

THE COMPLETE EQUIPMENT MAGAZINE

INTERNATIONAL
MUSICIAN
AND RECORDING WORLD

October 1985
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**DIRE
STRAITS**

Sultan of Strat
Speaks

Heart
John Waite
'Til Tuesday
Tony Thompson

On Test:
Ibanez
HD 1500 Delay
Eden SM-12T
Stage Monitor
Carvin DN612C
Double-Neck
Roland Axis-1
MIDI Controller
Korg DW8000
Synth

Casio CZ-101 Giveaway



See Page 5



AS TIME GOES BY.



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of the Yellowjackets.

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World Radio History

ON THE COVER

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VOLUME 7 NUMBER 10
OCTOBER 1985

Photo by Deborah Feingold



Dire Straits

Mark Knopfler and company are proof that life on the road is no picnic, contrary to the opinion of the blockhead in their hit "Money for Nothing."

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Double your pleasure with Carvin's DN612C twin-neck guitar, which passed our "On Test" with flying colors.



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John Waite is a great singer, and on *Mask of Smiles* he used a great mike, the new Sanken CU-41.

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Cover photo of Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve



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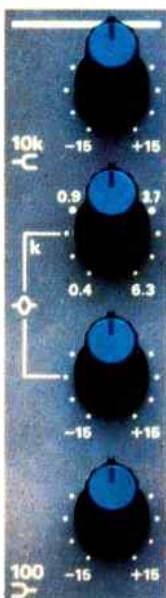
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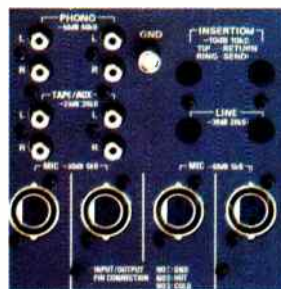
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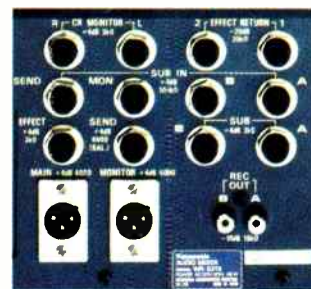
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Founded by Richard C. Desmond

Editorial

MANY FINE ARTISTS, SUCH AS painters, often become wildly successful after they have already passed on to the big canvas in the sky, never knowing public appreciation of their craft. And unless you believe that in the next life you're going to paint your masterpiece or write the hit of the century, it really is best to enjoy the fruits of your labors while you are still in the present tense. What often gets people through the trials and the tribulations is perseverance.

Mark Knopfler persevered. Through various stages and occupations he continued to press on toward a goal of actually recording his songs for larger consumption. It is important to remember that when Dire Straits were signed, your music was supposed to be loud, fast and arrogant, or decidedly four on the disco floor. Instead, Knopfler's music was tuneful, rarely exceeded a medium-burn speed and included several nondistorted guitar solos. We are sure more than one record company exec shook his head over how to market Dire Straits. But the band was successful. When record companies and FM rock radio stations wanted 3:30-length "smash hits," Knopfler pro-

vided them with nothing less than 5:30 epic stories.

Knopfler's perseverance was realized in other ways. His unique sound and style, developed through years of practice, guitar swapping and eschewing flat picks, is really just an extension of the same tendency toward finding something of his own and making it work.

Jack Sonni, the newest member of Dire Straits, has likewise persevered. Sonni's is one of those classic stories, except it's true. We knew Jack when he was working at a music store while shopping demos for his band and playing the local clubs. Jack stuck it out even when it appeared that no breaks were on the horizon.

No breaks had summed it up for John Waite as well. After some lukewarm success as a Baby and as a solo artist, it took last year's *No Brakes* album to really put Waite in the spotlight for the first time.

From the examples in this issue, we hope that those of you still waiting for the big break can see that it can happen; it's just a matter of persevering.

Ron Bienstock
Publisher/Editor

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IM&RW October 1985 5

Happy Anniversary, Hartley

Congratulations are in order for **Hartley Peavey**: It was 20 years ago, upon his graduation from Mississippi State University, that he made the decision to launch his own amplifier company. By that time, he'd already been building amps for several years, having fashioned his first out of old television parts when he was just 16.

Today Peavey manufactures not only amps, but guitars and basses, strings and accessories, effects, pro-audio gear and drums, and employs a staff of 1,240. Yet Hartley still bases his operation out of the small Mississippi town of Meridian (population: 42,000), where he grew up and where his father once owned Peavey's Melody Music Co. music store on Second Avenue.

Once again, Hartley, congratulations.

Holdsworth Declares His Independence

"The Un-Merry-Go-Round," besides being the musical centerpiece of his fine new album, *Metal Fatigue*, also makes a neat metaphor for guitarist **Allan Holdsworth's** career. Embittered by the artistic meddling he encountered from Warner Bros. Records during the recording of 1984's *Road Games*, he decided to forsake the corporate merry-go-round.

"I was bullied around so much by Warner Bros.," says the British-born Holdsworth. "I will never sign with a major label again." He is currently with the smaller, independent Enigma Records, and while its distribution is certainly no match for Warners's, that shouldn't adversely affect a cult artist such as Holdsworth. But most importantly, he sighs happily, "I get to do exactly what I want."



Allan Holdsworth: Happy as an indy...

The guitaring on *Metal Fatigue* is in keeping with the title, Holdsworth's tongue-in-cheek commentary on the recent glut of hard rock. On tracks such as "Home" and the title cut, he is noticeably subdued, eschewing his usual blistering attack for more textural, atmospheric playing. At times his custom-made Charvel and self-designed Ibanez guitars sound more like keyboards. MIDI? A guitar synth?

OPENERS

by Philip Bashe

No, smiles Holdsworth, mostly just an Eventide H949 harmonizer or a series of harmonizers used in conjunction with a stereo chorus. "I have my own ways of deglitching the sound, which I won't disclose," he chuckles. "It's my secret." But on his forthcoming LP, *Atavachron*, due out this month, Holdsworth will be using a MIDI controller, the Synthaxe, of which he says, "I'm excited about it because it's opened up a new world to me from a composing standpoint."

The 14-minute instrumental "The Un-Merry-Go-Round" has its title taken from a drawing rendered by his late father, to whom the piece is dedicated. Sam Holdsworth was, in his son's words, "a brilliant piano player" who abandoned his musical career in lieu of forsaking his principles, a decision that Allan Holdsworth considered making only a short time ago.

But right now, he says, "I'm pleased with the way everything's going. It's difficult—we still have a problem with the rent check every month—but at least I'm playing the music I want."

Buchanan's 10th LP Should've Been His First

Like Allan Holdsworth, 46-year-old guitar legend **Roy Buchanan** also has had his fill of the major labels, which have a tendency to sign an artist based not on who he is but on their perception of what he can be molded into. In the case of Buchanan, who 15 years ago was offered the lead guitar spot with the Rolling Stones but turned it down, "they



Roy Buchanan: That's not a Tele...

kept trying to turn me into some kind of pop star."

Didn't the idea ever appeal to him?

"Sure it did, to be honest, but after I tried it, it wasn't worth it."

After his last album on Atlantic, 1978's *You're Not Alone*, Buchanan was so disillusioned that he vowed never to record again. "But then I got to thinking, 'I can't leave that as my last album; I've got to prove I can play a little bit,'" so in 1981 he financed *My Babe*, a "very low-budget" LP recorded and mixed in just 48 hours.

Buchanan's latest, *When a Guitar Sings the Blues*, is his first for the Alligator label, and, says the guitarist, "It should have been my first, 'cos it's me playing with a band, not a tape recorder." Buchanan coproduced with **Bruce Iglauer** and **Dick Shurman**, and also participating in the sessions was *IM&RW* contributor **Ashley Kahn**, who titled the song "Chicago Smokehouse" and in general assisted with arrangements.

The guitar Buchanan is shown holding on the LP cover is not his customary '53 Fender Telecaster but a model built for him by **Bill Lawrence**. "It's everything I ever dreamed of in a Telecaster," says Buchanan. "His pickups make it sound like running water; clean, clear and noiseless." Its neck, however, is a Fender.

Are the blues making a comeback, as evidenced by the chart successes of George Thorogood and Stevie Ray Vaughan? Buchanan thinks so.

"I see more and more young people at my shows," he observes, "which makes me very happy. I think they deserve to hear music other than what's happening on Top 40."

Major LPs Expected This Month

Arista: **Jermaine Jackson**, **Thompson Twins**, **A Flock of Seagulls**; *Atlantic*: **Ted Nugent**, **Bette Midler**, **Jean-Luc Ponty**, **David Foster**, **INXS**, **Spinners**, **Stevie Nicks**, **Peppi Marchello**, **Freddie Hubbard**, **Crosby, Stills & Nash**, **Twisted Sister**, **Yes**, **Gary Moore**; *Capitol*: **Joe Cocker**, **Saxon**, **W.A.S.P.**, **Bob Seger**, **Iron Maiden**, **Tom Cochrane**; *CBS*: **Elvis Costello**, **Heaven**, **Maurice White**, **Wayne Shorter**, **Wire Train**, **Wynton Marsalis**, **Ramsey Lewis**; *Chrysalis*: **Pat Benatar**, **Divinyls**; *EMI America*: **Phantom**, **Rocker and Slick**, **Sheena Easton**, **J. Geils Band**, **Peter Wolf**, **Queensryche**, **Kate Bush**, **Talk Talk**; *Epic*: **Adam Ant**, **Clash**, **Arthur Baker**, **Nena**, **Box of Frogs**, **Bill Nelson**, **Molly Hatchet**; *I.R.S.*: **Jane Wiedlin**, **Stan Ridgeway**, **Wall of Voodoo**, **Alarm**, **Fleshtones**; *Island*: **Robert Palmer**, **Waterboys**; *MCA*: **Jimmy Buffett**; *PolyGram*: **Ralph MacDonald**, **Dexy's Midnight Runners**, **ABC**, **Kiss**, **Rush**; *RCA*: **Diana Ross**, **Kenny Rogers**, **Juice Newton**, **Annabella Lwin**; *Warner Bros.*: **Phil Alvin**, **Asia**, **Marshall Crenshaw**, **Morris Day**, **Jan Garbarek**, **Madness**, **Joni Mitchell**, **Quarterflash**, **Replacements**, **Todd Rundgren**, **Wang Chung**.

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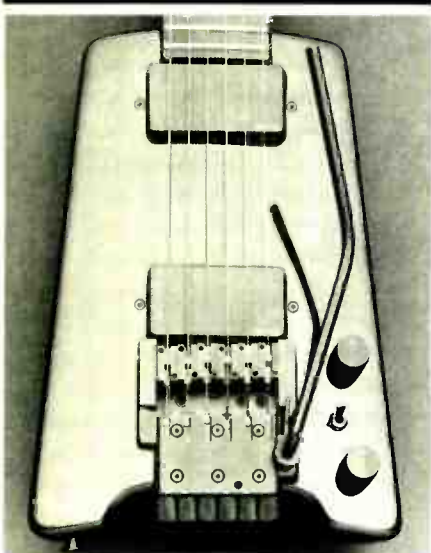
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SANDY GENNARO
Cyndi Lauper Band drummer

It seems as if every time my band plays a large club or hall I can't hear myself in my monitor—especially my bass drum. To compensate I pound so hard that after just a couple of songs my wrists are ready to cramp. Any advice?

Adrian Stone
San Francisco, CA

There are several things you can do.

One, is to lower the other instruments' volumes in your monitor, keeping some keyboards and the vocals but almost exclusively your drums. With Cyndi, in my two monitors I have her vocal, my Simmons and my drums coming out of one, and bass, guitar and a tiny bit of keyboards out of the other.

Another thing you can do is to make sure the guitar and bass amps are positioned just behind your ear line. That way they act as monitors for those instruments, and all you have to put through your monitor are the vocals and your drums.

You can also combat the problem psychologically. During your sound-check, listen to your kit and how it sounds larger than life, what with the natural ambience of the room. When you're playing the gig, even if your monitor level isn't what it should be, recall what you heard at the sound-check and imagine that it's being mixed wonderfully with the band.



CHARLIE DECHANT
Hall and Oates
saxist/keyboardist

I play Selmer Super Action 80 tenor and alto saxes on stage, as well as a baritone. Do you recommend using a multiple-mike setup to handle all these different tones? And do you play into a mike on a stand or one mounted on the sax?

Danny Causy
Calimesa, CA

I use the same mike on both my Selmer Mark VI alto and Mark VI tenor. I used to use a Sennheiser, but now I use Shure SM58 cartridges, which I attach to the bell by way of a special clamp. It's better than an alligator clip off to the side, because with that you also get the vibrations from the bell.



DAVE MENIKETTI
Y&T Lead Guitarist

I'm a heavy-metal guitarist and am thinking about getting my Gibson Les Paul refretted. However, I can't make up my mind whether

to get high or low frets. Highs are good for intonation but slow you down, while lows facilitate speed but make it hard to do hammer-ons. Any advice?

Paul Hunter
Santa Monica, CA

I also play a Les Paul, a '68 with a cherry finish. I'd suggest you have jumbo frets installed, then have someone who knows what he's doing mill them down about halfway. That's basically what I do. The jumbo frets are great because they're a little bit wider and enable you to really grab a note, sustain it or stretch it; you'll be able to get more action out of the string.

Send your questions on equipment, playing, recording, producing, etc., to "Voice of Experience," IM&RW, 242 West 38 Street, #1400, New York, NY 10018.



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INTERNATIONAL MUSICIANS

Austin, TX/ZEITGEIST

Zeitgeist, which means "the general intellectual, moral or cultural climate of an era," is an ironic name for this sexually integrated quartet. With their basic guitars-bass-drums lineup and frequent referencing of folk and folk-rock styles, Zeitgeist are certainly of their time—witness the recent success of R.E.M. and the major-label signing of the Washington Squares. Yet they are considered something of an anomaly in their home town, which has come to national attention by way of its blues heritage and artists such as Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

Lead guitarist John Croslin can't explain the folk elements in the material he cowrites with guitarist Kim Longacre. "In fact," he claims. "I'm really not that big on folk and don't listen to it much. The songs just seem to come out that way."

Croslin's shared lead vocals with Longacre go a long way toward creating that folk flavor. Neither has an outstanding voice—he intones rather than sings, in a deep, husky register and with a deadpan delivery reminiscent of Lou Reed's, while her voice is plain and pretty. But instead of adhering to lead/harmony roles, Croslin and Longacre sing as one entity, which could be the reason why their lyrics often seem androgynous. Croslin, again, is unable to articulate the origin of their approach; it's as if he sees himself merely as a medium through which the songs egress.

Quite often, the tunes on the group's first LP, *Translate Slowly*, contrast melancholy themes with bracing, energetic playing: "Things Don't Change," which delivers the unsettling message "Things don't change/They never have," is backed by a gale-storm performance from the band, especially Keith Moon-inspired drummer Garrett Williams, who randomly detonates cymbals when not careening around his kit, playing single-stroke rolls. He and bassist Cindy Toth comprise a first-rate rhythm section whose keen understanding of dynamics is at the center of *Translate Slowly's* best cuts.

Not long after forming in 1983, Zeitgeist's members—all in their early 20s—issued an independent EP, *Translate Slowly*, out on Atlanta's DB Records (making Zeitgeist that label's first out-of-town signing), was recorded with an MCI 16-track, a Tascam eight-track and a Ramsa WR-8616 console at Austin's Europa Sound Center, Croslin coproducing with John Viehwig. Like many of the newer, streamlined American bands, Zeitgeist's equipment is rather elementary: Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster guitars plugged into Fender Deluxe Reverb and Super Reverb amps; Fender P-bass put through Acoustic 1-15" amp; and five-piece Ludwig drum kit with Zildjian and Sabian cymbals.

—PB.

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London/SIMON TOWNSHEND

C'mon Simon, give it up! What's it gonna be, boy? The simplicity of being able to plug that R. C. Griffin Schecter (which big-brother Pete gave you) into a Boogie amp, turning up all the settings and cranking? Or sitting around your flat with friend David Tickle's Fairlight CMI and molding power-pop masterpieces like "Barriers" from your new LP, *Simon Townshend's Moving Target?* Guitars or keyboards?

"I'm really a very simple rock guitar player," says Townshend in an accent as thick as mutton gravy. "I'm not the type of guitarist who's going to get a big rack of pedals or a guitar synth, because I'm not technically capable of anything much more than what I know I can do with my Schecter

and my Boogie. I love playing guitar because of that simplicity, whereas with keyboards you sit down and become completely engrossed in a different sort of way."

Guitars, keyboards or whatever, Simon Townshend is impressively adept at combining stunning pop melodies with real rock & roll aggression. Aided by producer Neil Kernon (Hall and Oates), who, says Townshend, "reduced the instrumentation and gave us more space," *Moving Target's* tracks display hard-edged guitar hooks and tight vocal harmonies ("Meet You"), fresh lyrical insights ("Barriers," the first single) and killer keyboard-sprinkled pop tunes ("Cast Away," our choice for second single).

Twenty-four-year-old Simon Townshend has been a musician since the age of nine; his best mate as a child was Tony Butler, now of Big Country. Claims Townshend: "At age nine we were jamming every Sunday, we had a band when I was ten, we were doing gigs when I was eleven and began recording when I was twelve." Townshend and Butler carried on for nearly 10 years, playing in acts dubbed Sounds of Green Lightning, Stringy Sounds, Clearpiece, On the Air and "tons of others." The latter group's drummer was Mark Brzezicki, now Butler's rhythm section mate in Big Country. Both he and Butler appeared on Simon's 1983 debut, *Sweet Sounds*, and on Pete's solo LPs *Empty Glass* and *Chinese Eyes*.

The younger Townshend's dilemma over guitars and keyboards hatched when he found that he had Tickle's Fairlight on permanent loan. "The Fairlight gives me complete freedom," he explains; "it is undoubtedly the best thing available for a writer because you've got every sound you could ever want. It can bring about a lot of things that normally wouldn't happen. I'm sure I wouldn't have written some of the songs on the album if it

hadn't been for the Fairlight; it has sounds that give you a certain feeling."

Townshend is currently traipsing around America on a club tour with a small, tightly knit band of musicians from Hull, England. Drummer Dane Morrell plays a simple three-piece Ludwig kit, bassist Andy Shillito—who formed the band for Townshend—thumps on a '58 Fender Precision, and second guitarist Geoff Carline uses Townshend's guitars because "he hasn't found anything he's happy with yet." The cream of Townshend's guitars is an R. C. Griffin Schecter originally made for Pete, who then sold it to Simon. As Townshend puts it: "Schecters are gorgeous, powerful guitars and reliable as hell. I really love playing guitar live, and despite how I made the record, I wouldn't dream of playing keyboards live."

But he is using an E-mu Emulator on stage, he admits, adding, "I'm preprogramming our whole set into it, all of the sequences and keyboard patterns. I'm not taking a keyboard player on this tour."

So how do we keep Pete out of the story?

"I don't think I'll ever surpass the stigma of having Pete as my older brother until I have a hit record," sighs Simon. "As soon as I have that I'll be able to feel like I've done my own bit. Then, of course, I'd like to see it keep snowballing in the same way the Who did. One of the beauties of that band was that it never stopped, and that's probably why it's such a large shadow that's been cast, though I'm in no shadow at all.

"Sometimes I think people feel slightly sorry for me, and they shouldn't," he emphasizes, "because I haven't got a chip on my shoulder about it."

—M.S.
Management: Ian Grant, 5 Wigmore St., London W1, England; Booking: Premier Talent, 3 E. 54 St., New York, NY 10022.

Champaign, IL THE ELVIS BROTHERS

What's in a name? Well, when you name your band after the king of rock & roll and build a solid local rep by performing Presley covers from an onstage songbook, you're bound to spark some preconceptions. "I think a lot of people still think we're three fat guys in white outfits trying to impersonate Elvis," says Graham Elvis, lead singer and bassist for the Champaign-based Elvis Brothers. "Actually," he quips, "we're trying to impersonate Aimee Mann from 'Til Tuesday."

Graham, guitarist/vocalist Rob Elvis and standup drummer Brad Elvis (no, they're not brothers) began playing together in the fall of '81 and soon were working steadily in and around their home town.

Before Brad joined up, Rob and Graham honed their skills by playing barbecue joints. "The first place we played in," Graham recalls, "the owner said, 'What's the name of your band?' We said, 'We don't know yet. It's gonna be either Rob and Graham, or the Elvis Brothers.' He said, 'I think you better go with Rob and Graham.' Then we looked at the guy and said, 'Well then, it's the Elvis Brothers.'" And the band took off from there.

Signed to Portrait, they recorded their debut LP, *Movin' Up*, filled with manic foot-

stompers, relentlessly memorable hooks and a couple of rockabilly raveups. For the follow-up, the Elvis Brothers went into the studio with guitar whiz Adrian Belew producing. He added a hint of eclecticism to the band's already varied, punchy sound. "He just basically wanted to capture the energy and a



little of the rawness that we have live," says Brad.

Though originally lumped in with the neorockabilly school led by the Stray Cats, the Elvis make mention that that's only a small part of the music they enjoy playing. "That's why we called the new album *Adventure Time*," says Brad. "We just wanted to break out of that mold."

"We're fans of all styles of music," Rob adds, "and that comes out in the way we write." On *Adventure Time*, those styles include horn-based soul ("Count to Three"), Buddy Hollyish rock & roll ("I Wonder Why") and pulsating, singalong DOR ("Chin Up").

"You want a list of equipment?" asks Graham. "Oh, that'll take about two seconds." These brothers travel light.

Rob plays a '66 Fender Strat and a '67 Telly through a '61 Fender Pro amp, while Graham uses Aria basses, an Ampeg SVT 300-watt head and a JBL Cabaret cabinet with one 15" speaker. Drummer Brad pounds and jumps on a four-piece Slingerland kit with a 28" bass drum ("a humongous thing") and one solitary cymbal.

—Douglas Brod
Management: Ken Adamany, 315 W. Gorham St., Madison, WI 53703; Booking: ICM, 40 W. 57 St., New York, NY 10019.

Photo by Benno Friedman

World Radio History

EQUIPMENT FILE



THE MODEL 440 EVERYTHING

Valley People introduces its new model 440 limiter/compressor/dynamic sibilance processor, housed in a single-space rack package. The compressor control section features continuously adjustable attack and release time and ratio, coupled with an interactive expander control to reduce residual noise. Other features include

fixed 60:1 ratio for the limiter; Gain Recovery Computation circuitry; barrier strip connectors; safety clipper; and electronically balanced inputs and outputs. Suggested retail price is \$599. For more information, write Valley People, Inc., P.O. Box 40306/2817, Erica Pl., Nashville, TN 37204, or call (615) 383-4737.

Circle Number 100



NOT A SEQUEL TO BLADERUNNER

Guild Guitars introduces its new Bladerunner series of electric guitars, featuring a new angular body design and radical triangular cutaways in the body. All Bladerunner guitars come complete with Kahler Pro tremolo system, EMG "Fat Control" pickup systems, anodized black hardware and Guild Pumping Iron strings. Guild also offers a range of custom finishes and the radical "Safe-Case" for extra protection. Suggested retail price is \$1,499. For more information, write Guild Guitars, 225 W. Grand St., Elizabeth, NJ 07207, or call (201) 438-4400.

Circle Number 101



WELL, WE'VE SAMPLED EVERYTHING ELSE

E-mu Systems has announced the introduction of its new SP-12, 12-bit sampling percussion system. Features include a full complement of acoustic and electronic drum sounds; cassette and disk-drive options; built-in sampling with memory; programmable tuning, decay, mix-level and tempo controls; touch-sensitive play buttons; multiparameter modes; flexible repeat and sub-song functions; real or step time; and built-in SMPTE time-code reader/generator. Suggested retail price is \$2,745. For more information, write E-mu Systems, Inc., 2815 Chanticleer, Santa Cruz, CA 95065, or call (408) 476-4424.

Circle Number 102



C-TAPE DRUMS?

C-Tape Developments has announced the availability of its Cactus digital electronic drums. EPROM-based voices for the kit include toms, snare, bass, hi-hat with pedal, crash and ride cymbals, claps, gong, cabasa, claves and tambourine. The starter kit with three toms, bass and snare, including pads and cables, carries a suggested retail price of \$1,950. For more information, write C-Tape Developments, Inc., P.O. Box 1069, Palatine, IL 60078, or call (800) 562-5872.

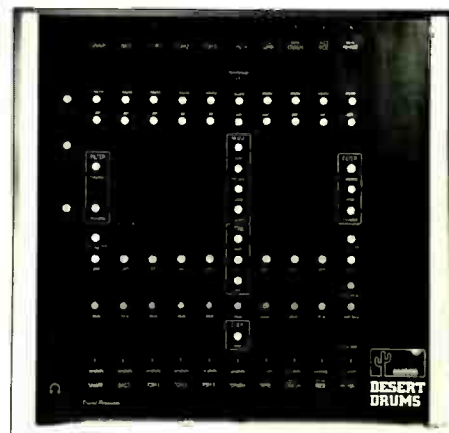
Circle Number 103

TOBIAS BASIC FIVE-STRINGS



Famous Hollywood luthier Michael Tobias has introduced his new Tobias Basic II five-string bass. The instrument features the traditional Tobias five-piece MultilamSM neck, built through an alder, koa or walnut body. Available in 30", 32" or 35" scale lengths, the Basic II is powered by Bartolini pickups custom-made to Tobias's specifications. Suggested retail price for the bass plus hard-shell case is \$1,550. For more information, write Tobias Guitars, 1614 Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028, or call (213) 465-2656.

Circle Number 104



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World Radio History

EQUIPMENT FILE



USE THE OBI MATRIX, SPOCK

Oberheim has unveiled a new 12-voice MIDI-equipped synthesizer based on its popular Xpander module. Called the Matrix 12, it has 12

independently programmable voices—each composed of two oscillators with simultaneously available square, sawtooth and triangle waveforms, five envelopes, 15-mode filter, 15 VCAs, five LFOs, four ramp generators, three tracking generators, frequency modulation and lag processor. The five-octave keyboard has velocity and release velocity, and is divisible into six user-programmable zones. The Matrix 12 also has 100 single-patch memory locations and 100 multipatch memory locations. Suggested retail price is \$4,995. For more information, write Oberheim Electronics, Inc., 2250 S. Barrington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064, or call (213) 473-6574.

Circle Number 105

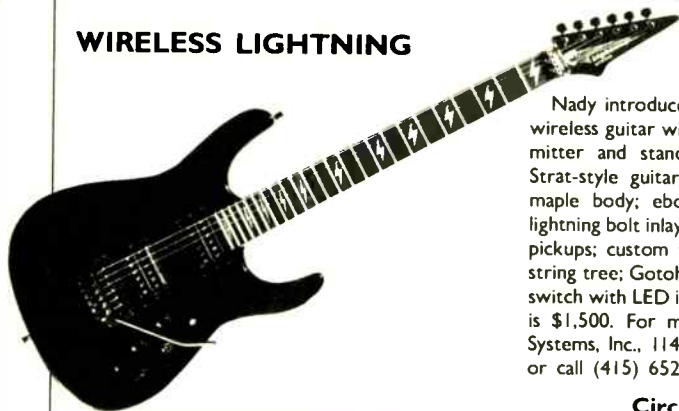


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Sundown Technology proudly introduces the SD50C Formula 50, 50-watt tube amplifier. The Formula 50 features an all-new design including switchable overdrive stage; versatile tone controls; Accutronics reverb; and Sundown's exclusive Governor™ control for advanced overdrive capabilities. Other features include ac outlet, overdrive foot switch and stacking cabinet corners. The Formula 50 comes with a stock custom-designed Sundown 12" driver, and Celestion 12H100 and EV EVM-12L speakers are offered as options. The amp is covered in Tolex, and black and gray finishes are available. Suggested retail price is \$799. For more information, write Sundown Technology, Inc., 37C Cinder Rd., Edison NJ 08820, or call (201) 321-1155.

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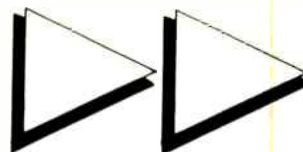
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Nady introduces the world's first production wireless guitar with built-in VHF wireless transmitter and standard 501 VHF receiver. The Strat-style guitar features alder neck through maple body; ebony fingerboard; jumbo frets; lightning bolt inlays; 25½" scale; two humbucking pickups; custom tremolo and locking nut with string tree; Gotoh tuners; and transmitter on/off switch with LED indicator. Suggested retail price is \$1,500. For more information, write Nady Systems, Inc., 1145 65 St., Oakland, CA 94608, or call (415) 652-2411.

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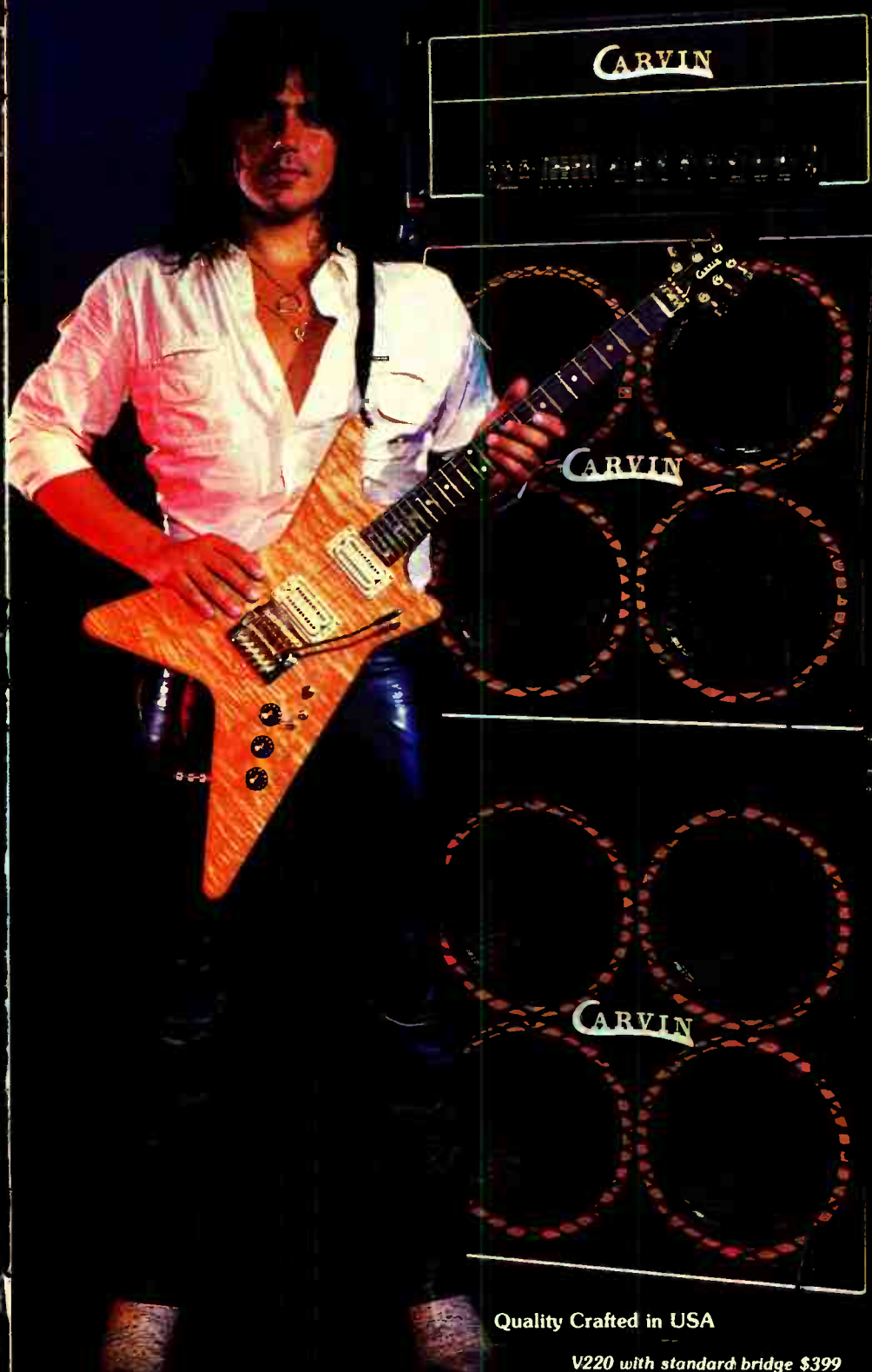
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EQUIPMENT FILE



AT'S NEW FOUR-TRACKER

Audio-Technica has introduced its new AT-RMX64, a full-feature, six-input mixer coupled with a three-motor direct-drive cassette recorder. The AT-RMX64 is designed to accommodate any microphone or direct input, including low-impedance balanced professional microphones requiring 48v phantom power. A total of 60db of attenuation is available to guard against input overloading, and cassette speeds are 1 7/8 or 3 3/4 ips. Other features include two-band parametric EQ on each input, two auxiliary sends, individual return volumes, solo switch for each channel, and 72db of gain available in the mixer for driving amplifiers or outboard gear. Suggested retail price is \$1,495. For more information, write Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224, or call (216) 686-2600.

Circle Number 108

MARSHALL MOSFET BASS SYSTEM

The new Marshall integrated bass system offers state-of-the-art features such as MOSFET power technology, variable electronic cross-overs, biamping, effects loops, wide-ranging equalization, and balanced and unbalanced line-outs. Power configurations are offered in 100-, 200- and 400-watt designs, all in rack formats. Speaker options include new Celestion Sidewinder series, and enclosures are offered in 1-15", 1-18", 2-15", 1-15" and 2-10" (biamp



model), 4-10" and 4-12" configurations. Suggested retail price on the 400-watt model is \$925. For more information, write Unicord, 89 Frost St., Westbury, NY 11590, or call (516) 333-9100.

Circle Number 109



NEW WASH-BOARD

With specialized electronic effects in pedal form back in style, Washburn has introduced a

new pedalboard for guitarists. The board comes self-contained in its own hard-shell case, and offers players a clean, organized and accessible method of effects selection and convenient 110v ac operation. Any combination of up to six Washburn pedal effects may be used individually or in conjunction with one another on the pedalboard. Prewired and designed to eliminate the hassles of battery drain and owner maintenance, the pedalboard features a line driver that cancels any potential battery hum or unwanted noise, and allows players to preset individual effect levels and separately engage or disengage them. Retail price on the pedalboard is \$160. For more information, write Washburn International, 230 Lexington Dr., Buffalo Grove, IL 60090, or call (312) 541-3520.

Circle Number 110

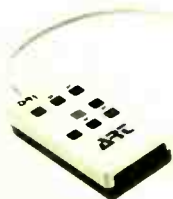
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DIRE STRAITS

Money for Nothin'? Chicks for Free? Not Quite, as a Typical Day on the Road Attests

By Michael Smolen

Ottawa is quiet. A nice day for football practice or washing a bus, and at the Ottawa Civic Center that's exactly what's going on. Jocks sweating out their frustrations on the scrimmage line, and a lone, lanky, bearded man scrubbing down a tour bus—dubbed the Sir Duke by the local cabbies—the size of a city block. The only other sound to be heard is that of a megablaster straining to the tune of Dire Straits' latest hit, "Money for Nothing." Already gathering outside the gates are a number of scraggly stragglers queuing up for the 1,000 extra general-admission seats that have been added for tonight's soldout Straits show.

You'd think the scene inside would be one of mass-hysteria: roadies scurrying around, tour managers screaming, soundmen moaning. Instead, various crewmen are gathered around a jar of

pickled jalapeños. Eyes roll skyward, faces turn red, and there's a mad scramble for the beer cooler. "Oh, yeah, we gotta replace a couple of drivers in some of the cabinets" is about the only work-related comment to be heard. Back outside, the street rat's blaster is pumping out the song's verse: "That ain't workin'/That's the way you do it/Money for nothin' and your chicks for free."

That must be the deal for 36-year-old Mark Knopfler and the six other members of the touring Dire Straits: money for nothing and chicks for free. No hassles, no fuss, just the occasional blister on your finger, right? Not quite, and "Money for Nothing," the first single from Dire Straits' sixth album, *Brothers in Arms*, is Knopfler's tongue-in-cheek testament to the fact that most people haven't the slightest idea what it takes to put seven musicians and several tons of equipment on the road for a worldwide tour. Especially guys who work in the back of appliance stores.

"I was in this place in New York that had a wall of TVs in the back and custom kitchen setups in the window," explains the English-born Knopfler, sipping a vodka and tonic and chain-smoking inside a plush conference room at Warner Bros. Records' Manhattan offices. "The store also had rows and rows of refrigerators, microwaves and all kinds of appliances. In the back, all of the TVs were tuned in to MTV, and this guy was sitting there mouthing off in the most classic fashion. He must have been Italian and was dressed in that usual way: checked shirt and lots of gold chains. I snuck behind the guy and watched him from behind some microwaves, trying to remember all the things he was saying. He had what I think you in America call a hard-hat mentality.

"It was great, it was so funny," continues Knopfler, becoming increasingly animated; totally out of character for this usually quiet and dour individual. "I went up to the front of the store and asked somebody for a pen and a piece of paper, and I actually sat down in one of the kitchen displays in the front window and began to write the lyrics to 'Money for Nothing.'"

Back in Ottawa, those lyrics are beginning to take on some real meaning. The Dire Straits entourage—Knopfler, bassist John Illsley, ex-Rockpile drummer Terry Williams, guitarist Jack Sonni, sax/flute/percussionist Chris White, and keysmen Alan Clark and Guy Fletcher—have arrived for soundcheck. Sonni is stopped by a local fan:

"So, you're gonna have a good show tonight, eh?"

[*Deadpan*] "Nah, we're not going to play well tonight."

"No, c'mon, eh! You're gonna do a good one."

[*Still deadpan*] "No, really, none of us feels well; we're not going to do a good show tonight."

"Ah, no, you're kidding, eh?"

There is still time for humor here, though not much. Tour manager Paul Cummins whisks in, and suddenly the Straits road crew looks very busy.

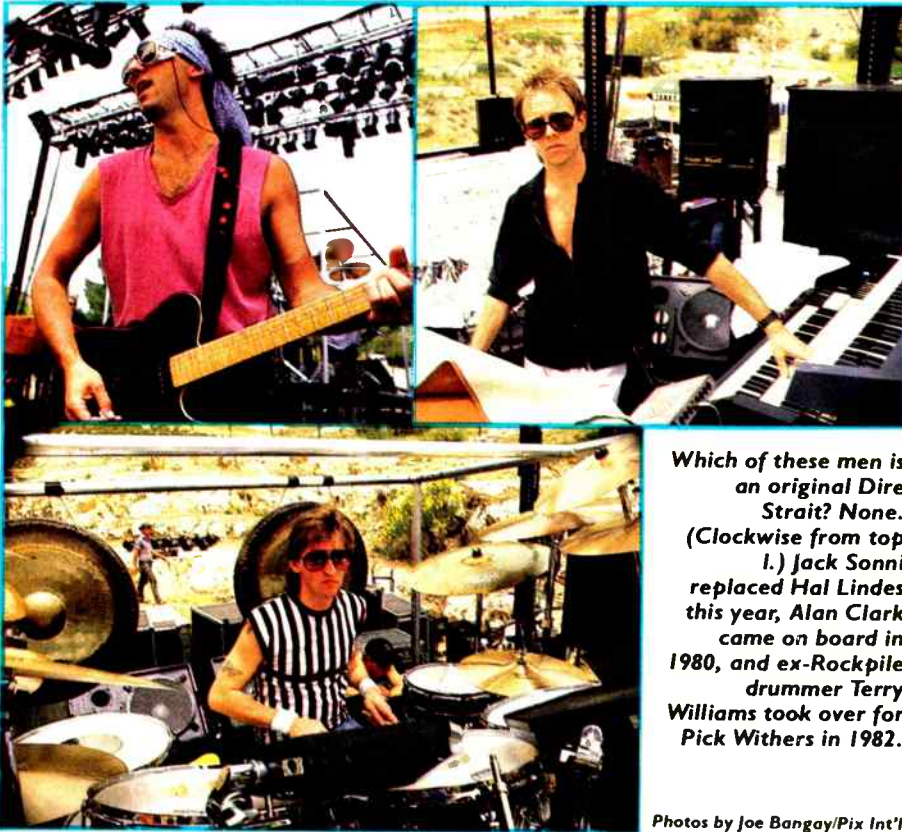
A band meeting is called in the dressing room, and bodies rapidly disappear from the makeshift cafeteria area, leaving behind the woman who catered the show and two scantily clad groupies. For a moment things are quiet. Then, one by one, members of the crew begin to emerge from the dressing room, their faces something out of *Night of the Living Dead*. Comments range from "Man, I hadda get out of there," to "Don't go in there, you'll get eaten alive!" Somebody—a good bet would be the perfectionist Knopfler—is obviously rather unhappy with the way things are going, or last night's show, or both. Later, sitting at the mixing board, beer in hand, upfront soundman Peter Granger reveals that it was last night's show,



Mark Knopfler, Quick-Change Artist

Photos by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

- 1) Red Schecter Strat (used on "Expresso Love" and "So Far Away").
- 2) Sunburst Gibson Les Paul ("Money for Nothing" and "Brothers in Arms").
- 3) Red Schecter Tele with white pickguard ("Walk of Life").
- 4) National Steel ("Romeo and Juliet" and "Wild West End").
- 5) Steinberger GL-2 ("One World").
- 6) White Schecter Strat ("Sultans of Swing" and "Why Worry").
- 7) Erlewine Automatic ("Solid Rock").
- 8) Sunburst Schecter Strat ("Ride Across the River," "Tunnel of Love," "Romeo and Juliet" and "Wild West End").



Which of these men is an original Dire Strait? None. (Clockwise from top l.) Jack Sonni replaced Hal Lindes this year, Alan Clark came on board in 1980, and ex-Rockpile drummer Terry Williams took over for Pick Withers in 1982.

Photos by Joe Bangay/Pix Int'l

during which "nothing went right."

"There's only one way to get someone to understand all that goes into this gig," contends Knopfler. "And that would be not to just have him come to the show, but to have him come to soundcheck every day, have him stay with me all the time. Even then he would have no concept of what it means to go through months of recording, months of rehearsals, hundreds of hours of writing, dealing with a band, organizing a tour, doing videos, doing interviews—it's such a long cycle, so much is involved in this thing. Even

so, I didn't hate that guy in the store just because he was a prejudiced blockhead; I loved him even though he represented everything I can't stand."

Dire Straits' present global assault is scheduled for over 220 dates, and there's talk of even more being added. It's been estimated that the two-and-a-half-hour show costs in excess of \$22,000 per day to put on and requires a crew of over 60 people. Things often don't go quite so smoothly. Backstage, small scenes begin to unfold, such as finding out that the two phones installed for band

use both operate on the same line—a shouting match tells you one is not enough. A sign is heard, a \$50 piano-tuning bill is sighted, and on the bottom in red ink is a \$15 additional charge for "waiting time." Cummins is approached by a crew member who says something to the effect that he is disappearing for a while. He is curtly informed he'll do nothing of the sort. "You have to watch these guys like a hawk," says the small but feisty Cummins, ponytail bobbing furiously. He's had enough experience to know, having worked in this capacity for seven years and at one point toiling for Talking Heads.

"The road is great, though you really have to love it, you really have to be into it," says Knopfler, who's toured regularly with Dire Straits since the band exploded internationally with "Sultans of Swing" in 1979. "Sure, some of the lows are pretty low, but they're not worth talking about because this band is so fabulous. We had trouble with the keyboards for a while, but Guy Fletcher and the crew are so together that things are fine now. I don't think this show has been as difficult to put together as the last one, which was pretty damn big."

Knopfler's enthusiasm for the road, however, may be dwindling. "I think this is the last of the big shows for us," he admits. "We just did two weeks at Wembley Arena in London, and it's gotten to the point where you say, 'Well, I've done that.' Our promoter told me I could have done a month there, but you have to be crazy to do two weeks there anyway. So given the fact that we're already crazy, I don't see any reason to repeat it. Anything we do in the future is going to be much smaller; we'll do away with these massive PAs and lighting systems. I think that by the end of this tour I'll be more interested in playing small places and doing a different kind of thing altogether—if I go back to playing live."

The scope of Dire Straits' live show begins to take place at soundcheck. Needless to say, Ottawa's Civic Center was built for

Soundcheck

Gear Used on Tour

R1000 digital reverb, manufactured by Yamaha International Corp., P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622, (714) 522-9011.



The R1000 is a digital reverberation unit featuring four reverb modes: Mode 1 is 1.5 seconds, mode 2 is 1.6 seconds, mode 3 is 2.3 seconds and mode 4 is 2.4 seconds. Other features include comprehensive input level adjustment, variable operating levels, LED metering, parametric EQ, mixing control, bypass mode and effects loop.

Suggested retail price: \$795.

Twelve SP PZM microphone, manufactured by Crown International, 1718 W. Mishawaka Rd., Elkhart, IN 46517, (219) 294-5571.



Crown's new mike offers studio quality in recording, sound reinforcement and broadcasting. The Twelve SP is phantom powered by a supply providing 18 to 48 volts. It features a transformer-balanced, low-impedance output available at an integral three-pin connector; wide, smooth frequency response with high-frequency emphasis for brilliance; low noise and high overload levels (150db/SPL); hemispherical pickup pattern; and windscreen for outdoor use.

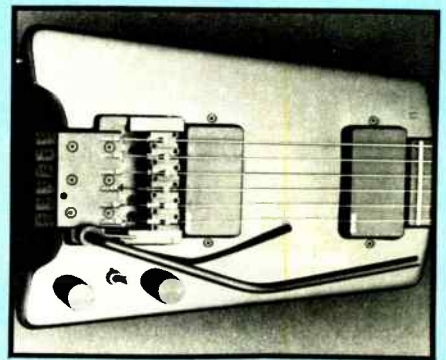
Suggested retail price: \$249.

TransTrem transposing tremolo, manufactured by Steinberger Sound, 475 Oakland Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310, (718) 447-7500.

The Steinberger TransTrem is the first pitch-bending mechanism made for an electric guitar to permit an individually controllable change rate so

that all strings can be set to maintain pitch relationships throughout tremolo travel. Tremolo movement can be quickly locked into place by a simple rotation of the arm. Additional lower locking positions of B, C and D tunings and higher tuning positions of F# and G are available besides the normal E-key position. The tremolo also utilizes precision ball-bearing action and does not require a locking nut.

Suggested retail price: \$300, as retrofit for Steinberger guitars.



hockey, not rock & roll, and for some unknown reason the oval arena has been bisected horizontally instead of vertically for the stage, losing a good many seats for a soldout show. Knopfler strolls on stage and is handed his favorite red Schecter Stratocaster, Illsley straps on his '61 Fender Jazz bass, and Terry Williams parks himself behind a massive Ludwig/Simmons/Paiste drum kit. Fletcher and Clark are busy tuning oscillators. The PA is fired up, and the empty arena comes alive with various bits and pieces of the set. Knopfler, dressed in an undershirt and jeans, seems aloof, but if you look carefully you'll see that his eyes are saying volumes to the people around him. Illsley—the only member remaining from the original four-man lineup that formed in London eight years ago—appears as if he couldn't be more bored, and the diminutive Williams—who replaced Pick Withers in 1982—is swallowed up by his kit to the point where if you couldn't hear his machinelike pounding, he might not be there. Chords are strummed, lead lines are fiddled with. Simmons pads are tuned. Knopfler, trading guitars at a frantic pace, seems to have difficulty hanging on to a single instrument for more than five minutes.

Second guitarist Jack Sonni, wiry, curly haired and sporting a loud Hawaiian shirt, bounds onto the stage and is handed his prize seafoam-green Schecter Stratocaster, and almost immediately the mood on stage changes. A recent addition to the band, in place of Hal Lindes, he radiates enough energy for both the entire group and crew. Knopfler

cracks a rare smile and is handed his Gibson Les Paul Standard for a run-through of "Money for Nothing."

"I use the Les Paul for different things," explains Knopfler, who is rarely seen sans Schecter Strat. "I think in terms of the Les Paul and string sounds. That always sounds nice to me. The Gibson, if played in a certain way, can sound really great with other instruments. I find that with my style of playing, however, I have to mask out certain strings to stop certain sounds. You get so much more sound from the Les Paul, you have to be careful that you're not bashing away on the wrong strings with your neck hand. For example, when I do the intro to 'Brothers in Arms,' I sort of mask out certain strings so that they don't make any noise."

Perhaps the single most important aspect of Knopfler's technique is his attack on the strings. He eschewed the use of a plectrum a long time ago—"while learning to play everything from Blind Blake to ragtime to country blues and Western swing"—in favor of fingerpicking, upstroking with the middle, index and ring fingers of his right hand and downstroking with his thumb. Occasionally, he will pluck or snap a string for an extra-decisive pop on a note. This style is known to some as the claw-hammer.

"I realize there are a lot of things you really need a pick for: quick single-note lines and all of that blazing stuff," says the sultan of Strat. "I really should be using a pick, but I don't. I like the direct feel of playing without it. I like to sort of squeeze out the music with

my bare hands."

Knopfler squeezes out quite a storm when he plays and does so with a tremendous variety of equipment, using a different guitar for practically every song. His current options include four Schecter Stratocasters, two Schecter Telecasters, the aforementioned Gibson Les Paul Standard, an Adamas acoustic, a National Steel, an Erlewine Automatic and a Gibson Chet Atkins. A recent addition to Knopfler's guitar collection is a Steinberger GL-2, the top plate of which is painted a gun-metal color—the same color as Knopfler's Porsche. He uses MESA/Boogie and Jim Kelley amplifiers played through Marshall 4-12" cabinets loaded with Electro-Voice drivers. His rack and his Pete Cornish custom pedalboard house a Roland SRE-555 chorus/echo, a DeltaLab digital delay, a Mic-Mix Dyna-Flanger, a Master Room reverb unit, a Roland graphic EQ, an Ibanez UE-303 multieffects unit and a variety of Boss pedals, including a CE-300 chorus, a DM-2 delay, a CS-2 compressor/sustainer, two CE-2 choruses, a BF-2 flanger, a BH-2 phaser and an OC-2 octaver.

"All of my guitars are supplied by Rudy's Music Stop in New York, and a guy named John Suhr does the work," says Knopfler. "My main guitars are Schecter Strats with Seymour Duncan Alnico Pro pickups and Dunlop 6110 frets in them. They are incredibly powerful guitars." The Erlewine Automatic "was made for me by Mark Erlewine in Austin. He supplies Billy Gibbons with ZZ Top guitars, and mine is just a screamer. I call

Knopfler's Knecks

by John Suhr, luthier

I met Mark Knopfler when he purchased a whole slew of Schecter and Fernandes guitars from Rudy Pensa. Soon, however, we got to the point where we were building custom instruments for him. In fact, the first full-fledged custom guitar that I built from scratch is a white Schecter Stratocaster with a tortoise-shell pickguard, which I just delivered to him.

Mark is very particular about the cut of his necks. The one I just made for him was a leftover Schecter that hadn't been fretted or shaped yet. I finished the cut on it, copying a '61 Fender Strat neck, only I made it feel a little bit nicer. He gets so particular about his neck/fingerboard edges that I cannot start out with a precut neck because the edges are too sharp for him. He likes them round, but he also likes them very thin. I must have spent an entire day on that neck. He also prefers more of a radius on the fingerboard than on a stock Schecter. He likes the radius to be 10", whereas Schecters are 12", old Fenders are 6" and Charvels are 15". He likes his action real low and doesn't want his strings to choke when he's bending up notes.

I also copied the headstock exactly like that of a '61 Strat and fitted it with Dunlop 6110 frets. The body was originally cut by Tom Anderson, former technician from

Schecter, then I painted it white and finished it off with a tortoise-shell pickguard, Seymour Duncan Alnico Pro pickups and a Fender bridge.

I don't think Mark knew we were making him the white Strat, because when I was working on one for Jack Sonni, Rudy said to me that we should make one for Mark as well. Of course, when I was halfway done with Jack's, Mark saw it and said he'd really like to have a '61-style white Strat with a tortoise-shell pickguard built the way he really wanted it. Basically, he wound up with a '61 Fender Stratocaster built the way it should have been built when it was an original. It's a really beautiful instrument, and he told Rudy it's his favorite guitar so far.

[Sigh] I would have loved to own it.

John Suhr is a noted luthier and repairman who has worked with such artists as Mark Knopfler, Lou Reed, Brian Setzer, Jamie West-Oram, Mick Jagger, Keith Mack, Jeff Golub and Eddie Martinez, to name but a few. John works with top technician and set-up king Guy Amato on the second floor of Rudy's Music Stop, 169 W. 48 St., New York, NY 10036, (212) 391-1699. Please be sure to call for an appointment first, as there is no walk-in service.

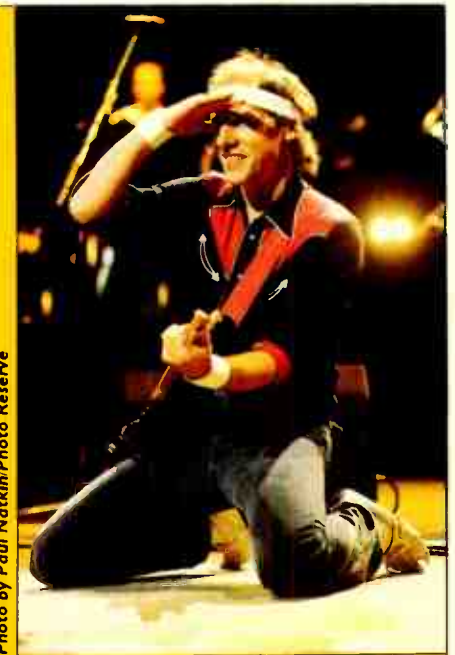


Photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

"Every time I approach the guitar I feel as if I don't know anything. It's amazing; I'm going to be learning the guitar when I'm seventy."

— Mark Knopfler

it 'the Pig.'" Knopfler used to play a Gibson ES-175 but says he no longer takes it on tour anymore because "every time I play it I start to play faster and faster.

"Generally I end up using the same guitar on the road that I used in the studio," he continues, "because in the long run, if I recorded with it, it has the best voice for that song."

With regard to voicings, Knopfler has certainly been stretching those of his band; into the seemingly unavoidable realm of keyboards, that is. Beginning on Dire Straits' second LP, *Communicue*, and culminating on their fourth, *Love Over Gold*, Knopfler has melded his truly unique guitar sound with a well-orchestrated yet pleasingly sparse keyboard mix. What with two keyboard players in the band and keyboard-heavy soundtracks such as *Cal*, *Comfort and Joy* and *Local Hero*

under his belt, it was probably inevitable.

Soundcheck practically over, Knopfler indicates that he would like to make a change in the set, and almost instantaneously the air is filled with an awesome barrage of keyboards. Alan Clark and Guy Fletcher are joined by yet a third pair of hands, those of chief keyboard technician Ron "Ronnie from Bromley" Eve, who during "Brothers in Arms" plays a Yamaha DX7 programmed to sound like an accordion. Clark, a veteran of Straits since 1980, plays a MIDI'd Yamaha G3 grand piano, a Hammond C3 organ, an E-mu Emulator II, a Sequential Circuits Prophet 5, and Yamaha GS1, KX88 and DX7 keyboards, all pumped into an RSD 16/8/2 mixing board, modified by Yamaha and Korg digital delays, a Yamaha R1000 digital reverb, and powered by Yamaha P2100 amplifiers and Frazer Wy-

att keyboard cabinets.

On the other side of the stage, newcomer Fletcher—who came to the band via Roxy Music and who worked with Knopfler on the *Cal* and *Comfort and Joy* soundtracks—also has an impressive array of new technology: Yamaha DX1 and DX7 synths, New England Digital's Synclavier, Korg's CX3 organ and Roland's JP-8 synthesizer. He mixes down into a Seck 10x4 board, and modifies his sound with Ernie Ball volume pedals, Yamaha sustain pedals and a Roland SDD-2000 digital delay. Like Clark, he also powers up with a Yamaha P2100 amp and Frazer Wyatt keyboard cabinets.

"We've got some interesting setups, and we've also had our share of problems," says Bromley. "The Yamaha G3 has been modified with Forte Music's MIDI Mod, and we mike it with C-Ducer tape mikes and two Crown



Photo by Deborah Feingold

Jack Sonni is the first person in the world to tell you he couldn't be happier doing what he's doing. Now sharing a gilt-edged spotlight with Mark Knopfler as coguitarist on Dire Straits' current tour, Sonni has come a long way from dreaming behind the counter at Rudy's Music Stop on New York's famous 48th Street.

"Dreaming? You must be kidding!" exclaims Sonni, sitting in the dressing room of Ottawa's Civic Center, waiting patiently for soundcheck. "All those years while I was sitting at home working on my playing and my tunes, guys I knew, guys that played in my band, were drifting off to play with Cyndi Lauper, David Bowie, all kinds of stuff! Meanwhile, I was just sitting there going, 'Hey, what about me?' It got very frustrating, especially as I was around guitars all the time."

If it took a long time for the 34-year-old Sonni to get his break, at least he was certainly prepared for it. Growing up and studying music on and off in various parts of Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, he soon ended up as leader of the house band at Kenny's Castaways on New York's legendary Bleecker Street, birthplace of many a hero. Daytime business was conducted at Rudy's Music Stop, a pleasant couple of square feet

Local Hero Makes Good Jack Sonni Takes the Walk of His Life

with the reputation of being the best guitar shop in the city, where Sonni sold guitars and consulted musicians on custom instruments. But it wasn't just from hanging around famous people and good guitars that vaulted Sonni to where he is today. A lot of it had to do with his relationship with a man who loved him like his own, his boss, Rudy Pensa. Seems Mark Knopfler had struck up a fast friendship with the store owner, frequently dropping by when in New York.

"Mark would hang out in the shop," says Sonni, "and one night I said to him, 'Hey, let's go get a drink.' We hung out that night, and we've been thick as thieves ever since. He would sit in with my band at Kenny's, and it'd be great."

Sonni's career, however, was at a standstill. Frustrated, and beset with health problems, he seriously considered quitting the music business, even applying for a special program and a grant at Fordham University. Three days after his acceptance, the phone rang.

"It was very funny," recalls Sonni. "The night before Mark called me, I had done a benefit for Ethiopia with a bunch of guys at Kenny's. I hadn't been on the club scene for some time, so we just slapped some tunes together and played. I ended up staying out very late that night, and Mark's call woke me up the next morning. It was a great conversation that went something like this:

'Hi, how are you doing?'

'Fine.'

'What are you doing?'

'I'm trying to wake up.'

'Well, Hal Lindes is no longer with us. Do you want to join the band and do the tour?'

'Is this for real?'

'Yes.'

'Hang on a second while I shake my head out a little and make sure I'm awake.'

"Actually, it took me about a millisecond to say yes," laughs Sonni. "I kept it real quiet until the next day, when I heard from their

manager, because I'd been involved in some real close things before. But this was great, a real surprise."

Now, more than midway through a worldwide tour during which he's been idolized in Israel and ya-ya'd in Yugoslavia, Sonni is in the Great White North, hundreds of miles from home and happier than he's ever been before. Even with life on the road?

"I love it!" he shouts. "Compared to my apartment back in New York, hotel rooms are just great!"

Sonni Strung

Having worked at Rudy's Music Stop, Jack Sonni certainly didn't have to travel far to gear up for the Dire Straits tour. On the road he's packing his main guitar, a Schecter Custom Shop Stratocaster in a seafoam-green finish with a white pickguard and a matching headstock, Seymour Duncan Alnico Pro pickups, Dunlop 6100 frets and Sperzel tuning machines. Other guitars include a lefthanded Schecter Strat (which he plays righthanded) with a '61 V-shaped neck, Sperzel locking machines, EMG pickups and a Floyd Rose tremolo; a Steinberger GL-2 fitted with a TransTrem transposing tremolo; a white Schecter Strat with a tortoise-shell pickguard; a Chet Atkins nylon string guitar; and a recent present from Rudy Pensa, a solid-body National. "I think it's a 1955," says Sonni. "It's got this two-inch thick mother-of-toilet-seat body, and I love it!"

Amplification for Sonni is strictly Jim Kelley FACS heads, usually set at 30 watts. "I've known Jim for years," says Sonni, "and his amps are the best on the planet." Sonni also uses two older, smaller Fender Bandmaster-style 2-12" cabinets that have been ported in the back "to get a little top in them and to get a bit more of a free-flow thing happening." Drivers are all Electro-Voice, and Sonni's myriad effects include MXR and Roland digital delays.

PZMs. We're also using four Leslie 147s with cycle changers that work—a rarity these days. Two are on stage for Alan's Hammond and Guy's Korg, and two are off stage, miked with Crown PZMs. Problems have arisen with the Emulator II and the Prophet 5; both have this serious problem of dumping their memories every time there's a power surge or the unit overheats. I even had to load the Prophet's memory from a cassette deck during the show once; it's ridiculous! My other biggest complaint is the cabinet they built the Synclavier into. It's so cheap that the whole thing fell apart, and I had to make my own cabinet for it. You'd think that for twenty-one thousand dollars they could make it road-worthy. I hate that attitude in manufacturing."

Brothers in Arms is pretty heady stuff and is also Dire Straits' best-sounding album to date. It runs the gamut, from standard Straits power twangers ("Money for Nothing," "The Man's Too Strong") to lilting opuses such as "Why Worry" and "So Far Away," to keyboard/guitar exercises like the title track. Of course, there's plenty of Knopfler's undeniable unfashionability: numerous six- and seven-minute songs in this era of three-minute pop packages. Throughout his career Knopfler—a onetime school-teacher and a rock critic for the *Yorkshire Evening Post*—has defied convention and avoided the pop-star wagon train.

"I think if you look at the song 'Brothers in Arms,' it has good depth, good melody and good orchestration," he says. "But then if you look at songs like 'Walk of Life,' they are in many ways throwbacks to the way our music's always been. The thing about *Brothers in Arms* is its range of music as opposed to its being more orchestrated. I wouldn't say it's more orchestrated than *Love Over Gold*, though there is some of that in there."

Then again, when you're joined in the studio by musicians such as Sting, Omar Hakim, Michael and Randy Brecker, Chris White and Tony Levin, how do you avoid a bigger sound? How do you avoid clichés? Something Knopfler always does.

"I don't know," he replies. "I suppose I just try to stay close to what I've written. I write something in a certain way, I record it, and then I go out and play it, and that, to a certain extent, is what I am. I think it's a question of being true to yourself, or at least being reasonably true to yourself when you're involved in making rhymes or making things look and sound good, or making new arrangements that might take you away from your original vision. Generally speaking, I just do what I think is appropriate. It never comes out like I'm trying to get on some kind of bandwagon or trend thing, because I don't write that way. I'm not interested in doing stuff like a lot of these pop songs, and so far it hasn't created any problems at all. It's great to see all those happy faces at the end of a show."

The Dire Straits show starts out with a whimper instead of the usual bang, but you shiver nonetheless. The opening chords of "Ride Across the River," a moody, slow-

paced number, fairly hypnotize the crowd as Knopfler, dressed in his trademark red and black cowboy shirt and red headband, strolls out with a sunburst Strat and jumps into the opening lines. Illsley takes command of the left side of the stage and coaxes a beautiful low end out of his Fender Jazz bass, which he will play for the entire evening. Joined under the red glow of stage lights by a similarly headbanded and Stratocastered Jack Sonni, the group tears through "Expresso Love," "So Far Away" and "Romeo and Juliet," all breathtaking and without their taking a breath. Knopfler's guitar playing has never sounded better, but the guitar nonhero is forever sketchy about his prowess.

"I haven't improved as much as I should," he laughs. "There was a slight improvement between *Making Movies* and *Love Over Gold* because I spent some time at home just learning some new chords. But during this tour," he notes, "I'm going to be teaching myself more guitar on a very intense basis. Every new thing that I learn, I try to work out what its connections are, what its implications are, and then I put it to use."

With the spotlights still dancing off his well-polished National Steel, Knopfler trades it for his Adamas acoustic, Sonni trades his Strat for a Steinberger GL-2, and the Strait-

men are off and walking ("Springsteen has the franchise on running," quips Knopfler) through an extended version of "Love Over Gold"—Hammond and Leslies blasting, smoke and light effects swirling (You sure this is a Dire Straits show?), and enough keyboard wizardry to last a lifetime. So what does attract Knopfler to piles of keyboards and make him work so hard at achieving a balance between the two?

"Very often I use keyboards as a texture of strings," he explains, "or as some kind of texture or backdrop over which I will say something with the guitar. I'm always searching for textures that work, and a lot of it is just trial and error. You eliminate a lot of things, try out different things, work on things you know you can do better, and just keep on searching. Using keyboards is just adding vocabulary to a song. Each one has its own character, its own voice. I use about eight different guitars for the show because they all have their own voices and are all good for different things. Even though I'm surrounded by all this high technology, what I'm actually dealing with is a piece of music; feelings. I'm not a very technical person, so it's never been a problem for me to balance technology and feelings."

As the lights dim and the last few sustained notes of "Love Over Gold" ripple through the arena, the audience wonders what the band could possibly follow an exhibition like that with. "Sultans of Swing," but of course. With all three guitarists fingering matching white guitars with tortoise-shell pickguards—Knopfler a Strat, Sonni a Tele and Illsley his ever-present Fender Jazz—Knopfler smiles as Sonni and Illsley break into a little impromptu choreography. Knopfler toasts the end of the song with a drink and announces proudly that the next song, "Why Worry," is being recorded by the Everly Brothers. This is one of just three times he will speak to the audience throughout the evening, so he must be proud. Watching sound and lighting men dance their way through other show highlights—"The Man's Too Strong," "Walk of Life," "Tunnel of Love," "Wild West End," "Brothers in Arms" and "Money for Nothing"—you realize that for this one moment, now, that ain't workin', that's the way you do it. No worries about being late, no hassles with equipment, no long rides in the tour bus, no missed meals and no late hours. Money for nothin' and chicks for free, eh? A nice thought, but at least one member of Dire Straits never stops working:

"You know, every time I approach the guitar I feel as if I don't know anything," claims Knopfler. "It's amazing; I'm going to be learning on the guitar when I'm seventy. That's the way the instrument is. The best way I can express it is that I think I've got a bit of soul when I play, but as far as vocabulary is concerned with the instrument, I feel as though I can say, 'Hello, how are you?' on it, and that's about it."

"I am hoping that by the time I get ancient," he chuckles, "I'll be able to carry on a reasonably fluent conversation with the guitar." □

PA Column Dire Straits at Ottawa's Civic Center

Chief Engineer: **Peter Granger**

Hire Company: **Delicate
Production Company**

PA System: **48-Bin Midas/Martin**

Guitar System: **Meyer MSL-3**

Hall: **Indoor Hockey Arena**

Upfront System (in Order of Rack
Appearance):

Klark-Teknik DN 300 graphic equalizer

Two Ashly SC-68 parametric equalizers

Lexicon 224X digital reverb

Brooke-Siren Systems modular crossover

Two Klark-Teknik DN 27 graphic equalizers

Two dbx 160x compressor/limiters

Lexicon Super Prime Time digital delay

Klark-Teknik DN 780 digital reverb

Klark-Teknik Time Processor digital delay

Eventide H949 harmonizer

Klark-Teknik DN 22 graphic equalizer

Orban 622A/B parametric equalizer

Aphex Type B aural exciter

Two dbx noise-reduction racks

Yamaha F1040 crossover

Sony TC-K666ES cassette deck

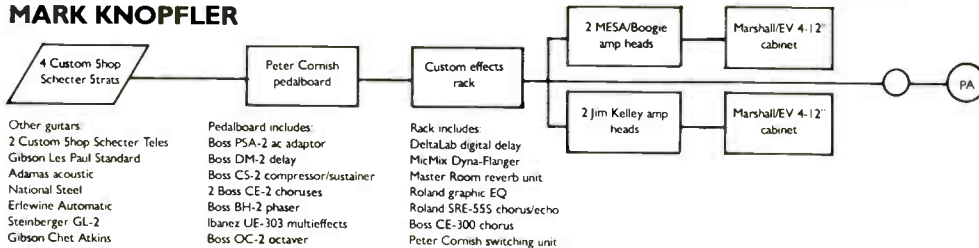
Tascam 122 cassette deck

Brooke-Siren Systems 402

compressor/limiter/fixed de-esser

Midas Pro 40 boards

MARK KNOPFLER



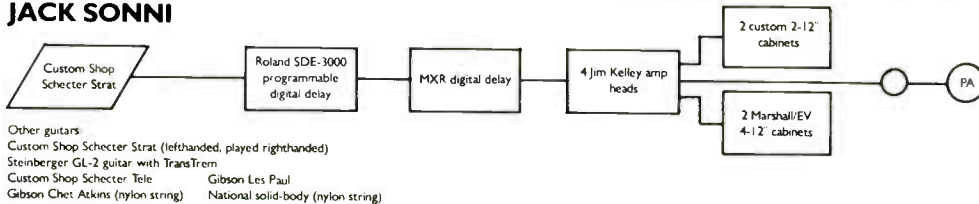
Other guitars:
2 Custom Shop Schecter Teles
Gibson Les Paul Standard
Adamas acoustic
National Steel
Erlwine Automatic
Steinberger GL-2
Gibson Chet Atkins

Pedalboard includes:
Boss PSA-2 ac adaptor
Boss DM-2 delay
Boss CS-2 compressor/sustainer
2 Boss CE-2 choruses
Boss BH-2 phaser
Ibanez UE-303 multieffects
Boss OC-2 octaver

Rack includes:
DeltaLab digital delay
MicMix Dyna-Flinger
Master Room reverb unit
Roland graphic EQ
Roland SRE-555 chorus/echo
Boss CE-300 chorus
Peter Cornish switching unit



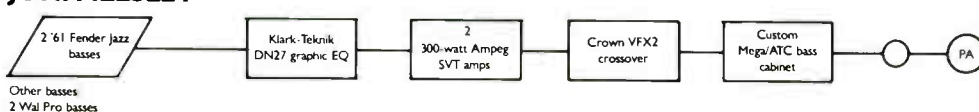
JACK SONNI



Other guitars:
Custom Shop Schecter Strat (lefthanded, played righthanded)
Steinberger GL-2 guitar with TransTrem
Custom Shop Schecter Tele
Gibson Les Paul
Gibson Chet Atkins (nylon string)
National solid-body (nylon string)



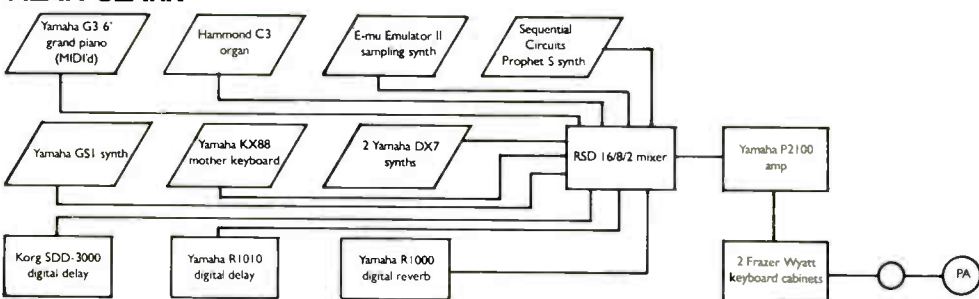
JOHN ILLSLEY



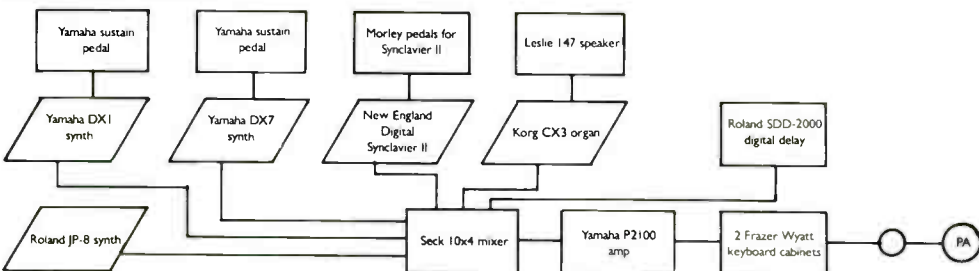
Other basses:
2 Wal Pro basses



ALAN CLARK



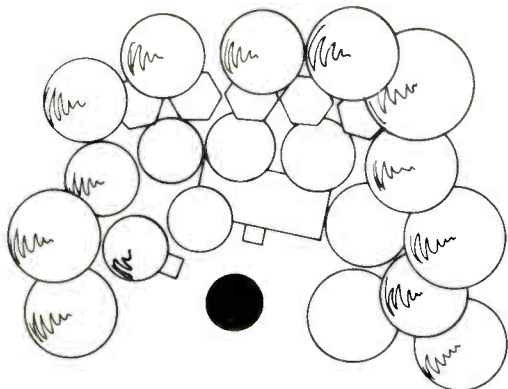
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14" snare (also uses 14" Sonor snare)
14", 15", 16" rack toms
18", 20" floor toms
5 Simmons electronic pads
Simmons trigger pad
Simmons control unit
Cymbals: Paiste
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20" 2002 medium
18" S05 crash
18" 2002 crash
20" S05 medium
21" 2002 crash
19" 2002 medium
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14" hi-hat
20" China
2 Tam Tam gongs
16" S05 crash
22" thin ride
24" ride

Accessories:
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Ludwig heads
Ludwig hardware
Paiste mallets
Custom mike stands
Tama bass-drum pedals
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Shakers
Maracas
Tambourines
Cowbells
Ludwig throne



SPECIAL FOCUS

Multitrack Recorders

by Michael Smolen

Since the first recordings were made there have been only a handful of ways in which it could be done: wax (as in old 78 rpm records), optical recording (sound on film, as in movies), the short-lived wire, disc recording (still being used) and the analog magnetic tape machine (from simple cassettes to 24-plus tracks). Until recently, analog magnetic tape recording has been the mainstay of both professionals and amateurs, and over the years some truly state-of-the-art systems have been developed. But like any other technology, the process of magnetic recording is slowly being replaced by a new kid in town called Pulse Code Modulation, or PCM for short. For those of you who are often winded by the never-ending supply of seemingly cryptic abbreviations used for new technologies, in layman's terms this process is called digital recording.

Simply put, the impact of digital recording on the music business has, in its short lifetime, already rewritten most of the milestone achievements of analog recording that until recently were considered quite conventional. Insofar as accepting that no new technology is worth its price tag—and the price tag of a digital recorder, at the moment, is entirely unaffordable—let's pluck a few of the specifications that apply to both technologies and give them an engineer's frothing comparison.

Crosstalk—On machines that have two or more tracks, some information can "bleed" from one track to the other. This is called crosstalk. In the professional world, this bleed is usually about 75db down from the main signal level. Digital technology brings this level to 90db (and often better), making it almost insignificant.

Print-Through—When material leaks through from one layer of the tape to another, this is called print-through. When recording a solo, sometimes you will hear a note on the tape before or after the note actually occurs. Analog recorders usually have 60db of print-through, or 60db down from normal recording level. With digital recorders, there is no print-through.

Dynamic Range—Dynamic range is defined as the difference between the loudest

and softest information that you are recording, thus providing a value for the changing level. Analog recorders usually average approximately 68db to 70db of dynamic range. In digital processing, dynamic range is boosted to an average of 96db, though much higher numbers are possible.

Wow and Flutter—Wow can be best described as a low-cycle variation in tape speed that causes a change in pitch, and flutter, as rapid variations in tape speed which distort the original sound pitch and tone variations.

Modulation Distortion—This occurs when noise components become audible across the entire audio bandwidth that is produced by any audio signal. Once again, while this problem is inherent in analog machines, there is no modulation noise in digital recording.

Digital recording works via a **sample and hold** circuit, which measures the voltage of the input waveform roughly every 45 microseconds and holds it until it's time to take the next sample. The output of this circuit goes to a **quantizer**, which basically calculates the sample into binary digits (or bits), represented by ones and zeros. The resolution of the system in the context of time is determined by how many samples are taken per second. The resolution of level is determined by how many bits of information are used for each sample. Most digital recorders use 16-bit microprocessors and have a sampling rate of between 44,000 and 50,000 times per second.

With all the talk of digital machines being the predecessors of completely digital studios—where sound will be converted to digital information right at the microphone—there are still a number of problems that need to be overcome before digital recording becomes commonplace. The biggest problem, as with any new technology, is cost. Sony, the first with a digital machine, has 24-track recorders that start at \$104,000, and Mitsubishi machines (12-track) kick in at a hefty \$170,000. And rental costs are comparatively high as well. Another problem is compatibility. Just like the problems of VHS versus Beta in the video world, digital manufacturers have yet to arrive upon a recording standard, so that tapes made on one machine may not be playable on that of another

company.

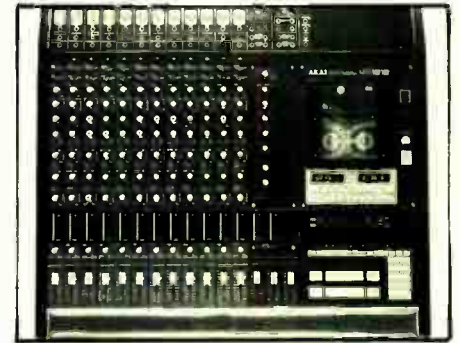
Meanwhile, multitrack machines designed for home use are nothing new. What's new is the number of state-of-the-art facilities such as noise reduction, higher speeds and better specs that can be found in these machines at an affordable price. Couple some of these machines—such as Tascam's 244 or Fostex's 250—with some moderately priced, high-tech outboard gear such as dbx's new 163x or a Lexicon PCM60, and you too can have a state-of-the-art living room.

Multitrack machines can be broadly divided into two types: **open-reel** and **cassette** formats. Cassette multitrack sales have grown dramatically and represent a major part of the multitrack market. In general, these machines put four discrete channels on one standard cassette and run it at 3¾ ips, meaning you won't be able to play that recording on a regular home-cassette deck. These machines are inexpensive, convenient, and terrific for songwriting and home demos.

Beyond the four-track cassette range, open-reel decks are far more common, with eight and 16 tracks being the usual configurations for home use. Open-reel machines generally use ½" tape and run at 15 ips, making them significantly quieter than their cassette counterparts. Some machines also come with an integrated mixer, though most require a link to a separate console for patching and equalization. Open-reel machines also usually come with a pitch control for varying tape speed; great if you don't have an MXR pitch transposer.

What follows here is an overview of multitrack manufacturers and distributors, to give you a good idea of what's available on today's market. Please assume that all specifications are from the individual manufacturer and not a result of testing by this magazine. All prices reflect manufacturer's retail price.

Akai Electric Co.—1316 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth, TX 76102, (817) 336-5114.



Akai MG1212.

Current line includes: MG1212 (\$1,699)—½" original cassette format, 12 channels with built-in mixing desk, 3¾ and 7½ ips, pitch control, three heads, 50Hz-to-20kHz frequency response, dbx Type I and three motors.

Aria Music (USA), Inc.—1201 John Reed Ct., City of Industry, CA 91745, (818) 968-8581.

Current line includes: R504 (\$799)—four-track cassette format, Simul-Sync, rack mount, effects send/return, 3¾ ips, pitch control, dual headphone jacks, 0.03 percent wow and flutter, and dual mix-down outputs.

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Schecter Sales Co. 2605 Andjion St. Dallas, Texas 75220 214/350-6955

Audio-Technica—1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224. (216) 686-2600.



Audio-Technica AT-RMX64.

Current line includes: AT-RMX64 cassette (\$1,495)—Integral six-channel mixer, three motors, direct-drive, Dolby B and C, 1 7/8 and 3 3/4 ips, punch in/out and variable pitch control.

Clarion (Kaman)—P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002, (203) 243-6304.

Current line includes: XD-5 (\$1,095)—Four-track cassette format, 3 3/4 ips, Dolby B, full logic control, synchro, mix-down, transfer and 20Hz-to-16kHz frequency response.

Fostex—15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA 90650, (213) 921-1112.



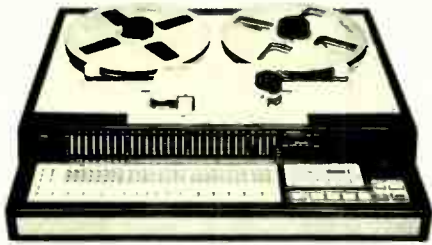
Fostex A-8 LR.

Current line includes: A-2 open reel (\$850)—7" reels, 7 1/2 and 15 ips, three heads, two tracks, three motors, 40Hz-to-22kHz frequency response and 63db S/N; A-8 open reel (\$1,995)—7" reels, 15 ips, two heads, eight tracks, three motors, 45Hz-to-18kHz and 73db S/N; B-16D open reel (\$6,800)—10 1/2" reels, 15 ips, two heads, 16 tracks, three motors, 40Hz-to-18kHz and 80db S/N; B-16M open reel (\$9,600)—10 1/2" reels, 15 ips, three heads, 16 tracks, three motors, 40Hz-to-18kHz frequency response and 80db S/N. There are five other multitrack machines available from Fostex, including two cassette versions.

Otari Corporation—2 Davis Dr., Belmont, CA 94002, (415) 673-4544.

Current line includes: MX5050 MKIII-4 open reel (\$3,895)—10 1/2" reels, 7 1/2 and 15 ips, three heads, four tracks, three motors, 30Hz-to-20kHz frequency response and 70db S/N; MX-70-816 open reel (\$13,500)—10 1/2" reels, 32, 15 and 7 1/2 ips, three heads, eight tracks, three motors, 55Hz-to-22kHz frequency response and 72db S/N; MTR90-II 16 open reel (\$27,500)—14" reels, 30 and 15 ips, three heads, 16 tracks, three motors, 20Hz-to-20kHz frequency response and 76.5db S/N; and MTR90-II 24 open reel (\$38,950)—14" reels, 30 and 15 ips, three heads, 24 tracks, three motors, 20Hz-to-20kHz frequency response and 74db S/N. There are 16 other models in the Otari line.

Sony Professional Audio—Sony Dr., Park Ridge, NJ 07656, (201) 930-1000.



Sony PCM-3324.

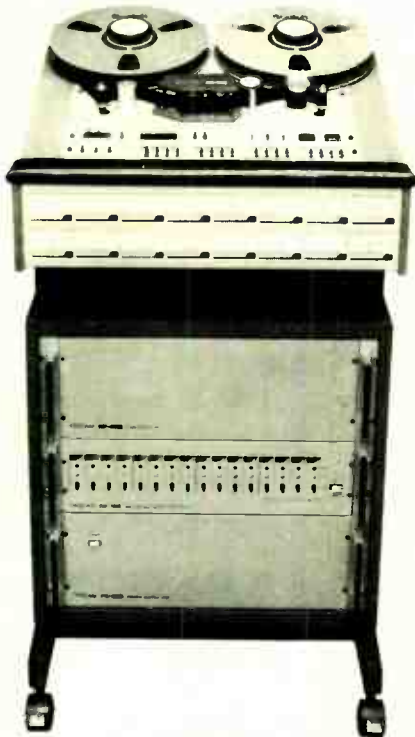
Current line includes: JH-110C series open reels (\$5,890 to \$11,975)—10½" reels, 2/4/8 tracks, three heads, 0.02 percent wow and flutter, and 66db S/N; JH-24 series open reels (\$17,000 to \$34,000)—14" reels, three heads, 8/16/24 tracks, 0.03 percent wow and flutter, and 67db S/N; PCM-3324 open-reel digital (\$104,000)—10½" and 14" reels, 76cm/s and 66.7cm/s tape speeds, 16-bit linear quantization, 24 tracks, greater than 90db dynamic range, 20Hz-to-20kHz frequency response, better than 0.05% thd, and 44.1kHz and 50.4kHz sampling rates (switchable).

Soundcraft Electronics—1517 20 St., Santa Monica, CA 90404, (213) 453-4591.

Current line includes: Series 20 open reel (\$6,500)—14" reels, 15 and 30 ips, four heads, two tracks, three motors and 0.02 percent wow and flutter; SCM 381-8 open reel (\$10,500)—10½" reels, 15 and 30 ips, three heads, eight tracks, three motors, 50Hz-to-24kHz frequency response and 63db S/N; and SCM 760 open reel (\$17,590 to \$24,950)—10½" reels, 15 and 30 ips, three heads, 16/24 tracks, three motors, 50Hz-to-24kHz frequency response and 60db to 63db S/N.

Studer Revox America—1425 Elm Hill Pk., Nashville, TN 37210, (615) 254-5651.

Current line includes: B77 open reel (\$1,799)—10½" reels, adjustable speeds for any two between 1½ and 15 ips, three heads, two or four tracks, three motors, 30Hz-to-22kHz frequency response and 65db S/N; PR-99 MK II open reel (\$2,250)—10½" reels, 3¼ to 15 ips, three heads, two tracks, three motors, 30Hz-to-22kHz frequency response and 65db S/N; A810 open reel (\$6,300)—11.1"



Tascam 85-16B.

reels, 3¼ to 15 ips, three heads, two tracks, three motors, 35Hz-to-31kHz frequency response and 72db S/N; and A80 RC open reel (\$8,950)—11.1" reels, 7½ to 30 ips, three heads, two tracks, three motors, 50Hz-to-20kHz frequency response and 64db S/N.

Tascam Professional Products—7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA 90640, (213) 726-0303.

Current line includes: Porta One Ministudio cassette (\$600)—Compact, 1½ ips, integral four-channel mixer, dbx noise reduction and electronic punch in/out; 22-4 open reel (\$1,425)—7" reels, three heads, four tracks, three motors, 40Hz-to-22kHz frequency response and 61db S/N; model 38 open reel (\$2,750)—10½" reels, 15 ips, three heads, eight tracks, three motors, 40Hz-to-20kHz and 68db S/N; and 85-16B open reel (\$13,000)—10½" reels, 15 ips, three heads, 16 tracks, three motors, 30Hz-to-24kHz frequency response and 68db S/N. There are many more models in the

Tascam line, something for any price range and any application.

Yamaha International—P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622, (714) 522-9011.



Yamaha MT44D.

Current line includes: MT44D cassette (\$535)—1½ ips, four tracks, Dolby B and C noise reduction, two motors, punch in/out jack, and fast-forward and reverse cueing. Yamaha makes a complete line of accessories to complement the MT44D, including the RM602 mixer (\$395), the RB35B rack/patchbay (\$165) and the YMC10 MIDI-to-tape-sync converter (\$120). □

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The Sessionmen

Tony Thompson: Renowned for the Groove, He Was Raised on Rock

by Bill Milkowski

As drummer for Chic, Tony Thompson was an integral part of a sound that has become a genre unto itself. That quintessential Chic groove, epitomized by the monster 1979 hit single "Good Times," has been imitated and emulated by countless artists.

Consequently, Thompson has become a hot property. David Bowie recruited him for *Let's Dance* and the eight-month Serious Moonlight '83 world tour. Mick Jagger called on Thompson's crisp drumming for his solo debut, *She's the Boss*. Robert Palmer grabbed him for his latest release. Plus, Thompson, Palmer, and Duran Duran's John and Andy Taylor recorded together as the Power Station, named after the New York studio where the LP was recorded. And now he's sitting on offers from Bonnie Tyler, Ric Ocasek, Elton John and Men at Work.

Everybody wants to cop a piece of that groove.

But in spite of all this activity, the question remains: whither Chic? It's been three years since their last album, although the members (Thompson, Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers and vocalists Alfa Anderson and Norma Jean Wright) have all been busy on their own.

"Well, Nile's off doing his thing, and God bless him," says the 30-year-old drummer. "I

don't know if we'll ever get together again with Nile, but Bernard and I have been talking about doing some things together. Bernard did mention to me that he's thinking about doing another Chic record with Nile, but I don't know. We haven't discussed anything. I think it would be a perfect time for it now. In fact, we have a whole album under wraps that nobody's ever heard. Rhythm tracks, anyway. It's smoking! Me and Bernard. Serious stuff, but I don't think anybody will ever get a chance to hear it. It's on the shelf."

Thompson doesn't like to sit on the shelf himself. He enjoys playing live before howling crowds, which is why he so enjoyed the Bowie tour.

"I hadn't been on the road for a while, so I was itching to get back," he recalls. "I had just finished up my parts on *Let's Dance* and was hanging around the studio when I overheard David talking to some people about doing a tour. So I told him, 'Hey, if you're looking for a drummer...' I've always been persistent like that."

Thompson got the gig, along with two boyhood pals from Queens, New York: bassist Carmine Rojas and perennial Bowie guitarist Carlos Alomar. "We were thumpin', man," he enthuses, "these three black cats from Queens playing some serious rock &

roll behind David Bowie. It was hip. There's not too many white rock & roll guys who are going to allow a lot of black cats to come in the band, which is unfortunate, because there are a lot of black cats I know who can play rock & roll. Some people think that if you don't have blond hair and blue eyes, you can't play rock & roll. But Bowie was cool. He just let us go out there and burn. People assume because I'm with Chic that all I can do is groove. But I was going out there breaking sticks night after night, having a fun time playing rock & roll."

Thompson points out that he was raised on rock & roll. "A lot of people assume that because I'm black I grew up listening to James Brown," he says, "but my major influences on drums were Ginger Baker and John Bonham. I remember hearing Ginger on 'Toad'—that's what made me want to become a drummer. From then on I was a Cream fanatic. It was that or Hendrix or Led Zeppelin." Thompson realized a dream this past summer, playing alongside Phil Collins as part of the Led Zeppelin reunion at the Philadelphia Live Aid show. "I didn't know anything about the Commodores or James Brown," he continues, "I didn't listen to that stuff. Cats would come up to me in school and say, 'Wow, man. You hear the new Commodores record?' And I'd say, 'No, you hear the new



Thompson (r., above with Chic and at far r. with Power Station) plays a Yamaha Recording series kit both on stage and in the studio. Dimensions are 24" bass drum, 6 1/2"-deep snare, 12", 13" and 14" rack toms and 16" x 16" and 18" x 16" floor toms. Cymbals are Zildjian, which the New York-born drummer endorses.



Blind Faith record?"

Thompson began learning about the groove after hooking up with Chic mates Edwards and Rodgers. "When I originally joined Chic, I was really into the flash technique and all the fancy things that most drummers find necessary to have, and they really aren't," he explains. "I really learned by playing with Nile and Bernard that it's all about the groove. John Bonham knew that. He'd lay down a solid four, and when it came time for him to do a fill, he did it at the right time and place. He had big ears, just like Nile and Bernard. So I've learned to listen. Groove is the most important thing to me now. Equipment-wise, having a hundred drums and cymbals don't mean squat. It's all about laying down that solid groove. If you have no foundation, all that other stuff you do on top don't mean nothing."

As a kid, Thompson used to beat on tables, the couch and anything else around the house that could stand up to his percussive assaults. His father finally relented and bought him a \$60 Telstar snare drum and a little tin cymbal. "Man, I had 'Toad' down on that snare drum and that cymbal! I remember sitting in front of the record player just bashing along to 'Toad.' I would never go out, never play sports or anything. I'd just sit and listen to music and play all day long."

Not long after that, his father bought him a full kit, and Thompson was appeased for a while—until he saw Carmine Appice in concert with the group Cactus in the early '70s. "He had this drum set that I had never seen before: two 28" bass drums, huge toms all over the place. I went home and begged my father for a kit like that. It took three years of begging, but I finally did get it, my first professional Ludwig kit."

He adds, "Back then I always vowed that one day if I ever made it to the point where I could afford it, I'd get tons of drums and tons of cymbals. Now I feel like I've got too much."

His current kit for both the studio and the road is a Yamaha Recording series with a cherry-red finish, including 24" bass drum, 6½"-deep snare and five toms: 12" × 8", 13" × 9", 14" × 10", 16" × 16" and 18" × 16". He endorses Yamaha drums, hardware and pedals. His bass pedal is from the CS-500 series. His heads are clear Remo Ambassadors and he uses a Remo Ambassador Black Dot on his snare. He also endorses Zildjian cymbals and carries six in his setup: two 18" paper-thin crashes in front, a 20" paper-thin crash on his right, a 20" ping ride, a 22" pang ("the loudest thing in the world") and a 20" swish over the ride cymbal. For his hi-hat he uses 14" Quick Beats in the studio and 15" Quick Beats live. He endorses Power Tip sticks and uses no electronics.

"No, I'm not into electronics," he maintains. "I didn't get this far using any of that stuff, although I guess it's valid in some ways. Like, I'll use a Linn or something for handclaps once in a while, instead of using a click track. I hate using click tracks; most of the recordings I've done—Bowie, Jagger, Diana Ross, Chic—I've never used click tracks. With me it's more of a natural feel; I think I can lock in

pretty well. Now, if I do a session and the other artists want a click track, I'll say, 'Forget the click. Put some handclaps in there and just go with that.'

"In fact, when I did three tunes on the Material album, *One Down*, it was just me, the handclaps and a chart—no band! I did all the drum tracks first, then everybody else came in and overdubbed their parts. And I also did that on *Power Station*."

"People assume because I'm with Chic that all I can do is groove. But [with Bowie] I was going out there breaking sticks night after night, having a fun time playing rock & roll."

After years of laying down the groove, Thompson is now taking some time to study the drums. "I'm getting into the reading end of it and learning about polyrhythms and where drums are going now. I still take lessons from an old cat named Sam Ulano. He's about sixty-five years old and an incredible reader. He's teaching me all kinds of stuff, which is cool, because for so long I put most of my emphasis on time and groove and feel, just getting that snare, bass drum and hi-hat locked in. I'm still into that, but I'm branching out a bit." Thompson also studies from *The*

Funk Drumming Workbook by New York-area drummer Chet Deboe (available through Deboe Publications, 427 Uniondale Ave., Uniondale, NY 11553).

Thompson practices on pads in his midtown Manhattan apartment or drives out to his mother's house in Queens, where he has a full kit set up. "I'll go out there and bang for hours and hours," he says. "My parents don't mind. I've been doing it for years."

His favorite drummers are Vinnie Colaiuta and Terry Bozzio, both graduates of the Frank Zappa school of discipline. "I really admire those guys a lot because they can read so well," says Thompson. "And they've both played with Zappa, who is somebody I've always wanted to play with. I always wanted to get to that point—Zappa or Weather Report. Because when you play with those cats, you've got to be on the money and you have to have your reading down. I think it'd be a good test for me."

Thompson is proud to be among the fraternity of young New York drummers currently burning up the scene, including Omar Hakim, Steve Jordan, Lenny White and Narada Michael Walden. He contends that there is a certain amount of friendly competition involved that spurs each of them on to new heights. "The pride factor is definitely there. I mean, you've got to be serious to play here. I turn on the TV and see Steve Jordan burning on the 'David Letterman Show,' or I see Omar smokin' with Sting. You know, everybody's doing it here, and that

Continued on page 65

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Home Recording Workshop

Combining Tracks and Bouncing

by Julian McBrowne

What's the one question that's asked in every multitrack studio every day? It could be the popular "Why can't I hear anything?", which is usually followed by "Can I have another set of headphones?" It could even be that famous telephone query "Where's my check?" Experience tells us, however, that the winner of the most-asked studio question is: "How many tracks do I have left?" The advent of 24- and 48-track studios has done nothing to diminish the frequency of this question, and most engineers will admit to spending an idle hour dreaming up optimal track assignments. The quality of your four- and eight-track home recordings depends on this kind of planning.

The advantages of multitrack recording are clear: You can concentrate on one thing at a time, experiment with different relationships among the instruments and voices, and delay the moment of truth—the mix—almost indefinitely. The problem with all of this freedom is that it breeds indecision. Sooner or later, if you want to continue, you're going to have to mix those first three tracks down to one. The trick here is to make up your mind and start thinking like a producer.

Every recording needs a strong foundation: the basic track. Basics are usually the simplest combination of drums, bass and

rhythm needed to play the song. Whether you're playing it all by yourself or you're using musicians, these are the first three components you'll be working on. Once you get the sounds, it's time for your first decision: a track apiece for each of the three elements, or one track for the whole thing? Although there are advantages to both approaches, the second choice will sound better. Remember: The object is to record as much first-generation material as possible. If, however, you're a one-man band, bouncing is inevitable. But your options are still not limited to just one instrument per track. You could, for instance, cut your bass and drum parts on one track. With a little care and some planning you could have bass and drums on track one, rhythm guitar on track two, a second rhythm guitar on track three, and then mix all of them down to one great basic track.

One way to reduce your mixing problems is to let your arrangements mix for you. If you want the guitar to be louder and stronger on the chorus, try doubling the guitar parts only on the chorus. There's more than one way to do this, too. You could just cut two guitar tracks and mix them down to one. But this time let's try a "live bounce." This technique incorporates your first guitar track with a new part in one simple step: Bring your first track up on a fader (via the "tape" or "remix" selector) and assign it to the new track. Then, on another fader, bring

up the part you're playing and assign it to the new track as well. Listen closely to the combined signal, and when you have a good balance between the new and the old, it's time to "print." Although the trial-and-error method works well, simple math works even better: Bring up your original track so that it peaks at -5vu . Mark your level and turn it off. Then bring up your new part to the same level, -5vu . The result of the combination of these two -5vu signals should add up to a resounding 0vu .

Mixing is a function that improves with practice. The more mixes you do, the better you get. As usual, there are some rules that must be followed, and some that were made to be broken:

Rule: Monitor your bounces and premixes on speakers, not headphones. Music that sounds great in the 'phones is usually unrecognizable on speakers, but a great speaker mix always sounds good on headphones.

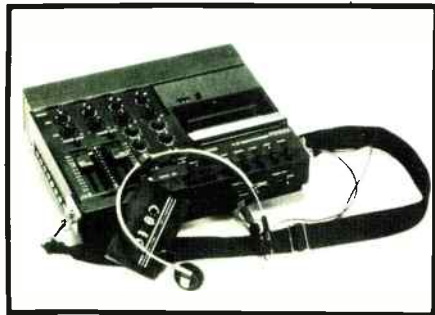
Rule: Add highs to your bounce tracks. The top end is the first thing that suffers as it goes from generation to generation. There are those who say that everything sounds better with a little 8k-to-10k boost, and they might be right.

Rule: Take your time. Having a home studio allows you to do things at your own pace. Take advantage of that; mix and remix until you're sure you're satisfied.

Rule to break: Always put percussion on a
Continued on page 36

MULTITRACK CASSETTE RECORDERS

Fostex—15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA 90650, (213) 921-1112.



About the size of a physics textbook, Fostex's the X-15 weighs just under seven pounds, runs on batteries (included) and provides a minimal mix section with two post EQ and pan pots. The machine runs at $1\frac{1}{2}$ ips and doubles as a regular cassette player. On board is a calibrated Dolby B NR circuit. Levels are set with slide pots, but you can record only two tracks at once. Bouncing is done without patch cords, and each track has a

separate out for signal processing. The pitch control works for both the record and playback functions, as do the treble and bass controls. Punching in/out is done by means of a mechanical plunger, which isn't quite as accurate as an electronic one. But the deck fulfills its stated purpose of being "an electronic notebook" rather handily. List price: \$495.

The 250 Multitracker is a cassette system that lets you record all four tracks simultaneously. The $3\frac{3}{4}$ -ips unit has a mixer section with assignable inputs, improved signal-to-noise ratio and can use any foot switch (even one from a Fender Twin Reverb amp). Each channel has direct-out and record-in jacks, resulting in a possible 10 inputs, and the record and mixer sections can be used independently of each other. Controls consist of gain, tone, echo send and pan. The 250 rounds out with Dolby C, vu metering with LED peak indicators, digital tape counter and return to zero. List price: \$1,300.

Tascam/Teac—7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA 90640, (213) 726-0303.

Tascam's 244 Portastudio is an upgraded version of Teac's original 144 Portastudio, a pioneering machine in home-cassette multitracking. On the 244 you can record all four tracks simultaneously, and the new NR is dbx. Like the 144, it has a mixer

integral to the unit, and parametric EQ has been added. It has three-motor transport, stereo tape cue, stereo auxiliary for either additional cueing or effects, digital tape counter, slide-pot faders, soft-touch controls and foot-switch punching. List



price: \$1,300.

The 234 Syncaset is not much larger than a regular cassette deck and is rack mountable. Sans mixer, the 234 provides dbx NR at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips, digital tape counter with zero return and repeat-play feature, LED monitoring of mode operation (nice after a long day at the board) and a foot-switch punch in/out capability that allows you to monitor on input. List price: \$900.

Producer's Chair

The Recording of Heart's "What About Love?"



(L) Heart's most recent lineup has remained intact since 1982: (l.-r.) Mark Andes, Denny Carmassi, Ann and Nancy Wilson, Howard Leese. (Above) producer Ron Nevison.

by Ron Nevison

An established producer who's worked with the likes of Jefferson Starship, Michael Schenker, the Babys and Eddie Money over the course of his decade-plus career, Ron Nevison is sought out by artists for his sound: characterized by cannoning drums and densely mixed guitars, and perfect for AOR radio.

The combination of Nevison and Heart has helped to revitalize the career of the Seattle-based group, whose fortunes began to slip in the early '80s. "What About Love?," from their ninth LP, 'Heart,' is their biggest hit in years, and here Nevison details its recording.

PREPRODUCTION

We had to change the key from the original demo; it wasn't high enough for Ann Wilson to sing effectively, so we moved it up. There were a few other changes, all minor. We pretty much learned it from the demo, and then everybody started stretching out to find his or her parts. We worked on it in the little rehearsal space that Nancy Wilson has in her house in Seattle, which is where we did all the preproduction for the record. When we got to Los Angeles, we rented rehearsal space at SIR [Studio Instrument Rentals], where we could crank things up more, and ran a tape of the rehearsal onto their Teac four-track as a reference.

BASIC TRACKS

In studio D at L.A.'s the Record Plant—which has an SSL board, two Studer A800 24-tracks and Westlake Audio monitors—

we recorded drums, bass, synthesizer, and Nancy and Howard Leese playing guitars; but only on the choruses. There were two different sounds on the synth, and I kept the verse sound but later redid the chorus sound. Later we also redid one of the two guitars; I think it was Howard's. The guitar amps were Marshalls and the new Seymour Duncan Convertible.

DRUMS AND BASS

I didn't use overhead mikes on the drums; just room mikes fairly far out from Denny Carmassi's kit. I used two Sennheiser 451s on the boom mikes, an Electro-Voice RE20 on the bass drum—not tight in, and he didn't have the head off, but it sounded good at the time—a 451 on the snare and the hi-hat, and Sennheiser 421s on the toms.

Mark Andes played a Fender Precision bass, which we took direct only.

Song: "What About Love?"

Produced and engineered by Ron Nevison

Recorded at: The Record Plant, Los Angeles (basic tracks); the Plant Studios, Sausalito, CA (overdubs, mix-down)

MASTER

Track 1	Track 2	Track 3	Track 4	Track 5	Track 6	Track 7	Track 8	Track 9	Track 10	Track 11	Track 12
Vocal	Bass drum	Snare drum	Floor (snare) tom	Floor tom-tom	Tom-tom	Tom-tom	Tom-tom	Hi-hat (left)	Hi-hat (right)	Room (left)	Room (right)
Track 13 Simmons toms	Track 14 Simmons toms	Track 15 Bass guitar	Track 16 Keyboards (chorus)	Track 17 Leese's guitar	Track 18 N. Wilson's guitar	Track 19 Synclavier (verse)	Track 20 LinnDrum	Track 21 Dr. Click	Track 22 Simmons snare	Track 23 —	Track 24 SMPTE
SLAVE											
Track 1 Chorus backing vocals (Slick, A. Wilson)	Track 2 Chorus vocal	Track 3 Chorus backing vocals (N. Wilson)	Track 4 Yamaha DX7 (verse)	Track 5 Yamaha DX7 (verse)	Track 6 Chorus backing vocals (Slick, Thomas, A. Wilson)	Track 7 Chorus backing vocals (Slick, Thomas, A. Wilson)	Track 8 Guitar solo/lead lines	Track 9 Synth French horns (chorus)	Track 10 "Pretty power" chorus	Track 11 Fender Chroma synth	Track 12 Fender Chroma synth
Track 13 Bass guitar (recorded in Sausalito)	Track 14 Rockman guitar, N. Wilson solo mandolin	Track 15 Synclavier synth strings	Track 16 Keyboards (verse)	Track 17 Chorus line	Track 18 N. Wilson's guitar	Track 19 Chorus guitar	Track 20 Lead vocal	Track 21 Yamaha DX7 strings	Track 22 Backing vocals (N. Wilson)	Track 23 —	Track 24 SMPTE

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KEYBOARDS

We used a Synclavier, a Yamaha DX7 and a Fender Chroma with a patch that sounded kind of like a guitar. The synths were programmed and played by Peter Wolf, a solo artist and also a touring keyboardist with the Starship. I really tried to achieve a sort of moody kind of voice on the synths. I kept the original synthesizer on the verse and added a similar stereo track to the background to thicken it up. We used the Synclavier to do the intro, whereas the original demo had a guitar doing it. The main synth on the track has a kind of horn sound on it. Then, on the choruses, there are two or three different sounds doing ascending and descending lines, along with a French horn sound doing an answer line.

It was after this that we redid Howard's guitar, which posed a problem on the basic tracks, either because of the tuning or the sound. We kept Nancy's guitar because it sounded real good and matched up nicely.

GUITAR SOLO

The next step was the guitar solo, for which we used a 50-watt Marshall amp. When I do guitar overdubs, I have six or seven different amps all set up. We try different settings on the amp and the guitar. Howard has a huge collection of guitars, so we had a lot to pick from. He brought in maybe ten. On a four-speaker cabinet, I miked two speakers and used a Shure SM57—which I almost always use—placed really close up. I don't use a room mike. I have a Roland chorus echo that has a repeat effect, which I like to use on solos. There was also a limiter on it. I usually set my guitar recordings with a Urei 1176 limiter and a Pultec program equalizer and combine that with EQ added at the board, since on a program equalizer you can select only one frequency for the top end and one for the bottom.

VOCALS

Ann sang through an M-49, an old tube Neumann that sounds beautiful. We tried six or seven microphones before we found the one that really fit her. We didn't add many effects to her voice. I wanted to get a very close, clear sound for the verses because I wanted it to be a very moody kind of delivery, whereas on the choruses I wanted a

big sound that hit you smack in the face. There was some compression, however, because she has such a wide range of notes and intensities on this song. We did the verses and the choruses at different times, coming back to them two or three times until I was happy with them.

For the backgrounds I got the Starship's Grace Slick and Mickey Thomas to sing the "what about love"s with Ann and had Nancy do a harmony with her on the answer part. I used Sennheiser 441s for all the background parts, and the processing on them was just limiters and some EQ for brightness. There's really no plate reverb on the whole record; it's all digital. We used two older Lexicon 224s and two AMS digital reverbs. But mostly it was the 224s, which I really like. On some of the newer reverbs the echoes sound too good; I like them to sound roomy and not too bright.

On the tag where it modulates, I had Ann do several tracks of vocal ad libs and then did a compilation track of them.

MIX-DOWN

We mixed at the Plant Studios in Sausalito, which is where we also recorded the overdubs and the vocals. The console at the Plant is a Trident, the multitracks, Studer A800 twenty-four tracks, and I used my own Meyer monitor speakers. We went forty-eight tracks after the basics, which means that after we cut the tracks we put away the masters, used slaves for the rest of the recording, and then, for the mix, I put back in the original drums. The drums had been mixed down to two tracks for the purpose of doing overdubs, and that does two things for you: It saves the drum tracks from constant wear over the heads, and it gives me a lot more tracks to record on. And also, once you get your original drum tracks back in the monitors, it's kind of exciting. After you've been listening to those third-generation drums for a while during the overdubs and then go back to the originals—which are in pristine condition—it gives you quite a boost.

The mix for "What About Love?" was pretty conventional, and I approached it very straightforwardly, like I would a live performance. It was really just a case of mixing the whole thing together. □

— Edited by Dan Daley

Home Recording Workshop

Continued from page 34

separate track. If you follow this one, you may be forced to choose between a lead guitar track and a percussion track. Why not have both? Try recording a live percussion track along with your basic track premix. Try playing tambourine while you record your lead vocal. There will probably be just enough leakage into the vocal mike to make it sound good.

Rule to break: More than three or four bounces equals mush. This depends on what you're bouncing. A third-generation lead vocal is not something you'd like to hear, but for three-part backing vocals, this might be

your only choice.

Now, it's completely possible that you can master all of these techniques and still need more tracks. Your last alternatives are: Mix down your track to another machine, then bounce that back to your multitrack and continue. Or this method: Do your overdub while you mix. It sounds simple now. But when the first records came out with an artist singing harmony with himself, the public was fascinated and mystified. We've removed some of the mystery, but you don't have to. When they say, "You did that on four tracks?," just smile. □



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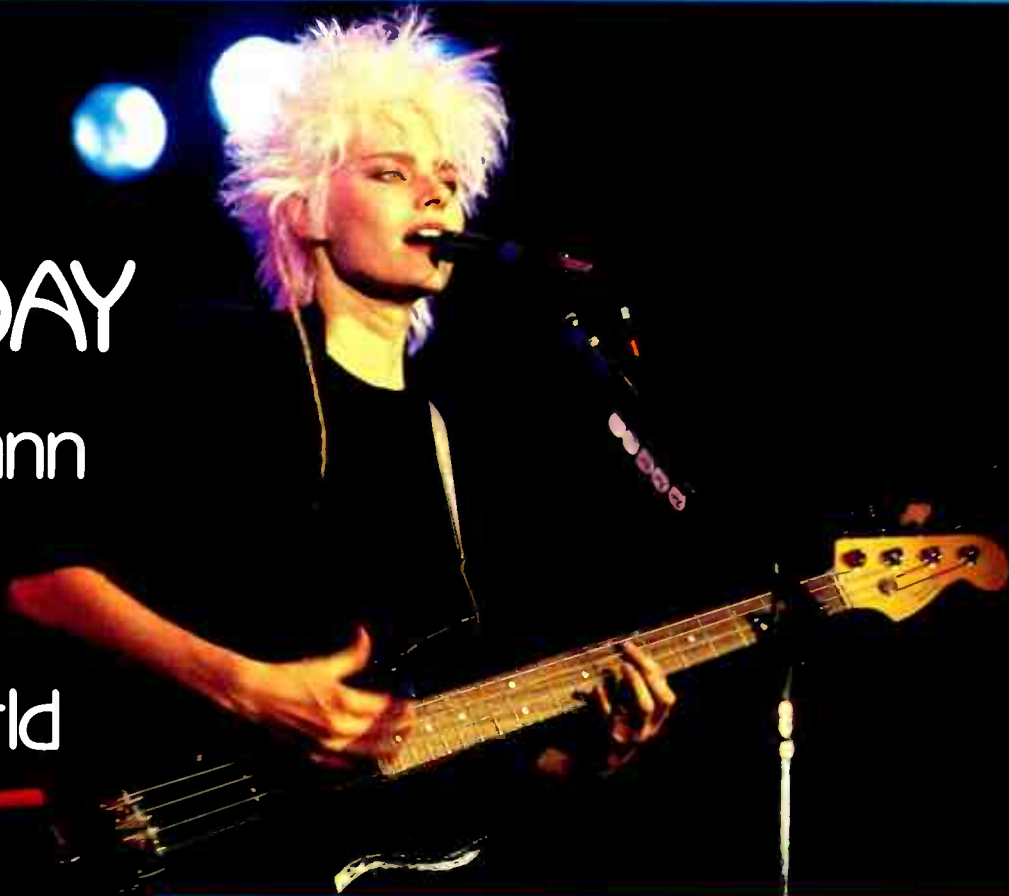
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'TIL TUESDAY

Aimee Mann In a Man's Man's Man's World



Aimee Mann (above, and second from l. in photo at r., with guitarist Robert Holmes, keyboardist Joey Pesce and drummer Michael Hausman). The Boston-based band played its first show in 1983; this year 'Til Tuesday have opened for Hall and Oates as well as for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

by Dan Daley



Murphy's Law. It'll catch up to ya at the damndest times; in 'Til Tuesday's case, in the midst of the Boston-based quartet's first major tour, opening for Hall and Oates. In Detroit, somebody made off with Aimee Mann's Fender Precision basses and Robert Holmes's prized Fender Stratocasters, one of which he'd owned for eight years.

"It sucks to get guitars ripped off," sighs Mann, whose sharp, aquiline features and plumes of blond hair make her the band's obvious focal point, in addition to the fact

that she cowrites and sings its material. But outside of the four- and six-string theft, 'Til Tuesday's prospects couldn't look brighter, thanks largely to their "Voices Carry" video, one of the more startling visual feasts to slink across the MTV screen recently.

Not because it breaks any new technological ground. Not because of any hair-raising pyrotechnics. It stands in stark contrast to much of what surrounds it by virtue of its—and the Top 10 song's—ability to touch a very real and human chord. And that's be-

cause its source, like the inspiration of any fine piece of work, is the truth.

"I know what it's like to be involved in relationships where you don't really have anything in common but you still want to hold on hoping," says Mann, referring to the song's story line. "But if somebody wants to hold you back for some reason, after a while it's not because they want to keep you to themselves; they want to keep you down because they're afraid of change."

Continued on page 40

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male antagonist as too overbearing, to the point where it was becoming unrealistic. "If he were more of a jerk," she comments about the character, "I wouldn't put up with him, so I was trying to get him toned down a little. I can get behind it the way it stands now, but I obviously wouldn't be with a guy like that."

When told of Mann's remark, Mike Hausman laughs softly in agreement. "No, Aimee wouldn't go out with a guy like that," says the drummer, who was romantically involved with her for a time. In fact, the two were sharing an apartment when 'Til Tuesday formed. Some bruised egos resulted from the breakup, both admit, as well as within the entire band, though for another reason. There was some grumbling over Mann's figuring so prominently in the "Voices Carry" video. It's an old story—rookie band coping with the newfound pressures of stardom—but one that was new to 'Til Tuesday.

"We had been on the road and all we saw was one another, and things were really just getting strange," says Mann. "But a couple of weeks ago we sat down and had this big conversation, and now things are fine. We wanted to be completely honest and decide what we wanted, because..." She hesitates warily. "I'm not going to work in a very personal way with anyone who says, 'This is just a job.' I have to bring in songs about things that have happened to me, and everybody knows what it's about because they know me and what goes on in my life. And if I can't trust them to the point of telling them these secrets, then it's not going to work."

Hausman amplifies further: "Everything that happened for this band happened really quickly. You can easily lose track of what you want to do with the band and how everything works together. We were feeling that

everyone was going in different directions and not really pulling together." The problem, both Hausman and Mann maintain, was quickly extinguished.

'Til Tuesday's closeness was palpable at a recent performance opening for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers at the Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey. They stood tightly together on the stage that night, looking to one another for support. "It's not like each of us is trying to grab his or her own piece of the audience," contends Hausman. "We try to project a sense of really being together on stage. We want people to see that there's a chemistry which works. It makes the music better." Plus, he adds pensively, "You can really feel alone up there."

At one point between songs, Mann reached out and touched Joey Pesce on the shoulder as she crossed the stage. Their eyes met for only a moment, but the communication was there.

"There's a moment in the video where Aimee touches me on the shoulder, and I look up and see that she's upset," says Hausman, noting the similarities between the video and the stage encounter. "That's the way this band works; there's a lot of support."

There is a recurrent theme in literature, that success erodes the personal relationships which enabled success to take place. 'Til Tuesday's four souls seem cognizant that it can happen and that it's a constant endeavor to avoid such a trap. "Everybody tries to be sensitive to other people's feelings," says Hausman, "and that always takes effort, whether you're best friends or not." □

Soundcheck

Selected Gear Used on Tour

JC-120 combo amplifier, manufactured by RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213) 685-5141.



The JC-120 is a 120-watt amplifier featuring two 12" drivers; two channels; volume, treble, middle, bass, distortion, reverb, vibrato speed, vibrato depth and chorus/vibrato switches; foot-switch jacks for chorus/vibrato and reverb; and line-out and external speaker jacks. Just because the "JC" stands for "Jazz Chorus" doesn't mean this monster won't pound out the rock & roll as well; just ask the gang in 'Til Tuesday.

Suggested retail price: \$775.

Panther guitar, manufactured by Washburn International, 1415 Waukegan Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062, (312) 541-3520.

Washburn's Panther is a Strat-styled instrument featuring 25" scale; two humbucking pickups; rosewood fingerboard on laminated neck; 22 frets; chrome machines; and polyurethane finish. The Panther's neck is bolted on, and Washburn offers a number of tremolo options, including its hot, new Wonderbar.

Suggested retail price: \$799.



800RB bass amplifier, manufactured by Gallien-Krueger, Inc., 504-B Vandell Way, Campbell, CA 95008. (408) 379-3344.



Gallien-Krueger's 800RB is a self-contained biamp system featuring preamp section; variable electronic crossover (100Hz to 1kHz); two amplifier sections—one 100-watt amp for high end and one 300-watt amp for low end; effects loop and optional rack-mount configuration.

Suggested retail price: \$949.



Holmes and Mann had the Fender Strat guitar and the Precision bass shown here stolen in Detroit earlier this year. Mann is now playing another P-bass, which is covered in black tape, while Holmes has switched to a Schecter Strat.



ON SONGWRITING

Bob Halligan, Jr.: Writing the Heavy Hits

by Dan Daley

It is a putative notion that heavy-metal acts are the primary suppliers of their own material. It's hard to conceive of one of the more covered contemporary writers such as Billy Joel or John Fogerty being recorded by Def Leppard or Blue Oyster Cult. But these bands do have a problem in that the vast majority of their material rarely makes it to the radio, which tends to shun HM to the point of ghetto-izing it, relegating it to the early a.m. hours—if it plays it at all.

Even established purveyors of metal have to get access to the airwaves in order to flourish; to survive, for that matter. And to accomplish that they sometimes have to go elsewhere for songs that can crack the Top 40.

Enter Bob Halligan, Jr., whose compositions and cowrites have sold over four million records worldwide. By the end of this year, he will have at least 25 cuts released on albums by Judas Priest, Helix, Blue Oyster Cult, Kix, Icon, Lee Aaron and Rick Cua, with projects in the works with Ted Nugent, Blackfoot and Export.

"I've benefitted from the assumption that heavy-metal bands generate all their own material," says Halligan, 33. "In fact, they're looking for songs. I seem to be the only guy doing what I do; the only one who noticed this niche."

Halligan, currently with Screen Gems Music, was a staff writer at United Artists Music in 1981, writing mainly pop rock—his personal favorite—with one successful cover behind him: "The Best of Me," recorded by South African rockers Clout. The single sold over 300,000 copies in Europe that year.

But something else happened that year for Halligan. Judas Priest were searching for an American single for precisely those reasons mentioned earlier. Halligan's "Take These Chains" was submitted and was chosen by the band from over 300 other entries. Appearing on the 1.3 million-selling *Screaming for Vengeance* LP, it gave Halligan the proverbial lightbulb over the head.

"I got the bright idea that if I could write one of these, why not go for others?" he says. And he did, with a very well-thought-out—to the point of being clinical—approach. "I really studied that record and the other songs on it," he admits. "I listened to Priest's other albums, read about them, looked at their photos, and went to one of their gigs. I really tried to climb into their skins and see what it felt like."

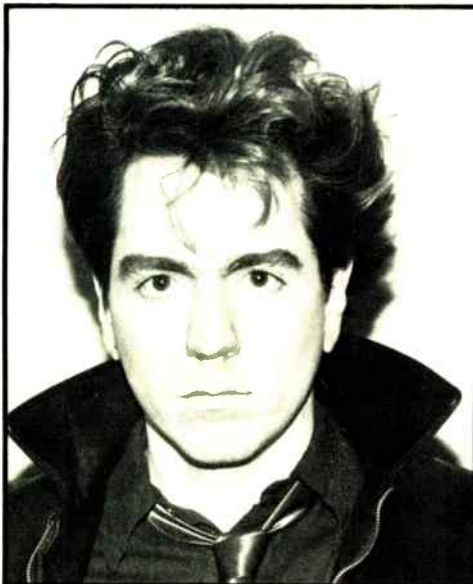
He took heavy metal apart like a watch and examined the pieces, looking for its essence. "I analyzed their songs from a

harmonic, melodic and rhythmic standpoint," he explains. "There are certain places you can go, certain modalities that are comfortable for heavy metal. Harmonically, it's rather simplistic. There are certain tricks, certain chromaticisms you can use.

"Let's say you're in E minor. The popular avenues there are to C. The G is often a passing chord. The D will get used a lot. You won't get a lot of augmented or diminished chords—if any at all—or thirds in the bass." However, Halligan says that the latter is becoming more popular, a recent HM evolution he asserts was legitimized by the unusually tuneful Def Leppard. Halligan's research became Judas Priest's next single, "Some Heads Are Gonna Roll" from 1984's *Defenders of the Faith*. The record garnered considerable airplay and brought Halligan recognition as an HM specialist.

Halligan's approach to metal can be applied to any genre for writers trying to expand their horizons. His advice: "Initially, study the structures; never mind about the chords or the melodies at first. Just sit down like a football coach watching films of last week's game. Time the songs. Time the intros. Figure out where the intro stops and the song begins. Find out if there's an 'a' section and a 'b' section in the verse. If so, how many bars are there in each? Once you kind of rough all that in, you get a sense of structure, and then you try to write a song that fits that structure.

"Better yet," he continues, "take one of **For those aspiring to write in the hard-rock vein, Bob Halligan, Jr., advises studying carefully the song structures of popular metal acts.**



your own songs and see how it stacks up against this structure. If your chorus comes in at a minute and thirty seconds, people might turn the radio dial before they get to it. That's basic stuff which applies to any genre."

In terms of heavy metal specifically, he suggests writers listen closely to instrumentation once the structure is mastered. "Think like a producer. These bands have to perform these songs in a certain kind of style. Don't dig any holes for yourself. Do they use a glockenspiel on the intros? If not, don't write one in."

MAKING METAL DEMOS

What's the best way to present a metal song on tape? Calling the songs' arrangements "absolutely critical," Halligan stresses that "if you use prominent keyboards on a heavy-metal demo, it goes directly into the trash without a listen." The guitar is still supreme in this neck of the woods, apparently.

What about the maxim that a good song is a good song regardless of how it's presented? "I don't believe that," he replies, "unless you're blessed with a great pair of ears on the other end. We're in an era of style over content, and if people don't feel the style is right, or if the guitars on a demo aren't cut in a certain way, you're up the creek."

Halligan, born in Syracuse, New York, further asserts that the nature of the industry these days requires high-tech demos to secure a fair listen. He's probably correct in that assumption, if only because the proliferation of good home recording equipment has made at least minimal production values on demos *de rigueur*.

Halligan himself works mostly on an upright piano and admits to "showing my acquired ignorance" when it comes to technical jargon. His demos are recorded on a friend's Tascam 38 eight-track. "Producing to me is having ears and knowing when something sounds right," he contends. "The trick is to know your limitations and to work with somebody who knows the tech end."

In exploiting the niche he has carved out, Halligan has implemented an overall game plan, a higher operative philosophy. Both he and his manager, Barry Bergman, believe that hard rock is "mellowing out." Why? "Because radio is appealing to an older audience," says Bergman, who originally signed Halligan to UA in 1979. He points out that heavy-metal bands have to accommodate the changing demographics and make their music more accessible to the mainstream. Halligan's prescription: "More melody; more musicality. A heightened sense of song craftsmanship for the adult palate."

Considering the number of acts covering

his tunes in the genre, is there a danger that he might become tagged within the industry as a writer of only metal? "There's some danger of that," he admits. "Let's call it a situation where there is this metal monicker, and we don't want it to stick anymore than necessary." To this end, Halligan is pursuing a recording deal for himself; a record that would reflect his own musical taste. (As to whether or not he likes metal personally, he says he has "acquired a taste for it" along the way, although he prefers to be near the volume control.)

Halligan has adapted his skills to another, nascent form of hard rock, one whose impact is just beginning to be felt: contemporary Christian music. "It's rock & roll that I would defy anybody to identify as gospel music unless he had a lyric sheet in front of him," he states firmly. He recently coproduced and cowrote seven songs on an album by Rick Cua, a born-again Christian rocker formerly of the Outlaws. One notable cut from that record (*You're My Road*, Sparrow Records, Chatsworth, CA 91311) is "Don't Say Suicide," a song that addresses the recent teen-suicide epidemic. Noting that this cut is perhaps the most metallic of the songs on the record, Halligan says, "We felt the best way to do it was with a sledgehammer, because

Contemporary metal, contends Halligan, features "more melody; more musicality."

the kid who is in that frame of mind is more apt to be listening to Scorpions than to Debby Boone."

Halligan is no evangelist. His Irish heritage and choirboy appearance suggest more a mischievous altar boy than a brimstone-belching crusader. But with Cua the pairing worked remarkably well. "Rick is well-versed in the lexicon of gospel songwriting and knows the images that you can use in those songs," he says, noting ironically that those images are diametrically opposed to the ones which characterize heavy metal: demons, death and destruction—the three Ds. An interesting juxtaposition. In his own tongue-in-cheek words, "from Judas Priest to Jesus Christ and back again."

The bottom line on Bob Halligan, Jr., is that he has taken analysis of the craft to a rather elevated level. Even more, he has been enormously successful at it. Cogent, at times almost eloquent on the subject, he is the archetype of the calculated writer, a breed in short supply these days. Not that he's a stranger to inspiration—you simply don't get as much done as he has without liberal doses of it. But he illustrates the major side of the equation which states that it's 90 percent perspiration. Halligan has put a lot of thought into what he does, and every writer, regardless of his or her type of songs, can learn a great deal from him.

Dan Daley is a songwriter whose credits include "Still in Saigon," recorded by the Charlie Daniels Band, and "This Could Be the Night," a Top 10 single for R. B. Hudson.

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ON LAW

Incorporating Your Band or Music-Related Business, Part 2

by Ron Bienstock

Roger Phillips, an associate with Solomon, Lieberman, Tusk and Chung, called Harley Whitbread, leader of the Lifters, a new band the firm had been hired to incorporate. The group had sent several names for possible use as its corporate name, and there were a few problems.

"Mr. Whitbread," said Phillips, "a corporate name cannot use someone else's trademark or any other corporate name that has been previously used."

"I would imagine that '3M' is out then."

"Definitely," replied Phillips. "In addition, 'Mixmasters' may still be someone else's trademark; I'll have to do a trademark search before we can try."

"Let's go with 'HitSquad, Inc.:' it's got a certain anticorporate feel to it."

"I'll have to check with the Secretary of State's office first, but it sounds O.K. to me."

As Phillips hung up the phone he pondered Whitbread's curious comment on anticorporate names. He wasn't sure what Harley meant, but he had a feeling he would be finding out.

The rest of the Lifters, Dan Smoot, Bob Schwartz and Hans Kirshner, thought that Harley's choice of a name would suffice, although Dan was disappointed they couldn't use 3M or Xerox Music. The band had more important responsibilities such as electing officers and directors to think about. At their next rehearsal the Lifters began their corporate process.

"I move we make Harley president and chief operating officer," said Harley.

"I think we should ask Phillips just how we're supposed to do this," groaned Dan.

"I think we should use the money from HitSquad to finance a silk-screening business for Dan and myself!" exclaimed Bob. "After all, for a year we've been making our band posters on our own time at work, and we can all write off the printing business on our taxes."

"I don't know if we can do that. Our bylaws say our business has to be music related," said Dan. "We could end up owing millions; then where would we be?"

"Let's not overreact," interrupted Harley. "Look, I'll be the president, but we will all have a vote in what HitSquad does, and yes, Dan, we will follow our bylaws. I promise that Elliot Ness will not break down the door to remind us we cannot run something outside of our sacred corporate duties."

"Aren't we supposed to write down this stuff as corporate minutes?" asked Dan.

"Oh, come on, Dan," sneered Harley. "This isn't Chrysler. Let's get on to more important stuff, like exactly what equipment

we're going to pick up tomorrow."

The next day the band made a trip to Morley's Music. Feeling quite flushed after finally getting their bank loan as a corporation, they bought two DZ-9 Polystems, an Ancron sampler, two San Andreas bass bins and a slew of Cross effect pedals. Although Dan had complained, the band had named him as the purchasing agent, and he signed and paid for the equipment as "Dan Smoot, vice-president."

Across the street at Stamish Music, Bob purchased a set of custom-length PA and stage cables, and signed and paid for them as just "Bob Schwartz," leaving an order for more cables to be picked up in two weeks.

Weeks went by, and the Lifters continued their success as a live act, now sounding better than ever. One day a letter from an attorney appeared in Bob Schwartz's mailbox. It said he personally owed Stamish Music for the custom cables that he ordered. When Dan Smoot saw the letter he became hysterical.

"How can we play if you're in debtor's prison? And what's worse, if we owe Morley's any money, I may join you."

Harley called Roger Phillips. Phillips now knew what Whitbread meant by "anticorporate." He told the band to come to his office late in the day.

Phillips was perturbed. "I instructed you gentlemen that a corporation is serious business and that you must follow guidelines and rules if you're to benefit from it. Now, I think I can call the attorney about the Stamish bill, and it appears Dan signed correctly at Morley's, though you should have signed as vice-president of HitSquad. But in the future, corporate minutes must be taken, such as a resolution to buy equipment. This will show you intended to buy for the corporation. I hope everyone has got the picture? Oh, and by the way, about an hour ago Lenny Kornblatt, head of A&R for Divco Records, called. He really liked your tape and wants to see the band. I told him you'd all be very pleased."

A corporation is a legal entity—an artificial person—created in accordance with individual states' statutes. The corporate entity is separate and distant from the legal personalities of those who own and manage the corporation. After incorporation has taken place, care and continued planning and counseling are needed to avoid the following problems that generally can arise with any corporation, and have in the Lifters' case. This month we continue our conversation with Manhattan attorney and manager Harris Gordon Miller.

1. Piercing the Corporation—The

benefits of incorporation discussed in last month's column will be lost if the band or music-related business corporation fails to operate and maintain itself as a legal and tax entity separate from the band and its individual members. If this is allowed to occur, a creditor can then pierce the protective nature of the corporate "shell."

The corporation must comply with federal tax and state law requirements, including the filing of specific documents, forms and tax returns. It must observe the corporate formalities, including recording the minutes of corporate meetings (which the Lifters failed to do), preparing bylaws, issuance of stock certificates representing the shares of the corporation, election of directors and officers, and establishing corporate bank accounts.

Further, the corporation should enter into an exclusive employment contract with the band-members, specifying the services they will provide. The corporation, *not* the band-members (as in our example with Bob Schwartz), should purchase or lease equipment, rehearsal space and other items required by the band to conduct its music or music-related business.

If the band ignores the corporate structure and conducts its business as individuals or as if it were still unincorporated, each member/shareholder opens himself to the fullest personal liability for the debts and misdeeds of the band and every other member/shareholder to the extent of every asset he personally possesses. To make matters worse, whatever tax-favored status the business is enjoying may be challenged by the IRS, possibly resulting in bigger tax bills for the band-members. The points below cover some of the tax problems.

2. Personal holding company status—This is a problem for the solo artist in particular. When a corporation is established to receive and hold the income of its shareholder in order to shield that income from higher individual tax rates, the IRS will scrutinize the operation of the corporation. If the IRS finds "undistributed personal holding income," then it will be taxed at the highest rate.

This tax can be avoided. One way is to distribute all of the corporation's income in the form of salary, pension, profit sharing and other fringe benefits that can be deducted by the corporation. When no undistributed personal holding company income remains, nothing can be taxed. Even so, the corporation may be subject to the challenge that the compensations are unreasonable.

3. Unreasonable compensation—Should the IRS deem the shareholder's

Continued on page 51

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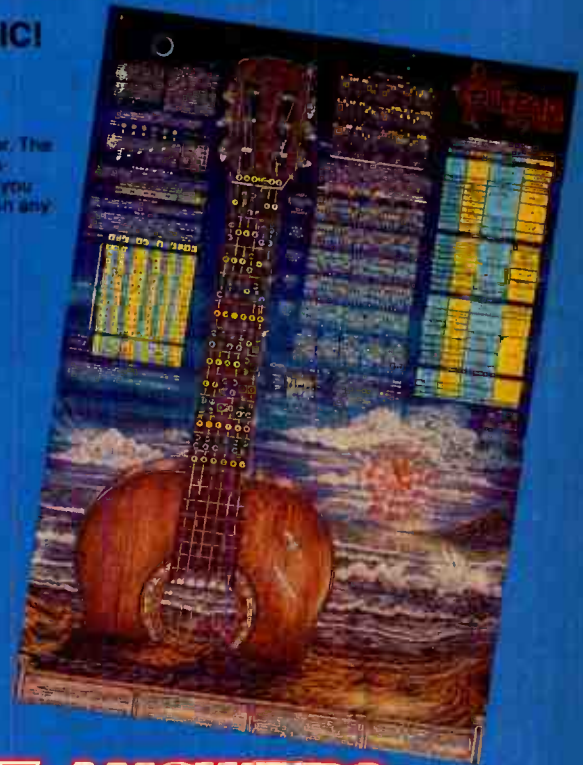
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JOHN WAITE

First No Breaks, Then 'No Brakes'

Now He's Shifting Into High Gear

by Philip Bashe

Photo by Ebet Roberts

"I really want this story to come out sounding positive," John Waite half-emphasizes/half-implores, "because that's how I've been feeling lately." Doing his best to sound convincing, he adds, "I'm such a happy person these days. Really."

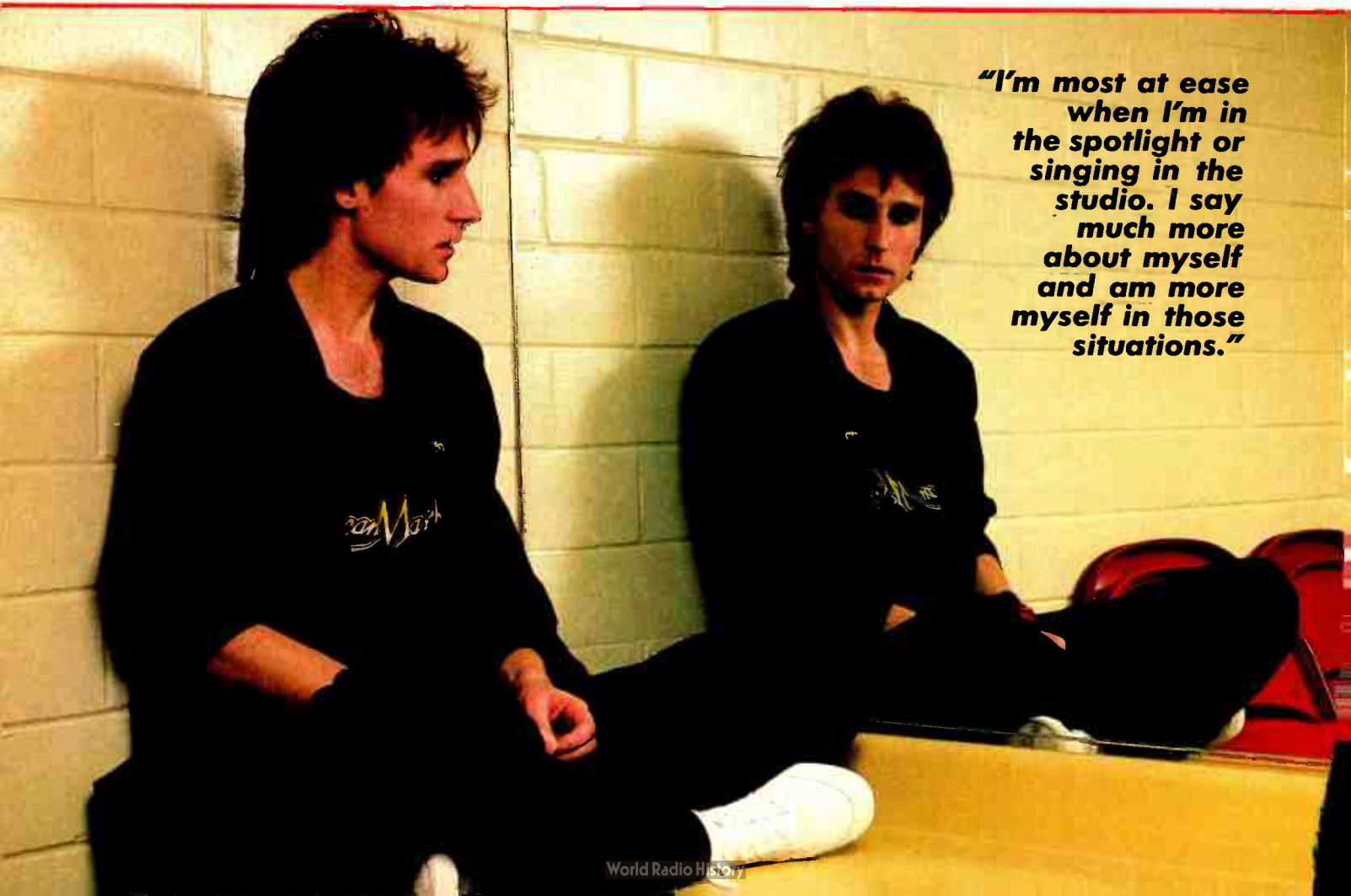
A John Waite story with a happy ending would be a nice change of pace, actually, for it's only been in the last year that such a culmination would be possible. Until 1984's *No Brakes*, the 30-year-old Lancaster, England-born singer's career was bedeviled by no breaks. Consider the following chronology (handkerchiefs optional):

From 1976 to 1981 Waite fronted the Babys, an immensely underappreciated and misunderstood band whose sardonic name conflicted with its aggressive, melodic pop & roll. They should have finally broken amid the late-'70s new wave but instead of sweeping ashore were swept aside. In frustration, and disabled from a knee injury suffered on stage, Waite quit both the Babys and the music business, bolting back to England with the intent of becoming a painter.

One year later he was coaxed out of retirement to record *Ignition*, a respectable solo debut that was thwarted commercially by an apathetic label which then had the audacity to reject a second album. Waite disappeared into the English countryside once again.

Then, unexplicably, his luck changed: He signed with a new, supportive record compa-

"I'm most at ease when I'm in the spotlight or singing in the studio. I say much more about myself and am more myself in those situations."



ny, EMI America, and, to fill out his first LP for the label, hastily penned a poignant ballad called "Missing You." The song went to #1, and the complexion of Waite's career changed overnight.

But Waite is not one to overlook the hard times. You can see it in his deep-set, entrancing brown eyes and, most of all, hear it in his voice, which can wring heartache out of the simplest line. The tortured-artist principle enacted once again.

"I've gone through a lot of bad things in my life," Waite says in a moderate brogue that turns a word such as "guitar" into "ge-tahr."

"I'm a pretty distant person; most of the time my mind is somewhere else. I'm most at ease when I'm in the spotlight or singing in the studio; I say much more about myself and am more myself in those situations than when I'm, say, with a friend." Waite is extremely animated, tugging constantly at the sleeves of his Navy jacket, displaying the kind of restlessness that pervaded his last album, the successful *No Brakes*. Many of its songs concerned loneliness, separation and distance, one track in particular—"Dark Side of the Sun"—seeming to sum up the singer's perspective at the time. But now Waite has enjoyed what he says is unequivocally "the happiest year of my life." So how is that reflected on his new record, *Mask of Smiles*? In blithe, cheery little numbers about taking time to smell the roses?

"Well," Waite snickers, "there's one song called 'Welcome to Paradise,' which is the ultimate down song." He recites the opening lines: "'Sour milk in a saucer and the cat won't come home/And sometimes New York City feels like burning Rome"—pretty depressing stuff."

Everybody's favorite heartbreaker is one who's been heartbroken—that's John Waite. If you're a guy, you want to buy him a good, stiff drink and commiserate. If you're a girl—

"Eek! It's him! It's him!" Knees are squeezing together tightly and hearts are melting outside the entrance to the Boogie Hotel, the onetime Moose Lodge and Slavic Cultural Center turned recording studio. A trio of teenage girls has staked out the stately looking Victorian-era building on Main Street in bucolic Port Jefferson, New York, about two hours east of Manhattan. Somehow the squealing nubile were alerted that John Waite is recording music at the 24-track facility, originally built by the members of Foghat seven years ago. Waite, who'd just darted out of the control room, feigns embarrassment before ambling over to dutifully sign some autographs. Then it's back into the studio, where keyboardist Tommy Mandel is overdubbing a part on a Yamaha DX7 as coproducer Stephan Galfas intently adjusts the levels.

Waite has become a bona fide celebrity over the past 12 months, due not only to the success of *No Brakes* but also to his appearances on the since-scrapped TV series "Paper Dolls." It wasn't exactly Shakespeare ("I got to stick my tongue down some girl's throat," he laughs wickedly), but it did provide Waite with an appreciation of the parallels between

acting and trying to put across a song. "In acting you have to lose yourself completely. It's a sublimation of your own personality, which in some ways is a lot more difficult than rock & roll."

It's his ability to *not* lose himself that ultimately makes John Waite such a convincing singer. He may rue his sensitivity when it comes to his personal life, but it certainly comes in handy when it's time to step in front of the microphone. His emotions, he admits readily, are exposed like bare wires, making it easy to draw from past experiences, both pleasurable and not. For example, when laying down the vocal to "Missing You," he subconsciously conjured up memories of a lost love, with no coaching from his producers and no psyching necessary before the tape started rolling. "I was cringing when I sang that one," he recalls.

"I don't need a false start," Waite says when asked if he prefers a certain environment in the studio, whether it be soft lighting or an intimate vocal booth. "Every time I sing 'Missing You' I think of the same images. Every time I sing 'Dreamtime/Shake It Up'—partly about the murder of John Lennon—"I think of Seventy-second Street in Manhattan, which is where I lived when I wrote it.

"Without being too poetic, you can just



Though he's not using one here, Waite generally favors Shure SM57s live, saying, "You can whack an SM57." On 'Mask of Smiles' he sang into a Sanken CU-41.

Vocal Mikes—Which to Use?

Over the course of his multifaceted recording career, Stephan Galfas has been a producer/engineer (including a stint as a staff producer for Warner Bros. Records) and for 10 years a co-owner of the House of Music recording studios in West Orange, New Jersey.

His main area of expertise, however, is in working with vocalists—how to inspire a quality performance and with what microphone to capture it. He's helped bring out the best in Jack Bruce, Southside Johnny Lyon and Ellen Foley, to name but a few. Here are Galfas's comments on some of the more popular studio vocal mikes, plus some recommended applications:

AKG C-414 (condenser, multidirectional), **AKG C-414EB** (condenser, multidirectional)—"I find the 414 to be a little hard for most male singers. For background vocals it's terrific, but for leads it's got a little bit of a midrange boost and a slightly crunchy top end. The 414EB has a very smooth top end and can be terrific for female singers. I used it for Ellen Foley several times, and it was very, very good. I've never used the 414 for a male vocalist on a record."

Audio-Technica ATM-63 (dynamic, cardioid)—"A very clinical-sounding mike. It's very good for dance-record vocals, where the voice needs to be very even and right up front. I recommend it for female vocalists."

Beyer M600 (dynamic, hypercardioid)—"For heavy rock tunes and for a really heavy, harsh singer, it can be great. It takes a lot of dynamic pressure to move the capsule, and therefore the mike has something of a bottom-end hump. The bass proximity effect

is very noticeable with the M600."

Neumann U-87 (electret condenser, multidirectional), **U-67** (same), **U-47** (electret condenser, cardioid)—"The U-87 has been a standard for years and is just a great all-around mike; anybody sounds good with it. If a vocalist doesn't know how to work it, you can get some real pops, but for a vocalist who does, it's terrific. As soon as it gets wet, however, it must be allowed to dry out. Also, U-87s have unique personalities, so you have to check them out very carefully, to get the one you want with the sound you want.

"I usually start sessions with U-47 tube mikes; the solid-state model is a little too cold, even and flat. The U-67s can be wonderful too, and there's also an M-49, which is incredible for background vocals."

RCA 77 DX (ribbon, multidirectional)—"I used this on one of the Southside Johnny records I worked on. It can't take any pressure, but it has this real warm, strange sound; a real in-the-living-room-with-you sound."

Sennheiser 441 (dynamic, supercardioid)—"It's a good live microphone, and it's great for recording acoustic guitars, but I find it a little too bright and too sizzly."

Shure SM57, SM58 (dynamic, cardioid)—"Even though you're 'not supposed to' use these in the studio, I have. Sometimes a singer has a great live sound but can't reproduce it in the studio. That's because he's spent his whole life using the bass proximity effect to develop the sound of his voice, and when he uses a real clinical mike, he can't deal with it. So for that reason, I'll sometimes use the Shures."

Soundcheck

Selected Gear Used on 'Mask of Smiles'

A80 RC two-track recorder, manufactured by Studer-Revox, 1425 Elm Hill Pk., Nashville, TN 37210, (615) 254-5651.



The A80 RC's features include 7½/15, 15/30 speeds; 11.1 maximum reel size; three heads; three servo motors; 50Hz-to-20kHz frequency response; 1.2-volt output level; two vu meters; 28" x 24" x 8" dimensions; and 117-pound weight.

Suggested retail price: \$9,000.

CU-41 microphone, manufactured by Sanken, available from Martin Audio Video Corp., 423 W. 55 St., New York, NY 10019, (212) 541-5900; Studio Supply Company, Inc., 1717 Elm Hill Pk., Suite B-9, Nashville, TN 37210, (615) 366-1890; Audio Industries Corporation, 1419 N. LaBrea Ave., Hollywood, CA 90028, (213) 851-4111.



The Sanken CU-41's features include flat frequency response from 20Hz to 20kHz; inherent noise level less than 15db; and dynamic range of 125db.

Suggested retail price: \$1,327.

DX7 synthesizer, manufactured by Yamaha International Corp., Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622, (714) 522-9011.



The ubiquitous DX7 shows up at more sessions than a case of Dom Perignon. Its features include 61 keys; FM Tone Generator sound source with six operators and 32 algorithms; 16-note poly mode; one-note mono mode; six mode selectors; six controls; 12 voice parameters; 12 function parameters; LCD display; and cartridge interface.

Suggested retail price: \$1,995.

"John is a great singer," says his producer, Stephan Galfas, "though he sings as badly as you can sing if you're going by the book. But it's correct for him. John has an urgency in his voice that I think rock & roll is about."

Photo by Ross Marino



close your eyes and the song takes you there. The landscapes are inside your head. So for me, studio environment isn't important."

Having the proper microphone, however, is important to Waite, who says he was unhappy with his vocal performance on the last album. "I couldn't find the right mike, but this time I'm singing like a bird." For that he credits New York City's Clinton Recording Studio, coproducer Galfas and the Japanese Sanken CU-41 mikes he's using.

"They have a tube sound," Galfas says of the solid-state dual-condenser mikes, which retail for \$1,327 and are available through only three dealers in the U.S. "They're like perfect Neumann U-87s.

"But," he adds, "they may not be right for all singers, because they're real unforgiving—exactly what they hear, they give you." Live, Waite favors Shure SM57s for their ruggedness, saying, "You can whack an SM57."

Just as critical as mike selection is having the correct balance in the headphones when singing. Waite prefers a relatively low volume of music and voice, which, he explains, "allows you to really get behind the song and get a lot of response from the mike. If your voice is too loud in the cans, you tend to not sing hard enough. You can get a great vocal only if you have a great sound in the 'phones, and Stephan is the only person I've ever worked with who can get that for me."

Galfas, a vocalist himself, is extremely sensitive to supplying the right mix in the headphones, because singing in a studio, he analogizes, "is like singing in a laboratory. So if John wants more EQ in the headphones, I'll EQ the return. But I won't EQ what's going on tape; I'd rather have everything to work with in the mix instead of being restricted by a pre-EQ'd voice. The same holds true for limiting."

Galfas calls Waite an easy singer to work with, able to take direction, but not so easy to capture on tape. "No vocalist as good as John is easy to capture," he says, "because of their emotional range." For that reason,

Waite is not a punch-in vocalist. Galfas explains that he records two or three full performances of a song and from those picks the best one. "Very often we won't tamper with it at all, though once in a while there'll be something to correct here and there.

"John is a great singer," he continues, "though he sings as badly as you can sing if you're going by the book. But it's correct for him. John has an urgency in his voice that I think rock & roll is about, and that's what I try to stimulate from him."

That urgency is just one of the traits that makes Waite such a distinctive singer. There's also the quality of his voice, raspy yet potent, capable of evoking both vulnerability and strength. And then there's his adept delivery. One technique Waite frequently employs is the use of blue notes, which are sung a half-step off to suggest a bluesy, dissonant feel. "That comes from being a bassist," claims Waite, who played bass for the Babys in the early stages of their career and who today composes mostly on acoustic guitar and piano. He jumps up and runs over to a nearby piano to sound out an example of a typical Waite vocal line, creating a chord that makes you wince slightly. "Very disturbing, isn't it?" he smiles. "Sting does the same thing. It comes from having played bass and my blues background."

Waite's uncanny phrasing is also derived from his years spent playing in bands. He'll often cut off the last word of a phrase, as on "Missing You's" "I ain't missing you at all," allowing the band to rush back to greet him. He's an unusually band-conscious vocalist.

"Band conscious, yeah. I believe that in order to have a great vocal performance, everybody's got to be at his finest. It's not like being in the movies—'Don't upstage me, darlin''—you have to let everybody be really great and not inhibit anyone. I can't work with musicians and say to them, 'Be not quite

Continued on page 65

TRIUMPH

GIL MOORE

of Triumph Talks About Drumsticks



I always had a problem with sticks snapping and hitting me in the face. One time at a show in London, Ontario, one hit me in the eye. I thought I was blind; I couldn't see for two days.

Another time a stick nearly tore off my ear—blood was coming out all over the place. So I finally decided that I had to use a synthetic stick. I tried them all, and the problem was that they felt too heavy; plus, of course, they didn't feel like hickory sticks, which is what I'm used to. So I looked around and found that Aquarian Accessories Corp. (1140 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807, 714-632-0230) solved the problem. Their sticks feel and sound great. I'm using the Formula X-10™ Combos with Shock Grips™ as pictured.

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ON TEST

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CONSTRUCTION

The HD 1500 comes in a compact EIA standard 19" rack-mount chassis. Slim (43mm × 454mm, 112mm deep) and light (eight pounds), it fits neatly into one rack space—nice for both home studios and gigs.

The front panel is clear and clean. There is an input level control, adjustable for both mike and instrument levels (high/low impedance). The level display is a five-block indicator calibrated from -10dbm to 6dbm, allowing you to tweak it for optimum s/n ratio. Another display below it reads out either delay times (in milliseconds) or harmonics pitch (in cents). Delay times are

adjustable with two-step switch buttons, allowing for rapid or slow movement.

Three other switches determine the delay, harmonics or bypass modes, with indicators above them.

In the harmonics mode, pitch shift is controlled by two knobs, the second of which is a fine-tuner. Additional rotational knob controls for width, speed, feedback, dry signal and effected signal round out the front panel.

The rear panel contains an input jack, feedback send and receive inputs, dry and mixed signal outputs, and a standard foot-switch input; all standard two-conductor ¼" phone-plug types. Additionally, there is a DIN-type jack for the PC40 preset controller, the ac cord and a 0.5-amp Fast-Blo fuse.

The PC40 preset controller has six foot switches, enabling the user to recall three preset harmonic pitches or a preset delay time to switch between the two, or to bypass the system altogether. There are also redundant pitch and fine-tuning controls, and LED indicators on each pedal to show mode status.

FEATURES

The HD 1500 provides up to plus or minus 1,300 semitones of pitch shift, doing so in a very respectable processing time of 30ms. You can play passages with accompanying harmony notes or octaves, pitch shifting, micro pitch shifting (for excellent fattening effects), and time companding. The har-



Ibanez's HD 1500 harmonics delay comes in a compact EIA standard 19" rack-mount chassis. It's both slim (43mm × 454mm, 112mm deep) and light (eight pounds).

Circle Number 28

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monizer mode utilizes PM (phase-matching) circuitry and microprocessor, resulting in pure pitch shifting. Completely digitalized, it incorporates two separate central processing units and custom integrated circuits.

The delay mode offers digital delay of up to 504 milliseconds, enabling the user to achieve all the standard effects, such as doubling, flange, chorus and reverb. There is also the delay time Multi feature, which allows for quick shuttling between delay settings where successive pushes of the button selects among the three delay ranges: X1—0 to 126ms; X2—0 to 252ms; and X4—0 to 504ms.

The specs qualify as features on this unit: The normal frequency response (pre-delay or harmonics) is from 30Hz to 20kHz at minus 3db, the thd at less than 1.0 percent with effects in, and the LFO response at 0.03 Hz

to 7Hz.

STAGE AND STUDIO

The HD 1500 was a quick set-up, thanks especially to a very well put together user's manual and the clearly laid-out back panel. We ran ours through a Fender Twin Reverb amp on stage.

The harmonics effects we were able to achieve were excellent. The real-time shifts created thicknesses that could not be duplicated by digital delays alone. The aforementioned user's manual clearly lays out a brief primer on harmonic theory and quickly shows you how to make settings to fit into whatever modality you're playing in. The LED readouts presented clear and fast indications of status from even long distances on stage.

Running the HD 1500 through a Tascam 244 Portastudio, we were just as pleased.

The frequency response was as good as promised, and the DDL mode performed flawlessly, particularly the delay time Multi feature, which allowed for rapid shifts in delay-time settings—even during the same pass—with no noticeable pops or clicks. This makes one-man operations at home that much simpler, especially if you're running on only four tracks. The one thing we might have wished for was a longer onboard delay time.

CONCLUSION

The HD 1500 is a unit we can recommend without hesitation. We found that having both of these features in one unit was not only technically sound but also cost effective, making it a value to both live players and home recording buffs. □

— Dan Daley

On Law

Continued from page 44

compensation, including salary and fringe benefits, unreasonable, the corporation will not be permitted the deduction for the compensation expenses, and the compensation will be considered a distribution of profits. This means that the excess compensation will be taxed twice, at the corporate and shareholder levels.

But if it can be shown that substantially all of the income earned by the corporation is paid to or for the benefit of the shareholders, and that the compensation does not exceed the value received by the corporation for the shareholder's services, the IRS may then have a difficult time finding the compensation unreasonable.

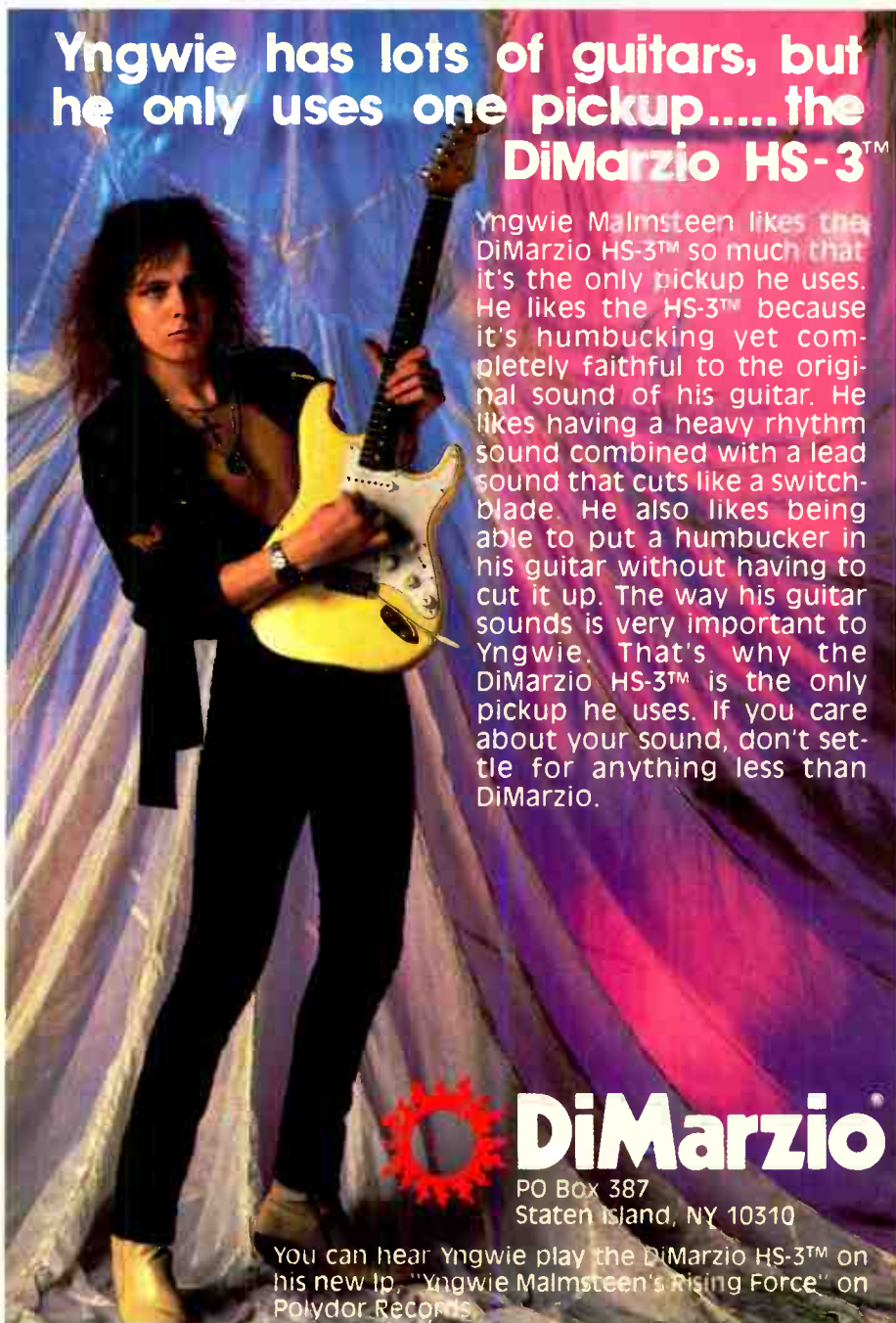
4. Tax Avoidance—The corporation may also be challenged under a law permitting the IRS to disallow deductions, credits or other allowances where it can be shown that: a) individuals acquired control of a corporation and b) the principal purpose of the corporation is to avoid payment of federal income tax by taking advantage of tax benefits the individual would otherwise not receive. However, based on past cases and rulings, the benefits of incorporation that have been discussed here are unlikely to be disallowed by the IRS.

Incorporating a band or music-related business offers many benefits to the bandmembers (see part I, Fall Equipment Special). But it's not the right move for every band. The act should weigh the advantages against the potential problems. No matter what form the business or band takes, an experienced lawyer and/or accountant can help organize and guide it into successful and profitable operation. □

Next Month: Readers' Questions Answered.

In "On Law" we seek to provide general information about legal issues affecting musicians. We hope to educate our readers to recognize legal issues when they arise and to obtain further legal assistance to resolve those matters.

All characters contained in the above are fictitious; any similarity to actual persons is purely coincidental.



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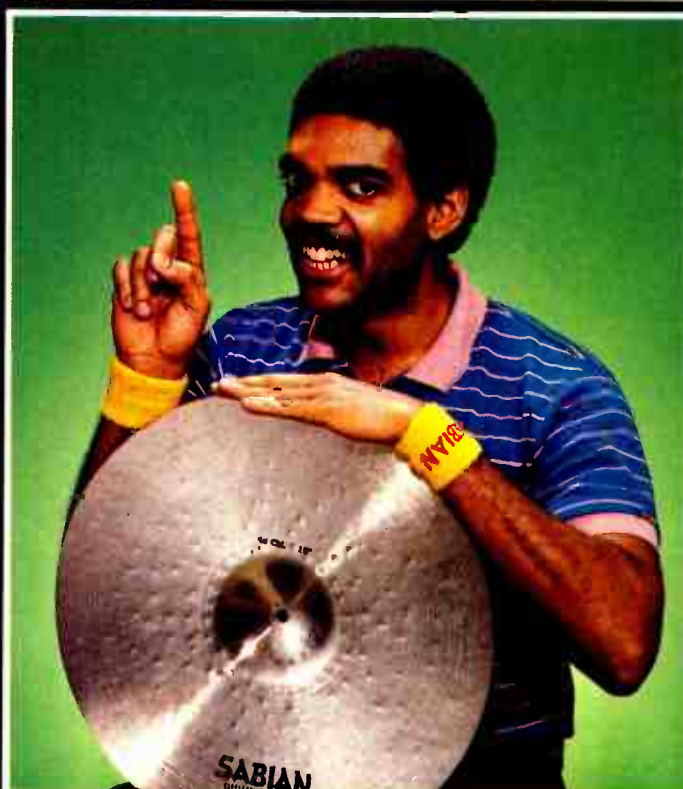
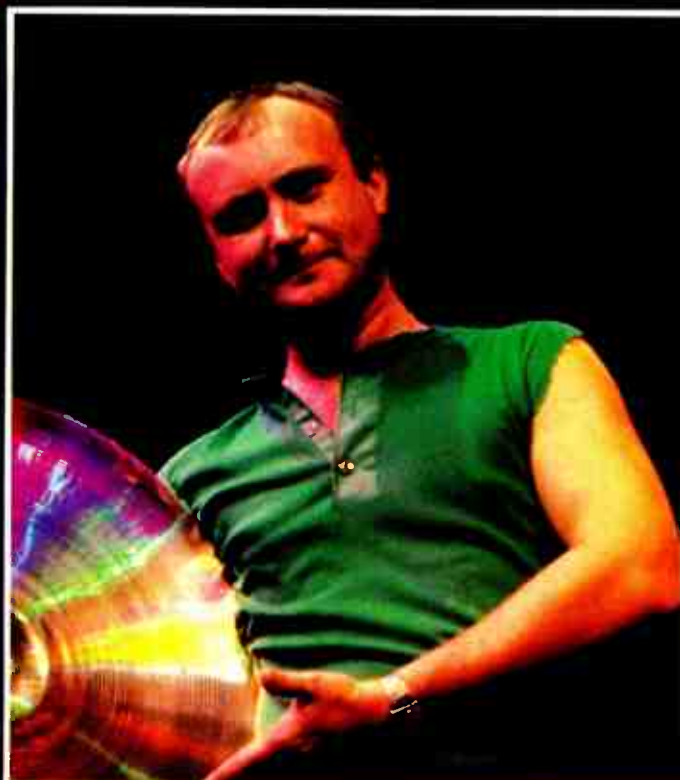
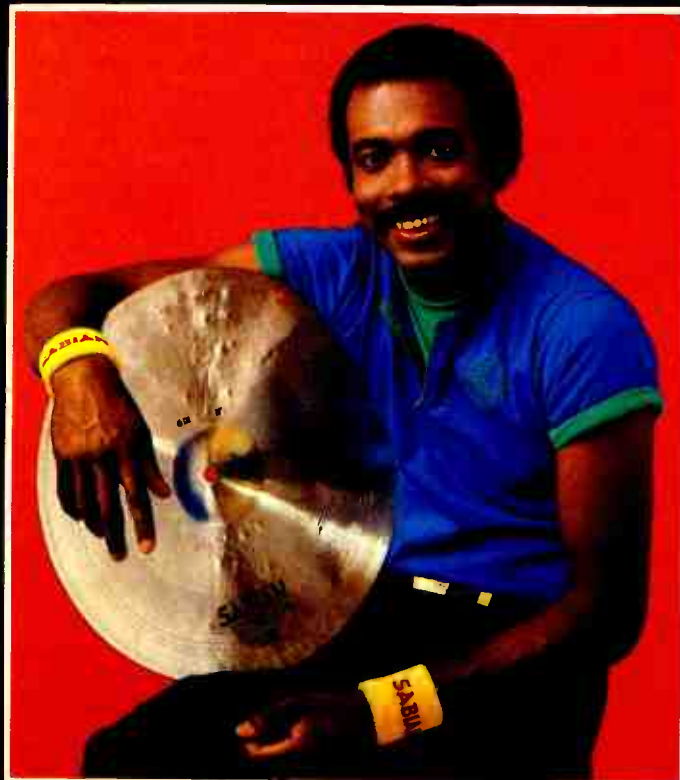
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SABIAN

World Radio History

ON TEST

Product: **DW6000/8000**
Programmable Polyphonic
Synthesizer

Manufacturer: **Korg (Unicord),**
89 Frost St., Westbury, NY
11590, (516) 333-9100

Suggested Retail Price: **\$1,295;**
DW8000: N/A

To fully comprehend the Korg DW6000/8000's capabilities, it's necessary to first understand what a synthesizer utilizing DWGS is all about.

Conventional synthesizers use VCOs or DCOs, which produce simple waveforms such as sawtooth, triangle, pulse and square. But to obtain the richness of real instrument

sounds, a more complex harmonic structure is required. These harmonic structures can be found in a digital waveform generator (DWG) system. Korg claims that it is using a new digital method of sound generation for its DW6000/8000 synthesizers, called Digital Waveform Generator System, or, for short, DWGS. DWGS uses digitally encoded waveforms, which have a more complex harmonic structure. In the following test, *IM&RW* will determine the effects this type of synthesizer design has on the everchanging digital-versus-analog debate.

CONSTRUCTION

The Korg DW6000 comes housed in a durable, rugged plastic enclosure. On the front panel, function and editing controls are neatly labeled for quick access to all parameter changes along with program changes.

Solid white buttons lace the front panel for quick access to the editing capabilities of the synthesizer. To the left of the unit is a data-entry slider, and volume and master tune controls. Directly above center is a neatly formed LED display that features (left to right) program number, parameter number and value number. To the right of the panel is a complete parameter listing printed solidly on the face of the keyboard. To the extreme right, oscillator waveforms with their value numbers are also similarly printed. On the DW6000, there are eight waveforms, and on the DW8000, 16. These waveforms are based on re-creations of sampled sounds. To the far left of the keyboard is a four-way joystick. The rear panel of the instrument includes output, headphones, damper, portamento, program up, foot switch and pedal jack. MIDI in, out and thru is also included along with tape interface. One interesting thing here is that the DW8000 claims to have a *rapid* tape interface. Finally, to the far right

Continued on page 56



Korg's DW6000 and DW8000 synths utilize DWGS (digital waveform generator system), a new digital method of sound generation.

ON TEST

Product: **SM-12T Stage Monitor**

Manufacturer: **Eden Electronics,**
P.O. Box 338, Montrose, MN
55363, (612) 675-3650

Suggested Retail Price: **\$331.11**

What good doeth a musician that he should gain great guitars, keys and amps, yet loseth his hearing? By now, everyone who plays live on a regular basis knows the value of a reliable stage vocal monitor. Even if you play in clubs that provide a PA system, it's not unknown for them to skimp on the monitors, since they might be more interested in making sure their patrons hear what they came to hear. So if vocals mean anything to your music, a good monitor is a critical factor in the performance.

Eden Electronics's response to this frequent problem is its SM-12T stage monitor.

CONSTRUCTION

Built with club applications in mind, the SM-12T is intended for medium-to-high-level use, and, according to the manufacturer, is capable of covering both vocal and instrumental programs simultaneously.

The SM-12T is constructed of plywood and fibrepine. All wood joints are either daddo or rabbit cuts (which result in higher acoustic integrity), and there are specially

coated staples placed every 3", which, when driven into the resin-based glue, form a complete seal around the unit. The front grill is coated with 16-gauge epoxy, which eliminates ringing. There is also a Thiel-aligned ventral port, which maximizes bass response. A military-type folding handle is mounted for easy carrying.

FEATURES

The SM-12T is configured with three placement angles: 30 degrees near-field, 60 degrees midfield, and 90 degrees for far-field and side-fill applications. The center position (directly in front or just to the side of the mike) is designed for cardioid-type mikes, while the 60-degree angles (either side) are for super-cardioid types.

The speaker is Eden's own make, and it

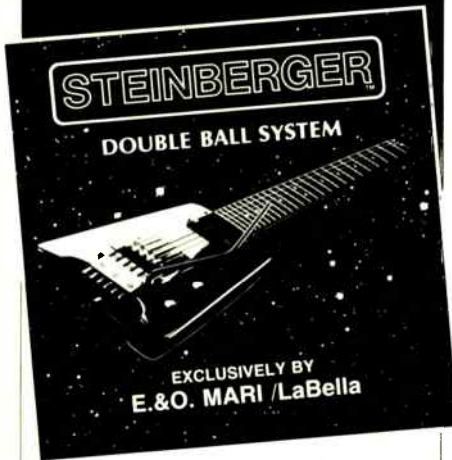
Continued on page 62



Eden Electronics' SM-12T stage monitor is constructed of plywood and fibrepine, and all wood joints are either daddo or rabbit cuts.

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ON TEST

Product: **DN612C Double-Neck Electric Guitar**

Manufacturer: **Carvin Corporation, 1155 Industrial Ave., Escondido, CA 92025, (800) 854-2235**

Suggested Retail Price: **\$895**
Direct From Carvin (Mail Order/Pro Net); Case, **\$75**

Double-neck guitars have always been something of a double-edged sword for guitarists. On one hand, they offer the versatility of two guitars in one, but on the other hand, there has always been the lurking suspicion that they represent a compromise of quality.

Carvin, perhaps aware of this dilemma, has done its best to make available a double-neck that fulfills the promise of two quality guitars

in one, and certainly the DN612C is well worth scrutinizing.

CONSTRUCTION

The DN612C has both six- and 12-string necks, with a double-cutaway body for easy access to both necks. The necks are made with selected ebony fingerboards with dot fret-marker inlays. The six-string neck is standard in size, with the 12-string neck slightly wider (1 1/16" at the nut, 2 1/4" wide at the heel). The necks are glued and contoured into the body at the base of the neck.

The body has new contoured edges, a nice feature when you're moving rapidly from neck to neck. The body is made from eastern hard-rock maple wood, and the finish is of high-luster polyurethane. Our test model had a lovely blond finish beneath the polyurethane. At an overall length of 43 1/2", a width of 15 1/2" and a thickness of 1 3/4", it's not an unwieldy axe, and a weight of 13 1/2



Carvin DN612C six- and 12-string doubleneck (l.) and six-string and four-string bass (r.). The former weighs just 13 1/2 pounds.

pounds is rather remarkable for a double-neck.

The bridges and the tailpieces are machined of solid brass, with the rest of the hardware sporting triple chrome plating. The pickups on the DN612C are four M22s, each with its own dual/single-coil switch and each fully adjustable by way of four screws.

Other notable construction points are the balance engineering of this guitar, which is truly remarkable, and the Schaller machine heads atop each neck.

FEATURES

The DN612C's main feature is its electronics. There are individual volume controls and tone controls for each of the two necks; individual pickup selector switches for each neck; the aforementioned dual/single selector for the pickup coils; individual phase in/out switches; and separate mono input jacks for each neck, which enable you to plug each half of the guitar into its own amp or channel.

There is a very accessible neck-selector toggle switch located between necks, and a master tone control just aft of the other toggle switches on the upper (12-string) neck.

The volume controls rate a special mention here. The gradient of gain increase is consistent and fluid. We only wished the controls were placed where they would be reachable by the little finger for volume swells. As it is, all the controls are located behind and below the pickups.

STAGE AND STUDIO

The electronics continue to be the

DN612C's prime feature. Running it through a Porta One four-track machine, we encountered no humming or buzzing. The phase in/out switches provided some excellent on-board effects, and they really do lend additional versatility to this guitar, especially when you combine them with the dual/single-coil selector switches. You can run the gamut from screaming metal leads to funkier r&b licks and chording on the six-string neck.

Putting it through a Fender Twin Reverb in a rehearsal studio, we found that the neck-selector switch was silent, with no pops or clicks moving between necks during a performance. And because of its light weight, there was no feeling of fatigue that you might expect from wearing a double-neck.

The one disappointment we had was with the six-string neck. The sustain really came from the pickups rather than the neck. We didn't notice this on the 12-string neck, although we used that primarily for chords, and it was a winner, with clear, bright, biting tones. And you could vary the sound tremendously, ranging from a twangy Rickenbacker sound to thicker—and considerably more original—textures.

CONCLUSION

The DN612C double-neck represents a serious advance in double-neck technology. The electronics alone are worth its very affordable price, which puts it within reach of those who might want to start experimenting with more than one guitar at a time. □

— Dan Daley

Circle Number 34



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Korg Synth

Continued from page 53

of the rear panel is the power cord, conveniently removable.

FEATURES

Since the DW6000 seems to be one level down from the DW8000, let's put the spotlight on the latter and take a closer look. This is an eight-voice, programmable synthesizer featuring two digital oscillators per voice, each with 16 waveforms. The unit comes complete with a velocity- and pressure-sensitive keyboard with aftertouch. The synth has a built-in programmable digital delay that can handle 64 programmed effects, based on one for each program. These include echo, flanging, chorus, slapback and doubling, which is standard with any decent

digital delay. Two six-parameter digital envelope generators per voice plus separate oscillator autobend functions are also available. The data-entry controller, along with all other functions, is fully programmable, and the 64 programs can be offloaded with the rapid-tape interface. Other programmable features are as follows: polyphonic portamento, noise, aftertouch, pitch bend and VCF sweep functions. The MIDI group includes full 16-channel MIDI implementation, changeable transmit-and-receive channels, and external program-editing capabilities.

STAGE AND STUDIO

Unfortunately, the DW6000 was the only synthesizer we could spend a lot of time with in the studio and under live conditions. Nevertheless, we were very impressed with the digital-like quality of the programs. With

easy-to-understand editing, due to the unit's analog language, we were able to achieve good bass lines, fluid strings, decent pianos and cutting leads. All sounds were satisfactory in quality. Had we had touch sensitivity, we are certain that with the new functions of the DW8000 keyboard, it would be a top runner in the sampled-wave market. Using the DW6000 live, all editing, programming and tape-loading operations operated smoothly. The keyboard action was quick to the response of the hand and operated adequately from the sequencer. Joysticks, although not as accurate as wheels, seem to be a standard on Korg products and operated sufficiently. One positive feature about this type of synthesizing technique is that live edits are quickly made, as Korg has an excellently laid-out parameter-listing display board, and the synthesizer produces digital quality with user-friendly internal language at all times.

CONCLUSION

It would have been nice to see Korg include touch dynamics sooner, but having a choice is also a positive thing. MIDI capabilities were up to the industry's demands and overall preset sounds were average, but how many synthesists use presets? We also feel that the RAM cartridge system should have been used, and a rack-mount version of these two synthesizers should soon be offered. As it is, however, this is a very good system. □

—Les Davis

MULTIMIX

16:2:1 12:4:2:1 16:4:2:1

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SOUND MIND

With its on-board computer, the GR-700 is a brilliant electronic mind. It follows the nuances of any guitarist's techniques and commands a spectacular sonic palette. Not even keyboardists have ever enjoyed this much synthesis power. Imagine using a guitar to play an entire string or brass ensemble, a fat synth patch or a steel drum. With 12 DCOs, 6 VCAs and 6 Envelope Generators, it's all possible. The GR-700 has a great memory, too. Store 64 different patches for easy footswitch access during performance. The GR-700's MIDI output even lets you tap into the power of any other MIDI instrument. The Roland Guitar Synthesizer System: A great body with the brain to back it up. RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040.

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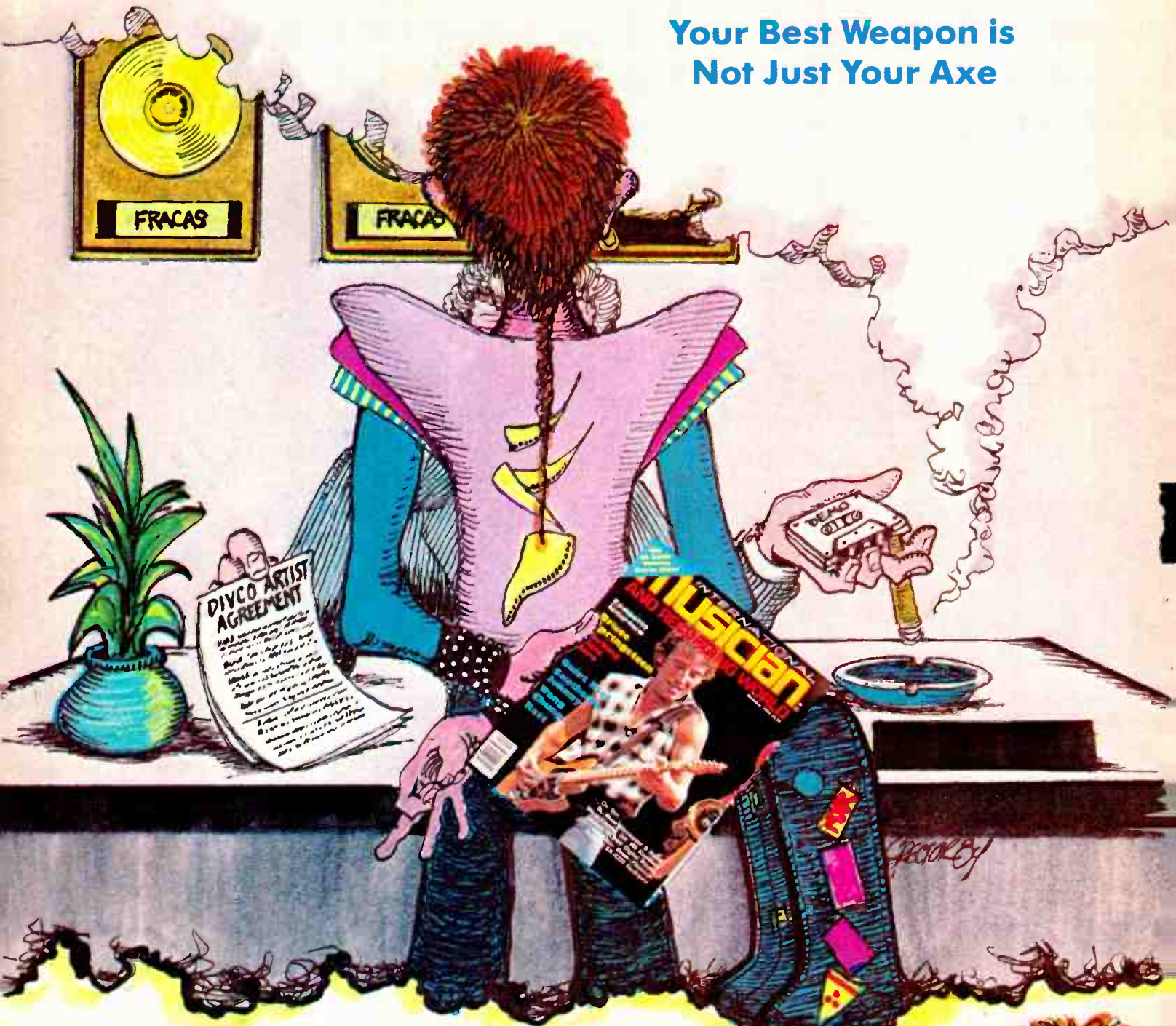
07



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Eden SM-12T Stage Monitor

Continued from page 53

features a 60-ounce magnet and a Kapton voice coil, which is a high-temperature plastic compound that is claimed to enhance both high- and low-frequency responses.

There is an automatic thermal-protection circuit built into the unit, which operates only on sustained overload and does not trip the peak overload safety. The protector, when engaged, is silent and also protects the amplifier from transient damage. In operation, the protector reduces cabinet level by about 25db for five to 15 seconds, depending on the amount of overload. The speaker then automatically switches back to full power after the initial safety delay.

Another feature that keeps this relatively light (45 pounds) unit cost effective is its all-field-replaceable diaphragms.

The eight-ohm unit has a power-handling capability of 300 watts rms short-term and 150 watts rms long-term. The frequency response is rated at 70Hz to 19kHz, plus or minus 3db to 6db.

STAGE AND STUDIO

For the live application we set up the SM-12T in a theater, using a Crown power

amp and a Tapco board. We used both floor and flown configurations.

The unit had a smooth frequency response across the spectrum and a consistent projection pattern at all gain levels. Set-up was quite easy, and we found that the SM-12T gave very good results with a minimum of equalization. It should be noted that placement of the unit in front of the vocalist so that he or she is looking down at the center of the horn is important. Athletic vocalists still get good response if they move off axis, though if you move about a lot you should also get a side fill.

When hooked up to a Tascam Portastudio as a reference monitor, the SM-12T also proved its mettle. While it's a tad large for apartment use, if you have more space you'll find this unit competitive with others in its price range. It has a slight frequency boost built in, from 2.5k to 4k, which enhances the signal's clarity. In this application, a bit more time must be spent on EQ, but in the more critical studio environment, that's expected.

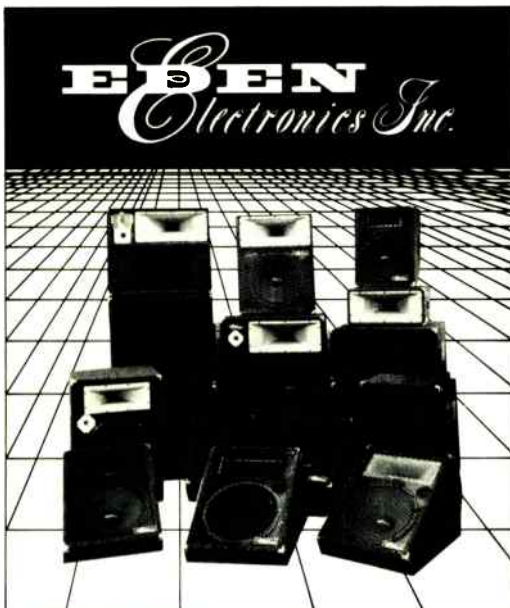
CONCLUSION

The SM-12T monitor is a cost-effective, reliable unit. In each situation in which we used it, we found it fulfilled the manufacturer's claims and then some. We can recommend it without hesitation, so if your ears need a break, give this one a listen. □

— Dan Daley

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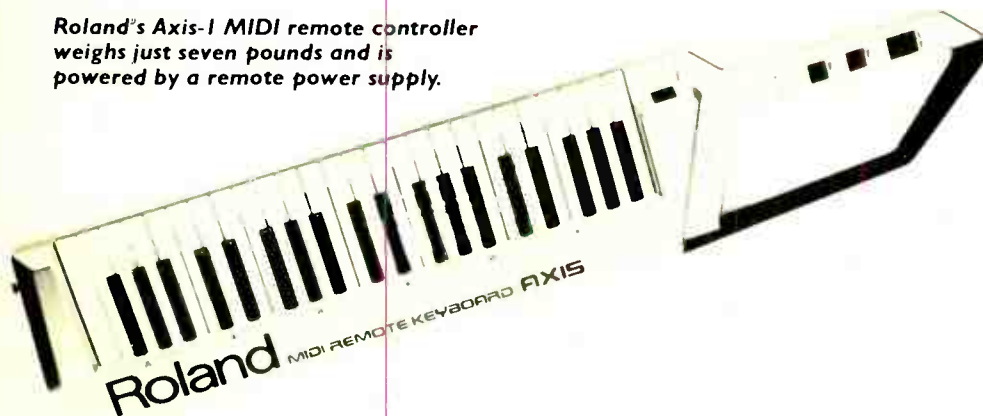
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ON TEST

Roland's Axis-1 MIDI remote controller weighs just seven pounds and is powered by a remote power supply.



Product: Axis-1 MIDI Remote Controller

Manufacturer: Roland Corp US, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA 90040, (213) 685-5141

Suggested Retail Price: \$695

It is no longer unusual to see keyboardists performing with the keys hanging around their neck. The next step, of course, is a MIDI remote that allows you to play the whole operation while enjoying the same freedom of movement. Roland has always tried to offer the newest in synth technology, and its Axis-1 MIDI remote controller should have quite an impact on live playing.

CONSTRUCTION

The Axis-1 weighs a mere seven pounds, making the keys easy to wear and comfortable for long durations. It has adequate playing space (just under four octaves), though you'll probably have to adapt your technique somewhat. The Axis-1 is powered by a floor-unit remote power supply with one five-pin Switchcraft connector, which is for sending all data information back and forth from the remote to the synthesizers you choose to control. The power supply has a single MIDI plug to the synths, with adequate chord lengths supplied for MIDI and power connections. The unit itself is of a similar color and shape as Roland's GR-700 guitar synth. The Axis-1 we tested came in a burgundy-red color, but it may also be purchased in silver base.

FEATURES

With the Axis-1 strapped on, you'll find that your left hand has complete control over virtually every vital performing function of your synthesizer. It has volume, modulation and pitch-bend button functions, all of which can be routed to perform different tasks via MIDI by your assigning control change numbers to designated keys. These same keys

also assign the channel info for fast programming changes: Hold the program button and hit the key, which will light a visual display of program patch info along with whatever mode is desired. Mono and poly modes can be achieved the same way, by holding the edit button and hitting the proper key, with total mode LED readout at all times. In our test, all key action was smooth, with very expressive touch sensitivity, complete with aftertouch. One excellent feature is the chord-hold function. When activated, the remote does complex effects and lead lines by properly programming the chord hold function via the keyboard. Again, Roland has made it easy for all of its performance controls to interface

with other manufacturers' keyboards.

The Axis-1 can be programmed with patch-change information to immediately call up a sequence of up to 10 programs in sequential order at any given time. This is a user-friendly function that's essential for live performance. The power supply also holds a foot switch for sustaining chords or notes for enhanced effects. The Axis-1 comes with MIDI cables and a very comprehensive, easy-to-follow manual.

STAGE AND STUDIO

Playing the Axis-1 live can be a little confusing at first, as there are multiple functions to deal with. But once you become familiar with its operation, the Axis-1 becomes a vital new addition to any keyboard setup. The power cable is extremely long, giving you the ability to move freely about the stage—maybe even into the audience!

In the studio, the Axis-1 is a great portable controller, able to control easily any MIDI keyboard, although program channel readouts don't always match up. This is a relatively minor point, however. Plus, as anyone who has been ball-and-chained to a studio keyboard setup for hours on end will attest, having the freedom to roam the studio while playing is a godsend that may spur you on to some especially creative playing.

CONCLUSION

The Axis-1 is a highly innovative product and, with all its program data, a bargain at \$695. It could even make you feel young again! We have just one question: What will guitarists do when synthesists step up front to take a blazing solo!

— Les Davis

OUR BACK PAGES \$3 per issue

- May 1984**—Queen, Heart, 38 Special, Cyndi Lauper, Special Focus on power amps.
- June 1984**—Judas Priest, Scorpions, Missing Persons, Pretenders, Special Focus on electronic percussion.
- July 1984**—Rush, Huey Lewis and the News, "Boss" mini-magazine, John Entwistle, Special Focus on acoustic guitars.
- August 1984**—Jeff Beck, David Gilmour, King Crimson, "Group Therapy—Getting Your Band Signed," Howard Jones, Special Focus on guitar amps.
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- October 1984**—Bruce Springsteen, Southside Johnny, Quiet Riot, Ratt, Wong Chung, Special Focus on signal processing.
- November 1984**—David Bowie, Iron Maiden, British Invasion Revisited, the Fixx, Dio, Special Focus on strings.
- December 1984**—U2, Pat Benatar, Herbie Hancock, Steve Morse, "Boss" mini-magazine, Chris Squire of Yes, Special Focus on mixing boards.
- January 1985**—Paul McCartney, Duran Duran, the Power Station, Big Country, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Special Focus on keyboards.
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- April 1985**—Guitar Greats (Hendrix, Clapton, Beck, Page, the Edge, et al.), Computer Music, part 2, Alcatrazz, Yngwie Malmsteen, Special Focus on effects and signal processors.
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Tony Thompson

Continued from page 33

only motivates me to go out and play my ass off every time I see these other smokin' cats. 'Cause if you don't approach it that way, you get lost in the shuffle. So I'm constantly practicing just to keep up."

Thompson is also exceedingly proud to be a charter member of Chic. "I'm flattered when I hear that groups like INXS patterned themselves after us. But what's cool about the Chic thing is that it's respected by all musicians—jazz, r&b, rock & roll. People know Chic, so it feels good to be known as a part of that band. Yeah, I'm proud. It's not like walking around going, 'Hey, I'm in Frankie Goes to Hollywood,' if you know what I mean." □

John Waite

Continued from page 48

as good as you can be.' I feel privileged that they're on my record, and honored that they're trying to do their best." Waite has a right to take pride in the band he assembled for *Mask of Smiles*: guitarist John McCurry from Cyndi Lauper's group; bassists Carmine Rojas (David Bowie, Julian Lennon and Waite's 1984 touring unit) and Donnie Nossov (Pat Benatar); drummers Alan Childs ('84 touring band) and Frankie LaRocka ("the best I've ever worked with") and keyboardists Chuck Kintis and Tommy Mandel, the latter also a member of Waite's past and present touring bands. The keyboardists play a key role on the new album, which Waite views as a radical departure from his usual sound, describing it as "a cross between Genesis and Bad Company." Apparently that was enough of a disparity to cause his former label, Chrysalis, to abort the project two years ago—five of the songs from that original album turn up on Waite's latest.

Besides the more keyboard-heavy direction, there's also the cryptic lyrical thread that runs throughout and Waite's original LP title, *Rake's Progress*. Who's this rake? Anyone we might know?

"Oh, he's just what it's about," Waite answers slyly, like a contestant on "To Tell the Truth" withholding his true identity.

And what about John's—er, the rake's—progress? In what ways?

I think I've finally grown up," answers Waite, betraying the character as a symbol for himself. "I don't need to keep returning to my roots anymore, I just take 'em with me. I'm pretty much complete and secure now, having succeeded. It's given me an enormous amount of confidence. This is the first time," he confides, "that I'm genuinely confident in what I do, and with this record I was determined to take advantage of it."

"So on *Mask of Smiles*, there's no middle ground; I don't care if it goes to number one or not. It's like everything I've ever done in my life has been to get ready for this.

"This album is me," says Waite, supplying this story with a happy ending after all. "It's like 'Will the real John Waite please stand up?'" □

Dr. Who?

In your June 1984 issue there was an "On Test" of the Simmons SDS8 electronic drum kit that mentioned an interface which allows you to hook up the kit to all drum machines. Can you please tell me who makes that interface and where I can get some more information about it?

Chris Johnson
Lockport, IL

Actually, there are quite a few companies out there making such devices. Two of them are Garfield Electronics (Dr. Click and Mini Doc), P.O. Box 1941, Burbank, CA 91507, (818) 840-8939, and Moog Electronics (Song Producer), 2500 Walden Ave., Buffalo, NY 14225, (716) 681-7200.

What Joy a Song Be

With regard to your article "Return Rock & Roll to the Musicians" [March 1985], I agree and disagree. Though not obvious to the general public, for years there has existed a schism between players and writers. A great songsmith need not be a great axeman; in fact, players with the best chops seem to make the worst songwriters. Let control of the airwaves fall into the hands of the so-called accomplished players and what do you get? More two-hour jams à la Cream, or atonal, scalar diatribes like Mahavishnu, Corea and Di Meola. Give me a break, a song is an art form unto itself; you can whistle a song, it can cheer you up. The next time you're lonely, try humming McLaughlin's "Inner Mounting Flame" or any recent Herbie Hancock composition.

I'm no fan of the Thompson Twins, but at least they write songs. I'm a songwriter, and am happy and proud to be one. So what if I can't blow your mind with scales and riffs, I'll do it with a song. Ya dig, Steve Morse? In the tradition of Msrs. Gershwin, Lennon and Dylan, stow it!

Vince Lucie
Teaneck, NJ



Steve Morse:
Paranoid about synthesizers?

Automation vs. Live Players

In response to the article "Return Rock & Roll to the Musicians" [March 1985]: I am in agreement with most of the article. I think the excessive use of automation in live shows is probably a bad trend; however, it might be even more destructive in the studio, as many instruments can now be emulated via sampling technology and through the use of multitrack keyboard recording be reproduced simultaneously by a single operator.

My objection to Philip Bashe's article is the reference to a sour quote made by Steve Morse, that there are "keyboardists who could play with nine of their fingers amputated; all they need is one finger to press the one button on their incredible new synthesizer." This simply isn't true, and serves only to display Morse's lack of understanding and paranoia concerning synthesizers. Four of the fingers on my left hand were amputated, leaving me with my left thumb and my good right hand. Most conventional instruments are beyond my reach, but modern synthesizers offer me a way to play music. I rely on a Roland synthesizer controlled by a pitch-to-voltage converter, which I can sing into in order to make my musical sounds.

I take this very seriously and practice with the same dedication as would any other musician with professional goals in mind. Seeing the sort of callous comments you quoted in order to drive your message home is really frustrating to me and anyone like me. It reminds me of my phantom fingers, and also suggests that handicapped players shouldn't be taken seriously.

Clifford Metting
St. Clair Shores, MI

In no way was Steve Morse disparaging the handicapped; he was simply trying to make the point that advanced technology has made certain instruments, particularly keyboards, so simple to "play," that it can take the art out of the art of making music. No insult was intended, and we're sorry you were offended by it.

Yo, Aria, Give It Up

How can I get some information on Aria basses? I've written to them a few times, but either I have the wrong address or they've been ignoring my letters. I am interested in the SB-1000 and the SB-950.

Wendy Wilson
Shelburne, VT

The Aria SB-1000 bass guitar features a double-cutaway body, a 34" scale length, one pickup, a laminated neck with an ebony fingerboard, 24 frets, active electronics, die-cast knobs and a brass bridge. As far as we can determine, the SB-950 has been discontinued, but you can check on that by writing to Aria Music USA, 1201 John Reed Ct., City of Industry, CA 91745, or by calling (818) 968-8581.

That's Some Powerful Noise

As I know you are familiar with the Tascam Portastudio and all those other goodies out there, I need your help. I use a Roland TR-606 drum machine with my Tascam 244 multitrack, and though the results are usually very good, they are noisy as hell. Would a preamp help reduce the trim level enough to cancel some of this powerful noise, or is this something I must live with? Is there anything I can do to the TR-606 to quiet it down, or must I buy a new drum computer? Since the TR-707 is digital, would it be quieter? Help!

Donnie Bedford
Newburgh, NY

In answer to your first question, no, a preamp is not what you need, and, no, you needn't live with all that noise. We assume that you are using an ac adaptor to power your TR-606, which is actually a very quiet machine. What you need to purchase is a static line suppressor, available at Radio Shack for about \$6. If that doesn't do the trick, we suggest taking your unit to an authorized Roland dealer for a look-see. In answer to your final question, the TR-707's sounds are probably quieter than those of the TR-606, though its operational noise level is most likely the same.

The Greatest Percussion Issue on Earth

Just a note to thank you for the Phil Collins/Sabian ad in your Summer Percussion issue—funny shot! "Drumming '85—The State of the Art" by Philip Bashe was great, informative reading, though it could have been longer. The Simmons ad for the SDS9 changed my life; what a monster, I wish I had several. The "Special Focus" on drums by Michael Smolen is the reason I bought the issue; great writing, sir! And Frank Zappa, always appreciated. Your magazine's a winner.

Rick LaFontaine
Chicago, IL

P.S.: I hope I win the Gil Moore drum kit giveaway.



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