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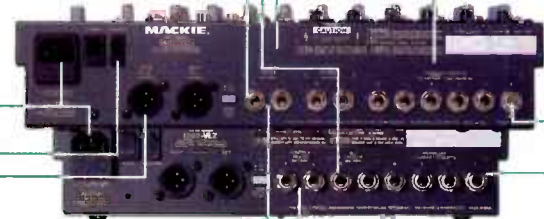


## MS1402-VLZ • 14x2 • 6 MIC PREAMPS



All inputs & outputs are balanced<sup>1</sup> to cut hum & allow extra-long cable runs, but can also be used with unbalanced electronics. <sup>1</sup>except RCA tape jacks, headphone jack & inserts.

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- Bobby Owsinski  
EQ Magazine

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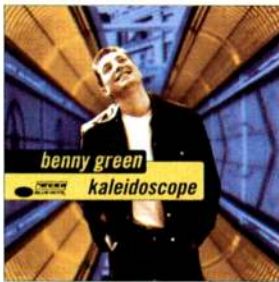




**benny green**

**kaleidoscope**

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(213) 525-2215

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# ANNOUNCING

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## Low Noise Mic Preamps

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Note: there is no such thing as a perfect preamp!

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## Discrete Summing Amplifiers

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# PEAVEY

## The Little Details

When comparing competitive consoles you can miss the little things that make such big differences; like mutes that mute the sends, but not the PFL. Little things like meters and inserts on all 4 stereo returns. These and a bunch more may not show up on paper but make a big difference in the real world.

## The Handle

The center handle on the flite case/chassis allows one person to comfortably carry the SRC™ 4034 FC. In fact, this leaves the other hand free to carry one of our lightweight power amps (like our 23.5lb. CS-800S), but that's another ad.

- (the Small Print)
  - few other things like: 48 switched PHANTOM POWER mic preamps with full bandwidth at all gain
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  - band fixed EQ ±15dB shelving
  - 100Hz low pass filter peaking 2.3dBHz and
  - 200Hz low pass filter with 2 switchable preamps
  - PFL (pre-fader listen) on every input channel, each aux master (6) each sub master (4) and each aux return
  - mutes that mute the right stuff, high quality 60 MM faders
  - 4 opt LEDs, 2 stereo line channels, 4 stereo aux returns with level pan assignment, meters and opt LED
  - 2 of the 4 buses have 2 band shelving EQ and 2 aux sends
  - stereo tape section with input and output levels, and bus assignment, L R or L - R trackback with assignment to L-R or Aux
  - control room section with headphone level and noise PFL
  - opt LED balanced XLR L/R outputs
  - balanced XLR Mono output with rear panel level control
  - XL type low voltage lamp sockets, etc.



## golden moments

I just read the quotes from Eddie Van Halen in your twentieth anniversary issue (Feb. '97), in which he responds to interest in him branching out into other styles with other players by insisting that he would never leave or betray his band, which he equates with his family.

Well, Eddie, I have one simple question: Do you still live with your parents?

**rob houghton**  
via internet

## dazed on dando

Your Jan. '97 issue has a picture of Evan Dando in what seems like a parody of a drugged musician. Does Evan really want us readers to take him seriously? I know drugs are prevalent in the lives of some "artists," but the musicians I play with have the common sense to keep the drugs out of the picture. I hope my lack of Lemonhead knowledge proves me wrong.

**p.n.**  
greendale, WI

## now hear this

After reading "The Sounds of '97: Eight Acts You Need to Hear" (Jan. '97), it was obvious the authors have never heard nor seen the band Resolve. After their debut release *Jack* last year on Artist's Only Records, they climbed high in the college charts. Their song, "Gun for Christmas," is being added to commercial radio playlists around the country. Resolve play from deep in their guts with a passion that runs adrenaline through my bloodstream every time I hear their name. Please search their Website at: <http://www.soupmultimedia.com/resolve.html>. Read the issues of the band's newsletter, *The Acorn*. Listen to their song samples. And then, please rewrite your article under the heading "Nine Acts You Need to Hear."

**mark rose**  
[mark@soupmultimedia.com](mailto:mark@soupmultimedia.com)

## just my bill

I've decided to subscribe to your magazine. The article "License to Bill" in your Jan. '97 issue is the kind of information I need. I hope you'll do even more stuff that's of interest to songwriters in future issues.

**steve wise**  
fayetteville, AR

ASCAP President Marilyn Bergman seems to think "intellectual property" is the exclusive possession of artists. Most everything made by humans, from the Fender Strat you play to the machines you record with, is *somebody's* intellectual property. The difference is that Fender only makes you pay for their property once, while ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC want to stick their fingers in the pie a multitude of times. People don't object to paying for property; they object to paying the same bill over and over again.

**jim tomczyk**  
[cnj@webtv.net](mailto:cnj@webtv.net)

## stompin' the box

Thank you for the informative Technology article in your Feb. '97 issue (The Ripple Effect"). It

The problem with Eddie Van Halen's dirty laundry (Frontman, Feb. '97) is who dirtied it. If he was upset with those bad boy lead singers for not allowing him his freedom to make the music he wanted to make, that's his problem. The point is that ever since Matt Resnicoff fried Eddie in your magazine, Van Halen has done nothing but achieve that rock dinosaur mediocrity that they once laughed at. What made Van Halen so appealing was that they were in on the joke of rock & roll even while they were playing the shit out of it. Eddie's whining may have a point, but it's also a clever way to avoid the basic fact that his band's music is as clichéd as Axl Rose's psychobabble. It's so ironic to compare his comment that "you can't sing 'I Can't Drive 55' over 'Stairway to Heaven'" with the quote on the flipside Sideman interview with a beautiful and musical man, Brian Blade: "My object at all times as a drummer is to get out of the way and let the music speak for itself." If the music doesn't speak, what kind of a conversation can we have?

**j. schneider**  
albany, CA

cleared up my confusion about the difference between tremolo and vibrato. However, you failed to publish Roger Mayer's address in your product index. I believe his Voodoo Vibe might sound better than any other comparable products; after all, he was Jimi Hendrix's guitar tech. I would greatly appreciate it if you could send me his address.

**patrick hay**  
virginia beach, VA

[While Mayer has no American distributor at this time, his Voodoo Vibe and other pedals can be ordered from Manny's in New York, the Trading Musician in Seattle, and other selected retailers.]

## luscious jackson

Your Jan. '97 ish was a great read, but I must

disagree with Elysa Gardner's review of the new Luscious Jackson record. If you ask me—and I know you didn't—it's their best effort yet. Gardner's review reads like a college professor's grading a paper on proper song structure. Of course, this is just one person's opinion, but to this person *Fever In Fever Out* is the best disc of the year.

**stephen "fatboy" polizzi**  
ft. pierce, FL

## young man blues

After reading Chuck's Cuts in your Dec. '96 issue, it became apparent to me that Charles M. Young is not a Karen Carpenter fan and never was. He apparently has been living under a rock for the past thirteen years and hasn't yet learned that Karen Carpenter is deceased. From

reading his review, he still thinks she is in the recording studio daily, pumping out releases. Let me remind Young that any album releases, solo or not, were probably chosen by her brother Richard from material that wasn't good enough, in their opinions, to be released when she was alive. Good or bad, I commend Richard for releasing these albums and keeping Karen's beautiful voice alive forever in the memory of her beloved fans.

I have to wonder about Young's credentials here when he suggests that the songs on her solo album are not good enough except for her experiments in disco. What is he talking about? He and I must have

listened to two different albums. Being a musician myself, I heard no disco selections, nor did I hear a solo album. Richard Carpenter & Co. are very present in the vocal backups on just about every song.

Charles M. Young needs to put criticisms where they belong. They certainly don't belong on this album or on any future Karen Carpenter releases. I suggest that Young forget the bad lyrics, forget whether Karen Carpenter was a virgin or not, and just enjoy her magnificent voice once again, as I have.

**james I. kieffer**  
port tobacco, MD

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**O**n your new album, *Earthling*, you've set several different songs to jungle and hybrid club rhythms. What's especially striking about them is the contrast between the fairly relaxed melody lines and the frenetic drumming.

Because of its form, the melody has to be long notes.

Or else it would sound like chaos.

Which would be interesting as well [*laughs*]. But purist jungle doesn't work with melody in quite the same way; it goes for chant or a minimalist thread of a tune. It's almost cumulative. What I wanted to do with this album was to rework a lot of my old material within industrial, dance, or jungle contexts. I wanted to do the reverse too: Take jungle and industrial, and work with a strong melodic form—in fact, harness hard rock to jungle.

How do you phrase your vocal line in a jungle groove?

I just feel the beat.

The actual beat of the rhythm track, or ...

I'm feeling the slower beat. I don't work to the fast beat at all; that only creates a scintillating ... I hesitate to say decoration, because it's more than that. But the bass and the bass drum are the heartbeat. The snare drum is this bubbling, perky, mischievous energy that's put on top of everything else. You have to learn to halve the tempo. When you understand that it's really a Caribbean sensibility, and that in fact it comes from reggae, it starts to feel like a much more pleasurable beat, not so spiky and hostile.

The album includes a song called "I'm Afraid of Americans." Are we really that scary?

[*Laughs*.] It's really more ironic than hostile. In fact, a lot of my formative enthusiasms were American, everything from Jack Kerouac to blues music. But that's not the culture that's being transmitted to the rest of the world; it's Disney and McDonald's, the worst of America. To be in Java or somewhere on the day a McDonald's opens is really depressing.

Kerouac and the blues are both manifestations of resistance to conformity.

And they're the greatest cultural exports America has to offer.

It was always the rebelliousness of the American character that made it such an interesting place. But the corporate world has so much power and money, they're gonna win the cultural invasion.

As a postmodernist, you must be especially distressed by this addiction to the simplest and most banal aspects of American culture.

Well, one keeps refreshing oneself and one's work by remembering that the center of culture attracts mediocrity. Things that make their way to the center require only the most minimal effort to appreciate. It's on the periphery of cultural exchanges and dialogs that the most interesting explorations take place. So my choices always seem to come from the outside and virtually nothing from the center. My center is out there someplace, on one of the moons. I'm lo, definitely a moon boy [*laughs*].

—Robert L. Doerschuk

# David Bowie

**"Rebelliousness ... is the greatest cultural export America has to offer."**



# Mac Gollehon

**“Playing for a sampling session was like being raped.”**

**H**ow do the skills you need to play sections on trumpet differ from those you need to do a jazz gig? There are plenty of excellent players, who can play a thousand notes to the bar and even none of them right.

But if somebody tells them to go “bop ... bop-bop,” they can’t figure it out. It’s a matter of adaptability. You also need to have a knack for playing in tune and putting things on the beat where it belongs.

**What about tone? Do you need a certain kind of sound to do a date with, say, David Bowie or Nile Rodgers?**

Sure. There’s more individuality allowed when you’re recording a jazz gig. An ensemble could be a little ragged, but if it swings it’s cool. Whereas in a session you go into a section that’s squeaky clean and doesn’t get in the way of the vocal.

**Describe your first contact with trumpet samples.**

It was a dreadful experience. It was in early ‘83, and this producer asked me to bring in a four-piece horn section. We got there, and he said, “Okay, you guys don’t have much to do today. I just want to play a long note with a slow one. Next give me a bop ...” By the third or fourth thing I realized what was going on, and I told the producer, “Look, you’re being sampled.”

“How does everybody feel about that?” They all said, “Hey, let’s get paid,” and they finished the date. But for me it was like being raped.

I’ve changed my mind since then. Now it’s like tying your shoes.

**Do you get called much to sweeten sampled horn pads?**

Sure, even though those samples are 90 percent of the reason why I don’t get called more [laughs]. I’ll play an octave above or below the part, because they sound so huge there’s no need to add to them.

**Anybody ever ask you to play more “green” or “blue”?**

I hear that a lot. You run into any and everything. You’ll play something and it’s, “No, play it with more enthusiasm.” So you’ll play it the same way but jump up and down in your seat, and they say, “That’s it.”

**Did you ever really embarrass yourself on a session?**

Not playing, but I’ll never forget this date I did for Bruce Springsteen. They wanted me to do some repairs on a concert tape, but they called me at the last minute, so I was fighting rush-hour traffic. Then as I ran up the steps I ripped these jogging pants all the way up to there.

I ended up looking like a wreck, and as I’m unpacking my gear this guy comes over and asks if I’m the trumpet player. I say yeah, and he says, “Well, you’re a little late, but don’t worry. Everybody’s ordering food. Would you like something?” “Yeah, I’ll have a cheeseburger, fries, and a Coke. No mayonnaise and no ketchup.” He looks at me and says, “Well, I won’t be getting it for you, but I’ll give the order to

another guy. By the way, my name is Bruce.”

It’s all that embarrassing.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

**résumé:**

- Chic
- David Bowie
- Duran Duran
- Laurie Anderson
- Madonna
- Mick Jagger
- Nile Rodgers
- Onyx
- Tina Turner
- Buddy Rich

Bob Berg



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# talents

## maria schneider



Ines Kaiser

Clubs and bars proliferate throughout Greenwich Village. Most of them feature solo or small acts huddled in corners or on tiny stages. So it's kind of a shock to grab a seat at Visiones and watch the Monday night band file in: a parade of reed, brass, and rhythm players, clambering over risers to await the arrival of their leader.

And here she is. **Maria Schneider** comes in, jokes with the guys. She sits down as the musicians tune-up; in boots and black dress, with blonde hair tied back, she fits no one's stereotype as one of the most adventurous big band composers in jazz, though that's exactly what she is.

Then she stands, calls out a number, and raises her hands. And with her downbeat the sprawl of mismatched, mixed-gender horn blowers and noise

makers locks gears and sends a cloud of dense harmonies into the smoky air. It's the kind of magic Gil Evans used to work.

Not surprisingly, Schneider studied with Evans, putting in time as his assistant orchestrator and arranger. "The thing that drew me to Gil's music was the aspect of improvisation with orchestration that had all the subtleties of classical writing," she recalls a few days later in her uptown apartment. "I wanted that sound in my music too."

With two albums out on the Enja label—*Evanescence* and *Coming About*—Schneider has left her acolyte days behind. The road now points toward bigger ensembles; she's just finished a commission for the National Jazz Orchestra in Paris.

"It's a struggle for me to compose on demand," she admits. "I don't even want to do another album until my music has come to a different place."

Such as one of her upcoming orchestral works? "Yeah," Schneider says, smiling. "As long as it doesn't suck."

—Robert L. Doerschuk

After spending years in other bands doing what singer Jeff Lowe Robbins calls "all the right things to get signed," the three members of **Orbit** got tired of trying to please everyone else. "When we got together," Robbins says, "we really tried not doing things like playing what you think the audience wants. Fuck that—we just wanted to play for us."

It's a sentiment echoed by drummer Paul Buckley. "We figured we'd do things we haven't done before and just have fun with it. Lo and behold, six to nine months later we were attracting attention from major labels." One of the things that put Orbit on many A&R reps' dance cards was their debut EP *La Mano*, which came out on their own Lunch label and earned them rave reviews, opening spots for

Easily one of the most beautiful recordings of the year, reggae perennial **Bim Sherman's** *Miracle* (Beggars Banquet) layers his graceful, Marvin Gaye-style voice and subtle rasta ballads over a rich tapestry of tablas, strings, and acoustic guitars. Produced and played by On-U Sound's Adrian Sherwood and guitarist Skip McDonald with magical percussionist Talvin Singh, *Miracle* is comprised of eleven dreamlike vignettes, creating a luminous presence as sublime as morning sun bathing a Himalayan mountaintop.

"It's a very spiritual, universal record," says Sherman from his north London home. "You can see it from all angles. You can approach it about Jah, The Father, it's not just about girls and such. It's a very meditative album."

A resident of the Jamaican recording scene since the Seventies, Sherman moved to London in the early Eighties, where he released many self-produced albums. Work with Sherwood's On-U-Sound label led to the happenstance gathering of musicians for *Miracle*,

## bim sherman

including McDonald, Singh, bassist Doug Wimbish and the Studio Beats Orchestra Bombay. Sherman's yearning vocals meshed surprisingly well with Singh's bubbling tablas and the Orchestra Bombay's sculpted strings.

"There's not a lot of music coming from the heart with emotion and feeling," explains Sherman. "For many people it's a money issue. That is the wrong direction."

Humble and softspoken, Sherman didn't take the title *Miracle* lightly. It seemed the only proper choice. "It's something that we didn't expect when we started recording in Bombay and London. The response we received before we even put it out is part of the name, the miracle. It took their heart away. It inspired us to go on." —Ken Micallef





Elastica, Weezer, and Archers of Loaf, and MTV air time.

Robbins, who authors most of the Boston-based band's material, started writing his own stripped-down version of alternative rock after hearing Billy Bragg's "A New England" on the radio. He dumped the synth-heavy group he'd been playing with and picked up a bass to compose the early Orbit tracks. "It's a really solid way of writing,"

mentation—it's a 650 for Robbins and a 4001 for bassist Wally Gagel—helps the band stand just at the edge of grunge while maintaining a pop feel.

Robbins was worried that the band's power-trio sound would be thin. "I compensated for that by leaving a lot of negative space. If you rock and don't stop, people aren't going to notice, but if you stop, the loud stuff will feel that



Dante Clunch

he says. "You come up with a good bass line, then build it from there." Which is why you'll hear a bevy of rhythm section-driven songs on Orbit's major-label debut *Libido Speedway* (A&M). A distinctly Rickenbacker-oriented instru-

much louder.

"Hopefully we're coming up with something that sounds new," he says. "I'm not going to fool myself by saying it's revolutionary, but maybe it's evolutionary."

—David Farinella

The other night I had a long coffee talk with Johnny Colt from the Black Crowes," says **Seely** bassist/vocalist Joy Waters. "Our music has absolutely nothing in common with theirs. We've made such unlikely friends and allies."

A more unlikely band you won't find coming from Atlanta's deep-fried scene, but Seely glory in their anomalous status. Shunning alt rock and blues in favor of krautrock and 4AD flavors, Seely weave engrossing harmonies, circular drum-guitar rhythms, and Moog wavers into a multi-hued sound quilt. The first American signing to the revered English label Too Pure (PJ Harvey, Laika, Mouse On Mars), Seely benefits from its improbable origins.

"It is weird," comments Waters. "There's no sense here for the kind of music we make, but it's helped us to find our own voice without being categorized. Working in isolation has given us so much more courage."

Playing clubs usually worked by drum 'n' bass DJ, Seely's reverberating rhythms and dreamy melodies provide chill space to the hyperdrive of jungle. Repeatedly, triple-metered time signatures cast the Seely spell. "I have some mystical ideas associated with time signatures," says Waters. "Not to sound like a quack, but three-against-four is more of a female mood. It has a different symmetry. Any feeling that is a little off-kilter lends itself to 3/4. It's kind of kooky."

Seely's sound seems equal parts philosophy, mysticism, and Deep South cooking. "We're hesitant to use words to put meaning on the sound," concludes Waters. "We'd rather let the sound make the meaning for the words. Instead of playing some solo that has a linear trajectory to it, we're more bubbling and circular in our approach. It's something that cooks up out of a mood." —Ken Micallef



**seely**

Ruth Leitman

For the past couple of years the **Clouds** have hovered just over the American horizon. They've been packing houses in Australia since 1990, but it wasn't until the summer of '95 that *Thunderhead* broke into American college radio playlists. Their pop sensibility made listening to them easy on the ears, and the interplay of guitarist Jodie Phillis' and bassist Patricia Young's voices broadened the impact of the beat. Listening to their harmonies above the din of David Easton's guitar and Raphael Whittingham's drums was like watching sea gulls spiral over an urban terrain.

If you missed *Thunderhead*, you can wait for their next album, *Futura*, which hit stores in Australia last October and will likely be

available on Ichiban in the U.S. release later this year. Or you can catch up on the Cloud catalog with *Collage*, a collection of old and new tracks that hangs together rather nicely.

"I think there's a feeling that not so many

women are involved in Australian music." Young muses. "Bands that have come out of Australia and made any sort of international mark, like Silverchair or You Am I, are all boys. Perhaps when people hear that we're two girl singers from Australia, they might expect us to sound more pop than we actually do."

One thing lots of folks will notice on *Collage* is the band's unlikely cover of "Wichita Lineman." Slowed down and dressed up with a couple layers of distorted guitar, the song takes on a refreshing new life. "It's a beautiful song," Young agrees. "Not only that, it's a lot easier to pick up airplay with familiar material. Most important, it's a favorite of everyone in the group. And getting all four of us to agree on anything is a major accomplishment." —Robert L. Doerschuk



Jay Blakesberg

**clouds**



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What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," smiles Longpigs frontman Crispin Hunt. His oft-repeated bon mot is fitting—this Sheffield, England foursome have endured everything from the collapse of their original record label to a near-death car crash en route to their current deal with Mother Records (the label co-owned by U2 and their manager, Paul McGuinness).

Hunt and guitarist Richard Hawley tell the story over a pre-gig pint at a pub near the University of London. "It was all very much based on lies at the beginning," confesses Hunt. "I had a demo and, as a laugh, was phoning up record companies, saying something like, 'Hi, I'm Artie Fufkin, and we're down visiting Columbia and Sony and whoever.' Once you tell them you're visiting a few others, they think they're gonna miss out, and say, 'Come on over!'"

Improbable as it sounds, it worked. "We basically walked into the record companies having not even so much as played a note together as a band—and they all went mad for it! So we had to lie again and say, 'Yes, of course, we're playing a gig for a few record companies, next week.'"

Hunt describes that first gig as "absolutely appalling," but several labels showed interest.

"It was all terribly quick from there," he says.

"Too quick," adds Hawley, ominously.

The band signed with Elektra

UK, recorded a costly album with a big producer (Gil Norton) and, continues Hunt, "got two big-wig managers who strolled in with their crocodile-skin boots and said, 'Kids, we're gonna make you famous.'"

"Everything was really great—we were going to all the rock star parties, dating supermodels, promising our mums new houses ..."

Then misfortune reared its head. Returning from a gig, their van collided with an eighteen-wheel Volvo truck, leaving Hunt in a coma for three days, fighting for his life. Everyone survived, but it left its mark on both Hunt's songwriting and the band. "We approach things with a bit more humility now," says Hawley.

It got worse when Warners folded the Elektra UK office, leaving the Longpigs album on the shelf. "It was literally three weeks before the release of our first single," sighs Hunt. "The whole thing ended with a simple phone call saying they'd closed down the company."

"Then we had ten months of litigation trying to get out of the deal. We had to pretend the band had split up and go into isolation—we couldn't perform, we couldn't record."

"It was just a fucking nightmare, basically," sums Hawley.

"Elektra owned everything and they were asking a fortune for

us," Hunt said. "\$500,000 for a band that had never sold a single record was absurd."

Andy Leese, an A&R rep at Mother, had courted the Longpigs while at EMI Publishing. He was still a fan, and quickly converted his boss, Mother Records head Malcolm Dunbar.

"The problem was, Elektra, at that point, wanted a lot of money to release them from the contract," explains Dunbar. "So, what we had

to do was actually *not* show a lot of interest, yet continue to build a relationship with the group behind the scenes. Eventually, Elektra realized they weren't going to get a lot of money from another record company,

they weren't going to get an override, and they let them go."

The Longpigs, frustrated and anxious, were done messing around, and immediately signed with Mother. "We had fun going through the whole courting business," reflects Hunt. "You'd play a gig and the audience would consist of 90

A&R men, your grandmother and a goldfish. We'd get taken to dinner, pit

## LONGPIGS

ALBUM: *The Sun Is Often Out*  
 LABEL: Mother UK/  
 Island Records  
 RELEASE DATE: February 25





labels against one another to keep upping the offers, and it was a thrill. But we didn't want to do it again. By the second time around, we knew what we wanted, the kind of label we wanted, and just wanted to get on with making records."

"When we were on Elektra, we'd go in to discuss sleeve art or something, and just feel lost in this huge corporation," says Hawley.

"With Mother, it's a tiny label with an indie mentality, but they've got Polygram's distribution and all of U2's money to spend," adds Hunt. "And we're more than happy to spend it."

"What we went through was good for us in the end because it really put everything in perspective. We'd been through the worst-case scenario and came out in front. It wasn't like George Michael or Prince—we fucking won!"

Their new album, *The Sun Is Often Out*, contains songs re-recorded from the shelved Elektra album and several new ones. It's a blend of crashing guitars and Hunt's impassioned vocals that combines elements of Radiohead, James, even a little U2. But their songs, Dunbar feels, are what set them apart.

"What attracted me was their classic songwriting—Crispin's songs and lyrics are timeless. He's also got a very passionate voice—strong, genuine and with an occasional falsetto, which I love."

McGuinness, meanwhile, was impressed by the band's strength of character. "What they went through sounded like a real disaster, and it's very hard for a band to survive something like that," he says. "I'm very much from a band background. Morale, momentum, campaigning, 'gang-life'—those are my terms of reference, and the Longpigs seem to have the characteristics of a genuine 'gang,' which I think a rock & roll band inevitably is."

In bringing the Longpigs to America, Mother relied on the network that McGuinness had established here, releasing the band through Island Records. (Though he doesn't manage Longpigs, McGuinness handles, in addition to U2, Island artist PJ Harvey. His Dublin-based management company, Principle, also maintains a New York office.) Still, despite McGuinness' position, nothing guarantees an artist priority within a major label. "I've learned over the years that it's usually a bad mistake to try forcing a record company into doing things it doesn't want to," he reasons.

So, he brought the band to New York for a showcase, and they've been a favorite within the company ever since. "That's sort of the classic paradigm," he explains. "Sell the band to the record company first, then to the world."

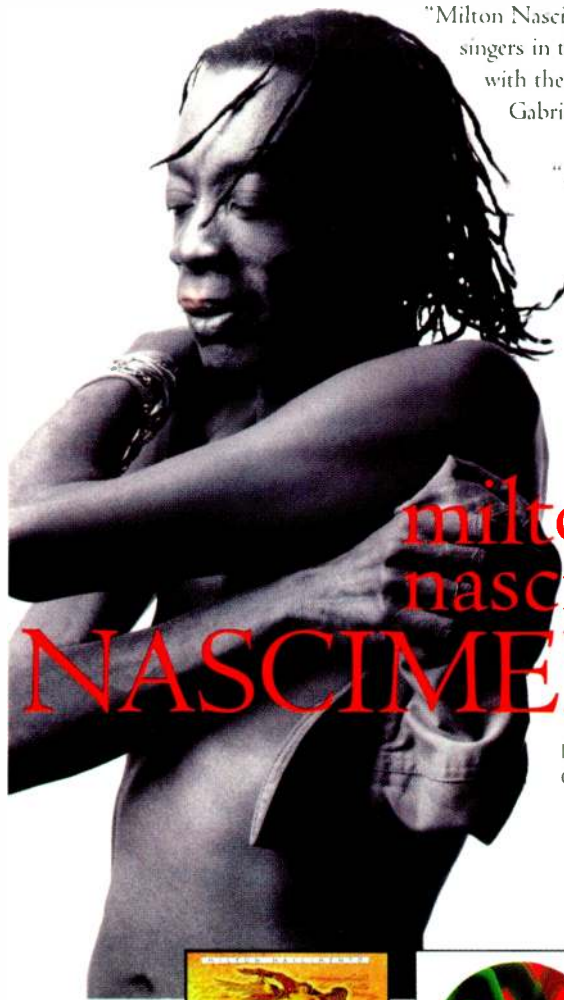
When it comes to the moral of the Longpigs tale, McGuinness, as one who has been on both sides of the street, understands it best. "A band must be more than its record company," he advises. "A band must have a life that is independent of the organization that they hook up with to put out their records."

"We have a completely healthy disrespect for the whole business now because we know that you can beat it," concludes Hunt. "It can be so intimidating—so many bands end up having to do what the record company says for fear of losing whatever position they have. Well, we lost it and got it back." —Dev Sherlock

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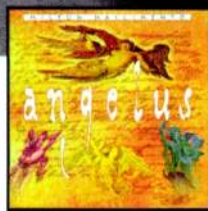


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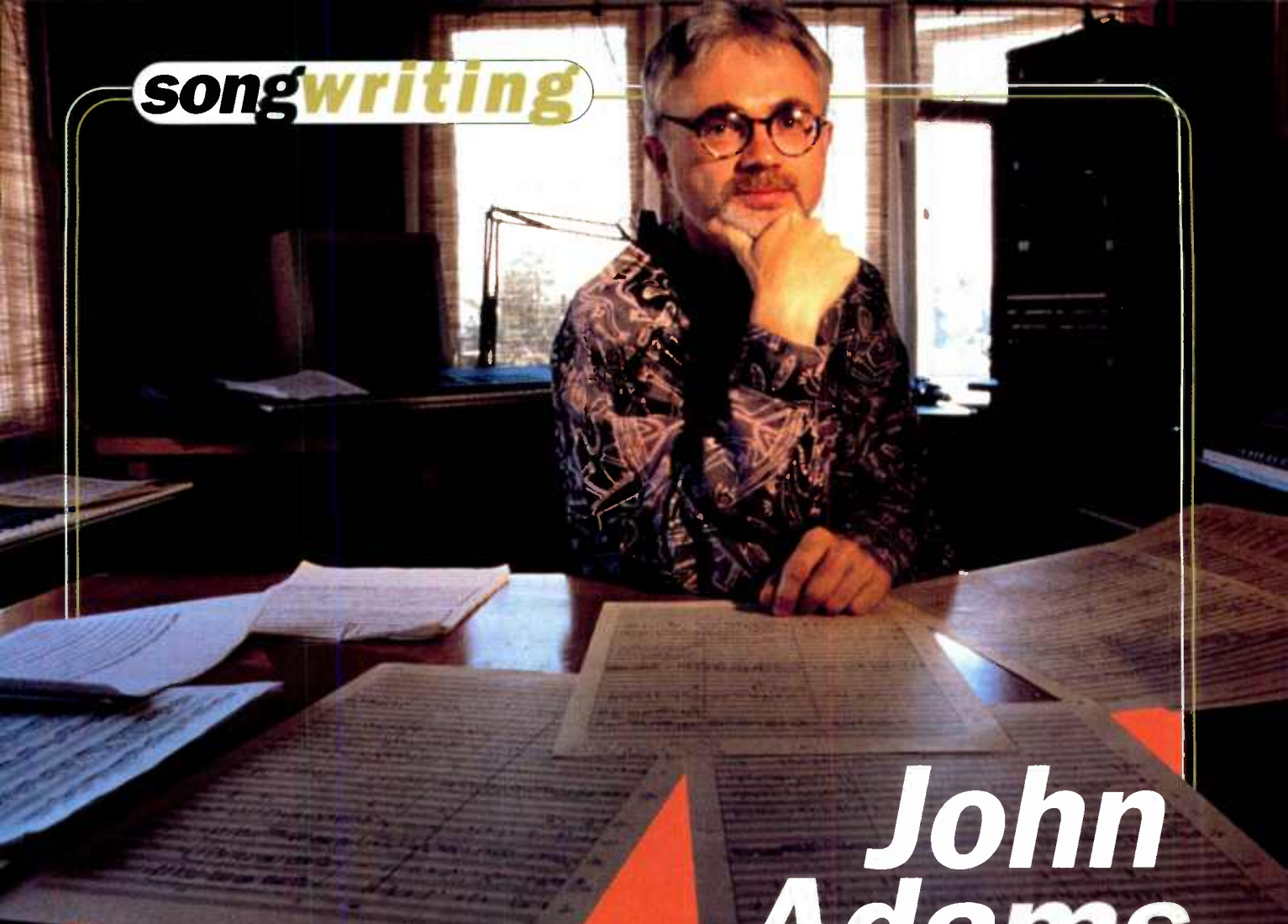
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# John Adams

## Classical Perspectives ON THE RIDDLE OF POP

by paul tingen

**Y**ou've heard it before: Pop music is simplistic, unmusical, unsubtle. It ain't got no melody. It's music for morons. Even a child can write it. And so on. Your parents may have laid this line on you, or maybe your music teacher. The big surprise is that so many uptight types still hold onto these snobbish conceits even in this popcult-driven day and age.

So it's actually kind of refreshing when one of the world's most respected classical composers writes a collection of 25 pop songs—and has the honesty to admit that composing them was “the most difficult thing I've ever done.”

This candid soul is John Adams, America's most frequently per-

formed living composer. At age fifty, he has as exceptional a pedigree as you'll find in the world of arty music: Trained at Harvard, he was originally seen as a second-generation minimalist, following in the footsteps of Steve Reich and Philip Glass with works like *Harmonium* (1981), *Shaker Loops* (1977, revised in 1983), and *Harmonielehre* (1985). He won public renown, as well as a Grammy award, with his opera *Nixon in China* (1985), a work of massive scope and lingering minimalist characteristic. But his next operatic *tour de force*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, incorporated more chromatic and harmonically complex elements. He followed it with a *Violin Concerto* (1993), an exuberant and decidedly non-minimalist achievement, and *El Dorado*, a striking effort of rhythmic and chromatic intensity.

Heavy stuff. And yet, for Adams, pop tunesmithery was even more



of a puzzle than the act of composing a large-scale work. "The main challenge," he says, "is that in a pop song your best idea has to come right at the start of the piece. Not long after that excellent first idea, you need to introduce a really good second idea. If that's not happening, the song is considered a failure. Whereas in classical music and opera you can indulge your audience for quite a long time before your first important idea comes around. Think of *Das Rheingold* at the beginning of Wagner's *Ring* cycle: There's ten minutes of Eb major before the first melody comes in. Opera audiences are used to being there a long time between important ideas, but in pop songs and on Broadway your ideas have to be immediate and very strong. You have a margin of only four minutes per song, so you must get to the point quickly."

In truth, Adams has always been intrigued with jazz, rock, and blues. From his teens through his thirties, these genres formed an

"Opera audiences  
{can wait}  
a long time between  
important ideas.  
In pop tunes  
your ideas have to  
be immediate."

important part of his daily listening diet. Like many of his pop contemporaries, he experimented with synthesizers and home recording; in fact, he built his own synth and recorded two albums featuring himself playing on electronic instruments: *Light Over Water* (1983, New Albion), and *Hoodoo Zephyr* (1992), the latter featuring Adams wailing on a Yamaha SY77 and SY99, Korg Wavestation, Kurzweil K2000, E-mu Proteus One, and Macintosh running Mark of the Unicorn's Performer software.

All this led to Adams' first serious exploration of pop composition. Bundled together under the title *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*, these tunes were premiered in May 1995 in Berkeley, California, with six performances following at New York's Lincoln Center in July 1995 and several European performances in '96. "It's a dramatized song cycle," he explains, "or you could call it a rock opera or a musical. The idea came to me because I was interested in Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht—specifically in the way that Weill used the popular music of his time to create something deeply original and with great dramatic and political power.

"The story of *Ceiling/Sky* is also very political. It describes the lives of young Americans of mixed ethnic background against the backdrop of the 1994 Northridge [California] earthquake. I wanted to take black music styles—gospel, soul, R&B, blues, doo-wop—as my starting point and use them as a vehicle for this story. I'd never written pop songs before, but I wanted to give it a try."

It was the African-American poet June Jordan, the lyricist on this project, who elevated a quote from an earthquake survivor to the title.

"The words invariably came first," Adams explains. "June and I discussed things before she wrote anything, and then she wrote the lyrics alone. She didn't write standard lyrics, and to be honest I had great difficulties with that. She's a great poet, and she wasn't interested in writing simple verse, so I had to accept what she did and find ways to turn it into songs. I didn't change her words to fit the music, other than to insert a few repeats to fill up a phrase, and occasionally I left things out, about which she wasn't too happy. But we were both quite pleased with the end result."

Adams wrote most of the music for *Ceiling/Sky* at the piano, then transferred it to his keyboards and computer sequencer, though "I move back and forth between samplers and piano all the time when I'm writing, to keep myself from getting into a rut." He scored the piece at the computer, with the exception of the drums: "I realized that that would be ridiculous. Any good drummer would come up with better parts than I could write out." Nor did he restrict himself to the relative limitations of pop song structure, the basic building blocks of chorus, verse and middle eight: "I was very amused that during the course of writing *Ceiling/Sky* I ran into a book about how to compose your own pop tune, and it had all these different possibilities for moving choruses and verses about. In contrast, I realized that I was always responding to the libretto and following its structure; that gave me a different angle on writing pop songs."

There were other "rules" that Adams felt free to ignore. For instance, he repeatedly violated the idiom's almost mystical fixation with the number four, as in the fact that the number of bars in your typical pop tune are inevitably divisible by four. He also caused the non-classical singers who performed *Ceiling/Sky* some serious headaches. "I was aware that the singers we would be using didn't have the training that opera singers have," Adams says. "I had to adapt my vocal lines with that in mind. It wasn't the same as writing opera. I couldn't make the harmonic contents and the vocal lines terribly wild anyway, because it wouldn't sound like something young people today would sing. The singers nevertheless found the music extremely difficult to learn, though they eventually found that it followed its own logic and that




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if they followed that it became much easier to learn."

*I Was Looking at the Ceiling* hasn't yet been recorded, so a performance of six of its 25 songs in London last fall was the only opportunity this writer had to judge the success of Adams' experiment. From what I heard, he managed to write some pretty authentic R&B, as well as some gospel pieces that truly kicked ass. In fact, at times his efforts were almost too true to life. Some pieces sounded like straight blues, which raise the question: What's the point? Surely the main interest of a work like this lies in the chance of a classical composer doing something unusual with the genre—and this Adams did in the slower pieces; there were some exquisite ballads with unusual melodic, rhythmic, and textural aspects.

"I agree that a piece like 'Dewain's First Solo' very much followed the mold of straight R&B," Adams concedes, "and is therefore ultimately not as interesting. But in other pieces I took an original idea and turned it into my own

slightly skewed version, and these are the ones that interest me the most."

Other listeners objected to *Ceiling/Sky* for reasons that had less to do with the music itself. "Some critics accused me of simply dabbling in pop music without having the lifestyle of somebody like, say, Kurt Cobain," Adams says. "This supposedly meant my music couldn't be genuine. I think some white people also got nervous because of the confrontational political contents of the piece. There were even people who criticized me for using black music. I pointed out to them that George Gershwin, a white Jew from Brooklyn, wrote *Porgy and Bess*, which has been played by the likes of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis. There was more than a hint of misguided political correctness to these criticisms."

Shortly after this interview Adams was off to Finland to record *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky* with an American cast of singers and Finnish musicians. A release is expected during the second half of 1997.

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by mac randall

**T**he thing about being a rock guitar demigod is that it's hard to hide. Even when you move on to new types of music and consciously cut down on technical displays, the underlying virtuosity can't help but come out. Nuno Bettencourt is a case in point. His solo debut, *Schizophonic* (A&M), credited simply to Nuno (no last name), ventures down numerous stylistic alleys. As its title suggests, the album's sound varies widely from track to track, even from song section to song section. Although the melodic hard rock and sweet balladry that Nuno's old band Extreme was known for are still evident, they're often cast in odd context: Harshly distorted singing interrupts the acoustic musings of "Pursuit of Happiness," and the sweeping main theme of "You" is offset by jazzy guitar octaves. Overall, this is music that doesn't aim to impress with chops exhibitions. But when it comes time for the solo, Nuno's axe-hero status never fails to emerge from the multi-genre stew, torching the competition with fingers aflame.

"But the songs always dictated how much guitar to play," Bettencourt asserts. "They dictated what the solos would sound like and how long they'd be. I feel like I dropped out of the Guitar Olympics about eight years ago. I haven't stopped learning and experimenting, but most of that has been about sound and texture rather than actual playing."

It would be wrong to say that the guitar solos are the only technically interesting part of *Schizophonic*. The fact is that Bettencourt played nearly all the instruments on the album himself, and recorded most of the songs while on the road with Extreme, in whatever available studio he could find between gigs. One track, the vaguely Byrdsian "Fine By

# Nuno Goes Solo

Me," was taped start to finish on a 4-track in a Tokyo hotel room. "I didn't think about that [playing all the instruments] as a goal," Nuno says. "Whenever I write anything, whether it's for me or Extreme or anybody else, I always record the tracks on my own first. That's how I'd show songs to the band. That pretty usual process just ended up being the record. It never occurred to me to get anyone else involved, and I enjoyed doing it myself." It just so happens that the man can play most instruments quite well indeed.

Of course, he *is* best on guitar, as the two solo excerpts presented here show. On *Schizophonic*, Nuno specializes in bite-size solos that make a concise



**A bandless Bettencourt still practices extreme guitar**



melodic statement but are technically challenging enough to double as superb exercises for building up left- and right-hand dexterity. The solo from "Gravity," from which Example 1 is taken, is based on two melodic phrases, the vocal melody of the verse and the song's central riff. The riff, basically Ab pentatonic but with frequent inclusion of the dissonant flat fifth (Ebb, the enharmonic equivalent of D), is the springboard here. First Nuno varies the theme with slashing, offbeat partial chords that emphasize the D. Then he launches into a ludicrously fast sixteenth-note pattern incorporating the tonic, flat fifth, fourth, and minor third, which he repeats until the end of the example.

Because this pattern breaks down into groups of five, it's a great rhythmic exercise; because you have to skip a string (the second), it's a great picking exercise; and because of the slightly awkward way it falls on the fretboard (you have to keep moving your first finger back and forth along the fifth fret from the third string to the first), it's a great left-hand exercise. Try moving the pattern up the neck, or across (second and fourth strings, then third and fifth, finally fourth and sixth) and back again. If you're really feeling ambitious, keep all the notes within the given scale—the fingering will change, obviously, but the string jump will remain the same.

Steen Sundland

Example 2, from "Swollen Princess," is also structured around a sixteenth-note pattern. This time it's strictly major-scale (third, fourth, fifth and tonic), and no strings get skipped. But at the end of each bar, Nuno throws in a couple of lower notes that follow the track of the song's descending bassline. This tactic adds harmonic interest

**Ex. 1** \*Tune down 1/2 step (low to high: EbAbDbGbbBbEb)

N.C.  
(A5) (G5) (F#5)

*ff*

1/2

\*Notation reflects fret positions rather than actual pitch.

(A5) (G5)

(F#5) (A5)

**Ex. 2**

*ff*

C# C#B#

A#m7 A B

5:4

"Gravity" and "Swollen Princess" by Nuno Bettencourt, © 1996 Color Me Blind Music (ASCAP), all rights admin. by Almo Music Corp. (ASCAP) for the world.

and further challenges the right hand. Again, try moving the pattern around the neck, but also try to maintain the downward motion of the bassline—from A#, go on to G#, to F#, and so on. This'll bring in the string skipping, just in case you needed some.

Bettencourt denies that there was much pre-planning involved in these pattern-oriented solos. "Most of the time I recorded everything pretty quick," he says, "and the solos were fairly spontaneous. I didn't think the 'Gravity' solo out at all—that's why it probably came out so random, as far as where the pattern falls. That was really just messing around. The solo on 'Swollen Princess' is a bit more planned, a bit more of a melody within itself. But even that came

out of just jamming with the tape."

Still, such examples bespeak many hours in the woodshed. Nuno confirms this, but also makes plain that those hours were put in long ago. "I practiced all the time when I first started, but in the Extreme days I got more interested in writing. Then the songwriting begins to change the way you play—you're looking to project an overall vibe that goes beyond the playing. You start to look at arrangements and ask questions like, 'Why does that solo sound good? Maybe it's more because of the chord progression or the rhythm track than the solo itself.' I still love to play guitar and I can still do some things on it if I want, but it's not the whole aim anymore."





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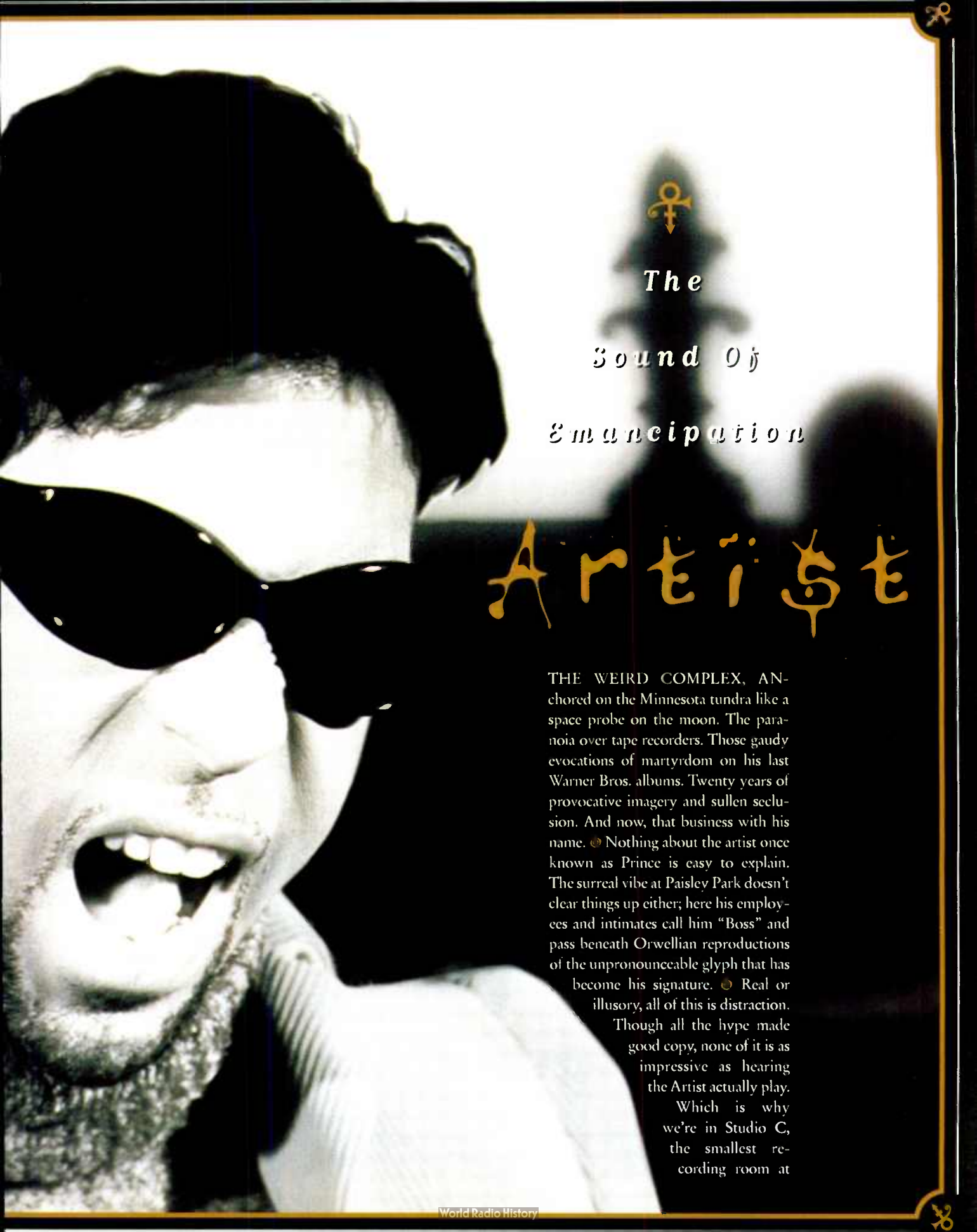
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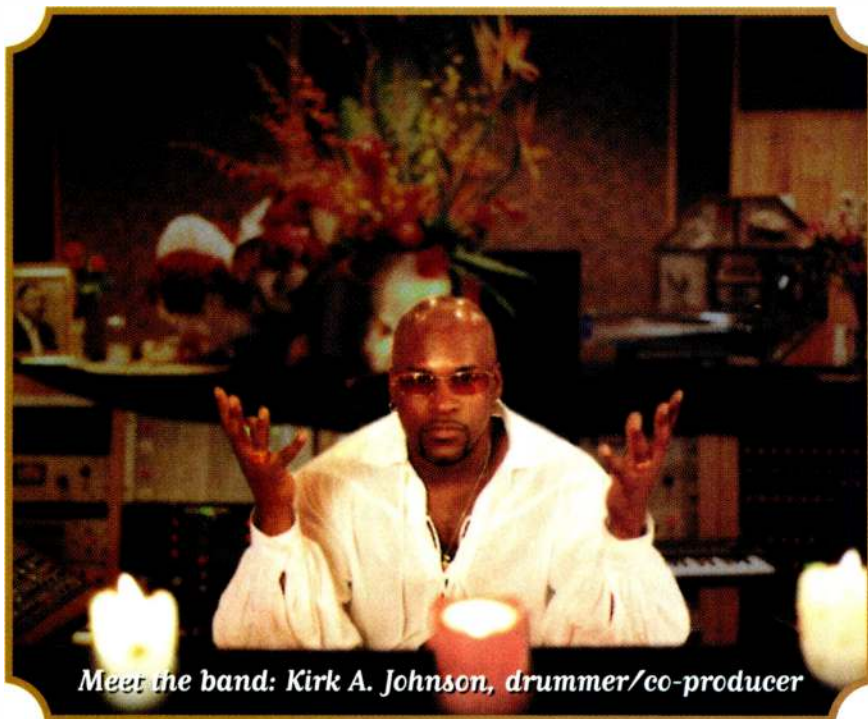
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sion. And now, that business with his  
name. ● Nothing about the artist once  
known as Prince is easy to explain.  
The surreal vibe at Paisley Park doesn't  
clear things up either; here his employ-  
ees and intimates call him "Boss" and  
pass beneath Orwellian reproductions  
of the unpronounceable glyph that has  
become his signature. ● Real or  
illusory, all of this is distraction.

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impressive as hearing  
the Artist actually play.

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Meet the band: Kirk A. Johnson, drummer/co-producer

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Paisley Park, the former Prince's *sanctum*, on the evening of the first serious blizzard of the year. As it is, there's plenty of room for the band, which is spread out against one wall. In sweater and black beret, keyboardist Mr. Hayes is on a riser in the far corner, surrounded by synths, a bag of popcorn perched atop the customized Plexiglas frame of a Hammond B-3. Guitarist Mike Scott, the latest addition to the band, is trying out a few funky licks on his Gibson 335, while Kat Dyson uses her Tele to shower the room with samples from her Rocktron Chameleon. Bassist Rhonda Smith is next to Dyson, and to her left Kirk A. Johnson, the Artist's drummer and co-producer, sits behind a pile of electronic and acoustic drums.

"Okay, here we go," Johnson announces. Four stick clicks, and the band begins jamming through a selection of titles from the Artist's recently released triple CD, *Emancipation*. Listening to them is something like shifting through a new transmission and feeling each gear sliding into place. Johnson's beat, locked to

a rock-hard kick drum, drives this machine; they hit the changes perfectly, leaving no skid marks.

The doors open, and the Artist walks in. The band doesn't acknowledge the entrance, but there's a change in the air. He's short, even in his high-heeled white boots, but there's nothing fragile about him. He's wiry rather than delicate, with a businesslike, confident charisma; you might say he acts like he owns the place.

On the far side of the room is what looks like a violet concert grand piano, with the word "beautiful" scripted in white on one side. It's actually a Roland A-90

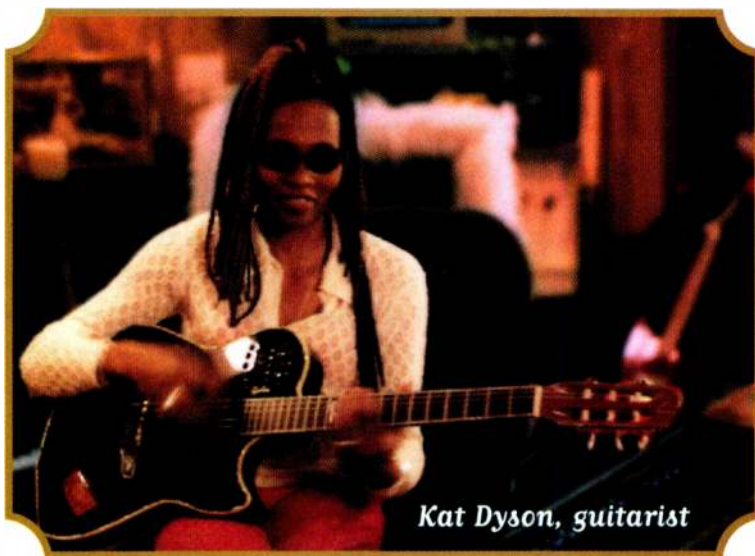
built into an artificial frame. The Artist plants himself here, rocking back on the heel of his left boot and tapping fast eighth-notes with the toe of his right foot as he comps furiously with the group. His licks are nimble, with quick cross-hand runs threading through jazzy voicings. After a minute, he spins away from the keys, strides toward the band, and straps on one of his custom-built guitars. Here, too, he plays with blazing intensity, wailing through bluesy lines that end with emphatic cadences and a defiant foot stomp.

Later, when Smith excuses herself to run an errand, the Artist picks up his Washburn bass and winds up killing on it too. But by then he's made his point: This guy is, if anything, underrated as a player. If he were starting out today, unburdened of his reputation, freed from all the excess baggage and left with only his music, he would still blow us all away.

The problem is that he doesn't have that option anymore. When he goes on the *Today* show, the first thing Bryant Gumbel tells his viewers is that the Artist was known to his high school friends as Skippy. One cringed with sympathy for the Ex-Prince, who seems fated to be called to the carpet again and again for the sins of eccentricity. Of course, it's also true that he is the architect of his image. If he got burned by the press, the match was lit in his hands.

So it is with his two most recent trials, the name change and the long dispute with Warner Bros. On his 35th birthday, June 7, 1993—only a month after announcing his decision to retire from recording—Prince

declared that he was changing his name to a morphed male/female symbol. Warners wasn't thrilled with this development, which in retrospect was a portent for the semi-public struggle to follow. The issue was control—specifically, ownership of his masters. Though he insisted in various interviews that he bore no grudges, the Artist had no problem adorning his final Warner releases with images of oppression that skirted the line of self-pity: The only mystery was



Kat Dyson, guitarist

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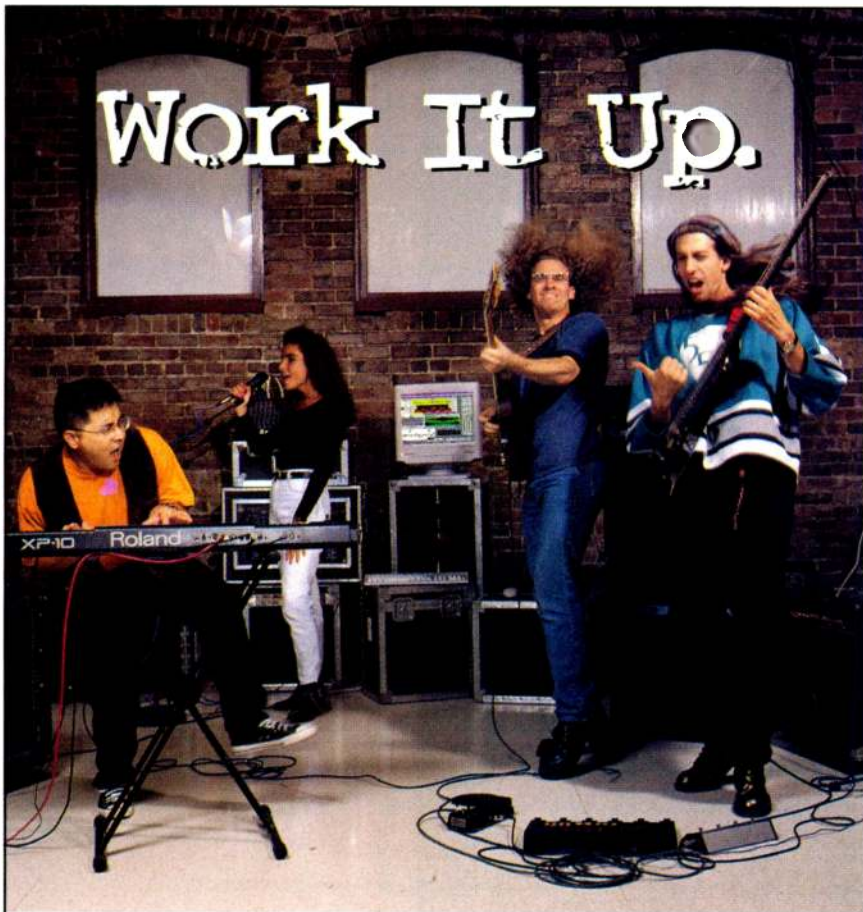
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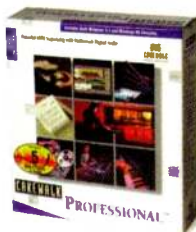
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why the Artist felt the need to publicly bash his label of eighteen years.

Whatever the reason, the end of his Warners contract last November began what the Artist considers his liberation. Thus, when *Musician* sat down with him behind the API console in Studio A, the Artist seemed almost elated at the prospect of actually talking about his music. He folded himself into a chair, swung his legs over the edge, gestured expressively, broke into frame-shaking explosions of laughter. The man was obviously having a good time, as was the interviewer, except for one problem: The Artist's interrogator would not be allowed to use a tape recorder. (In what Paisley Park officials apparently considered a sign of the Boss' good will, we were permitted to take notes.) While *Musician* wasn't being singled out—this restriction has been applied to all print interviews for years—it was nonetheless an annoyance, especially given our obligation to turn an hour's worth of hurried scrawl into accurate information. For this reason, we suggested that, in the interest of getting it right, he might reply to a series of follow-up questions via fax once we got back to New York and deciphered our notes. Delighted with the idea, he agreed.

What follows is a two-part encounter with the Artist. The first was real, there in Studio A. The second was virtual. From start to finish, the subject was music.

*You've said that Emancipation was created in a freer climate than that under which you recorded for Warner Bros. Yet there doesn't seem to my ears to be a significantly "freer" sound on the new album than in your earlier work.*

Well, when you're in the creative process, the first thing you naturally think about is the "bombs," the great ones that you've done before. You want to fill in the slots on your album with the songs that will make everyone the happiest: fans, musicians, writers, and so on. I used to try to fill those gaps first whenever I was doing something new, or wait to challenge myself to do another great one.

This means that you think about singles: time constraints, for example, and the subject matter. [For that reason] my original draft of "Let's Go Crazy" was much different from the version that wound up



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- LED meters to allow the setting of levels. (Some powered mixers have no meters at all.)

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Rhonda Smith, bassist

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being released. As I wrote it, "Let's Go Crazy" was about God and the de-elevation of sin. But the problem was that religion as a subject is taboo in pop music. People think that the records they release have got to be hip, but what I need to do is to tell the truth.

*So one element of creativity missing for you in the Warner years was that freedom to say what you wanted to say in your lyrics.*

Right. I had to take some other songs, like "A Thousand Hugs and Kisses" and "She Gave Her Angels," off the Warner

albums because they were all about the same subject. But now I can write a song that says, "If u ask God 2 love u longer, every breath u take will make u stronger, keepin' u happy and proud 2 call His name: Jesus" [from "The Holy River," on *Emancipation*], and not have to worry about what *Billboard* magazine will say. Plus I'm not splitting the earnings up with anyone else except the people who deserve to have them. The people here in my studio will reap the benefits of how *Emancipation* does, not people in some office somewhere

who didn't contribute anything the music.

Now, the record industry can be a wonderful system, if you want to go that route. After all, some people don't want the hassle of getting on the phone and talking to retailers about their own records; they want someone to do it for them. I'm just not one of those people.

*So lyrically you've got greater freedom than before. What about the music itself?*

If you're working in a happier atmosphere, you'll hear things differently and play them differently. "Courtin' Time" [from *Emancipation*] is different from "Had You," from



Morris "Mister" Hayes, keyboardist

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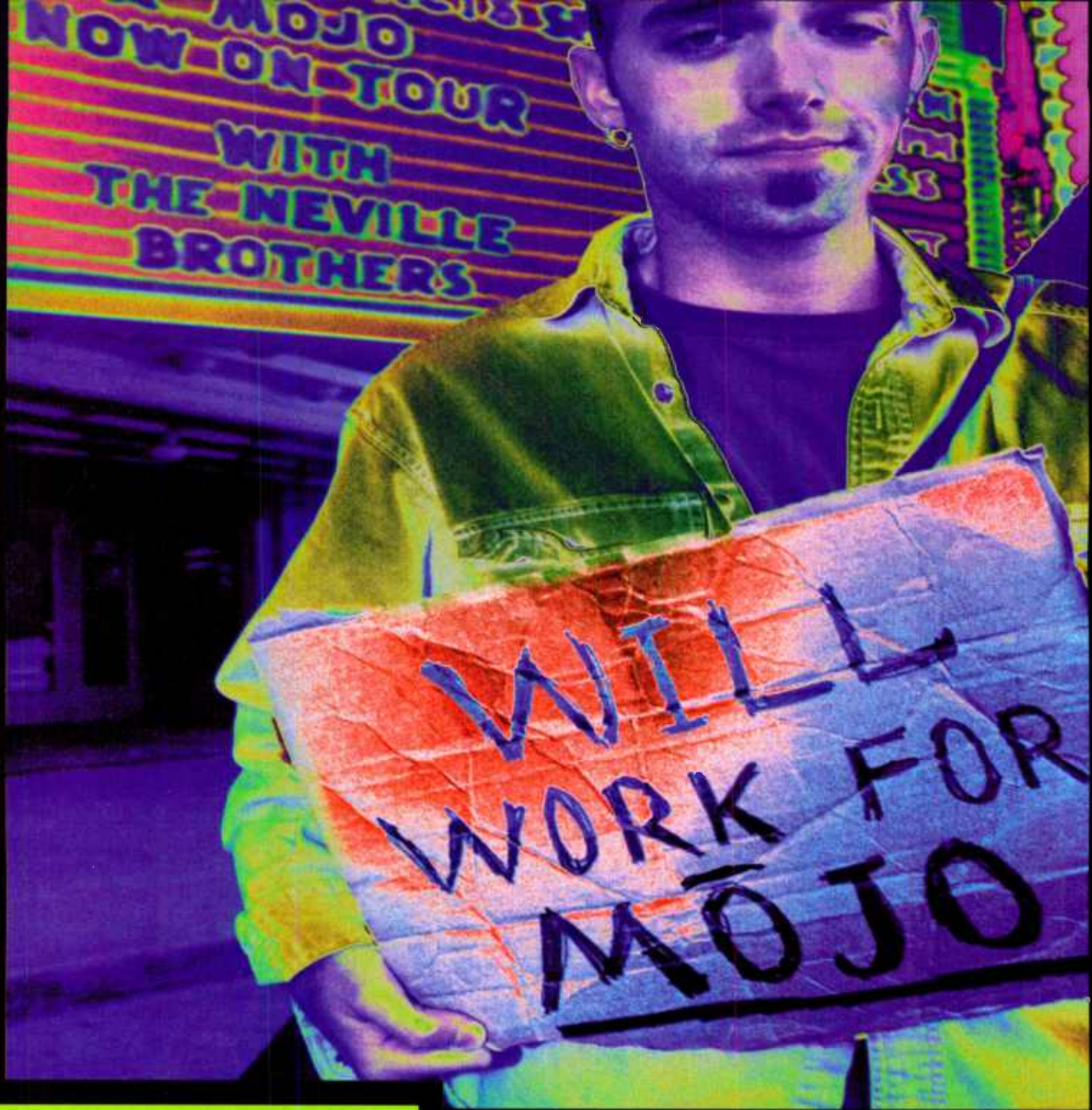
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*Chaos & Disorder*. That whole album is loud and raucous, but it's also dark and unhappy. Same with *The Black Album*.

Your drummer, Kirk A. Johnson, co-produced much of *Emancipation*.

That stems from his being a drum programmer. He's good at using the computer to put a rhythm track together. I don't like setting that kind of stuff up, because a lot of times the song will leave me while I'm doing it. But when Kirk and I work together, we can keep each other excited. I can do

all the programming myself. 1999 is nothing but me running all the computers myself, which is why that album isn't as varied as this one. Technology used to play a big part in my music; it only plays a very little part now.

Why?

The problem was that regardless of what I heard in my head, I'd work with the sounds I had in front of me. Actually, I very seldom wrote any instruments. But I'm definitely into letting sounds dictate ...

not the way I write a song, but the way I develop my ideas. "In This Bed" [from *Emancipation*] is experimental; as we were working on it, I put a guitar on the ground and just let it start feeding back. After a while I hit this button on the digital recorder and let the feedback pattern repeat. Does this mean that instruments have a soul or a life of their own? Will they end up writing the song?

It's like how after Mayte and I got married, I took her to see the neighborhood where I was raised as a baby. When we got there, everything was gone: The house where I grew up, all the buildings, everything had been torn down, except this one tree that I used to climb on when I was a kid. That's all that was left. So I went over to this tree, put my hand on it, and let the memory of that time flow back into me. If that's what energy is all about, if this tree could remind me of something, even if it looks raggedy and old, that's the most beautiful thing. The sounds in my music are chosen with a lot of love too, and always with the idea of which color goes with which other color.

How do you know whether to do the bass part in a song on synth or bass guitar?

I'll listen to the kick drum. The bass guitar won't go as deep as the synth, and the kick drum tells me how deep I have to go. My original drum machine, the Linn, had only one type of kick. I think I had the first Linn. I did "Private Joy" [from *Controversy*] with a prototype of that Linn.

Do you use the Roland TR-808, the rapper's choice, for bass drum sounds?

Sure. I used that on "Da, Da, Da" [from *Emancipation*]. But I need to remind you that I'm not a rapper. I'll do rhythmic speaking. "Style" [from *Emancipation*] calls for words to be spoken, but you can't [vocally] riff on it. It's like James Brown: He'll talk his whole song, but he's not a rapper either. There's music behind my groove; it's not just loops and samples.

On "Courtin' Time" you drew a lot from big-band phrasing for your vocal parts; the whole thing comes from swing jazz. So why did you stick with a backbeat rhythm track, instead of loosen it up into more of a swing feel?

I wanted it to be a dance record. [Saxophonist] Eric [cont'd on page 75]

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# Topping

BY ROBERT L. DOERSCHUK

There's no mistaking that sound, those tooth-rattling power chords in the intro to "Rattlesnake." After a moody drone that turns out to be a Wurlitzer drowning in reverb, the first chord erupts as the drums kick into the beat. One bar later, another chord explodes, and then another one a bar after that. It's big, buzzy, and played with authority.

It's the sound of Live, the sound that shot *Throwing Copper* into sextuple platinum figures and transformed these four high school friends into a massive concert draw. It roared across four hundred thousand heads at Woodstock two years ago and at the Avalon festival in England last summer.

But Chad Taylor doesn't like what he's hearing.

"There's a guitar in there that's got an Echoplex on it," he says. We're in one of the Record Plant's control rooms, listening as engineer Tom Lord-Alge plays back the three layered guitar parts that Taylor had laid down, one at a time. Singer Ed Kowalczyk wanders through the room, leans for a minute against Jay Healy's chair, his long, spidery fingers on the co-producer's shoulders, and then drifts out again, saying nothing. Bassist Patrick Dahlheimer and drummer Chad Gracey are sensibly out of town, putting up holiday decorations and chilling out. Taylor is seated behind the console. The more he listens, the more agitated he becomes.

"I never liked those stacked guitars," he mumbles, "except for the solos." He's a little annoyed.

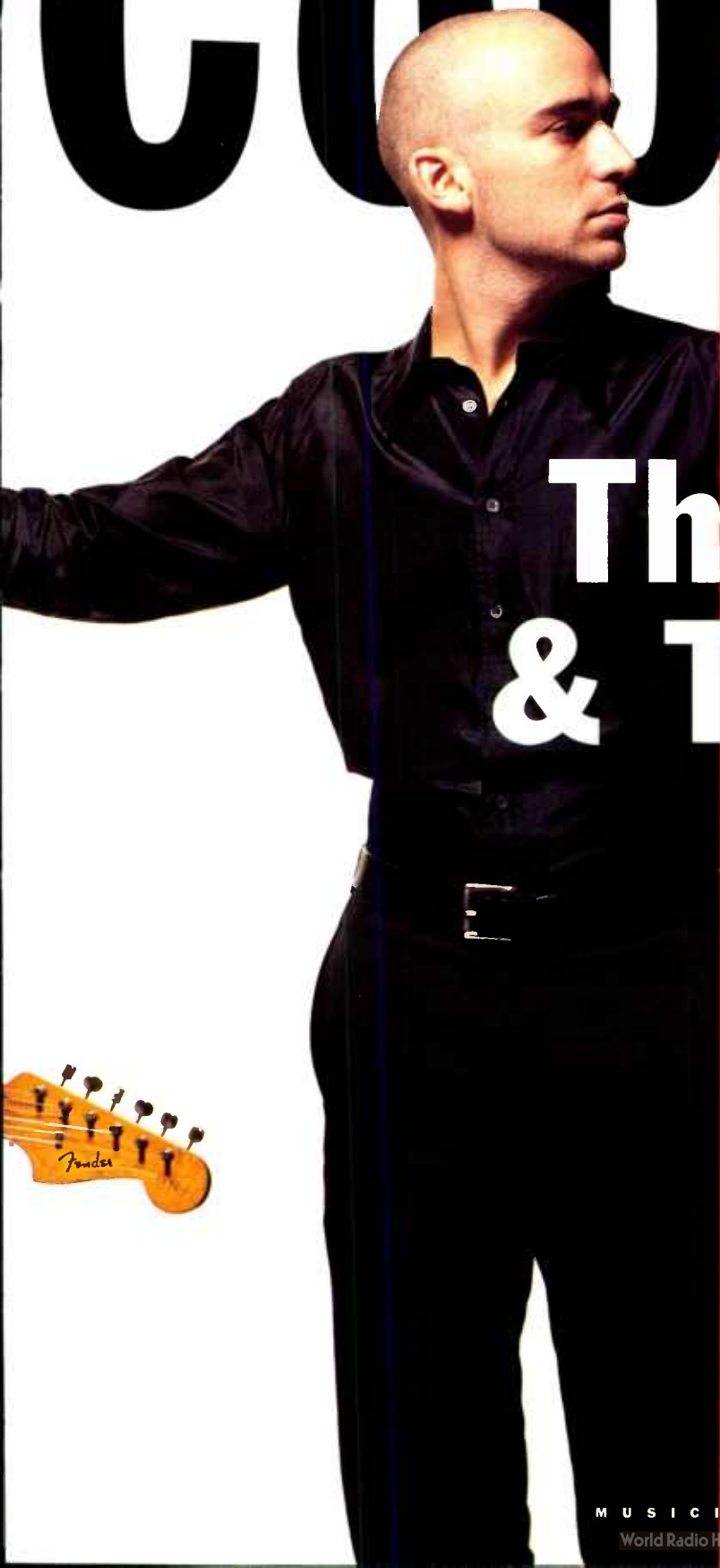
"I was manipulating it," Lord-Alge says. He speaks more slowly, in a lower range. But he's not having much fun either. "I tried to get the best of all the takes."

Taylor interrupts. "Okay. Here's what you gotta





# Copper



## The Trials & Triumph of Live

do. With all those amps piled on top of each other, I'd almost rather you'd pick one of them ..."

Lord-Alge is fading the guitars in and out, in quick surges of boil and whine.

"... One of those amps I don't like at all. I can tell better on the quiet section than in the loud one."

"I think they all sound great in the quiet section," Lord-Alge insists. Now we're hearing the last power chord dissolve, like a wave on the beach; unlike the hiss of water on sand, the timbre oscillates wildly as Lord-Alge juggles the EQ.

"That's helping," Taylor concedes, but he's still listening intently. "The thing is, when you add the other guitars in there, it loses its definition. You know, the problem is, there's just too much guitar. It's turning into

PHOTOS BY ROSS HALFIN



a wall of guitars, like one gigantic sound.”

From Lord-Alge, a brief grimace, a hint of diplomatic exasperation.

Taylor reads it. “I’m *not* disappointed.”

But the veteran engineer seems bent on defending his work here. “It’s not like it was three different performances. You always said it was good where you could record from more than one amp. This gave me the ability to say, ‘I love the bottom and mid from this amp, I love the top from this amp,’ and then balance it out and go, ‘Wow, listen to this!’”

“Yeah,” Taylor mutters, “but what I’m missing is the monophonic effect of ...” and he’s up, his arm windmilling, snarling in imitation of what he’s hearing in his head.

“Well,” says Lord-Alge, “that’s why they put mono buttons on your stereo.”

This is Live as the clock counts down, in the last days of mixing their new album, *Secret Samadhi*. The pressure is on. Anyone who’s been through what these guys have can’t help but feel it. Not so long ago they were stuck in Amish country, down in York, Pennsylvania. Now fans from around the world dissect their lyrics and interviews on the Net. They protest that they’re the same band they always were, interested in nothing

more than to keep making music. And they mean it; that really is what they want, precisely because it’s so rare, that classic/romantic notion of boyhood pals keeping the dream alive all the way into ... well, at least into their mid-twenties.

Yet that obsession over whether three guitars should sound as one tells another truth about Live, which is that they know what their responsibilities are. Not just to themselves, but to fans, to the label, to everyone in this suddenly intricate interplay of indulgence and obligation. When a lot is on the line, every nuance—even in the context of epochal guitars and thundering drums—counts.

*Throwing Copper* was a phenomenon. It stretches credulity to imagine that *Secret Samadhi* could top its sales. In fact, the follow-up arguably does up the ante in musical terms. *Secret Samadhi* is the band’s high point thus far. Here, we have vast dimension diced into four-minute bits, at no loss of impact or integrity. One important ingredient in Live’s sound on *Throwing Copper* and its predecessor, *Mental Jewelry*, was expressive dynamics. They used volume well in the past, and just as effectively here. Their approach does get predictable after a while; why not make the verses loud and the choruses quiet on just one cut?

Still, the formula works.

But there’s more: The songwriting reaches a new level on *Secret Samadhi*. Each cut is unmistakably Live, but the group takes chances. They stick to commercial structures on most of the songs, including “Rattlesnake” and the lovely “Turn My Head,” while throwing a few curves with the brief but volcanic, bass-driven “Heropsychodreamer” and “Insomnia and the Hole in the Universe,” a jazz-inflected piece built on quizzical minor ninth chords and diminished fifths and riddled with Kowalczyk’s carney-barker sputterings. They take risks, in other words, at a time when a few suits probably wish they wouldn’t.

There’s the paradox. The great bands are those that challenge prevailing notions of what sounds good and/or sells. Incessant comparisons with R.E.M. and U2 have forced Live to weather the most skeptical scrutiny. It is, of course, unfair to cripple any band with the weight of other artists’ reputations. Yet with all the uninspired stuff one hears on mainstream and alternative playlists, one can’t help but follow that bright light that seems to burn at Live’s core. Maybe these are the guys to watch. Maybe Ed Kowalczyk is next in line for that torch that Bono and Michael Stipe have carried for so long.

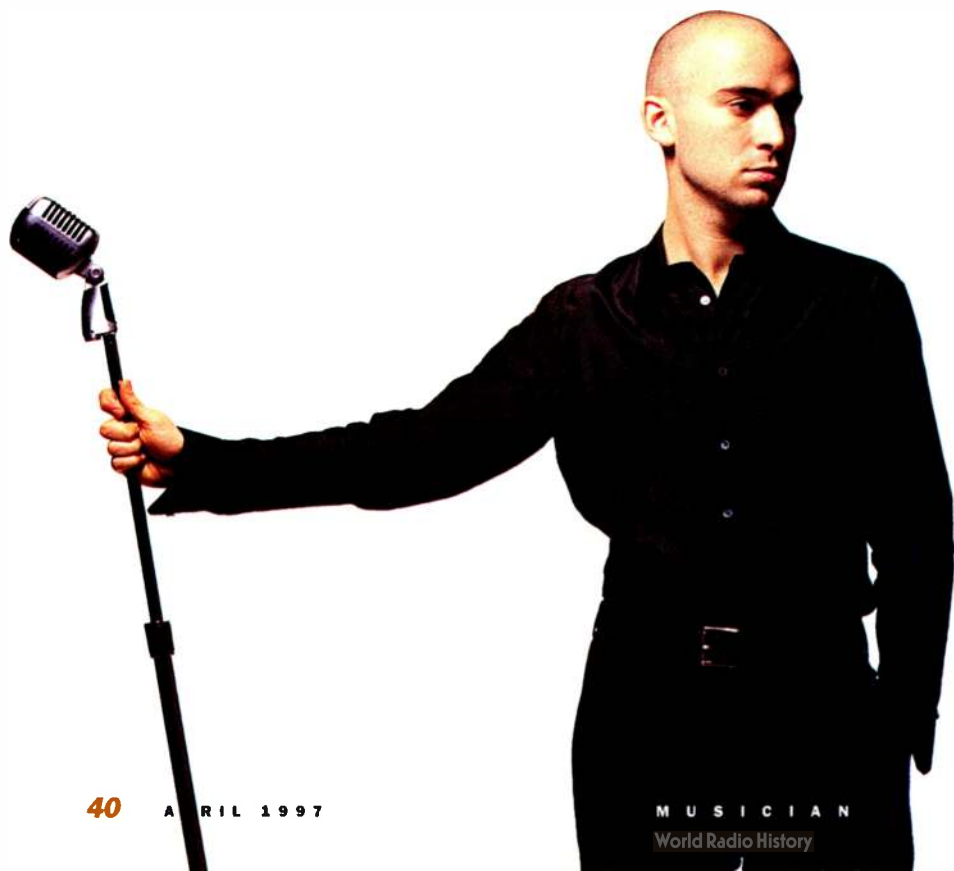
Maybe, on the other hand, Live really is nothing more than it pretends to be: a band bound by friendship and a love of music, just like any local garage rockers.

Best of all: maybe they’re both.

## Ed Kowalczyk

**U**nlike many other bands, *Live* seems to develop its material in every possible setting—at home, during sound checks on the road, in studio jams. Was the songwriting method for *Secret Samadhi* different in any way?

It was actually through playing at sound checks. When we got off the road we were surprised that we had, like, ten





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songs that we really dug and were actually pretty much arranged, finished, and ready to record. We knew we needed to finish it; it wasn't a complete thing yet. That's why we thought about going to Jamaica, for something that would be totally different than the road or being at home, and might inspire these songs we had sort of completed. And that's exactly what happened.

*"darker" album than your earlier efforts.*

There are definitely darker songs on the record, like "Lakini's Juice." And "Freaks" has a weird quality to it. It's kind of ... is "morose" the right word?

*Morose is like, you're depressed ...*

It's not that. It's more twisted: "In the bowels of the cathedral" [from "Freaks"], where there's a possibility for transcen-

think of what happened first.

*And the feel of those lyrics is totally different from "Freaks." For me, "Graze" was very intimate and reassuring. The words, and the voice you used, really draws the listener into the song.*

Yeah. I listen to the record sometimes and I think, you know, I must have multiple personality syndrome or some kind of

## "Not everybody gives a shit like rock & roll guys do."

"Unsheathed," "Lakini's Juice," and "Gas Head" were completed in Jamaica, and they were the missing links that this album needed. When we got home, we waited about a month and a half, and then we just rehearsed them a little bit, and we were ready to go.

*Was there something specifically about Jamaica that guided the way these songs took form?*

No, not "guided." What really was good about that period of writing was just the band being together without any distraction in an atmosphere of total fun and relaxation. Drinking, partying, lying on the beach, and just doing what comes natural to us, which is playing.

*Given the songwriting method behind Secret Samadhi, do you treat sound checks as creative exercises, as something beyond just getting a balance before a concert?*

Well, see, it just happens that way. When you're on tour, sound checks are the part of the day when you're actually onstage with your instruments, and God knows you don't have to rehearse the songs you're playing every night. They're already done. So at sound checks we'll do the old songs, just to get the bugs worked out of whatever is going on technically. Then we'll have an hour or two where we can either sit on the bus and be bored or we can play. We just use those moments for toying with new ideas.

*Do ideas tend to come up collectively in those situations?*

I would say that fifty or sixty percent of our songs come from ideas that I come up with but don't complete until I'm with the band. The other forty percent is, like, Patrick [Dahlheimer] will play an idea or a riff that's instrumentally based.

*You've said that Secret Samadhi is a*

dence but you have to go through the works. That's what *all* the songs deal with, and that's what we've always done as a band.

*Do you deliberately write lyrics that twist the truth of your experiences in order to create a more poetic effect?*

See, I never sit down and write a lyric with any kind of hidden agenda. I just want to convey a specific emotion or tell a particular story. In that sense I guess you could say that I let my subconscious write the lyrics. And I find that my subconscious is much more hip [laughs]. It has a lot more things up its sleeve than I would perceive at a conscious level. I've never let my waking brain write the words. Instead, I'll go into a state that's somewhat off the cuff and in the moment. I'll just throw these words up onto the canvas of the song structure, then I'll look and see where that is leading. I'll get a phrase or maybe the first verse.

*You're not thinking of rhyme or meter at that point. You let the words come, and then you tweak them to fit.*

Right. A lot of times the lyrics start out as gibberish, things that aren't words.

*What's your actual method of getting these words or sounds down?*

If it's something we're writing as a band, and I have a track that the band has done with no vocals or words on it, I'll sit with headphones on, one ear off and one ear on, and sing to myself and write down words on a note pad as they come to me. When I'm writing on my own with guitar, it all happens simultaneously, but it all happens so convolutedly that I can't even tell you what comes first, the word or the song or even the idea. I wrote "Graze" on guitar, pretty much by myself, and that one came so instantaneously, with all its parts coming so easily, that when I look back I can't even

schizophrenia at some base level. But I guess everybody does, to a certain extent, especially if you start to examine your subconscious. There's all kinds of deceit and lies going on in all of us, and you feel that if you let the belly of it expose itself, you'll get all weirded out. It's wild when you're writing from the subconscious, because you end up ... I end up learning a lot from it about myself that I didn't even know while it was happening. That's one of the driving reasons why I do this. It's a way of self-observation and self-understanding that I use to grow.

*Does the theatrical scope of Live's sound limit your lyrical choices?*

Funny that you say that, because I do feel that way. If we were a little more manic than we are, we could very easily get into some kind of proselytizing thing where we absolutely hit you over the head with some kind of agenda. But we don't do that, I don't think. Lyrically, I don't do that. I've never done that, even though people read in all kinds of things to my lyrics. I've never been the type of guy who tries to convert somebody to something. I've always looked at it as a process of self-observation. I think that's what engages people who really love Live, the true fans: It's such an emotional attack [in the music] yet the lyrics are elusive at times. In the past we've been more direct. In some ways we're getting more vague, but none the less powerful. In some ways we've gained a lot by tightening our belts and relaxing into the position we've taken in our words.

*But, again, are there lyrical reservoirs you don't tap because the Live sound points you in another direction?*

I do sometimes feel limited by our sound. We definitely have a structure that we write in; it's just part of our chemistry.



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But we've gotten a lot better at what we do in terms of the words. Songs like "Freaks" and, in particular, "Gas Head" are more loose and non-linear than anything we've done before, especially in the way they're written. And "Herpsychodreamer" is like little schisms from our subconscious coming out of nowhere, and not necessarily like Pop Song #1, Pop Song #2.

*Why do you think people misinterpret much of your earlier material as so much sermonizing?*

Well, I think that was because of the strength of what I was exposing myself to spiritually in my life. It came off as very emotional in my lyrics, even borderline fanatical. Anything like that in this day and age is looked down upon as sort of childish and naïve, especially in the West, because of this materialistic, scientific culture we live in. There's nothing sacred anymore. In some weird way, our band has always had this strange reverence for our music, even though we don't subscribe to any specific religion. We've always had an emotional-

ism that we've devoted ourselves to, and that comes off sounding like we must really believe in something. But to me, it's not about belief at all. It's a total process of creativity that has led us to this, and I know our fans, the ones we've really engaged, have been helped by it.

*Do you censor yourself at times?*

Not really, because I often don't know what I mean. In my everyday self, I approach the lyrics and the music of Live pretty much like a regular listener; I feel that detached from it sometimes. When it happens, it happens in such a creative space that, when I'm not in that space, I can get like, "Wow, I said that?" So I haven't done any kind of censorship. The only things I'll tweak would be grammatical, wrong tenses and stuff. But usually I treat what comes out of those creative times with a sort of reverence.

*What lyricists inspired you to develop the kind of relationship you have with the act and art of writing words to songs?*

John Lennon, most definitely.

*Why?*

The absolute and pure emotion that was evident in his songs.

*There's actually a strong connection between your lyrics in "Graze" and his to the song "God."*

Yeah. Oh, yeah. When we were mixing "Graze" I was getting this total jolt of emotion. I realized that this is the closest we'd ever come to that whole thing of putting it down authoritatively and exposing that nerve of surrender and sweetness yet very powerfully. I looked at Chad Taylor and I said, "This is one of the best songs we've written."

*And in "Ghosts," when you come to a line like "I need a woman to make me feel," that's about as blunt and bald as you could possibly be in a pop song. That, too, has a Lennonesque quality.*

Yeah, it's earnest. Being earnest has been given a bad name, but it's what people connect with. It's like, a guy walking down the street, who has never written a lyric or could care less about it, can still tuck face

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with you. It's universal. It's something we've always treasured. We honed our musical craft listening to U2, the Beatles, and John Lennon, though it's mainly Lennon's solo stuff where I get the raw emotional stuff.

*Was there any particular lyric of his that got to you?*

There's totally one: "How can I go forward when I don't know which way I'm facing?" That's from "How?"

*What happened when you first heard that?*

It's hard to explain. Not so much a concrete sort of thing as, you know, here's this guy who is totally a world figure, and he's admitting to himself and to everyone else that he doesn't know. Just flat-out doesn't

and how easily we're fooled into thinking it's all working out. I mean, look at the absolutely unenlightened life process that's going on in a place like York, Pennsylvania. But it's all over the world too. Again, you know I'm not preaching about it. We're a part of it too; it's inbred in us.

*In several interviews you've referred to literary influences, including Henry Miller and George Eliot—authors whose books sit neglected in libraries until being blessed by a pop star. That strikes me as a little sad.*

I feel that way too, but some of the greatest information I've ever been blessed with has come through records by people I respect, people who say, "Check this guy out." In the end it pivots on whether what's going on is positive. I remember when

But some of my biggest influences in my life come from when I found the guru I'm involved with right now. I found him through the World Wide Web, through a totally unrelated source. I was really getting into Ken Wilbur, the consciousness guy who's kind of mapping out the levels of life and all that, so I'm on the Web, looking around for stuff on Ken Wilbur, and the only thing that came up on the search engine was a piece that he'd written about Adi Da. And I said, "Wait a minute. Who is this guy?" It was just like it all led into this whole thing. So I know that a guy like Ken Wilbur can perform a service that's even unknown to him. Who knows at what level he's conscious of it?

*So even though you were kind of isolat-*

## "Sometimes I think I must have multiple personality syndrome."

know. It's incredibly powerful, a negation of his whole knowledge of life. And it puts you in a place where you're completely vulnerable. That's what really touched me about John Lennon.

*And it touches on that ambiguity of being a huge pop star who can communicate intimately to so many people.*

That's what I want "Graze" to be.

*Yet there is something preachy about "Graze." "We came to the earth to graze": It's almost like you're telling people a truth of some kind.*

That's where the confusion lies. To me, it's still a suggestion. It's me looking at how I'm living and being moved to say something positive, not necessarily something that I discovered because I'm this smart person or something like that. It's a truth that I've come to realize, something that's significant enough in my life that I can say, "Yeah, this is true." Anybody who knows the history of Live knows that I'm just a fledgling going through growth, like everybody else. I'm not sitting on some throne and telling everybody what's going on.

*Probably the funniest lyric on the album is the opening line of the first cut, "Rattlesnake." After this typically anthemic Live-style intro, you cut the dynamic down and kind of mumble, "Let's go hang out in a mall ..."*

"... or a morgue, or a smorgasbord." It's a song about the mediocrity of our culture

Chad and I met the Edge. We were, like, twenty years old, these two little devotees with their guru. We had just put out *Mental Jewelry*, and we were completely naïve. We were at this record party, one of the first rock & roll things we'd ever been too, and it was like [*awestruck whisper*]: "God, he's here!" They were right at the beginning of Zoo TV, but even at that point in their career they were responsible, as best they could be, for what they were saying and putting out into the world via their shows. That really hit home, you know? I thought, here's a pretty successful guy who doesn't really have to care. But he does. Even after all the success, they were still making sure that what they were doing wasn't so self-indulgent that people got the wrong message.

You know, that kind of thing is looked down upon in rock & roll. It's like, if it's not pure, it's not cool. But not everybody gives a shit like rock & roll guys do. Not everybody lives and dies by what's being said about them. A lot of normal people are experienced in the media. They're conscious of what they're doing. That's what I try to emulate.

*Of course, even John Lennon said his band was bigger than Jesus.*

Well, that was a whole different thing.

*ed when you were coming up as a band in York, Pennsylvania, you weren't really cut off from the artists that affected your evolution as musicians.*

We felt related to those bands even though we didn't know them. In our dreams, I guess we felt we were part of some tradition. Chad Taylor and I were just talking about how, right around the time we were born, everybody was dying. I mean, all the great people: Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison. In some weird way there was a changing of the guard, because in the early Nineties, when all of us were coming of age, there was this huge movement, this rebirth of expressive rock & roll. That's the clan I identify with now. When I read an article about Michael Stipe, or Bono, or Billy Corgan, or Chris Cornell, there's something about their experience, even with the separate egos, that lets me say, "Yeah, that's what's going on. This is happening in our lives as well."

*So the music press still performs a vital function.*

Yeah, I think so.

*I'm happy to hear that.*

It also trashes your whole day [*laughs*].

*How do you keep your voice in shape on the road?*

I drink. Maybe three beers before I go on and then about five to sleep at night.

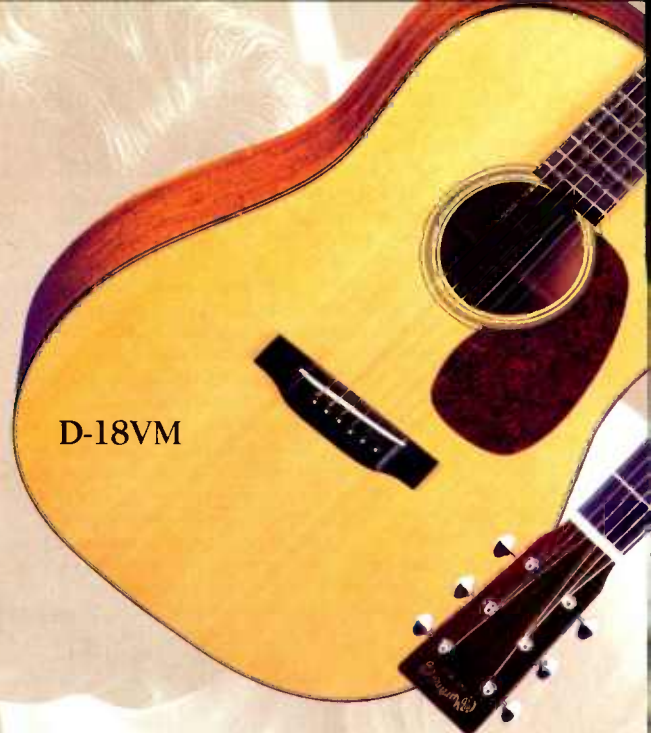


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think about it too much. Find what drives you the most, and follow that. Whether it takes you to gigs at dinner clubs or somewhere else, it almost doesn't matter. Live never had a commercial goal. We always figured that if we just followed what was driving us, we would eventually get to the point that meant success of some kind for us.

*Although you've said in other interviews that you "arrogantly" assumed that you would become big-time stars one day.*

Oh, yeah. But the paradox is that by not caring about it, you allow it to happen. By letting go of everything in order to focus absolutely on the music, you somehow get there.

*And now you're there, at the pinnacle of a kind of success you used to dream of back in York.*

It's weird, because the foundation of our band has always been in our chemistry and in the spirit of the songs. That hasn't changed at all. That is absolutely still what we're here for. The rest is so peripheral. If everything just came and went, the essence of what Live does would still be untouched. We're struggling all the time, pushing each other here and there. All of that in the end is just to keep the band together. The practice is at this level; everything else is nonsense.

## "There's no such thing as a great band that doesn't succeed."

My voice responds very well to alcohol [laughs].

*Any particular brands?*

Uhh ...

*Consider this part of our gear list.*

Depends on the weather. Winter is a heavier beer time for me, like I'll do some kind of Bass Ale. And in the summer I'll have Becks. Becks regular. It's a good summer beer, like a lighter ale that still has some balls to it.

*How do you keep enthusiastic about doing the same songs night after night on tour?*

Once the record's finished, it becomes less about the creative struggle to make the songs the best they can be. That's over; they're recorded forever. Touring is a very different place. It gets easier at some level because the mental, creative

aspect of it isn't there; it becomes much more physical, animating the songs to the point they deserve at every performance.

*You used the word "animate" to describe your approach onstage. That's different from getting up and jamming on a tune. Live doesn't strike me as a jamming band.*

Not at all. We're like an NBA team, and every show is the finals. It's do or die. I think we've gotten to a point where we take it seriously but we don't take us seriously. The job, the process of touring, is the most fun we have in life. It's a great feeling to get offstage and feel like you really did it. But wanting to repeat that can lead to getting all serious and weird about ourselves.

*What lessons can you distill from that experience?*

Don't ask too many questions. Don't

## Chad Taylor

**A** lot of our readers don't have the budget to do two weeks of partying and working in Jamaica. What lesson should they derive from Live doing that as part of the songwriting stage for Secret Samadhi?

The most important lesson is that it's more important to be friends than musicians or songwriters. Being in a band should be about having fun. We could have done the same thing, had we not traveled to every city in the world and played our music there, if we had decided



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that every night at eight o'clock we'd meet at the corner bar and talk with each other. See, I think that's where drugs come into play with bands. If everybody's on the same drug, it gives you a common plateau. For Live it's always been more about open communication. Our long-term friendship, not what we're all doing individually, creates the common ground where we write. Our shared history enables us to write. So I would recommend to most bands that they start by learning how to get along with each other. If you pick an environment and start doing that, and if you don't develop anything in an hour or two, stop. Don't get down; just say, "Hey, man, that was fun. I'll meet you tomorrow night at eight." Eventually something will come.

*That band consciousness you're talking about is integral to the whole concept of rock & roll.*

What makes a rock & roll band different from anything else is that there has to be a spiritual connection. When you get that, it's the greatest of bands. With an average band, you can tell they want to make music together but they're not combining spiritually. With the Stones or the Beatles, there was a bond between the guys in those bands that has not been duplicated since, maybe with the exception of R.E.M. or U2. Pearl Jam is one of those bands. I always wonder how hard it must be for those guys to stick together, to be a band and function as a song-writing unit, with all these outer elements—money, fame, success—influencing them. As close-knit as we are, I don't know if we could have made it through if success had come as fast to us as it did for those guys.

*In some cases, the appropriate thing might be to split up the band. Some bands, like the Doors, make one magical statement, and then they might as well hang it up, given the corrosive effect the business obviously had on their later work.*

But don't you think it was less about the Doors as a band and more about a group of songs they came up with at one time? Those thoughts were only gonna come out of Jim Morrison at one time.

*But it's also the moment. I mean, how many times could they have played "The*

## Doin' It Live

**F**or all the enormity of Live's sound, it all boils down to basics. The band's stage and studio setup is low on frills and big on basic necessities.

**Chad Taylor** has been building an impressive collection of vintage guitars for several years. "I don't really like new ones that much," he admits. "I don't even like old guitars that are in great shape. There's just something about guitars that have been played; a spiritual kind of thing seems to come out of them." As he hears it, each instrument has a unique sound: "You can even compare two Strats or two Les Pauls, and they're totally different." As a result, he switches axes from song to song, alternating between four Gibson Les Pauls (a '54, a '56, a '57, and the first guitar he ever owned—a '70 Les Paul that his father bought for him). His main instrument, though, is a '63 Fender Jazzmaster, the first old guitar that he ever collected. No matter what he plays, it runs through only two effects, a Vox wah-wah pedal and an old Dallas-Arbitrator Fuzzface. Taylor favors two Diaz DS-DC100s for amplification; each one drives a 4x12 cabinet containing 75- and 30-watt vintage Celestion speakers. For Leslie effects, Chad uses an old Fender Vibratone amp, with a 50-watt Marshall JMP-1 acting as the preamp. His strings of choice are Dean Markley Blue Steel, .011 through .052 on the Strats, and .010 through .046 on the Les Pauls.

**Ed Kowalczyk** favors an equally simple setup, playing his '69 Telecaster, '65 Jazzmaster, or mid-Seventies Les Paul through a 50-watt Marshall JCM Duo Reverb, which drives 75-watt, 12" Celestion speakers in a 4x12 Marshall cabinet. "We both run the master volumes all the way up, with pretty clean settings," Taylor says. Kowalczyk also uses Dean Markley Blue Steel strings, .010 through .046. He plays

the band's acoustic guitar parts on a Takamine EN10C with Dean Markley Acoustic Bronze strings, .013 through .054; Taylor, a self-confessed fan of feedback and distortion, prefers sticking to electric.

**Pat Dahlheimer** went through a lot of different basses in preparing for the *Samadhi* sessions. In the end, his '58 Fender Precision was his preferred instrument, though he also used his '73 Gibson Signature Les Paul on several tracks and, less frequently, a '76 Gibson Thunderbird. "I used the T-Bird for really nasally, restricted sounds, a flat-out rock & roll sound," he recalls. Each bass was strung with Dean Markley Blue Steel medium-gauge strings, which he attacks with Dunlop Tortex picks. Dahlheimer's sole effect is a Boss octave pedal. He plays through Trace Elliot PPA 600 power amps into eight GP12 SMX 4x10 cabinets.

**Chad Gracey** plays a Pearl Master Studio kit, which consists of a 22x16 kick drum, a 16x16 floor tom, two rack toms (13x11 and 12x10), and a 3-1/2" free-floating piccolo snare. His cymbals are A. Zildjians, all regular finish, including a 13" QuickBeat hi-hat, an 8" splash, a 16" crash ride, a 17" rock crash, a 15" dark thin crash, a 20" heavy ride, a 14" Mini-China, and a 17" China Boy. Gracey's sticks are custom-made ProMark 5As. (Recently he switched to wooden tips because, he says, his old nylon tips kept rocketing off the sticks in concert; "I almost got it in the eye a couple of times.") Gracey also makes expressive use of ProMark Lightning Rods and their somewhat thinner Hot Rods. "They give you an intense but subdued sound in the choruses," he reports, "but by the end of the song these things start to fly apart. If I could switch in the middle of a song I would, but that's not always easy to do." Chad's drums are miked by Shure SM98s.

*End" as they did on the album?*

Certainly it can be about the moment, but overall it should be mainly about the song. Songs stand the test of time. What I'm looking for is integrity, for people who put their music and their band above all else in their lives. For example,

look at the struggles that Oasis were going through. You just can't help but think to yourself, "Why are they ruining the dream? Why are they spoiling what's so precious?" You're only given so many opportunities in life. You have to seize them, not for success but because each of

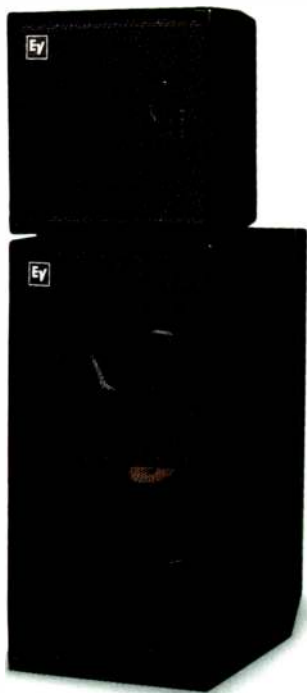


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us is on a path, and if a path is pointing you in a particular direction, that's where you go.

*During that long period before you played for any record companies, did you guys ever think about sending tapes to labels, or showcasing at South By Southwest? Or did you consciously decide not to try to break into the business?*

notes in the side margin: For example, "U2 got a manager"; I wrote down, "Get a manager." Literally, step-by-step, I outlined how to go from being a band that can play at the corner bar to a band that can play at the corner stadium. All I was doing was looking at what happened to other bands. We certainly didn't have anybody locally to attach ourselves to, so

Exactly. Live was successful the day we decided not to go to college and to dedicate ourselves instead to the band. Whether we ever sold a record or wrote another song, that was the day we became successful. Up to that point in our lives, we had been content to go along in mainstream society. I think it was the biggest spiritual decision we ever

## "It's more important to be friends than musicians."

Well, you've got to understand that where we grew up no previous bands had done that, so we didn't know the process. We had no idea what steps to take to become successful. For me, defining those steps of what it was gonna take to become a great band started by choosing mentors and watching what they had done. I read a U2 book called *Unforgettable Fire* in the summer between my junior and senior years in high school, and I remember writing

we did it with more national figures, whoever we could relate to. For example, I remember reading a passage about the Edge, and after four or five paragraphs I thought I was reading about myself. It was in that moment that I realized that I would be as my mentor. I would be the Paul McCartney or the John Lennon or the Bono or the Michael Stipe, whoever it was. We would have the chance to be successful, and we would be the best band in the world.

*At that stage of your career, that sounds more like hallucination than a coherent strategy.*

But that kind of belief is the most important thing you can have. You have to believe in yourself because if you don't, nobody else will. For as many people who supported us, there were ten times as many who thought we were terrible—and probably still think we're terrible. My teachers and my peers and my friends all through high school were all doubters. Once we graduated from high school, my employers, people I worked with eight hours a day, were doubters. That's the one factor that doesn't change, so it makes no sense to concentrate on it. Even today; there are as many bad reviews as good reviews, so you might as well convince yourself that you are the best band.

*Aren't there different levels of doubt? It's one thing to say "You guys suck," but maybe some of your colleagues were saying, "Look at this rotten business of music. No matter how great you are, the odds are still against you."*

Well, I think there's no such thing as a great band that doesn't succeed.

*That depends on what you mean by success.*

made, to remove ourselves and go into that isolation I was talking about earlier. Live is not about the business of selling records or tickets to shows, it's about conveying a spiritual energy that we were lucky enough to bump into. That's a much bigger goal than just selling product.

*Your decision to isolate yourselves also marked the point where you put your collective identity as a band above your individual concerns.*

That is a rock & roll band. I keep telling my friends in younger bands to stop thinking about the record companies, stop thinking about the tour bus or the gear you want to buy. Start thinking about the fun you're going to have. Success, in music business terms, ruins a lot of great musicians. Being true to what's inside your heart is what people and record companies gravitate toward. If you're honest, like Keith Richards about his drug habits and drinking, people appreciate it. I appreciated it. Thank God he lived that lifestyle for me, because I can say "Wow, that was great!" and not have to do it myself.

*You're expressing a real faith that listeners, yourself included, will be able to discern honesty in a song. But some of the greatest writers out there were something less than honest in their presentations. Bruce Springsteen created a fictitious world centered around cruising in cars, though he didn't even drive during those years he so evocatively celebrated.*

But when artists are honest to themselves, it always comes across. Bruce Springsteen's a great example. I can honestly say I didn't listen to him when I was growing up, until I read this *Rolling Stone* article where he talked about how

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he likes our band, our intensity and integrity. For him to realize that, does he not have integrity himself? So I bought some Bruce Springsteen records, some of which to this day I can't understand, but I tell you, when the guy is singing, he means what he's saying. I don't necessarily get it, but there is an integrity there that you can't discount.

*Just before I finished speaking with Ed, he suggested I ask you to talk about "Lakini's Juice" because, he said, "in this song is the future of the band." Certainly its structure is unlike anything Live has done before, with the proliferation of diminished fifths.*

When I was writing "Lakini's Juice" it was four or five o'clock in the morning. I had just polished off a bottle of cabernet, and I was drawing on the emotions I had gotten from seeing some movie earlier that night—I wish I could remember which one it was. But the song was like a call to arms, a war song. I remember that as I was writing it I envisioned a shotgun

when you pump it and a shell pops out, like *chu-choong!* That's how I wrote it: I just went *chu-choong, chu-choong*, and then before I knew it the chords started coming together. I felt more free to experiment because I was really intoxicated; it had a lot to do with the fact that my hands wouldn't keep up with where my thoughts were going. The alcohol was actually hindering my ability to play guitar, which is pretty bad when you're already low on the scale. This was the first song I ever wrote in open tuning, and I did that so I could at least get one chord in there without having to keep my hand on the guitar.

*Without getting too technical, there were some interesting dissonances in "Graze," especially where you play this major triad against a minor chord in each chorus.*

It had totally to do with feeling. Because Ed's focus is on melody and lyrics, he tends to not want to pay attention to the guitar. He doesn't play like a

traditional guitar player would, so it's a very delicate thing to balance with him. For example, he tends to do the strumming stuff, so I try to stay out of his way. If I can not play at all, I'm usually happy; I like being the guy who's just sort of making noise in the background. But when the song starts to take on heat, I get the ball from Ed, and I want to take the song in a different direction. In that song, the major over the minor just sounded right to me. I was just playing with the melody. Because Ed and I don't have a communication based on "What are you playing? What should I play?" Ed won't say, "I wrote this song, and it goes G-C-D." He'll play it, and we'll fold into it. We don't relate to each other in musical terms. I mean, you could even ask me what key this song is in, and I wouldn't have a clue. I couldn't tell you what chords I'm playing. I don't have that relationship with my guitar at all.

*You know where to put your hand on the neck, right?*

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# Taking It To The

THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE RELEASE of Pearl Jam's new album *No Code*, band manager Kelly Curtis headed for the resort village of Interlaken, nestled high in the Swiss Alps. He was not on vacation. There, at the Grand Hotel Victoria Jungfrau, inside a conference room closed to casual passersby, the sound of *No Code* shook the walls. Ensnored with Curtis were top Sony Music executives from throughout Europe and from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand, all as eager for Pearl Jam's latest as their American counterparts. The reason for this gathering became clear within weeks of Sony's simultaneous worldwide release of *No Code*, as the album racked up sales of two million outside the U.S., roughly twice the sales achieved on the band's home turf. "I've always gone and played each new album for all the different territories," says Curtis. "We're a band that doesn't really tour that much, so it's important." From the start of Pearl Jam's career, the band and its manager have focused on the worldwide music market, particularly its

# Swedes

HOW TO PURSUE FAME & FORTUNE IN A  
FOREIGN MARKET EVEN IF YOU'RE  
STILL UNKNOWN AT HOME

BY THOM DUFFY

World Radio History







potential outside American borders. "It seems like Basic Management 101," he concludes.

That may be true. But because American musicians live in the largest single record market in the world, many don't fully grasp a fundamental fact about the global music business in the Nineties: If you're not selling your music outside the U.S., you're missing out on two-thirds of your market. For superstars and newcomers alike, the importance of international sales has only increased as record sales in the U.S. have stagnated.

In the early days of rock & roll, America so dominated the pop music business that many U.S. acts didn't even bother to cross an ocean. Elvis Presley never toured outside the fifty states; through the Seventies, many U.S. superstars stayed home as well. A few dates in the British Isles and a couple of European capitals might pass for an "international" tour.

In the early Seventies, the U.S. accounted for nearly half of all record sales worldwide, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, the record industry's global trade organization. Nowadays the U.S. can claim just under a third of total worldwide sales. Although that still gives America the largest single slice of the international sales pie, most records now are sold outside the U.S. Taken as a whole, for example, the countries of Europe make up a larger music market than the States.

The competition facing U.S. artists in international markets has grown as well. In many countries local rock and pop, which once was merely a pale imitation of American music, has become more creative and exciting. The quality of record production overseas matches that found in the U.S., and fans abroad now seek out sounds from homegrown heroes as often as the latest releases from New York or L.A. In Japan, the world's second largest music market, local artists account for more than seventy percent of all record sales.

That's true elsewhere as well. When Jon Bon Jovi and his band performed at the opening of a Hard Rock Café in Taiwan, Asian pop idol Andy Lau warmed up the crowd. As Bon Jovi took the stage and asked the audience what they wanted to hear, one polite voice

# A Hit with the Locals

When American artists make the effort to promote and sell their music outside the U.S., they often find the competition tougher than they expected. In many countries fans have greater loyalty to acts from their own land, who sing in their own tongue and reflect their own culture. So who are these artists who challenge the idea of music being a universal (i.e., American) language? Here are four of them, along with reasons why they're beating even U.S. superstars on their own turf.



## TERRITORY:

Japan

## ARTIST:

**Dreams Come True**

**T**he *Swinging Star*, this trio's 1992 release, is one of the most popular albums in the history of Japanese pop, with sales of about four million. Signed to Sony Music in Japan, the group is fronted by Yoshida, a female vocalist whose powerhouse style can hold its own against labelmate Mariah Carey. The group records its albums in London but understands that in Japan, where local artists claim more than seventy percent of the market, a wholesome image matched with accessible melodies is an unbeatable combination.



## TERRITORY:

Germany

## ARTIST:

**Marius Muller-Westernhagen**

**I**n Europe's largest music market, few artists are bigger than Marius Muller-Westernhagen, whose 1994 album *Affentheater*

has sold more than two million copies in his homeland alone. Westernhagen is a dynamic performer who regularly packs stadiums on tour. He was raised to the sound of American rock & roll via Armed Forces Radio but sings his thought-provoking lyrics in German, thus winning over listeners with a hybrid of two musical cultures.



## TERRITORY:

Asia

## ARTIST:

**Andy Lau**

**W**hen MTV Asia signed Andy Lau to host the first *Unplugged* show taped in that region, the move was a coup for the music video channel. Lau, based in Hong Kong, is a king of Cantopop, the formulaic, ballad-heavy style sung in Chinese which dominates the Asian market. By one estimate, Lau's albums outsell those by U.S. superstars in the market three-to-one. Language and musical style are two reasons for his edge over Western artists; media image and constant

exposure are others. In a region where even top-selling acts are kept on a productive treadmill, Lau has recorded dozens of albums and appeared in an estimated eighty movies.



## TERRITORY:

Italy

## ARTIST:

**Eros Ramazzotti**

**R**omantic rocker Eros Ramazzotti is a model of a modern-day European superstar. Singing in Italian, he regularly tops sales of one million in his homeland. But his popularity also crosses borders in Europe, where fans are open to performers who sing in foreign languages. Ramazzotti has also recorded in Spanish and staged extensive tours of Latin America, which helped boost his worldwide sales to over four million and broke him into the U.S. Latin music market. With his willingness to spend months on the road and record in a second language, Ramazzotti offers an example to U.S. acts of what it takes to succeed in today's global music market.



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exercise in musical ingenuity. It was but a soul that warmly embraces the past. Its



called back: "We want Andy Lau."

American superstars such as Madonna and R.E.M. routinely sell as many or more albums outside the U.S. as they do at home. But international opportunities are just as significant for new artists, those with careers established at the 100,000-plus sales level at home, or those playing styles with particular popularity abroad. "Roots rock and blues fans tend to be more active in Europe and easier to reach," says Bob Benjamin, manager of Joe Grushecky. For years the veteran roots rocker had been unable to land a label deal in the U.S., but when Benjamin sought a deal for Grushecky's album *American Babylon*, which featured production, performances, and songs co-written by Bruce Springsteen, Pinnacle Licensed Repertoire in Britain stepped forward with the best offer.

"If the label interest is there, you can get the same kind of deal as in the U.S.," says Benjamin. "We got a lot of support for touring, and it's easier for artists like

Joe to make an impact over there." While major labels in the U.S. took little notice of Grushecky, Pinnacle sublicensed *American Babylon* to European majors, including Virgin in Sweden and East

torney Josh Grier, who followed that strategy for client Bob Mould. Creation Records has a deal for Europe with Mould, who is signed to Rykodisc for the U.S. and international territories outside

I F Y O U ' R E N O T S E L L I N G  
Y O U R M U S I C O U T S I D E  
T H E U . S . , Y O U ' R E M I S S I N G  
O U T O N T W O - T H I R D S  
O R Y O U R M A R K E T .

West in France.

For artists who are well-established in their careers but working outside the web of a multinational major label, striking individual deals for separate international regions can have advantages. "It's generally something we recommend because it allows you to customize your international situation," says music at-

Europe. Rykodisc, in turn, licenses Mould's albums to Video Arts in Japan, Rock Records in Taiwan, and Festival Records in Australia. "And each time Rykodisc establishes a beachhead [in an international market] they come to us," says Grier.

"Bob is an established artist," he continues, "which was an important part of why he did what he did. You do take on a bit of administration yourself. You have to organize all sides and pick a primary label in a region." But there are payoffs to such a split setup. For example, notes Grier, "your European royalties are not charged against the advance of your U.S. deal."

For artists with substantial song catalogs, cutting individual publishing deals in different international territories can have similar benefits. Collective advances from separate agreements can be larger than those offered in a single worldwide deal.

Even if an artist signs a single worldwide contract with an independent label based in the U.S., the release of an album abroad via a licensing deal can bring great opportunities. One of the most remarkable examples in recent years involved the Connells from North Carolina. The band has a worldwide deal with TVT Records, who licensed their 1993 album *Ring* to Germany's Intercord Records for release in Europe. (Intercord, an independent label, was subsequently acquired by EMI.) Despite positive comments from several critics, sales of their work in the States were—and still are—tepid, a fact that left them unprepared for

## World's Top Ten Music Markets

RANK	COUNTRY	RETAIL VALUE*	GLOBAL SHARE
1	U.S.	\$12,102	30.5%
2	Japan	\$7,552	19.0%
3	Germany	\$3,270	8.2%
4	U.K.	\$2,572	6.5%
5	France	\$2,392	6.0%
6	Canada	\$1,113	2.8%
7	Brazil	\$1,053	2.7%
8	Netherlands	\$716	1.8%
9	Australia	\$681	1.7%
10	Italy	\$582.7	1.5%

\* Retail value in millions of U.S. dollars

Source: International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

(Note: most recent full-year figures are for 1995.)



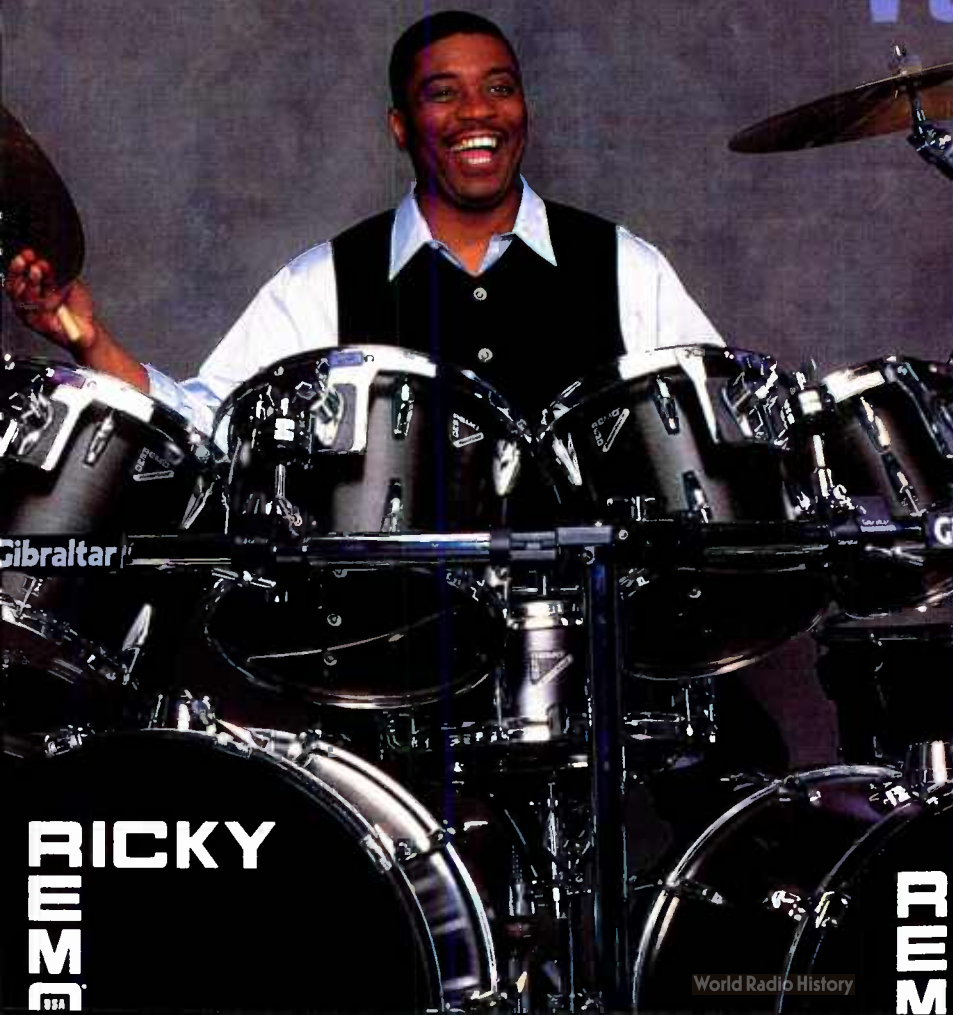
Why is  
Ricky  
Lawson  
smiling?



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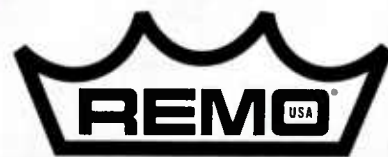


Is it because of the satisfaction and acclaim he's received after logging thousands of miles on the road with multiplatinum artists like Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Phil Collins and Steely Dan?

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the response that would await them in Europe.

During a promotional tour of Germany in late 1994, recalls singer and songwriter Mike Connell, "I started to get suspicious that something was happening. We were getting all this attention, unlike anything we'd seen at home. We were driving around Germany, listening to the radio, and I was thinking, 'There's no way ...'"

Then in January of '95 the single "74-

is that the international market can offer some very lucrative non-album sales revenue," says Morgan. For example, as a successful single, "74-'75" appeared on more than fifty hit compilation albums, he estimates. For these kinds of discs, which are a staple in European pop music, "the royalty rates are considerably lower but," Morgan points out, "the impact is substantial. It's all gravy."

For the Connells, whose overseas release came through a licensing deal

national major labels want their local companies around the world to develop home-grown artists, the promotional and marketing skills gained by selling those local acts help sell albums from American artists as well. Says Margo, "The domestic [i.e., local] repertoire all over the world is the key issue for any company. Our first priority is to develop local talent."

In many regions, promotional avenues which are taken for granted in the U.S., from music television channels to commercial pop radio, are relatively new on the scene. As Margo notes, "the key now is that people are able to travel anywhere in the world and the media—TV shows and radio programs—are available" to expose new acts, even if local artists dominate these media, as they usually do.

Since the release of *Jagged Little Pill*, Morissette has toured not only through North America and Europe multiple times but also South America, Australia, and Asia, including Japan. The pace of her travels was evident when she was chosen for an award last fall in the U.K. She videotaped her acceptance speech backstage in Mexico, and was in Korea on the day the award was presented in her absence in London.

Yet Morissette, like other artists who become successful in the international market, still starts from scratch every time she sets foot in a new country. "In January 1996 we had a Latin American marketing meeting, and we discussed bringing Alanis into the region," recalls Margo. "We set the tour for October." In the intervening months, her album sales in America and Europe skyrocketed. "She honored those commitments" made earlier, says Margo. "When she got to Brazil, a market where she had sold less than sixty thousand records, she did all the TV and radio shows with her usual humility and style."

The lesson is obvious. To build a career in the global music business, Margo says, "you have to have the desire and foresight. Just because you're successful in America, that doesn't make you successful around the world."

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**Contributors:** Thom Duffy is international deputy editor of *Billboard* magazine in London.

M O S T R E C O R D S N O W  
A R E S O L D O U T S I D E T H E U . S .  
T A K E N A S A W H O L E ,  
T H E C O U N T R I E S O F E U R O P E  
M A K E U P A L A R G E R  
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'75" started to make "these huge jumps" on the German pop chart. Within a year it had become a Top Twenty hit in thirteen countries and one of the Top Ten videos of the year on MTV Europe. Connell recalls the "immediate and insane response to that song night after night" at concerts, including a memorable festival date before thousands at a piazza in Rome.

Connell concedes that "the gap was pretty evident" between the band's acclaim abroad and its lack of a pop breakthrough back home, "but we were just so ecstatic and thrilled about what was happening that we had a new sense of purpose." As the band tours the U.S. to promote its new TVT album *Weird Food & Devastation*, says Connell, "there's the hope that something similar might happen in the States."

The Connells' *Ring* album sold more than half a million copies worldwide, with 300,000 of those outside the U.S. The band's manager, Ed Morgan, says that higher retail prices for albums abroad offset the reduction in royalties which most U.S. record contracts dictate for foreign sales.

"The one thing I learned very quickly

struck by its U.S. label, "the international sales activity certainly put the band in a recouped situation a lot quicker," Morgan adds. "On a career level, not only does it afford you that luxury, it opens up more opportunity for touring. It's clearly changed the future of the band."

The trajectory of an artist's career outside the U.S. can be no less dramatic for debut artists on a multinational major label. Steve Margo, VP of international for Warner Bros. in the U.S., landed in London early in 1995 to pass along advance tapes of an exciting young Canadian singer. Two years later, Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* has become not only the best-selling debut album by a female artist in the U.S., with sales of twelve million; it's also sold more than nine million outside of America.

"It started with a tape with two songs on it; 'Head Over Feet' and 'One Hand in My Pocket,'" says Margo. "We didn't even have 'You Oughta Know' on there. And the rest is history."

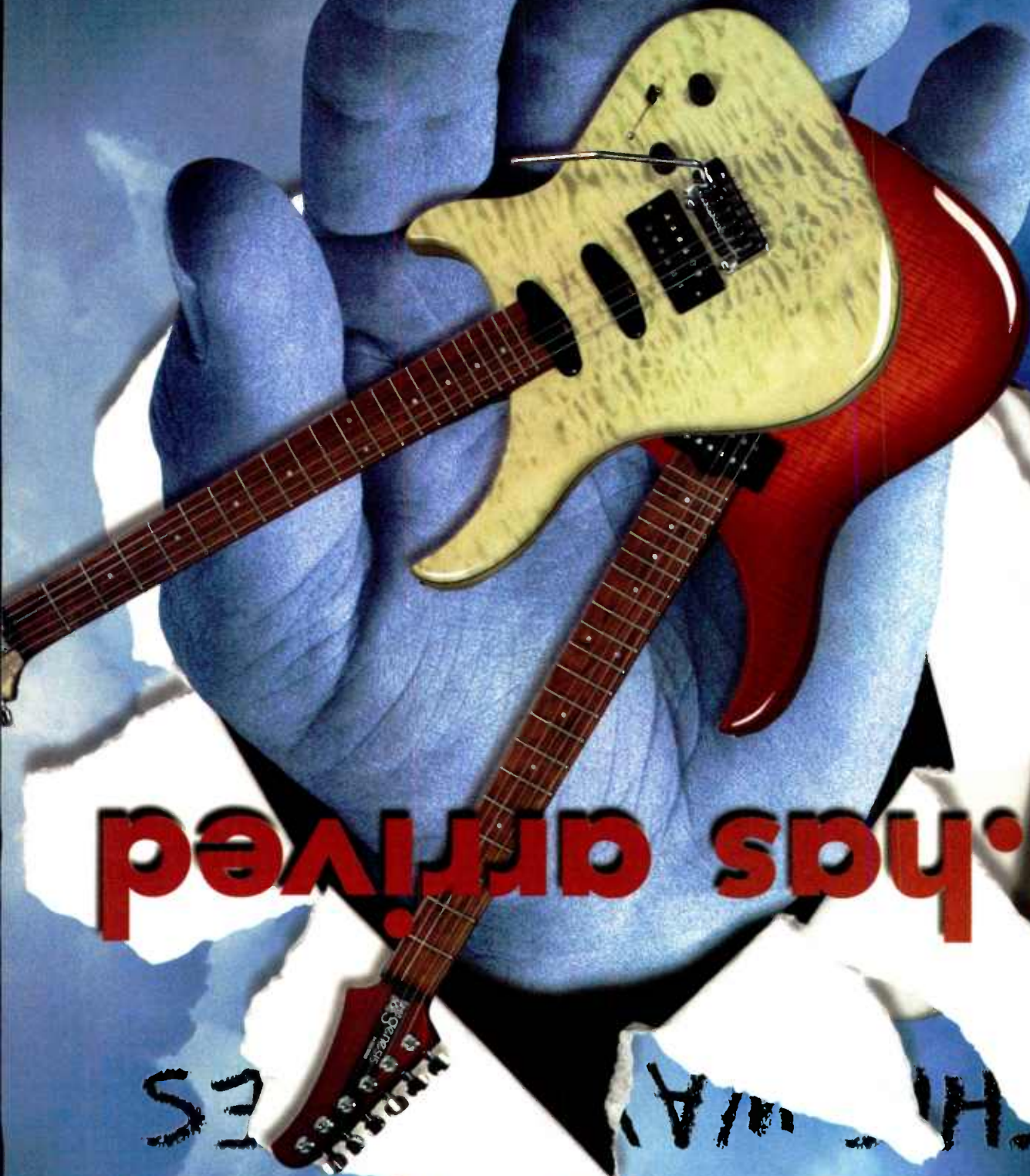
The scope and scale of Morissette's international success help highlight the factors which have made global marketing more sophisticated. While the multi-



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### 1 Yamaha G50

Bold new horizons promise to open up for MIDI-curious guitarists with Yamaha's G50 guitar MIDI converter (\$749.95; the accompanying G10 flex pickup is \$199.95). The G50 converts every nuance and expression of your playing into MIDI data, enabling you to use MIDI tone generators or interface with computers. Four tone generator modes are included with automatic setups in ROM for Yamaha's MU50, MU80, VL70m and VL1m; a fifth mode can be used with any tone generator, allowing a complete set of programmable parameters for each string. ▶ **Yamaha, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622-6600; voice (714) 522-9011, fax (714) 522-9587.**

### 2 Modulus Flea Bass

Holy Magic Johnson, the new Flea Bass from Modulus is here! Co-designed by the Modulus folks and the erstwhile Chili Pepper himself, the four-string features the renowned Modulus composite neck, complete with 22 fret fingerboard, and a solid alder, double-cutaway body. Custom Lane Floor, Bartolini, and Seymour Duncan Basslines pickups are available as no-cost options; you can also choose from among several different industrial semi-gloss and big-bike sparkle finishes. They say it's red hot. Prices start at \$2199.

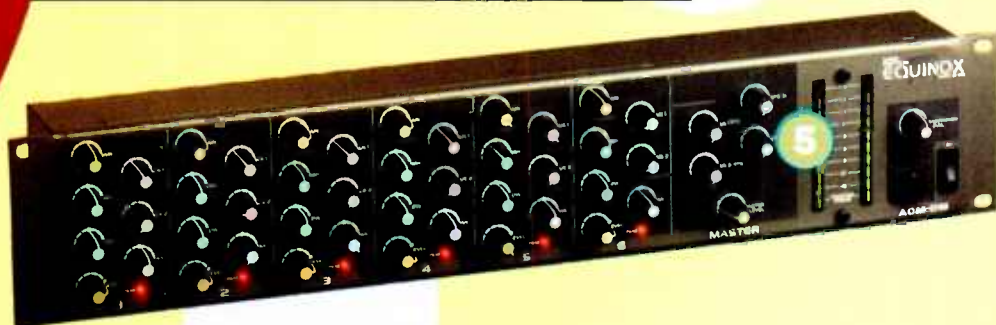
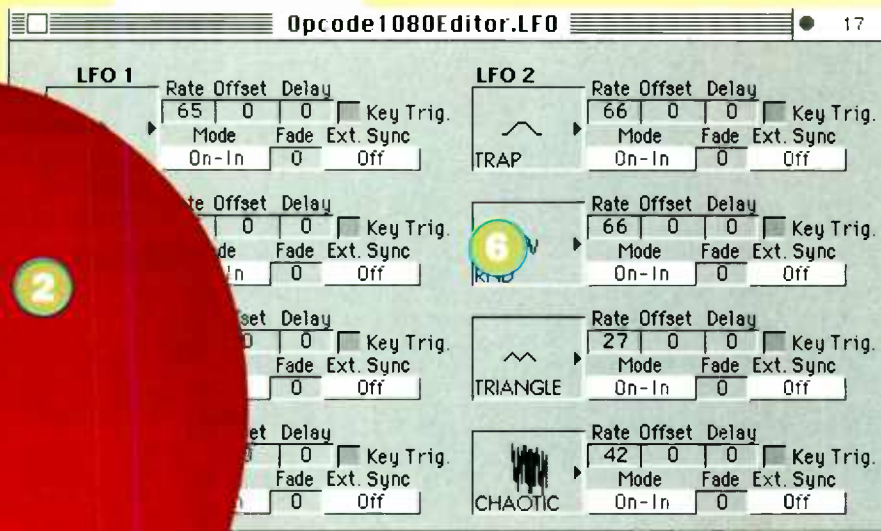
▶ **Modulus, 575 Seventh St., San Francisco, CA 94103; voice (415) 703-0500, fax (415) 703-0979.**

### 3 FATAR Studio ST-1176

Lots of keyboardists love the action of FATAR's 88-key MIDI controllers, but those things are hard to cart around. Now the company's trying to do something about that with the Studio ST-1176 (\$1395). Because it's only got 76 keys, it's smaller than previous models, and because it doesn't come with the built-in road case option, it's substantially lighter. Features include 32 presets that can be stored via saves, bank select, pitch and mod wheels, 120 controller values that can be assigned to programmable sliders, aftertouch, and MIDI merge. ▶ **FATAR, c/o Music Industries Corp., 99 Tulp Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001; voice (516) 352-4110, fax (516) 352-0754.**







#### 4 Fostex DMT-8VL

Eight uncompressed digital audio tracks, a full-featured analog mixing console, and the massive storage capacity of a hard-drive-based architecture are the main selling points of Fostex's new DMT-8VL multitrack recording and editing system (\$1295). All eight tracks of the DMT-8VL provide 16-bit, 44.1 kHz digital audio; 18-bit, 128X oversampling A-to-D conversion and 20-bit A-to-D converters aid the cause. Each channel offers two-band equalization, two aux sends, and a stereo in-line monitor section. Between the recorded tracks, inputs, and stereo aux returns, 20 separate signal sources are available at final mixdown. ▶ *Fostex, 15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA 90650; voice (310) 921-1112, fax (310) 802-1994.*

#### 5 Audio Centron ACM-DM

Two-space rackmount mixers have been a winner for Audio Centron, so they've decided to put out a few more specialized models based on their ACMS42. The ACM-DM (\$360) is an analog-input version designed as a drum submixer. Features include six mic/line channels, phantom power, two aux sends with stereo returns, RCA tape inputs and outputs with level control, stereo headphone jack with level, and peak LEDs on all mic channels. ▶ *Audio Centron, c/o St. Louis Music, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133; voice (314) 727-4512, fax (314) 727-8929.*

#### 6 Opcode Galaxy Plus Editors 2.1

Over 15 new editors and 50 new librarians are included in the 2.1 version of Opcode's Galaxy Plus Editors patch storage software (\$249.95). MIDI devices from Alesis, Korg, Kurzweil, and Lexicon all receive new editors, while full color editors are available for some Roland and Yamaha products. The above get new librarians as well, along with Clavia, Digitech, and Novation; the World Wide Web syntax format is also featured. Using Opcode's OMS (Open Music System), Galaxy Plus Editors provides comprehensive access to, and control over, synth patches. ▶ *Opcode, 3950 Fabian Way, Ste. 100, Palo Alto, CA 94303; voice (415) 859-3333, fax (415) 859-3322.*

**W**hen it comes to equipment, musicians can easily get jaded. If you're like a lot of us, you probably think you've seen just about every kind of possible processing innovation. Multieffects? We all know about them. They're either complicated high-tech rack-mount units or those pedal-board-type things with lots of switches and buttons—and you can be pretty sure that the good ones'll set you back a tidy sum.

Well, get ready for this: 24 individual effects (including seven types of distortion), up to nine of which can be used simultaneously, and all of which can be edited and altered to your personal taste, crammed inside a box approximately 6" long, 5 1/2" wide and, at its peak, 2" high. The thing weighs so little that they measure it in grams (480, to be precise, which might be a lot when you're watching your fat intake, but is minuscule in the processing arena). The control setup on this mini-marvel couldn't be much simpler—a mere two small foot pedals and four even tinier buttons—and its \$149 price tag is so low it's almost absurd.

No, don't reach for your thermometer. This is no fever dream. It's the Zoom 505 guitar processor, which, along with its sibling the 506 (also \$149 but designed for basses), marks the first entry in what is planned to be an extensive line of low-cost, ultra-petite digital multieffects pedals. You can't say the 505 and 506 are unprecedented; after all, the company that made them is famous for sticking cool sounds into surprisingly small packages. But this



by pressing either the plus (up) or minus (down) button on the right side of the front panel. If you connect the optional footswitch, you can scroll up through the banks with it, so you won't have to deal with those teeny buttons.

Below the big display number are eight cursor LEDs. Except for the eighth, which is a simple volume control, each stands for a particular effects module; if it's lit, then the module is being used in the selected patch. In order from top to bottom, the seven modules are Comp (including compression, limiting and wah), Dist (various types of pre-amp and distortion sounds; on the 505, a simulation of an amplified acoustic guitar is also included), Gain (for the distortion effects),

## A TRIP TO THE SHRINK **Zoom's newest multieffects pedals break the size barrier.**

by mac randall

time Zoom has truly outdone itself. These two boxes extend the limits of what is possible in processor design.

Pleasantly enough, the 505 and 506 work exactly the same way. Both include four jacks on the back panel: Input, Output (this'll work equally well for one or more amps, headphones, etc.), Control In (for either an expression pedal or footswitch—more on this later), and DC In. You'll probably want to use an AC adapter; these babies wear out a 9-volt battery in four hours max.

Once you've plugged in, the center display lights up. The number at the top indicates which patch (or preset combination of effects) is currently selected. Both the 505 and

506 have room for 24 preset patches, divided into six banks of four. You can get from one patch to another by pressing either the left (the numbers go down) or right (the numbers go up) foot pedal, and from one bank to another

ZNR/Amp (noise gate and amp simulator, available either separately or together), EQ (four-band EQ boost and cut, plus phase shifting), Mod (including chorus, flanging, pitch shift and other modulation effects), and Dly/Rev (hall and room reverbs and delay).

At this point, our more alert readers may be scratching their heads and thinking, "Wait a minute, just a couple paragraphs back he said that you could use up to nine effects simultaneously, but now he's saying there are only seven effects modules. What's with that?" But there's no need for concern; it just so happens that some of the 505 and 506 modules feature effects that are actually combinations of two—compressor and wah, for example, or





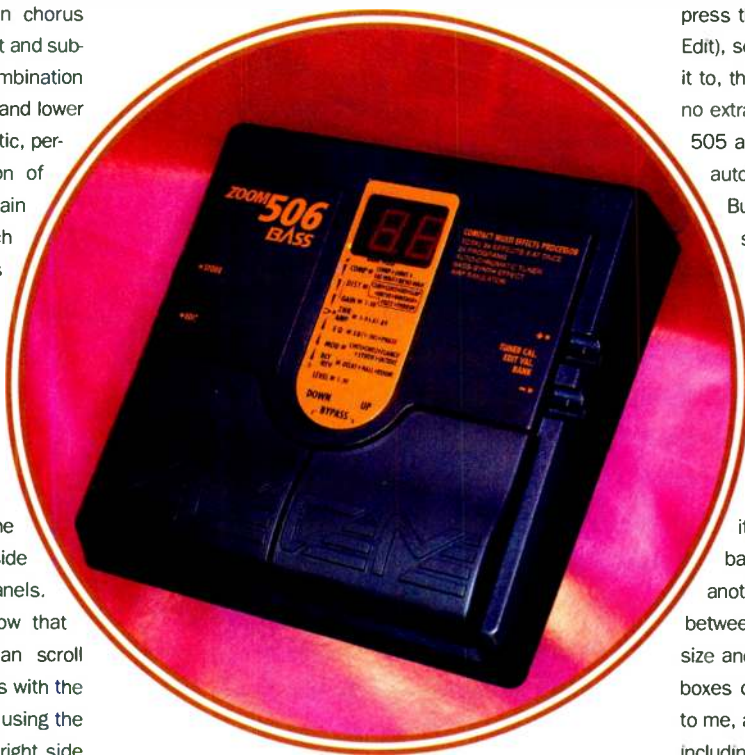
chorus and octave—and if you use a couple of those together, you can get to nine. (In the spirit of full disclosure, I should point out that this figure can only be reached on the 505. The 506 doesn't have as many combination sounds, and so the highest number of simultaneous effects it can summon is eight.)

So much for the preliminaries. Now how do the things sound? Quite excellent, actually, but you might not always be able to tell that from the first few minutes' audition. As with most products of this type, many of the factory presets are a bit generic-sounding. There are, of course, exceptions: The clean chorus patches on the 505 are elegant and subtle, while "Octave Pitch," a combination of heavy distortion with upper and lower octaves, is delightfully bombastic, perfect for a souped-up rendition of Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King." As for the 506, any patch with the word "slap" in it is pleasantly warm and hefty, while "Vintage" will please anyone who likes that gritty mid-Seventies John Wetton sound. Overall, though, you'll probably want to start customizing right away.

That's done by pressing the Edit key, which is on the left side of the 505 and 506's front panels. The top display will then show that you're in Edit mode. You can scroll through the module parameters with the foot pedals, and change them using the plus or minus buttons on the right side (the same ones used to switch banks in normal mode). Neither the 505 nor the 506 offer anywhere near the amount of parameter twiddling that you could get from a fancy rackmount device—for example, you're stuck with nine delay speeds and no control over mix or regeneration—but what you do get is eminently usable, and even within this limited scope, there are plenty of possible variations. The auto wah choices are fantastic, and I enjoyed the pedal-controlled wah sounds even though I didn't have an expression pedal to hook up,

because every time I punched in a higher parameter value, the center of the wah frequency changed, and with it the tone of the guitar or bass.

Speaking of wahs, several of the 505's distortion types sound slightly wahed, with a delicious honking quality that's reminiscent of some of Jimmy Page's solos on the first couple of Led Zeppelin records. At least they do on headphones; through an amp, the honk gets smoothed out somewhat. And speaking of amps, some players might want to use the excellent built-in amp simulator even when they're not going ampless—it provides extra midrange mud that's most pleasing to the ear. The Zoom phase shifter isn't going to lead anyone to throw out their old MXR Phase 90, but it's certainly distinctive, a little like a slow envelope filter.



A related sound on the 505 is the so-called "step" option, which randomly changes the filter range to create an auto-arpeggio effect that's very techno. Its cousin on the 506 is the "synth" sound, which conjures up mildly distressing images of Geddy Lee and his favorite Taurus pedals. A more normal sound in the 506's preamp section, simply called "Fat," made even my cheap old Aria hollowbody bass sound as vibrant as any top-end instrument. The 505's pitch shifter tracks well; I particularly liked taking it up a fourth for severe overkill on min7 and min6 chords. But easy with the reverbs! They're digital, remember, and though perfect at low levels, they get fritzzy when turned up too much.

A final note about the sounds: Because the 505 has

effects that the 506 doesn't have, and vice versa (even the effects the two share aren't always alike—the 506's delays, for example, are quieter and faster than the 505's, with less regeneration), I figured I'd try both guitar and bass through both pedals. Unfortunately, guitars sounded puny through the 506, and bass through the 505 was simply overbearing. Guess that's what you get for being contrary. I'd advise sticking with the recommended combinations.

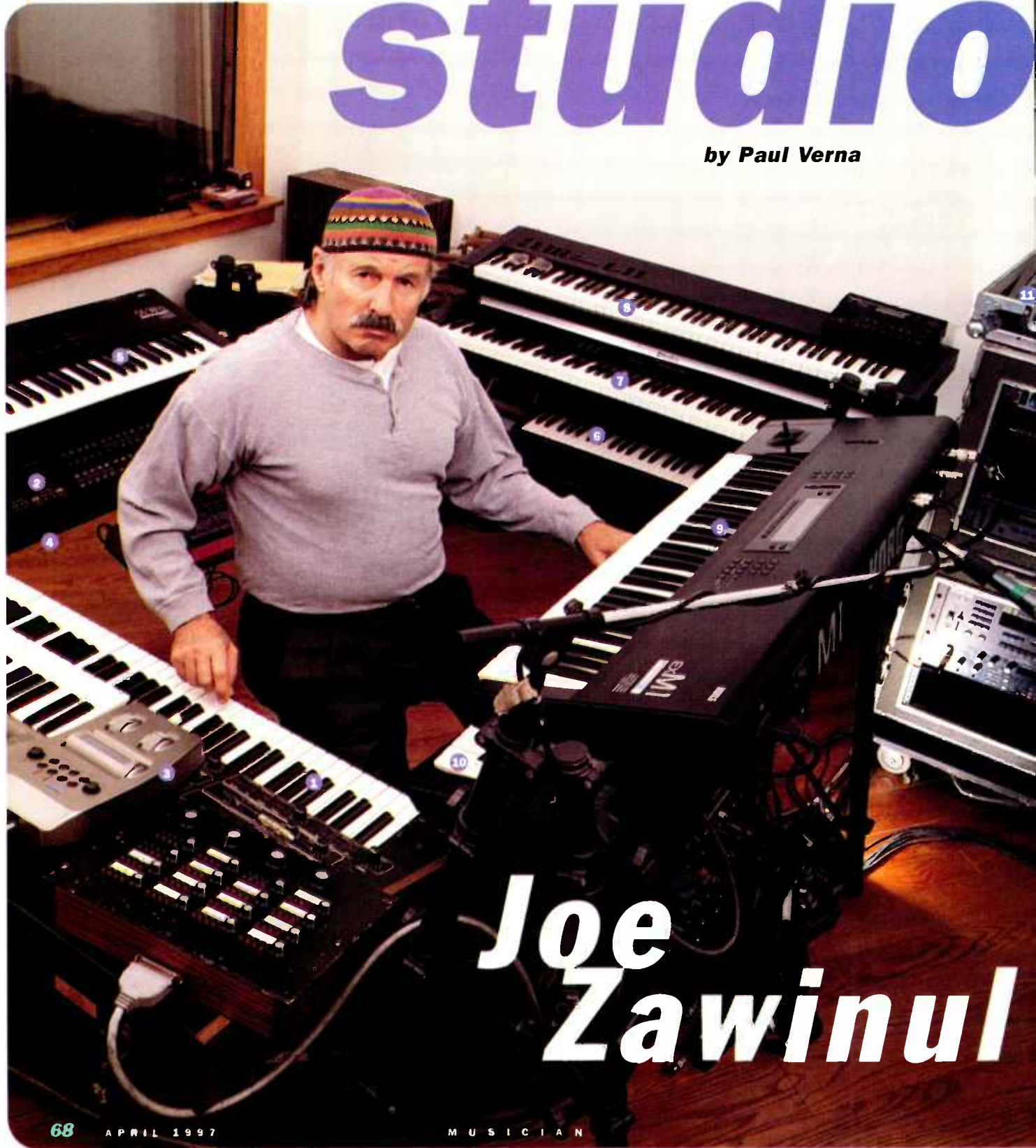
Once you've gotten a sound the way you like it and want to keep it, simply press the Store button (it's right above Edit), select the patch you want to save it to, then press Store again. There are no extra banks for user patches on the 505 and 506; storing an edited patch automatically gets rid of a preset. But the original factory patches stay in the unit's memory, and recalling them is a simple two-button process.

Assuming that you've done your patch editing before the gig, both the 505 and 506 seem ideal for live work. Extra features like a mute/bypass mode, built-in tuner, and the ability to limit patch switching to one bank or switch from one patch to another without hearing the ones in between add to their appeal. The small size and plastic, toylike nature of these boxes doesn't exactly spell roadworthy to me, and I question the wisdom of not including two separate jacks for the expression pedal and the footswitch. (What if you want to use both?) But these aren't major complaints, and there's certainly no denying the high quality of the sonic manipulations that the 505 and 506 perform. They probably can't satisfy all players' effects needs—I don't imagine many will give up their vintage analog pedals for Zoom's latest creations, simply because they don't sound the same—but at least they make another useful link in the chain, and at best they can cut down the size of that chain considerably. 🎸

# Home

# studio

by Paul Verna



# Joe Zawinul





photographs by Eli Hersko

**B**efore Weather Report veteran keyboardist Joe Zawinul set up the home studio of his dreams, he needed to set up a home. In March 1994 he found a spacious loft in Greenwich Village that now encompasses ample living quarters, a business office, and a state-of-the-art recording and MIDI facility that Zawinul used almost exclusively for the recording of his latest album, *Mi Gente (My People)*.

In the main recording space, Zawinul's keyboard rig occupies a corner of a large room that also features a drum kit, an isolation booth, and enough room for various musicians to rehearse and record in comfortably. "The sound in this studio is phenomenal," enthuses Zawinul. "You really hear the bass drum pumping."

The core of Zawinul's keyboard array is a **Sequential Circuits D8** 1, a **Chroma Expander** 2, and an Oberheim Expander (not visible)—his "foundation of sound, because I need analog." The remainder of the setup consists of a **Korg Prophecy** 3, **Nord Lead Virtual Analog Rack** 4, **Korg O1W-FD** 5, **Korg 707** 6, **Rhodes MK-**

**80** 7, **Korg SG-1D** 8, **Korg EX-M1** 9, **Korg EX-Wavestation** 10, and a DigiTech Vocalist (not visible).

Zawinul's rack of modules, mixers, and samplers 11 features a **Mackie SR24•4** mixer, **E-mu Proteus 3/XR**, **Korg A3**, **O1R/W**, and **EXM1R**, **Ensoniq ASR-10**, **Korg DVP-1** voice processor, and a Korg DSM sampler (not shown). Zawinul's keyboards are wired into a custom switching box built by engineer Jim Swanson, and controlled by 15 volume and VCA pedals on the floor.

The studio's control room features an **Amek Einstein Super E** console 12, a 40-channel, 80-input board with a proprietary, PC-based automation package (the PC, to the right of the console, is an **IBM 46** 13); Tannoy SRM-12B monitors; and an **Ampex MM 1200** 24-track, two-inch recorder 14, which Zawinul appreciates for its analog warmth. ("I've had that machine for years, and it's a work-horse," he says.) To the left of the three-rack unit that lines the side wall of the control room are an **Ensoniq ASR-10** keyboard 15, a Korg EXM-1



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(underneath the ASR-10), and the second of two Swanson custom switching boxes.

In the first rack of the three-rack unit <sup>16</sup> are a host of **Korg** effects processors, including two **DRV-3000**s, a **DRV-1000**, an **A1**, an **A3**, and an **SDD 2000** sampler/digital delay. Also in the first rack are a **Lexicon PCM-41**, a **dbx 165** compressor/limiter, and a **Urei 1176 LN** limiting amplifier. The middle rack <sup>17</sup> houses an **Ensoniq DP/4+** effects processor, two **Barcus-Berry BBE 802** processors, a **dbx 166** compressor, two **dbx 266** compressors, two **Drawmer** dual gates, two **Rane SP-15** parametric EQs, and two **Rane HC-6** head-phone amplifiers. In the right rack of the three-unit set <sup>18</sup> are more **Korg** modules, including an **EXM 1R** workstation, an **M3R** module, and two **DSM-1** sampler/modules. On top of the three-unit rack are a **Korg Pepe** breath controller <sup>19</sup>, a **Korg DDD-1** drum machine <sup>20</sup>, and an **Alesis HR-16** drum machine <sup>21</sup>.

To the right of the Ampex recorder, another rack features, from top to bottom, a **Philips**

CD player <sup>22</sup> and double-cassette deck <sup>23</sup>; a **Panasonic SV-4100** DAT recorder <sup>24</sup>; a **Brainstorm SR-26** time-code distributor <sup>25</sup>; **Alesis ADAT-XT** <sup>26</sup> and **ADAT** <sup>27</sup> units, used as adjuncts to the Ampex 24-track; and a **JL Cooper** synchronizer <sup>28</sup>. On top of the latter rack are a **Sony RMR-D3** digital converter <sup>29</sup> and a **Sony D7** portable DAT recorder <sup>30</sup>, which Zawinul uses to make DAT clones.

The **Atari Mega ST** computer <sup>31</sup> along the back wall of the control room drives the Hybrid Arts MIDI sequencing program; that and another Mega ST are also used to print scores via Steinberg Cubase software. The keyboard behind Zawinul in the control room is his master controller, a **Korg Trinity Plus** <sup>38</sup>.

"Ever since I can remember, when my wife and I first had an apartment in New York, I had a serious little music room," Zawinul muses. "I had a Nagra tape machine that Roberta Flack gave me and a big old Sennheiser microphone. Then we moved to Pasadena, where we had a huge room looking

out to the swimming pool, and the music room was more elaborate. It was there that Weather Report started making recordings that were later used, like 'Jungle Book' on *Mysterious Traveler*." In Malibu, Zawinul moved his setup into a three-car garage.

But it wasn't until he and his son Ivan built the current studio that Zawinul has had a place that accommodates his increasingly eclectic artistic palette. Not only did he record the bulk of *My People* there, he also composed and recorded overdubs for a recent symphonic recording. Most recently, Joe and Ivan have been assembling and mixing a series of previously unreleased Weather Report recordings for a Sony Legacy reissue.

Ultimately, Zawinul envisions his new facility as a place where he can compose, improvise, rehearse, record, edit, mix, and remix—all the while enjoying the comforts of home. ♪

**Contributors:** Paul Verna is pro audio and technology editor at Billboard.

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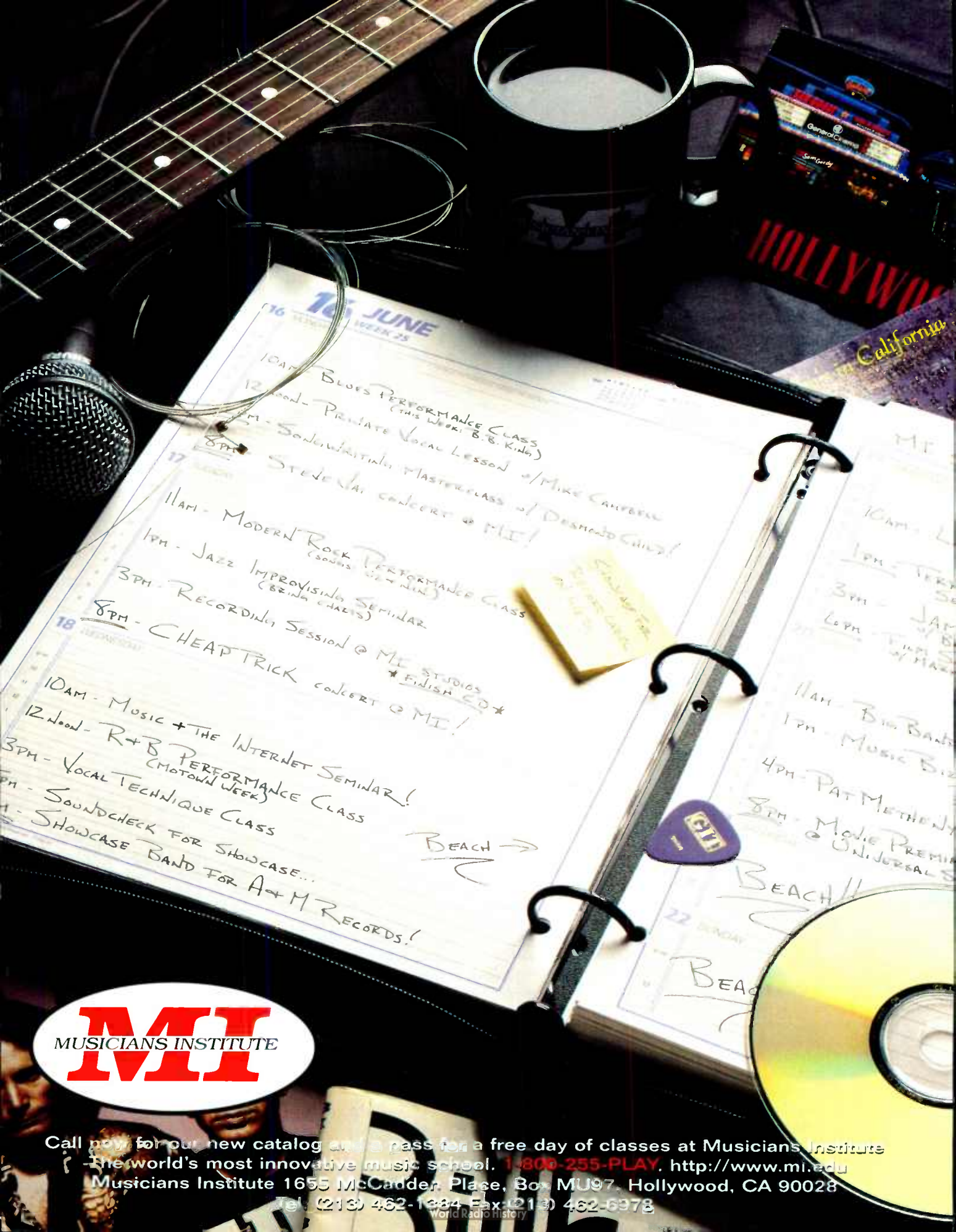
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16 JUNE WEEK 25

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12 Noon - Private Vocal Lesson

1PM - Songwriting Masterclass w/ Mike Anderson

8PM - Steve Vai concert @ MI!

11AM - Modern Rock Performance Class  
(Songs: U2 + Nirvana)

1PM - Jazz Improvisation Seminar  
(Brenda Charet)

3PM - Recording Session @ MI Studios  
\* Finish CD \*

18

8PM - Cheap Trick concert @ MI!

10AM - Music + The Internet Seminar!

12 Noon - R+B Performance Class  
(Motown Week)

3PM - Vocal Technique Class

4PM - Soundcheck for Showcase...

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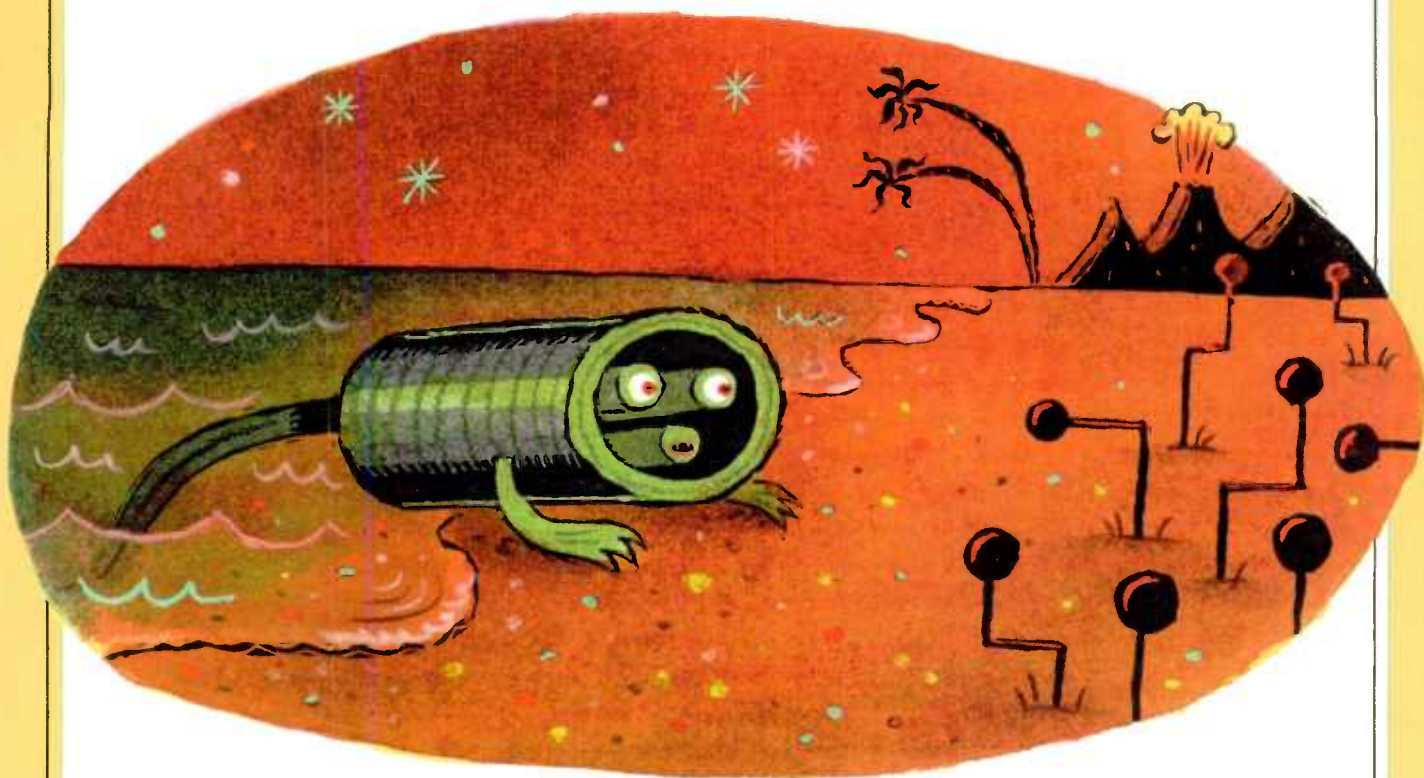
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One of the most important developments in music technology in the last 25 years or so has been the rise of the digital musical instrument, (i.e., synthesizers, samplers, and drum machines), with the creation of these devices. There quickly followed the need for a standard method of controlling them (and allowing them to communicate with one another). MIDI has filled that need for a very long time. But there was no Internet back when MIDI was adopted in 1982—no streaming audio, no CD-ROM, no multimedia. Computer games were primitive at best (remember Pong?), and digital video was but a glimmer in the eyes of its inventors. Home recording studios barely existed, and only a handful of musicians were tinkering with personal computers (little wonder, considering that the state of the art at the time was the Commodore 64 or Apple IIe). Clearly, the musician's world is very different today, and it will cer-

## The Future of **MIDI**

by **howard massey**

tainly change even more rapidly as we round the corner into the next century.

To be sure, MIDI has evolved. MIDI Machine Control was added to enable integrated control in the studio, as does MIDI Show Control in live performance. MIDI Time Code allows SMPTE-like synchronization with video and multitrack audio decks. The Standard MIDI File (SMF) format made sequences portable. And General MIDI was specifically designed to make the whole shooting match more accessible for the hobbyist user. But many of the basic elements of MIDI—its transmission speed, number of channels, and hardware interface—remain from the original proposal. The big question is: Will MIDI be able to keep pace in the years ahead, or will we have to evolve a newer means of controlling our digital toys?

We had a chance to discuss this with Tom White, president

and CEO of the MIDI Manufacturers Association, the U.S.-based organization which, along with the Japanese AMEI (Association of Musical Electronics Industry), oversees the development of MIDI. "Let's get one thing straight from the outset," he declares. "MIDI is not dead, and it is not going away, for one simple reason: It remains the most efficient, effective way to control sound. In fact, because of its enormous potential in interactive

applications, it will be used by even wider groups of people in the future."

Under White's direction, the MMA has already taken three bold steps toward the future. First, it has taken

under its wing an autonomous Internet discussion group called the Interactive Audio Special Interest Group (IA-SIG). This was originally

**Is your favorite interface on its last legs? Don't bet on it.**

started by a bunch of computer game developers who wanted to find ways to improve audio development tools and upgrade multimedia audio performance. The MMA's affiliation with the IA-SIG not only establishes a strong connection with the much larger computer and gaming industries, it creates an impetus toward exploring new applications for MIDI.

In fact, in conjunction with the IA-SIG, the MMA has taken a second major step with its announcement of the creation of a new industry standard called Downloadable Sounds (DLS), expected to be formally ratified and adopted by the time you read this. DLS extends General MIDI by providing a means for game developers and composers to add their own sounds (downloaded from card, disk, or CD-ROM into RAM), rather than relying on the fixed GM sound set stored in an instrument or sound card's ROM. With DLS, custom sounds can be created and existing sounds can be augmented with special effects by simply downloading a new sample bank. Unashamedly targeted for CD-ROM and Internet entertainment applications, DLS will allow the wavetable synthesizers in computer sound cards to deliver improved audio at no additional cost.

"This is the industry standard that will make wavetable and MIDI ubiquitous on mainstream computer PCs," White insists. "Consumers will experience enhanced interactive sounds beyond anything available today on the PC, and composers can rest assured that the consumer will hear exactly what was intended." Multimedia artist Thomas Dolby agrees: "Downloadable Sounds will give composers a universal delivery system for great-sounding music in computer games. I'm done apologizing for a string section that sounds like a squished bug!" There are also plans to launch a "musician's" version of DLS, possibly to be called DLS Level 2, which will include such features as digital filtering, more comprehensible envelope generators, interactive voice allocation schemes, and audio compression.

The third major step taken by White is to aggressively promote moving MIDI to a faster, higher bandwidth interface protocol such as FireWire (officially known as IEEE 1394), which

is already being used by manufacturers like Sony for digital video transmission. The MMA now has an official "steering committee," which includes representatives from Yamaha, Mackie, IBM, Roland, Microsoft, and Ensoniq, to evaluate this idea fully.

The IEEE 1394 interface's sheer rate of speed is staggering. Current 1394 devices operate at 200 Mbps (that's 200 million bits of data per second, as opposed to the 31.25 thousand bits per second used by MIDI), and this is expected to rise to 1 Gbps (1 billion bits per second) by 1998. A single 1394 cable operating at 200 Mbps is capable of carrying the content of 640 MIDI cables (that's 10,240 channels of data) or 140 CD-quality audio channels. This, of course, assumes the use of the

**Currently there are  
two kinds of musical data:  
MIDI and digital audio.  
Soon both kinds  
will be merged into one, and  
all data will  
simply be music data.**

current MIDI feature set at the current transmission rate, but White is quick to point out that 1394 will make it possible to expand greatly upon MIDI.

"Logjam has been a problem up until now in certain circumstances," he says, "but 1394 will not only pretty much eliminate that, it will allow us to add all the things to MIDI that people have been asking about for years: more channels, greater resolution, more controller numbers, a greatly extended command set, new kinds of events, and so on." Tied in with the rise of higher-density storage devices such as DVD, this will not only give game developers much greater control over audio content, it will also extend that control to the end user. "Game developers will be able to tap into a whole new set of tools for fashioning sounds, such as digital mixing and customized DSP," White points out, "and end users will also be able to interactively alter the sounds in many new and exciting ways."

1394 also presents a possible solution to the current segmentation of the marketplace. "For all practical purposes," White observes,

"there are now currently several kinds of MIDI, from low-end GM applications to high-end uses such as sample dump. There are also currently two kinds of musical data: MIDI, which contains performance information, and digital audio, which contains data transcribing the sounds themselves. One of the best things about 1394 is that it will allow both kinds of data to converge into one, so that we'll simply have music data, period. After all, if you think about it, the only difference between MIDI and digital audio sounds is their length and where they are stored—in sound card ROM, for example, or on a hard disk. 1394 has the potential to dramatically change the whole paradigm of working with audio. And the thing is, 1394 will happen in the computer and consumer electronics industries, whether we're there or not; future devices will have 1394 ports and future operating systems will support the protocol. We have a golden opportunity here to bring MIDI into the mainstream."

So, five years down the road, how will the MIDI specification look? White gives us this prediction: "Though there will hopefully be some degree of backward compatibility, the MIDI of the future will largely become a control protocol for audio and less of one for musical instruments. For example, it will include a means for setting up comprehensive virtual mixing consoles. It will contain a format for streamlining MIDI, which will be required for interactive control over streaming audio being broadcast over the Internet. I also expect there will be some kind of interactive delivery mechanism and one or more totally different file formats, including an Interactive SMF format which will include hooks such as looping points. This MIDI won't run at 31.25 kbps, either; it will operate at a much faster speed, using 1394 or something like it. This in turn will enable the usage of more channels and integration with digital audio, and I expect there will be a lot more standardized parameters and controls." In other words, if White's vision comes true, bank on a rosy future for MIDI.

For more information on the MMA or IA-SIG, check out their Web site at <http://www.midi.org> or write them at Box 3173, La Habra, CA 90632.



[cont'd from page 36] Leeds played me this record, *Duke Ellington Live at Newport*, with that long saxophone solo [by Paul Gonsalves, on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue"]. He was telling me that one reason the solo went as long as it did was that this lady jumped up on a table and started dancing to the rhythm, so naturally nobody wanted to quit. That's the vibe I'm trying to capture. I played "Courtin' Time" with Eric once for twenty minutes, and he was wailin' that whole time. That's why even people who are into hip-hop still get "Courtin' Time."

Like "Courtin' Time," "The Holy River" stands out on *Emancipation* as a departure for you in terms of the rhythm.

Well, the melody came first on that one. Sometimes I'll be walking around and I'll hear the melody as if it were the first color in a painting. If you believe in that first color and trust it, you can build your song from there. Music is like the universe: Just look at how the planets, the air, and the light fit together. That's one reason why *Emancipation* is so long—because of the sense of harmony that keeps it all together.

"Soul Sanctuary" is more of an orchestration experiment, with a mixture of what sounds like Mellotron string lines, harp, and marimba.

I'll start a track like that piece by piece. I'll have a color or a line in mind, and I'll keep switching things around until I get what I'm hearing in my head. Then I'll try to bring to Earth the color that wants to be with that first color. It's like having a baby, knowing that this baby wants to be with you. You're giving birth to the song.

Was that a real or a sampled harp on "Soul Sanctuary"?

That was a sampled harp. I wanted to be able to play it perfectly, and while I can kind of play a few simple things on a real harp, the sample helped me get it the way I wanted it. Samples are good for music; you almost can't compare "It's Gonna Be a Beautiful Night," the up-tempo song from *Sign o' the Times*, with "The Human Body" [from *Emancipation*] [cont'd on page 88]

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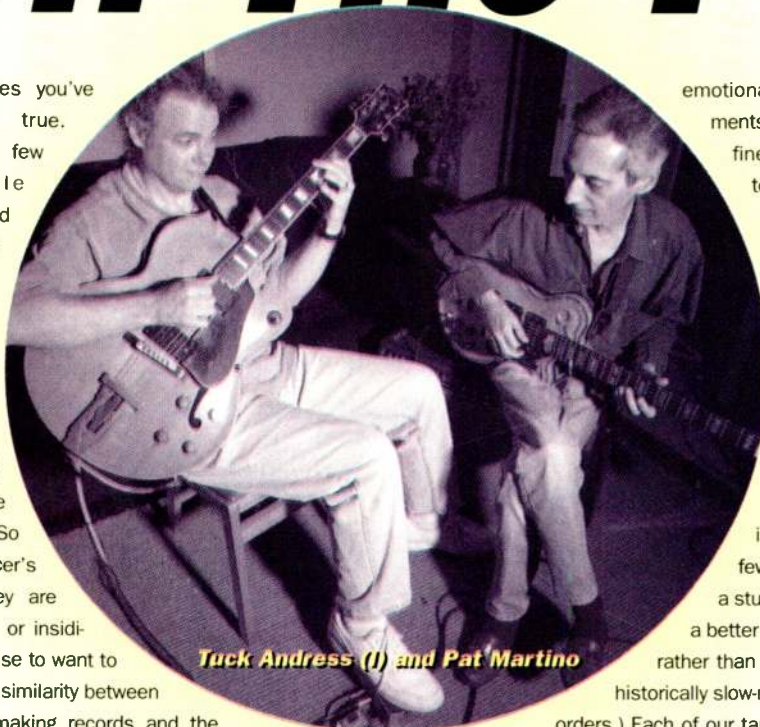
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by matt resnicoff with bill milkowski

# On The Fly

**A**ll the stories you've heard are true. There are few irreducible

principles guiding record production, since principles have no place in the music business, and the problems encountered during any album's birth generally feed off the characteristics and peccadilloes of every person and place within a project's orbit. So why are they the producer's problems? Because they are often too huge, meager, or insidiously vague for anyone else to want to address. There's a close similarity between the producer's role in making records and the responsibilities film producers and directors face together to create a movie: designating the budget; choosing, hiring, and moti-



Tuck Andress (l) and Pat Martino

emotional and logistical readjustments, and at times tested our finesse in negotiating with touchy artists and their even touchier handlers.

*United States* was unlike anything Pat had undertaken. This would not be a typical post-bop session, with a crew of vets knocking out an album in an afternoon; it would stretch over ten months, under wildly differing conditions. We enjoyed few of the benefits of working in a studio for a long period. (You get a better rate, by the way, paying cash rather than asking a studio to deal with historically slow-moving record label purchase orders.)

Each of our tapes retained so much of the identity of the location and personality of the instruments used that we had to carefully shape the tracks' musical identities at every

## Studio Adventures with Pat Martino

vating the cast of players; approving the program material; constructing a production schedule; protecting the budget; formulating the product's continuity and marketability; mourning the budget; chasing down everything from extras to fuses; and consolidating everything into a presentable, polished form.

We signed to produce Pat Martino's Blue Note debut record (working title: *United States*) with an idea of the range of the project: Label president Bruce Lundvall envisioned an all-star album, a guitar equivalent of Sinatra's *Duets*. What we ended up with, once we recast the project as an eclectic collaborative event rather than as a "tribute," was by no means the average production but easily the equivalent of ten records' worth of effort. Each song required the planning of an entire conventional record, with all the attendant

step to create an overall esthetic balance.

What we were blessed with, in most cases, was the cooperation and generosity of our special guests who, with only a few exceptions, went to great lengths to help us facilitate this far-fetched circus of ours. (Lundvall's sensitivity to our vision was invaluable in this area.) Who could have imagined Michael Hedges, the country's premier acoustic guitarist, crawling around his own studio to patch in cables, mics, and amps, as well as engineering two grueling sessions? And there's certainly no way you can lose with the estimable Charlie Hunter pumping his eight-string guitar through a rotating Leslie speaker while Pat blistered over a funky Stevie Wonder groove like "Too High," or with a wizard like Joe Satriani providing his patented futuristic melodies and unearthly harmonies.

Jimmy Katz



The biggest headaches weathered by producers involve dealing with everyone's sense of creative entitlement. In a record like this, where a jazz giant like Pat had to step into many genres (often with musicians he'd never even heard of), our job was to sketch out common ground between him and his collaborators by selecting tunes, even laying in the suggested framework for their new subgenre-in-progress. Lots of cassettes were Fed-Exed; many tune structures and concepts were bandied about in bars, on trains, even while tape was rolling.

Too often, the most unexpected detail can upturn an entire week's planning: Rerouting a plane ticket can cost thousands of unbudgeted dollars, and a blown preamp can leave a studio full of paid engineers and musicians with nothing to do for hours at a time. Sometimes things fall out of whack when musicians clash on a technicality like a key signature: Pat had an unaccompanied version of the Joni Mitchell classic "Both Sides Now" in the key of A major, but when Cassandra Wilson came in to rehearse the tune, she was most comfortable singing it in Db—no picnic for any guitarist, especially one who'd prepared an entire arrangement which had to be transposed by the time the red light went on the next morning. Even more chilling, Cassandra had to split halfway through the session to make an important previous appointment. In spite of all this, we still got a magic first take.

A great first take, however, is a rare gift from the heavens. One of our most arduous production challenges was a track with *Tonight Show* bandleader Kevin Eubanks, whose schedule didn't allow for any rehearsal; we wound up spending hours and many dollars in studio time while he and Pat worked up sketches of a tune. By the time they'd rehearsed, eaten dinner, and played through three rather undistinguished takes, everyone was spent. But because we anticipated just such a disaster—studio jams are a gamble at best—we had our Los Angeles engineer, Malcolm Cecil, roll ADAT and DAT machines from the moment Kevin and Pat sat down with their instruments.

A decision was made in the privacy of subsequent production meetings that the track would flounder unless we used the best bits of the rehearsals, none of which contained a full rundown but some of which featured better playing than in the complete but less inspired later takes. Even then, we agreed, a percussionist would have to be called in to lift the music to a new level of excitement. This was a multi-step process: Back in New York a few weeks after the session, we went through all the DATs and located the prime stuff, which was piecemeal, false-start material. Then we brought our log and the multitrack ADATs to Musegarden studio, where engineer David Lawrence mixed these segments off the ADATs, and we located and polished the edit points where each portion of music would butt up against the next.

David then dumped the patchwork piece into the Opcode Studio Vision Pro program on a Power Macintosh with Digidesign hard-disk recording hardware, and we grafted the parts together so they "breathed" rhythmically as one piece of music. The final edit was then copied to two tracks of ADAT, with the digital output from the Mac going through a Panasonic SV-3800 DAT machine, using that deck's 20-bit

converters. At this second ADAT stage, Brazilian percussionist Valtinho was brought in to provide texture, color, and much-needed rhythmic cement. Two Neumann KM184s went up for the congas and a Sennheiser MD421 hung over his bells and whistles, all of which were blended, faded, and melded to anoint the transitions we envisioned and even cover some unwanted guitar bleeds. Showcasing Kevin's astonishing virtuosity and Pat's bluesy funk, the composite "Progression" shows how even the simplest digital technology can preserve material with first-generation fidelity while affording freedom to layer, rebuild, redefine, even elevate a performance beyond its original conception.

The suite we call "Ellipsis/Never and After" represented another unexpected opportunity to attempt the sort of creative "Teo Macero" tape manipulation we worshipped on Miles Davis' landmark *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*. Guitar hero Joe Satriani met with us at Michael Hedges' Speech and Hearing Clinic way

up in Mendocino County, California, for a day of free jamming with Pat. Joe suggested laying down a bass part to a click track, which could serve as a stimulus for him and Pat to play against. Throughout the day, the two musicians improvised together, using a variety of sounds and time feels, monitoring the click as we turned it up and down in their headphones to incite unpredictable reactions. They went through space bop, metal blues, and tribal-squeal motifs, and we wound up with a half-hour's worth of fabulous, absolutely disjointed material.

The guitarists took a long break, and we hunkered down in Michael's control room with pens and paper for an audit. Fantastic ideas popped in and out of the music; some of the best playing and interaction sat within chaos too extreme even for an "out" record. Again, we selected the cream—certain moments shorter than a few beats long—and presented them to Hedges, often singing him the ideas we'd concocted from the tape segments. Then Michael unwrapped his razor and began to cut and paste these shreds of one-inch tape in a way that miraculously matched what we'd sung. He even used the blade to fix one bum note—we're not saying whose—in an intimate acoustic duet version he and Pat did of Michael's beautiful "Two Days Old," recorded on the same site two days later.

One truth about producing is that if something goes great, someone else is sure to get the credit, and if things go wrong, you're the first to suffer. This was confirmed by most of the other producers and musicians we encountered during the ten months we spent on this record. One friend who produced a superstar multiplatinum group remembered helping them arrange and even rewrite in the studio; not only was he passed over financially, but in interviews the band claimed to have done all this themselves. Even working with gracious people, we felt the pressures mount. But with that comes a quiet satisfaction: Collaborating with incredible musicians is magically thrilling. Our most valuable lesson, in the face of all else, was to simply relax and be part of the music.

**Contributors:** Matt Resnicoff and Bill Milkowski are the founders of *Delicious Mystery Productions*. Their credits include an album in progress by harp guitar virtuoso Philip de Gruy.

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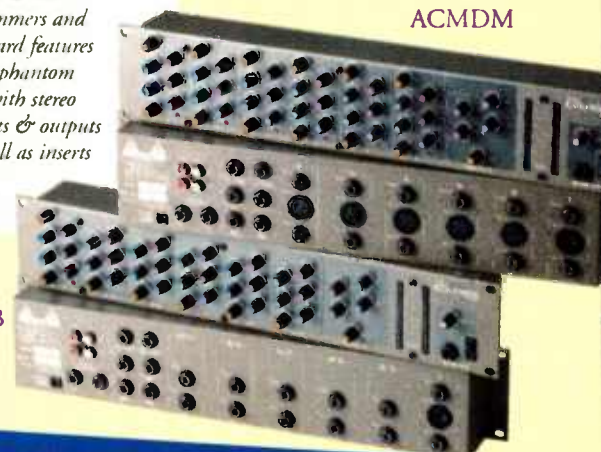


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# MOBY GoEs MODULAR

by greg sandow

**M**oby—who is about to demonstrate a synthesizer that has, he insists, no practical use—is bored with the thoughtful dance music that made him famous. Now he plays rock guitar and sings. He has formed a band, toured with Soundgarden, and produced songs or mixes for a variety of rockers, including Ozzy Osbourne.

The instrument he shows me, though, is a throwback to his earlier life. It's a modular synthesizer, built by the now defunct Serge Modular company in San Francisco. (Sound Transforms Systems in Oakland, Calif. is now licensed to manufacture Serge units.) It's an odd contraption: three boxes hinged so the whole thing bends but doesn't fold. Mostly it's black knobs alternating with holes surrounded by blue or red or yellow plastic.

"See, it operates like most synths," Moby says, meaning most analog synths. "You start with an oscillator ..." Meanwhile he's sticking patch cords in the holes, connecting one oscillator to an output. We hear a low, buzzy hum.

"So," he goes on. "Patch cables

... output here ... variable output ... out from that ..." He's connecting stuff. Now the tone is lower, almost watery.

"You can send everything to everything else," he explains, pointing out that the unit includes three oscillators. He sends a low, slow sine wave from one of them into another one, modulating its frequency (or, in plainer English, making its pitch sail up and down). *Whirp! Whirp! Whirp!* "And you can send the same pulse to the filter,

## Whirping and wheeping with help from Serge

see?" *Whee-irp! Whee-irp!*

He connects another cord, and now we hear a low, whirling hum. "That's the ring modulator," Moby murmurs, lost in his demonstration. "Then there's the wave modulator, whatever that is. I don't worry about what it means. I just plug stuff in. Let's see what happens if we ..." His voice trails off. A quiet whoosh gets high and nasal.

The Serge has a keyboard, of sorts: six metal pads at the bottom, on which you tap your fingers to trigger whatever sound you've programmed each to play. Now Moby twiddles his fingers on the pads, creating little out-of-tune melodies, tiny poodle sighs: *Whewy, whewy, whewy*.

Moby has never used the Serge on a record. Why? "Because you can never get the same thing out of it twice," he says. Besides, you adjust the pitch of any sound by whirling knobs, not the most precise procedure; thus, as

Moby observes, the notes won't be in tune.

So why is this the gear he wants to show *Musician*? "Because it's cool," he smiles. "It's quirky, as opposed to, like, an effects unit I bought off the shelf and would use the same way as anybody else."

There really is a lesson for musicians here. Creativity doesn't move in a straight line. Sometimes you need to take time off to amuse yourself, and then you find, in Moby's words, that "everything sparks off everything else. I fool around with the Serge as a meditation, the way some people play acoustic guitar."

He pauses, visions dancing in his eyes. "And maybe I won't be the only one," he says, loving the thought. "The aesthetes of the future...maybe they'll all be sitting there, making sounds like this..."



Melanie Weiner



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# records



## MCS of Swing

**F**or all the talk about the ways in which hip-hop resembles jazz—its reinvention of existing songs, its sense of improvisation, its expression of African-American culture—the one area in which it seems most dissimilar is its rhythm. With its longstanding reliance on drum machines and loops, hip-hop tends towards a metronomic regularity, something utterly inimical to the free-flowing play of jazz. At the same time, the freedom jazz affords its drummers often undoes the trance-like intensity of hip-hop's slamming beats. It's as if the two styles are, by definition, at rhythmic cross-purposes.

US3 doesn't entirely resolve that dilemma, but *Broadway & 52nd* comes close. With the Blue Note jazz catalog at his fingertips, member Geoff Wilkinson assembles loops that grant him the best of both worlds: a steady beat with a free-swinging feel. It isn't just that he laces those loops with a healthy dollop of actual jazz drumming, grounding "Recognize and Realize," for instance, with a roiling Art Blakey tomtom pattern; it's that he also appreciates that there's more to

a rhythm bed than what the drummer does.

So Wilkinson takes a cue from bebop and lets the bassline handle the basic timekeeping chores, allowing the drums more room for rhythmic elaboration. That works particularly well with the loping cadences of "Snakes," a sinuous 5/4 workout that flows so easily from the bass ostinato that you won't even notice the odd meter unless you count the beats, but it's just as much the case with conventional groovers like "Come On Everybody (Get Down)," a solid, soulful number in the vein of "Cantaloup." Nor is it always the bassline that does the job, as "Thinking About Your Body" relies as much on keyboards to stabilize the beat.

If *Broadway & 52nd* has a fault, it's that the instrumental elements too often defer to the raps. Not that there's anything wrong with what KCB or Shabaam Sahdeeq do with their words, but anyone who remembers "Chilli Hot" from the *Get Shorty* soundtrack may end up wishing that more had been drawn from that well. Still, that's a minor complaint for what sounds like a major album.—J.D. Considine

### US3

*Broadway & 52nd*  
(Blue Note)

Steve Eichner



**Pavement**

*Brighten the Corners (Matador)*

ndie cred. It's tough to acquire, but it's even harder to hang onto. Take the case of Pavement, a band boasting a distinctive guitar-based sound steeped in the Television/Sonic Youth tradition and one of rock's smartest (and funniest) lyricists, Stephen Malkmus. Their second album *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain* was widely hailed as one of 1994's best. But with sales figures going up as newcomers caught on, the tastemaking elite were quick to grumble. The followup, *Wowee Zowee*, was largely greeted in critical circles by words like "conventional." That it was in fact stylistically more adventurous than its predecessor didn't matter; Pavement were getting too successful, and that couldn't be tolerated.

So what do Malkmus and his cohorts do to fight the backlash? How about rehearsing their new songs for weeks in advance of recording, and then bringing the whole five-piece band in at the same time for sessions? These might not seem like innovative ideas for most musicians, but for Pavement they were firsts, and as *Brighten the Corners* shows, they paid off. This is a much more cohesive record than *Wowee Zowee*, full of deft arrangement touches, from the chirpy Mellotron asides on "Transport Is Arranged" to the insistent minor third that discordantly rings against the jangly major-ninth chords of "Blue Hawaiian." (Cleverly enough, one of the lines Malkmus sings over this tone cluster is—you got it—"The tones are grouped in clusters.") Just about every track features an unusual voicing, stuttering riff or winsome melodic phrase that's sure to get you grinning. And Malkmus' words are as well-crafted and witty as ever.

Yet, absorbing and amusing as it is, there's something disturbing at times about *Brighten the Corners*. Maybe it's the way the majestic outro of "Fin" gets sabotaged by a guitar solo that trips into ugly overbends and fret noise, or how the graceful open-tuned progressions of "Type Slowly" are matched by a Malkmus vocal that suggests Tom Verlaine trying to imitate Alfalfa from the Little Rascals. Moments like these, though probably meant to combat excess smoothness or seriousness, end up breaking momentum, distracting from the al-

**TONY BENNETT**  
*Beauty & Billie Holiday*

Lights are off in Clinton Studios, Tony Bennett's facility of choice in midtown Manhattan. He's a study in shadows, standing just outside the glow of the lamp that illuminates the sheet music on Ralph Sharon's piano. More than Bennett's accompanist, Sharon has for many years been the vessel in which the singer's ideas take shape. He knows how to translate a fragment of melody, or a gesture, or an isolated word or two into the perfect framework Bennett wants for his performance.

They're working their way through "Me, Myself, and I," one of 26 songs they're cutting for *Tony Bennett On Holiday*, a tribute to Billie Holiday, scheduled for release in February on Columbia. Sharon is experimenting with the ending; his ad-libbed finale stumbles a bit.

smile. "Me, bah, bah, bah, myself, bah, bah, bah, are all in love ..."

And, suddenly, an unexpected high note: "... with yew!" Even after all these years, it's like a small miracle when he hits those show-stoppers, clean and clear, way above what seems possible for a voice as warm and worn as his.

A minute later, the playback. Sharon is hunched over, chin in hand, chewing over every detail. Bennett, meanwhile, has his sketchbook and pencil in hand. An obsessed and gifted artist, he spends much of his down time drawing whatever happens to be in front of him—in this case a Coke bottle. But he, too, is listening.

They get to the ending, with that barn-burner finale. The sound fades, and both musicians are quiet for a few seconds.

Finally Bennett speaks. "So, you like that ending, Ralph?"

"Yeah," says the British-born veteran. "All the way."

"All right, then." It's as simple as that.

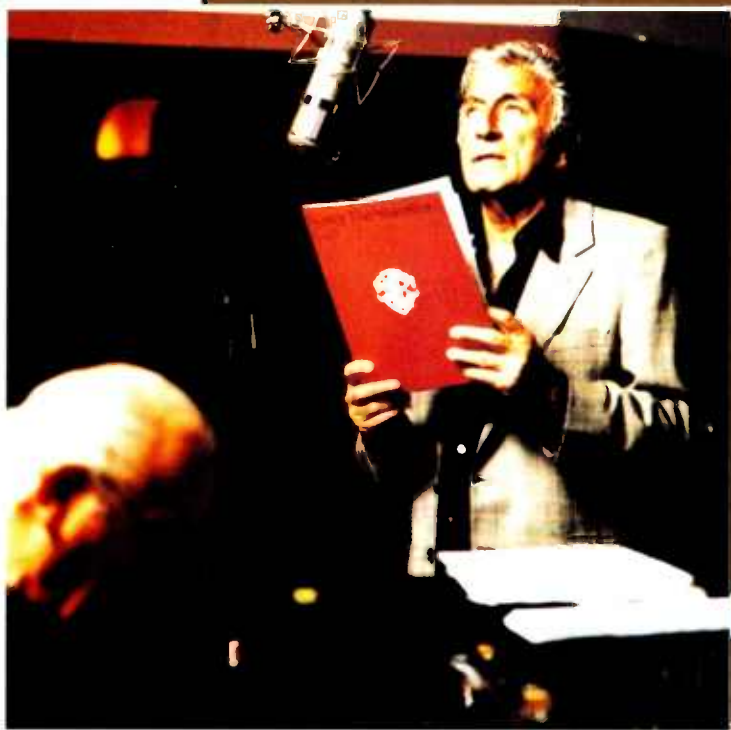
"I'm very affected by Billie," Bennett says. We're in the control room now; he's sketching again, this time capturing a vase of flowers near the console. "I threw a little scat into 'Me, Myself, and I,' that happy little tune, because she was so influenced by Louis Armstrong. All her records had an Armstrong phrasing. I like that too, because that's the source.

"I saw her near the end of her life, singing in a little sawdust joint in Philadelphia. I was unknown at that time. She didn't know who I was, but I was in awe of her. My eyes were just poppin' out of my head, and she kind of got a kick out of how I looked. She lifted her dress, took some money out of her garter, and

said, 'Get me a gin.' I couldn't believe it! I just stumbled all over the place until I got her a gin.

"By that time in her career, her singing had gotten deeper and simpler, more economical. She left a lot out, but she made it so clear." Bennett stops to study his drawing—fields of white space between bursts of floral color. "But you know what? It was even more beautiful than what she had done before."

—Robert L. Doerschuk



Elli Hersko

The singer shakes his head. "I don't recommend it," he says; his speaking voice is husky and tired.

They try it again, and Bennett is suddenly off, like a thoroughbred bolting from the gate to the pistol crack of Sharon's intro. He hooks his thumbs into his belt, sways gently to the piano's gentle stride. By the time they hit the home stretch, he's swinging his arms, head back, eyes closed, and scatting through a





James Smolka

bum's overall excellence. Do Pavement merely want to sound honest, or are they afraid of becoming too mainstream? I hope it's the former. It would be a shame if the top-notch musical minds that created this album were to deliberately botch their art in the name of indie cred.

—Mac Randall

### R.L. Burnside

Mr. Wizard (Fat Possum)

**R**.L. Burnside, the 70-year-old juke bluesman from Holly Springs, Miss., got a large and unexpected shot of the hip factor in 1996, when he and his working band cut the lunatic album *A Ass Pocket of Whiskey* with blues-punk maven Jon Spencer. While that tag-team effort was free-swinging fun, *Mr. Wizard* offers a much more authoritative picture of Burnside's prodigious Northern Mississippi guitar style, which Fat Possum Records has been rambunctiously documenting since 1991. Some leftovers from the *Ass Pocket* session are audible here, most notably the theremin-laced "Highway No. 7." But for the most part, the new album is a bold and straightforward rendering of Burnside's socko approach to traditional blues materials. Of special note are the unadulterated opening and closing numbers, "Going Over the Hill" and "You Gotta Move," which are solo slide pieces that bear the gospelized stamp of Mississippi Fred McDowell, the late great Delta bottleneck ace and Burnside's longtime neighbor and mentor.

The guts of the album are a steaming batch of full-band tunes that mate Burnside's bass-heavy guitar drones to the whizzing slide guitar of Kenny Brown, his "adopted son" and protégé, and the wallop of Burnside's grandson Cedric's

drums. The best of these amped-up tracks—"Alice Mac," "Rolling and Tumbling," and "Snake Drive" (the latter in a trio take different from the Spencerized one included on *Ass Pocket*)—bubble with an energy punk rock bands would envy. Even though some tracks are less focused or played more raggedly (these are live recordings, first and foremost), they ultimately bear the mark of human hands, which is more than you can say for the processed cheese that's being spewed out by the majors these days. This is the real blues, most assuredly, y'all. —Chris Morris

### Big Head Todd & The Monsters

Beautiful World (Revolution)

**F**or state-of-the-art competence, Big Head Todd and the Monsters can't be beat. Never less—and rarely more—than listenable, the trio's fifth album is utterly average in every way, featuring smooth, forgettable melodies, pleasantly soulful vocals from Todd Park Mohr, and thoroughly professional production by Jerry Harrison. *Beautiful World* is a teeny bit rock, a tiny bit funk, and all harmless filler. Isn't that reassuring?

Blessed with a de-

cent set of pipes, Mohr occasionally aspires to be Al Green ("Tower") but usually settles for milder stylings akin to Boz Scaggs ("Please Don't Tell Her") or Eric Clapton, echoing Slowhand's languid moan on the gently simmering title track. When the tempo escalates, on the rockabilly-tinged "True Lady," Mohr still plays the crooner, drawing out the lyrics as the beat chugs along. Someday he'll get up the nerve to cut an album of Bing Crosby covers, and do a reasonable job of it too.

Sporadic flashes of excitement can't spoil the lads' down-to-earth aura. A capable rhythm guitarist, Mohr quickly runs out of ideas on solos: He ignites the sluggish "Helpless" with a few bars of "Eight Miles High"-type daring, then resorts to dull yet frantic showboating. While drummer Brian Nevin displays solid chops, Harrison's overheated production turns him into a generic arena basher. And guest Susan Voelz's sizzling violin licks aren't enough to turn the pedestrian love song "Caroline" into interesting material.

However lukewarm the grooves, Mohr and company are probably taking the most rewarding route. Aspiring to raunch, the guys churn out a thudding cover of John Lee Hooker's "Boom Boom," complete with a commanding cameo by the originator himself. After hearing Mohr try to bark and swagger, it's easy to see why Hooker prefers the laid-back approach.

Except for that one misfire, *Beautiful World* is consistently adequate. —Jon Young

### L7

The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum (Slash/Reprise)

**I**n the same way a giant Stegosaurus skeleton inspires awe in little field-tripping kids, the lumbering new behemoth of a record from surly-gal gang L7 sounds so Pleistocene-primitive it almost wows a listener via enormity alone. But make no mistake—it's still a museum piece. Suffering through its tepid

Susan McCartney





# chuck's cuts

by Charles M. Young

## Chris Smither

### *Small Revelations (Hightone)*

Smither has a Voice of Experience, roughly in the Leonard Cohen tradition of deep resonance, relaxed because it's been through everything and can't be bothered with the requisite adrenalin for angst. If that isn't wisdom, it comes close enough for the purposes of art. And it comes close enough to put me in a contemplative mood whenever I slap a Smither CD into my boom box. Aptly titled, this album chains together epiphanies of self- and other-discovery, and Smither's songwriting and subtle arrangements are more in the forefront than his always inspirational neo-Lightnin' Hopkins finger-picking. I'm still humming along with several cuts, and who would have guessed that anyone could do a vital new arrangement of "Dust My Broom" in 1997?

## Altan

### *The Best of (Green Linnet)*

In Celtic music, the lead fiddle finger can relentlessly unreel reels to the point of monotony. I was afraid at first that this might be the case here, but it isn't. The music unfolds beautifully over two long CDs, with the acoustic guitar, bouzouki, bodhran, tin whistle, and Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh's gorgeous voice all balancing out the arrangements (first CD is the best-of anthology, second CD is a live concert). So only intermittently will you want to dance a jig, and the rest of the time you'll be wondering why oppressed people always make the coolest music.

## Rockers Hi Fi

### *Mish Mash (Warner Bros.)*

Working over fifty hours a week, the average American absorbs music like he absorbs politics—in soundbites—because he doesn't have time to let anyone else develop an idea. The soundbites, however, have become so stale in recent years that it just might be time for a countertrend in which these vast symphonies of techno-psychedelia find a mass audience. The Rockers have as good a chance as any for break-

ing through: They understand trance induction—phasing simple melodies and rhythms in and out of each other—and they manage to be witty with their sampled voices issuing non-sequiturs from beyond the ozone layer. I just don't know when I'll have another 75 minutes to listen to it. Maybe if this stuff gets popular, people will start reading novels again.

## Orff-Schulwerk

### *Volume Three/Piano Music (Celestial Harmonies)*

Whenever I'm in a classical music store, I check the Carl Orff bin and nine times out of ten all they have is thirty different versions of *Carmina Burana*, which is incredibly an-

ally is. This particular CD consists of melodies that emerged from improvisation exercises he used with his advanced piano students. The exhilaration of freedom within form is everywhere evident, but the main appeal is how these melodies create endlessly subtle variations of mood. Great as background music for writing or painting, equally great as foreground music for interrupting your worried life.

## Lunachicks

### *Pretty Ugly (Go-Kart)*

They've always been loud and obnoxious, and they're still loud and obnoxious, but they've also learned how to play songs in different loud

boyfriends, transsexuality, and the joy of eating donuts. "Donuts," in fact, ought to be a novelty single, during which they throw jelly-filled pastries into the moshpit. Recommended as the proper antidote to Jenny McCarthy. P.S. What is "spork"?

## Drain S.T.H.

### *Horror Wrestling (The Enclave)*

In an age when females have made such inroads in punk, I don't know what would stop this Swedish foursome from making a run at Marilyn Manson's metal throne. Their songs are better. Dark, bleak, sensual, they have mastered the grind, and the grind is most of what matters. Their guitar sound owes a little something to Ministry, but we're not talking industrial here. The drummer is a live human, and they don't beat riffs into the usual massive overkill. What we are talking is overtone, in which they revel orgastically. As far I can make out the lyrics, they aren't singing about donuts or menstruation, so you get no jokes to break up their vision of mortality. I want to hear them live, and I will take out my earplugs if the soundman is good. An early nominee for Best Metal of '97.

## Taj Mahal

### *An Evening of Acoustic Music (Ruf)*

Taj has been playing the folk circuit for so long that it's easy to take him for granted. He isn't old enough to be honored as a gray eminence, and he's not young enough to be a novelty. But he really knows how to sing folk blues, growling and exuberating and rasping through seven classics and eight originals with such benign cheer that you can't help thinking of one of his major guitar and vocal influences, Mississippi John Hurt. Cool moment: Taj giving the German audience a lecture on how to clap on the two and four as an intro to "Blues with a Feeling." Another cool moment: the reunion of Taj and Howard Johnson, the brilliant tuba player, on "Cake Walk Into Town." A small quibble: that's a little too much chorus on the acoustic guitar.



noying, because he had a vast body of exquisite music, unique in its grasp of rhythm, resonance and melody. Today's trance music can be traced directly to his experiments with music education and therapy for children. Indeed, if I were deejaying a rave, I'd mix in some Orff and show these young punks what trance re-

and obnoxious styles and do semi-intricate stuff with the vocal arrangements. "Missed It" concerns going to work too late and missing the train, being born too late and missing all the great rock & roll bands, and ovulating too late and missing your period. Other subject matter includes the death of a gerbil, bad



sludge-riff-and-screaming-mimi-vocals schematic, you can't help but wonder: How has this outdated thunder lizard of a group avoided the ice age for so long? And at what point did its strained shtick start to take precedence over any desire for artistic growth? Your kid sister and three of her drunken teenage friends, locked in the family garage for a few days, could have coughed up a more invigorating effort than *The Beauty Process: Triple Platinum*. Even after the beer ran out.

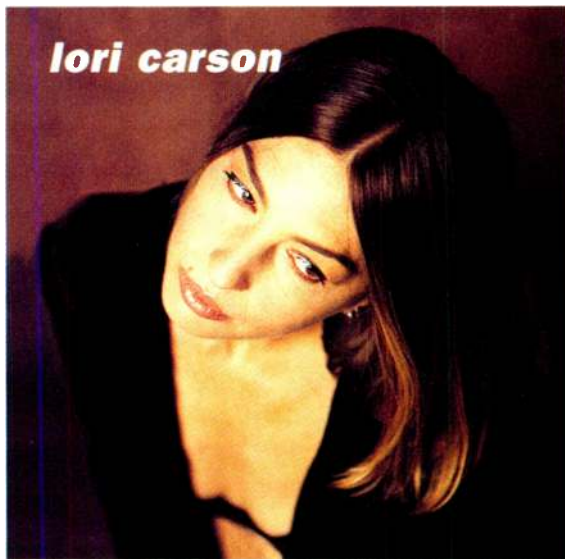
Where should L7 be at this point in its existence? For comparison's sake, take other prime purveyors of grunge (on whose flannel shirttail this band has always had a tentative grip) such as Soundgarden or Pearl Jam. In 1996, both hallowed sludge-slingers made the most adventurous, almost anti-grunge, records of their careers, music that—while not necessarily pleasing the masses—pleased the artists themselves. Yet here we have L7 frontwoman Donita Sparks, braying "The Masses Are Asses" over a pedestrian chukka-chukka rhythm that feels so phoned in you'll wind up scouring the floor for used calling cards. The message, too, is pedestrian, a "we're cool, they're not" routine that Brit-brats Girlschool delivered with more speed, volume and trashy humor over a decade ago. That song resembles almost every other knuckleheaded stomper on *The Beauty Process*. It also resembles almost every other knuckleheaded stomper in the group's five-disc catalog. Encased in amber. Bound for the tar pit.—**Tom Lanham**

### Lori Carson

**Everything I Touch Runs Wild**  
(Restless)

To the casual listener, the title of Lori Carson's new album may seem like a misnomer. If there's any wildness to be found in the sometime Golden Palominos vocalist's third solo effort, it lies buried beneath the surface of her spare, almost fragile folk-pop tunes, in her sometimes goofy but always richly expressive lyrics. When she has something interesting to say, and the courage to say it frankly, Carson can be as potent in her fashion and as sweetly disarming as a sudden phone call from an old flame.

There are echoes of Joni Mitchell and Rickie Lee Jones in Carson's airy, vaguely haunted soprano, and the best songs on *Everything I Touch Runs Wild* use moody, jazz-tinged nuances also redolent of these influences. The opening track, "Something's Got Me," is a wistful romantic melody with a subtle hip-hop beat and bitersweet horn fills. The ballad "Make A Little Luck" follows, a portrait of a thoughtful drifter fu-



smash debut "Rapper's Delight" (ironically the label's biggest success) to Mass Production and Melle Mel's 1985 swan song "Street Walker." In between these musical bookmarks are hours of important music, including classics like Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five's "The Message," "White Lines (Don't Do It)" and "New York,

eled by graceful piano chords and laced with warm, plaintive cello.

After that it's slow going for a while, at least from a musical standpoint. The stinging poignancy of Carson's blunt confessional narratives on "Snow Come Down" and "Whole Heart" is undermined by anemic melodies and sleepy acoustic-guitar-dominated arrangements. But the singer rebounds with the softly glowing "Souvenir," which builds from wispy verses to more driving, percussive choruses, and the delicately pretty "Greener," on which Carson tells her lover, "I think I'm changing/I don't know what into." So long as she remains true to her untamed heart, you can bet that Carson will remain at least intermittently compelling.—**Elysa Gardner**

### Various Artists

**The Sugar Hill Records Story (Rhino)**

Although debates may rage about the "best" or "most important" rap label of all time, there is one fact that cannot be disputed; Sugar Hill Records was the first label to take rap music to the national (and international) arena, and begin its development into the multi-million dollar industry that it is today. By bringing rap from the streets of New York to the stores of the world, owners Sylvia and Joe Robinson, Sr. used impeccable ears and astute business acumen to prove that rap could—and should—be a commercial success.

Rhino's epic 5-CD set, *The Sugar Hill Records Story*, does a commendable job chronicling the maverick label's unmatched output during rap's early years, from the Sugarhill Gang's 1979

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New York," the Funky Four +1's "That's The Joint," "Funk You Up" by the Sequence, the Sugarhill Gang's "8th Wonder," and cut-and-scratch masterpieces "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel" and West Street Mob's "Break Dance - Electric Boogie," with dozens more to spare.

By presenting the label's output in such depth, the Rhino set testifies to the sheer volume produced by Sugar Hill during its heyday. It also makes plain the many aspects of the Robinsons' musical vision: in using one of the tightest "house" bands (featuring bassist Doug Wimbish, guitarist Skip McDonald and drummer Keith LeBlanc) in recent memory, and in their carefully chosen backing tracks, all of which were taken from a popular break-beat or dance groove of the day. The quality of that vision is further proven by the fact that rappers today, from the Beastie Boys to Dr. Dre, still reverently use Sugar Hill tracks for samples and inspiration. The Sugar Hill gang may not have always known what would hit and what wouldn't, but they never shied away from new ideas. And for that, their legacy will be as important 20 years from now as it is today.

—Brian Coleman

## Charlie Haden and Pat Metheny

*Beyond the Missouri Sky (Short Stories)* (Verve)

**N**o one can deny the umbilical connection between jazz and the blues, but what of the link to folk music? Leave it to bassist Charlie Haden and guitarist Pat Metheny

to lay the linkage bare for all to hear on *Beyond the Missouri Sky (Short Stories)*, a brilliant and subtle album on which the demarcations between jazz, folk and pop are blissfully blurred. This long-promised duet album by these kindred Missourians, the finest of their collaborations to date, is worth the wait.

Whatever else can be said about them, Metheny and Haden are romantics, without apology or qualifiers. No post-modern irony gets in the way when they take on the silken sounds of Ennio Morricone's *Cinema Paradiso* theme, Jimmy Webb's "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress" or Johnny Mandel's "The Moon Song." Metheny contributes only two tunes to the project, the coolly introspective "Message to a Friend" and "Tears of Rain," replete with electric sitar. But his signature as an improviser and texturalist is evident throughout, from the increasingly intense solo statements on Haden's "Our Spanish Love Song" to the tastefully layered treatment of the melody following Haden's double-stopped rendition on Roy Acuff's "Precious Jewel." Closing the album, Josh Haden's simple "Spiritual" becomes, in Metheny's hands, the most engaging set of variations on I-V-minor IV-IV chord changes you're likely to hear all year.

This is a feelgood record in all the right ways, a deceptively smooth listen that can be considered a persuasive essay on jazz with a heartland coloration. It's about painting pictures, telling stories, and finding the heartfelt center in a piece of music, without regard for what's culturally correct. Mostly it's just lovely, and that is plenty.

—Josef Woodard

## SHORTS

### Van Morrison

*The Healing Game (Polydor)*

**I**n his quest for the musical Grail, the grand Irishman of song has raged at God and reveled in the beauty of religion, always on his own rock and roll terms. Along the way, his gems have far outweighed his failures. Equal parts scalding sentiment and celebratory soul, *The Healing Game* finds Morrison in stronger R&B mode than recent releases, even venturing close to doo-wop in a few cases. "The Burning Ground," which describes spiritual trial by fire, is an uptempo boiler enlivened by upright bass, pungent bari sax and harmonica over a riveting chorus. "Rough God Goes Riding" presents a justice-seeking deity cruising over a sassy beat; the title track is a gospel-inspired hymn to Morrison's life work as soul searcher and musical crusader. —Ken Micallef

### Helmet

*Aftertaste (Interscope)*

**L**eaving Metallica to the hard stuff and Soundgarden to the thoughtful prose, Helmet scurry back to home turf after the

ambitious experimentation of '95's *Betty*. *Aftertaste* is bowel-bruising, if safe, metal rock, with no asides to hip-hop or avant-garde (okay, there is a backwards guitar solo). Guitarist-songwriter-vocalist Page Hamilton's oft-touted jazz references are absent here, the chord changes leaving little space for stylistic interpretation. *Aftertaste* lacks the cathartic danger and wallowing guitar harmonies of crucial Helmet tracks like "Meantime," as though Hamilton seeks acceptance among an audience who've always spurned him. MOR metal? Smells like teen cash to me.

—Ken Micallef

## Jonas Hellborg/Shawn Lane/Apt. Q-258

*Temporal Analogues of Paradise (Day Eight Music)*

**T**he series of quietly astonishing jam-oriented albums that bassmeister Hellborg's been putting out on his own Day Eight label for several years now continues with perhaps the finest yet. The lineup consists of his current touring band, featuring reclusive Memphis guitar virtuoso Shawn Lane and drummer Jeff Sipe (aka Apt. Q-258); the music, divided into two roughly half-hour-long sections, was recorded at various European live shows. Obviously, some of it was preplanned, yet it's hard to know where the plan ends and the improv begins, so seamless and confident is the playing throughout. All three players are headsplittingly magnificent, but the highest praise should be reserved for Lane. Yes, he can move his digits at a surreal speed, but hardly ever does the sonic information thus produced seem random or without purpose. Not just show-off material, this is music with real power and heart.

—Mac Randall

## The Paul Butterfield Blues Band

*East-West Live (Winner)*

**E**ast-West" was the title track of the Butterfield Band's 1966 sophomore album; composed by guitarist Mike Bloomfield, the sprawling number fused electric Chicago blues with Eastern modalities. This funky raga is heard here in three discursive live versions compiled by the group's keyboardist Mark Naf-talin. The least of these is a rambling quarter-hour '66 sortie captured at the bands home base, Poor Richard's in Chicago. Far better are a pointed 12-minute excursion, taped at the Whisky A Go Go in Hollywood in '66, and a mammoth, hard-hitting 28-minute take from the Golden Bear in Huntington Beach, Calif. in '67, both of which feature punchy Bloomfield solo work and impassioned harp blowing by bandleader Butterfield. Despite the rough sound of the tapes, "East-West" survives as one of the sturdiest and most exciting formal experiments of its day. (To order, call 1-800-411-WINNER.)

—Chris Morris

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guitar  
is alright,  
John,  
but you'll  
never make a  
living at it.

Mimi Smith  
(John Lennon's Aunt)

[cont'd from page 75] because of the difference that samples make.

*Yet your songs don't rely on samples in a structural sense. Unlike a lot of dance-oriented musicians, you use samples to adorn rather than to support a tune.*

I am so glad you said that! I've heard a whole lot of musicians who have had a hit record and then come to Paisley Park to set up and jam with the New Power Generation. Now, I'm not a judge, but I know when I see someone jamming and when I see someone *drownin'* [laughs!] I have to pull the plug and save some of their asses. Man, *learn your instrument!* Be a musician! You can't call yourself a musician if you just take a sample and loop it. You can call yourself a thief, because all you're doing is stealing somebody's groove. Just don't call it music.

*How can you tell when the song you're working on has potential?*

Well, see, I can't say anything about that, because I hate criticizing music. If you judge something, maybe that means you

get judged back someday. I wouldn't tell you that some song you wrote isn't any good. I wrote this song called "Make Your Mama Happy" that would probably really frighten you. And this other song I wrote, "Sexual Suicide," has this horn section that's nothing but baritone saxes; it sounds like a truck coming at you. So who can say?

*You don't rate any of your songs as more noteworthy than others?*

The thing is, everybody has an inner voice. Maybe and I are into this thing now of wondering whether we're supposed to get up out of bed when we wake up. If you sleep past this point when you're supposed to get up, then you're groggy for the rest of the day. It's the same thing with songs: Each song writes itself. It's already perfect.

I remember when Miles Davis came to my house. As he was passing by my piano, he stopped and put his hands down on the keys and played these eight chords, one after the other. It was so beautiful; he sounded like Bill Evans or Lisa [Coleman], who also had this way of playing chords that were so perfect. I was wondering whether he was playing games with me,

because he wasn't supposed to be a keyboard player. And when he was finished, I couldn't decide whether it was him or an angel putting his hands on the keys.

*The point is that you recognized something in what Miles was doing, a kind of excellence that you might not hear in the work of other musicians.*

For me, excellence comes from the fact that God loves me. But what is excellence? You've heard of these people who will bomb a building and kill all these people in God's name. You could say that they did an excellent job at what they were trying to do, right? Now, when I look at my band, Dyson is a different kind of guitar player than Mike. She looks cool, she has that kind of punk attitude. But that's her; that's not Mike. Lisa was never an explosive keyboard player, but she was a master of color in her harmonies; I could sing off of what she had with straight soul. I don't know if the people in the band I'm with now will go on to greatness on their own, but everything they do gives me something that I need right now.

*You don't differentiate between musicians either? You don't point to this person as a better player than that person?*

God gave us all gifts. If we accept that, we'll all do the best that we can do. Miles took some soul-type players and put Keith Jarrett on top of that; it was magic. And Fishbone—are they good or not? The last time I saw Fishbone, their drummer played the whole gig facing the wall. But in that kind of craziness there was a certain kind of excellence too.

*Still, you presumably audition musicians for your bands. This means you have to put them on some kind of scale to rate one as being better, or at least more appropriate to your needs, than another.*

Well, "auditions" ... The idea of a judge is in there somewhere, and I don't want to be a judge anymore. A lot of people criticized the last band that Jimi [Hendrix] had, but they were able to start and stop at his will; they were right for him at the time. I've even hired dancers whose only job was to be there and make me feel good. See, *anybody* can play with me. I can play with any musician and make them sound good, and they can bring something to me. This hit me when I married Mayte and accepted my name for what it is.

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With that, the Artist suddenly stood and stretched. "My band will kill me if I don't get in there with them," he announced, bringing the interview to an end. Within a week or two I had translated and transcribed my notes, then called Paisley Park to arrange for the follow-up Q-and-A. The Artist picked up the phone—"You're not taping this, are you?" were his first words—and asked me to send the questions his way via fax. Within a day he had them, and a couple of days later his replies were in my hands. Here, as written, is the final round:

*What are the positive sides of music software? Could you cite examples of where running a certain program yielded results that you might not have obtained otherwise?*

The body of a human (when healthy) runs like a sequencer. It was obviously programmed a long time ago by an absolute genius. That was the notion behind the groove "Human Body" on *Emancipation*. Every track of the song is its own "cell," so 2 speak, running in harmony with its "cell-mates." A living being of sorts is created every time computers are put 2 use this way. No other way yet discovered would be as rewarding.

*You noted that one element of using music technology is that the instruments themselves might end up "writing the song." While some artists seem to consider this a reason not to pursue sequencing and sampling, as if the products somehow shift control of the creative process away from the person, you take a more intriguing view, as if you have an almost organic partnership with the tools of your trade. How, then, do you get to know a new instrument?*

Something very soul-like attracts me 2 some instruments moreso than others. It starts with the sound and then the shape. I dig instruments that appear as if the makers were in love with them.

*Some of your most memorable songs have been structurally pretty simple; if you write a lead sheet of, say, "We Gets Up" [from *Emancipation*], what you see is pretty much rooted on the 1 chord, with mini-*

*mal melody. What, then, distinguishes a song that doesn't rely on unusual chord changes or an extended melody?*

One-key songs designed 2 put the participant into a trance are best filled up with sound provoked by the spirit more than, say, a structural melody that's best complemented by color. This 2 me is the root of funk: the choices one makes.

*You've had a number of customized guitar designs over the years, including the "white guitar" from Purple Rain; to what extent does playability factor into your design for these instruments?*

I have compromised playability 4 the look of an instrument in many instances. Keyboards, though, have 2 have "the touch." Everything is sort of patterned after the 1st violet piano I received as a gift in 1986. Chords sound and feel the prettiest on that instrument. Chords are important. Every note in a chord is a singer 2 me. This approach gives my music its life. 2 look at music this way is a reason 4 living, as far as I'm concerned.

*You're set up at Paisley Park for analog as well as digital recording. What are the pluses and minuses of the two technologies?*

Warmth. Digital is faster. Analog ... well, the kick drum on analog sounds like a fat dude getting stomped in the back with a timbaland! It's all personal preference.

*What approach do you take in rehearsing a new band?*

Again, let everyone play their strengths. Because Rhonda's so smart, 4 example, I tend 2 lean toward bassier grooves moreso than with my other bands. She has a nuclear future sure!

*What are your thoughts about the state of songwriting today?*

I will always respect people like Duke Ellington—someone who has their own style and just watches music change around them. Carlos Santana has more fans now than when he played Woodstock!

*You're preparing to tour. Do you find that you compete with the high standards you've set for yourself in past tours? What insights about performing can you share with artists who are working with limited budgets in relatively funky venues?*

My own competition is myself in the past. "At war with himself." Y'all said it 1st. 2 the new artists: Be wild and all else follows. ♪



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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.

**ALESIS**, 3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90016, (310) 558-4530: HR-16, **70**; ADAT-XT, **70**

**AMPEX MEDIA**, 401 Broadway M/S 22-02, Redwood City, CA, 94063, (800) 227-8443: MM 1200, **69**

**AUDIO CENTRON**, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63133, (314) 727-4512: ACM-DM, **65**

**AVEDIS ZILDJIAN CO.**, 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA, 02061, (617) 871-2200: cymbals, **50**

**BOSS**, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: Octave pedal, **50**

**CELESTION**, 89 Doug Brown Way, Holliston, MA, 01746, (508) 429-6706: speakers, **50**

dbx, 8760 S Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT, 84070, (801) 568-7660:

**16S, 166, 266, 70**

**DEAN MARKLEY**, 3350 Scott Blvd., Ste 29, Santa Clara, CA, 95051, (409) 988-2456: Blue Steel strings, Acoustic Bronze strings, **50**

**DUNLOP MFG.** 150 Industrial Way, P.O. Box 846, Benicia, CA, 94510, (800) 722-3434: Tortex picks, **50**

**E-MU, 1600** Green Hills Rd., Scotts Valley, CA, 95066, (408) 438-1921: Proteus 3/XR, **69**

**ENSONIQ**, 155 Great Valley Pkwy., Malvern, PA, 19355, (610) 647-3630: ASR-10, **60**; DP/4+, **70**

**FATAR/MUSIC INDUSTRIES CORP.** 99 Tulip Ave., Floral Park, NY, 11001, (516) 352-4110: Studio ST-1176, **64**

**FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**, 7975 N. Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ, 85258, (602) 596-9690: Stratocaster, **50**; '63 Jazzmaster, Vibratone amp, '69 Telecaster, '65 Jazzmaster, '58 Precision, **50**

**FOSTEX**, 15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA, 90650, (800) 7FO-STEM: DMT-8VL, **65**

**GIBSON**, 641 Massman Dr.,

Nashville, TN, 37210, (800) 283-7135: **33S, 30**; '54 '56 '57 '70 mid-70's '73 Les Pauls, '76 Thunderbird, **50**

**J.L. COOPER ELECTRONICS**, 12500 Beatrice St., Los Angeles, CA, 90066, (310) 306-4131: synchronizer, **70**

**KORG**, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY, 11747-3201, (800) 645-3188: Prophecy, 01W-FD, 707, SG-1D, EX-M1, EX-Wavestation, A3, 01R/w, EXM1R, DVP-1, DSM, DRV-3000, DRV-1000, A1, SDD 2000, M3R, DSM-1, Pepe, DDD-1, Trinity Plus, EXM-1, **69**

**LEXICON**, 100 Beaver St., Waltham, MA, 02154-8425, (617) 736-0300: PCM-41, **70**

**MACKIE DESIGNS**, 16220 Wood-Red Rd. NE, Woodinville, WA, 98072, (800) 258-6883: SR24-4, **69**

**MARSHALL AMPLIFIERS**, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY, 11590, (516) 333-9100: JMP-1, Duo-Reverb, 4x12 cabinet, **50**

**MODULUS GUITARS**, 575 Seventh St., San Francisco, CA, 94103, (415) 703-0500: Flea Bass, **64**

**NORD LEAD**, 923 McMullen Booth Rd., Clearwater, FL, 34619, (813) 796-8868: Virtual Analog Rack, **69**

**OPCO**, 3950 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94303, (415) 856-3333: Galaxy Plus Editors 2.1, **65**

**PANASONIC/RAMSA**, 6550 Katella Ave. 17-A7, Cypress, CA, 90630, (714) 373-7903: SV-4100, **70**

**PEARL**, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN, 37211, (615) 833-4477: Master Studio kit, **50**

**PROMARK**, 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX, 77025-5899, (713) 666-2525: 5As, Hot Rods, **50**

**RANE**, 10802 47th Ave., W. Mukilteo, WA, 98275-5098: SP-15, HC-6, **70**

**RICKENBACKER**, 3895 S. Main St., Santa Ana, CA, 92707-5710, (714) 545-5574: 605, 4001, **15**

**ROCKTRON**, 2870 Technology

Dr., Rochester Hills, MI, 48309, (800) 263-ROCK: Chameleon, **30**

**ROLAND**, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: A-90, **30**; TR-808, **36**

**SHURE BROTHERS**, 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL, 60202, (800) 257-4873: SM98, **50**

**SONY ELECTRONICS**, 3 Paragon Dr., Montvale, NJ, 07645, (201) 930-1000: D7, **70**

**SOUND TRANSFORMS SYSTEMS/SERGE**, 1615 Broadway, 7th fl., Oakland, CA, 94612; (510) 465-6896: Serge modular synthesizer, **79**

**TAKAMINE GUITARS**, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT, 06002-0507, (203) 243-7941: EN10C, **50**

**TRACE ELLIOTT**, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT, 06002-0507, (800) 647-2244: PPA 600, GP12 SMX 4x10 cabinets, **50**

**UREI**, 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, CA, 91329, (818) 894-8850: 1176 LN, **70**

**VOX**, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY, 11590, (800) 645-3188: wah-wah pedal, **50**

**WASHBURN INT'L**, 255 Corporate Woods Pkwy., Vernon Hills, IL, 60061-3109, (800) 877-6863: bass, **30**

**YAMAHA**, 6600 Orangethorpe Blvd., Buena Park, CA, 90622, (714) 522-9011: G50, **64**

**ZOOM**, 575 Underhill Blvd., Syosset, NY, 11791, (516) 364-2244: 505, 506, **66**

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Wilbert Prysock

## backside

Double

in celebration of spending money as fast as you make it, chasin' honeys, and doing 110 down the backstretch. The titles of his tunes—"Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young," "I've Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night"—said it all.

Faron was a little too late for the Hank Williams boom, a little too early for rock & roll. But over three decades he held down a place of distinction in country music, at least up until the recent and regrettable "new country" epidemic.

Red died of stroke-related problems in '93, and Faron, "the Singing Sheriff," cashed in his own ticket last December. But fortunately for us, some of their best work has been recently reissued. Check out *Rock & Roll (The Best of Red Prysock)* on AVI, and Faron Young's *Live Fast, Love Hard* on Country Music Foundation Records.

Both Red and Faron made simple, honest music, whose strength stemmed from more than just great lyrics and arrangements. In fact, that agitated preacher we sometimes see scaring the bejeesus out of parents on Fifties-vintage newsreels had it right: "What's drivin' those kids wild? It's that beat! The beat! The beat! The beat!" Amen to that.

—Rev. Billy C. Wirtz

# Visionaries

It always chaps my butt to see certain "artists" whose longevity owes more to good publicists and liposuction than actual musical ability. Likewise, it's a shame that so many artists who've actually shaped musical history have been forgotten along the way. Here, for example, are two who deserve a much bigger share of the spotlight than they've gotten.

Wilbert "Red" Prysock was a founding father of the honkin', hard-drivin' school of tenor saxophone. Along with Big Jay McNeely, Sil Austin, Noble Watts, and a dozen or so others, he pioneered the post-World War II transition from big band jazz to a raucous, small-combo style that was short on subtlety and heavy on the downbeat. Usually beginning with a repetitive signature riff before exploding into a breakneck tempo, such tunes as "Handclappin'," "What's the Word," "Thunderbird," and "Paquino Walk" revolutionized more than music by tearing down racial and social barriers and daring young mixed audiences *not* to dance. Jazz purists dismissed his music as vulgar, the segregationists called it race-mixing trash, but in truth it was just Red blowing his heart out.

Around the same time Red was tearing it up at Alan Freed shows in New York, Faron Young was livin' fast, raisin' hell, and playing raw country music down in Shreveport, Louisiana. He made tough, uncompromising records for factory workers and rednecks who lived for Saturday nights. Aside from the occasional ballad, his early gems kicked ass

Faron Young



Michael Ochs Archives

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