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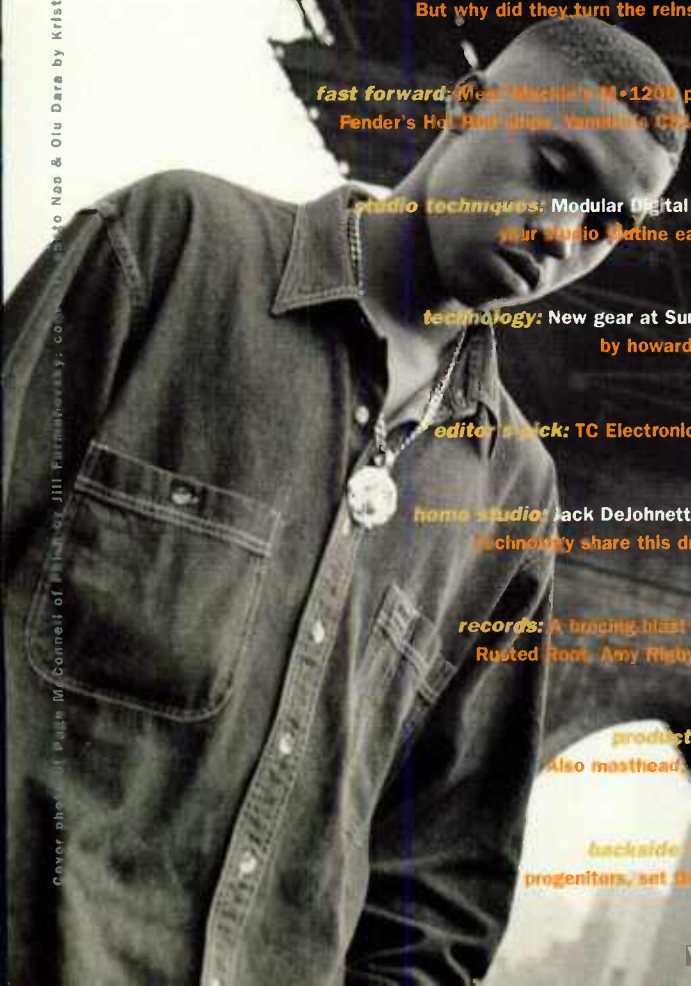
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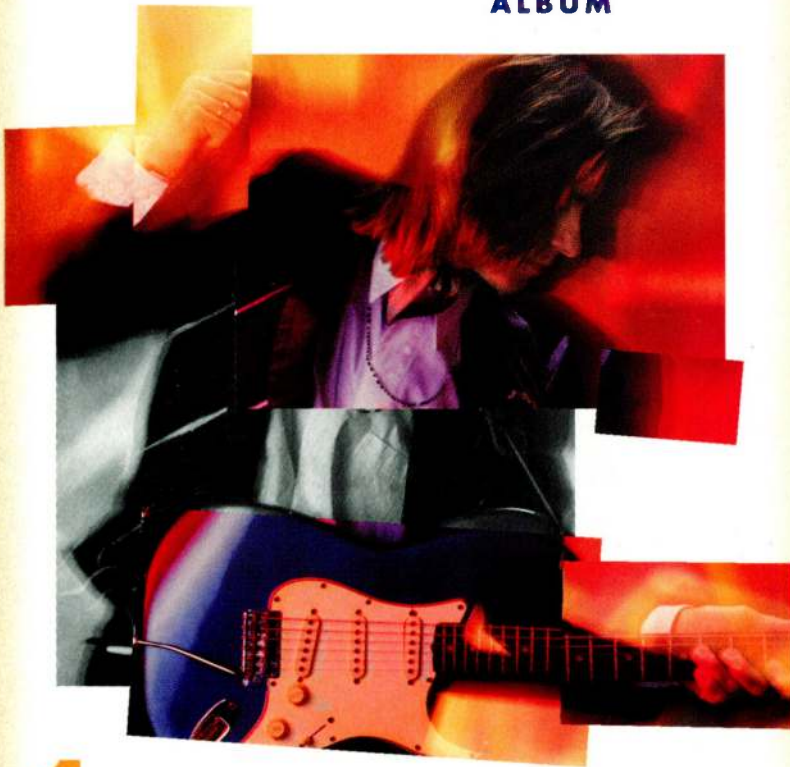


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3

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echoes of duane

I was happy to see your tribute to Duane Allman (Sept. '96). I first met Duane in the late summer of '69. I was at the Boston Tea Party to see Frank Zappa with two members of my band. We walked around to the back for a couple of quick smokes and saw Duane and Berry passing around a bottle of wine. We started talking music and found we had a lot of the same influences and tastes. Soon Gregg came over and said it was time to go on. Duane laughed and said, "Come in and check us out." We wandered into the club just as they were starting "Dreams." I walked over to the stage in front of Duane, watching him intently. In the middle of the slide solo, he looked down at me, broke into a huge grin, and played like I've never seen anyone play before or since to this day, 27 years later. I still get goose flesh all over my arms when I hear that solo.

Duane was a gentleman, a genius, and an enlightened rogue. His spirit will always live on.

j. dustin sommers
Idlewild east, rhode island

Duane Allman did much more than "add a splash of color" to a few songs on *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs*. As producer Tom Dowd will tell you, Duane was the catalyst for the *Layla* album. In fact, it was Duane who came up with those seven heart-stopping notes that open "Layla," probably the most exciting introduction in rock music since "Johnny B. Goode."

Duane Allman is certainly the most underrated guitarist of the modern era. His legacy suffers for several reasons: He was from Macon, Georgia, far from the media centers of Los Angeles and New York. He also was never one to brag on himself, and he never played up his critical role in the creation of the *Layla* album. Whenever he was asked who played what on that record, he would simply reply that it was a team effort. Such was the character of Duane Allman.

scott freeman atlanta, georgia

[Scott Freeman's book, *Midnight Riders: The Story of the Allman Brothers Band*, was published by Little, Brown and Co. in 1995.]

Last March I was onstage with my band at the Bank in Daytona during Bike Week. People were hanging from the rafters. The emcee was intro-

ducing us when he stopped and said, "Wait a minute! Let that guy in!" It was Gregg Allman. Of course the place went batshit as he took the stage. As we played "Rock Me, Baby" and "One Way Out," this argument was raging in my mind: "Play that Duane solo!" "No, play you! That's the way Duane would have wanted it!" Well, I played me, and that was like a little personal reward—playing me with Gregg in Daytona.

Oh, and who walked in during the set? Floyd Miles. You had to peel me off the wall after that.

pete kanaras, the nighthawks
washington, dc

To the Readers:

There's a new look to *Musician*. You'll see the changes in this issue, and they're all designed to serve you better.

For twenty years *Musician* has set the pace for music magazines, with articles that investigate hot topics in the music industry, provocative album reviews, and the best artist interviews in print. Over the past year, we've added other valuable features, including the New Signing report on how different acts landed their record deals, our Sideman interviews with the unsung heroes of studio and stage performance, and the in-depth Editor's Pick product review.

With our expanded feature section, you'll be getting all this and more from now on. Each month you'll find a full-length feature related to the business side of music. In addition, we'll be running special sections on songwriting, performance, music technology, and home studio recording, as well as a bigger Talent section, in which we introduce you to the best new acts on the horizon.

We've covered these subjects regularly in our Rough Mix and Fast Forward sections. Now, by turning those pages over to the feature well of the magazine—and adding a few extra pages of coverage for good measure—we're able to give you even more of what you want and need as a player or a fan with a serious jones for music.

It adds up to one simple fact: If you gotta play music, you gotta read *Musician*.

Robert L. Doerschuk Editor

I'll never forget that magical night when the Allman Brothers came back to Jacksonville after their first album came out. They played at the Jacksonville Beach Coliseum, a small auditorium, but it was packed with maybe a thousand people. The boys were hitting the note that night. There was a magical, almost spiritual flow of energy in that building, as if the crowd and the band were all one. I can still see Duane, cigarette hanging from his mouth, that Coricidin bottle on his finger, and his foot tapping. His slide

work, Berry Oakley's bass playing, those twin leads by Duane and Dickey Betts—it was all just as it should be. I cried tears of pure joy as Duane worked his magic on that beautiful slide during "Dreams."

I still see the Allman Brothers Band every chance I get, and they're still hittin' that note. As an old fan who still tears up a little when he hears "Dreams" or "Mountain Jam," I sure would like to thank those boys for about 30 years of the best damn music I've ever heard. In memory of Duane Allman and Berry Oakley, bless you, Allman Brothers Band.

donald bacon
keystone heights, florida

sonny rollins

Thanks for the Sonny Rollins interview (Oct. '96). This great artist must be commended for losing neither his passion nor his sense of purpose in his quest for musical perfection.

ron leskovec youngstown, ohio

in review

Having read your recent semi-pan of Eric Johnson's *Venus Isle* (Chuck's Cuts, Sept. '96), I approached buying the CD with some trepidation. I wondered if the six-year lapse between albums had gone to Eric's head. But after a good listen, I found that *Venus Isle* has much to recommend itself. Admittedly, as pointed out in *Musician*'s review, lyrics are not Johnson's strong point, and some of the pseudo-mystical longings expressed in *Venus Isle* are not his best. Also, the liner notes by Vince Mariani reek of godawful "new agism." But what about the music? Much like Pat Metheny, Eric possesses a tone that can be recognized immediately, and his instrumentals are as inviting and inventive as ever. And even with the lyric pans, you have to admit that "When the Sun Meets the Sky" is probably the best vocal Johnson has ever done.

So the album is a mixed bag. Now, if a tour will only come our way.

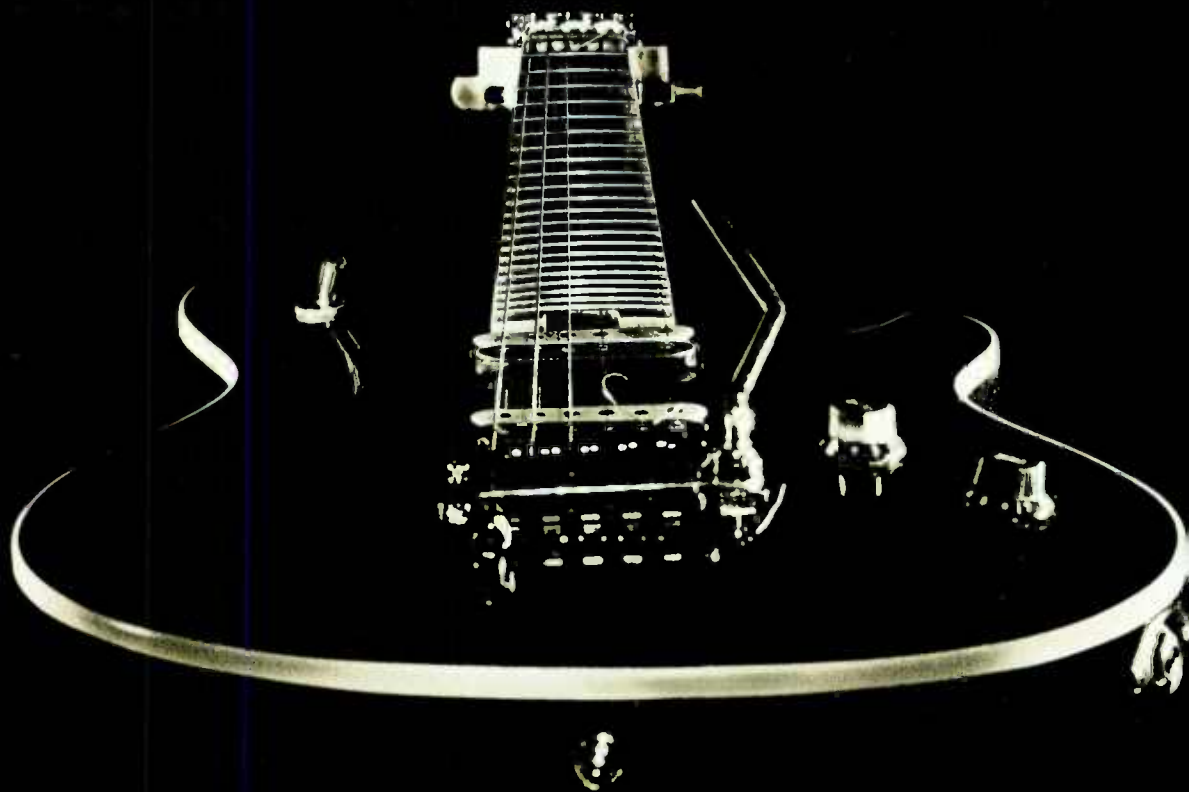
michael j. doyle union city, new jersey

[By now, it probably has. See last month's cover story.]

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VAN HALEN BEST OF

VOLUME I



THEIR FIRST-EVER RETROSPECTIVE, FEATURING TWO NEW RECORDINGS WITH DAVID LEE ROTH—"CAN'T GET THIS STUFF NO MORE" AND "ME WISE MAGIC."

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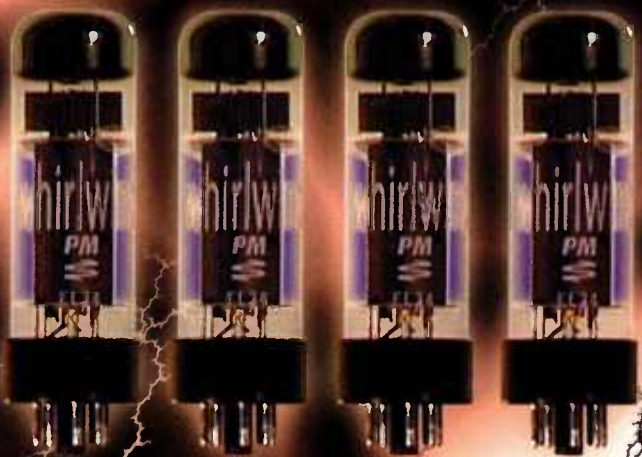


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frontman

Sting

“At age 44, ranting isn’t enough.” about your misery again, you’re almost forced by

Sure. When I was younger I was angry and aggressive. But at 44, ranting isn’t enough. I always said “Every Breath You Take” was a dark song because it doesn’t resolve musically or lyrically. It’s circular: The guy is trapped in this loop of control, paranoia, and sadness. Same with “So Lonely.” In “I’m So Happy...” the bridge can take you to a new harmonic area. If you listen, there’s a chromatic step up. I didn’t want to just go from E to F—that’s so clichéd—so we disguised it a bit. But it helps so that by the time your third verse is coming around, instead of singing the structure to find the light at the end of the tunnel. It’s good therapy.

What music makes you so happy you can’t stop crying nowadays?

I still marvel every time I listen to “So What” from Miles’ *Kind of Blue*, hearing those guys push the limits. But while meditating, Samuel Barber’s *Adagio for Strings* actually brought me to tears. He takes you to the outer reaches of the human mind and spirit through these logical and ever-higher steps until you arrive at this amazing place. I still can’t believe an *American* wrote this [laughs]. I’ve also been working through the Bach lute suites on guitar. Mstislav Rostropovich, the Russian cellist, told me that only now, at 67, does he have the expertise and soul as a musician to really record the Bach cello suites. So maybe I’ll record the lute pieces in twenty years. [Sings] “When I’m 64.”

—Vic Garbarini

I’m *So Happy I Can’t Stop Crying*” is the turning point in the cycle of death and rebirth on your latest album. It’s also become a single by popular demand.

What happened?

I think we were in Philadelphia and some guy had a sign asking to come up and sing that song with me. So I let him, and it spread over the Internet. So every night someone comes up and sings it with me. Billy Crystal and Robin Williams popped up one night, but Lyle Lovett really added another dimension in Chicago, a sweet man. But people from the audience bring something special. The song does shift midway through. At first the guy is singing the chorus cynically; he’s miserable about his divorce and misses the kids. Then one night he looks up and suddenly understands something about the interconnectedness of the universe, and it gives him this comfort. Now he

really means it when he gets to that chorus.

Did you have to go through a death and rebirth of sorts to write that song?

Definitely, yeah. I’ve been meditating and doing yoga for six years now, plus I’ve been through some shamanistic rituals and training in the Amazon. At first it was a physical discipline, but when the deeper, really spiritual dimensions of these practices opened up I felt like I was hanging from the top of the Empire State Building from some buttress, facing the vastness of eternity inside myself. I kept envisioning all the relationships in my life, grieving over them and mourning that duality in human nature that produced bad as well as good. Eventually it gets cathartic and joyous, and you realize it’s about forgiving ourselves ultimately. Then you can move on.

Does the music as well as the lyrics mirror that sense of evolution in your new songs?

sideman

"The guy who gets the glory gets just one shot."

Graham Maby



Do people still expect you to play like you did on the early Joe Jackson records, with that up-front tone and aggressively melodic style?

Sometimes people call me and say, "Yeah, get that pick out. I want you to sound like you did on 'Look Sharp' back in 1978." That's okay, but I get tired of hearing it because I feel like I've moved on a little bit since then. I'm not the wild-haired punk that I may have appeared to have been back then. I've got a few more tricks in me bag these days, and it's nice when people recognize that. I really like it when people call me because they like their own conception of the way I play. It's flattering, especially when you consider that you could be brought in there just as a bass player.

Have you done any sessions that didn't work out?

Only once. [Producer] Richard Gotterer got me in this session with David Wilcox, and between Gotterer, the engineer, and Wilcox, I couldn't win. I'd come up with an idea, and one of them would say "Yeah" while the others would say, "Uh, I don't know." It went on like that for several hours. Things got so bad that I actually got them to run me off a tape, which I brought home and worked on overnight. I came back the next day and the same thing happened. That's when I said, "Maybe I'm not the right guy for this track." I gather they got Will Lee in there.

Do you ever want to lead your own band?

Not really. Part of that has to do with deciding whether to be the guy in control, but as time has gone by I've been glad I made

that sort of unwitting decision to remain out of the limelight. For one, the guy who gets the glory gets one shot, or maybe two if they're lucky, but I keep getting a shot. Somehow it's easier than keeping a solo career going. But the rewards are commensurate.

When you're performing with a group—They Might Be Giants, for instance—do you ever feel like you'd enjoy working with them full-time?

Sure, it crosses my mind. The Giants are great people. They really push me to contribute, they let me be myself, and I have lots of laughs with them. On top of it all, they don't pay poorly. But honestly, there hasn't been one situation that fills all the bills, and I don't know if there ever can be.

So you're happy being a sideman.

Definitely. One of the beautiful things about it is that I can live a normal life. I can take my kids to school, and while the people there

know that I play music and that I'm on TV sometimes, I'm not a celebrity. It never presents me with the problems that I see people like Joe going through. Even after all these years, he still doesn't want to deal with all the recognition. I've always appreciated that I can get up and play in front of thousands of people, and then the next day I can go to the supermarket with my kids.

You never get recognized in public?

About once every five years someone will recognize me. Once I was taking a piss in the men's room at some movie in Secaucus, and this guy comes in, stares at me, and says,

"Scuse me, but you're Graham Maby, right?" Yeah, you laugh, but it's so infrequent that I remember every time it's happened.

—Michael Gelfand

résumé

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Chris Stamey
Shania Twain
Graham Parker

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talents

the divine comedy



you should have a musical reason for it, so it's not just simply a pop song with strings stuck on. It's one thing to use these instruments, but it's another thing to use them properly."

Hannon is no newcomer to orchestral pop—a post-grunge movement toward fuller, cleaner arrangements that also includes artists such as Eric Matthews and the High Llamas. The Irish native started composing his brand of baroque pop more than six years ago. This latest collection of songs sounds something like Scott Walker covering Pulp, with liberal flavorings of pomp, romance, and cheek.

The budget for *Casanova* was big enough to bring an entire 40-piece orchestra into Abbey Road for a couple of numbers. "We were in and out of the studio for about seven months, which is six months longer than anything I'd done before," Hannon smiles. "During mixing we were spending four or five days on one track, which is ridiculous. Suddenly I thought, 'Oh, dear, we're turning into Def Leppard!'" Not a chance.

—Dev Sherlock

I've always liked strings in pop music," admits Neil Hannon, the man behind the Divine Comedy. "But it's against my better judgment, because strings are often used in pop to cover up what is really just a boring tune. So if you can possibly avoid it, it's worth shying away from."

But before you heed this advice, consider that the Divine Comedy's latest, *Casanova* (their first U.S. release and the third for U.K. indie Setanta), is awash in sweeping strings, soaring brass, tubular bells, celeste, timpani... you get the idea.

"When I use strings—or any orchestration—I make sure that they're there for a reason," Hannon insists. "A lot of bands will say, 'Well, I think a large church pipe organ would be good on this track,' but it's more to do with creating a mood or atmosphere, rather than a musical thing. If you use an instrument,

Personal transformation through applied mystical practices rings like a '60s cliché, but then Kula Shaker re-sound with Summer of Love comparisons. To the swelling Hammond organ and acetylene slide guitar that opens their debut album *K* (Columbia), the English quartet adds Indian ragas and mantras, aided by tabla, finger cymbals and the odd bit of Sanskrit. Beyond stylistic shenanigans, these chart-topping moptops are devout Buddhists drenched in the classics.

"We're not worshipping the late '60s but we have that spirit, which is a youthful spirit of idealism," says Shaker singer/songwriter Crispian Mills. Son of actress Hayley Mills,

E, the vowel-monikered singer, guitarist, and songwriter for the trio eels, is hoping that his band's debut album for DreamWorks, *Beautiful Freak*, grabs listeners by the nose. "The best advice I ever got came from *Brother Ray*—Ray Charles' autobiography—where he said, 'You've got to make it stink of your own manure,'" he explains. "I took that to heart, and I've spent a long time defining my own stink."

E's journey toward an inspired stench had him working as a solo artist in the past, and he released a pair of albums for Polygram that showcased his smartly aromatic tunes of depression and uplift. But he felt constrained working under the burden of the singer/songwriter tag, and the material that might have become a third solo album turned into eels tunes when E discovered bassist Tommy and drummer Butch during jam nights at an L.A. blues bar. When some eels demos received airplay on L.A.'s KCRW, the music excited the ears of Michael Simpson, half of the Dust Brothers production team and a DreamWorks A&P man. The band was signed, and *Beautiful Freak* was on its way.

The record is an engagingly dynamic swirl of sonic playfulness and sophisticated popcraft. Theremins, Chamberlins, Wurflizer electric pianos, and a very cool Gladys Knight and the Pips sample add some fetching depth as E presents his doubtful observations on the human condition. While the songwriter will cop to a White Album sense of eclecticism, his band is not about retro-pop homages.

"It's missing the point to try to sound like the old groups instead of just doing what the old groups did, which was to move forward and be their own thing. If the Beatles did what all the Beatles-y bands are doing these days, they would have never gotten beyond being a Chuck Berry cover band. I don't want us to sound like the Beatles; I want us to do as the Beatles did." —Chuck Crisafulli

eels



the 24-year-old, who laces his lyrics with enigmatic religious references, sees spirituality as rebellion.

"It's our way of denying a society that bases everything on temporary happiness. We're not monks or anything, it's just our way of rebelling. There's nothing outrageous [any more] about being gay or being on drugs or being a Nazi. How do you

Harrison ("Wonderwall") and Deep Purple ("Hush"), Kula Shaker (named after a sixth-century Indian king) seemed stuck in some cosmic wrinkle. But in the tradition of Peter Green, early Jethro Tull, and Cream, they swung with a mighty riff.

"At the end of the '60s you had great playing, great songs and this wonderful spirit of idealistic expres-



kula shaker

rebel now? What's shocking? The only thing that's shocking is to find spiritual happiness."

Scorching a Brighton festival crowd recently with covers of George

sion," resolves Mills. "We're just tuning into that and getting it out through pop music."

—Ken Micallef

It's a familiar story: Female piano prodigy grows up to sell her soul to rock 'n' roll. But Seattle-bred singer/songwriter Kristen Barry mostly ditches her early lessons for the sweet sins of the electric guitar, an instrument she taught herself to play only four years ago.

"I didn't take lessons," Barry says. "Purposely. Piano had already become this monkey on my back, because I wanted to be better at it than I was. With guitar, I had this fresh instrument; I had no idea what I was doing, so I could do everything wrong and not be wrong. Basically, I learned guitar by taking what I heard in my head and figuring out where it was."

The result of this unconventional methodology is Barry's raw and challenging debut, *The Beginning the Middle the End* (Virgin). On it, her fierce, emotive playing gives the music freshness and white-hot immediacy. *BME* marks the latest step in a journey that has taken Barry past a teenage stint playing keyboards with a rock band, as well as a failed development deal she signed at age 21 with Epic.

"They were setting me up with a lot of writers," Barry, now 26, recalls. "I was getting a lot of people's opinions about my music in such a way that what I was doing was wrong and their way was right, and I struggled with that for the next couple of years."



kristen barry

Disillusioned, she walked away from the deal after only a year. Her exit bought her the opportunity to hone songs on her own. "When I was writing when

I was 17 or 18, I was really trying to be clever, and it was so apparent to me that it was not me," she laughs. "It was kinda cute." Now, she says, "most of the [lyrical] stuff comes out raw and stays raw. I don't spend too much time over-analyzing it." Truthful and direct, she employs a fearless economy of language on *BME* that's rare for any songwriter. "Sometimes," she admits, "the lines that kill me when I hear a song are the simplest ones."

"Words," she muses quietly, "always screw me up." —Chris Smets

Had it up to here with alternabands who claim Nirvana as their inspiration? Consider Rasputina—a trio of corset-clad women playing rock music on cellos. Cobain & Co. rank as high as Rodgers and Hammerstein on founding member Melora Creager's list of influences, and her band also got an early break opening for Nirvana on their summer '93 European tour. Creager's vision of an all-cello band kept her going through years of searching and posting classified ads for bandmates; with the arrival of Julia Kent and Agnieszka Rybska and the recording of *Thanks for the Ether* (Columbia), that vision has finally become a reality.

What makes a cello rock? "Heavy distortion will make it sound amazing," Melora says. "Also, there are ways of physically attacking the instrument that break the rules of traditionally correct playing.

To me, the cello is so emotional. It's got a very human soul, and when I feel like it's speaking, that's when something good is happening."

While Rasputina's instrumentation is certainly an attention-grabber, Creager's singing doesn't lag far behind. Her vocal style is one part heavy vibrato to two parts Broadway drama. "I grew up listening to *Oklahoma!* and *The Music Man*," she explains, "and I like to emulate that singing style." That's evident on nearly every track of *Ether*.

A constant need for challenge often leads Rasputina down less traveled roads. "Any Old Actress" was inspired by the chords of a favorite Bowie song: "I heard it played backwards on a four-track by chance," Melora says, "then I composed it and played [the backwards chord sequence] forwards—it was like a happy accident."

"I think we like to make things hard for ourselves. Much of the reason we dress in Victorian lace and corsets is because when we perform live, we can't move. It's an aesthetic thing. I like to try to give a little something more to people."

—Kris Nicholson



rasputina

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So it was with Leah Andreone, a young singer now touring on the wings of her first album for RCA but, not too long ago, a waitress with a tiny flat in L.A. and a budget that relied heavily on the kindness of her customers. She had paid her musical dues in San Diego; she was all of eight years old when she began singing with her sister's band at "some bar or club down in Mission Beach." Later on she led her own group and did pretty well on her hometown circuit. And she had, in fact, gotten nibbles of interest from labels who couldn't help but notice her riveting, expressive voice and assertive presence—interest enough for her to move up to L.A. and take her chances in the industry's backyard.

Once she settled in, though, things began falling apart. Her label contacts didn't pan out. She scrounged enough money to cut a demo, but its production quality was as iffy as her income, and the titles—mainly covers—seemed to underscore her own feelings that she hadn't yet developed an original voice.

Soon Andreone began scuffling for day jobs. Ironically, her first position was at her future label, RCA, in the accounting office. "I just wanted to get my tapes out," she



LEAH ANDREONE

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Melanie Weiner

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explains, "so I looked for a job at a record company. Zoo, Arista, RCA: I asked every single one of them, 'Is there anything I can do here? Any kind of secretarial work? Accounting? Anything?' And when I finally did get a job, it was awful. I was there for two and a half months, and I did give out a couple of tapes to people at RCA and someone at Arista, but I don't remember who they were and nothing came of it."

After taking about as much of this as she could handle, Andreone quit and went to work at a diner on Sunset Boulevard, in the heart of the recording jungle, near the offices of BMG and A&M. The location had nothing to do with it: "I took that job because I needed to eat," she says. "I was trying to support myself in Hollywood, and it was hard."

But then one day she overheard a couple of guys at one of her tables talking about music. Acting on impulse, she got permis-

sion from her boss to dash home for a demo tape. Her customers were just leaving as she hurried back.

Skip Miller now works with Lionel Richie, but on that fateful morning he was head of black music at RCA's A&R department—and Leah's customer. "I was with an attorney,"

a listen to this.' It was almost an order; it stopped me dead in my tracks. I felt that I had to listen to it immediately, which I don't usually do. But I went into my car and put in the tape."

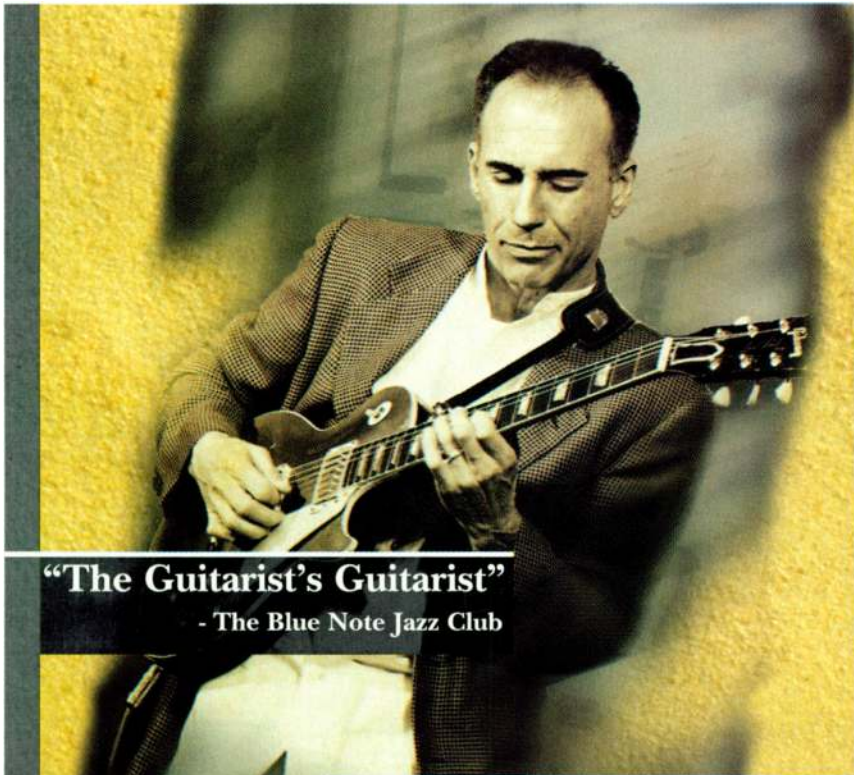
Andreone remembers it this way: "He went out to the car. I watched him, and I actually got on the phone with my mother and said, 'Oh, my God! This guy's listening to my tape! He's got his head back and his eyes are closed!' Then he drove away, and I was so upset."

She needn't have been. "Leah's tape was incredible because the things she was attempting to do showed no fear," Miller says. "She had chosen Barbra Streisand songs, Aretha Franklin songs—difficult things to sing. I went back to the diner the next morning, just so I could meet her again."

That night he caught her act for the first time. It was a far cry from the fist-clenching,

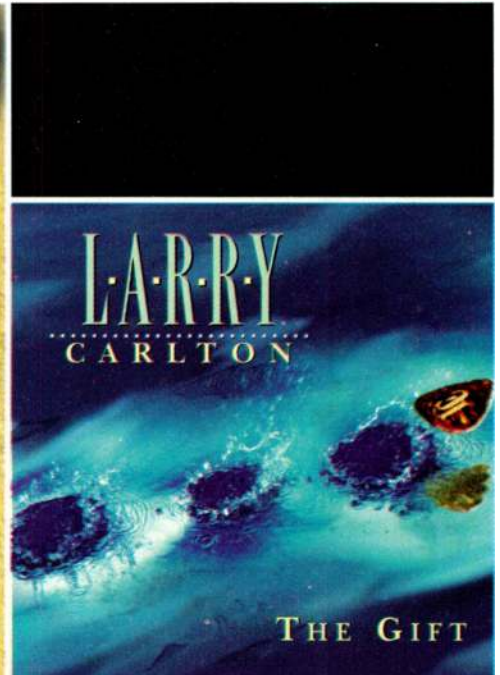
**Lesson One:
Keep your eyes open for
the unexpected
opportunity.**

he recalls, "and we were talking about the need for talent. RCA wasn't really hot at that time, other than with SWV's first album, which was just coming out. Then as we got up to leave, our waitress came over to me, looked me dead in my eyes, and said, 'Take



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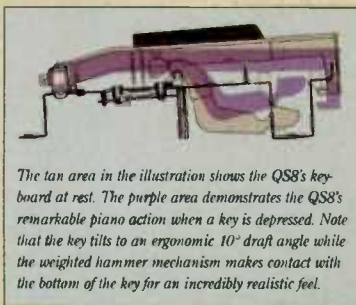
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Tori-inflected, Mariah-sprinkled melodramatics of *Veiled*; she was crooning standards at the Mondrian Hotel lounge on Sunset. "Things you'd have a drink to," Miller laughs. "I've always thought that people who have an instrument like Leah's should write music for that instrument."

"It was kind of funny," Leah recalls. "Instead of saying 'That was good' or whatever someone would say, he asked me, 'So was

that the best you could do?' I'm like, 'Uh, yeah, that was the best I could do.' And he said, 'I thought so too. How'd you like to sign a record deal?'"

Like Lana Turner perched at a Hollywood soda fountain, Leah Andreone was at the right place at the right time. But ultimately it was her initiative, and the instincts of a receptive label executive, that made it happen. Dave Novik, her current A&R staffer at

RCA, explains, "It depends on the commitment to listen, because you never know where the next great artist is going to come from." Or, as Leah puts it, "If you're afraid of what might be, nothing will ever be."—

Robert L. Doerschuk

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
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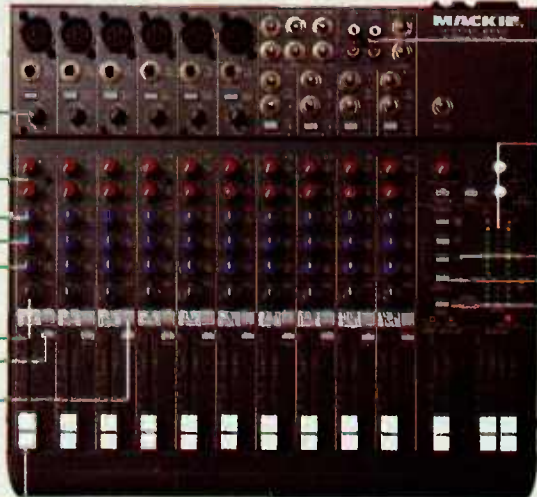
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
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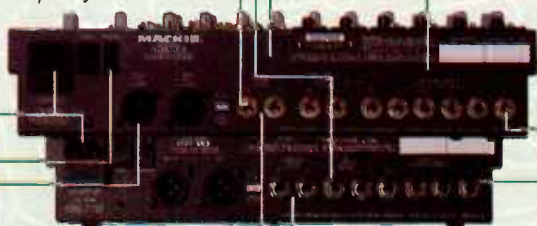


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
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
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
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**Burt Bacharach's
Strange
Communion with
Elvis Costello**

This years

by mark rowland

Models

movie musical titled *Grace of My Heart*, and set in the '50s Brill Building era where Bacharach's own career first took flight, was put together without the two composers ever meeting face to face. Due to geographical constraints and a tight production schedule, Burt and Elvis knocked out their first collaboration together by voice mail and fax machine.

More recently, they did meet in New York to record the version of the song that will appear on the movie soundtrack, with Elvis singing and Burt arranging for a live-in-the-studio orchestra. The result ranks with the best work of both careers—quite an accomplishment. One suspects it's the beginning of a beautiful long-distance relationship.

At *Musician's* urging, Burt and Elvis agreed to talk about this historic, eccentric collaboration—by phone, of course.



Audiences attending Elvis Costello's recent shows with pianist Steve Nieve could be heard murmuring with surprise when Elvis introduced a new song called "God Give Me Strength" by explaining that he'd written it with Burt Bacharach. Surprise mutated into awe as the song unfolded—a gorgeous waltzing ballad that seemed to effortlessly meld the signature talents of these two legendary pop songwriters. So it was even more startling to discover that the song, commissioned for a

So, what are the pros and cons of composing together by fax?

Burt Bacharach: It kept the adrenalin pumping for me pretty good because we had a time limitation. You never knew what was coming in on your fax machine.

Elvis Costello: That's true. They had a very tight deadline and this was the only way to solve the problem. The most nerve-wracking thing I've ever done was to send this opening statement of the song to Burt. Thankfully I got encouragement and amendments to the ideas right away. Then Burt wrote the next bit and I put the words to that. So it was written in stages.

What makes a collaboration work, or not work?

Bacharach: To go the long distance for me there would have to be a personal compatibility—liking the person. No one has to go to the movies or eat dinner with me, but I do want to tolerate the time I'm in a room with them. It's sort of like a

Todd Eberle

marriage, if it goes beyond a one-night stand to a longer basis. I think we can all write. Don't you think so, Elvis? We can all get by with someone. . .

Costello: I'd never written before using the somewhat eccentric methods we did. But I've written what you'd call "mail order" songs, where I've given a tune to a friend to add words to, or more commonly written words for other people's tunes. This is the first dialogue type of collaboration that hasn't been in a room. The only other occasions have been with Paul McCartney, Ruben Blades, and my wife. Working with your wife is a completely different thing. It's more spontaneous, because you spend all of your time together. . .

Bacharach: Tell me about it!

Costello: . . .and therefore it'll spring out of a casual conversation. Sitting down to a writing session with Paul, there was a time frame—more like the collaborative work you must have done at the Brill Building. You worked there in an office, didn't you?

Bacharach: That is true. Where the situation

I had with Carol [Bayer Sager] was basically, we live together, we're married, we write a song, have dinner, go to sleep, get up, go to the studio....

If you write quick, that's a salvation too. You can get out of the room fast.

Costello: I haven't had that experience of getting out of the room fast.

Bacharach: Me neither. I don't write very quickly.

With many of the classic songwriting teams of the '30s and '40s there was a clear division of labor—George wrote the music, Ira wrote the words. Since both of you write music, I'd imagine a different sort of dynamic.

Bacharach: I like that the person you're working with has that awareness. I remember going into the director George Roy Hill's office before I got the job on *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, and you know that directors can be impossible. They have blind spots, or no spots at all, when it comes to perceiving where the music might go or what they want it to be. I walked into his office and he's sitting at the

piano playing Bach. So you know you're going to get a perspective right there.

Costello: Somebody has to institute the dialogue. On this one I played Burt a demo, sent the changes. He said, "Let's change this harmony, let's hold here, let's do this." Then he wrote the B statement, and that needed no amendment on my part—I don't know whether I would have presumed to even attempt it. My job then was to match the intensity of that next statement with a suitable increase in the temperature of the lyrics. I wrote my share of the music, but when it really takes off, particularly in the main bridge, he moves into another gear than I know how to achieve. I'm not talking about the first bridge, but the central section of the song. In the earlier part of the song we were collaborating more on the musical text, as well as trying to set the scene. But the payoff is that sense of darkness which is in his music and is quite compatible with my own feeling. There's that romantic doubt in some of his sunniest songs which makes his music so enduring.

The melody of "God Give Me Strength," the floating 6/8 rhythm, the use of horns in the arrangements, and the sense of emotional desperation in the lyrics all hark back to those great collaborations between Burt and Hal David in the '60s. Was that a conscious approach?

Costello: Well, obviously I wasn't writing in the '60s, I was listening. I was absorbing those songs, and I've tried on a couple of occasions to write an imitation of Burt. The very first time we met I was at Ocean Way [studios] working on "Satellite" [from 1989's *Spike*] and shamelessly stealing lots of arrangement devices and quite artificially bending a song which had been written in 4/4 into 6/8 and attempting to dress it up with figures played on marimbas to make it float more. Once you did the arrangement of this record I learned more about why several of my attempts to imitate your style had not quite come off as I had imagined them. I was always too busy in the bass end, but you left much more space than I imagined I heard. I think it's because I think in a very linear way and you think as a proper composer does, linear and also vertically. I'm not as good at thinking vertically. Does that make any sense at all?

Bacharach: It does to me.

Costello: Meaning the relationships of rhythm and harmony—some of which I leave to chance, to be perfectly honest. There was one beat on the timpani in the [cont'd on page 50]

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Jimmy Rosenberg's

by mac randall

Gypsy Arpeggios

Channeling the spirit of Django

Crank up any track from Sinti's self-titled debut album on Columbia and you're instantly transported to some sepia-toned European locale. Depending on the tune, it might be a sophisticated Parisian cafe or a backwoods Gypsy caravan. In both the verve of the music and the stunning virtuosity of its players, one prime influence is apparent: the spirit of Django Reinhardt. But would Django indulge in Chuck Berry licks or cover the theme from *The Flintstones*? Clearly a youthful wit is at work here.

It all makes sense upon meeting Sinti's fiendishly talented lead guitarist Jimmy Rosenberg. (The band's rounded out by Jimmy's cousin Johnny on rhythm guitar and Rinus Steinbach on bass.) Rosenberg comes from Holland, but he isn't Dutch; he's a Sinto, from the same Gypsy tribe that spawned Django. The Sinti still idolize Django to this day, and in a sense Jimmy grew up with him. "My family's very musical," he says, "and they all listened to Django. I've heard a lot of music, but I play this kind because I like it. I've heard it all my life."

Jimmy hasn't had a particularly long life. He's only 16. So how has he gotten so good? Maybe it's because he started playing at age three. This kind of early start is not unusual in Gypsy musical culture. "People are always playing guitars around the campfire at night,"

Sinti's manager Hans Meelen says, "and the little kids see that and they take a piece of wood and they try to imitate making the chords. I've seen this happen. That's how it starts. But I still don't understand how it works."

Rosenberg and his bandmates never learned how to read and write music; they picked things up off records and learned from relatives. Their songs aren't written down but memorized. All this means a lot of practice, and though Jimmy confesses his schedule is "irregular," he'll often play for 6 to 8 hours a day. "I work on songs that I already know and like, but I'm always trying to do something with them that can help me develop a new sound, my own sound."

One thing he's certainly practiced a lot are arpeggios. That's apparent not only in the blinding speed with which he rips through them, but also in his choice of note placement. Both Examples 1 and 2 come from a simple 12-bar blues. The first, taken from the fifth and sixth bars of a chorus (on the IV chord, in this case D7), demonstrates Rosenberg's mastery of cascading eighth-note triplets. Note how he starts off ascending chromatically to the ninth of the chord (E), then swiftly traces out the rest of the chord in a ferocious downward run. That run ends on C natural (the flat seventh), whereupon Rosenberg backtracks and starts another downward flurry from B (the sixth), ending this time on C# (the major seventh, but also the third of A, the tonic chord, and thus a sort of slightly premature, and very cool-sounding, resolution). This type of backtracking, or beginning an arpeggio from two different points in the scale, is a Rosenberg trademark.

Example 2 is a full 12-bar chorus in E. It starts with a repeated pentatonic eighth-note triplet figure, goes



Dorian over A (with an F# and C#), then reverts to E pentatonic for the smooth phrase on bars five and six. And here's where Rosenberg's arpeggiatory cleverness comes to the fore. On the V chord (B7), he slides to G#, then hits an E, C# and A in succession,

thus implying two different chords, E and A major. On the IV chord (A7), another blinding run sketches out a B7 chord before dodging around the tonic with an F# (ninth) and D# (major seventh). Finally, back on E, Rosenberg takes an Emaj7 arpeggio through two octaves,

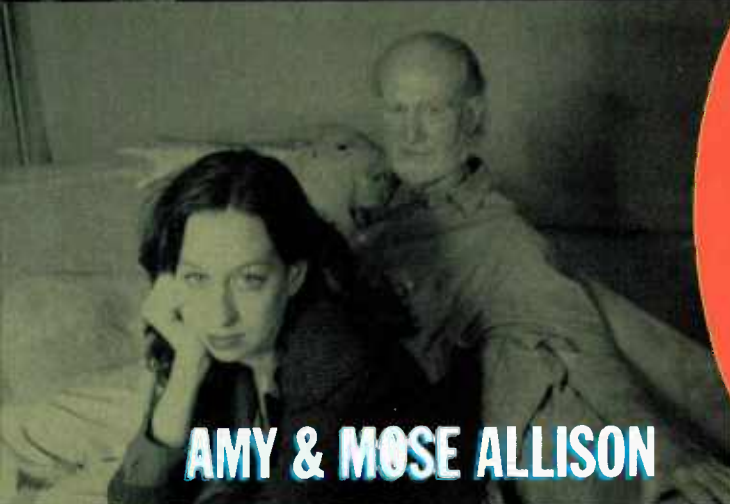
ending with a humorous emphasis on the sixth (C#). This kind of chordal superimposition (I and IV over V, V over IV) sounds great at any speed, but if you can manage to play it at Jimmy's astounding clip, you're bound to turn some heads.

Ex. 1 With Swing Feel (♩ = ♩³)
Eb7⁹

Ex. 2 With Swing Feel (♩ = ♩³)
E



OLU DARA & NAS



AMY & MOSE ALLISON

Genre



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Talkin' Bout Our Generations

TALENTED FATHERS & KIDS ON WHY MUSIC RUNS IN THE BLOOD

Talent doesn't come from room service. You can't put it in a bun and sell it with fries on the side. It's not programmed into your sequencer or hidden in drumsticks, guitar picks, and sampled licks.

Yet it exists. Like pornography, it's indefinable. Like God, it's invisible. Like both, when it crosses your path, you know it's there.

And like insanity in certain royal circles, it tends to concentrate in families. Maybe this is because the parents inspire (or browbeat) their young into becoming artists. Or it could be part of the DNA. Probably it's a bit of both. Whatever the reason, we've certainly benefited from having more than one Bach,

Zappa, and Marsalis to appreciate.

Ditto for the artists on the following pages. In his sensuously muted trumpet and cornet performances and early investigation of African instrumentation and styles, Olu Dara—born Charles Jones III—laid a foundation for the chart-busting rap performances of his son Nas. Amy Allison's laconic, pinch-nosed vocals with Parlor James have their direct antecedent in the hip diction of her father Mose. Dave Brubeck's respect for European form and cerebral experimentation echoes in the work of his son Matthew, as well as other members of the Brubeck brood. And there's more commonality than meets the ear in the avant-jazz aesthetic of bassist Charlie Haden and the altie experiments of his offspring.

Ours is not to figure out why all this is so. Rather, let us heed the advice of drummer extraordinaire T. S. Monk's dad Thelonious: "Just listen (or read) and dig."—*RLD*

Olu Dara & Nas

BY NATHAN BRACKETT

Listen to the closing minute of "Life's a Bitch," an ominous song about youth and hopelessness in a Queens ghetto, and you'll hear an interesting turn. The rapper has finished dropping his rhymes, and a muted cornet emerges, coloring the dark groove with its warm tones. The horn player is veteran cornetist Olu Dara, and the MC is his son Nas, whose debut album *Illmatic* was among the acclaimed rap albums of 1994, and whose latest effort, *It Was Written*, shot to #1 on the pop charts upon its release in July.

Calling "Life's a Bitch" a jazz/hip-hop fusion isn't entirely accurate. Dara, a journeyman whose mercurial career has included stints with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Julius Hemphill, Henry Threadgill, James "Blood" Ulmer, Bill Laswell's Material, Brian Eno, and Taj Mahal, has never been comfortable with just making jazz. His music has always been informed by the blues of his native Mississippi, as well as a love for R&B, African music, and New Orleans—eclectic roots which, along with his lyrical sense and relaxed timing, have made him a spare, lovely voice in often avant-garde choruses. A multi-instrumentalist who plays guitar and sings country blues when he has his druthers ("You'd think Robert Johnson was back alive in my house"), he fell into the New York scene in the '70s out of—improbably, considering the typical jazz musician's salary—economic necessity. "When they took funk off the scene as a live music in the early '70s and started playing recorded music at dances," he says, "to do anything in music I had to go to jazz."

For the past ten years the cornet has taken a back seat to Dara's work as a composer for film, TV, and regional theater, for which he also sometimes acts and dances. An all-around entertainer as well as a serious musician, Dara is not afraid to

draw parallels between his okra act and his son's profession.

"I consider myself a rapper," says Olu, "just with an old man's style. When I just started I would get up onstage and not really have the band together, 'cause we didn't have time to rehearse. I would just rap and the songs would come. I like the idea that you can get up, start your rhythm, and create."

Nas, born Nasir Jones, was raised in New York City's Queensbridge Projects, mostly by his mother after Dara and she split in the mid-'70s. The contrast between his Queens childhood and his father's small-town Natchez, Mississippi, roots is stark. "I grew up very cooled out," reflects Dara. "Everything was right there, and if it wasn't there, they'd bring it in. His life has been altogether different. Altogether. He's the first generation of my family in New York. But Nas is like an oasis—beautiful, quiet, serene."

"I didn't realize it," says Nas, "but it's bugged. Because me and my crew that I've been with since I've been a little kid, we kind of follow our fathers' footsteps. I have a friend whose pops used to be in jail a lot, and now he's in jail. My pop's into music, and now I'm into music. But he didn't know about a lot of the stuff me and my brother was into. He knew how it goes, but shit happens to younger kids nowadays. It's worse than when he was young—people being killed, the drug situation. When he found out, I guess he was amazed. Just how we would be finding out about his growing-up."

"When I was growing up, they had music in the schools," says Olu. "You could choose instruments to play, you know? Nas didn't have that opportunity. The schools he went to had no band, no instruments, no nothing. If they hadn't taken charge and created some music with technology, there wouldn't be no music. I commend this generation for finding another way to make music."

Which isn't to say Olu shouldn't take any credit for his son's musical development. "I've been going to his shows since I was crazy young," says Nas. "I've been influenced by the way he handles a crowd—in a calm manner, and he adds humor. But he's straight to the point with his music. His shit is spiritual, you know

what I'm saying? I was always one that thought he should be more well known than he is, 'cause he comes from the old school, the true school.

"When I was younger, I would go to the studio with him," the rapper continues. "I had to be all quiet in the mic room while he was playing the horn. Every time we'd go somewhere, it'd be some shit that would make our minds just open up. Whether it would be Central Park or some old down-low shit underground where a bunch of other jazz musicians was at and we was the only little kids."

Any early proficiency Nas might have shown with instruments was swept aside by the hip-hop revolution of the late '70s and early '80s. By age eight, though, Nas was already a skilled dancer and a budding writer. "I was writing all the time," Nas recalls. Dara adds, "I remember when he was eight and I had to go over to find some things at his mother's house. I noticed that Nas had written some short stories, I mean from beginning to end. At eight years old."

A cameo in '90 with rappers Main Source and 1992's single "Halftime" got the buzz humming for *Illmatic*, which went on to set the standard for East Coast hip-hop at a moment when West Coast rappers had been stealing most of the thunder. But both *Illmatic* and *It Was Written* show jazz influences beyond Dara's cornet. "I like to hear a nice fat jazz rhythm," Nas says. "You throw it in and boom."

"When my pops came into the studio [for *Illmatic*]," he goes on, "I told him, 'Think about the day when we moved to Queensbridge and what you thought about it.' And he played that shit."

Olu remembers the episode slightly differently: "As soon as I walked in, he introduced me to all the people in the studio, and the mic was turned on, and he said, 'Okay, now my pops is gonna rap some of his stuff.' Stopped me in my tracks. My mind said, 'You're not going to be the oldest rapper in the world.' I thought real quickly. I said, 'I'll just play some jazz.'

"And I loved it. I've heard it in the streets, you know? You go down the street and you hear guys in the cars and you hear it. You hear a little trumpet."

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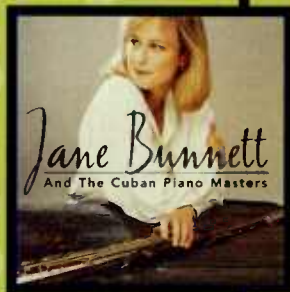
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Mose & Amy Allison

BY ROBERT L. DOERSCHUK

For all the differences in their styles—and there aren't really that many, come to think of it—Mose Allison and his daughter Amy share one undeniable trait: vocals so weird and wonderful that they'd stand out in any choir or caterwaul.

Over the past four decades Mose's delivery, a mutation of bebop jive and Bible Belt drawl, has quietly defined one major school of jazz singing. Perhaps it's an inevitable extension of his Monk/funk pianism and lyrical bent: It's hard to imagine anyone singing "Your Mind Is On Vacation" or "I Don't Worry 'Bout a Thing" without at least a dash of Allisonian irony.

Amy's perspective mirrors her father's, while her voice hovers a tad beyond the edge of idiosyncrasy. Just listen to "Down On Dreaming," from *Dreadful Sorry*, the debut EP by her band Parlor James: Lines like "I'm down on dreaming/Someone wake me up and make me face reality/Dreaming's killing me" could just as easily have been penned by Mose, but that hyper-nasal, quivery timbre and deadpan elocution somehow sounds like a put-on and a stark confession at the same time.

"I have three daughters and one son," says Mose. "They were all into music, but it was more of a personal thing with Amy. I saw that she had talent when she was about four. She was singing a children's song one day. Now, all my kids could carry a tune, but she put so much emotion behind it that, right then, I said, 'Oh, Lord!'"

Amy, phoning in from the road, remembers it this way: "Whenever I did anything musical around the house, Dad would give me feedback. He'd hear me sing something and say, 'Wow, you've got a

really good ear!' I remember him asking me to sing the *Dark Shadows* theme"—she warbles the spooky Theremin melody—"and he was impressed that I could do those intervals. With little things like that, I started thinking, 'Hmm, I guess I have the knack.'"

Amy took lessons on piano (though not from her father) and flute. But through her high school years, and even into her college studies at Oberlin, she had trouble with performing. "I really liked the idea, and I wrote songs, so I guess the desire was there. But it was scary too. For a long time I questioned whether I'd be able to get over that."

Eventually, by "gritting her teeth" and getting on with it, Amy began playing in public. New York was her proving ground; with her band, the Maudlins, she gigged in small clubs on the Lower East Side. Her sound began to coalesce on this circuit. From the start country music was its focal point, especially the plain-folks, un-New-Yorkish approach of Loretta Lynn. Even now, in her work with Parlor James, the connection is clear.

Yet traces of her father's swampy jazz are just as evident in Amy's work. "She's doing the same thing in the country idiom that I did in the blues idiom," Mose insists. "I used to listen to country music too; it was called hillbilly music in Mississippi in the '30s. I remember I liked Kitty Wells."

"She was Loretta Lynn's biggest influence," Amy pipes in, apparently delighted.

"I've always loved country tunes," Mose grins, maybe laying on the drawl more than usual. "I do three or four of 'em almost every night, like 'If You Got the Money, Honey, I Got the Time.'"

"I know you like Lefty Frizzell," Amy laughs.

"I do 'You Call It Joggin'" by John D. Loudermilk . . ."

"Hey, Good Lookin'," Amy suggests.

"I do that one too." They're enjoying themselves now; it's with great reluctance that Amy gets ready to bid her Dad goodbye. "I'm at the IHOP and they're holding my food...."

We squeeze in one last question: Why is it that so many musicians wind up passing their talent and, more importantly, their fascination with music to their kids?

"I've been reading books about that," Mose replies. "They're saying that most everything is genetic but it has to be triggered at a certain point. A bird, for example, cannot sing its natural song unless it hears it within a two-week period after being born. So maybe with Amy it was triggered by having someone around who was in music."

"Is it genetic?" Amy muses. "Partly, I guess. I have a great respect and love for music, but even if that's my natural inclination, I'm sure that had a lot to do with who my dad is."

Though they've never played together, she is undoubtedly Mose's biggest fan, and there is talk about teaming up. "We have a live recording of 'Fool Killer,' and we're thinking about doing 'Days Like This,'" she says. "I know that Ryan [Hedgecock, former founder of Lone Justice and now Amy's partner in Parlor James] is totally keen on doing one of my dad's songs too. And we're gonna do a full-length album this fall, so I'd love to have Dad on it."

Mose seems tickled but, instinctively, fatalistic. "Well, we'll see."

"Well, are you available, Dad?"

"Uh," he hedges momentarily, "it depends on whether I can play the tune. Better get to that food, Amy." "Alright. See ya later, doll."

Dave & Matthew Brubeck

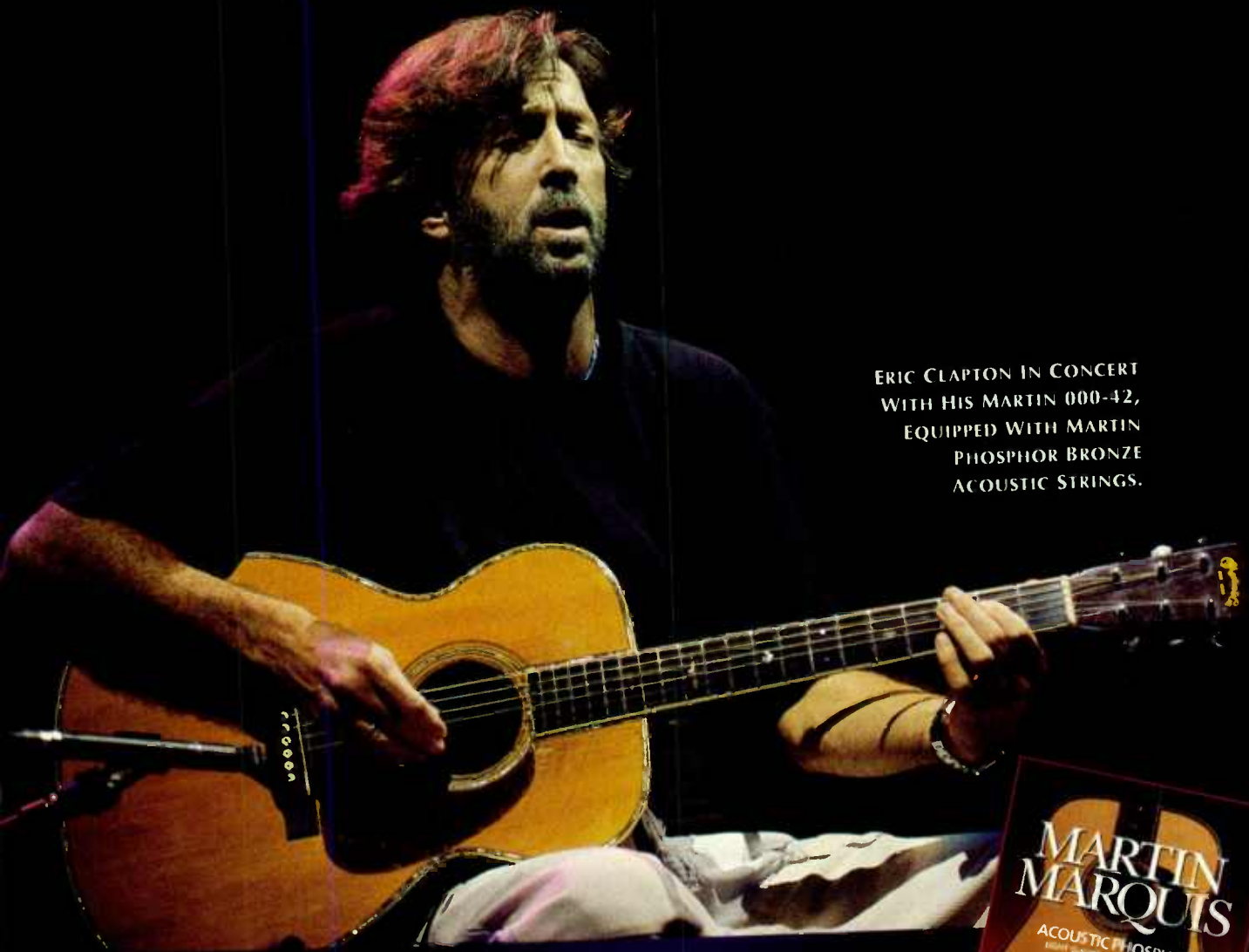
BY ROBERT L. DOERSCHUK

Forty-odd years after Dad began turning modern jazz rhythms inside out, Son was accompanying Buster Keaton's ancient *Sherlock Junior* flick in arty theaters and underground clubs. Dad drew from the European classics; Son wrung neo-Hendrix squalls from his solid-body Eric Jensen cello.

This is progress? Sure, agree Dad and

Photo of Mose & Amy Allison by Rafael Fuchs

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Son—Dave and Matthew Brubeck. Because despite differences in the sounds of their music, their methods are simpatico.

“I don’t think what I do is that far off from a lot of things I’ve learned from working with Dave,” insists Matthew, 35, whose credits include stints with Tom Waits on *Night On Earth* and *The Black Rider* and his ongoing gig with San Francisco’s Club Foot Orchestra. “When you look at what drew me to Waits, for example, it’s the fact that his music comes off as naïve in a certain sense, but he actually really knows what he wants. Waits likes the first take, when musicians are still trying to figure out what they’re supposed to do; I’ve always felt the same way. Also, in the ‘70s, I was an avid Brian Eno fan. I remember being astonished when, on *Before and After Science*, you hear one sound from the next track that leaked accidentally onto what you’re listening to.

“The point is,” Matthew sums up, “you don’t erase a mistake; you have to use it.

I’ve seen Dave work that way many times, especially in live performance. He’ll take something that he or some other played that, at first impression, was a mistake, then transform it into a beautiful event. I grew up with Dave’s idea that improvisation really is improvisation, and there really aren’t any mistakes. I’ve just gone into it further, into music where the whole thing starts with that premise.”

Of course, it takes a lot of shedding to reach the level of turning musical straw into gold. As Dave remembers, his youngest son’s journey began when Matthew was three years old. “He used to crawl under my grand piano, where I kept a 3/4-sized string bass. It was on its back, and he was on his back, hitting that bass once in a while. Then, when I would play something in 5/4, he’d always start to dance. He’d dance perfectly in 5/4 time. I’d often play that way just for fun, just to see him do that.”

Matthew inherited his father’s playful

fascination with time signatures. When not playing behind the dim flicker of silent films, he’s often gigging with Oranj Symphonette, a San Francisco-based band whose current repertoire consists of tunes written by Henry “Moon River” Mancini. “When we play ‘Charade,’ which is a waltz, we do it in 4/4, with a sort of Prince/James Brown feel,” he laughs. “Then we play the bridge in 3/4, like a drunk cabaret band.” Their debut CD, *Oranj Symphonette Plays Mancini*, was recently released on Rykodisc/Gramavision.

Still, like his father, Matthew builds his work on a classical foundation. Between bouts of blues improvisation on the family organ, he clocked ample time with piano and, especially, cello lessons. “Had I known about the commercial consequences of specializing in cello, maybe I would have thought twice,” he muses. “Now I really appreciate my choice, because it’s forced me to do something dif-

Photo of Dave & Matthew Brubeck by Mitch Tobias

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As with most children of celebrated parents, Matthew hasn't always found it easy to be a Brubeck. "I grew up in a household where I almost didn't know there was any other way of life than music. It took such precedence that it became my focus naturally." Strangely, Dave looks back on his brood's upbringing with feelings even more mixed: "I couldn't prepare my kids for the kind of life they had to live. People are so insensitive to what the child of a musician goes through, and it's even tougher on the kid if the father or mother achieves some kind of recognition. When I had [drummer] Danny, [keyboardist] Darius, and [bassist/trombonist] Chris on

the road with me, people would write reviews where they only dwelled on the fact that these were my sons. It was idiotic. You'd think these kinds of reviewers, just by being alive, would have known better than to write that way, especially if they had children of their own."

In the end, the Brubeck saga seems fated for a happy ending. The entire clan got together a year ago September to finish a sidelined project for Telarc; in addition to new material, they reworked some classics with typical irreverent glee, including a 5/4 mutation of Dave's "In Your Own Sweet Way" and a 7/4 shuffle treatment of "Sweet Georgia Brown." Then, in December, they hied off to London to celebrate Dad's 75th birthday in concert with the London Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, the Brubeck Brothers, sans Dave, perform from time to time in the States.

Looking forward, looking back, Dave concludes, "All of my kids are indepen-

dent of me, doing what they want to do. They can come back with me on occasion now, without feeling that pressure. They've proven themselves on their own. They're gonna be like me and keep developing all their lives."

Charlie Haden & Family

BY ANDREW GILBERT

At the age of two Charlie Haden was singing country-western music on his family's radio show in Iowa. By his early

Photo of Charlie Haden & Family by Karen Miller



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20s he was at the center of a revolution fomented by Ornette Coleman's first classic quartet, a group that forever changed the shape of music with its New York debut at the Five Spot. He's remained among the more influential and respected bassists in jazz. So it's only fitting that when Haden's four children talk about their various bands and musical projects, they describe upbringings suffused with improvised music.

"I probably wouldn't know what improvisation was if there wasn't so much around growing up," said violinist/vocalist Petra Haden, who along with her vocalist/electric bassist sister Rachel makes up half of the band that dog. "As the main solo instrument, I play by ear all the stuff I've created. If it wasn't for growing up with jazz, I don't think I'd be able to do that."

Tanya Haden (the three sisters, 23, are triplets) is a cellist who contributed to that dog's eponymous '94 Geffen release, which mixes an acoustic folk sound with

occasional pop hooks and sudden, kinetic, guitar-driven rhythmic shifts. Meanwhile, Josh Haden, 27, an electric bassist and longtime participant in L.A.'s alternative music scene, is part of Spain, a band with an early Elvis Costello-ish sensibility.

"I believe in encouraging young people in whatever they want to do," says father Haden. "I loved that they wanted to play music, but if they didn't want to play, it was cool. I wanted to let them do their thing. But they were surrounded by classical music and jazz."

Spending a little time with the Hadens, it becomes clear that jazz is something of a lingua franca. During the down minutes of the photo shoot for this piece, Petra, whose first violin was a gift from Ornette Coleman, started picking out the melody of "Blues on the Corner" on her mandolin (an instrument she got from her grandmother, who plays in a mandolin orchestra), and Charlie began following her lines on bass. Tanya added some pithy accents with her miniature accordion, a recent

obsession. Later, the younger Hadens discussed the impact of Charlie's playing on their own.

"Listening to my dad play a lot when I was little does affect the way I play now," Rachel says. "I find myself playing certain harmonies that I've heard him play. Sometimes it frustrates me. Sometimes I want to find my own sound, but I guess in a way I am finding my own sound doing this."

"I try to be a jazz musician," Petra says. "I definitely have the jazz blood in me, even though publicly I'm not really doing it. But I will, you can bet on it."

As sure as Charlie exposed his children to all kinds of music, they've returned the favor. "Josh turned me on to a band called the Minutemen," Haden says. "I liked them so much that when I was playing at McCabe's in Santa Monica, we got them on the gig and they played opposite the Liberation Music Orchestra. Then they asked me to sit in on a tune with them at the end."



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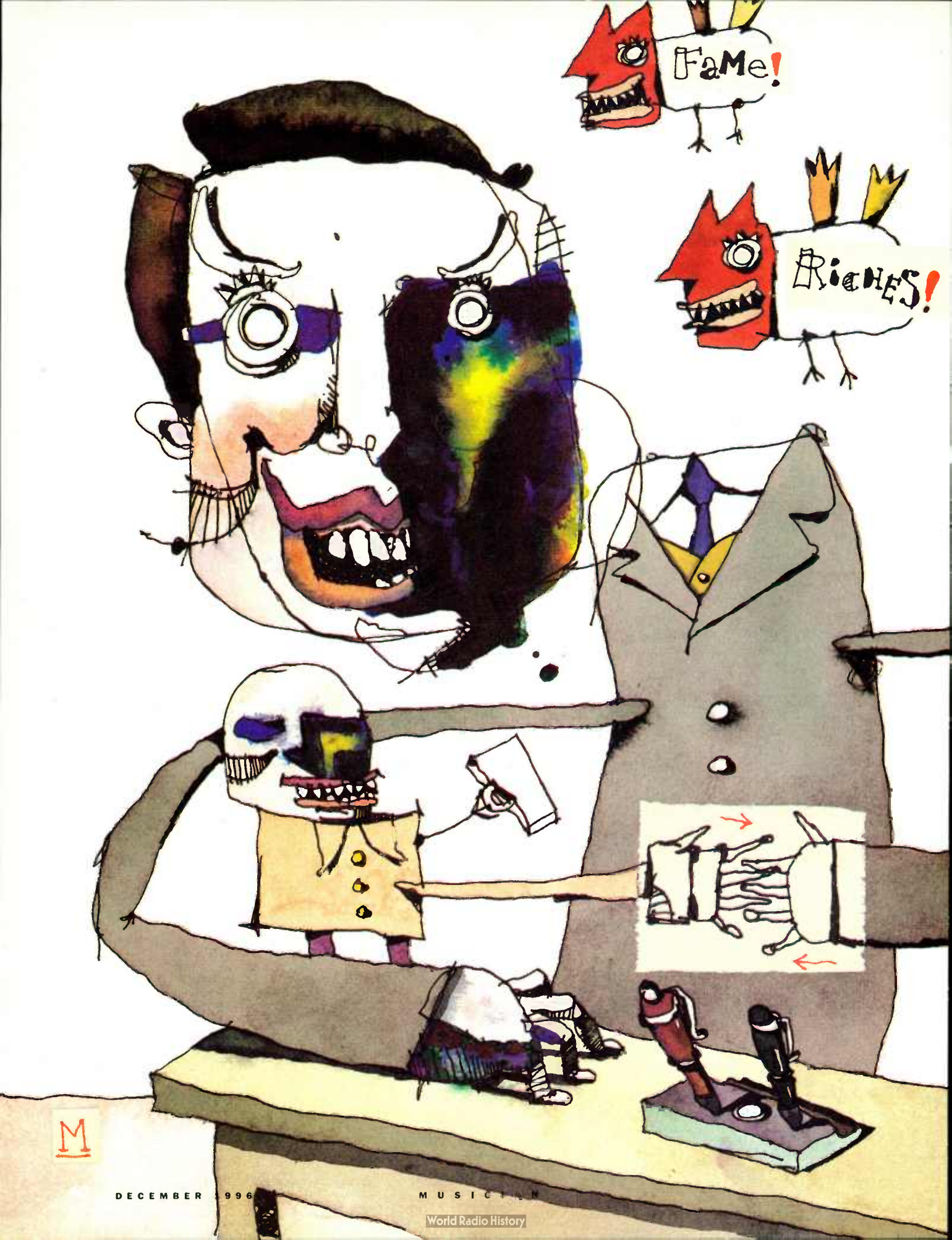
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the major **t** indie connection

what does the growing presence of big labels in indie territory mean to musicians?

ALIAS RECORDS, AN INDEPENDENT RECORD label based in Burbank, Calif., is typical of many moderately successful rock-oriented indies. The eight-year-old company has built a slate of radio-friendly alternative acts—Archers of Loaf, Matt Keating, the Loud Family, Throneberry—that are not unattractive to major labels in the hunt for new talent. While some of the imprint's bands—especially Archers of Loaf—have racked up respectable sales via indie distributors like Caroline and Alternative Distribution Alliance, the feeling at the home office is that more marketplace clout could help its young roster.

So, according to Alias president Delight Jenkins, the label has pacted with Elektra Entertainment. As many as four albums per year will be jointly promoted and marketed by the indie and the major, and distributed through giant WEA Corp. The first project under the terms of the arrangement, Archers of Loaf's *All the Nations Airports*, was released Sept. 24.

"Our intention for doing this was to be able to grow with sales," Jenkins says. "We've done pretty well with this last release of the Archers,

and that was a compilation which sold 40,000. Each step has grown for that band. I hope to do the same with Throneberry. Once you get to a certain plateau, you need a bigger company to help push, to get that extra attention."

There, in a nutshell, is the main reason for the proliferation in recent years of accords between upwardly mobile indie labels and the six major label groups. Such associations—which range in nature from distribution arrangements to the partial acquisition of some indies by the majors—have become increasingly common since 1991, when the multiplatinum explosion of Nirvana's *Nevermind* simultaneously created an appetite for cutting-edge music among young listeners and a quickly burgeoning interest among the majors in credible acts developed within the indies' "farm system." If such a deal works for both sides, it may result in larger dividends for the indie that has sometimes spent

**by chris morris
illustration by
david miller**

years nurturing a band, and can grant a major some hip cachet and a breakout act with a devoted fan base.

But do such indie-major alliances work? A few case studies indicate that while an independent can score big through a pact with a major, it may find itself sidetracked or stranded by the vicissitudes of corporate culture, with its political and hierarchical complexities, its high rate of executive turnover, and, in many cases, its inability to understand an aesthetic system that is foreign to it.

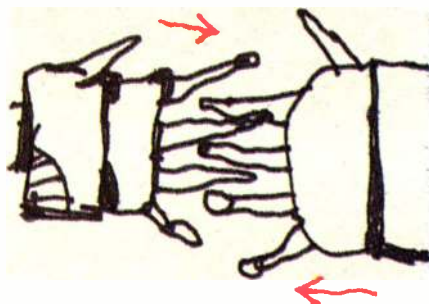
One of the indies professing satisfaction with its arrangement with a major is Mammoth Records, an eight-year-old alternative label based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. According to president Jay Faires, Mammoth's deal—which entailed the acquisition by Atlantic of what he terms “a minority position” in the indie—allowed it to distribute records both through Atlantic (via WEA) and through independent channels.

Faires says, “We’d sort of created our own identity and our own infrastructure,

and Atlantic respected that. They had services that we needed to take our artists to the next level, and we provided something that they needed. . . sort of hipness.”

Asked if the alliance has succeeded, Faires says, “Phenomenally, yes. Seven Mary Three [whose Mammoth/Atlantic album *American Standard* is certified platinum] will be at one-and-a-half-platinum by the end of the year, and I want to figure out how to get a record to two or three million next year, and break another artist along the way.”

Faires, who also serves as an A&R VP for Atlantic, says that only a close relationship between Mammoth and its major-label partner has allowed the deal to flourish. “Mammoth was at one level, and



an indie label may find itself stranded by the majors' corporate culture

you can sort of sit outside of corporate politics and get your artists to 75,000 like Victoria Williams, and every once in a while you can get Juliana [Hatfield] to 250,000, but to

break an artist, it's political here. I mean that in a good way. You've gotta be inside. If you're not inside this building, talking about your record, there's somebody talking about Jewel or Collective Soul or

Brandy or whatever the record is. I had to come inside and speak up for our records, and make sure people were seeing, when Seven Mary Three came in, that it shouldn't just be this little Mammoth thing, that it could become [a] platinum act.”

Faires managed to weather the departure over the last two years of such Mammoth boosters as Atlantic's then president Goldberg and Doug Morris from Warner Music Group. Another internal shuffle led to a rocky ride for New York-based Zero Hour Records.

President Ray McKenzie's label—which began as a vehicle for his own band, Voice In Time, in 1990—had by 1995 grown to become a well-promoted company with such acts as the co-ed group 22 Brides and the Dirt Merchants on its roster. After Epic A&R VP Michael Goldstone expressed an interest in the latter group (now signed to Epic), several labels joined the hunt for Zero Hour. And then, McKenzie says, he got a call from Doug Morris, then just departed from his job at Warner Music to head the new MCA-distributed label Rising Tide.

McKenzie recalls, “They called me up and they said, ‘We've got this great opportunity for you. We have this brand new label. It's called Rising Tide, it's a subsidiary of MCA. We need alternative music; you've got the best in New York. We'd like to be your distribution and marketing arm. You'll be our only alternative music, and you'll work together one-on-one with Doug,’ all that kind of stuff. I was like, ‘This is too good to be true.’”

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The deal between Rising Tide and Zero Hour was structured as an exclusive distribution pact; all of the indie's alternative rock product would move through Rising Tide, via MCA's Uni Distribution Corp. Things have a way of changing rapidly at major labels, however.

"A month after we did the deal," McKenzie says, "Doug Morris became chairman of MCA, and Rising Tide became a country label in Nashville, and I found myself with this company called Universal

[Records], which changed their agenda. Universal became like Geffen Records; it's gonna be a huge, well-financed major label, part of MCA, and we weren't the only music anymore. Very quickly they had six or seven other labels, and they went from [saying] 'Take three or four years to develop your bands' to [saying] 'We need a hit and we need it now.'

"So what was initially going to be a great opportunity for a developing label like ourselves turned into a different situa-

tion, and now we have a non-exclusive deal, wherein some of our records, if we want to, we can say, 'Do you want to put them out?' And if they want to they can, and if they don't want to they don't have to. It's very loose."

Feisty New York indie Matador Records signed on with Atlantic in early 1993. According to Gerard Cosloy, who is partnered in the company with founder Chris Lombardie, the label's arrangement with the major entailed an up-front cash payment, a credit line, and payment of all Matador's salaries, expenses, and marketing and manufacturing costs. In return, Atlantic would take 50% of Matador's profits and co-release six albums a year with Matador, with the remainder of its product going through independent distribution.

"The deal would have reached its terminus after three years," Cosloy says. "We approached them, prior to the three years being up, and said, 'Can we please end this?' They were very amenable to that."

While Cosloy feels that the departure of dealmaker Danny Goldberg from the Atlantic fold helped hasten the deal's end, he admits that other factors also played an important role. Echoing Faires' caution, he notes that Matador "had a lot of trouble finding space" at the major and found its albums, by such artists as Liz Phair, Yo La Tengo, the Fall, Unsane, Pavement, Moonshake, and Bettie Serveert, becoming low priorities within the company.

Cosloy accepts some responsibility for the impasse: "I don't think that we did enough to make it clear what we were about, what our bands were about. I think we made our own periodic attempts, but they were half-assed and not very compelling, let's put it that way."

Matador has since made a pact with Capitol Records. The major has purchased 49% of Matador, and will release four or five albums a year through its EMI Music Distribution; Matador, which will maintain autonomous offices and staff, will release another 20 or 21 titles independently. The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion album *Now I*

Contributors: Chris Morris is senior writer at Billboard in Los Angeles and author of the magazine's weekly *Declarations of Independence* column.

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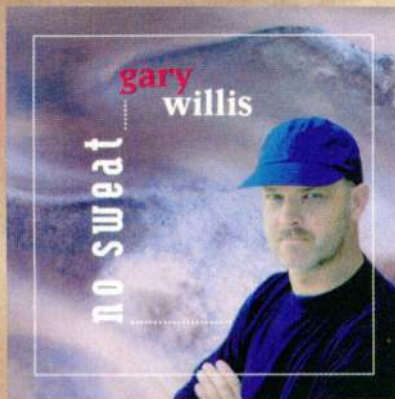
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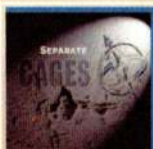
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Got Worry, released in October, was the first *Matador* title to move through Capitol/EMD.

Good chemistry between the two labels helped spur the deal, according to Cosloy: "[Capitol] is a company where there are several dozens of people that we're happy to work with. There are people with backgrounds in music, in independent retail, college radio, journalism, etc.—these are people who grew up loving music and understanding music. They understand the relationship between a band that sells 10,000 or 15,000 on their first record and eventually goes gold. They understand how that transition works. At Capitol, if a record does 10,000 or 15,000 its first six months, the project is not dead, it is not buried. They understand that that can be the beginning of something very special."

Matador was willing to go back to the major-label well. But New York indie spinART Records has sworn off the majors for good, after not one but two nightmarish affairs.

"We were naive," says Jeff Price, who runs spinART with his partner Joel Morowitz. "We believed it twice. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Shame on us, because we believed it a second time."

Launched as a bedroom label by two high school buddies in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, spinART attracted attention four-and-a-half years ago with *One Last Kiss*, a compilation featuring such groups as Suddenly, Tammy!, Velocity Girl, the Lilys, and Lois. Suddenly, Tammy! was snapped up by the majors after releasing an album with the indie, and spinART found itself wooed by Columbia Records.

Under the terms of the arrangement, the label received sustaining funds from Columbia and released its records through indie distributor Caroline; over a certain sales plateau, a good-selling album would move over to Sony Distribution. Lotion's album *Full Isaac* made such a move, through Sony's now-defunct Chaos imprint, in early 1994. According to Price, the record sold a little more through branch distribution than it did independently—about 7,000 or 8,000.

Price says spinART's situation with Columbia collapsed for a familiar reason: "All the people who were there when we

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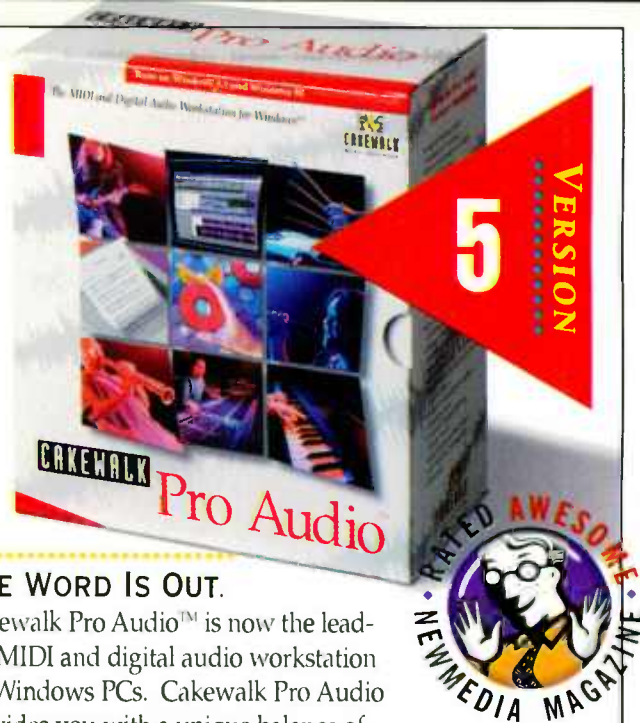
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came in were not there when we left. All the A&R people, all the business people, all the promotion people were gone. So we come to the end of the term [of the deal], and it's like there's nobody here. They came to us and said, 'Uhhh, who are you again?' It was really kind of comic."

Undeterred, spinART began entertaining offers from other majors and major-distributed imprints. Price says, "Joel and I still decided that we wanted to be in a label deal. There's a lot of people who claim you're selling out, you're doing a deal with the devil, you're just trying to make money. No. We're not out there just trying to score a buck for ourselves. This has to do with a responsibility to the bands."

Of the prospective suitors, Irving Azoff's Giant Records (known as Revolution Records today) "pitched a good pitch," according to Price. A deal was secured, and Lotion's second album, unprophetically titled *Nobody's Fool*, was moved through Giant's distributor WEA.

And the same damn thing happened

again.

"When the dust settled," Price says, "the people that had brought us in, which were [former Giant executives] Steve Backer and Howard Benson, were gone, as were 40 other people in that company, and in their place stood a whole new team. And I guess they didn't want us."


The separation of spinART from the refurbished Giant was apparently acrimonious: Price will not discuss certain details, citing a pending settlement between the two companies. He is categorical, however, about his feelings regarding any potential future dealings with a major. He implies that, both situationally and philosophically, such a mating is just not feasible for an indie in the long run.

"Joel and I talked about it," he says. "It can't work. You've got to be larger than spinART to make this work. You have to be a Matador [or] Sub Pop size. The company's got to own you. We're four people. We're not a bedroom label anymore, but we're not Matador's size. We fall some-

where between the two. I don't think at the size that we're at that it's possible. What spinART needs in order to substantiate getting in bed with a major is doing a band-by-band deal."

Price adds that the whole premise of an indie deal is made unstable by major-label economics: "I've learned twice now that the turnover in this industry is too fast, it's too furious, and you need stability. A lot of times the majors come in, and they have that fourth quarter, and they need to bring in X number of dollars, and there's no patience. They want to pop that gold record, and when you don't deliver a gold record in the first six months, they seem to forget about the whole concept of grooming talent, developing them, working them slowly so you can have a band with a career, like R.E.M. You develop the band. You go out and sell 10,000 of the first one, and the second one you do 70,000, and then you can pop the third one, but that's gonna be four years down the road, and who has patience for that?"

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SONGWRITING

[cont'd from page 26] bridge which I now think is the best moment on the record. I could not hear it at the time. I couldn't seem to place my vocal against it, but now I love it because it just throws the rhythm forward.

Bacharach: Part of the appeal of this recording with Elvis was that 90% of the vocal was done to track while the band was playing. They react to him, he reacts to them, instead of some guy coming in and doing the percussion overdub alone with earphones. Sometimes there's an excitement that happens when people participate at the same time.

Costello: We met for the first time on this song when we rehearsed it at the Record Plant, which happened by sheer chance to be vacant that day, and then we recorded it over the next three days. Burt had come with the arrangement: he'd composed that flügelhorn introduction. We discussed the merits of me singing it, bearing in mind that it's a woman's song, really, but there wasn't an obvious vocalist. You had the

dilemma of going with a great unknown or trying to pitch it to a known diva who might butcher it. It was decided that I would at least sing it passionately, even though not technically as well as some singers.

It is a live vocal. There's one line where my voice cracks in a way that I would have fixed, that Burt insisted on keeping because he said it sounded real. I was really heartened by that. And I noticed that he got great respect from the string players and horn players because, although he was very exacting and demanding that they played it a certain way, they respected that it wasn't what some producers do, which is to put you through the paces just because they can. There was always a reason, an objective.

You've both had success in the pop field over the years while bending or breaking a lot of unofficial pop rules, despite the ever-increasing tyranny of the 4/4 beat.

Bacharach: I never did a 7/8 bar to consciously break the rules. It certainly came as a surprise to me when I went to write it down. I'd say, "That can't be right, it comes out seven

beats to the bar." But it felt right.

On some level I've tried to make these mini-movies—they have some big moments, they have quiet moments. That's built into the song. If it's not, you're not going to do it orchestrally. Very often when I'm writing, I'm hearing when things all come in and go out. They kind of go hand in hand. It's the advantage of being able to orchestrate as a composer, see.

But it used to be that I'd know who I was writing for. An artist that you might have some control over, like Dionne [Warwick], you could maybe write the orchestration, have some control over the way a song is done. That doesn't work anymore. A lot has changed. There's a lot more self-contained acts. It's real hard to sign a writer now who isn't an artist or a top producer. And there's so many formats. As far as my writing, there's always a place, but I think there's a smaller window for good solid songs.

Costello: Growing up as a listener, I wasn't musically literate. But there was an unsettling mystery about certain kinds of music. The most profound example for me was [Bacharach's] "Anyone Who Had A Heart"—to this day it has a strangely erotic effect. I think it's somewhat because of the unsettling nature of the rhythm but of course you don't analyze when you're 12 years old, you just feel it. It definitely came from a world I didn't know about yet.

The next record that made me feel that way was *Revolver*, where the Beatles clearly weren't the Mop Tops anymore; they'd gone into darker areas. It's that mysterious period between childhood and adolescence where sophisticated music frightens you a little bit, but in an intriguing way, like movies with "adult" themes without in any way being lurid.

Bacharach: If I get an idea, I get away from the piano and start working in my head. I can hear it longer that way, hear the length of the song or get a balance of what those eight bars are. If you use an instrument, you can get trapped in the bar-by-bar or chord-by-chord.

I think it's important to be able to write music down. I try to encourage young people getting in this business—learn *solfège*, learn the rules. Then you can break the rules down the line. But learn to write it down.

Machines are very seductive. I can lead my little boy to a keyboard with three or four "brains" hooked up and have him play two notes, and sound magnificent. That still doesn't make a song.

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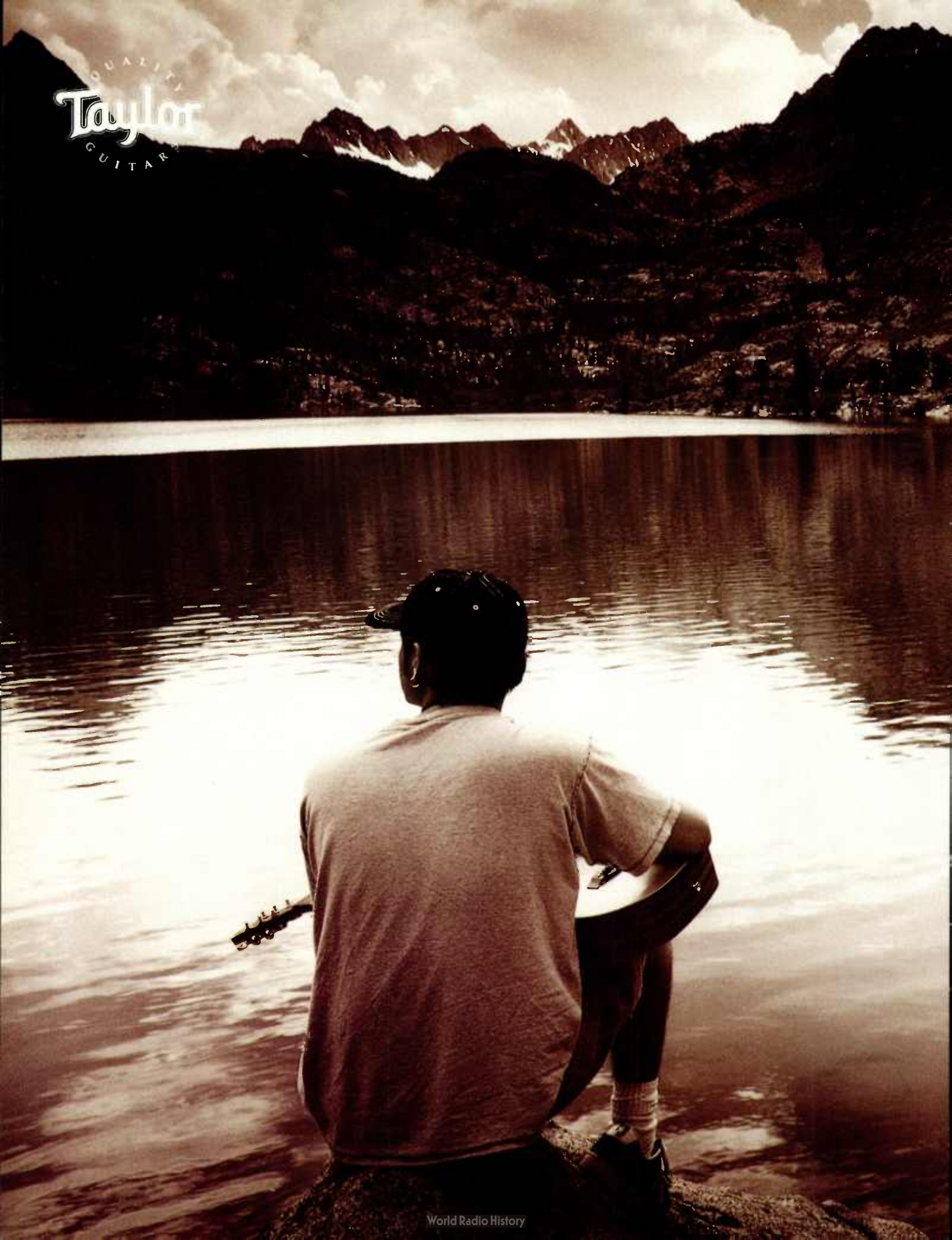
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CALL THE ICHTHYOLOGISTS!



In 1996, for the first time in several years, Phish didn't embark on a big summer tour of the United States. Of course, big summer tours of the United States are the primary way this Vermont quartet has made its name, to the point where that name seems almost synonymous with shed concerts, acres of tie-dye, and parking lots full of frisbee and hack-ysack players. But this year, guitarist Trey Anastasio, keyboardist Page McConnell, bassist Mike Gordon, and drummer Jon Fishman forewent their usual route. They did take their show to Europe for most of July, and they played a few select American gigs in August, ending with a two-day festival in Plattsburgh, New York—dubbed the "Clifford Ball"—that attracted over 100,000 people. But for most of the year, Phish were concentrating on something other than live performance. They were busy making a record. • The process took place in a quiet backwoods setting: a renovated barn that's part of the sprawling Bearsville Studios complex near Woodstock, New York. It began in February in a spirit of freewheeling experimentation, broke down in mid-March in a fog of uncertainty, got back on track at the end of April, and ended in June with great excitement. In the interim came a record-breaking concert in New Orleans, at least one major group rethink, and a lasting lesson in how the right choice of producer can alter everything for the better. The final result, Phish's sixth studio album *Billy Breathes* (Elektra), stands miles above the band's previous recorded output. • Throughout the year *Musician* checked in with Phish



was on the brink of making a weighty decision about the album's direction, and back to Bearsville to catch the recording process near its conclusion. What follows is a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of a band in transition. ● **Bearsville, March 12** The sound emanating from the speakers in the Barn's spacious control room is pastoral, tranquil, predominantly acoustic guitar and piano, with a hushed vocal by Trey. The song, which the band started recording five days ago, is called "Billy Breathes," and Trey, Page and engineer Jon Siket are playing it back to check on the lead and backing vocal tracks. At the moment, there are six lead vocals, each one compiled from several takes, four from last night and two from previous nights. In the end, all six will eventually be edited down to one. "This is the most inorganic part of the process," Page comments. "The tracking's been live, and no instruments have been edited. But with the vocals, we want it to be as good as we can get it, and since we have the ability, why not?" ● In the middle of the playback, Siket and assistant engineer Chris Laidlaw have to change from one Studer tape machine to another; the one they were using is having trouble muting and fast-winding. The new tape machine doesn't exactly tickle Trey's fancy.

"Looks pretty cold and mechanical to me," he quips. "The other machine's a '64 Mustang. This is like recording to a '95 Taurus." But once it's up and running, Trey's initial hesitance is soon erased. ● Next Tuesday, the band is scheduled to leave Bearsville and take some time off from the sessions. Ideally, they'd like to have the rest of the vocals and overdubs for the whole album finished by then, but there's still a lot of work to be done. Two more weeks have been booked at the Barn in May; they were originally intended to be for mixing only, but the possibility looms that more recording will be necessary. "I'd really like to have the record done," Trey says, "but usually we don't get the chance to take it home and listen to it for a while. You never know, a track may suck." ● "Billy Breathes," the song being played back, had its

BY MAC RANDALL PHOTOS BY JILL FURMANOVSKY

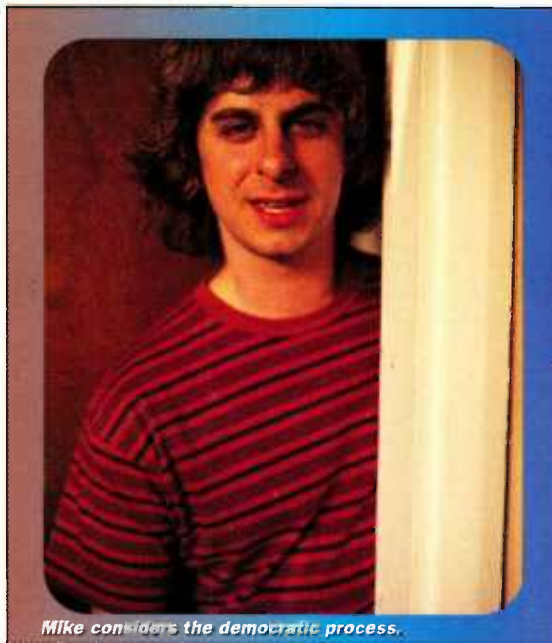


Phish on tour in Europe, July '96: devising a set list.

genesis near the beginning of the sessions. It came out of an experiment called "The Blob." For the first couple of weeks at Bearsville, the members of Phish composed a gradual improvisation on one reel of tape. Each member took turns adding a part; they could start anywhere they wanted on the tape and play whatever came to mind on whatever instrument they felt like playing. At first they limited themselves to playing one note at a time. Later, as the Blob slowly took shape, chords were allowed. Finally, brief snippets of songs were brought in, including an early version of "Billy Breathes." Ten minutes or so of "The Blob" was completed. "Some vignettes may make it onto the album," Mike says. The rest remained a work in progress, which was set aside in order to tackle "real" songs. Of those, as usual, about 90 percent came from Trey and his songwriting partner Tom Marshall. Mike submitted two songs, and one other, "Theme from the Bottom," was a group jam that Marshall added lyrics to later.

For the first time in three albums, Phish are producing themselves. Today, Trey and Page take turns producing each other's vocals. Page listens to Trey's six lead vocal tracks with a pencil in one

hand and a notebook containing track information in the other, following along with a lyric sheet and writing comments on each different take. "Should we go back and check again before we sign off on the first two verses?" Trey asks. "Sure," says



Mike considers the democratic process.

Page. They listen back again. Trey's pitch at the end of one line is in question. "Maybe I should just leave," Trey suggests, "so if Page has an idea, he doesn't feel he has to turn to me and okay it." Eventually he does leave; an hour or so later, all the fixing is done and he returns. Listening to the edited track, he laughs

and says, "It almost sounds like I can sing."

All this talk of "signing off" on tracks seems almost obsessively democratic. And this is just Trey and Page we're talking about here; Mike and Jon aren't even involved at the moment. "We're taking a lot of time," Page admits, "but I enjoy the freedom. After working with real producers [Barry Beckett for 1993's *Rift* and Paul Fox for 1994's *Hoist*] and seeing how they worked, that influenced us this time. It doesn't mean you can't get a



Trey in full flight

good version on a first take. Ideally, you can."

Jon puts it this way: "It's a cool process. All four of us are doing the job of one producer."

The next song Siket cues up is called "Strange Design," an atmospheric number featuring a Mellotron drone, spacy guitars, and a somewhat abstract melody. This version of the song was recorded without drums to a click track. Now, with everything else on tape, it needs drums. "Let's get Fish on one pass and then tell him to go," Trey advises, "because he gets mental after one." The reason for this seemingly backwards recording approach—Page calls it "build-

ing the track from the top up,” while Trey favors the term “Blob-ifying it”—comes out of a conscious effort to change the song’s sound. Phish has been playing “Strange Design” live for a while, and back in February they recorded it just as they played it onstage. According to Trey, it sounded “stale” that way.

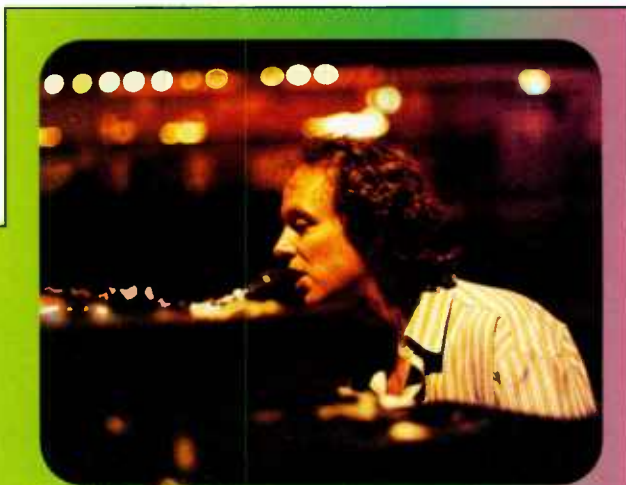
Mike, cornered in one of the houses adjoining the barn, disagrees. “I didn’t love the song *until* we recorded it the first time,” he says. “And then I thought it was the best thing on the album. But by

the time Trey and Page brought the tape home, they were already sick of it.” He plays a tape of the earlier version; it sounds much poppier, almost Beatlesque. “This version has a catchiness to it that I’m more attached to,” he says. “But

doing between five and ten takes later on, but we were learning lessons about recording along the way.

“We still don’t feel like we’ve made a great record yet. We always like them when we’re working on them, but two months or so later we get real critical. Also, after hearing the same songs over and over again, you lose perspective. You burn your ears out, you don’t know what’s good or not.”

Mike isn’t spending much time in the studio this week. Page and Trey are running the show, and as Mike puts it, “I don’t want to feel

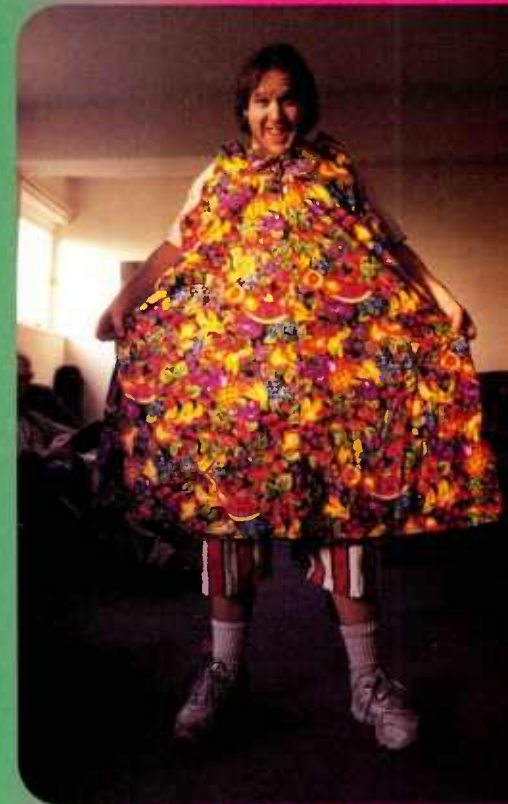


Page takes the mike.

when you get attached to something while you’re making an album, you’re screwed.”

This isn’t the only song the band’s had disagreements about. Page’s piano solo on “Waste” features three notes that half the band can’t stand. “Page and I find those notes fine, but Fish and Trey have this horrible reaction every time they hear it. They wanted him to change it, and he tried, but it didn’t work. We just have to see whether the people that hate it can live with it. You have to compromise.”

The buzzword used regularly by every member of the band during these sessions is “preconceptions.” They’re to be done away with at every turn. That’s why the band didn’t rehearse before coming into the studio this time (in the past, they’ve rehearsed for weeks before recording). That’s why they started off with something as bizarre as “The Blob,” to get people thinking differently. “We’re learning our production methods the hard way,” Mike says. “One time we did 17 takes of a song—we learned not to do that again. So we decided to do no more than three after that, because after the third it was going downhill anyway. Then we ended up breaking that rule and



Jon shows off his dress collection.

like I’m pretending to take part.” What about all the talk of “signing off”? “Oh,” Mike laughs, “the democratic process. Trey sometimes complains that we’re overly democratic in the studio.



Outside the Shepherd’s Bush Empire, London

Everyone has to always be there agreeing on everything and it's just too much. But that is our general policy. At the same time, Trey's such a leader that...well, *he* really is the one who has to sign off on things."

Back in the barn, Fishman is doing drum tracks for the two tunes recorded with a click—"Strange Design" and "Far Away." (The latter probably won't make it on the album.) After the first few runs through "Strange Design," Fish comes in to listen. "I don't know about that second part," he muses. Trey and Page respond in unison: "It's fine." "Okay," Fish chuckles, "it's rock solid." "Steve Gadd would be proud," Trey adds.

Fishman has no such trouble with "Far Away." From the outset, he latches onto a vicious groove full of click-defying fills. Because Fish isn't concerned with demonstrating his technical skill at all times, you can sometimes forget what a great player he is. Moments like this remind you of that fast. Trey bounces up and down in the control room to the playback, and Fish is bubbling with enthusiasm. "I forgot there was a click," he says, "I really warmed up to it. Though for one moment there, I remembered Dennis Chambers existed and I thought, 'Won't play this fill.'"

The excitement is short-lived, and the drudgery soon begins again. Trey picks up the pencil and the notebook and starts to work on comping Page's vocals for "Strange Design." He doesn't want to be disturbed. "He'll probably be going all night," Page says. "The last comping session was nearly 20 hours." We take that as our cue to exit the barn.

Phish don't end up meeting their original goal. The recording isn't done by the time they leave Bearsville; more will have to be done in May. How much more is still uncertain.

New Orleans, April 26

After a month off, the members of Phish reconvene in the warm, sunny climate of the Crescent City. This Friday afternoon, they play their only concert of the spring, opening for the Meters on the first day of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. The Phishheads have

piscatorial picks

For the *Billy Breathes* sessions at Bearsville, TREY ANASTASIO used the same electric and acoustic guitars he's had for years, custom designed and built by Phish's soundman Paul Languedoc. In addition, he experimented with a '66 Rickenbacker 360 12-string, '61 Gretsch 6186 Clipper, '67 Epiphone Casino, '90 Gibson Les Paul Studio, '63 Fender Strat, '68 Silvertone (the kind with the amp built into the case), and a '58 Gibson lap steel. DR strings were also spotted in great supply near Trey's setup in the Barn. Trey's effects are controlled by a quartet of 4x4 switching systems designed by Bob Bradshaw of Custom Audio Electronics, and include a CAE Super Tremolo and Black Cat Univibe replica, two Ibanez Tube Screemers, an Ernie Ball volume pedal, Dunlop Crybaby wah, Ross compressor, Electro-Harmonix Phase Shifter, DigiTech Whammy pedal, Ibanez analog delay, and (count 'em) five different reverb units: three Alesis Microverbs, an Alesis Midverb, and a Peavey tube spring reverb. For live work, Trey's signal goes through a CAE three-channel preamp and Groove Tubes Dual 75-watt power amp into a set of four 12" Celestion Vintage 30 speakers in custom boxes and a RotoPhaser speaker with rotating horn. In the studio, the Languedocs blared through a Marshall 1960 4x12 cabinet, '64 Fender Twin, '66 Magnatone M-15, '73 Hiwatt 50-watt combo, '63 brown Fender Deluxe, '57 Fender Champ, and a '63 Vox AC30.

PAGE McCONNELL's array of keyboards included an eight-foot Steinway grand piano (he takes a Yamaha C7 on the road), a Goff Hammond B-3 organ, Wurlitzer and Fender Rhodes 88 electric pianos, vintage Moog Source and Prodigy synths, a Mellotron, and a Hohner Planet-Clavinet Duo. The scrunched-up horn section in the middle of *Billy Breathes'* title track is an original Chamberlin, which Page bought off Bearsville neighbor Todd Rundgren during the sessions. "He was selling his house and moving to Hawaii," Page reports, "so I made him an offer, which he accepted. He even helped me move it down the stairs. The first time I used it was to record that track." Page also dabbled with a 100-year-old toy piano and a Space Control Theremin made by Robert Moog's company Big Briar.

Like Trey, MIKE GORDON calls Paul Languedoc his No. 1 manufacturer; besides using Paul's five-string electric basses, he plucked an old no-name upright—"a Kay or something"—on a track or two at Bearsville. Again, DR are the strings of choice, though Mike has also experimented with Ken Smith flatwounds. Mike's Custom Audio Electronics 4x4 switching system is controlled by a CAE RS-10 pedal and incorporates an Ibanez Tube Screamer, Meatball envelope filter, Boss flanger, and Boss octave divider. From there, the signal hits a Lexicon LXP-5 processor, an ADA MB-1 preamp, a Crest Audio 7001 power amp, and a slew of components from Meyer Sound Laboratories: a CP-10 ten-band parametric EQ, a VX-1 three-band crossover, S-1 mid/hi processor, B2-EX sub processor, two MSL-2A cabinets for mids and highs, and two 650-R2 cabinets for lows. A '72 100-watt Marshall Super Bass and an old Ampeg received some use at the Barn too.

JON FISHMAN bashed away on two different kits. The main kit consisted of a 7x14 10-ply Ayotte snare; 6x8, 8x10, and 10x12 Eames rack toms on a Gibraltar rack with Yamaha mounts; 14x14 Eames floor tom; and 16x22 Tama ArtStar II kick drum. Cymbals included a 22" Sabian dry ride, 18" custom Zyn china, and an abundance of Zildjians: 20" A. flat-top custom ride with rivets, 18" dark crash, 17" medium crash, 16" thin crash, 14" New Beat hi-hat, and 6" A. splash. The smaller "jazz kit" matched a 6x14 Ludwig Black Beauty snare with a vintage Gretsch set: 6x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 14x14 floor tom, and 14x20 kick. Zildjian 13" K. custom hi-hats, 15" and 16" crashes, and 22" ping rides rounded out the set. Heads were Remo Ambassadors, sticks Vic Firths.

Billy Breathes was recorded on two Studer 16-track machines, an A800 II and an A827, using 2" BASF 900 tape; all signals went through an API Legacy 32-input split console. Microphones of choice included the Neumann U47, M49, and U67; AKG C12 and C24; and a Sony C37. Two pairs of Fairchild 670 tube compressors also came in handy, as did various Pultec tube EQs, Urei tube compressors, Daking mic preamps, and an Eventide DSP 4000 processor. When Steve Lillywhite arrived to save the day, he did it with help from Neve's Flying Faders automation program from MartinSound Technologies. It allowed him to set levels for the final mix even while the band was still tracking, saving a lot of time for everyone, and he and the crack engineering staff could say nothing but good about it.

taken over the place. Fleets of Volkswagen buses run through the French Quarter, and the shores of the Mississippi throng with tie-dyed kids selling homemade necklaces for cash to get to the next town. Phish take the festival's main stage around 3:30 in the afternoon. The crowd is massive, and devoted.

Members of the Phish organization report that the band initially felt intimidated about playing this show. The festival, and the city it's held in, belongs to a great tradition of American music; allegedly, some of the band were uncertain what their place in that tradition was. Do four white guys from Burlington really belong at Jazzfest? Trey denies having any mixed feelings about it. "It's just flattering that we were asked to play there. For me, of all the festivals, Jazzfest is the top of the list. And the music that it's all about has influenced all of us strongly, so I think we fit in all right."

One thing's for sure: You haven't seen too many acts at Jazzfest cover Richard Strauss' "Also Sprach Zarathustra" or do a note-perfect rendition of the Beatles' "A Day in the Life," which even duplicates the orchestral buildup convincingly. Phish's covers are legendary among fans: the a cappella "Freebird," including all the solos, or the special Halloween shows, in which the band covered the Beatles' White Album and the Who's *Quadrophenia* in their entirety. (For those readers who haven't experienced the magnitude of a Phish concert, get this: The night they did *Quadrophenia*, the whole album took up just one of the band's three sets.)

Phish's crew, who've been there for every show, say this one isn't that tight—the band hasn't rehearsed for a while, and they're rusty. But to any outside observer, everything sounds just fine. The customary lengthy jams move along well, feeding off the crowd's energy; it seems the guys are more interested in having a good time than blowing people's heads off. A new instrumental, featuring Page on organ, is graced by the presence of ex-Sun Ra trumpeter Michael Ray, who also guested on Trey's solo project *Surrender to the Air*. It's loose, in a funky, playful way.

At times like these, Trey emerges as

the band's real leader. From his position toward the front of the stage, he communicates with the others through a series of body movements and hand signals, orchestrating the dynamics of the jams and the flow of the set. Trey acknowledges that he does tend to take charge live. "I don't think I'm the Billy Corgan of the band, but I am the one who thinks about the set most beforehand. We've tried it other ways, with the others taking

different roles, but this way works best. You couldn't get to the moon without mission control."

Mike says that after a lot of Phish shows, the band obsessively discusses its jams and their success or failure. "If something goes wrong, we've got to figure out what it was and why. It generally comes down to two basic problems: not listening and not being supportive. If you're coming in with too many precon-

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ceptions, you're not listening. If you aren't careful to build a platform for everyone, you're not being supportive. Even 13 years into it, we're still overanalytical about it, but we're slowly getting better."

After this particular show, we find Page backstage and ask about the new song that Michael Ray played on. "I wrote that one," he says proudly. "It's called 'Cars Trucks Buses,' and it might end up on the album." So you're still not sure what's making it onto the album? "Not completely. We booked a couple more weeks at Bearsville so we could do some more recording. But things are in hand."

Page's answer seems a bit evasive. The reason for this only becomes clear later. It turns out that Phish were in the middle of making a big decision: whether to continue producing the album on their own or bring in an outside producer. The final vote, cast almost immediately after the

band returns home from Jazzfest, is for the outside producer, and that changes everything.

Artistically and financially, the New Orleans show was a great success. Approximately 62,500 people showed up, over 20,000 more than the first day of last year's festival. Unfortunately, certain showgoers reportedly didn't believe in the Port-O-Sans thoughtfully supplied by management, choosing instead to deposit their bodily wastes elsewhere. This unsanitary behavior did not endear the Phish crowd to New Orleans' city fathers. And thus, Phish is officially banned from playing the Jazz and Heritage Festival ever again.

Bearsville, June 19

A new face has entered the Phish sessions, and it's a legendary one. Producer Steve Lillywhite has worked with everyone from U2 to Talking Heads, the Rolling

Stones to Dave Matthews. In fact, it was Matthews who recommended Lillywhite to the band when they told him they were looking for another set of ears. It just so happened that the producer was available, liked the material, and immediately agreed to come to Bearsville for the second half of the sessions, starting at the beginning of May. Now, with Lillywhite joining Jon Siket and Chris Laidlaw in the Barn, the technical team and location are exactly the same ones that produced the Dave Matthews Band's *Crash*.


"We hit a wall," Trey confesses. "We'd wanted to make an album that was just us, with nobody else hanging around. But then Page and I started working way too hard, doing all the stuff that you have to do to make a record but that people don't know about. It got to the point where after you'd spend hours and hours comping tracks, you'd just want to leave. Then you'd record a track and it would sound completely [cont'd on page 94]"

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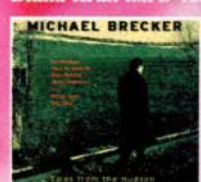


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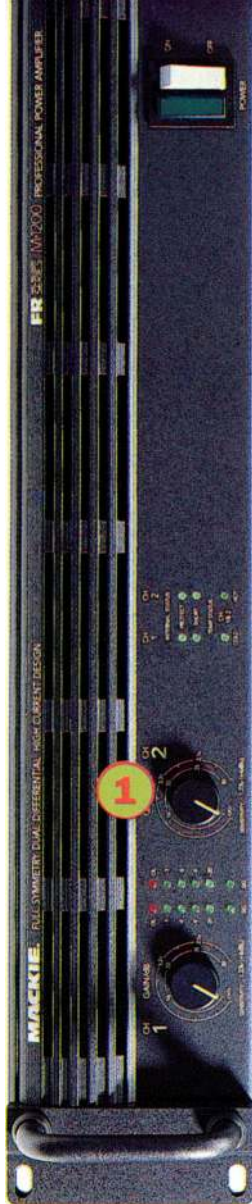
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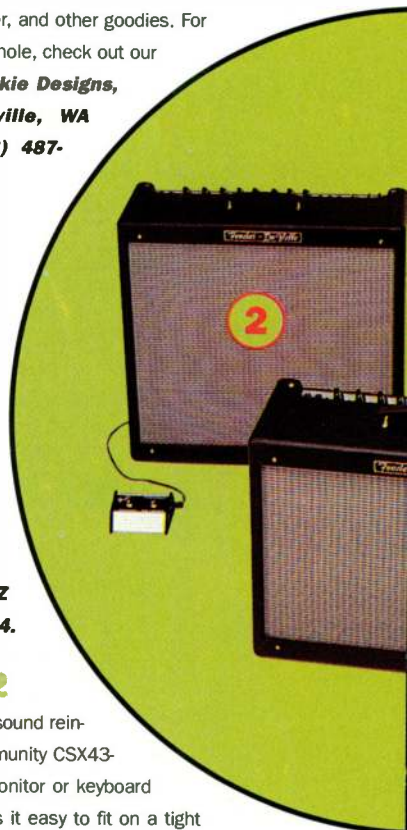
1 Mackie FR Series M•1200

No, they're not just a mixer company anymore. With the introduction of the FR Series M•1200, Mackie's moved into the power amp world. Weighing in at 1200 watts and \$599, the M•1200 features T-design constant gradient cooling to keep the temperature stable, sustained ultra-low impedance capability, a defeatable clip eliminator, built-in sweepable high pass filter, and other goodies. For more information on the FR Series as a whole, check out our

Summer NAMM report on page 70. ▶ **Mackie Designs, 16220 Wood-Red Road NE, Woodinville, WA 98072; voice (800) 898-3211, fax (206) 487-4337.**

2 Fender Hot Rods

Bad news: Fender's getting rid of its tweed amp line. Good news: They're replacing it with something better—jet-black and silver Hot Rods. The Hot Rod DeVille 410 and 212 boast 60 watts of tube circuitry, with a choice of four 10" or two 12" speakers, while the Hot Rod Deluxe is 40 watts with a single 12" speaker. All three models feature three channels—normal, drive, and more drive—and a two-color LED indicating which one you're using. Prices on the Hot Rods range from \$700 to \$900. ▶ **Fender Musical Instruments, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85258; voice (602) 596-9690; fax (602) 596-1384.**



3 Community CSX43-S2

Designed primarily as a portable PA speaker for sound reinforcement in clubs and auditoriums, the Community CSX43-S2 (\$755) can also be used as a stage monitor or keyboard loudspeaker. Its trapezoidal shape makes it easy to fit on a tight stage or place two side by side for wider coverage and increased output level. A 15" Ferrofluid-cooled woofer is coupled to a 1" titanium-diaphragm, high-frequency compression driver mounted on a 90x40-degree pattern control horn. ▶ **Community Professional Loudspeakers, 333 E. 5th St., Chester, PA 19013-4511; voice (610) 876-3400, fax (610) 874-0190.**



ard

4 Yamaha CS1x

The first thing you'll notice about the Yamaha CS1x is its distinctive bright blue coloring. The next thing you'll notice are the knobs. Yes, this is a digital synthesizer, with hundreds of voices, plenty of memory, one-touch setting reconfigurations, and MIDI. But it's controlled by six analog-style knobs—no pages and sub-pages of hidden menus here. The 61-key, 32-note polyphonic CS1x also features a "scene controller" that allows instant and dramatic shifts in atmosphere and timbre. The final thing you'll notice is the price, but that's by no means bad (\$799.95). ▶ **Yamaha, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011.**

5 Ibanez JEM10

Guess it's anniversary time in the guitar business. Ibanez is celebrating one too: 10 years of making JEM guitars for Steve Vai. The commemorative JEM10 (\$2999.95) frames its black basswood body with luscious pearloid/abalone binding and engraved aluminum pickguard. The neck's a one-piece maple, frets are jumbo, pickups are DiMarzio Evolution, and the bridge is a Lo Pro Edge (with whammy bar, of course). ▶ **Ibanez Guitars, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020; voice (215) 638-8670, fax (215) 245-8583.**

6 Lakland Bass 5

Five-string basses can often be sonically shaky, and that's why Lakland designed the Bass 5 (\$2095). Its strings run through the body, and the tuning machine for the low B string is up higher on the headstock than on most five-strings. Both features increase string tension and length for better tone. The Bass 5's got a 35-inch scale length, Bartolini pickups and a bypassable three-band active equalization system, and it's made from a variety of hand-selected woods, including swamp ash, quarter-sawn hard maple, rosewood, ebony, and birdseye maple. ▶ **Lakland Musical Instruments, 2044 N. Dominick, Chicago, IL 60614; voice (312) 871-9637, fax (312) 871-6675.**



by michael cooper

With close to 90,000 tape-based Modular Digital Multitrack (MDM) recorders installed worldwide, the basic tools and techniques of digital recording have become practically as familiar to musicians as stomp boxes and duct tape. Yet there are still a few tips you can use to squeeze more juice out of your MDM, and several new products promise to sweeten the fruits of your labor even further.

Drop-Out Dread

You can avoid lost data and session down-time by properly preparing your tapes prior to recording on them. Before formatting, fast-wind each tape completely forwards and backwards a few times to spin off any loose oxide deposits. If your MDM is an ADAT-format machine, fast-wind your tapes in a clean VCR to avoid contaminating the ADAT's tape path and heads. No matter which type of MDM you use—ADAT or DTRS/ Tascam—the entire tape path and heads have to be sparkling clean before you reformat your tapes. You'll also help preclude sync and dropout problems by running multi-machine



Tips for Tracks

setups out of sync while formatting tapes—that is, make sure each MDM operates as its own master and is not slaved to another MDM. (If you're using a BRC with multiple ADATs, turn off the BRC and operate the ADAT's

How to get the most out of your MDM

transports locally and individually while formatting tapes.)

When problems arise in the thick of a session, ADAT users now have an alternative to the 3M Black Watch cassette for emergency head-cleaning. American Recorder Technologies now offers their outstanding V-311A wet-based cassette cleaner (\$20) for the ADAT. Less abrasive than the Black Watch system, the V-311A dissolves and lifts embedded debris off of the head gaps and tape path. I've used the V-311A for several months; it's never failed to clean dirty heads and get my session back on track in about two minutes.

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Maximizing Bits

To get the full 16 bits out of your MDM, record as close to 0dB as possible. Two eight-channel auto-compressors, the **Symetrix** 488 DYNA-Squeeze (\$579) and **ART** MDM-8L (\$599), attempt to maximize your MDM's performance by allowing you to record as hot as possible without exceeding the 0dB mark. Now, to my ear, while both units work reasonably well on vocals and such, they fail on per-

cussive sources, thinning out the tone and sometimes causing pumping and breathing. And routing all your tracks through auto-compressors (which offer no control over attack and release times in shaping your sound) is kinda like running all your analog synths through the same envelope generator setting. A full-featured, dual-channel compressor/limiter (including models offered by both Symetrix and ART) will give you better results on those

tracks that need compression. Don't be paranoid about peak levels going slightly over 0dB on trap drums and distorted electric guitar; you'll never hear the distortion. Do keep vocals, woodwinds, and cymbals under the 0dB mark, however, or you'll get nasty results.

Sometimes you've got to choose between the lesser of two evils. If your sampler's output is too low to record highly transient material (e.g., percussion samples) directly to your MDM at a hot level, you may want to record direct anyway, rather than boost the level by routing (and degrading) the signal through a budget mixer's substandard line input pre-amps. Compare the sound using both methods and choose what sounds the cleanest.

If you've been recording to ADATs via their +4dB rear panel multi-pin connectors, consider using their unbalanced -10dBV phone jacks. The ADAT pads signals coming in to its balanced +4 inputs approximately 11.8dB in order to present a -10dBV nominal signal to its A/D converters. Why boost your preamp gain 11.8dB more (to get the signal up to the +4 level) only to have it padded down 11.8dB at the ADAT's input? If your cables are reasonably short and radio frequency interference is no problem in your area, recording via the ADAT's unbalanced input jacks will save you 11.8dB of preamp gain (and noise!).

Digital Editing

By now most everyone's heard that you can paste the best parts of various takes together, using two MDMs, to create one "supertake." Both DTRS format machines—the **Tascam** DA-88 (\$4799) and the **Sony** PCM800 (\$5995)—and the ADAT-format **Fostex** RD-8 (\$4395) give you this capability right from the unit's front panel, with no extra hardware controller required. Though the original Alesis ADAT required a BRC (\$1499)—Alesis' remote multi-machine controller—for such gymnastics, the improved **Alesis** ADAT XT (\$3499) includes editing functions as standard features.

The ADAT XT—and XT clones such as the **Fostex** CX-8 (\$3495) and **Panasonic** MDA-1 (\$3495)—incorporates many of the BRC's functions as standard front panel features. (It also features higher resolution A/D and D/A converters, digital track bouncing within one ADAT, and faster transport speed and lock times, but that's another article.) But don't

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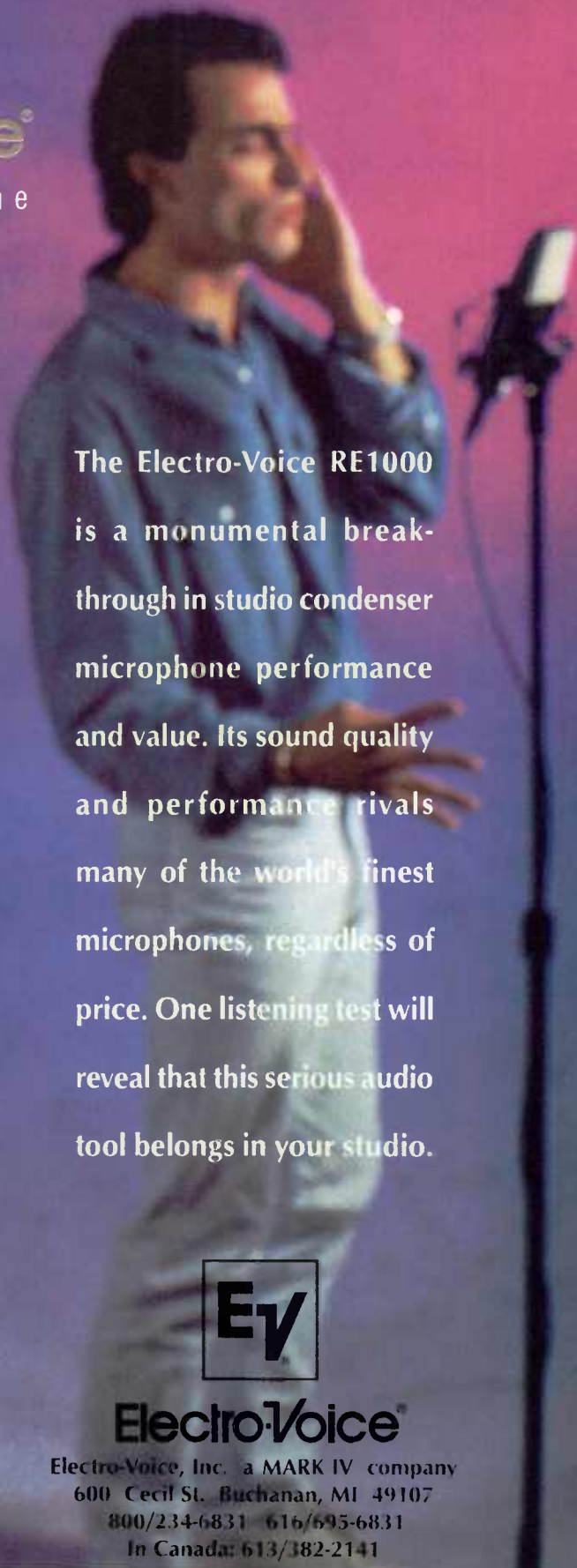
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sell your BRC just yet! You'll still need it for SMPTE sync with video decks and to name locate points. Where the ADAT XT offers 10 locate points, the BRC gives you more than 400. But most importantly, the XT's display only resolves down to 1/100 of a second or one-frame increments. If you want to move your digital edit and/or auto-punch points by as little as a single sample (which is sometimes necessary to avoid clicks and pops),

you'll need a BRC. The BRC remains the ADAT power user's dream interface.

Ringin' the Bells, Blowin' the Whistles

Speaking of power users, the ADAT's adjustable crossfade times and track delay functions can be invaluable studio tools. Say your vocalist has to sing a long phrase that ends in a screamer high note held for ten sec-

onds over the outro. Tough to do; most singers would run out of breath and go flat. Here's the solution: Program an autopunch at the point just before he starts to go flat, and set the ADAT to the longest possible crossfade time (42.67ms). Then rewind and have the singer take another stab at it. As long as the level and intonation is exactly the same at the punch-in point as on the previously recorded take, the punch should be seamless. Instead of having to nail the entire killer phrase again, the singer now only needs to sing the held note at the tail.

Track delay can be used to fatten the bottom end of tracks (such as bass guitar) recorded both with a microphone and a DI box. The miked signal will always be delayed (by the amount of time it takes the sound to reach the mic) compared to the DI signal. This often results in phase cancellation of bass frequencies—thin sound—in the combined mic and DI tracks. Sound travels roughly one foot every millisecond. If your mic is two feet away from the bass cabinet, delay the DIed track two milliseconds so that it's in phase with the inherently delayed mic signal. You'll be amazed at the beef this will add to the bottom end of the combined tracks.

A 24-Bit Future

As digital recording technology continues to eclipse the archaic 16-bit compact disc and DAT formats, recordists are looking for ways to archive their recordings for the day when 24-bit playback systems become the norm. The **Rane PAQRAT** (\$999 for the ADAT-compatible version, \$899 for use with Tascam formats) takes the 20- to 24-bit digital output of a digital mixer (e.g., the **Yamaha ProMix 01** [\$2199] or **02R** [\$8699]) during mixdown and encodes it onto four tracks of your MDM for later retrieval.

By the time 24-bit CDs become a reality—two or three years from now—we can also expect to see prices for removable storage media drop to a level that's competitive with Hi-8 and SVHS tapes. At that point we may all be recording direct-to-disk, and tape-based MDMs may fall out of favor. But for now, tape is still the cheapest way to go.

Contributors: *Michael Cooper writes about music technology and owns a commercial recording studio in Eugene, Oregon.*

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Though lacking the bombastic overkill of the annual winter extravaganza, the summer NAMM Show has found a terrific home (Nashville) and evolved into quite an important event. So hitch up your wagon and set a spell, stranger, while we fill y'all in on some of the new gear headin' to your local music trading post.

Judging from the scores of attendees emerging from the demo with mouths hanging open, the hands-

down hit of the show had to be the AxSys 212 Digital Amplifier, the premiere offering from a new company called **Line 6**. Created by the principal designer of the ADAT (so you know it's got to be good!), this looks like a generic 100-watt guitar amplifier with two 12-inch speakers—but it can actually replicate the sound of dozens of well-known tube and solid-state amps with astonishing accuracy. The secret lies in its highly advanced digital signal processing and physical modeling circuitry—name your favorite stack or combo, and the AxSys can clone it. What's more, there's an incredible set of effects built in that can take the place of a whole army of stompboxes and outboard processors—there's even a simulator that makes your

electric guitar sound very much like an amplified acoustic. Way cool—and, priced at under a grand, affordable too.

Of course, Nashville being Twangtown, there were lots of new guitar products. **Gibson** targeted the more affordable end of the market with their chunky Blues Hawk, and also went for the eco-obsessive who's got money to burn with their SmartWood Les Paul, the first production-line electric guitar to be made from "environmentally friendly" woods (and only \$3399). Not to be outdone, **Fender** introduced two new Stratocasters—the Deluxe Strat (featuring overwound Tex-Mex pickups) and the Fat Strat (going for a most agreeable \$339)—and the J.D. Signature Series Telecast-

er, designed to the exact specs of longtime Tele enthusiast Jerry Donahue; they also announced an agreement with the Jimi Hendrix estate to release two Hendrix model Strats in '96 and '97. Hope they're white. Meanwhile, **Guild** reissued two vintage electric

**At Nashville's
Summer
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faves, the Bluesbird and Starfire IV; **Modulus** debuted its Genesis series of guitars and basses, featuring necks made from a mix of composite materials and soft tonewoods; **Schecter** unveiled its rather gaudy colored-pearl-pickguard Spitfire; and **Peavey** showed off the Impact Firenza JX, which has a mahogany body, maple neck with 22-fret rosewood fingerboard, and two soapbar-style single-coil pickups. Peavey also introduced its Axcelerator 6 six-string bass, while **Yamaha** updated its line of RBX basses—now all RBXs will have 24-fret necks and an updated headstock design that positions the tuning pegs across from each other.

On the guitar amp front, **Vox** introduced its 15-watt AC15, with a remarkable simulation of the AC30's Brilliant channel; **Marshall** displayed the VS230R and VS265R combos, with a lovely stereo chorus (no joke); **Trace Elliot** debuted its 50- and 100-watt Speed Twin



Zoom's 505 amps; **stompbox** **Crate** added the GX60C and GX60D combos to its Excalibur line; and **Fender** gave its amps a new finish while keeping the tones cool with a series of Hot Rods (for more on these,

see our Fast Forward spread on page 62). In the acoustic guitar domain, the biggest developments were the new signature models: **Martin's** 000-28EC (the EC stands for Eric Clapton), **Takamine's** GB-7 C (Garth Brooks), and **Taylor's** LKSM-6 (Leo Kottke). Otherwise, the news was down low, in the form of the **Alvarez** Avanté baritone six-string acoustic, co-designed by Joe Veillette and Michael Tobias Design, with a Honduras mahogany body and solid spruce top.

Can you say "diversify"? The folks at **Mackie** can. Up until now, their hugely popular mixers have always been connected to other manufacturers' power amplifiers and speakers, but things may change with the company's announcement of the M•1200 power amp and Model 8020 self-powered studio reference monitor. Both utilize a unique "Fast Recovery" design so that they sound good even when driven close to clipping. We had an opportunity to listen to a pair of 8020s in a quiet demo room and can attest to their excellent stereo imaging and unusually smooth response. As for the M•1200, it's also made our Fast Forward spread on page 62.

A significant trend was forecast with the unveiling of two new four-track MiniDisc recorders to rival the **Tascam** Portastudio 564, which debuted at the winter NAMM show. **Sony** showed their MDM-X4 and, in a press conference that featured a surprise performance from Waylon Jennings, **Yamaha** countered with their MD4. All three include a mixer and provide a wealth of editing options, and all are priced around the \$1500 area. Probably the most amazing feature, which is shared by all three, is that you can bounce to a track that's already occupied: The machine simply transfers the already recorded data into a buffer and recombines it with the tracks you're bouncing. And since this is happening in the digital domain, you can bounce to your heart's content with no audio degradation. Will the MiniDisc usurp the audio cassette as the demo medium of the future? Stay tuned.

Alesis premiered their QS7 76-key synth, which features a semi-weighted keyboard and lots of new, improved ROM sounds. **Kawai** showed their K5000W workstation and

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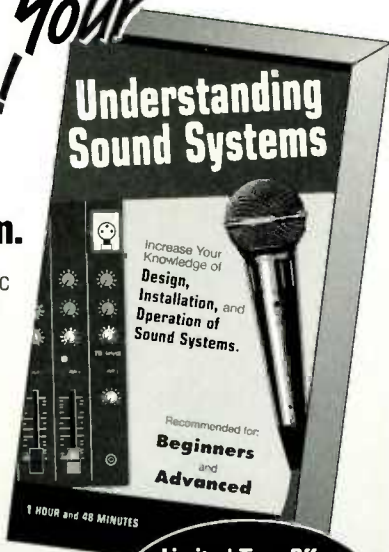
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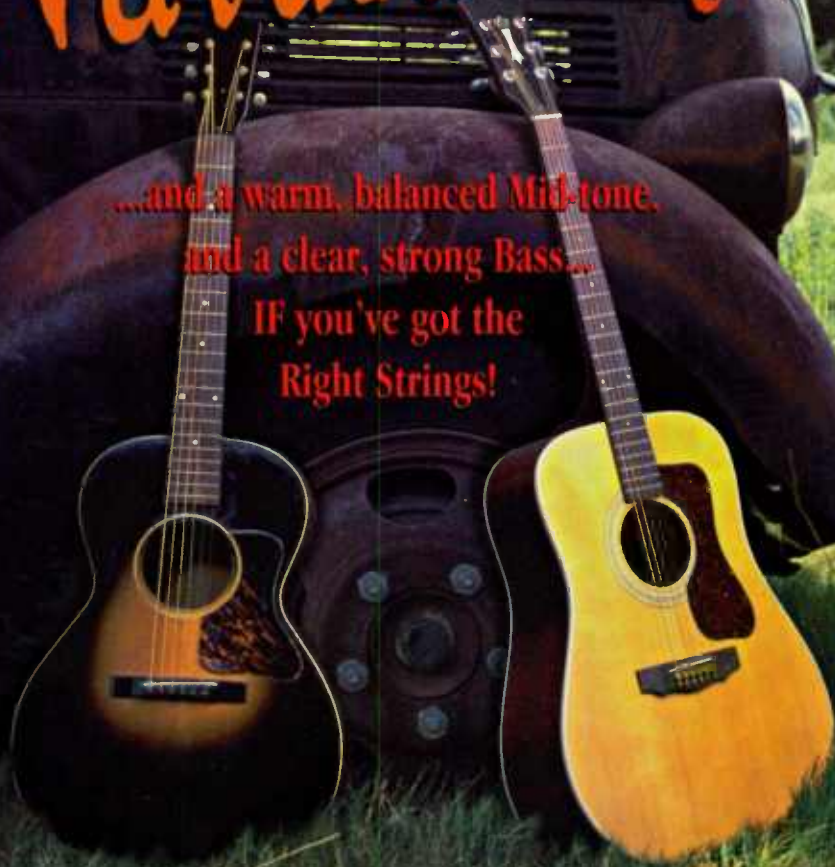
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Vintage "Double-0" flat-top & resonator guitars, courtesy of Carl Yellicott

K5000S synthesizer (the former has a sequencer, the latter doesn't), both of which use additive synthesis as their primary sound generation technique (looks like retro is "in" this year). **Yamaha** introduced the similarly digital-meets-analog CS1x, otherwise known as "The Blue Guy" (again, see our Fast Forward spread for more). And **Korg** debuted the first in their "N series" of keyboards—specifically, the 76-key N264 and 61-key N364. The N-series instruments boast a feature called Real Time Pattern Play and Recording (RPPR), which lets the user record and save musical phrases as patterns and then play the entire pattern back by pressing a single key.

Roland's MC-303 Groove Box provides hundreds of patterns of hip-hop, techno, dance, house, and rap grooves. **Yamaha** debuted their VL70m, their first low-priced physical modeling instrument (housed in a half-space rack module), and the QY700 sequencer/tone generator (complete with two-octave mini-keyboard), which they tout as the "world's smallest project studio in a box." They also unveiled the G1D hex guitar MIDI pickup, as well as a new guitar MIDI converter, the G50. For drummers who want an alternative to stand-alone electronic drum sets, **Linear Solutions** showed their Layon drum triggers. These are rubber surfaces that mount right on top of your acoustic drums, much like practice pads, but with 1/4-inch trigger outputs. And **MIDIMAN** introduced several new PC expansion cards, including EQ Man, which adds a stereo seven-band graphic equalizer to your soundcard's output, and Video Producer, which provides video synchronization capabilities.

There were several innovations on the software front. **Steinberg** presented their new VST (Virtual Studio Technology), incorporated in the Power Macintosh version of Cubase 3.0. This adds up to 32 tracks of digital audio (depending on the Mac model) and a virtual effects rack (with up to four multi-effects processors), with no external hardware required. On the PC front, **Cakewalk** introduced a line of 5.0 products, all of which add multitrack digital audio and full 32-bit Windows 95 support to their existing sequencers. The folks at **Sonic Foundry** unveiled the new 4.0 version of their Sound Forge PC digital audio editor. New features include a "direct

edit mode" (which allows you to open even large files nearly instantaneously), real-time previewing of effects processing, and an L1 Ultra-Maximizer plug-in from **Waves**, a sophisticated bit reduction module that's extremely popular among multimedia developers. And **Mackie** announced the release of a 32-bit Windows 95 version of their UltraMix Pro mixer automation software.

With the rise of the home studio, signal processors have become big sellers, so it was



Line 6's AxSys 212

no surprise to find lots of new products in this category. **Zoom** showed their incredibly affordable 505 guitar stompbox, which offers no less than 24 effects, nine of which can be used simultaneously. We're told that this will be followed shortly with the 506 (optimized for bass) and a number of other "five-oh" boxes for vocals and other instrument families. **TC Electronic** debuted their Finalizer stereo mastering processor (as covered in this issue's Editor's Pick—see page 77), **Peavey** showed their DeltaFex multi-effects processor, and **Alesis** premiered their NanoCompressor, a one-third-rack mono compressor/limiter. And the show bore witness to two other hot trends in signal processing: The proliferation of eight-channel devices designed to work with MDMs such as the ADAT and DA-88 (as represented by the **Studer** D19MicAD and **ATI** 8MX2 mixer/preamps and the **ARX** ULTM-8 compressor/limiter), and the continued tube "retro" craze (new products in this category included the **Aphex** Model 109 Tubessence parametric equalizer and the **Studer** D19 MicVALVE mic/line preamp with 20-bit digital conversion).



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Off to See The Wizard

by howard massey

also a true stereo mode (where the same effect is produced by both engines, with the left and right audio paths remaining completely separated) and a "preset glide" mode that allows crossfading between two different effects (for example, having delays slowly fade out while a reverb fades in). There are 128 factory (ROM) engine presets that provide just about every kind of reverb (halls,



Pro studio-quality processing at home studio prices from TC Electronic

For musicians, one of the most important benefits of technological innovation has been the blurring between "professional" studios and roll-your-own home studios. For nearly every high-priced piece of "pro" audio gear, there's now an affordable equivalent aimed at the home studio market. TC Electronic is best known for ultra-high-quality (and high-ticket) signal processors and delay lines, found mainly in world-class studios. But TC's recent debuting of a mid-priced "Wizard" series has made that quality available to us all—at a fraction of the cost.

The first two Wizard products are the M2000 multieffects processor and the Finalizer studio mastering processor. The M2000 (list \$1995) doesn't provide much new functionality—it includes a plethora of reverbs plus most of the other effects we're used to hearing from

this kind of product—but it has a refreshingly singular sound of its own. In contrast, the Finalizer (list \$2495) is superbly transparent, imparting virtually no sonic signature, but its functionality is unconventional. Both pack a nifty "Wizard" feature (more about this shortly) that enables even audio novices to get terrific results.

Both the M2000 and Finalizer are single-space rack units, with both analog and digital inputs and outputs. The analog I/O is balanced XLR, and digital I/O is provided, happily, in both professional AES/EBU and consumer S/PDIF formats. Both have MIDI in/out/thru jacks (although their MIDI implementation is somewhat limited) and a footswitch input as well as a PCMCIA card slot for additional data storage. The user interface of the two units is similar; cursor buttons let you move around in the mid-sized backlit LCD display and an Adjust wheel sets the selected parameter. On the whole, they're no more complicated to use than most other digital signal processors.

The M2000 provides two identical "engines," each capable of producing a wide array of effects. Depending on the routing you set, the two can work independently or in tandem in either serial or parallel configurations. There's

chambers, rooms, and plates), echo, flanging, chorusing, phasing, pitch shifting, EQ, and dynamics (compression/limiting/de-essing/gating) imaginable—and another 128 RAM slots into which you can store your own edited renditions of these effects. The M2000 also provides 128 ROM "Combined" presets (which recall settings for both engines) and another 128 RAM slots for the storage of your own custom combinations (plus four "snapshot" memory areas where you can temporarily store edits). These Combined presets yield the most complex and interesting multieffects, including a number of stunning flanged/chorused/echoed reverbs, as well as autopanned echoes and reverbs.

As you'd expect in this price range, there are lots of bells and whistles. There's a "dynamic morphing" mode which lets you crossfade



between two different engines as the input level changes (so that soft sidesticks played in verses can wash in a long, lush plate reverb, while solid rimshots played in choruses automatically switch over to a tight room 'verb). There are editing parameters galore for all effects types, and a Tap key that lets you manually set delay times or other parameters (such as, interestingly, reverb decay time). If you're using a MIDI sequencer, you can simply feed in MIDI clock signal and the M2000 will learn the incoming tempo (alas, it does not continuously track MIDI clock and so cannot follow tempo changes). There's a useful MIDI monitor display, and even a built-in guitar/bass tuner!

And, of course, there's Wizard mode. This feature is based loosely on the "Wizards" offered by the Windows 95 operating system, where you simply tell the computer what you want and it carries out your request without bothering you with technical details. The M2000 Wizard lives in a screen display where you are asked three questions: a) What kind of effect do you want? (i.e., reverb, delay, pitch change, etc.); b) What is the source material? (i.e., vocal, guitar, bass, keyboards, percussion, etc.); and c) What intensity (gentle/normal/extra) do you want from the effect? Once it has this information, the Wizard presents a number of factory ROM presets that might fit the bill, and you scroll among them to audition the effect. This terrific time-saving feature lets you get a lot out of the M2000 even if you don't have technical chops. Still, I wish that the Wizard allowed you to add your own custom (RAM-stored) effects to the list of possibilities.

Features aside, it's the sound of the M2000 which distinguishes it from other multi-effects processors. The most computationally demanding digital effects are reverbs. That's why many inexpensive (and therefore underpowered) reverb devices tend to produce coarse, grainy reverbs, especially apparent as the signal fades away and the bit resolution decreases. Most mid-priced units don't demonstrate this aberration but do impart a sound of their own instead (for example, the famed Lexicon reverb sound, which most engineers—including yours truly—love, but which is easily recognizable). The M2000 reverb, however, is remarkably transparent, with an almost glasslike quality. These kinds of sounds are difficult to translate into words, so I suggest that you head over to your local TC dealer and listen

for yourself. But the M2000 reverb is clearly qualitatively different from that of other equivalently priced units, and that alone makes it stand out. Just as its reverb is more subtle than most, so too are some of the other effects (such as flanging, chorusing, and phasing) that you might prefer to be more strident. On the other hand, the dynamics processing—compression, limiting, de-essing, etc.—is as good as any I've heard coming from digital devices, and the factory presets that create ambient spaces are nothing short of remarkable. When you dial up "High School Gym" or "Airport Gate," you really are transported there, which suggests that the M2000 would be a sterling performer in video postproduction applications.

The even more incredible Finalizer is a complete digital mastering studio in a box—as far as I know, the only device of its kind on the market. To many musicians, mastering is a black art. After spending hundreds of hours painstakingly recording and mixing your tunes, you give your finished two-track to a mastering engineer, who will either enhance or screw up your work. If you're a recording artist with some clout, you or your producer will probably be able to work with the mastering engineer to help shape the final result, but if you're at the lower end of the food chain, your mixes will more likely simply be shipped off to this mysterious, anonymous figure in whose hands your musical fate rests.

Until now. Because, for about the cost of a single mastering session, the Finalizer gives you all the circuitry you'll need to render the final tweaks that can make or break your music. Before I get inundated with angry letters from mastering engineers, let me repeat: The Finalizer gives you all the *circuitry*, not all the *ability* you need. A competent mastering engineer can greatly aid a well-recorded, well-mixed piece of music. But if you've got an accurate monitoring system and good ears—or if you know an engineer who does—the Finalizer allows you to achieve final mastering in your own studio, thus saving you the considerable expense of hiring a mastering suite.

All the tools of the trade are provided here—a clean low-cut filter, a five-band parametric equalizer with variable resonance and ± 12 dB of gain in each band (incremental in .5 dB steps), a signal "normalizer" (which enables you to set optimum gain level just

short of distortion), and three discrete frequency-dependent three-band dynamics processors: an expander, a compressor, and a limiter. You can also choose one of three different "insert" effects—either a "digital radiance generator" (which imparts subtle second harmonic distortion to the signal, adding a warmth reminiscent of tube circuitry), a variable stereo imager (which can increase or decrease the spread of sound in the left-right plane), or a de-esser (used to remove sibilance from vocals). All of this may sound like technical mumbo-jumbo, but in the right hands these components can make the difference between your recordings sounding like demos or like something you might hear on MTV. Once you get the ideal setting for a particular piece of music, you can store it in any of 128 user RAM slots. (There are also 25 factory ROM presets, which contain generic settings for common applications such as boombox mix, radio/TV commercial, etc.)

The three dynamics processors in the Finalizer are worthy of note not only because they're of extremely high quality but because they're designed to handle complex signals such as final mixes. By being able to independently apply expansion, compression, or limiting to individual frequency bands (and by being able to adjust the crossover frequencies themselves), you can avoid the signal squashing or pumping effects that a generic compressor/limiter might impart. Instead, when carefully adjusted, the Finalizer delivers superb in-your-face sound. One reason why these processors work so effectively is the Finalizer's use of "look-ahead" sidechain circuitry: The main output is delayed by either 1 or 10 milliseconds, so that the dynamics circuitry can act upon transients in the signal before they're heard. Of course, it's critical that the main signal not be degraded by this delay, and that's where TC's experience in building high-quality digital delay lines comes into play. In repeated tests, I heard no degradation—even on intensely complex signals—when utilizing the sidechain circuitry; in fact, the only audible result was an extra cleanliness, due no doubt to the increased effectiveness of the dynamics processors.

The Finalizer's front panel sports input and output meters, along with dedicated gain reduction meters for each of the three bands, as well as clip, limit, and expansion status

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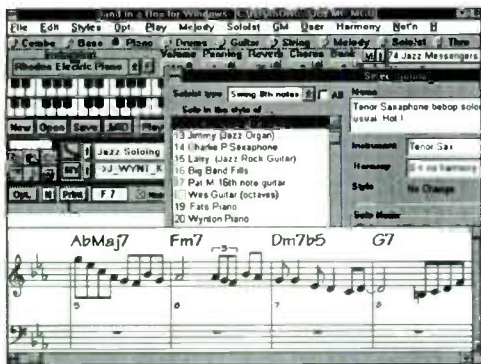
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LEDs. Despite its modest-sized back-lit LCD, a great deal of graphic information is imparted. For example, the Normalizer page shows a continuous wave display of the incoming audio signal, with a "Clip Counter" showing the number of samples that were clipped (overloaded) during the previous second of time. By monitoring this while adjusting the gain control, you can manually set the optimum level. This not only allows you to match the volume of individual tracks within an album, but also has the advantage of enabling you to get the full bit resolution out of your digital system or achieve the maximum signal-to-noise ratio in an analog system. Even digital clipping isn't a major problem here, since the Finalizer has the uncanny ability to mimic analog "soft" clipping in both its Normalizer and Limiter stages.

As with the M2000, there are tons of extras here, all of which provide functionality typically found only in dedicated boxes in the mastering suite. An output page lets the Finalizer perform user-defined automated fade-

ins or fade-outs (as well as manual fades); a peak hold meter shows overall gain in 0.1 dB increments; a phase meter continuously scans the signal and shows phase correlation (critical for accurate mono playback of stereo material); a calibration tone tool outputs a 1 kHz reference tone signal (at a user-specified level) for alignment of tape recorders; a digital I/O page lets you set the copyright status of the digital output to no copies, one copy, or infinite copies; a Compare feature allows you to not only compare your edits to the original preset but even enables you to temporarily lower the gain of your edited preset for level matching during A/B comparisons. And the Flow page shows the continuous output levels of each of the individual stages, so you can identify areas of possible overload.

And, of course, the Finalizer has a Wizard. Here, as with the M2000, you are asked three questions: a) What is the source type? (soft/medium/hard, presumably in terms of transient content); b) What degree of com-

pression do you want to impart? (again, soft/medium/hard); and c) What sort of equalization curve do you want to impart? (flat, loudness, bass lift, or air). Unlike the M2000, the Wizard goes straight to work on your signal after you answer these questions instead of suggesting a list of presets. The Finalizer Wizard also provides an Optimize Gain function which, when activated, scans the incoming signal and automatically sets optimum gain. The most effective way to use this function is to play the source material through it once completely and then disable it on future playbacks to avoid spurious gain changes when the loudness of the material changes substantially.

The M2000 and the Finalizer: Two radically different signal processors that will both blow you away. Kudos to the design staff at TC for maintaining "professional level" quality and features while keeping these products affordable enough for the home studio crowd! ♪

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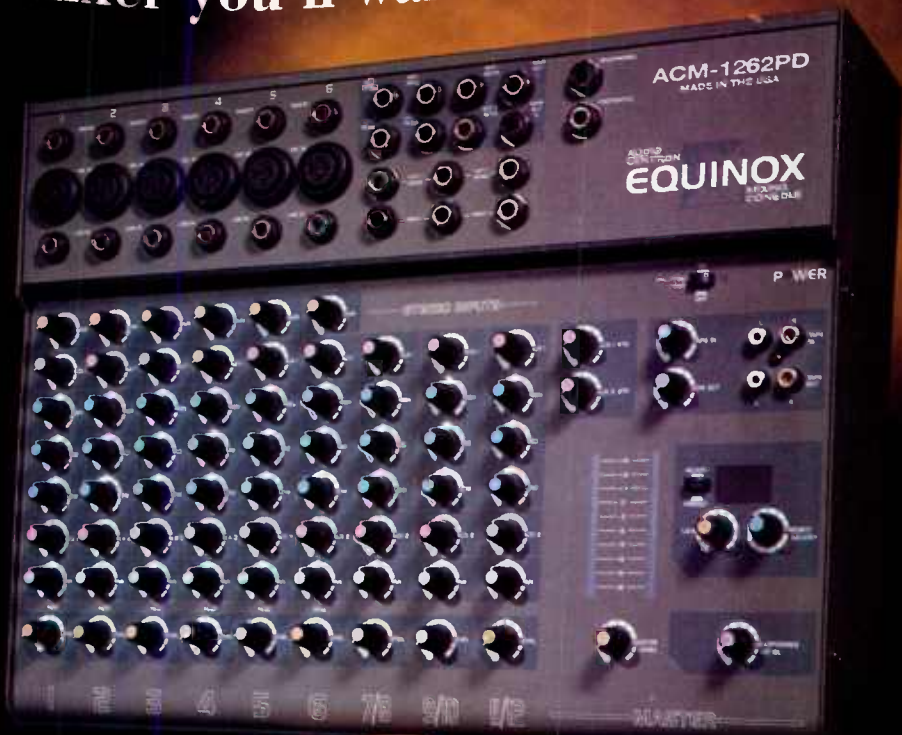
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studio

by Ken Micallef

Jack DeJohnette is the quintessential rambling man. If not touring the world with the Keith Jarrett Trio or his own group (with reedist Steve Gorn and pianist Michael Cain), DeJohnette can be found traipsing far continents, collecting instruments and knick-knacks along the way. His comfortable home in Woodstock, New York, contains the fruits of his travels, including African ceremonial masks, unusual rugs, and a basement studio jammed with percussion from exotic corners of the globe.

A minimal recording studio by conventional standards, it provides DeJohnette plenty of room to indulge his longtime fascination with world music. Well documented on *Extra Special Edition, Music for the Fifth World*, and most recently, *Dancing with the Nature Spirits*, DeJohnette's far-reaching tastes belie his jazz background.

"I love straight-ahead but I also love classical music, and lot of what people call world music," says DeJohnette, supping on a bowl of carrot soup. "Baaba Maal, Youssou N'Dour, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan—I've been listening to them a long time. That music has substance, and the spiritual aspect of it is very powerful."

The heart of the studio is percussion, beginning with a **Sonor Designer Series** drum set 1, topped off with **Sabian Jack DeJohnette Encore Signature Series** cymbals 2 (20" China, 22" ride with mini cup, 21" ride, 16", 17" and 18" crashes, 14" hi-hats). Acoustic hand percussion plays a big role in DeJohnette's music. A 22" Native American ceremonial drum 3 supplies the bottom end with a resonant, thunderous tone.

Numerous frame drums add texture. A tunable, 16" Turkish frame drum with finger cymbals 4 makes a brisk, penetrating sound, while a native American model 5 produces a hollow "wrrnnngg" next to a 15" African double-headed drum 6 with goatskin heads. Two African talking drums 7 border a Moroccan tam-tam drum 8.

"Those are ceramic drums played at festivals in Morocco. They're handmade. My wife and I even saw

them stretching the hides beforehand, then they painted on those bright colors."

Two sharply-pitched *djumbeks*, a 14" 9 from either Africa or India, and a 13" 10 from Turkey, provide contrast to a six-tongue log drum made from canary wood 11 and a ten-tongue log drum made of birdseye maple 12. The basement hand percussion collection (more is stored upstairs) is rounded out by an Udu drum 13 given to Jack by Brazilian drummer Robertinho Silva, a **Langley** ceramic ocarina 14 made in Derbyshire, England, a small harp 15 from **Anyone Can Whistle**, and **Vic Firth** Jack DeJohnette model sticks 16 ("like longer 5As") held in the jaws of Spot the dog.

DeJohnette mics his drums and a 3/4 **Frechner** acoustic bass 17, formerly owned by Harvey Brooks of the Fabulous Rhinestones, with a modest but effective trio. A **Shure VP88** stereo microphone 18 stands overhead. "It's great on cymbals, piano, and on location, and also for natural sounds in the bush, like birds and animals." A pair of **Shure A98 MKs** 19 covers the drum set, held firmly in place by thin holders made of a lightweight, graphite-like alloy.

DeJohnette has always been forward-thinking, and his electro-acoustic percussion is state of the art. The **Korg Wavedrum** 20 is expensive (listing for around \$2500), but DeJohnette sings its praises. "It's like having 20, 30, 40 acoustic drums in one unit. With two or three of them being played on different settings [an onboard digital editor modifies programmed settings], it's an amazing drum. Digital signal processing algorithms have enabled people to go beyond looping sounds. It uses the actual sound of the drum being struck as the controller. You can even play the rim as the hi-hat. When I play it live, people flip out. It's a good investment."

photograph

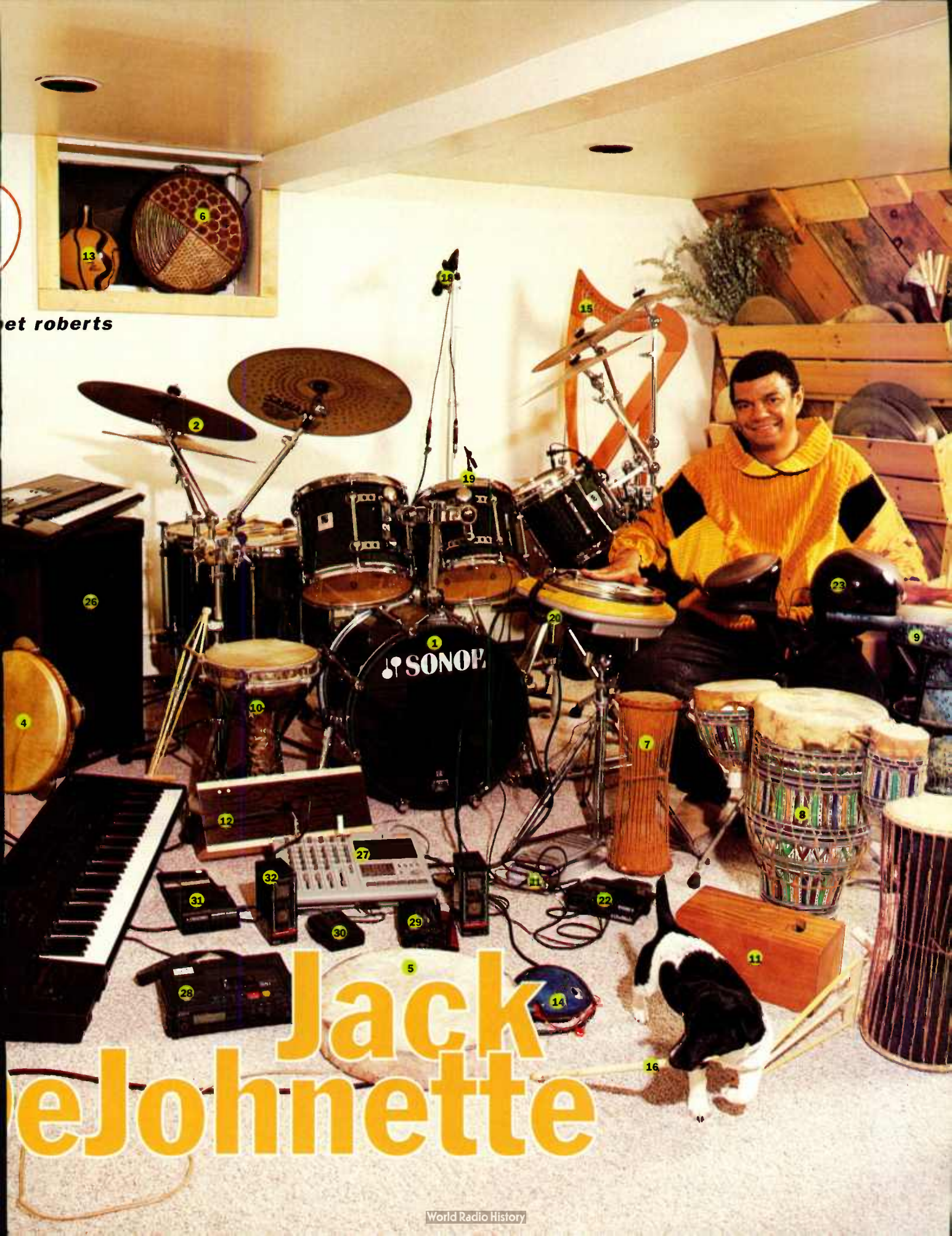




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Jack eJohnette





Besides adding effects to the Wavedrum, the **Korg XVP10** expression/volume pedal  doubles as a bass drum controller. "It makes certain changes in the sound, does pitch-bends, creates sustain. Press the pedal down and you get the Maya drum, bring it up and you only get a tabla sound, some rim things as well. It gives you a little more expression." The **DigiTech Whammy 2** pedal  supplies extra pitch bend if DeJohnette is feeling humorous.





Two lightbulb-shaped drums with hard ceramic shells create even more sound illusions. The **Hadgini Drum**  is miked internally and when played by hand (even unamplified), sounds like a cross between tabla, kalimba and conga. "It was invented by [drummer] Jamie Haddad and a sculptor named Georgini. If you play tabla or frame drums or bongos, you can use the same techniques on the Hadgini. It has a smooth surface, and you can get a deep sound almost like tabla with it. You can play it on its

side [tapping it produces a watery, deeply resonant sound], and it has a rougher top surface for a different texture, you can even rub it. It has a unique sound that fits into any type of music. I recently toured Europe with just piano, drum set, and the Hadgini drum."

Besides a **Howard** grand piano upstairs and a **Korg** sampling grand keyboard (not shown), DeJohnette's compositions take shape on **Korg I-2**  or **01/W FD** workstations , fed into a **TOA** bass-reflex, horn-loaded monitor  with a 15" driver.

DeJohnette will sometimes record acoustic instruments to a **Tascam Portastudio 424** , then, adding keyboards, run the signal to the **Sony TCD-D10** DAT machine . When deploying effects or vocals, he'll go to the **TOA D43** electronic music mixer (not shown) back to the Tascam. A **TOA P300D** power amplifier and a **Korg DRV-2000** digital reverb remain hidden from sight in a wall-enclosed rack.

DeJohnette mixes down from the DAT to a

Sony Pro Walkman , leading to a modest playback system that doubles on the road. A **Panasonic RQA170** cassette recorder  and a **D50 MK II Sony Discman**  feed self-powered **Sony SRS50** speakers  ("I like their size and they give a really, good full sound") and **Sennheiser HD25-1** headphones (not shown).

DeJohnette's music draws influences from around the globe, but his jazz upbringing keeps his focus stateside. As jazz has turned "classic"-oriented, free thinkers like himself aren't always in vogue; still, DeJohnette stays his own course. "Music is rhythm, and percussion is a very natural, native aspect of music. But a lot of the music we hear in the States lacks the spirit. That's because the country lacks spirit, and the leaders lack spiritual substance. It's all head stuff, it's not from the heart. But music by its vibration alone will find its audience. The music I'm doing will endure. I'm on the path that is right for me."



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records

Come As You Were

Nirvana

From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah
(DGC)

This is more like it. While *MTV Unplugged in New York* was understandably embraced by grieving Kurt Cobain fans as a memento mori, this compilation of live tracks, some of which date to the band's earliest live incarnation, is a far more representative look at Nirvana's concert accomplishments. Here we hear the group as we knew them at their apex—bratty, fiery, loud, raw.

Much of the material on *Muddy Banks* may be of limited interest to come-lately camp followers, since it leans heavily on pre-*Nevermind* repertoire. The album includes raging takes of such primordial numbers as "School," "Sliver," "Spank Thru," "Negative Creep," and "Blew." Two of the tracks, including a rain-paging early version of "Polly," were recorded in London in 1989 with original drummer Chad Channing behind the kit. These performances, like the songs themselves, have an embryonic quality but, if anything, they demonstrate how rapidly Nirvana developed in the ensuing two years, before fame found them.

The remainder of the album features the Cobain-Krist Novoselic-Dave Grohl lineup, augmented on four songs recorded in 1993 by tour guitarist (and Grohl's current Foo Fighters partner) Pat Smear. Here the guts and gristle of the Nirvana legend are served up smoking: Cobain's pained catarrh and smeary lead guitar, backed by the busy thump of the rhythm section, push along presciently written songs that merge cannily contrived melody with an ardent directness.

Muddy Banks may not be everything one could wish for. I personally miss "Come As You Are," a song that, as much as anything Cobain penned, defined Nirvana, and I also found myself craving (now much-bootlegged) material from those fierce, tragic shows the band played in Europe in early 1994. (Then again, that stuff may have been too much to take.) As it stands, this album arrives as a welcome and ferocious memorial to a band that rode the zeitgeist of its epoch all the way to the top. —Chris Morris

CHARLES PATTERSON

Miles Davis & Gil Evans
The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings
 (Sony/Mosaic)

It seems odd to speak of the Miles Davis-Gil Evans big band sessions as being in need of a critical reappraisal, but unlike many a jazz classic, these recordings found their audience—and then some—at the time of their initial release. Beginning with *Miles Ahead* in 1957, and culminating in the phenomenal commercial outreach of *Sketches of Spain*, these surreal tone poems were just as likely to be part of a *Playboy* reader's make-out arsenal as the cornerstone of a modern jazz collection.

But at the dawn of the avant garde's ascendancy, despite the irrefutable power of Gil's orchestrations and Miles' solo sonnets, some listeners fondled, filed, and forgot these and other holdings from the trumpeter's "conservative" middle period—between the furious ascendancy of his two great quintets—when Davis and the Wynton Kelly/Paul Chambers/Jimmy Cobb axis transformed Tin Pan Alley and Broadway chestnuts into soulful groovers or equestrian gallops.

Although the live recordings from the May 19, 1961 event featuring Miles' working Quintet and the 21-piece Gil Evans Orchestra (documented on *Miles Davis At Carnegie Hall and Live Miles*) are not included here, this 6-CD collection is lovingly remastered and annotated, and contains a wealth of alternate takes and rehearsal sketches, offering a fascinating glimpse at how these sublime performances came together while illustrating the juncture between Miles' written and improvised sections.

The studio encounters on *The Complete Columbia Miles Davis-Gil Evans Recordings* represent a radical recasting of the modern big band, a tonal, harmonic and melodic universe every bit as sensual and inscrutable as that of Duke Ellington, and the culmination of the directions Davis and Evans (and, it should be added, Gerry Mulligan) first hinted at with *The Birth of the Cool*. Bill Kirchner, Bob Belden, and company do a nice job analyzing the highways and byways of the music, but for this listener the contrast between traditional brass accents and Evans' unique blend of tubas, French horns, and flutes is what makes the orchestral counterpoint and shadings on *Miles Ahead* so original. With *Porgy and Bess* and *Sketches of Spain*, these collaborators arrived at an evocative synthesis of jazz and concert music, as Evans added more woodwinds and strings (such as bassoons, English horn, and harp), and Miles' soloing took on a simple, poignant quality—the emotional depth of performances such as "Bess, You Is My Woman Now," "Gone, Gone, Gone," and "Saeta" is remarkable.

Most fascinating is how the annotators have resurrected the long out-of-print *Quiet Nights* (sort of like Gil and Miles meet Dizzy and Jobim), reconstituting it with unreleased sessions from 1963 and 1968. "The Time Of The Barracudas" and multiple takes of "Falling Water" anticipate the exotic colorations of *Filles de Kilimanjaro* and *In a Silent Way*; multiple electronic keyboards and percussion gave

Gil and Miles even more tonal colors to play with, while electric guitar and saxophone invoked the spirit of Hendrix and Coltrane. Such a development, far from being a crass repudiation of their orchestral work, was a fulfillment of its spirit. Nevertheless, even for those who couldn't take that leap of faith with Gil and Miles, these collected orchestral works are a wonder to behold. For those who'd prefer to own these recordings on audiophile quality vinyl, contact Mosaic Records (35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902/203-327-7111).—**Chip Stern**

Counting Crows

Recovering the Satellites (DGC)

The first time many people in the music industry saw or heard the Counting Crows was at the 1993 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame din-

ner, as the young Bay Area band performed in place of missing-in-action inductee Van Morrison. Those were some spacious shoes to fill, but the Crows did an admirable job of it. The subsequent release of their hugely successful debut *August and Everything After* has sold more than any of Van's albums, maybe more than his catalog.

Huge sales don't equal great art, of course, and on *Recovering the Satellites* it's painfully obvious that the Crows are trying too hard to bridge the gap. Unlike similarly successful relative newcomers Hootie & the Blowfish, who seem content to write catchy folk-rock songs, the Crows attempt to make big music that matters, in the vein of Pearl Jam and U2. But while even Bono and Eddie Vedder occasionally demonstrate the value of subtlety, front Crow Adam Durwitz has yet to learn that lesson.

BYRNED OUT
EX-TALKING HEADS RETURN

When former Talking Heads Chris Frantz, Tina Weymouth and Jerry Harrison reunited to make a new album, it wasn't because they needed the money—consider Harrison's production royalties for *Live and Crash Test Dummies*, or Frantz's and Weymouth's take on Manah-Carey's "Fantasy" (which samples the Tom Club's "Genius of Love"). But they did need a singer.

"We ran into a problem with people being very shy and feeling like, 'Well, I don't know if I can fill [David Byrne's] shoes,'" admits Weymouth. "So instead of putting that pressure on any one person, we chose a different singer for each song." The roster ranges from old friends like Detbie Harry (who, ironically, once declined an offer from Frantz and David Byrne to be the original Talking Heads frontperson) and Richard Hell to modern rockers like former Concrete Blonde frontwoman Johnette Napolitano and Irish crooner Gavin Friday.

Work on *No Talking Just Head* (MCA/Radioactive) began in October 1994 when the three Heads and guitarist Blast assembled at the Frantz/Weymouth home studio in Connecticut, laying down a dozen backing tracks in 14 days.

While most of the artists made the journey to Connecticut to record their vocals, there were some peculiar instances. Black Grape vocalist Shaun Ryder (with whom Frantz and

Weymouth worked on the notorious sessions for the final Happy Mondays album) wasn't allowed into the country at the time because of previous drug convictions.

"We sent him a tape and it came back with all of our tracks wiped out—only the beats per minute remained the same," reveals Tina. "All of our tracks had been replaced with samples



Chris and Tina in the studio with special guest Martin McKee.

of George McCrae's "Rock Your Baby."

"We said, 'But Shaun, we're the Heads, man, we can't put out a George McCrae record,'" Frantz continues. "So we flew his vocal into the computer and completely rewrote the track. Then we put his vocal back on top of it."

Any thought of inviting Byrne in for a track? "Absolutely! We'd have had David in for the entire album," says Frantz. "But he's told us in so many words that he's not interested and he not even think about it."—**Dev Sherlock**



Edward Barron

Rosen

Amy Rigby

Diary of a Mod Housewife (Koch)

In the liner notes to her inspired study of relationship hell, Amy Rigby describes a mod housewife as "a woman being dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood," forced to trade the extended recess of slackerdom for maturity's dead end. Formerly of the New York combos Last Roundup and the Shams, Rigby wears the guise of an uneasy thirtysomething, but her witty songs have universal import. Mostly, *Diary of a Mod Housewife* considers the profound quandary of what to do when romance loses its glow. Walk away? Try harder? Whatever the solution, she nails the dilemma with scary precision.

Never fear, this is no grim therapy session: Rigby employs a variety of agreeable styles and a keen sense of humor to enliven her downer stories. "Sad Tale" tempers a rueful monologue with delicate pop textures, just as "Down Side of Love" uses a bubbly Buddy Holly groove to counterpoint her tart account of how "that tingling feeling when you're first holding hands/Gives way to dealing with a list of demands." Her spirited vocals retain a pleasingly optimistic edge, even when dispensing bitter medicine. In the acoustic "Knapsack," she courts a fantasy lover, only to follow with "Just Someone I Had in Mind," which kisses off the real-life version to a mournful cowpoke tempo.

Plenty of swell folks pitch in. Cars alumnus Elliot Easton and Gene Holder (hubby Will Rigby's cohort in the late dB's) furnish sensible production on different tracks, and the ringers include steel guitarist Greg Leisz and drummers Don Heffington and Doug Wygal.

Still, Rigby never cedes the spotlight. On the snarling rockers "That Tone of Voice" and "Didn't I?" she sheds all traces of gentility for raging dustups that vent nasty feelings yet resolve nothing. She closes the entertainment with "We're Stronger Than That," a not entirely convincing feelgood shuffle. Otherwise, *Diary of a Mod Housewife* is chillingly persuasive. C'mon, feel the pain! —**Jon Young**

Adrian Belew

Op Zop Too Wah (Passenger)

The League of Gentlemen

Thrang Thrang Gozinbulx (Discipline Global Mobile)

The opening track of Adrian Belew's latest is called "Of Bow and Drum." It begins with the brittle, piercing tone of a lone electric guitar snapping out a zany string of notes. The pickin' swiftly gets chicken, inducing Billy Gibbons-esque artificial harmonics. Finally, Belew's axe lets out a wicked shriek and plunges headlong into nasty



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Karen Carpenter

Karen Carpenter (A&M)

The master of Republican mating music recorded her only solo album in 1979 and for reasons unspecified in the press release, it is only now being released. Let me speculate on one reason here: The songs aren't good. Except for some tepid experiments in disco, she's mostly doing what she always did, with a little more sex in the lyrics and not much hook in the melodies. Was she trying to make the transition from virgin to vamp that Olivia Newton-John and Debbie Gibson failed to accomplish? "Make believe it's your first time/And I'll make believe it's mine," she warbles, presaging Madonna's "Like A Virgin." I doubt her fans would have wanted to be reminded that they were pretending she wasn't a virgin. On the other hand, I did think several times in the course of the album that I should move to the suburbs, marry a cheerleader, and mow the grass.

Various Artists

Industrlum Post Mortem: The

Deconstructed Sounds of

Karen Han (Tone Casuaitles)

Traditional Chinese music run through the industrial/ ambient blender by a variety of artists ranging from ex-Devo Mark Mothersbaugh to the remnants of Christian Death. Han plays the violin-like erhu, which you'll recognize from movie soundtracks. You won't recognize it a lot, however, because it gets so thoroughly chopped up. In the process, it chops up your brain, which this music is supposed to do. More frightening than whimsical, it takes you to a place where only Karen Carpenter can redeem your soul.

Sue Foley

Walk In the Sun

(Antone's/Discovery)

Foley could kick in the door on the left and become the first true gui-

tar hero of the female persuasion, or she could follow Bonnie Raitt in the door on the right and be a blues-pop singer who happens to play the guitar well. I could live happily with either door, both of which are in abundant evidence here. Her guitar alternates between the Lightnin' Hopkins droning open-string bassline thing and the Stevie Ray Vaughan fingers-of-fire thing. Noticeably caught up to her instrumental skills, Foley's voice displays both confidence in her blues moves and a little girl nudge that draws the ear in the midst of a crowded genre. She's one smart marketing campaign from being a big deal.

Cherish the Ladies

New Day Dawning (Green Linnet)

Traditional Irish music always seems to affirm beauty in the context of looming mortality, bringing a tear to the eye even as the feet are moved to tap out a jig. Playing it pure with no tinge of jazz or new age, the Ladies allow themselves no distance from their emotions, and you don't get any

either. So prepare yourself to contemplate that "the ripest apple is the soonest rotten." Also prepare yourself to contemplate Scottish poet Robert Burns: "The worldly race may riches chase/And riches still may fly them oh/And when at last, they catch them fast/Their hearts can n'ere enjoy them oh." Who writes better than that? And I doubt anybody's sung it better than the Ladies in the two centuries since it was written. o

Donovan

Sutras (American)

It takes courage and a personality that knows itself to present the world with a style as distinct as Donovan's. Even if his aching sincerity, in-your-face intimacy and natural tremolo in the vocal cords require a special mood to assimilate, you have to admit the guy could always assemble an engaging melody out of a few astonishing-though-simple ideas. I admit it, anyway. If he was your guilty pleasure in the '60s, or even your forthright pleasure, the guy's still got it. Let it also be said that Rick Rubin knows how to produce with-

out pissing on the music to mark his territory.

They Might Be Giants

Factory Showroom (Elektra)

Where Frank Zappa's satire was informed by his contempt for everyone who didn't get the abstruse extremes of his academic eclecticism, the Giants just want you to think they're clever. Okay, they're clever. Their arrangements are very clever, and they aren't afraid of a catchy melody, even if they sing it like chronic geeks. Listening to a whole album is sorta like having lunch with a comedian: You get tired of reassuring him every thirty seconds that he's amusing. I wish their budget had allowed for a guest appearance by Lou Christie or Frankie Valli on "How Can I Sing Like A Girl?"

Richard "Hacksaw" Harney

Sweet Man

(Genes CD Co./Blues Vault)

A shy man with a speech impediment, Harney (1902-73) spent most of his life tuning pianos around the Mississippi Delta and very little of his life promoting his brilliant acoustic guitar skills. So you probably haven't heard of him, even though he was an influence on Robert Johnson. Recorded about a year and a half before he died, this album documents a first-rate fingerpicker roughly in the Blind Blake tradition, but with a thrilling array of moves all his own. Rags, pre-blues folk, 12-bar blues, pop tunes from his youth ("Five Foot Two")—Harney plays them all like he expects you to dance, which is how this music was originally intended.



karen carpenter

Jeffrey Mayor

arabesques over crazed pseudo-Moroccan percussion. It's a performance that belongs on the short list of Greatest Guitar Moments Ever.

Those few seconds alone would make *Op Zop Too Wah* worth owning. But to sweeten the deal, Belew just happens to have made his best overall "pop" album yet. One of the reasons it's so good is that besides the usual winning, Beatles-inflected rockers ("On," "Live In A Tree"), and craftily melodic ballads ("Time Waits," "Beautiful"), there are also strong hints of Belew's non-pop output. The sonic mayhem of "Modern Man Hurricane Blues" and the bruising riffs of "I Remember How to Forget" recall his work with King Crimson, while "Conversation Piece" and "High Wire Guitar" reflect the ambience of his 1986 instrumental masterwork *Desire Caught by the Tail*. Belew's last bunch of songs, on *Here* (1994), were similarly top-notch but occasionally undone by goofy lyrics; this time, the words wisely mind their place.

Again, Belew plays all the instruments himself, and while you expect his guitar playing to be ace (check out the keeno country breaks on "Six String"—see what living in Nashville for a while can do to you?), the high caliber of his drumming is a slight surprise. If the spirits of Tony Williams and Ringo Starr could somehow inhabit the same corporeal form, they'd probably sound a lot like this.

The latest offering by Belew's partner in Crimson, Robert Fripp, is a compilation of live tracks recorded in 1980 by Fripp's short-lived all-instrumental "dance band," the League of Gentlemen. The League's other members included drummer Johnny Toobad, bassist Sara Lee (soon to join Gang of Four), and keyboardist Barry Andrews (in between XTC and Shriekback). Their one studio album was a bit weak, but this almost ridiculously propulsive collection is quite the opposite. The dizzying contrapuntal lines laid down by Fripp and Andrews mirror what Fripp and Belew would be doing in KC a year later, while Lee and Toobad maintain a frenetic groove throughout. To put it bluntly, the League are killing shit. Of particular note are Fripp's sneaky downward bends on "Inductive Resonance" and the snippets of onstage banter that close the album. "I really need to party," Fripp says in his mild-mannered Bournemouth accent. "If we don't party, I think I'm going to go home." Let that be a message to you.—**Mac Randall**

John Parish and Polly Jean Harvey

Dance Hall at Louse Point (Island)

Polly Harvey's last release, 1995's *To Bring You My Love*, was an undeniably powerful, postmodern chunk of blues. It did suffer at

times from sounding a little stiff—a treatise on *mojo* rather than a real battle with soul demons. Happily, there's no doubting the efficacy of Ms. Harvey's *mojo* or her readiness for demon battle this time around. The singer supplied sublimely spooky lyrics and estimable co-production talents to these compositions by guitarist/percussionist John Parish, who's been a part of her studio and concert bands since 1993. The results are as engaging as they are disturbing.

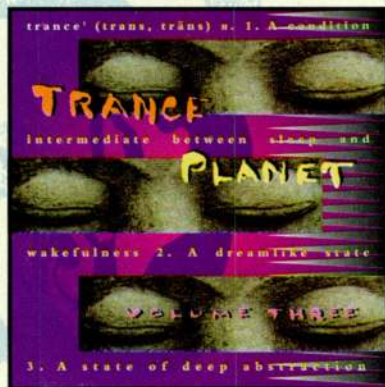
Parish's music is full of strange moves and unusual textures, and often seems built from sonic blueprints rather than chord charts—the instrumental title track sounds like the crackling synapses of a nervous breakdown. But for all the odd sounds that snake through songs like "Rope Bridge Crossing," there's an easy, underlying tunefulness which keeps them inviting, even soothing. Of course, you can't get too relaxed when Harvey starts weaving her bad dream laments of doomed love, consuming lust, and lying bastards. The woman is a remarkable vocalist, and on a few tracks she makes her points with over-the-top bravura. More often she and Parish demonstrate some sense of restraint, counting on nuance rather than assault to lift the music. On "That Was My Veil," Parish's delicately understated approach makes Harvey's tale of betrayal all the more affecting.

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Song titles such as "Urn with Dead Flowers in a Drained Pool" may read to some as "Warning: Art Project," but overall it's an art project that grabs for the guts. Consider Harvey's *Eraserhead* lounge version of Peggy Lee's ode to disappointment, "Is That All There Is," an unsettling bonus.

—Chuck Crisafulli

David Grisman

DGQ-20 (Acoustic Disc)

Like his mandolin mentor Bill Monroe, David Grisman is that rare musician who can lay claim to inventing an utterly new style of music—which, in a brilliant stroke of marketing, he affirmed to his own nickname, "Dawg." Pulling in elements of bluegrass, swing, bebop, modern jazz, classical, Latin, rock, and Eastern European folk music, his all-acoustic whole is distinct, if not necessarily greater, than the sum of its parts. From the start Grisman must have realized he was onto something because, thankfully, he's documented every stage of it since the debut of the David Grisman Quintet twenty years ago. Hence the title of this three-CD collection of mostly live, entirely unreleased performances.

DGQ-20 features virtuosi who have passed through the Quintet/Quartet, either as full-time members or guests, including Tony Rice, Mark O'Connor, John Carlini, Rob Wasserman, Darol Anger, and Mike Marshall, plus Dawg's long associations with Jerry Garcia and Stephane Grappelli. But it is Grisman's compositions that impress most, from the 'grassier "Dawg Patch" to scores for the films *Capona* and *King of the Gypsies*, from the jazzy "Blue Midnight" to the unclassifiable "Mondo Mondo" (a live 1981 rendition here teams mandolin great Jethro Burns with the Kronos Quartet!).



john parish & polly jean harvey

maria mochnacz

While forging a new stylistic format for the acoustic mandolin, Grisman has had an incalculable impact on popularizing the instrument and reconditioning audiences' ears to the unadulterated sound of wood and strings. The clarity of tone that Rice gets out of a Martin flattop or Joe Craven extracts from his violin is as riveting as their deft solo turns. As if he weren't wearing enough hats, Grisman is also head of his own record label; as with his extravagant *Tone Poems* sets (with Rice and jazz guitarist Martin Taylor), sound quality remains remarkable throughout this patchwork quilt. So listen in: Regardless of where and when you joined the Grisman saga, any one of these 38 tracks, and probably several, will not only provide context and perspective, it'll knock your socks off.—Dan Forte

more you listen to the singer emote, the more like a Bono-level superstar he sounds—the guy's got charisma. He also manages the risky task of riding herd on the trilling tribal chants of "Voodoo," which are a few grating notes away from a flock of constipated kookaburras. Again, the mix shouldn't work. Again, it does.

But Glabicki displays his best trick of the trade on "Baby Will Ram," a shamefully addictive folk-blues shambler. His Antish antics slither python-like into the heart of the song, leaping and looping, yowling and guttural-growling until they've hit the cathartic center, head-on. It's a truly memorable performance. These Rusted Root peaceniks may wear patchouli, Birkenstocks, and love beads, but they'd be fun to have over to the MTV beach house just the same. Probably more fun than the crowd already there.—Tom Lanham

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Rusted Root

Remember (Mercury)

Pittsburgh pop curiosity Rusted Root has three strikes against it before it ever plays the game: an aura of that most heinous PC fad, "world music"; a propensity for extended hippie jams; and frontman Michael Glabicki, who's as yelpy as Adam Ant. By all rights, it's a recipe for recording studio disaster. Surprising, then, that the sextet's third release, *Remember*, congeals into a brilliant effort that's much more than the sum of its prickly parts.

The clear, echoey production of Jerry Harrison helps. Glabicki's emotions (and jeez, does this guy have emotions) froth to the surface through campfire-ish singalongs ("Bullets In The Fire," "Circle Of Remembrance"), tinny back-porch blues ("Who Do You Tell It To"), Appalachian-meets-Middle-Eastern mantras ("Faith I Do Believe"), and even hard-partying Cajun arrangements ("Virtual Reality"). But the

shorts

Buffalo Daughter

Captain Vapour Athletes (Grand Royal)

This fascinating Japanese trio boils acid rock, punk rock, Ventures rock, and a love for Karen Carpenter down to a paste, then smears it over experimental Moog records. Beyond found sound cliches, Buffalo Daughter have a pop sensibility that makes *CVA* a rollercoaster ride of delectably screwball moments. Guitarist Sugar styles surf sendups, shuffling blues, and screaming slide solos while Yumiko overloads her ARP Odyssey until it erupts in fat gurgles and space blips. DJ Moog adds '50s test recordings and vocal snippets for a finishing touch.—Ken Micallef

Barry Adamson

Oedipus Schmoedipus (Mute)

What kind of album begins with a rumination on masturbation? With Pulp's Jarvis Cocker reciting "Set the controls for the heart of the pelvis" while a gospel choir sings "Save me from my own hand," this isn't yer typical, soundtrack-styled album. Ex-Bad Seed Adamson saddles R&B atmospheres and melancholy jazz forays upside ominous orchestra-

tions and enigmatic spoken word. From the Teo Macero-ish darkness of "Dirty Barry" to the sexual sarcasm of "Vermillion Kisses," he draws from a well of uneasy listening. Even when "The Big Bamboozle" humorously parodies Goldfinger memories, its gangsta dialogue spells discontent. Adamson works this magic with rapt instrumental detail and seamless production. —Ken Micallef

Various Artists

Germes (Tribute): A Small Circle of Friends (Grass)

In a short, fitful career as one of the more provocative, self-destructive, and notorious of L.A.'s first-wave punks, the Germes came closer than any of their late-'70s contemporaries to embodying America's answer to the Sex Pistols. The resemblance had less to do with singer Darby Crash dying Sid Vicious-style of a heroin overdose than with the power of his strangled voice and mangled lyrics, which carried the authoritative fear and loathing of a Johnny Rotten. Unfortunately, as the West Coast turned from the anarchy of punk to hardcore nihilism, the myth of Crash's demise came to overshadow the vitality of the creative forces he'd unleashed with his band. *Germes (Tribute): A Small Circle of Friends*—which includes Kim Gordon's Free Kitten, Thurston Moore and Mike D. playing incognito as Puzzled Panthers,

Flea solo, the Posies doing a sweet, tuneful version of "Richie Dagger's Crime," and former Germ/cur-rent Foo Fighter Pat Smear joining Hole for a spirited rendition of "Circle One"—is a welcome, timely reminder that the songs Crash created with the Germes have a life that stands apart from the circumstances of his death. —Matt Ashare

The Kinks

Kinks (You Really Got Me)

Kinda Kinks (Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab)

If an audiophile edition of the first two Kinks albums seems odd, remember Mobile Fidelity's stellar treatment of low-tech titans like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. Sure enough, this unlikely project sheds light on fascinating facets of a band that reveled in eccentricity from the word go. Rendered in startling stereo detail, the ungainly yet endearing *You Really Got Me* makes a strong case for slammin' drummer Mick Avory as the unsung hero of the Kinks' prehistoric days and reveals a deep affection for sloppy swamp blues. Shel Talmy's production frequently goes haywire, with lead vocals panning from one channel to the other in mid-verse for no apparent reason.

The monaural, slightly fuzzier textures of the more coherent *Kinda Kinks* emphasize Ray Davies' staggering growth as a songwriter, from the brooding

paranoia of "Nothin' in the World Can Stop Me Wor-ryin' 'Bout That Girl" to the passive-aggressive mas-terpiece "Tired of Waiting for You" to "Something Better Beginning," his touching update of the Drifters' "Save the Last Dance for Me." Early Kinks is essential to begin with; consider this essential and then some. —Jon Young

Altered Beats

Assassin Knowledge of the Remanipulated (Axiom)

This fascinating compilation examines the underbelly of the fractured '90s hip-hop world. It also recon-ciles two musical spheres that have previously had little to do with each other: ambient dub-funk and classic cut 'n' scratch DJing. Considering the miles of tape that he's amassed in both realms, it's appropriate that Axiom chief Bill Laswell would be the one to finally bring them together. Cuts here show a healthy cross-section of newjack turntable hotshots (Q*Bert, Rob Swift), old-school masters (DXT, formerly known as D.ST) and those who fall somewhere in between (Laswell, Prince Paul, DJ Krush and Spec-tre). Standouts include the laser cuts of "Invasion Of The Octopus People" by the Invisible Scratch Pick-les, "Black Hole Universe" by DXT and "Reanima-tion" by Rob Swift.

—Brian Coleman



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[cont'd from page 60] exhausted. Listening to the tapes during the time off, the stuff that was mellow sounded good, because that was the vibe, but the rock tunes sounded flat. So we decided we ought to bring someone else in."

They picked the right person. Lillywhite is a guy who really loves his job. His energy and enthusiasm is apparently boundless; for the Phish crew, it's contagious. A few tunes, like the predominantly acoustic "Talk" and "Train Song" (the one song of Mike's two that made the final cut), are kept largely the same as they were, but most, like "Free," "Waste," and "Billy Breathes," are almost completely redone with Lillywhite at the helm. "Far Away," the song with the great Fishman groove from back in March, is ashcanned, but several songs that only got, in Trey's words, "half-assed demo treatment" in the earlier sessions, are now revived: the full-on rock of "Character Zero," the intricate "Taste," and Page's groovy instrumental "Cars Trucks Buses."

We first hear the new recordings while riding around Woodstock in Page's car. The improvement is remarkable. "Free" is a particular standout, with an infectious descending riff, giant harmonies, and a backing track that sounds like a long-lost recording by Traffic or the Small Faces. Most of the songs are concise (only one is over six minutes); there's little group improv as such, but the energy of the band's live jams is there in nearly every track. According to Page, much of this energy came from being liberated from the necessity of both producing and playing. "Before Steve came in, we tried to limit ourselves to doing a song in less than ten takes, because with every additional take, all you could think about was, 'Oh my god, I have to go back and listen to all this shit.' It starts defeating itself really quickly. Whereas when we recut 'Free' this time, I don't know how many times we played it. It might have been 20, it might have been 40. But I didn't have to worry about it anymore."

"You get to learn that attitude shifts are so important in recording," Mike says. "There were times when we'd do 40

takes of a song, and it would be two in the morning and we'd have played the same song over and over all day and night. I'd go to sleep on the couch for an hour, and then it'd be three in the morning. I'd wake up half asleep and hope that we could go to bed now, and everyone would say, 'Mike, let's just try a few more takes.' I'd reluctantly pick up my bass thinking, 'This is stupid, it won't sound good 'cause I'm tired,' and then do a take or two and start to wake up. Then, after having such a bad attitude, I'd completely change and remember what it's all about. This is rock and roll, we're in an old barn and there's a stream outside—why would I ever want to go to bed? Rock and roll isn't for going to bed, it's for staying up all night. And then, after already doing 40 takes of the song, we'd get some stuff that's really usable."

Part of what has made the second half of the Bearsville sessions so much more exciting than the first is Steve's ability to catch ideas on the fly. One day, while working on vocal tracks with Trey, he heard Trey making percussive noises with his mouth between takes. "Let's get that," he said. In the end, Trey's "mouth percussion" made it onto several songs. Steve's also been mixing on the fly, using an automation program that lets him control relative levels during tracking. "Every time you overdub, you do a mix," he explains, "because you program the level of the overdub on the computer and it stays in memory. So when it comes down to the final day, you should be able to mix a song in fifteen minutes. The songs should mix themselves, basically."

"This work with Steve feels like it was meant to be," Trey says. "I don't mean to talk in cliches, but it's been like one long party, during which some recording hap-

pened to take place. I've begun to realize that on our previous albums, we really tied the producers' hands. We were such control freaks, me particularly. Now we're loosening up a little."

One band member who's definitely loosened up is Jon. "For a long time, Fish had a personal rule that he'd never play the same drumbeat twice,"

Trey reveals. "It was a great idea, but it got to be a pain in the ass after a while."

"I've realized,"

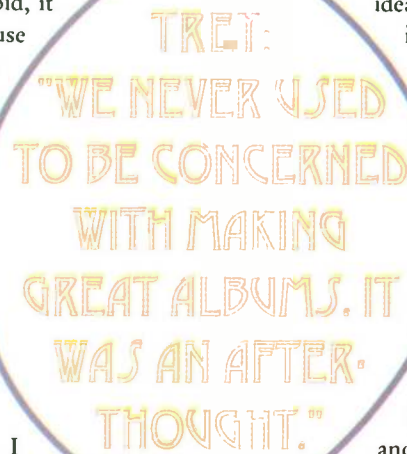
Fish says, "that if a song is crying out for a particular part, you've got to honor that. It doesn't matter so much whether or not it's been done before. What matters is how you do it.

For me, to play 'Free' and have that straight, well-worn groove move and be alive—that was a huge challenge. So in a way I've maintained my goal, but I've aug-

mented it. I'm still in search of the unplayed groove, but it's a smaller concern."

At the end of this week, the album will be finished; Lillywhite's got to go home and Phish has to prepare for its European tour. With the end in sight, Trey looks back. "This has been a weird process, with so many stages along the way. And it's all represented on the album. 'Swept Away'/'Steep' is pure Blob, 'Talk' and 'Train Song' are the next step away from the Blob—we're still not playing our usual instruments. Then Steve comes in and we do 'Free' and 'Character Zero,' straight hard-hitting rock songs. It felt really organic. And it's the first time since the first album that I fully enjoyed it the way I enjoy playing live."

For Trey, the pivotal moment of the sessions occurred while working on the guitar tracks for "Strange Design." You may recall that this was one of the songs that caused a lot of aggravation back in



TREY:
"WE NEVER USED
TO BE CONCERNED
WITH MAKING
GREAT ALBUMS. IT
WAS AN AFTER-
THOUGHT."

March; with Lillywhite producing, it was redone for the umpteenth time. "Steve was encouraging me to take it from a totally different angle," Trey recalls. "So I was working on this new rhythm guitar part. It was about six o'clock in the morning, the sun was coming up, just Steve and Jon and me in the studio. I'd been doing the track all night and not getting anything. Suddenly, while I was playing, I had this weird memory, like a lucid dream: I was standing in my back yard, when I was in third grade, and I had this dead bird in a shoebox. I was going out to bury it in the yard. This is something that actually happened, but I can't remember ever thinking about it any time in my whole adult life. It was like this other part of my brain opened up. I could see everything—the gray paint peeling on the back of the garage, the sliding glass door, the state of disrepair that the fence was in, what season it was, how it smelled. It was wild. Having this experience totally changed the groove I was playing, from slow to fast. And as soon as I got that rhythm, we changed everything to go with it. And that was the song. This kind of thing happens when I play live all the time, but it hasn't happened much in the studio before. Amazing."

The irony of all this is that you won't hear "Strange Design" on *Billy Breathes*. It was planned to be the last song of the album, but upon repeated listenings, the band decided that it didn't fit, and that the anthemic "Prince Caspian" closed the album well enough on its own. And so, despite all the work put into it and the transformations it underwent, "Strange Design" was taken out of the final sequence. But don't be too surprised if the song shows up again, at—where else?—a Phish concert.

Phish's summer ended on August 17 at the Clifford Ball in Plattsburgh, their own two-day festival (the band played three sets each day). The Ball, which attracted approximately 135,000 people and grossed over \$3 million, cemented what most people have known for a while: that this band has become a live phenomenon, with a rabid following to

match. But the real capper on the summer, the more significant one, is *Billy Breathes*. In October, the band starts touring for real behind its new album, and the Phish saga begins another chapter.

"We never used to be concerned with making great albums," Trey says. "We were always thinking about the live show. I came up with songs to fill holes in the set—oh, we need a rock number here, better write one. Albums were always an afterthought. But this time it changed. We really dove in.

"So many things changed for me this year. I had a baby and I turned 30. But I'd been playing with the same three people for 13 years. We got to a point where we asked ourselves, how can we stem the tide of commercial and organizational growth while still fueling the fires of creative growth? Before we recorded this album, we were supposed to do a CD-ROM of *Gamehendge* [the song cycle that Trey wrote as his college thesis; the band has never recorded it, but they've

played it live for years and it's become a bond for bootleggers and other aPhishionados]. It was all planned, gears were in motion. But we had this meeting and I said, 'I just don't want to think about anything old.' We've never made money off *Gamehendge*, and that's what's kept it a cool thing. We made a vow that we will never make money off any of those songs. So we cancelled the CD-ROM. Then we started making this album. And now with this album, we feel closer than we've ever felt."

Is this a turning point for Phish? Will we be able, sometime in the future, to look back and say these sessions marked the beginning of a change in the band's concentration, from the stage to the studio? "I don't know if I can answer that question," says Page. "I think the live show will always be important for us. But hopefully from this point on we can make good albums and enjoy making them and look back on them fondly. That would be a nice goal," he concludes with a wry smile.

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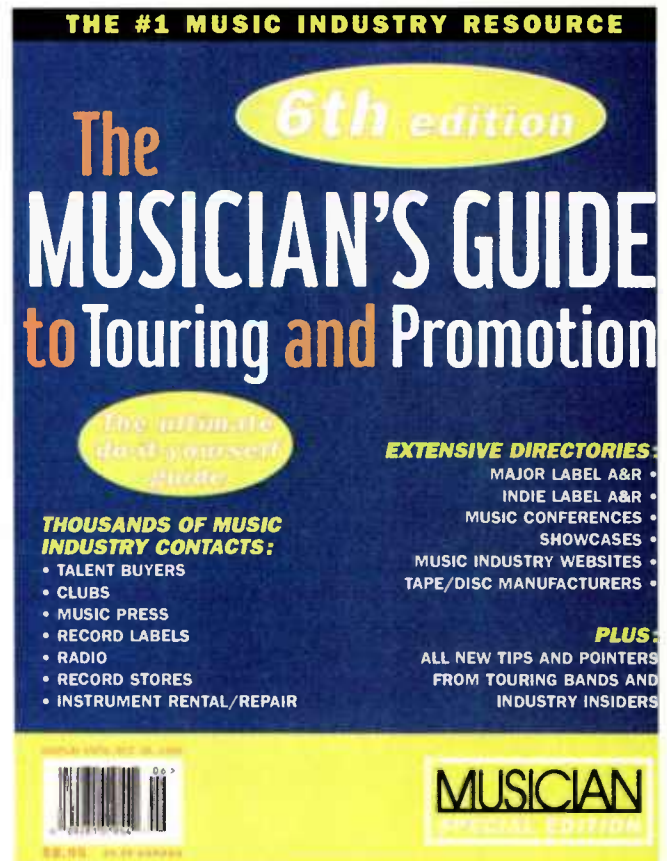
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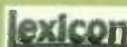
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productindex

Here's our product guide which lists the equipment and page number where the players talk about the gear they use. Feel free to call or fax the manufacturers listed below for specific info on what the best players play.

3M, 3M Center Bldg., St. Paul, MN, 55144: Black Watch, **64**
ADA, 420 Lesser St., Oakland, CA, 94601, (510) 532-1152: MB-1, **58**
ALESIS, 3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90016, (310) 558-4530: Microverbs, Midverb, **58**; ADAT, **64**; ADAT XT, **66**; QS7, **72**; NanoCompressor, ADAT, **73**
ALVAREZ, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63133, (800) 727-4512: Avante, **72**
AMERICAN RECORDER TECHNOLOGIES, 4545-6A Industrial St., Simi Valley, CA 93063, (805) 527-9580: V-311A, **64**
AMPEO, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63133, (314) 727-4512: amp, **58**
APHEX, 11068 Randall St., Sun Valley, CA, 91352, (818) 767-2929: Model 109, **73**
APPLIED RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY, 215 Tremont St., Rochester, NY, 14608-2366, (215) 436-2720: MDM-8L, **66**
ATI, 9017-C Mendenhall Ct., Columbia, MD, 21045, (410) 381-7879: BMX2, **73**
AVEDIS ZILDJIAN CO., 22 Longwood Dr., Norwell, MA, 02061, (617) 871-2200: cymbals, **58**
AYOTTE DRUMS, 2060 Pine St., Vancouver, BC, V6J 4P8, (604) 736-5411: snare drum, **58**
BOSS, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: Flanger, Octave Divider, **58**
BIG BRIAR, 554C Riverside Dr., Asheville, NC, 28801, (704) 251-0090: Space Control Theremin, **58**
CAKEWALK MUSIC SOFTWARE, 44 Pleasant St., Box 760, Watertown, MA, 02272, (617) 926-2480: 5.0, **73**
CELESTION, 89 Doug Brown Way, Holliston, MA, 01746, (508) 429-6706: Vintage 30, **58**
COMMUNITY, 333 E 5th St., Chester, PA, 19013-4511, (610) 876-3400: CSX43-S2, **62**
CREST AUDIO, 100 Eisenhower Dr., Paramus, NJ, 07652, (201) 909-8700: 7001 power amp, **58**
CUSTOM AUDIO ELECTRONICS, 10648 Magnolia Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA, 91601, (818) 763-8898: Super Tremolo, preamp, 4X4 switching system, RS-10, **58**
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DR HANDMADE STRINGS, 7 Palisade Ave., Emerson, NJ, 07630-1821, (201) 599-0100: strings, **58**
DUNLOP MFG., P.O. Box 846, Benicia, CA, 94510, (800) 722-3434: Crybaby, **58**
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ENSONIQ, 155 Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern, PA, 19355, (610) 647-3630: DP/4, **82**
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ERNE BALL, 151 Suburban Rd., P.O. Box 4117, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93403, (800) 543-2255: volume pedal, **58**
EVENTIDE, 1 Alsan Way, Little Ferry, NJ, 07643, (201) 641-1200: DSP 4000, **58**
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Get Up And Go Again:



They came from Liverpool, England, and their trousers changed the world. The groundbreaking 1978 film about their career, *All You Need Is Cash*, claimed that they had forged "a musical legend that will last a lunchtime," but in fact it has lasted even longer. From the early singles like "Hold My Hand" through the mature period of *A Hard Day's Rut* and *Ouch!* to the tea-fueled experimentation of *Sergeant Rutter* (the greatest millstone in pop history) and the final masterpiece *Shabby Road*, the music of Ron Nasty, Dirk McQuickly, Stig O'Hara, and Barrington Womble (better known as Barry Wom) continues to reverberate in the global psyche. In a word, the Rutles still matter.

And so it's not surprising that in this year of comebacks, the Prefab Four have decided to reunite and show everyone how it's really done. The new album, *Archaeology*, is their first in a very, very, very long time. "We thought we might have a chance to be in the Guinness Book of World Records for the group with the longest gap between consecutive albums," explains Ron Nasty on the phone from London, where he's hard at work putting the finishing touches on *Archaeology*. "That's why we dug it up."

Indeed, as the title *Archaeology* suggests, this is not a completely new album. "A lot of it was made sometime in the past," Nasty says. "Some of it's rehearsal tapes and outtakes, some of it's live—there's a song on there called 'Shangri-La' that I did on TV many years ago. It was buried as a time capsule to thwart bootleggers and tax authorities, but then

The Rutles Return!

Barry's dog found it. We're releasing it now so that people can hear it."

What people will hear is a mix of old and new, as Ron prevailed on his Rutle colleagues to come back into the studio, polish up vintage tracks, and record some new material. Among Nasty's favorite new songs is "Back in '64 (Before You Were Born)." "It's about imagining the future as we know it," he says. "That sounds scrambled egg, doesn't it?" The Rutles will also be shooting videos to accompany several songs; a tour is, in Ron's words, "quite possible. I'm game for it if the others are." Nasty describes the experience so far as pleasurable: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder. It's been really great to meet up with Stig and Barry again. When we all got together, it was as if no time had gone."

Sadly, this is not a full Rutles reunion, at least not yet. "We asked Dirk to join us, but he said he couldn't," Nasty relates. "He didn't really give any reason. We're hoping to twist his arm. The door's always open, but it's really up to him." Dirk hasn't been involved with music since the breakup of the Punk Floyd, the group he co-led with his wife Martini in the '70s. He has since gone into comedy—"Nobody likes a joke more than Dirk," Ron comments.

As for the other Rutles, Stig (The Quiet One) abandoned his career as an Air India hostess and went back to making music; he still doesn't

say very much. Barry (The Noisy One) gave up hairdressing and opened a pub. And Ron? "I turned me back on the world. But I found that everywhere I faced, I could see just as much world. So I've been trying to live in the present ever since. But the trouble is, it's on the exact spot where the past and the future meet, and it doesn't last long. So I've got a bit muddled in my philosophy." Helping him clear things up, as always, is Ron's devoted wife Chastity. Rutles fans who were alarmed at Ron's relationship with this creator of "broken art" will be pleased to hear that she's mellowed with age. "She's become the perfect housewife," he reports.

In the Rutles' absence, of course, a new wave of British bands has emerged, who proudly wear their retro hooks and Merseybeat harmonies on their sleeves. The debt that bands like Blur and Oasis owe to the Rutland sound is obvious. Ron confesses that he's much enamored of Britpop's up-and-comers. "They're all heavily influenced by the Rutles. I'm old-fashioned. I just like a tune and words you can understand, and that's coming back, which is good."

Which means that now, more than ever, the time is right for the Rutles' return. "Every 18 years or so you can have a bit of fun in the music business," Nasty observes. "You can't do it much more often."

—Mac Randall

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