finally reissued on CD, *I Love Brazil!* is one of Sassy's best sessions from the '70s. While Vaughan sometimes failed to fully engage her material on recordings, she digs into these gorgeous Brazilian melodies with gusto, clearly inspired by the Brazilian rhythm section. An absolute classic, with one moment of undescribable beauty after another. *(A.G.)*

RANDY WESTON/MELBA LISTON *Volcano Blues* (Verve)
Liston's brilliant arrangements surround Weston's powerful Monkish piano with thick, writhing lines. Marvelously shifting textures are provided by the cross-generational horn section, which brings together trumpeter Wallace Roney and saxophonist Talib Kibwe with baritone sax master Hamiet Bluiett, trombonist Benny Powell and tenorman Teddy Edwards (listen to him *wail* on "Mystery of Love"). *(A.G.)*

"If you're serious about guitar, this is a must"



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Deck II from OSC ($399) enables eight- or six-track recording on any Macintosh equipped with audio hardware from Digidesign, RasterOps or Spectral, or any audio-capable Mac. PowerMac or PowerBook with no additional hardware. Version 2 supports software plug-ins that add DSP effects. ■ OSC, 480 Potrero, San Francisco, CA 94100; voice (800) 343-3325, fax (415) 252-0560.

MARTIN D-1R GUITAR

Martin's new dreadnought, the D-1R ($1250), revises the popular D-1 with laminated rosewood back and sides, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and mahogany neck (20 frets, 25.4" scale length). Special bracing is employed on the top and back for solid, vibrant tone. ■ Martin, 510 Sycamore St., P.O. Box 329, Nazareth, PA 18064; voice (800) 345-3103, fax (610) 759-5757.

YAMAHA FX770

Yamaha's FX770 guitar processor ($749) incorporates eight independent effects: compressor, wah, preamp (distortion), amp simulator, pitch shift, modulation, delay and reverb. Four configurations determine the order of effects and whether they're connected serially or in parallel. Pedal inputs control wah and volume. ■ Yamaha, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9832.

RD

IBANEZ ATK BASS

Designed to deliver punchy attack and fat low end, the ATK bass from Ibanez ($699–$799) offers a thick neck, active electronics and a new triple-coil pickup. The ash body, fitted with a bolt-on maple neck, houses a bridge that can be strung either from behind the saddles or through the body to vary the instrument's response. Ibanez offers a choice of four or five strings, right- or left-handed, fretted or fretless. ■ Ibanez, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020; voice (215) 638-8670, fax (215) 245-8583.

KORG WAVEDRUM

The WaveDrum from Korg ($2500) is designed to respond dynamically and tonally to the gamut of standard drum and percussion techniques as well as various sticks, mallets and even brushes. Rather than triggering samples, the standard 10" head and resonant cavity drive DSP technology capable of synthesizing both conventional and novel sounds. ■ Korg, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590; voice (516) 333-9100, fax (516) 333-9108.

HEAR, HEAR: NEW GEAR AT MIDYEAR

Equipment explosion at the summer convention of the National Association of Music Merchants

BY TED GREENWALD

The world is ever turning
To demand and supply
So you gotta sell, sell, sell
And you gotta buy, buy, buy

—"Sell, Sell, Sell" © 1994 by Al McCree

DURING ONE of several early-morning seminars sponsored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) at their summer show in Nashville, speaker/showman Al McCree sang these words of encouragement to instrument retailers buffeted by the gusting winds of economic downturn and incipient recovery. Indeed, optimism was in the stale convention-hall air. Although the July show is always considerably smaller than January's convention in Anaheim, California, this year attendance was up 30 percent; a mezzanine was opened to soak up the overflow of exhibitors touting everything from saxophones to software to guitar-shaped toilet seats.

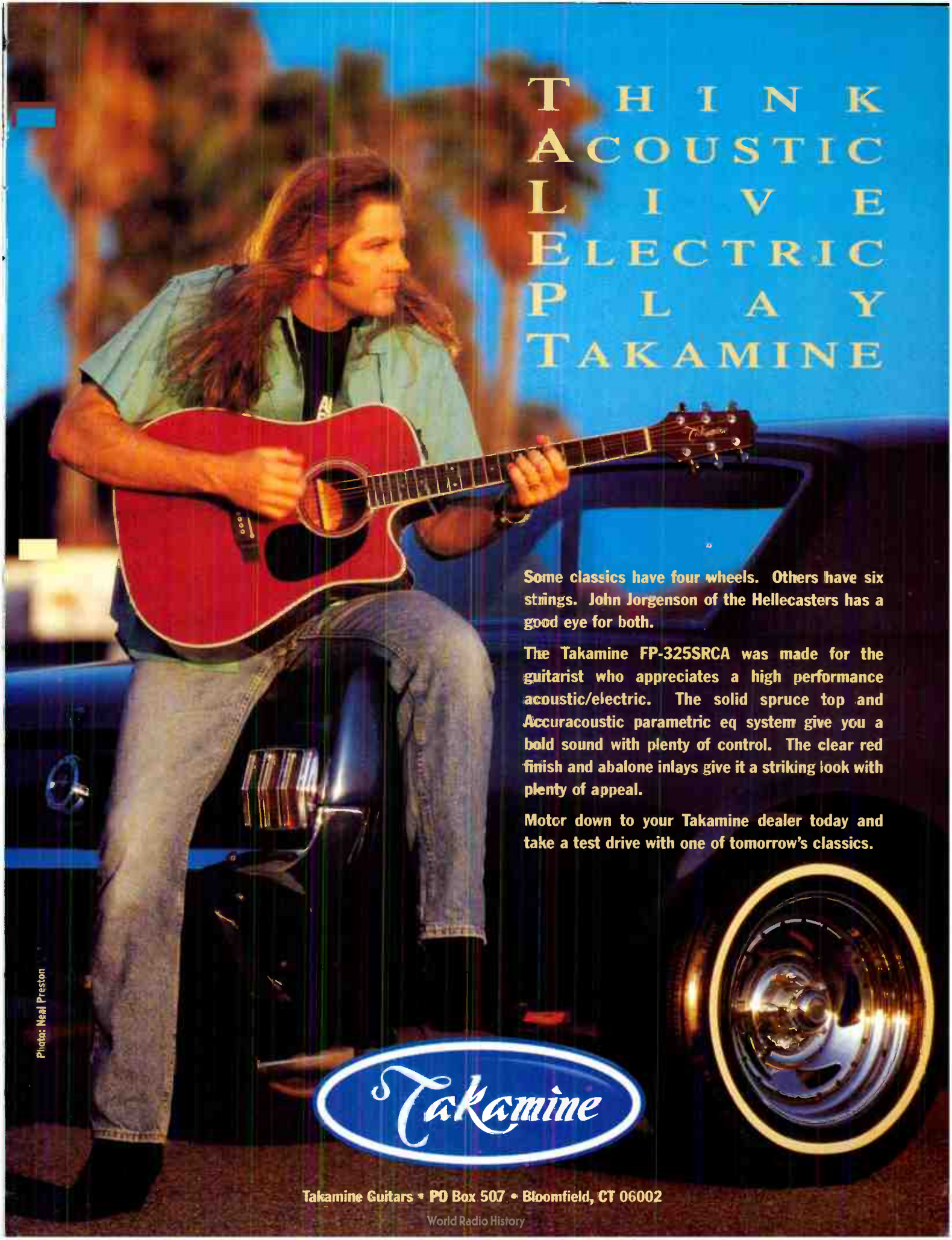
Whereas the Anaheim show is a roiling morass of metal licks and big hair, the Nashville convention floor rang with the sweet sounds of country and bluegrass. The booths were modest, more like storefronts than the multilevel complexes that dominate the winter show. After hours, conventioneers enjoyed outdoor riverfront performances by Fleetwood Mac and Kiss sponsored by Gibson, Shure and NAMM itself. But the more characteristic events were the Top Guitarists Night held by Godin, Rane and Homespun Tapes (featuring fingerstyle monsters Martin Simpson, Phil Keaggy, Happy Traum, Charles David Alexander and others) and Washburn's Monster Bash featuring Nashville sons Bone Pony and harmonica hall of famer Charlie McCoy. And, happily, there was a surfeit of stand-out products for players of all persuasions.

ELECTRIC GUITARS & AMPS

One of the electric guitar's possible futures was on display at Samick. It's a guitar-shaped game controller, the Virtual Guitar from Ahead, Inc. (price TBA), that enables you to strum rhythms to prerecorded music and offers slick video feedback—a dude in a skewed baseball cap, in fact, who whines that you're messing up his band when you make a mistake. A more worthy application of cutting-edge technology came from Gibson, which unveiled its on-line storefront on CompuServe. Product information will be available there, of course, but also cool stuff like interactive guitar lessons.

While Brian Moore and Paul Reed Smith were showing not-for-sale axes featuring intricate inlays—the latter a contender for next year's PRS 10th anniversary model—there were new guitars galore in all price ranges. Epiphone rolled out a number of beautiful instruments, led by the feedback-resistant Chet Atkins semihollowbody in several models ($749–$849). The gorgeous Emperor ($929) and Howard

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN & WENDY



Roberts ($1999) reissues, from 1939 and 1960 respectively, are large hollowbody electrics with a classic look and sound.

Yamaha put a new spin on the classic concept with their AEX1500 jazz guitar ($1799), a hollowbody with a combination humbucker/piezo pickup system that yields both electric and acoustic tones. Hamer's Duo-Tone ($1799) likewise bridges the gap between electric and acoustic.

Solidbodies were plentiful as well, including Peavey's upgraded Reactor AX ($499). Fender brought out a left-handed version of the American Standard Stratocaster ($499)—the first lefty Tele to be made in the U.S. since 1984—and Strat-style Squier Bullet ($225–$245, depending on finish and choice of maple or rosewood fretboard). Epiphone added to the Les Paul Collection (now including double cutaways, $749), Aria debuted the U.S.-built 615 ($999), Hamer showed off their koa archtop Mirage ($1499) and Washburn introduced the Korina Nuno Bettencourt N4 signature guitar ($5000), limited to 75 instruments. Also, Fernandes showed a few prototypes to gauge their market potential (the Gibson-scale, Les Paul–style LS75 and alternative-style H85).

When it comes to cranking these babies to 11, there's no shortage of new amps. Peavey introduced the 5150 Combo ($1099), a 2×12 combo version of their Eddie Van Halen head, as well as the Classic 412E and 412ES (prices TBA), mono and stereo cabinets designed to complement their Classic-series heads. Also, there were new amps from Washburn, Epiphone and Laney. Most interesting, though, was Deja Vu's use of solid-state technology to mimic the sound of tubes. Their Amp 11 mainframe ($2000) and line of amp modules (each for a different style of tube amp) boast a remarkably authentic sound.

GUITAR EFFECTS

Lately it has become de rigueur to beef up DSP chips with tubes. To whit: Zoom's Valve DSP 9150 ($599)—"valve" being British for "vacuum tube"—and DigiTech's rackmount Valve FX ($699), a scaled-down GSP-2101 that incorporates Whammy and Grunge effects. (DigiTech's new Legend II, $849, duplicates the Valve FX *sans* valves.) Peavey's rackmount Valverb ($369) recreates the tremolo/spring reverb effects of vintage '60s amps. The final entry in the tube/valve sweepstakes is the Vox V941 Valve Effects Loop Buffer ($199). This unique box inserts into an effect loop between the preamp and effects, matching levels and impedances properly to avoid losses of gain and tone.

Evidently there's still room for non-tube distortion devices as well. DOD introduced no less than four specialized fuzzboxes. First, there's the FX33 Buzz Box ($109), designed in collaboration with the Melvins' Buzz Osbourne. It combines Grunge circuitry with an octave divider for rumbling sub-bass. The TR3V Vintage ($299) meshes two layerable "vintage" tones with a slight pitch shift, while the TRG32 Double Grunge ($299) does the same with more contemporary flavors. The FX86 Death Metal ($109) reportedly creates an "extremely harsh" full-on scream.

Dedicated effects are on the rise, but new multipedal/multieffects continue to appear. Korg's AX30G ($429) offers six simultaneous effects as well as a "pressure pedal" for real-time control over effect parameters. Likewise, DigiTech's RP-10 ($699), an update of the RP-1, includes a treadle pedal capable of controlling ten parameters per patch. Yamaha's GW33 ($449) delivers eight simultaneous analog and digital effects, as does another analog/digital hybrid, ART's ECC Effects Command Center ($399). ART offers an accessory pedal, the AP-1 ($89), for volume and wah with the ECC, that works as a MIDI continuous controller pedal with their new X-12 MIDI Master Controller ($154).

ACOUSTIC GUITARS & AMPS

The acoustic boom continues fueled by design innovations by the likes of Taylor, which displayed its 20th Anniversary model ($3498, touted as their best guitar yet). Martin redesigned the D1 for a lower price range yielding the D-1R ($1250; see p. 72). Yamaha introduced the FJ681 and FJ661 Country Jumbos, intended for country-and-western sounds, as is Epiphone's EJ-200 Jumbo cowboy guitar. Recreating popular models from the turn of the century, Washburn debuted the D42 dreadnought ($799) and J28 jazz guitar ($799), both made of solid spruce and mahogany and featuring an unusual historic headstock.

Ovation and sister company Takamine debuted a bevy of acoustic/electric models including the extra-long-scale DS768 (designed to be tuned a full step lower than usual, $1595), the Roundback Mandolin ($1395) and a pricey custom doubleneck ($9000). The Celebrity CC148GS ($629) and Celebrity Deluxe CC247H ($749) feature mid-depth bowls with laminated spruce tops, while the Ultradeluxe 1517S ($699) boasts a solid top plus abalone rosette. Takamine expanded the limited-edition Santa Fe line with four new models in various configurations ($1199–1599). Also new from Takamine are the Natural Series EG15C (mahogany back and sides, cedar top; $749) and EG10C (rosewood back and sides, cedar top; $499) and a smaller-body cutaway acoustic/electric, the EF216 ($799), available in black or brown sunburst.

More acoustic guitars sold means more support products for acoustic players. Roland introduced its first "acoustic guitar amp" combo, the AC-100 ($1095), featuring 100 Watts of triamped power plus stereo chorus, reverb and notch filter. One nice detail (among many): Reverb is reproduced only by the two 5" speakers, not by the 12", for better articulation. Also, Trace Acoustic added a new combo, the Concert TA 200 (1×12, 100 Watts).

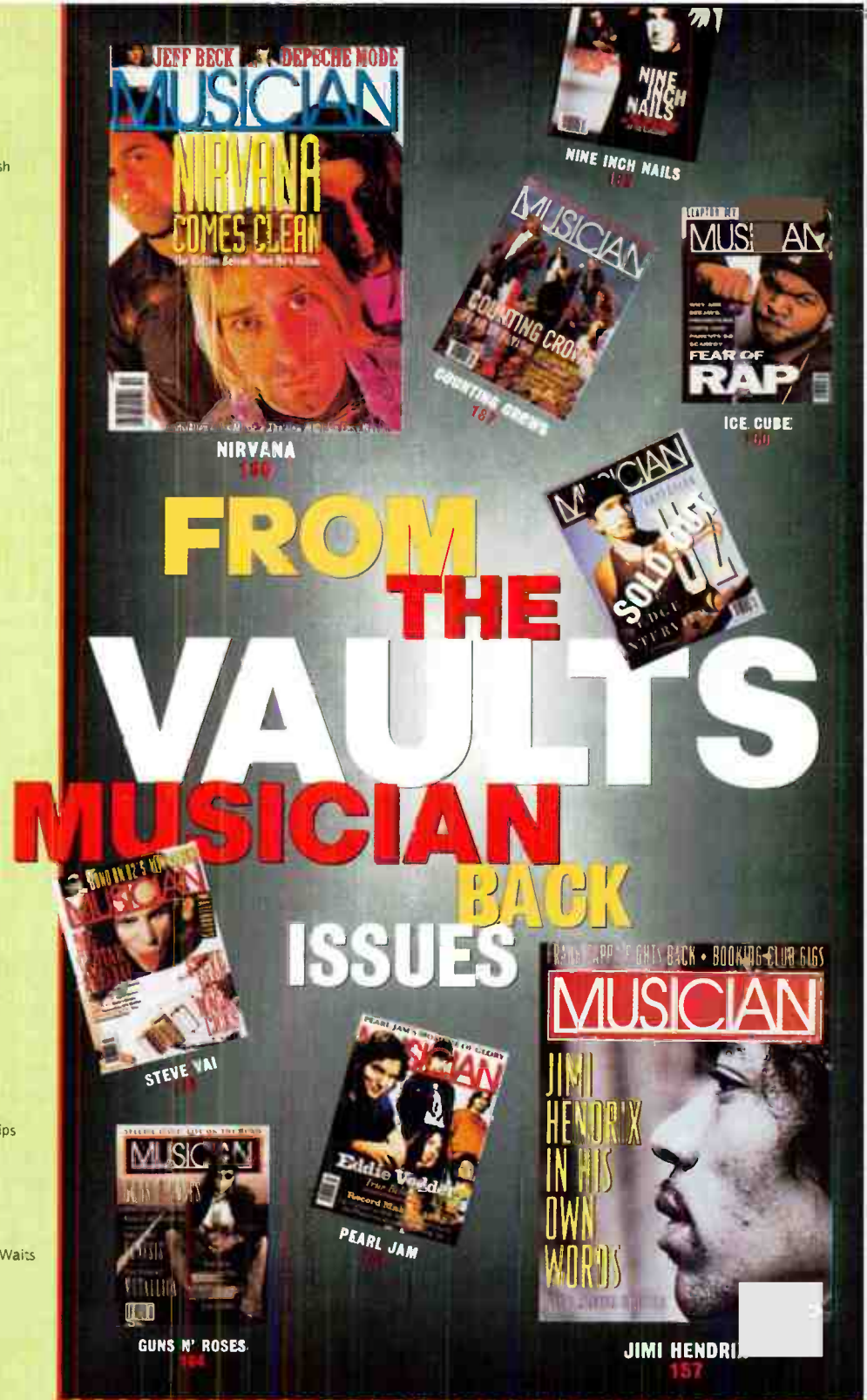
BASSES, AMPS & EFFECTS

New basses were split pretty evenly between electric solidbodies and acoustic bass guitars. Peavey showed off their upgraded Accelerator Plus ($749), made of swamp ash with a pau ferro fingerboard, while Aria introduced their Steve Bailey signature model with four, five or six strings (ash body, bolt-on maple neck; $899–$1199). Ibanez touted the new ATK series ($699–$799, see p. 73) as an alternative to their Soundgear basses, featuring thicker necks, active electronics and redesigned pickups.

As for acoustics, now there's a five-string version of Ovation's extra-long Acoustic Bass ($2100), and Epiphone debuted the El Capitan jumbo-body bass ($949). Takamine's Jasmine ES100C four-string cutaway ($649–$689), made of laminated mahogany and spruce or maple, is available in four finishes.

Fender introduced two practice amps for bass, the BXR 15 (15W, 1×8; $199) and BXR 25 (25W, 1×10; $279). Nonetheless, the trend in bass amps is toward more and more (and

102	4/87	Robert Cray, Los Lobos, Simply Red
104	6/87	Springsteen, The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
112	2/88	McCartney, Stanley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
113	3/88	Robert Plant, INXS, Wynton Marsalis
115	5/88	Stevie Wonder, Sonny Rollins, Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash
116	6/88	Sinead O'Connor, Neil Young, Tracy Chapman
118	8/88	Pink Floyd, New Order, Smithereens
119	9/88	ZZ Top, Carlos Santana/Wayne Shorter, Vernon Reid
120	10/88	Keith Richards, Crowded House, Depeche Mode
121	11/88	Prince, Steve Winwood, Randy Newman
122	12/88	Guns N' Roses, Midnight Oil, Glyn Johns
123	1/89	Year in Music '88, Metallica, Jack Bruce, Fishbone
125	3/89	Elvis Costello, Jeff Healey, Sonic Youth
126	4/89	Lou Reed, John Cale, Joe Satriani
128	6/89	Peter Gabriel, Charles Mingus, Husker Du
129	7/89	The Who, The Cure, Ziggy Marley
131	9/89	Jeff Beck, Laura Nyro, Billy Sheehan
133	11/89	The '80s, Daniel Lanois, Syd Straw
135	1/90	Aerosmith, NRBQ, Richard Thompson
137	3/90	George Harrison, The Kinks, Abdullah Ibrahim
138	4/90	Tom Petty, Lenny Kravitz, Rush, The Silos
139	5/90	Paul McCartney, Cecil Taylor, Kronos Quartet
140	6/90	Robert Plant, Suzanne Vega, Soul II Soul, Drums
143	9/90	Steve Vai, Michael Stipe, Malmsteen/McLaughlin
144	10/90	INXS, Neville Bros., Lou Reed/Vaclav Havel
146	12/90	Slash, Replacements, Waterboys, Pixies
147	1/91	Robert Johnson, Bruce Hornsby, Soul Asylum
148	2/91	Pink Floyd, Neil Young, Art Blakey, Black Crowes
149	3/91	Jerry Garcia/Elvis Costello, NWA, Pink Floyd
150	4/91	R.E.M., Top Managers' Roundtable, AC/DC
151	5/91	Eddie Van Halen, Fishbone, Byrds, Chris Isaak
152	6/91	Stevie Ray Vaughan, Morrissey, Drum Special
153	7/91	Bonnie Raitt, Tim Buckley, Sonny Rollins
154	8/91	15th Anniversary Issue, Sting, Stevie Wonder
155	9/91	Paul McCartney, Axl Rose, David Bowie
156	10/91	Dire Straits, Jesus Jones, McCartney Part 2
157	11/91	Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Primus, Eddy/Fogerty
158	12/91	Miles Davis, Robbie Robertson, Massive Attack
159	1/92	Megadeals!, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
160	2/92	Fear of Rap, Eric Clapton
162	4/92	Def Leppard, k.d. lang, Live
163	5/92	Drugs, Booze & Creativity, Lyle Lovett, Mikes
164	6/92	Guns N' Roses, Metallica, Genesis
165	7/92	Led Zeppelin, Faith No More, T-Bone Burnett/Sam Phillips
166	8/92	David Gilmour, Robert Wyatt/Bill Nelson
167	9/92	U2, Big Guitar Special, George Harrison
168	10/92	Playing with Elvis Presley, Producer's Special
170	12/92	Roger Waters, Prince, Bob Weir
171	1/93	Best of '92: Extreme, Chili Peppers, Bobby Brown, Tom Waits
172	2/93	100 Greatest Guitarists, Paul Simon, Robben Ford
173	3/93	Mick Jagger, Hothouse Flowers, Annie Lennox
174	4/93	Neil Young/Peter Buck, Henry Rollins, Sting
175	5/93	World Party, Stevie Ray Vaughan, PJ Harvey
176	6/93	Speech/Curtis Mayfield, Soul Asylum, Chris Isaak
177	7/93	Pete Townshend, Getting Signed, Primus
178	8/93	Guitar Special, Steve Vai, Bono, Waterboys
179	9/93	Steely Dan, Belly/Breeders, Daniel Lanois
180	10/93	Nirvana, Jeff Beck, Depeche Mode, Verve
181	11/93	Pearl Jam, Counting Crows, Liz Phair, Producer's Special
182	12/93	End of the Music Business, Lemonheads, The Band
183	1/94	Flea, Bill Graham, Max Roach
184	2/94	Zappa, Jeff Buckley, Slash, DAT
185	3/94	Nine Inch Nails, Elvis Costello, Kate Bush
186	4/94	Lyle Lovett, Soundgarden, AAA Radio, Afghan Whigs
187	5/94	Counting Crows, Rickie Lee Jones/Leo Kottke, Bjork
188	6/94	Decline of English Rock, James, Perry Farrell
189	7/94	Jazz Special, Branford Marsalis, Smashing Pumpkins
SP1		Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones



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more) power. The new Peavey Classic 4000 tube head ($1499) puts out 400W. Marshall's 7400 series ($1199–$1799) doubles that. Gallien-Krueger showcased the 2000RB head and 410+ cabinet, a 1000W system. Meanwhile, Trace Elliot offers the AH1200SM ($1795), which boasts 2400W into 4 Ohms! The extra juice is not for loudness but for tone, while the additional headroom affords improved definition and transient response.

As for effects, the new options are decidedly eclectic. ART offers a bass multipedal, the BCC Bass Command Center ($399). There's also a bass-optimized version of Tech 21's SansAmp, the Bass Driver DI ($225), and of DigiTech's Whammy, the Bass Whammy ($299). In a way, DOD's FX32 Meat Box ($109) may be the ultimate bass pedal: It adds a subharmonic one octave lower than the input.

DRUMS

While the rest of the world is occupied with building a better fuzzbox, manufacturers working the drum market are on an innovative roll. Korg's cutting-edge WD1 WaveDrum ($2500; see p. 73), announced last January, was given its first public showing. It fully lived up to the hype. Not only did it play a range of sounds from realistic congas to natural-sounding fantasy percussion, it actually responded as though it were an acoustic instrument.

A new company called Zendrum is taking the opposite approach, designing an instrument that suits the technology rather than inventing technology that matches real drums. Their Z-1 ($1350) is a wedge-shaped maple board studded with 24 velocity-sensitive trigger pads. Meanwhile, Roland continues to update the conventional drum kit with the entry-level TD-5K system ($1795), a complete electronic set that boasts a response time of 3ms.

KEYBOARDS & AMPS

Based on a new custom chip, Roland's JV-1080 synth module ($1695) looks like a powerhouse: 64 voices, 16 multitimbral parts, three pairs of stereo outs, General MIDI mode. But the real selling point is that it accommodates up to four expansion boards ($450 each), each with eight megs of sampled sounds. That's a total ROM capacity of 32 megs! Their latest expansion board is the SR-JV80-05 World, packed with exotic ethnic sounds.

The JV-1080 serves to illustrate that, in the midyear crop of keys, refinement wins out over innovation. Kurzweil pumped more power into the K2000 with a OS update, Version 3 ($20–$150, depending on your hardware configuration), which adds a 32-track sequencer, file management functions and other enhancements, and packed new sounds into the expanded PC88-MX master keyboard ($2750). The PC88-MX has new competition in Oberheim's Eclipse ($2150), an 88-key weighted controller with a basic complement of sounds. Oberheim also introduced the OB-3 organ module featuring actual drawbars and Leslie simulation.

Korg upgraded their X3 workstation with four outputs and a two-meg piano sound to produce the 73-key X2 ($2100), at the same time slimming it down into the 61-key X5 ($1099). Also, Korg's *i* series now includes the *i*4S ($2800), capable of automatically harmonizing a right-hand melody based on chords played by the left hand. The S-4 from Alesis ($999) is a QuadraSynth in a rack-mount case with all-new factory sounds and additional effect configurations.

Also, there were two new keyboard amps, from Fender and Yorkville. Fender's KXR 100 ($499) is a 100-Watt combo with three channels, including an XLR input. The beefier Yorkville 300K ($1149) offers five channels with 150W/channel stereo and also includes an XLR jack.

SOFTWARE

You can put all those synths to use with MOTU's Freestyle for the Mac ($199). Designed primarily for songwriting, Freestyle simplifies creating, arranging, and recording over patterns, making it possible to build a composition interactively as the music plays and easing the transitions between pattern-oriented and linear compositional approaches. Freestyle will be bundled with all Korg keyboards until January 1995.

Steinberg's MusicStation sequencer/notator for IBM/Windows ($199) also incorporates forward-looking features, including auto-accompaniment with user-definable styles. WavePlayer ($49), also from Steinberg, enables a MIDI keyboard to trigger samples directly from a PC's hard disk, turning the computer/soundboard combination

into a full-fledged sampler; in conjunction with MusicStation, it enables digital audio to be played in sync with sequences. Jump! Software, which acquired the ConcertWare sequencing/notation program from Great Wave, introduced an updated Mac version ($159) and announced a version for IBM/Windows ($159).

At the Fender exhibit, Lyrrus showed off the latest version of the G-Vox guitar instruction system. A new IBM/Windows driver called Bridge ($499 with hardware, $129 without) allows you to use your guitar as a MIDI controller/input device for Midisoft's Recording Session, Howling Dog's Power Chords and for other compatible sequencers.

Most unusual software concept: The MIDI Renderer from DiAcoustics ($69). Give the Renderer a MIDI file and it delivers an audio file suitable for playback on most IBM sound cards—presumably orchestrating and mixing your masterpiece in the process. This might be useful to multimedia developers and, as DiAcoustics suggests, those with cheesy-sounding synthesizers in their sound cards.

PROCESSORS

Increasingly, effects boxes are dedicated to a single function, and they're doing it better than they did when their microprocessors were computing seven other effects at the same time. Yamaha's D5000 delay ($1499) is a prime example, delivering high-end sound (20-bit, 50kHz) at a midline price.

Other new delay boxes introduced at the show include the ART DXR ($279) and DXR Elite (MIDI-controlled, $349). Roland took the 3D capabilities out of their SRV330 reverb to offer the RV-70 ($499). Zoom and ART are nipping at their heels with the budget-priced Zoom Studio 1202 ($249) and ART RXR ($279) and RXR Elite (MIDI-controlled, $349). Compressors were also plentiful at the show, represented by models from ART, dbx, Behringer and Audio Logic.

All of which doesn't mean that multieffects are a dead issue. Alesis delivered a one-two punch with the QuadraVerb 2 (eight simultaneous effects plus digital I/O, $799) and Midiverb 4 (four simultaneous effects, $399). Also, ART introduced the FXR (preset, $249) and FXR Elite (programmable, $329), which provide four simultaneous effects through two independent channels.

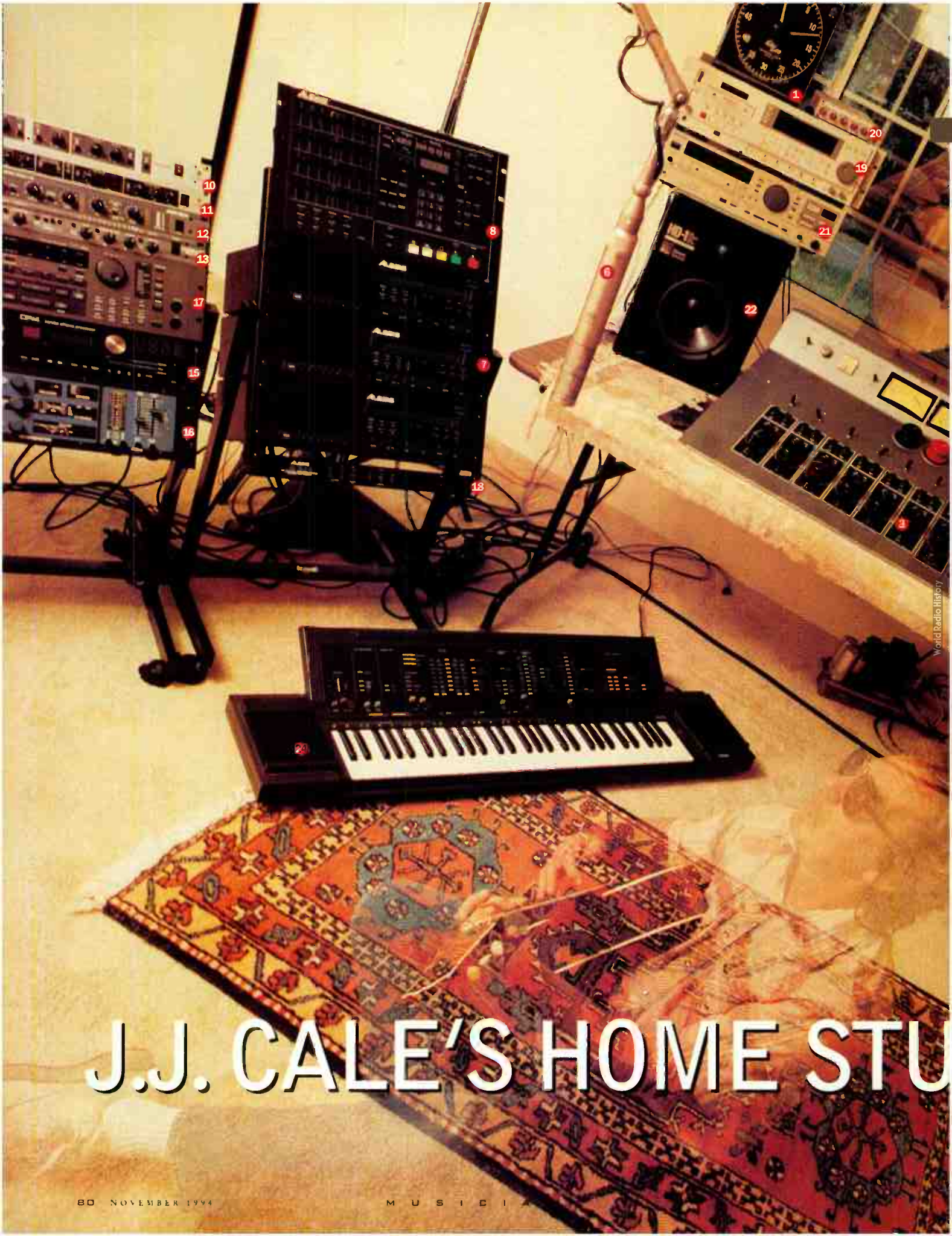
SOUND REINFORCEMENT & RECORDING

The mixer wars that flared in the wake of digital eight-track decks from Alesis, Tascam and Fostex have abated, but mixers continue to roll off the assembly lines boasting ever more bang for the buck. Yamaha's ProMix 01, an all-digital eight-channel mixer for live applications that lists for $1995, leads the pack.

Wouldn't it be nice to program levels and EQ for each club you play in town and simply recall the settings you need each time you play there? Fender's year-old Pro Audio division rolled out the MX-5200 ($2999), a general-purpose console featuring 32 inputs, six aux sends and four buses. An automation retrofit is on the way. Soundcraft introduced two recording mixers, the Spirit Studio LC ($2999–$5999) and small Spirit Folio Lite ($369).

To get signals into these consoles, there are new mikes from Audio-Technica, Sennheiser and Azden. Azden also introduced a nifty wireless transmitter, the 31XT ($405), that plugs into the XLR jack on any balanced microphone. And for getting them back out, there are power amps from Yamaha (the P series, $429–$2899) and Alesis (their first foray into sound reinforcement, the Matica 500, $549, and Matica 900, $699). New stage speakers were shown by Celestion, Yorkville, Community and E-V—among the standouts were Celestion's CR151X ($459) and CR181X ($649) powered subwoofers, with crossovers and amps built in—while studio monitors were debuted by Yamaha and SoundTech.

NAMM's twice-yearly superabundance of cool stuff is, by now, par for the course. But that shouldn't obscure the amazing industriousness and creativity of those who design and manufacture musical equipment—their ongoing success in addressing the changing needs of musicians and delivering greater value for money, not to mention their willingness to take a chance on untested ideas. Of course, musicians will choose whether to stand by a beloved axe or trade it in for the newest whiz-bang model (or go for broke by owning both). But it is precisely through such choices that new music is made, new styles emerge, and new sounds are heard.



J.J. CALE'S HOME STU

FAST FORWARD

TULSA-BORN J.J. Cale, who penned the oft-covered songs "After Midnight," "Cocaine" and "Call Me the Breeze" more than two decades ago, epitomizes cool. So does his studio, where half the tunes from his new album *Closer to You* were recorded. Note the **Gralab Universal Timer** ❶, which may be outmoded but looks fab, as does the illuminated **"recording" sign** ❷, a replica of RCA's old-time model built by Cale's consulting engineer Paul McManus.

But most of the relics in Cale's southern California digs aren't just for show. Take the **Universal Audio 610** mixer ❸, a faderless 1962 model. "The nice thing about it," Cale observes, "is that it gives you that bad sort of distorted sound." He also uses a **Neve** 8×2 board ❹. Note also the **Shure 520 Dispatcher** microphone ❺, the "Green Bullet" that, according to Cale, "harmonica players would kill you for at one time." He uses a hanging **AKG C-24** tube mike from 1965 ❻ "for ambience, or just to plug directly into DAT, since it's stereo."

Cale controls three **Alesis ADATs** ❼ via an **Alesis BRC** remote ❽. He also has a **Tascam DA-88** digital eight-track ❾ for recording on the road. "It will record for over an hour," he explains. "The Alesis will only record for 40 minutes." Hapless sounds run through an assortment of signal processors, including **Behringer SNR 202** noise reduction ❿ and **Ultrafex EX3000** multiband enhancer ⓫, **Aphex Dominator II 723** ⓬ and **Compellor 320** ⓭ compressor/limiters as well as a **Teletronix LA-2A** ⓮, an **Ensoniq DP/4** multiprocessor ⓯ and a **Lexicon 200** reverb ⓰.

Cale does his editing on an **Akai DR4d** hard-disk recorder ⓱ (an **Alesis AI-1** digital interface ⓲ ports audio from the ADATs). "Once you learn how to use it," he comments, "boy—you can edit a whole lot faster than with a razor blade on analog tape." Final mixes are recorded to two DAT decks—a **Fostex D-10** ⓳ (which supports an **Apogee AD500** analog-to-digital converter ⓴) and a **Panasonic SV-3700** ㉑—and play back through **Meyer Sound HD-1** monitors ㉒.

Assorted oddities round out the collection, such as a **Linn LM-1** drum machine ㉓. Keyboard sounds come from a **Yamaha PortaTone** ㉔ and **Kurzweil 1000PX Plus** module ㉕. As for the **Ursa Major Space Station SST-282** ㉖, "we put that up there as a joke," he grins. "It gives you an ungodly weird sound—it sounds like the '60s or something."

Sixty-five guitars occupy the premises, Cale admits. Among his favorites: a pickup-equipped **Martin**, a collectible 1960 **Gibson Les Paul 335** and a **Casio PG360** guitar synth. And then there's the 1929 **Gibson** acoustic he couldn't resist electrifying. Holding it to his face, he offers a sly smile. "Now don't that smell like Grandma's old clothing?"

BY DAVE DIMARTINO

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUSAN WERNER

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Flattery Gets You Nowhere

VARIOUS ARTISTS

No Prima Donna: The Songs of Van Morrison
(POLYDOR)
If I Were a Carpenter
(A&M)
Melody Fair
(EGGBERT)

IF EVERY MAJOR POP ARTIST DIED THIS minute in a plane crash, the record store grunts who stick tribute CDs in the Various Artists racks wouldn't know the difference—and if they did, they might be happy there'd be fewer musicians around paying tribute in the first place. Want a good time? 1) Print up some official-looking stationery embossed with the name of a fake charity 2) Send out a form letter to the managers of some of the more conspicuous bands who show up on these things, and 3) Ask if their artist would like to appear on a special tribute to (blank). See how low some groups will sink. Bachman-Turner Overdrive? *Sure thing!* Redbone? *You bet!* Foghat? *The Godhead themselves!*

What makes most tribute albums useless, of course, is that by definition most should be heard precisely once. After that, astute consumers will theoretically hightail it back to the record store to pick up the complete works of the original artist and thus enjoy the Real Thing forever after. And that's nothing to laugh at: If every R.E.M. fan in the world picked up *I'm Your Fan*, Atlantic Records' 1991 tribute to Leonard Cohen, he would be rich and new Cohen initiates even richer.

One therefore has to hand it to Van Morrison, at this point the only artist (with the possible exception of James Brown) cool enough to produce a tribute album to his own sweet self. Unfortunately, because he did, it's nothing special: Irish singer Brian Kennedy, who pranced around onstage on Vanno's last tour, shows up here twice (once even with Morrison's daughter); professional Morrison imitators Hothouse Flowers boldly imitate Morrison; and, worst of all, the song selection is uninspired and predictable. Only exception: Marianne Faithfull covering "Madame George," which hints at what might've happened if Morrison hadn't participated and his fascinating Bang Records catalog had been tapped.

Most interesting in the world of trendy tributedom is the simple question *who's left?* Now that Nick Drake, the Byrds, Jimi Hendrix, Curtis Mayfield, the Rolling Stones, Captain Beefheart, Neil Young, the Velvet Underground, Gram Parsons, Syd Barrett and Brian Wilson (among too many others) have been taken, what's the alternative? There are two, actually. First, predictably moronic corporate moneymakers—the Eagles redone by country artists and, soon, Led Zeppelin featuring the Stone Temple Pilots and the Beatles sung by (get this) country artists. The second option? Tributes to uncool artists. Thus, one supposes, this tribute to the Carpenters—who in fact have been much enjoyed by cool people since their 1970 A&M debut, people very likely cooler than the spotty alternative talents (Babes in Toyland, 4 Non Blondes and the

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS

WEEN MIXES UP SOME CHOCOLATE AND CHEESE

BEFORE *CHOCOLATE AND CHEESE*, Ween took a fairly casual attitude toward making its albums. "We never demoed songs, ever," says Dean Ween. "With our other records, we did it on a four-track, and that's what you got. To most people, that would be a demo."

So what brought about the relative professionalism of this album? In a word, money. "We used half of our advance towards a studio," says Gene Ween. As a result, *Chocolate and Cheese* was recorded using 16 ADAT tracks, with the help of what Dean laughingly describes as "a multimillion-dollar computer system."

Going high-tech didn't alter the group's ingeniously amateurish sound, in part because the Weeners rarely used their gadgets the way they were intended. Take the Digitech Whammy pedal: Most folks think of it as a guitar effect, but as Dean says, "We used it on everything."

"We used to use pitch control, but now we've graduated to the Whammy," adds Gene.

"Yeah, the ADATs don't pitch up and down very far," continues Dean. "So we had to Whammy-tize it."

Chocolate and Cheese features the new "expanded" line-up, with two new members augmenting Gene and Dean's contributions. As Gene says, Ween prefers players who know how to suck. "If you're a really good musician, you'll understand sucking when you have to," explains Dean. "Like, if you say, 'I want the song to sound this way'—not necessarily tight and technical, a good musician will get that, because he sees all of the circle. But any lesser musician won't."

"Right," agrees Dean. "Comes in and plays Eric Johnson shit on your record."

Despite all the new gear and studio time, neither Gene nor Dean feels that Ween lost any of its celebrated spontaneity this time out. "The spontaneity is just well-calculated," says Gene, as Dean chortles in the background.

"It's a very satanic record," says Dean, "but not in the usual 666 sort of way. It's more like underlying evil that we got to dole out."

—J.D. Considine

very ordinary Cranberries) here whose sense of irony far surpasses their musical ability. Despite some dandy performances (American Music Club, Sonic Youth, Sheryl Crow), the same people digging on this album would have been buying blues records made by white college kids in the '60s.

Still, the best album of the recent bunch worships at yet another unhip altar. *Melody Fair* covers the vastly underrated early works of the Bee Gees, who between 1967 (*Bee Gees First*) and 1970 (*Cucumber Castle*) recorded some of the best pop songs you've probably never heard. No superstar names here (Material Issue, Young Fresh Fellows and Dramarama are as famous as it gets), but somewhere between "Kilburn Towers" and "Turn of the Century" you might want to go out, plop down the dollars, and get the Brothers Gibb the new white suits they—and, ultimately, all of us waiting patiently for that new Styx tribute—so desperately need.

—Dave DiMartino

ERIC CLAPTON

From the Cradle

(REPRISE)

THERE'S JUST NO GETTING AROUND IT: As heartfelt and well-intentioned as it might be, *From the Cradle*—Eric Clapton's all-covers homage to the American blues music that, as the title implies, has been his very lifeblood as a musician and an artist—is a confounding disappointment. By all expectations, this should have been a monumental recording event. Sixteen classics by the likes of Muddy Waters, Freddy King, Elmore James, Willie Dixon, Lowell Fulson, Jimmy Rogers, Leroy Carr, Eddie Boyd and Charles Brown, as interpreted by one of the greatest (some would say *the* greatest) white blues musicians of all time. How could it not turn out spectacularly?

Well, that's where the confounding part comes in. First of all, this is a very sloppy album. Clapton may have thought that recording live in the studio (there are no edits and virtually no overdubs) would give the performances a spontaneous feel, just like those 1950s Muddy Waters band Chess recordings that so inspired him as a youngster in England. But the beauty of tracks like Waters' "Standin' Round Crying" or Jimmy Rogers' "Blues Leave Me Alone" is the instinctual interaction of the ensemble, where all the pieces work together; phrases started by one instrument are finished by another, and all complement each other in service of the whole. Such is not the

case here, unfortunately. With the notable exceptions of drummer Jim Keltner and second guitarist Andy Fairweather-Low, all the instruments sound like they're competing with each other—especially pianist Chris Stainton, whose nonstop showboating is both distracting and annoying. Great blues music, as Clapton has demonstrated throughout his career, is as much about what not to play as it is about what to play. (It's probably no mistake that the best tracks here are the three relatively unadorned acoustic tracks, and that the album's most memorable moment is the solo performance of Charles Brown's "Driftin' Blues.")

More problematic than all the cacophony, though, is Clapton's singing. On many of these songs, he self-consciously tries to emulate the vocals of the original recordings, and the results are not only confoundingly affected, but often embarrassing. Case in point: "Hoochie Coochie Man," on which Clapton attempts a note-for-note recreation of Waters' ferocious original vocal, and fails weakly. Nearly 30 years ago, on his first recorded vocal ever, Eric Clapton didn't try to sing, or play, like his hero Robert Johnson on the Bluesbreakers' version of "Ramblin' on My Mind." He just tried to sound like himself—and, in the process, started down the path that led him to that all too elusive key to the highway. That recording and its *Bluesbreakers* companion, the ground-breaking reading of Freddy King's "Hideaway," ultimately remain more successful, and important, homages than anything on *From the Cradle*. —Billy Altman

HOUSE PARTY

What Are You Listening to Lately?

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

1. Kurt Weill—Berlin im Licht
2. Miles Davis—Kind of Blue
3. Tony Scott—Music for Zen Meditation
4. Africa Fete '94
5. Arthur Alexander—Lonely Just Like Me

MICK MARS

1. War—Greatest Hits
2. Jeff Beck—Anthology
3. Sly & the Family Stone—Greatest Hits
4. Trapeze—You're the Music, We're Just the Band
5. Hole—Live Through This

STEWART COPELAND

1. anything by Desmond Dekker or the Specials
2. US3—Hand or the Torch
3. Pearl Jam—Vs.
4. Oliver Knussen—The Wild Things
5. John Adams—Klinghoffer

KRONOS QUARTET

Night Prayers

(ELEKTRA/NONESUCH)

NONE OF THIS WILL SHOW UP ON EASY listening stations. The mood here is pensive, darkly religious. The composer/collaborators, all mostly unknown to American audiences, all tied somehow to Russian satellite countries, are enjoying newfound freedom after years of official censorship. Moslem, Jew, Catholic—they now express themselves openly in traditional settings, thanks to the break-up of the Soviet state. If this ain't world music, nothing is.

There are many highlights. As with their best-selling *Pieces of Africa*, the Kronos usually provides the rhythm for their collaborators, who here include the Throat Singers of Tuva, American soprano Dawn Upshaw, cantor Misha Alexandrovich and duduk player Djivan Gasparian. When they perform alone, especially in settings by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Sofia Gubaidulina and, in the record's centerpiece, "Night Prayers" by Giya Kancheli, the playing is strong. Frequently the quartet's inner voices, violinist John Sherba and violist Hank Dutt, take up the rhythmic duties or drones, while intense leader David Harrington and attentive cellist Joan Jeanrenaud seek out melody. The music is difficult but rarely atonal. Appreciation grows with several listenings.

Here as usual with KQ there is gimmickry: ping-pong balls bouncing off strings, tape looping, otherworldly singing. Call it one-of-a-kind playing, if you're more favorably disposed to adventurous music. While the religious subtext creates a thematic unity sometimes missing in KQ releases, it also spotlights the omission of Estonian minimalist Arvo Pärt, whose *Fratres* Kronos recorded in 1988, and whose vision of sacred music demands inclusion in this group of composers.

When Kronos Quartet first struck, they epitomized the postmodern dictum: not "make it new," but "make it *look* new." The classical world still sneers that they are not at the top level of players, that their popularity has more to do with attitude and clothes than with musicianship. Time to get hip. The strength of this

CRANBERRIES

group is their dedication to new composition, their willingness to explore any number of musical collaborations, to tour, rehearse and record with incredible dedication. *Night Prayers* brings to life music of great integrity that has gone unheard far too long.

—Keith Powers

THE CRANBERRIES

No Need to Argue

(ISLAND)

CRANBERRIES WARBLER DOLORES O'RIORdan is a fine-feathered ornithologist's dream. In the space of one 13-track album—the Irish quartet's sophomore outing, *No Need to Argue*—she whoops like a loon, caws like a rook, trills like a meadowlark and chitters nervously like a small wren defending its nest from a predator. And the Limerick lass does it all with the loopy laissez-faire of a mimic-happy mockingbird; it's a fine operatic trapeze act, full of pluck and some genuine Sinéad O'Connor–school acumen. Trouble is, O'Riordan's intent often eclipses her material's content, giving her the look of a one-trick pony trotting in shticky circles.

Throughout most of the Celtic-flavored songs, the just-wed O'Riordan repeatedly says goodbye and good riddance to an ex-lover. Sometimes, her message is majestic—bolstered by a cathedral organ on the title track, her voice flutters down over the lyrics, warm as a hearth fire. Often, she's simply too hooked on phonics. Above the rumbling bass and big U2 chords of "I Can't Be with You," her chorus hovers a bit too long: "Be with yew-hoo-ooh...You're not heeh-eeh-huhr." By now, you begin to get the idea why the guy's no longer around—birdwatcher Roger Tory Peterson would toss his binoculars and run for the door.

But when things fall into place for the Cranberries, when the musicians match O'Riordan in both volume and velocity, this record ignites. "Ridiculous Thoughts" finds her double-tracking in on her own vocal etchings, painting a surreal choral panorama while Noel Hogan's six-string jangles and a tambourine rattles with '60s folk fervor. When the chorus of "You're gonna have to hold on to me-ee-ee-eee" finally hits, it's an inspiring moment, something that grabs you and lifts you up into its live-for-the-moment idealism. Ditto for "Zombie," a dissonant grunge-tempered reflection on the 1916 Irish war for independence, and how its lofty idealism was coopted and corrupted by the latter-day IRA. "You see it's not me/It's not my family/In your head," O'Riordan chastises bomb-wielding rebels, and repeatedly growls the putdown "Zoh-hum-bee, zoh-hum-bee" until the vitriol comes to a full boil. Suddenly the helpless wren becomes a killer kestrel, swooping in for the political kill.

And that's when you know that—despite her occasional stylistic excesses—O'Riordan is a unique new talent in pop music, a hot young diva still searching for the perfect libretto. She may not have found it with *No Need to Argue*, but—as in the bird world—even the peacock doesn't sprout all that colorful plumage overnight.

—Tom Lanham

DIGABLE PLANETS

Blowout Comb

(PENDULUM/ERG)

STILL 'PEACE LIKE DAT,' BUT I'M slicker this year," proclaims Doodlebug of Digable Planets at one point on *Blowout Comb*, the rap trio's second album. It's a cliché in hip-hop to "come back hard"—that is, address charges of selling out or "softness" by grimacing on album covers and whatnot—one usually perpetrated by rappers who weren't too tough in the first place. Digable Planets haven't gone down that road on *Comb*, but they're taken a step back from *Reachin' (A New Refutation of Time and Space)*'s jazzbo posturing, opting instead for a messier, more funk-oriented approach. The trio has loosened up, experimenting more with live instrumentalists and delving deeper into '70s miscellany—Ladybug rides a funky Meters cymbal crash throughout "Black Ego," the crew apes TV show themes on "NY 21 Theme" and "Agent 7 Creamy Spy Theme," and a touch of sitar appears on "The Art of Easing."

DIGABLE PLANETS

It's still sometimes hard to tell whether their elliptical rhymes are deep thoughts or jive, but they're not hitting us with ersatz cool-cat lingo anymore. When the trio isn't dropping in messages of black empowerment into their verses, *Comb*'s lyrics are more of a lifestyle advertisement for the Digable's current home city (Brooklyn) and the byways and public transportation system of New York City. The Digables have a bohemian outsider's love of the five boroughs (only Doodlebug is from NYC), amplified by hip-hop's tradition of territoriality. Street names are rattled off like Old Testament prophets, subway stops are sacred crossroads, and the Bronx is Mecca. And downtown Manhattan is where they clothes-shop—Butterfly is more interested in boasting about his "crepe sole clogs" than a 9mm in his waistband. One of hip-hop's great strengths lies in rappers' ability to mythologize the here and now, and the Digables populate their piece of turf with élan.

At the same time, if the Digables sound as if they snatched an intro or cadence or two from A Tribe Called and De La Soul, it's because they have. The trio has been able to navigate the trends of jazz in hip-hop and now lo-fi successfully, but as of yet they haven't established a voice all of their own, beyond perhaps Ladybug's distinctive phrasings. *Comb* displays the group's winsome style, but after a few listens, one wonders if in the end Digable Planets' music isn't as ephemeral as their whimsical pseudonyms. —Nathan Brackett

JEFF BUCKLEY

Grace

(COLUMBIA)

TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT this confusing, tormented debut:

1. Jeff Buckley can *sing*. We're talking about a voice (a high tenor, sometimes hazy, sometimes clear) that pleads and mourns, a voice that screams in pain, then curls into nothing, like a wisp of vanishing smoke.

2. It's hard to follow what he's singing about. His songs seem to wander, and when finally you realize that, no, they're just complicated—full of whirlpools and parentheses—then you bump against his lyrics. Nearly all of them are about troubled love, and while the theory (expounded in Columbia's official bio) is that they dig down deep, more often they just seem puzzled. Sample, sung to Buckley's about-to-be-former lover in "The Last Goodbye": "Why can't we overcome this wall?"

3. The production, busy as it is with tablas,

strings and shuddering noise, unerringly drapes itself around Buckley's probing guitar. So in one way, at least, this record is a triumph—it's a faultless expansion of Buckley's solo shows in New York clubs. Beyond that...well, if Buckley makes it, he'll very likely be a cult figure, something like a male Tori Amos. If he doesn't, that might be because Amos, once you understand what she's singing about, is pointedly specific. Buckley's most focused performance is, tellingly, not his own music; it's his Edith Piaf cover, "Je N'en Connais Pas La Fin," on his earlier *Live at Sin-é* EP. Singing his own material, he just seems vague. —Greg Sandow

AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB

San Francisco

(REPRISE)

AN AWFUL LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T understand Mark Eitzel. Which figures, since so much of what it is to be the singer/songwriter of American Music Club involves his own struggle to find meaning in the world. However, worse than those who don't know what to make of him are those who think they have his number down. Sure, each American Music Club album features a snail's-paced opener (1991's *Everclear* began with a dead body and a funeral beat) and plenty of self-deprecating jabs, but Eitzel doesn't play a whiner's game. When he sings, "All I have to offer you is archaeology and Christmas," he's really just trying to make the lint in his pocket seem a little more interesting. Unfortunately, he's the most misread black humorist this side of Leonard Cohen.

With *San Francisco*, AMC's seventh(!) album, Eitzel might as well be the poster boy for Prozac—since the tantalizing despair's been augmented by a rhythm section that knows how to move. "Hello Amsterdam" bumps and grinds like T. Rex; "The Revolving Door" slinks around with a metronomic buzz; "It's Your Birthday" and "Wish the World Away" both rock forward with unforeseen propulsion, while "Can You Help Me?" and "I Broke My Promise" catch a swinging Motown groove. When Mark sings, "I can't believe all these stupid things that I'm saying now" over the tightest mid-'70s AM radio groove, the situation's absurdity peaks. Here he is, the most noninvited party guest of the '90s, doing the hustle with the prom queen on her parents' living room rug.

It's not to say that the dissolute spirits of last year's *Mercury* have completely evaporated. "Fearless" and "Cape Canaveral" are both among the group's most sublime efforts. But

ET CETERA

ROBERT EARL KEEN

Gringo Honeymoon

(SUGAR HILL)

THOUGH NOT as heralded as such fellow Texas singer/songwriters as Joe Ely, Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Keen has plenty to offer. He's a highly capable narrative songwriter whose best work (like "The Raven and the Coyote" here) bears the stamp of Marty Robbins; he's also able to update that tradition, as the gruesomely funny Yuletide tale "Merry Christmas from the Family" proves. Keen's homey baritone can also work wonders with wry comedic material such as his hymn to burnt pork "Barbecue" and darkly introspective material like "Dreadful Selfish Crime"; his worth as an interpreter is on display in his reading of Steve Earle's stellar outlaw ballad "Tom Ames' Prayer." Booted along by a lively band that includes ace Austin guitarist Rich Brotherton and ex–E Streeter Garry Tallent, the album is one honeymoon you'll want to tag along on.—*Chris Morris*

BLUEBOY

Unisex

(WIDELY DISTRIBUTED)

NOT EXACTLY a band you want to gush about while weightlifting on Muscle Beach, Blueboy offer most of what is appealing about England's Sarah Records label (from whom it's licensed) in an especially strong package: pretty melodies, tasteful, restrained arrangements and wispy vocalizing by male and female bandmembers. Sounding vaguely like contemporaries of '80s twee bands like early Everything but the Girl, the Marine Girls and Grab Grab the Haddock—but sturdier, with a harder edge—Blueboy are quaint, refreshing and better than many bands with much manlier names, one must note.—*Dave DiMartino*

DIAMANDA GALAS WITH JOHN PAUL JONES

The Sporting Life

(MUTE)

AT TIMES, *The Sporting Life* sounds like the best album Led Zeppelin never made, with Galás' acrobatic, banshee-giving-birth caterwaul subbing for Jimmy Page feedback in a newfangled power trio. Zep bassist Jones even taught John Bonham's best licks to Attractions drummer Pete Thomas. In other spots, Galás spews out gospel-eyed R&B like a cross between Aretha Franklin and Cher singing "Amazing Grace" as decoded by Beelzebub. Black with the sarcasm of her typically maniacal lyrics, *Sporting Life* shows that Galás is still proud to be Prozac-free. The least claustrophobic edition yet of *Lady Squeals the Blues* contrasts Galás' shrieking in tongues with the spare crunch enforced by Jones—making it easier to fall prey to the evil-gal allure. Which is just how black widows like it.—*Tristram Lozaw*

CARLA OLSON

Reap the Whirlwind

(WATERMELON)

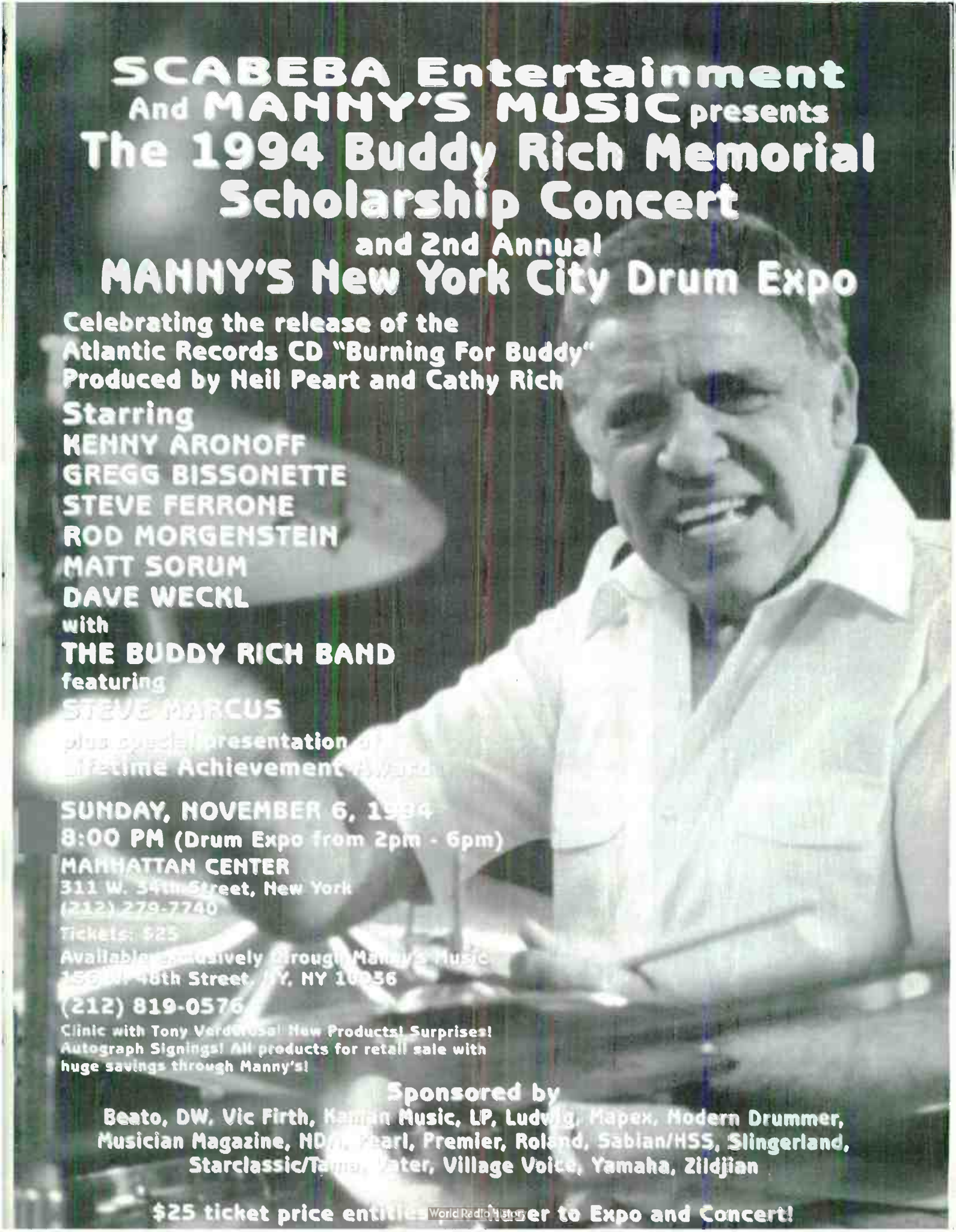
SINCE HER days with the Textones, Texas belter Carla Olson's discs have never quite hit their mark. This time around, Olson seems inspired by stronger material (like the gospel-flavored "Honest as Daylight") which makes her guitar-driven Tex-rock come to life. And it doesn't hurt to have new friends like Percy Sledge joining longtime cohorts Mick Taylor and Ian McLagan. Mark Lindsay surfaces on an unlikely cover of the Raiders' "Ups and Downs."—*Michael Lipton*

WAR

Peace Sign

(AVENUE)

ONE OF the best bits of advice my mother left me with was to always be suspicious of "reunion" projects. Though the current incarnation of War is missing some key members (Lee Oskar, Papa Dee Allen and B.B. Dickerson), this comeback still sounds like a ripe nugget from its funkiest years. With help from oldsters like Lonnie Jordan and Harold Brown, the steady, percolating funk of "Peace Sign" and "Wild Rodriguez" recalls—but doesn't imitate—the hypnotic groove of perennials like "Cisco Kid." Even ballads like "I'm the One" and ode-to-the-'hood "East L.A." are for the most part schmaltz-free. But no matter how good the playing (check out the harp work on "The Smuggler" by newcomer Tetsuya Nakamura), it takes strong tunes to make a good record—and that's what makes this different from a throwaway reprise.—*Michael Lipton*



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REVIEWS

the songs that sound most like what we've come to expect from AMC are, for the most part, the ones whose performances suffer. ("In the Shadow of the Valley" and "The Thorn in My Side Is Gone" sounded fresher during Eitzel's solo acoustic gigs last fall.)

While so much of the focus rests with Mark Eitzel, his cohorts' musical empathy is no small feat. Last time out, it was Vudi's guitar and Bruce Kaphan's pedal steel and piano that led the attack, oozing atmospherics dense enough to worry Brian Eno. This time, drummer Tim Mooney and bassist Danny Pearson couch Eitzel's stretched metaphors and fretted delivery. Could this be the next great American rock band? Either that or the coolest bunch of co-dependents you'd ever like to know.

—Rob O'Connor

VICTORIA WILLIAMS

Loose

(MAMMOTH/ATLANTIC)

TOO BAD IT TOOK MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS to introduce Victoria Williams to the general public, but she exhibits no resentment of the fact on the aptly named *Loose*. Indeed, the object of the Sweet Relief benefit seems almost unburdened by earthly travails on her charming third album, which features the same cheerful singing and ragged folk-rock that marked her previous work. Williams' scraggly tunes suggest conventional noises deconstructed and reassembled with the components in a less obvious order: The pieces don't fit together neatly, yet the songs chug along anyway. Her noisier strokes recall Neil Young with Crazy Horse, only even less polished; the gentler moments have the immediacy of a back-porch improv session.

Regardless of the groove, Williams' willfully offbeat vocals carry the music. Swooping in and out of the sturdy melodies, her irrepressible singing will be an acquired taste for those comfortable in the middle of the road; think of any number of idiosyncratic male artists, from David Byrne to Tom Waits to Michael Stipe, however, and she suddenly sounds less odd. In any case, her exuberance brings a glow to these vignettes of a soul seeking divine light. The lead-off track, "Century Plant," sets the upbeat tone, insisting it's never too late for a new flowering in life, while "Waterfall" and "Get Away" promote simple pleasures like nature and friends. Sure they're corny, but Williams' blissful lack of irony makes such hackneyed subjects attractive again. Skeptics should check out her straight-ahead rendition of "What a Wonderful World," complete with a Van Dyke Parks string arrangement, rendered all the more compelling by awareness of her condition.

Williams really shines on a pair of down-home duets, recruiting Jayhawk Mark Olson for "When We Sing Together," and teaming with Soul Asylum's Dave Pirner on the delightful "My Ally," a rare ode to friendship, instead of romance. Pirner also contributes to a heart-rending version of Spirit's cautionary ecological tale "Nature's Way," where Williams permits herself darker reflections than she's comfortable making thus far in her own songs. Otherwise, *Loose* celebrates the Creator's works, culminating in the devotional "Psalms." Although not everyone in her predicament would feel the same magnanimity—I sure wouldn't—Victoria Williams' generosity of spirit is a welcome tonic, whatever one's faith.

—Jon Young

J.J. CALE

Closer to You

(VIRGIN)

IS J.J. CALE MADE OF FLESH AND BLOOD? You may wonder after experiencing the cool breeze that is *Closer to You*. Like every other Cale album over the last two decades, this enticing country-blues hybrid features shadowy vocals, moonlit guitars and songs seemingly filched from ancient sources, rather than written. Riding grooves containing more air than sound, he could pass for a ghost.

In the tradition of underappreciated geniuses, Cale's impact exceeds his commercial success. Purists may scoff at Eric Clapton, who appropriated the man's style and sensibility in covering "After Midnight" and "Cocaine" way back when, but at least he generated solid royalties for our hero. (Curiously, the *Unplugged* "Layla" suggests Clapton has rediscovered the Cale way of knowledge.) As for Mark Knopfler, he could repay his debt by cutting a whole album of Cale tunes.

Anyway, Cale's nonchalance is so disarming that it comes as a surprise to discover internal tension in his songs. Shaped by grainy textures and an edgy tempo, "Borrowed Time" hints at impending doom, while "Show-Biz Blues" gently debunks the glamor of the footlights. Whenever Cale lapses into conventional stories of love and lust, his musicianly instincts pick up the slack. "Devil's Nurse," for example, tempers corny images of "Satan's lady" and other nonsense with a stinging guitar solo. Besides extensive overdubbing, the subtle use of everything from synths to vocoders belies the image of Cale as a simple good ol' boy. Still, *Closer*'s

most haunting track has the resonance of folk wisdom. The ominous "Brown Dirt" finds him wryly contemplating our final destination—six feet under.

For all his easy grace, Cale projects a steely determination to do things his way, in contrast to the undignified eager-to-please desperation of many performers. Although geezers like Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard convey a similar take-it-or-leave-it attitude, Cale's hazy charisma places him considerably farther from the middle of the road. Right now, in a smarter parallel universe, *Closer to You* has just gone platinum.

—Jon Young

SHORT TAKES

BY J.D. CONSIDINE

R.E.M.
Monster
(WARNER BROS.)

WHAT SETS R.E.M. apart from other alterna-rockers isn't its mainstream success but the way the band breaks new ground without surrendering its identity or accessibility. With its gruff grooves, noisy, pulsing guitars and eccentric, expressive vocals, *Monster* is as much a departure from *Automatic for the People* as *Out of Time* was from *Green*. Yet as different as its surface seems, the band hasn't really changed at all: The songs still stress melody over meaning, the playing still emphasizes the unit over the individuals, and the sound remains as fresh as it was a dozen years ago.

THE LOUD FAMILY
The Tape of Only Linda
(ALIAS)

NOT ONLY are the writer's credits spread more widely this time out, but the band's sound is tighter and tougher than before. While that hardly diminishes the amount of Rundgrenesque gingerbread (check the cheery keyboard hook in "Hyde Street Virgins"), it puts enough muscle behind the melodies to ensure the Louds live up to their name.

SUGAR
File Under Easy Listening
(RYKO)

"SUBTLE" MAY not be the first word that springs to mind when describing the speaker-shredding intensity of Sugar's sound, but it's probably the most apt. Although Bob Mould orchestrates the overdriven roar of guitars with more taste and intelligence than anyone around (listen to the richness of those overtones!), his songs never play the music's sonic impact for cheap thrills, preferring instead to use the melodic life of his pure-pop hooks to add extra resonance to his convoluted, emotionally complex lyrics. Consequently, there's always enough going on beneath the surface of these songs to ensure that the music is as absorbing as it is exhilarating.

LYLE LOVETT
I Love Everybody
(CURB/MCA)

EVER THE strange duck, Lovett celebrates "Penguins," identifies with "Fat Babies" and warns against "Creeps Like Me"—not exactly the stuff of star turns. But unlike his Large Band albums, this one isn't out to dazzle or amuse; it aims to seduce, and does so by building its songs around acutely observed lyrics (from the heartbreaking "Old Friend" to the comic "They Don't Like Me") and exquisitely nuanced, deceptively quiet arrangements.

GREG KIHN
Mutiny
(CLEAN CUTS)

ALTHOUGH THE choice of material and (mostly) acoustic instrumentation may leave this looking like a folkie throwback of sorts, it's really more a matter of getting back to roots—which, in Kihn's case, means everything from unearthing the country blues beneath "I Wish It Would Rain" to finding the melody hidden away in "Subterranean Homesick Blues." As a career move, it's brilliant, since it allows Kihn to shed his power-pop image without sacrificing any of the strengths that made his old stuff hits. But it never *sounds* like a career move, coming across instead as a labor of love—and probably the best thing Kihn has ever recorded.

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

John Henry

(ELEKTRA)

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS' SEEMINGLY INexhaustible supply of good ideas for songs remains seemingly inexhaustible. On *John Henry* (latest in their history of great album titles), Johns Linnell and Flansburgh sing of stuff like thermostats, moon rockets and looking at people in windows.

Stuff, in other words, that is fascinating in a world where Axl Rose is a professional songwriter. Or is that Paul McCartney?

No matter! *John Henry* shows the Linnell/Flansburgh knack for effortless lyrical slyness continues. And a good thing, too. Not just anyone can sing of subliminalism while the guy in the background is adding, "In an unnoticeable way." Or celebrate James Ensor, "Belgium's famous painter" (oh, yeah—*that* James Ensor), urging us to "Dig him up and shake his hand, appreciate the man." Or sing, presumably with a straight face, "One thousand years old, sure you think that's old."

Yeah, well...good call there, Mr. Flansburgh.

Although *John Henry* may contain nothing as instantly engaging as "Birdhouse in Your Soul" or "I Palindrome I," it's loaded with songs that will intrigue and reward the careful listener. "No One Knows My Plan" is a festive, jailbreakin', Mexican Hat Dance of a tune; the chime-filled "Destination Moon" ("Thank you for the card with the cartoon nurse, but you see there's nothing wrong with me") is infectiously rollicking; "Why Must I Be Sad" looks at the world of one disturbed Alice Cooper fan who writes thing down in a spiral notebook. And we may never know if John Linnell was consciously imitating that guy in Crash Test Dummies when he sang "Window," but wouldn't it be cool if he *wasn't*? Most compelling of all is "Unrelated Thing," a genuinely wistful look at a relationship gone way, way south. It's the most unTMBGish song on *John Henry*—starkly direct—and should be oft-covered.

All told, there's little for me to dislike about this record. The guys who made it are both named John. I myself am named John. I have a son named John. What the hell, even the *album*'s named John!

Could things *really* be much better?

—J. Kordosh

VIDEO

JOE PASS

An Evening With Joe Pass

(REH VIDEO/CPP BELWIN)

WITH THE recent passing of jazz guitar giant Joe Pass, this video is particularly timely. Filmed at the Guitar Institute in L.A., this concert/clinic showcases the talents of a true virtuoso and the amiable spirit of an all-around good guy.

The 90 minutes to which we are privy feature a performance with drummer Joe Porcaro and bassist Bob Magnusson. "Satin Doll," "You Don't Know What Love Is," "Stella By Starlight," "All the Things You Are" and "Joe's Blues" highlight Pass' melodic inventiveness, his use of single lines and block-chord melodies and the fluid interplay of the trio. The accompanying booklet illustrates numerous examples from these tunes, and from the clinic that follows.

The clinic's questions and answers take us directly into the maestro's technique. One portion focuses on his three-position barre chord theory—based on five chords (C, A, G, E and D) in three positions—which facilitates reaching any chord from anywhere on the neck. Elsewhere, Pass explains how to harmonize melodies and stresses the importance of simplicity in music. When a would-be hipster asks about reharmonizing Ellington, Pass replies, "Why would anyone want to?"

Pass has a wonderful way of communicating the essential ingredients of well-rounded musicianship. This is not a beginner's how-to lesson, but any instrumentalist would benefit from hearing what Joe and his guitar have to say.—*David C. Gross*

DANIEL JOHNSTON

Fun

(ATLANTIC)

IT'S NO SECRET THAT SINGER/songwriter Daniel Johnston is, or has been, reality-challenged—an article in *Spin* a few years back detailed his eccentricities and delusional behavior as well as the resulting institutionalizations: just the type of thing, in case his quirky garage tapes weren't enough, to give him some heavy caché with outsider wannabes, as well as with the genuinely alienated. Artists are cool, but crazy ones are even better. It's the old Romantic image of the tortured God-defier, wracked by guilt and reeling under the weight of his unwanted insights. He tugs at your sleeve with such intensity that you figure he must be on to something even though half the time you can barely make the message out. Of course, Johnston is a more mod version of the old mad seer, a prime example of Visionarus Americanus: a product of too much bad religion and gaudy SF comic books with a worldview informed by arrested adolescent obsessions and tempered by the creepy sweetness of a sentimental stalker.

Credit goes to Paul Leary, who produced *Fun* and plays many of the instruments on it, for giving Johnston a steady, professional rock-cum-folk-cum-experimental context for his loopy laments. Johnston's voice, tending to the high end pitch-wise and definitely unsteady, conveys in turns naivete, fear, excitement—just the kind of voice you'd expect from someone who believes in (actual) demons. The songs vary in style and impact. "Catie," just voice and guitar, comes on like a rustic blues but tells us, "Well I've had horrors/And I've had a lot of fear/But the worst horror/Is when there's nothing here"—and you believe he's glimpsed the abyss, even when he follows the revelation with a juicy belch. "Happy Time" is engagingly childlike, as Dan tells us "God told me to go out/Singing my songs and what not" (it's that

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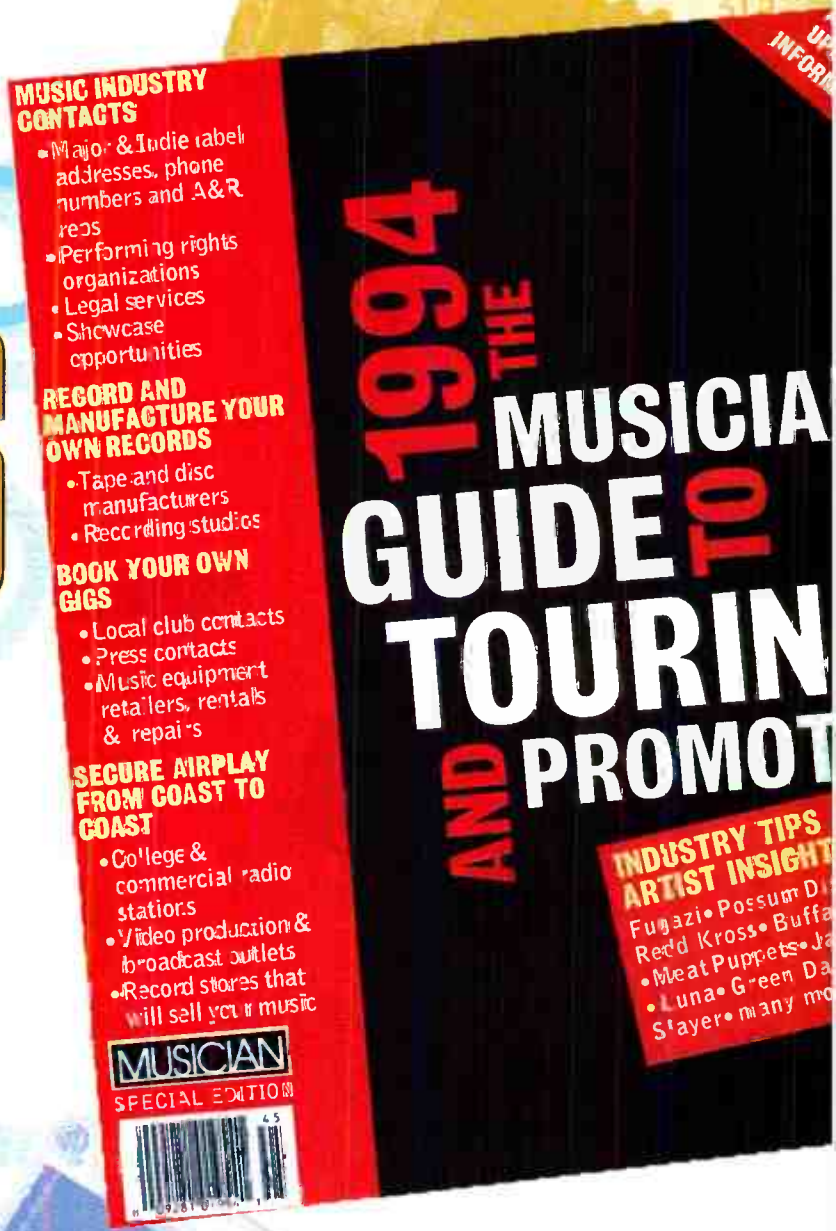

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"what not" that got him into trouble). On "Jelly Beans" and "My Little Girl" he finds a keyboard corollary for his dementia, sounding a bit like Jonathan Richman meets Sun Ra. "Silly Love" and "Mind Contorted" are two that inspired the above "stalker" crack. Of the other 12 songs here, I'd just say that Johnston is at his most interesting when he sounds like he knows he has problems—but when he goes into his cryptic/discursive mode, he sounds like any number of college radio would-be lyric poets.

Fun is impressive because Johnston has been through shit and at the age of early 30-something has come out with a record which mixes confused innocence with flashes of unfiltered self-awareness—a messy bit of art which drifts in and out of focus without becoming unhinged. Meaning that it would be a mistake—not to mention patronizing, and ultimately insulting—to assume that Johnston's bouts of madness have given him some kind of creative edge. It's that he's realized these songs despite his trials that makes him worth your attention.

—Richard C. Walls

MARTINO

[*cont'd from page 40*] home recording studio. "Chip, I've been ready to get to that next level for decades." Inside, he uncorks a series of remarkable extended forms, recordings he's composed on his Korg DIW workstation (slaved to a Roland GR-700 guitar synthesizer and an Apple Macintosh IIci computer). All the individual parts, all the samples and voicings, are recorded in real time, and stored in MIDI files. "The guitar is an altar," Pat enthuses. "Composition is an altar to me. This arrangement came to me in a dream, and when I woke up—"

—there was Eddie Sauter's severed head on the pillow.

"That's great," Pat laughs. "Nice compliment, there. Those string charts he did with Stan Getz on *Focus* are very interesting works. I haven't named this piece, because I'm not sure if I wrote it or if it belongs to Quincy Jones." Moody strings modulate in subtly shifting voices, as an oboe voice rises suggestively from a harp-piano mist. It is beautiful in the way Ravel and Debussy are beautiful. Pat follows with a charming 15/8 rhythmic cycle called "Mombassa," which is excerpted from his suite about a trip down an African river, all drones and tuned percussion. The grace and relaxation of his writing seems to me something of a reaction against the singleminded intensity of his hard bop improvisations.

"I'm not entirely sure I know what you mean by that," he counters thoughtfully, "but it's very difficult, in terms of my broader interests, to be doing something now that I was doing 30 years ago. If people invest in Pat Martino, jazz guitarist, they find it difficult to accept anything but jazz guitar from him, which leaves no margin for evolution. I have access to the rainbow, so why sacrifice the panoramic majesty of music by clinging only to certain hues.

"It seems all anyone wants is blue, and I'll always have gradients of blue in my rainbow—that's my ecstasy. But so too are the other colors. I'm always active. I'm inactive when I'm forced to restrict myself to only one of the colors. I'm currently writing new material for a straight-ahead hard bop session for King Records, but I'm also committed to the orchestral music I've been evolving for 30 years. Keep me free, that's all I ask."

But it must be frustrating to create this immense private stock of original music, with no outlet to share it.

"What frustrates me is when people come to my space and ask why isn't this out? I could ask

you the same thing. Why haven't you put it out? You know who I am, you know what I do. I do this every day, every year. I'm not a merchant. That isn't my blessing. I'm gifted at doing this. If someone wanted to turn it into merchandise, that would be great. But they're so busy they never come this way. And I'm so busy I never take the time to call them," he laughs.

"Would you expect me to stop doing this, only to refocus my attention upon selling it? Jazz is life, it's a form of expression. This is my life—this is what I do. This is my euphoria. This is my ecstasy. This is my paradise."

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NEW INTROS FOR OLD ROCK SONGS

A LOT OF readers write in to ask us why Frank Sinatra's just had the best-selling album of his career, how come Tony Bennett's the hottest act on MTV, and why Barbra Streisand's concert tour is outgrossing Lollapalooza. We conducted a scientific study and discovered that those older artists are offering the fans something that virtually none of the rock 'n' roll generation do—*a whole extra section in every song*. You see, while rock, blues and country musicians rush to the point for fear of losing the audience's attention, singers of classic pop songs always ease in with a little Broadway introduction—a verse that sets the mood and serves as a smooth segue from conversational patter to full swinging singing. Think of the opening of any classic Tin Pan Alley song from "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" (*"The loveliness of Paris seems somehow sad and gray..."*) to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (*"You know Dasher and Dancer and Donner and Blitzen..."*) and you'll understand what we mean. Yet in rock 'n' roll only the Beatles (*"To lead a better life, I need my love to be here..."*) and Roy Orbison dabbled in this crowd-pleasing tradition. Rather than see our generation's sounds fall from favor for want of so simple a device, we took it upon ourselves to craft introductory verses for famous rock songs. No, don't thank us—just make sure the cover bands send us a small kickback.

▶ LED ZEPPELIN

Some women are swimmin' in diamonds and rubies
They think a Ming ring is the height of great beauty
There are girls who think pearls give them reason
to gloat
And will not go outside
Without gems on their throat
But...*there's...a lady who knows*
All that glitters is gold
And she's buying a stairway to heaven...

▶ SEX PISTOLS

Take care of our leaders
Keep them healthy, we hope
Please protect our president, premier and pope
And Lord, if you hear,
In this jubilee year
There's one special monarch we hold extra dear
Oh...*God save the Queen*
She ain't no human bein'...

▶ ROLLING STONES

In an African village proud but so poor
A girl of great beauty, elan and allure
Wandered out to pick berries one day
And a cold-hearted slaver stole her away
Oooooohhhhhh
Gold coast slave ship bound for cotton fields
Sold in the market down in New Orleans...

▶ BOB DYLAN

She used to be at the top of the tree
A boarding school gal with a high pedigree
But that snobby broad took a fall
Now she's working a register
Down at the mall
Oh, *Once upon a time you dressed so fine*
Threw the bums a dime in your prime, didn't you?

▶ THE WHO

Save your Parcheesi
It's simply too easy
Ping-pong's for pansies
That stuff makes me queasy
I don't want to go bowling, with ten-pin or duck
Casino's no contest
It's won by dumb luck
I want a game that demands concentration
That calls for steel nerves and hand-eye coordination
Ever since I was a young boy
I've played the silver ball

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT MENCHIN

SR SERIES II, THINK OF IT AS FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

There's a little something for everyone in SR Series II™. From small combo vocal reinforcement to large club systems, from mobile DJ and recorded music reproduction to stage monitoring, front fills and main PA stacks in concert applications. SR Series II has evolved to be the first choice of musicians and sound engineers world wide. Here's what this evolution has produced.

MORE MODELS

You have a greater number of configurations from which to choose. With more systems containing large format compression drivers plus a dual 18-inch subwoofer system, SR Series II is sure to have the loudspeaker systems to fit your needs.

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INNOVATIVE COMPONENT DESIGNS

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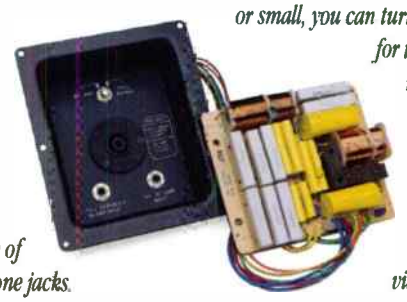

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AFTER 25 SONGS AND 1300 MILES, PUSH A BUTTON AND YOU'RE RIGHT BACK WHERE YOU STARTED.

Ahh, the joys of being on the road. One night the mics are giving you feedback. The next night it's the lead singer. And your nightly sound checks need more time than you have to spare.

Fortunately Yamaha has something to make your life a little easier.

We call it ProMix 01.™ But before you can truly appreciate what it is, we have to tell you what it's not.

It's not a mixer in the traditional sense. To call the ProMix 01 merely a mixer, is like calling a computer just a typewriter.

And it's not expensive. In fact, ProMix 01 is the first digital mixer that's down right affordable.

Yet ProMix 01 gives you something no other mixer at this price can touch. Namely the ability to store and recall all the settings of your mix. And that saves you a lot of time.

What does this mean to you? You can now get a digital mixer with mix memory and motorized faders for about the same cost as a low-priced analog one.

ProMix 01 is also capable of dynamic automation. All your moves can be recorded in real time and played back in conjunction with any outboard MIDI sequencer.

And because ProMix 01 is rugged and extremely compact, you'll find it's the perfect mixer to take on the road.

It has enough ins and outs for everybody in the band. Including 16 balanced mic/line inputs (plus one dedicated stereo input), phantom power, 4 aux sends, 2 stereo effect returns, metering of all inputs, two sets of stereo outputs and a monitor output with cue features.

Plus you'll find ProMix 01 is the ideal mixer for your project studio. Push a button and you're right back where you left that tune you were working on a few months back.

You'll also find two onboard digital effect processors. Three assignable stereo compressors. And a three-band parametric EQ on every channel to help control feedback and add punch to your sounds.

There's even an EQ library to store your favorite EQ settings. And when it comes to tough mixes, four fader groupings let you control multiple channel levels with a single fader.

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