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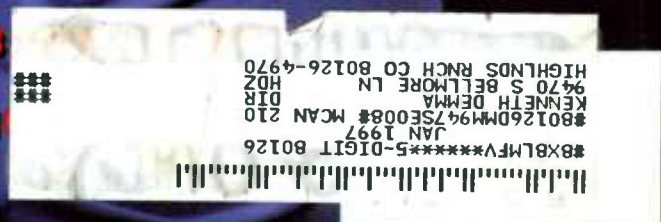
# Tori Amos

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WRITING JOAN OSB

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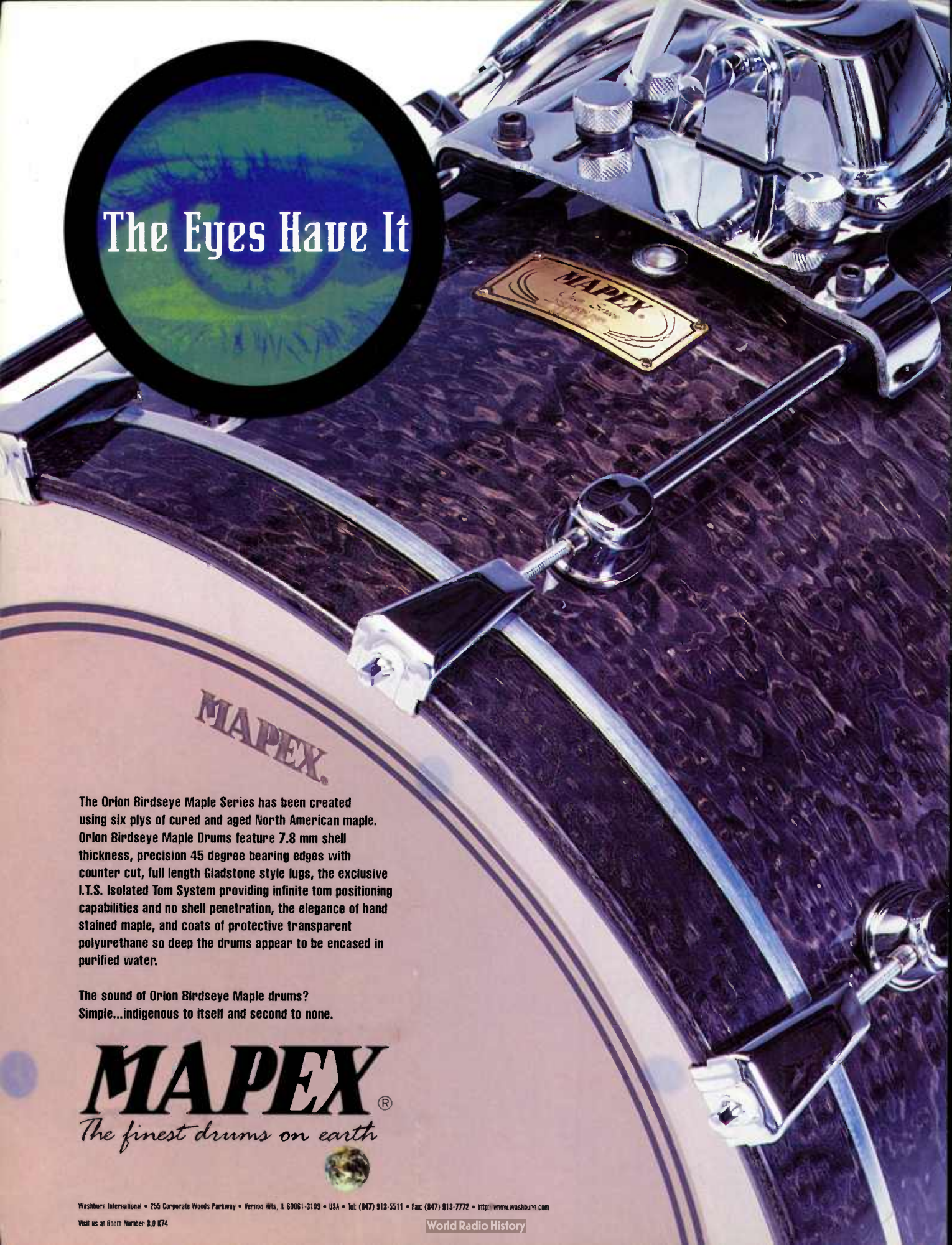
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*IT-1220 20 Amp Balanced Isolation Transformer*

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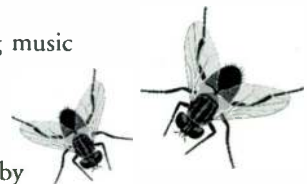
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[hits the crunch switch]

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SOUND YOU EVER HEARD?

The echo in Union Station.

What reverb!

WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG,  
WHO INSPIRED YOU?

Gilligan rocked my world.

[kicks up the treble and  
plays the TV theme]

IS THERE ONE GUITAR PLAYER  
YOU'D LIKE TO BE?

I already am.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START?

Coffee and donuts.

YOU SEEM TO BE MORE  
VERSATILE THAN EVER BEFORE.

I grew up.

WHAT DO YOU  
THINK ABOUT FLEXIBILITY?

You either have it or you don't.

[goes from shred to vintage blues]

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE  
MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION?

I'm plugged into it.

[kicks the volume up and  
starts to wail]

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ABOUT PLAYING GUITAR?

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and I play.

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World Radio History

Tube Logic  
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**Blues Cube**



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We could have simply bought thousands of tubes from the existing factories, thrown away most of them, and sold the ones that happened to accidentally perform well. That system is inherently unpredictable, however, and there is no

way to guarantee that the tubes which do pass will continue to perform after a few hundred hours of use. We also had new designs we wanted to produce.

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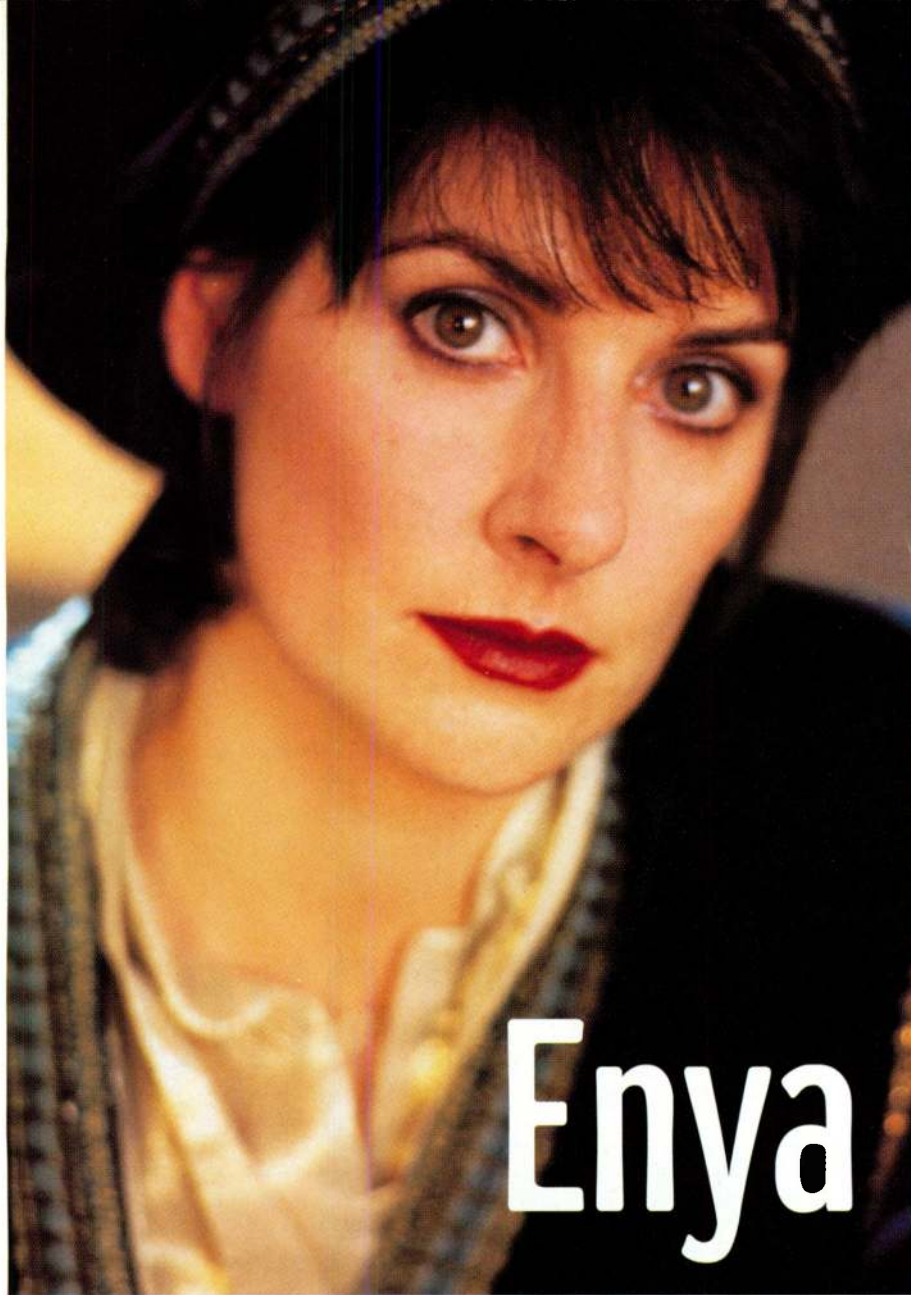
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DRAM





# Enya

**Y**our work relies heavily on electronic instrumental technology yet retains an organic quality one hears more often in acoustic and folk-oriented music.

I think that's because everything starts with the melody. When I introduce it to [producer] Nicky Ryan and [lyricist] Roma Ryan, we begin a lot of trial and error in finding ways to enhance that melody.

*Why is melody, rather than harmony or rhythm, your foundation?*

Because that's my first love. Even if it's simple, like things I used to sing in the church choir back home. Often when you're singing a hymn you know what the next note is; you want it to be

***"People don't know what I look like, but they know the music. That's important."***

that note, and it is that note. That's as beautiful as a very complex melody, even though some people can be afraid of that simplicity.

*Aside from an occasional bit of arpeggiation, everything on your albums is done live, and nothing is sampled. This is especially remarkable in your lush, multi-layered*

*vocal pads.*

Well, each melody is different, so it requires different multi-vocal harmonies. After the melody, we put on the strings and percussion. Then I go in to sing the harmonies, but I never know what I'm going to sing. That only comes when I put on the headphones and listen. There are no short cuts; if it takes three or four days to do the multi-vocal, that's irrelevant. There's as much erasing as work going on. But it's exciting to hear it build up each time I sing a new part: To start with there's only one voice, then the second time I sing there's two, and so on.

*You've never performed your recorded works live.*

That's true, but the nice thing is that we aren't dependent on tours, which means that the music is actually bigger than I am. Some artists are to a certain extent bigger than their music: People know what they look like and how they perform. People don't know what I look like or anything about me, but they know the music. I enjoy that, because that's what's really important.

*What sorts of music do you listen to these days?*

I don't listen too much to music. When I was beginning to write music and experiment with Nicky and Roma, I found it distracting to hear the radio, because what was being played caused a kind of negative reaction in me. A lot of bands were trying to emulate U2; that's what people were expecting to hear when they came to Dublin. I felt that what I was doing was so different that nobody would listen to it. I realized I shouldn't have this negative feeling in the studio, because when you're working on something you have to be very open and enjoy what you're doing. So the three of us had to isolate ourselves completely; one negative opinion would have caused terrible damage.

*Still, if you had to listen to something different...*

... it might be Rachmaninoff: Those piano melodies, so beautiful, so beautiful.

**—Robert L. Doerschuk**

**S**omebody told me that you're getting quadruple scale for sessions now. What?! I didn't even know there was such a thing! I'm generally a double-scale player. I get triple when the budget permits. And in certain situations where they can't afford double scale, we'll work out a day rate. To me, it's not about getting quadruple scale; it's about working all the time. You have to keep improving and staying abreast of what's going on. One way for me to keep learning new things is to work constantly. A lot of times, I have to be the one to come up with a new idea or sound. That's not to say that you have to be a genius every day. On some sessions they just want my time, groove and personality; they don't need me to reinvent the wheel with a drumbeat. Then there are situations like a Mellencamp record where John wants me to give him something he's never heard before.

*Has anyone ever given you royalty points for your creative contributions to a song?*

A couple of times. But there doesn't seem to be a law regarding who is worthy of points. A guitar player can "compose" a

I-IV-V chord progression and share in the songwriting royalties. Where's the uniqueness in that? Whereas a drummer might influence the whole feel and direction and come up with a beat that is totally unique.

*You generally haul a dozen or more snare drums to sessions. How does one achieve a signature sound if the instrument keeps changing?*

It's the way I hit the drums; the way I express myself on the kit. If I played on Peter Erskine's kit and he played on mine, we'd both still sound like ourselves because

***"It's not about quadruple scale, it's about working all the time."***

# Kenny Aronoff

we each have our own sound and approach. I do have a snare drum I like—a 1950s 5x14 Ludwig Supra-Phonic 400—but I can sound like me on any snare drum.

*A good studio player needs consistency and control. A convincing rock performance demands a certain amount of abandon. How do you balance the two?*

The consistency has to be there in terms of solid time and solid groove. If you're playing with a lot of sequenced stuff, then every note has to be perfectly in time or the live drums won't sound right next to the sequenced stuff. But even though each snare drum hit is landing exactly on the beat, each one can sound a little different in terms of the dynamic or how you're hitting the drum. It's subtle, but that makes the feel good. On sessions where you're looking for that uninhibited feel, you can be a little looser. You can

have a little bit of sloppiness in terms of every note not landing exactly with the click or using a loose hi-hat.

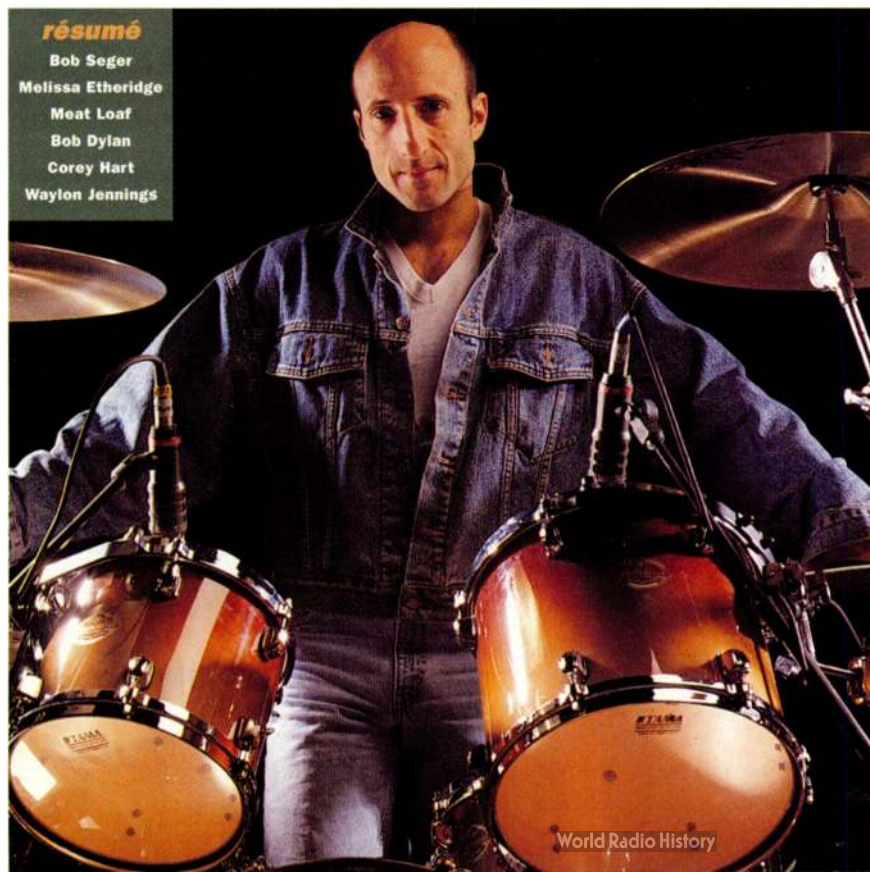
*You record in L.A., New York and Nashville. Any differences in procedure?*

Nashville is set up so that one session starts at ten in the morning, the next one is at two, and there's another one at six. They're three-hour sessions, so you have an hour in between to eat and get to the next one. You have to get down to business pretty quickly in Nashville because people have to get to their next session. Sessions in New York and L.A. are more like a rock 'n' roll hang. They block out a whole day where you start around noon and go to whenever. I once chased Belinda Carlisle down a hallway with my pants down because she wasn't in the mood to sing. But that was in L.A. You can't do stuff like that in Nashville.

*Did that put her in the mood?*

Yeah, she sang after that.

—Rick Mattingly



## résumé

Bob Seger  
Melissa Etheridge  
Meat Loaf  
Bob Dylan  
Corey Hart  
Waylon Jennings



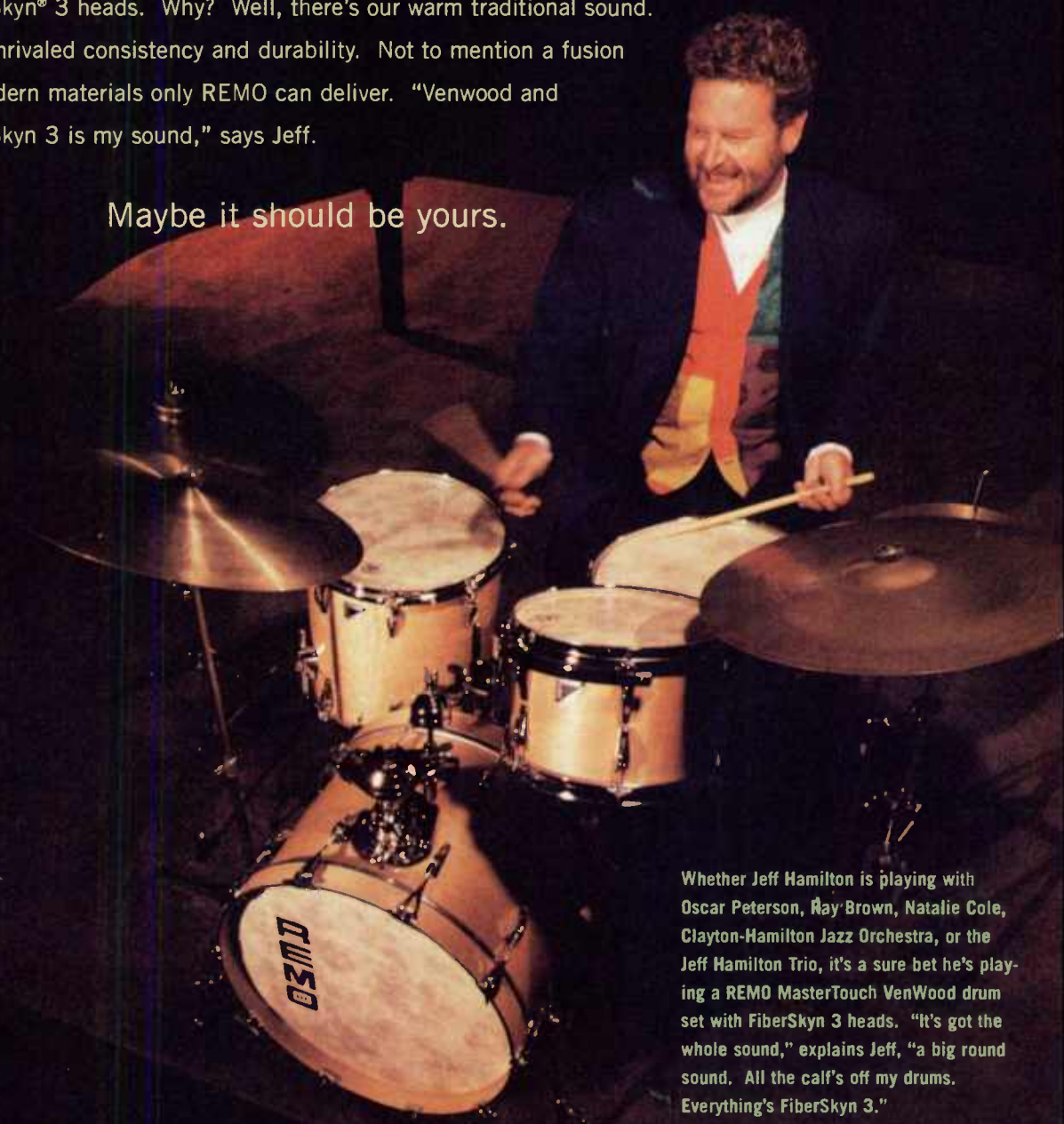
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THEY WANTED BLUE NOTE

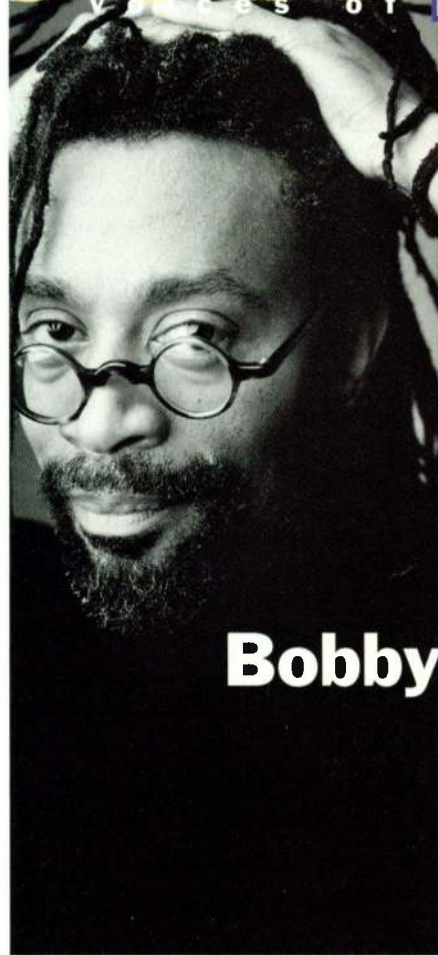
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**ALESIS**



## straight talk on tori

Finally, a more than decent review of Tori Amos's latest album, *Boys for Pele* (Mar. '96). After reading countless other reviews of the album, I was most happy to find that Robert L. Doerschuk did it justice. More often than not, reviews of Tori's music are lopsided, only striving to emphasize how weird or queer she is and not discussing the ingenuity of her music. Kudos to Mr. Doerschuk for his just criticism.

**Sze Tan**  
Columbus, OH

[Tori speaks for herself this month, beginning on page 42.]

## women of the board

Marc Weingarten's article about women's opportunities in the recording business (Mar. '96) was great to see. Those of us with the interest and determination to search for careers have been frustrated by the sexism and also the racism of the recording industry. As in Hollywood films and TV, there are lots of people of color in front of the camera but few behind. One place that men of color and women have had great opportunities for training is in public radio. Pacifica Radio stations, located in five major cities, recruit those who have not had the opportunity in the mainstream and give them the skills in production and broadcast engineering—for free. Thanks for spreading the word.

**Pamela Burton**  
Director, Pacifica Radio Archive  
N. Hollywood, CA

Marc Weingarten's story could leave readers with the impression that it is usual for a recording engineer who has training and talent, a sparkling demo DAT and the desire to work for practically nothing to get a studio job, absent some sort of discrimination. Maybe that was true 20 or 30 years ago (or maybe it was tougher than people remember), but it's not the case today. There must be a million frustrated engineers out there. For all the whining in the story, the engineers Marc talked to have had an easier time of it than any of the engineers I've known.

**Rick Aster**  
Phoenixville, PA

## keith jarrett vs. jazz newbies

It's my guess that the Keith Jarrett article ("Keith Jarrett On Virtual Jazz," Mar. '96) generates more letters than any other *Musician* article this year. Yet I can certainly empathize with Jarrett's concern that the minds that are closed to experimentation and open only to the bottom line are setting the

rules. Would any of Coltrane's mid-'60s works be made in today's "marketplace"? I doubt it. It's hard to garner much interest in today's younger players, because most of what comes out is form, not essence; image, not art; imitation, not homage. But I do not think that Wynton should shoulder the blame for this. I can only hope that this debate will force people to think about the future "soul" of jazz.

**Michael Macchi**  
W. Roxbury, MA

## subhead subtleties

I can't believe that on the cover of your "100 Years of Recording" issue (Mar. '96) you added the subtitle "Will Music Survive 100 More?" Ever since some caveman started beating a stick on a gourd, people have been making music. That was a long time ago and music is still going strong. Music will last forever. I'm shocked that a magazine that is printed by, for and about musicians would doubt this.

[dimebag37@aol.com](mailto:dimebag37@aol.com)

[Actually, it's music journalism we're more worried about.]

To dismiss Wynton Marsalis as an unemotional technician is to lack insight into his music. The last time I heard his septet, a couple of years ago, the music was warm, humorous, generous, moving and filled with ideas. No one "ran scales." The tune choices were interesting and varied. Toward the end of the evening Wynton played a beautiful ballad—I think it was "I Thought About You"—soulful and exquisitely.

Sure, Marsalis can come across in interviews as stuffy and dogmatic. (Come to think of it, so can Jarrett.) But I have never gotten that impression of him at one of his concerts. Do yourself a favor, Keith. Go to a [Marsalis] show, preferably in a small club. You might be surprised.

**Daniel Margolis**  
Northampton, MA

There was only one original musician. He heard these sounds in his head, walked out of his cave, picked up a bone, beat on a rock and wailed to the moon. He didn't care if his Neanderthal neighbors gathered around to listen. All the great jazz players are cut from the same cloth. None would change one sound even to please me, their biggest fan. That dedication to the music is what attracted me to jazz in the first place. But these players are far

too concerned with keeping their fans happy. Can there be anything more inauthentic than a jazz player compromising his music? Keith Jarrett and I think not.

**Dave Farrell**  
Ephrata, PA

## wild thing

The article on "Wild Thing" ("How I Wrote That Hit Song," Mar. '96) fit perfectly into your issue on 100 years of recording. One small moment of inspiration while grasping for an idea can be pieced together with a little bit of ad lib accompaniment, then sent thousands of miles away where it triggers something in another group of musicians and turns into a minor classic that entertains millions for years. All due to this wonderful form called recording—and probably also serving to fulfill Sir Arthur Sullivan's nightmare.

**Gil Lewandowski**  
Rural Retreat, VA

## travelin' light

I enjoyed E. D. Menasché's review of travel axes (Mar. '96), but what happened to the Vagabond Travel Guitar? It's handmade, weighs 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> lbs., is 32" long, and has a full 21 frets (15 to body). The 24.5" scale length and nice wide neck feel like a guitar, not a pocket calculator. No, I'm not affiliated with the Vagabond company in any way, and yes, I do hereby certify that I am smitten with my tiny travel axe.

**Joe Trimble Mack**  
Taegu, South Korea

## rr aatt a

Shortly after we went to press with our story on hard disk recorders (Apr. '96), Fostex announced that the price of their DMT-8 digital multitracker would drop from \$2795 to \$1995.

The Sennheiser advertisement that appeared on the inside back cover of our Apr. '96 issue contained information about a contest that has already been completed. The HD 414 headphones are available at your Sennheiser dealer, but the VW convertible is not.

The correct address for BBE/G&L now appears in our ad index. Look for it on page 88.

Send letters to: *Musician*, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Send E-mail letters to the editor, subscription inquiries and other messages to [musician.mag@sonicnet.com](mailto:musician.mag@sonicnet.com). E-mail addresses will be printed unless requested otherwise.



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Bazilian and Osborne consult the muse.

JAY BLICKSBERG

# How I Wrote That Hit Song

Joan Osborne's "One of Us" by Eric Bazilian

**E**ric Bazilian of the Hooters has just received the news that his song "One of Us," a current smash for Joan Osborne, was played on the radio by Rush Limbaugh, who said that the country is not going down the tubes if songs like this are being written. "It's a dubious honor," says Bazilian over the phone from his native Philly, where he's about to board a plane to celebrate Christmas in Sweden with his wife and her family. Before flying off, he took a few moments to discuss the origins of this song, about which much of the world—even Rush—is talking.

One night, my wife and I had just seen *The Making of Sgt. Pepper*, and she was intrigued by the multitrack recording process. She wanted me to record something for her on my four-track [Tascam] Portastudio, but I didn't have anything new, so she said, "Write something." I had this electric guitar riff that I had been messing around with, so I sat

down with my little sequencer and did a bass, drums, guitar and electric piano sequence. I literally doubled the guitar line, which on Joan Osborne's record I did with a Wurlitzer.

So I put down this track, complete with an "I Am the Walrus" middle section, which we didn't do on Joan's record. It was just an instrumental, but Sara, my wife, said, "Sing it." I said, "What do you mean? I haven't written lyrics yet, and when you write lyrics you still have to rewrite them, and then everyone in the committee has to approve them." She said, "Okay, cool," and went to lie down on the couch.

Right then, I heard the voice. The voice sounded very much like Brad Roberts of Crash Test Dummies. It was going, "If God has a name. . . ." I thought, "Okay, I'll go with that," and I put the machine into record and started singing. The verses all came out in one take, totally stream of consciousness, in a sort of Leonard

Cohenish, dark, benevolent sarcasm. Joan sang it in a much more childlike, questioning way.

On the second pass, the chorus lyrics came out, and that was basically it. I doubled the vocal an octave higher, brought it in the next day, and played it for the assembled multitudes, really just for entertainment purposes. [Producer] Rick Schertoff looked up afterwards and said, "Joan, do you think you could sing that?" I never thought it was a song for Joan.

Some people have taken exception to the concept of comparing God to a human. What I say to them is that I'm not comparing God to humans; I'm comparing humans to God. I've always wondered: If I saw a miracle, would that mean I would have to believe all of it, the whole story about Jesus and the saints and the prophets? I'm not that religious, but this has given my little latent faith gland some stimulation. I was raised Jewish, went to Quaker schools. I have a respect for all religions but no respect for intolerance—or for any religion that doesn't tolerate other religions.

# rou

**10.** Last month Julian Colbeck listed ten items you absolutely need to go on the road. Hope you haven't left yet, because here are ten more, courtesy of our expert on matters of musical mobility.

**11. Iron.** It's the only way to look presentable without having to pay hotel blackmail charges for a valet service.

**12. Hair dryer.** No longer universally needed, unless you're on that Romanian circuit, where hair dryers built into bathrooms have yet to catch on. That said, most built-in models are about as useful as a huff of breath from an asthmatic granddad, so. . . .

JOHN HERSEY



# In Residence with Chris Whitley

by **Dinky Dawson**

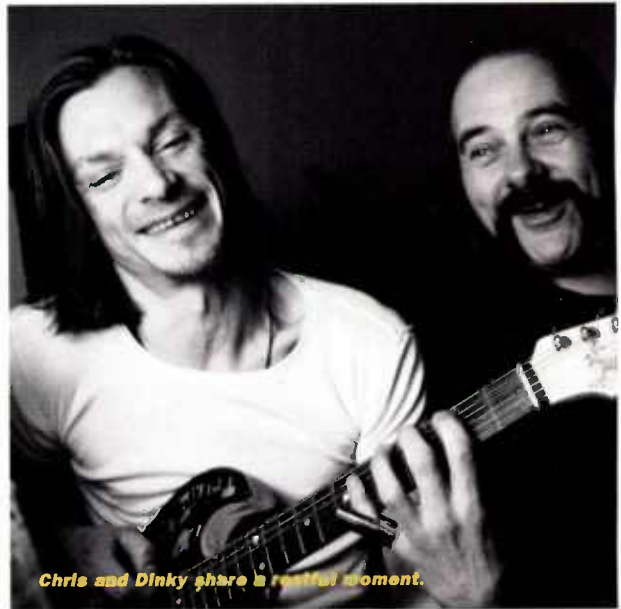
**C**hris Whitley's two-month U.S. tour last summer, for which I mixed sound, was a little unusual in terms of its scheduling. The plan was to have Chris available for three days in each city, as if to say that if you can't see us one night then you have two others to choose from. This idea of residing in a town for more than one night seems to be catching on as a sensible approach to touring in the '90s.

In the rock community, "residencies" is a relatively new word. But MOR acts on the casino or hotel circuit have been "residing" for years—you live in the same hotel for ten days, play three shows a day, and the audience will come to you. German clubs did it the same way in the '60s; the Beatles worked one place in Hamburg for a month at a time (and so did I, in Kiel). Such engagements are a

real education. The playing gets tighter; you figure out everyone's idiosyncrasies, and if you make it through the month, you might actually last as a band.

Chris's tour was full of challenges. Even though we'd be in the same club for three days, we kept encountering the same problems. The worst was when frequencies canceled each other out in the room. For example, Chris's voice was often tough to hear over the sound system, yet it's very loud on the board recordings. Then there's the summer voltage drop

that always seems to happen around 9 p.m. in the older cities, making the amplifiers lose their balls. (Check out the sound on an Ampeg SVT when this happens!) Also, many East Coast clubs have little or no air conditioning. Imagine a temperature of 100 degrees plus 100 percent humidity. It isn't long before you just want to get out of [cont'd on page 82]



Chris and Dinky share a restful moment.

DARREN MODRICHER

# ugh mix

**13. Kettle.** You'd be amazed at how many Brownie points you can earn by offering a cup of chamomile to an ailing companion after a distressing night out.

**14. Mug.** It'll make road coffee taste a thousand times better than it does out of Styrofoam.

**15. Screwdrivers.** Metal and liquid.

**16. Pain relief.** Someone always has—or is—a pain.

**17. Your Abflex,** or equivalent roving fitness device. Touring is the perfect opportunity to take in the spare tire

**18. Copies of your latest CD.** Better than cash. A flashed copy can get you into a club, out of a jam and whatever your particular need, poison or pleasure. Copies of your latest tape don't go quite as far. CDs

are cheap to produce, so a tape merely draws attention to your obvious state of poverty and impending failure.

**19. Disposable camera.** Forget your Pentax or Leica. Happy snaps of your fellow travelers are all

that's needed. **20. At least two back issues of *Musician*.** He who reads remains at least vaguely sane.

As a keyboard player in a band, Julian Colbeck started touring girls' private schools in England in the '60s, moving to far less glamorous outings with Charlie



## your music

### on the road

John Miles, Yes, ABWH and Steve Hackett in the '70s, '80s and '90s. Send your questions to Julian c/o *Musician* for possible discussion in future installments of *Your Music*.

# Trey Gunn's Rhythm Stickery

by David C. Gross

As one-sixth of the latest edition of King Crimson, Trey Gunn has got plenty of tricky parts to play (check out the album *Thrak*, the EP *Vroom*, or the live album *B'Boom*, all on the Discipline label, for proof), and he handles them all on either 10- or 12-string Chapman Stick. The Stick, which Gunn started using in 1987, is played mainly by tapping the strings; usually, a Stick player handles bass parts with one hand and melodies or solos with the other.

Trey enthuses about the instrument: "There's something particularly mesmer-



private lesson

izing about it, for it brings hands and limbs together in such a satisfying way. On the piano, you have this huge separation between the hands and the mechanics of the keyboard. With the Stick, you have your fingertips directly on the strings themselves."

Gunn often puts those fingertips to work by superimposing one time signa-

ture on top of another. One exercise he regularly practices involves playing a groove in 2/4 and adding chord punches in 5/16. "I play a bass ostinato with the left hand using four eighth notes," he explains, "and for the chord stabs I play a three-note pattern in a round with the right hand." The parts eventu-

ally meet again after five repetitions of the 2/4 part and eight of the 5/16.

Ex. 1 shows the two parts Trey plays in standard notation; the dotted lines indicate how they line up. Ex. 2 demonstrates how Gunn fingers the exercise on the Stick. Note that the 10 strings of the Stick are tuned in fifths; the individual tunings are to the left of the tablature. Ex. 3 is the same two parts in standard tablature for those who'd like to try some rhythmic madness on regular guitar and/or bass. "I practice this very slowly," says Trey, and so should you.

**EXAMPLE 1**

**EXAMPLE 2**

Right Hand *Play 8 times*

Left Hand *Play 5 times*

Tunings: D = 1, A = 2, E = 3, B = 4, F# = 5; C = 6, G = 7, D = 8, A = 9, E = 10

**EXAMPLE 3**

Right Hand *Sya* *Play 8 times*

Left Hand *Play 5 times*

Transcription by Frank Joliffe.



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# Turn it UP



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## new signings



**Y**ou can be bald. You can play acoustic guitar all by yourself. Your voice doesn't have to be pretty. You don't have to fit the unforgiving age demographic that seems to have become gospel. And you can still get a deal with a major label.

We saw living proof one night at the Sidewalk Café in downtown New York. Ed Hamell, a.k.a. Hamell On Trial, blasts into the spotlight, a muscular guy in black T-shirt, sneakers and jeans. His smooth head gleams, looking enormous on powerful shoulders. Clamped in his right hand, like the throat of a child, is the neck of his guitar.

Whipping it into position, Hamell begins battering the instrument with a wild staccato riff from his song "Dead Man's Float." After building momentum for a minute or so, he stops and, with listeners' ears still ringing, starts complaining about the radiator noise in his apartment. A guy gets up from the front table and tries to ease through the shadows to the door. But nothing escapes Hamell's notice: He interrupts himself to yell, "Hey! Hey!" Then, as an aside to the rest of the audience, "Must be my new cologne: Front Row Repellant."

Imagine Curly Howard kicked out of a punk band—for playing too aggressively. That's Ed Hamell, and he's signed to Mercury.

A&R scout Peter Lubin was sold the moment he heard Hamell at South By Southwest in Austin. "Sure, he's far from what's considered normal and conventional," says Lubin. "But those are the things you look for. The main thing for me was that, beneath his presentation there lurks [cont'd on page 23]

### HAMELL ON TRIAL

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LABEL: MERCURY

ON SALE: MARCH 12

Jill Greenberg



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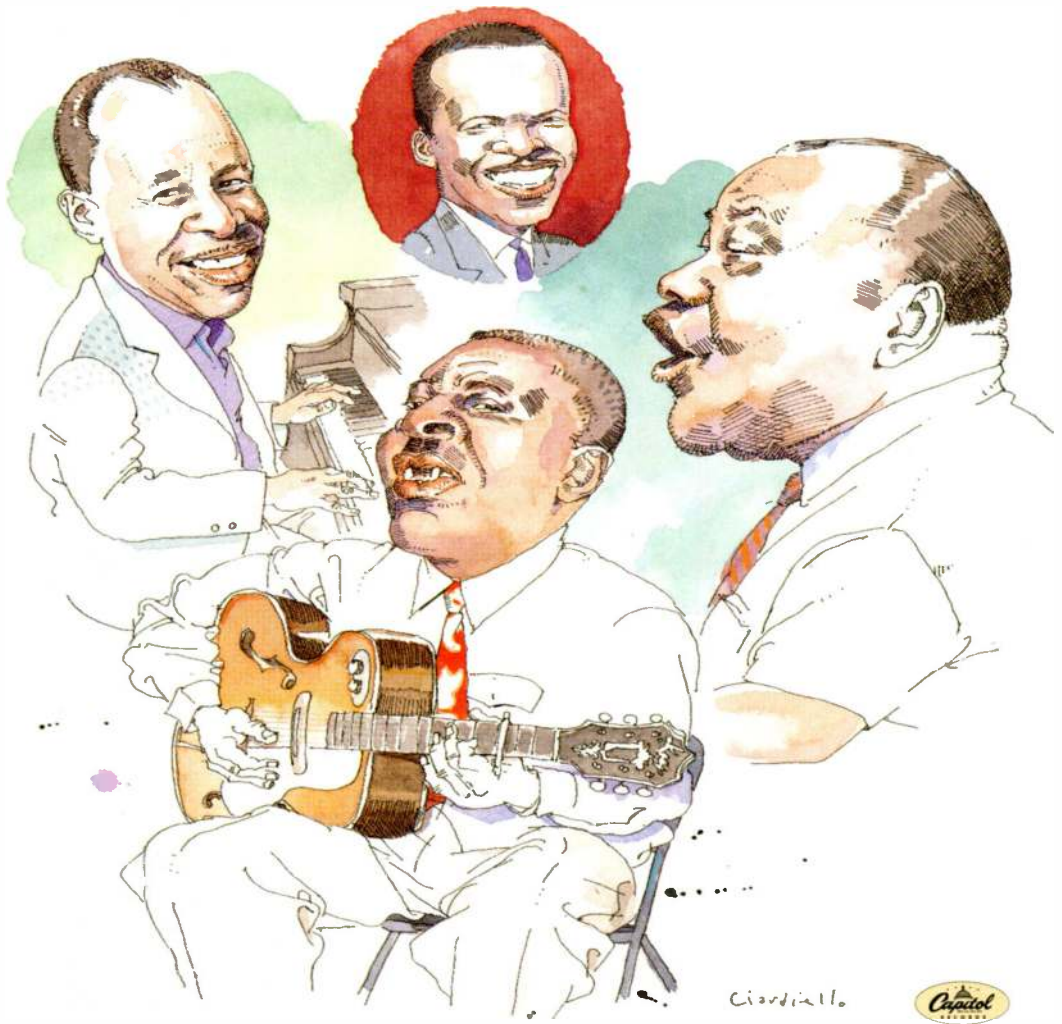
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**Floyd Dixon**



**Amos Milburn**

# talent

**the cardigans** "We don't really use modern technology," explains Magnus Sveningsson of the Swedish band the Cardigans. "Tambourine Studio in Sweden, where we record, is equipped almost entirely with stuff from the '60s and '70s. If we were to record in a modern studio, we would come out sounding completely different."



the cardigans

Martin Bogren

You can get a taste of the Cardigans' sound on their U.S. debut, *Life* (Minty Fresh), a swing-collection of '60s pop style (à la St. Etienne or Pizzicato Five) that features smartly arranged songs and singer Nina Persson's carefree, charm-drenched vocals. Also key to their sound are jazz-inflected guitars and a pile of vintage gear, listed in their CD notes.

"That list was kind of tongue-in-cheek," laughs Magnus. "Because we don't have any endorsement deals yet, we thought, 'Why not list everything and maybe one of these companies will call us and offer a sponsorship.' No one has called yet.

"The problem is, if we had an endorsement it would mean we could only play new guitars," sighs Magnus. "So, I think we'll stick with our own sponsorship—buying old guitars and paying for them ourselves."—**Dev Sherlock**

**space needle** Space Needle didn't intentionally jump on the lo-fi bandwagon on their debut album *Voyager* (Zero Hour). A swirling, surreal soundscape teeming with pulsating Farfisa feedback, recessed vocals, tape hiss and amp frizz, *Voyager's* *musique concrète* approach developed by happenstance.

"We worked in my parents' basement on a four-track that we had just purchased," says keyboardist/vocalist Jud Ehrbar. "We really didn't know what the hell we were doing. We just hooked up a mike and one effects pedal, and that was it."

Tracks like "Starry Eyes" and "Dreams" are based around open-ended song structures that gave Ehrbar and guitarist Jeff Gatland the freedom to build dense accretions of sound within a very loose framework. "It's kinda like a lot of rap you hear

today," says Ehrbar. "The stuff that Ol' Dirty Bastard and Genius are doing is *really* weird; the backing tracks are as strange as anything



self

Mitch Tobias

out there, and it's great to hear that on the radio now. All these lo-fi sounds are reaching the mainstream, and I think that's great."

—**Marc Weingarten**



space needle

Dennis Kleiman

**self** Listening to *Subliminal Plastic Motives* (Zoo), Self's grab-bag of a debut, it's obvious that the band's 22-year-old mastermind Matt Mahaffey has a short attention span. Barely 30 seconds into "Borateen," *Motives'* opening track, compressed riffing gives way to a sample-heavy dance groove—Smashing Pumpkins to Deee-Lite with no stops in between.

Elsewhere, Self's songwriter, producer, and primary musician moves effortlessly from rock to hip-hop to piano jazz, displaying a production savvy that makes you swear this couldn't be the work of a first-timer.

"Instead of going to frat parties, I just spent all my time recording stuff, living like a hermit," says Mahaffey. All that cleverness could have ended up sounding like a glorified musical revue, but it doesn't thanks to Mahaffey's inventive songwriting.

No longer a one-man show, Mahaffey plans to record the next Self record with his live band as equal writing partners. Will the loss of total control be tough for him?

"Yeah, I'm sure. But these guys are so great. And if it falls apart, I can always go back to doing things the way I used to." Sounds like either way, we win.—**Christian Finnegan**



[cont'd from page 20] the heart of a musician. This is even more compelling than the command he has over the audience and the sort of songs he writes. Deep down, there's a really musical guy here."

The fact that Hamell isn't exactly a fresh-faced newcomer doesn't faze Lubin either. "To me, Ed is of indeterminate age. He doesn't really appear to be 40 or 35 or 29. What matters is that he has the energy of a teenager. He's got the mental agility of a person who's not ready for the old folks' home. The only reason a guy would be too old to sign is if he's too set in his ways, and Ed is far too free a thinker for that."

All this makes Hamell uncomfortable. "Look," he insists, "I don't want to be the Tina Turner of bald songwriters. But in your own magazine, two years ago, you interviewed a bunch of industry professionals who said, in essence, 'If you're over

30, it can't happen.' So, frankly, it's been hideous. I have a wonderful wife; you need that kind of strength to keep at it as long as I have. Unquestionably, when you're a 36-year-old dude taking orders from an 18-year-old manager, it fucks with your head. What kept me going is, when I get onstage, it's obvious that I love being there. With the exception of my family, there's no other place I'd rather be."

Through years of wage slave gigs as a bartender, a pizza deliverer, a warehouse worker, and a boat painter, Hamell kept playing. "If you're 35, 40, 45, 50 years old, if you're playing your own music and no one's there, dignity is a factor. You're hanging out with your peer group, and your peer group says, 'I got a house. What are you doing?' And you're mopping floors for solvency, hanging onto a dream. I don't know how many people can be that sure of themselves. You say,

'Maybe I *am* a chump.'

"Oddly enough, though, I always believed that I would make it. I couldn't have put up with some of the shit I put up with if I didn't. I could just tell that if I made myself happy and people could see that, they would come. If a major didn't see that, if I sold 35,000 on an indie, that would be cool. If it took me banging it out and laying the groundwork like that, that's what I would do. I never thought, 'Screw it.'"

Keeping the faith paid off at last for Hamell, who recently completed a branch tour of Mercury offices and may be on his way to a U.K. debut. I can hear it now: the frenzied picking, the sudden silence, the squinting eyes targeting two chatty Brits, and the voice—"Hey! Shut up while I'm playing!"

They won't know what they're in for.—**Robert L. Doerschuk**

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# A

## THOUSAND MILES FROM NASHVILLE



DWIGHT  
YOAKAM  
MEETS  
WILLIE  
NELSON



Not far from the Santa Monica Pier one sunny afternoon, Dwight Yoakam and Willie Nelson were hanging out on Willie's tour bus, listening to Nelson play . . . reggae. More precisely, they were listening to a tape of a record he'd just completed with producer Don Was, featuring reggaetied versions of great old Willie songs like "Three Days" and "One In A Row," along with a few classics of the genre like "The Harder They Come."

"Don Was 'heard' me singing reggae," Nelson explained. "Cause I wasn't too familiar with it. I just didn't know it. But he could hear me doing my songs to a reggae rhythm."

"That's ironic," Yoakam said, "'cause I'm doing a covers album, and I was gonna cover a Peter Tosh song. And listening to his stuff, there was a real emotional affinity to what they were doing in reggae, some of the early stuff, and what country was doing then."

BY MARK ROWLAND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAY BLAKESBERG







There's a certain melancholy essence with what you write and with some of those melodies. I think Don must have picked up on that."

"Well," Nelson replied, warming to the subject, "you can take a really sad lyric and put this rhythm behind it and it sort of leavens it a little bit, so the lyric doesn't knock you down so much—you don't want to get drunk and slash your wrists, you want to dance."

"You want to hear another one?"

Five minutes into their first joint interview ever, and Willie Nelson and Dwight Yoakam have staked out common ground in the Southern Caribbean. Somehow that shouldn't surprise. After all, both musicians widened the frame of country music's possibilities by combining a deep reverence for that music's past with an idiosyncratic vision of its future. Both made their mark despite initial indifference if not hostility from the Nashville establishment, fomenting their insurrections on the dance floors of Austin and Southern California, respectively, and putting the "W" back into C&W in the process. Within that milieu, it can easily be argued, both became the most influential singer/songwriters of their

respective generations. And let's not overlook their ingenious solutions to every charismatic entertainer's *bête noire*—the receding hairline.

These days, of course, Dwight is the star, Willie the legend. Yoakam, who grew up in the era of the '60s rock concept album, spends years meticulously putting together records with his producer Pete Anderson. His effort shows; on each he's found ways to expand his musical vocabulary, culminating with his latest effort, *Gone*, an album at once wildly inventive and polished to a blinding sheen.

Nelson, by contrast, grew up in the old school of Texas troubadours—write songs, make records when you can, hit the road. Since he cut his first sides nearly forty years ago he's carved out a career of mythic

proportion, and he's never really slowed down. "I think that's just my personality and my character," he says. "I'm not supposed to be sitting around much. I get bored real quick when I'm not doing something."

Not to worry—along with the reggae record, Willie's completed a trio album of original songs with sister Bobbie Nelson on piano and Johnny Gimble on fiddle, also

scheduled for release later this year. He'd just returned from a tour of Australia with the Highwaymen before this interview, and as soon as it ended he cruised down the coast to begin a series of duet shows with Leon Russell. He's started work on a blues record too.

"You know, if you listen to the people in each country you go into, it all sounds very much the same," he was saying. "African country, Jamaican country, Swiss—have you been to Switzerland yet?"

"Oh yeah," said Yoakam.

"There's some great country cowboys up there. Jamaicans go more with the heartbeat, their rhythms do. These guys were telling me that reggae came into existence by way of our country radio. That they were picking up the radio stations years ago, but they could-

n't hear the bottom—so they put their own rhythms over what they heard. Now the biggest music in Jamaica is country, and one of the biggest guys is Jim Reeves."

Yoakam laughed. "Hey man, get a big sailboat and get ready to tour. You could be king there!"

Nelson nodded. "Well," he said evenly, "it's worth a shot."

**MUSICIAN:** *When Willie first came to Nashville, he was part of a community of songwriters, such as Roger Miller and Harlan Howard and Hank Cochran, who were writing a new kind of country song—music with a wider melodic range and maybe more emotionally introspective. What was that scene like?*

**WILLIE NELSON:** Well, we would get together every morning at the office, me and whoever was there, maybe Don Rollins—I don't know if you remember Don, he wrote "The Race Is On"—and Ray Pennington, Hank Cochran. We'd sit around and play what we'd written the night before and try to knock the other guys out. And we got paid \$50 a week to do it.

**MUSICIAN:** *But having those guys there. . .*

**NELSON:** It made you work. It helped me to write more, especially since the stuff I was writing really wasn't selling that much—except to the writers! So that was my audience.

**DWIGHT YOAKAM:** That's a tough audience. It's like comics with other comics. They're all waiting to play their songs.

**NELSON:** Yeah, "Bullshit, bullshit, bullshit—my part." [laughter]

**YOAKAM:** I was kind of on a solitary path, in that sense. I came to the West Coast and we were working the rock and roll clubs in town in the early '80s with the Blasters and Los Lobos, cause we weren't gonna get anywhere playing covers in the country bars in town. I was given a certain embrace by those bands and those performers, whereas with Willie it was more of a peer community.

I went to Nashville for a brief time before that, and I didn't find an atmosphere that was conducive to playing live. I think a lot of people have a misconception about the town—it's not one big honkytonk. It's the state capital, and it's very conservative, in an emotional sense—it's refined.

**NELSON:** It's also the publishing capital of the

**Nelson:**  
"I've never  
met a woman  
who could  
replace  
a guitar."







# INSTEAD OF BRAGGING ABOUT OUR 8•BUS CONSOLE AGAIN, WE THOUGHT WE'D BRAG ABOUT EDDIE KRAMER BRAGGING ABOUT OUR 8•BUS.

Okay, bragging is too strong a word. But we are very proud when one of the most important rule-breaking, producers in recording history has become a Mackie 8•Bus fan.

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a brilliant orchestral homage to Hendrix with an astonishing array of some of the best players in the world. Leave it to Eddie to break more rules. Net surfers should check out the **RCA VICTOR** Web Page @ <http://rcavictor.com>. For a great read, pick up the *Jimi Hendrix Sessions* book by John McDermott with Billy Cox and Eddie Kramer (Little Brown), and on video, *Adventures In Modern Recording* (available from Mix Bookshelf, 510-653-3307).



1. Including Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Kiss, Buddy Guy, and more recently, his work with other Mackie mixer owners: Sting, David Abbruzzese, Vinnie Colaiuta, Stanley Clarke, Tony Williams, Steve Vai, and Carlos Santana.
2. He hates the location of the 8•Bus' talkback button.
3. According to Eddie, Eric Shenkman (Spin Doctors), Little Red Wagon Mobile Recording Studio, Bootsie Collins and John McEnroe have purchased 8•Bus consoles at his urging.

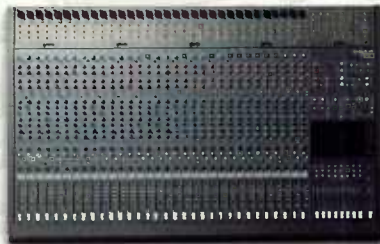


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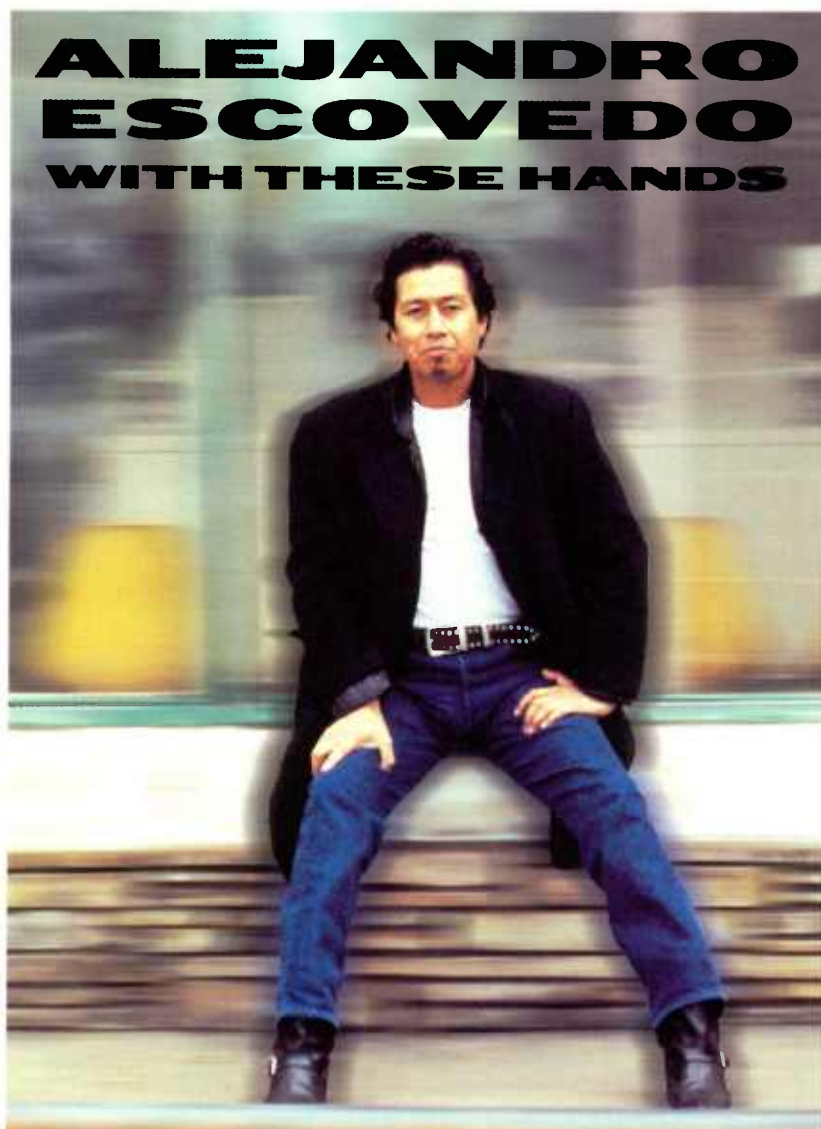


world—but gospel, not country. They didn't particularly like the Grand Ole Opry, it wasn't nothin' they were proud of. I knew a guy who took care of some cattle for me, he'd been there for fifty years and never saw it—and he was a country music fan. Just took it for granted. I guess you have a habit of doing that in your hometown.

**YOAKAM:** Well, in '76, '77, it was a different community than it is today even, with the explosion of marketing the music through

TNN and CMT. That access for the public in the last ten years is what's allowed there to be a Garth Brooks. I think if that access had been there when Willie broke with *Red Headed Stranger*, you would have seen ten million units sold on the "out-laws" and what you and Waylon did through the early '80s.

**MUSICIAN:** Also, before Soundscan the charts weren't truly reflecting sales. The record companies would inflate the impact of their



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## the hole guitar story

**W**illie Nelson's Martin guitar is among the more visually recognizable in the business, partly because it's covered with signatures and partly because of the sizable hole he's worn in the face of it—Willie has a mean downstroke. Back in 1964, Nelson recalls, he'd bought it over the telephone from a music store in Nashville for \$750. He plays it through an aluminum Baldwin amp of even more ancient vintage, though it's not quite the same model as when he began with it a few decades past. "But rather than get a new amp," he admits cheerfully, "I just take parts out of the new amps and put 'em in the old amp."

Yoakam also wore a hole in his cherished Martin D 28 back in 1973—the guy has a mean upstroke. "We sent it back to Martin and they put a new top on. It's the best-sounding Martin I've ever played so I'm just keeping it at home now." (Including the old top, which he had framed.) For the road, Yoakam also includes an acoustic D 41—"sort of a fluid version of the D 28. Those guitars are suited to what I do, which is music rooted in mountain and bluegrass. It has a deep bottom end that allows you to keep the rhythms slapping. I think that's why it was the guitar of the early rockabilly bands." He likes to strum a Gibson jazz set of strings, "cause they have a wrapped G. Being a hillbilly guitar player, playing first position and pulling real hard on it, it gives me a thicker sound."

His electric axe of choice is an unusual cherry-colored sunburst Fender Telecaster, which he played on the title song to *Gone*, as well as on "Never Hold You" and "Near You." His amp of choice is a Fender Vibro King, "the blonde one that looks like a Super Reverb—it's got three 10" speakers and a great tube sound. You can go from a real dirty Vox sound to that classic Fender warmth." He admits to a taste for "enough tremolo to be annoying and enough reverb to sound like I'm singing in a well."

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priorities, which were usually in the pop/rock field. Soundscan made clear that country music was a bigger part of the market.

**YOAKAM:** And that country is selling to a pop audience, not just country. Cause *Red Headed Stranger* . . . Willie Nelson was absolutely hip. He was coming at them with honest emotion, pure and simple. And—this is my outside observation—'cause you had nothing to lose.

**NELSON:** Yeah, that's right. I'd already made

forty albums by then, that they'd print 200 of and that was it. All my best songs were already recorded, so in order to get anything as good, I had to write something new or go back and do an old one—which I enjoy doing, even today. I'm glad they're back there.

But it's sort of disheartening too, when you have ten songs and albums that . . . are gone. They were your children, you know? I mean, you wrote 'em and you

spent agonizing hours putting them together. And you had all these hopes—here's ten of what you think are good songs, and then all of a sudden they're history. And you never had a shot.

**YOAKAM:** And great songs. It's like a kid with a lot of potential that died at twelve. Nobody knew what that kid could have been.

**NELSON:** And if you get ten or twelve of those albums in a row, that's hundreds of songs. . .

**YOAKAM:** You don't have that to give! I don't care who you are. Ernest Hemingway didn't have that to give. You're only here for a limited space of time.

Bill Cosby once said, "Mediocre people are the most dangerous people in the world." 'Cause they're the people who are usually put in control of overseeing the guys like Willie, who walk in a room and give them something that's flat-out brilliant. The moments you may have that may be inspired, you're not going to have them always. That's got to be disheartening. It can make you bitter.

**NELSON:** And when you're a writer, you write in spurts—well, I do. If I go for a long time without writing, I start getting a little nervous, you know—maybe I'm not gonna ever write another song. But whenever I get to thinking that way, I think about another thing Roger [Miller] said. He said, "When the well goes dry, you have to wait and let it refill itself."

**MUSICIAN:** *What can you do to help that process along?*

**NELSON:** Nothing. [laughter] You can write a few bad songs if you want to, get 'em out of your system.

**YOAKAM:** I try to let myself stop a lot, cause I want to have the semblance of a normal existence, so I can have some kind of reference to reality that will let me have an emotion that's honest, and write about that.

**NELSON:** One thing I miss is being able to get out among a lot of strange people. . .

**YOAKAM:** Anonymously.

**NELSON:** Yeah, and listen to the conversations. You get in a bar somewhere and order a drink and kind of turn your back and listen to what's going on. You can hear a lot of great stuff in a bar, but it's kind of hard to do that now. I miss that part of it.

**YOAKAM:** Once we become successful, we're living in a surreal environment, so I

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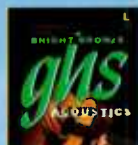
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think the key is trying to live with some degree of normalcy. Not to be on the road all the time. Have some sort of life that at least simulates the reality that gave you the inspiration to write in the first place.

One of the reasons I wound up staying in Los Angeles is because it's so vast, literally and metaphorically, and I can kind of fade into the mosaic of that and disappear. I can still walk around—hatlessly—and fade into the landscape.

**MUSICIAN:** Duke Ellington titled his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*. In Willie's autobiography, he notes his long experience as both a musician and as a married man, and suggests that the two things are incompatible.

**NELSON:** I think a guy becomes bonded to his guitar [laughs], or to his horse, or whatever. And the girlfriend or the wife sometimes does come in behind them—cause that guitar may have been there first. I'm

certain the guitar was there before the girlfriend, because usually the guitar is what got the girlfriend, you know? But sometimes the woman wants to replace the guitar. I never met one that could do that. But I've never met a guitar that could replace a woman either—some women, anyway.

**YOAKAM:** Music is my mistress—I used that analogy not too long ago. It was as if, had I been married, I would not have been able to be faithful, because this desire to perform and sing and write music was too seductive. It was what destroyed any hope I might have had to complete an academic education. It was always there, pulling me away.

**MUSICIAN:** In a way, the band seems to fulfill that need, particularly on the road. You guys have both had long and steady partnerships in that regard. It's like a family.

**YOAKAM:** To some degree. They've become very benevolent and tolerant real life partners. Ironically, they're the "enablers," if you will—the accelerator for my leaving the real world and going into the other reality, that existence inside music.

**NELSON:** We're definitely a family unit, and we work as close together as any family ever did. And we feel as much for each other as any family does. And fortunately, this particular family—the road family—I've been able to keep together longer than some of the others. Course I wasn't fuckin' the bus drivers, that might have had something to do with it. [laughter]

I sort of let it become that because it was going that way anyway. I didn't try to fight it. There are conflicts with home life, and hopefully you can find somebody who can put up with your being on the road half the time, and the rest of the time you're probably not spending as much time with the family as they would like. They have a legitimate gripe. If I were in their position I would probably be griping too.

However, had I been in their position, knowing the circumstances, I wouldn't have married the sorry son-of-a-bitch to begin with! Had I known what his habits were, I would have stayed out of the way.

**MUSICIAN:** It seems like the life encourages a kind of loneliness, which is maybe why sad songs are a lot more prevalent than happy songs—and generally more effective.

**NELSON:** Well, sadness is a strong emotion. I guess sadness sometimes seems more powerful than happiness. You can be so sad,

# surrender to the air

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and then it's hard to remember a time when you were as happy as you are sad, in that moment. I think songwriters were probably born to experience that maybe as much or more than anybody else, so they can write it.

**YOAKAM:** I think all human beings feel that sense of isolation and solitude. Although we share this journey for this moment in time collectively, it's one that we enter and depart in a solitary fashion. Perhaps all a songwriter is doing is focusing on that reality. For some reason they have a heightened sense of that reality, or a more constant awareness of it. Or a more willing awareness of it. The irony is, when we share that experience, it's no longer solitary! There is something that you sense about people through hearing them. Singing is not emotionally detached, it's candid. You've robbed expression of its pretense.

**NELSON:** You're stripped.

**YOAKAM:** Yeah, you actually are, because that voice. . .

**NELSON:** It doesn't lie. Or if it does, it does.

**YOAKAM:** That's why *Red Headed Stranger* was an album that eclipsed everything that was going on, or had gone on. See, as a kid, I was looking for a connection between Hank Williams and Creedence Clearwater Revival and the Rolling Stones. And Buck [Owens] was the only [country] person I was aware of who'd had commercial success doing anything with an affinity to rock and roll. But Buck went another way. And I remember first hearing Willie's stuff when progressive FM radio began to permeate what everyone else was listening to—college towns at first. That was my connection, as a teenager—I realized that country music could still address issues for a young audience and a hip audience. It didn't have to alienate itself because of the genre.

**MUSICIAN:** *The political divisions of the '60s seemed to eliminate the whole idea of populism, from the right wing as well as the left. But Red Headed Stranger seemed to bring that idea back without stating it directly—you were making a record. I think it was something that a lot of people were searching for at the time, without putting a name to it or even knowing what it was.*

**YOAKAM:** Finding something and going—ahhhh, there it is!

**NELSON:** It's not unlike today, when you

start turning the dial, trying to find something that you really like? You got to go to your album collection to find it.

**YOAKAM:** Somebody asked me what radio I listened to lately. I said, I can't—I don't. I just put on CDs in the car.

**MUSICIAN:** *Because radio formats have been getting tighter, it seems.*

**NELSON:** Any gambling at all is gone. They just take what they know is gonna draw so many people. And then, they're only talking to 300 radio stations, and there's 2800 country stations alone. All these other people are searching the dial.

**YOAKAM:** They're applying a statistical science to an art form. And the two—statistics and logic—has nothing to do with why he wants to sing a lyric a certain way. It's just intuition and instinct.

**NELSON:** If you go to a magic show, you don't want to see logic.

**YOAKAM:** That's it! Music is magic. As a kid, writing a song was magic. Somebody asked, do you ever chant or do yoga?

**NELSON:** That's music too. I've been humming all my life.

**YOAKAM:** I thought, yeah, that's exactly what I do. It's transcending this plane of existence. That's why the most frustrating experiences I've had in my life have been on stage, when the technical aspects start to go awry and interfere. It's what causes entertainers to react so aggressively about feedback or noise or things that blow up, because it's interrupting something that's almost akin to sex. It's like someone walking in and tapping you on the shoulder when you're in this moment: "Hey, can I ask you something?" It's not long before you want to turn around and strangle them.

**NELSON:** You don't want that thing broken. I just did a tour with the Highwaymen. In Singapore, the sound went out, and at the time it was just Johnny Cash and his guitar. But he kept singing, and the audience got quiet. It turned out to be the highlight of the evening, 'cause he captured them with just his voice in this huge building, maybe six or seven thousand people.

**MUSICIAN:** *When you strip down to the pure vibration of the voice. . .*

**NELSON:** It's like a cantor in a church.

**MUSICIAN:** *Channeling that kind of energy, or magic as you say, through to the audience—how does that experience affect your view of the world?*

**NELSON:** Well, there's a lot of responsibility when you start exchanging energy at that level. A lot of people are listening to what you're doing. It's important that you hit 'em with a bunch of positive energy.

**YOAKAM:** I'm only aware of it after the fact. I'm not conscious at the moment because I think you're compelled to be lost in it. Willie's point is that it's ultimately the goal to try and get to the untouchable, like with Johnny Cash. People respond to powerful moments like that. That's part of the lesson of the journey, that through time and experience you are given the necessary tools and wisdom to enable you to eclipse even the most heinous physical or technical distractions, and not allow that to be disturbed. But that takes time to learn.

**MUSICIAN:** *Singing is the essence of that communication. But you both ran into resistance early in your career toward your vocal style, which must have felt peculiar, at least.*

**YOAKAM:** I don't know what it must have been for him [*gesturing to Willie*] 'cause when I go back and listen to what you were doing in 1962, "Three Days" or any of them—I mean, you had to be from Mars to them! There was no way they could have figured out what you were doing with phrasing, for one.

**NELSON:** Actually, once it got past the musicians out to the people, it was okay. But for some of the musicians who couldn't count, they got lost. That's why it was always helpful for me to take my own band. Because for a long while I'd drive around and jump out, go into this club and there's a band; I'd start doing my songs and the next thing I know I'm the only one playing [*laughter*]. They're lost.

**YOAKAM:** It was a Johnny Cash moment—by default.

**NELSON:** So I knew how difficult it was gonna be for a guy who'd never heard me play or had never played with me. Sometimes I wouldn't take my guitar in—I'd wait and see who was playing in there, and if I thought the guy was gonna have a problem I'd just go up and say, "Can I borrow your guitar for this show?"

**YOAKAM:** Yeah, get the loaded gun out of his hand, man. At least take the bullets!

**NELSON:** Kill two birds with one stone.

**MUSICIAN:** *Listening to those records, like "December Day," the [*cont'd on page 74*]*



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# You Oughta be in Pictures

The first great film composers associated with the Golden Age of Hollywood were firmly in the Romantic orchestral tradition. When Dimitri Tiomkin accepted a 1954 Oscar for his score for *The High and the Mighty*, he thanked “all those who helped me win this award—Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky.” • These days, modern film score composers are more likely to thank the Beatles, Tangerine Dream, Simon & Garfunkel and MTV. • With the vagaries of a pop recording career, mid-life crises and advanced technology that favors the cut-and-paste approach of today’s music scoring business, more and more pop musicians are trying their hands at scoring. For Devo’s Mark Mothersbaugh, award-winning TV soundtracks for *Pee Wee’s Playhouse* and Nickelodeon’s *Rugrats*, film soundtracks for upcoming

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movies like *Bottle Rocket*, as well as interactive CD-ROMs, were a natural transition from a highly visual conceptual band. • “I was always influenced by elevator Muzak, TV and film soundtracks,” says Mothersbaugh, who is joined by the rest of the pioneering group—his brother Bob, Gerry Casale and his sibling Bob—in the Mutato Muziko production company. “On our first album, the song ‘Too Much Paranoia’ quoted a Burger King spot: ‘Hold the pickles/ Hold the lettuce/Double orders don’t upset us.’ One thing we learned from the ‘60s is that rebellion is obsolete.” • Was (Not Was)’ David Was also sensed a natural evolution from his role as the wacky lyricist/writer of such aural soundscapes as “Dad I’m In Jail” (used in both *Pump Up the Volume* and *Slaves of New York*) to writing commercials for Microsoft’s

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World Pacific History





Windows '96 campaign.

"I thought I'd gone from writing these social-critical diatribes meant to appeal to the conscience of my generation to hustling cars for Infiniti," he says ruefully. "Especially having been brought up with this lefty hatred of corporate culture. This was like sitting

down to eat raw sushi fatted calf. On the other hand, you can get a mighty big calf on the table if you do this shit."

Whether scoring a movie, TV show, commercial or CD-ROM, one of the hardest things for a pop musician used to being the sole auteur of his own work to accept is that he no longer has the final word on the outcome.

"The important thing to realize is that there are several different solutions to the same problem," says Grammy-winning and



**Michael Kamen:** "I try to be compliant, but I don't suffer fools gladly."

Oscar-nominated composer Michael Kamen. "I'm never opposed to trying something different. I try to be compliant, but I don't suffer fools gladly. I know there's more than one way to skin a cat, and if I can come up with two, I'll be very happy."

Adds Was: "Sometimes making music for a picture is the ultimate study in musical and creative humility. It's like being a

**Thomas Dolby:** "Interactivity. . . needs my input and ingenuity."

lyricist and having people say, 'Nobody listens to lyrics.' The point is, you could write something of spiritual, emotional or political significance. Or you could just write, 'Walk the fuckin' dinosaur,' and it doesn't matter as long as the chorus drives itself into your head through a felicitous combination of musical and verbal elements."

Even headstrong tunesmith Mark

Eitzel, former head of American Music Club, learned to compromise on his film score debut for first-time director Jeff Fines' *No Easy Way*, which he collaborated on with his onetime bandmate, pedal steel player Bruce Kaphan. "I hated having to answer to the filmmakers and boy, did they know it," he laughs. "But this has been such a learning experience for me. There was one instance where they didn't like the

lyrics of a song. And, y'know, usually, if you mention lyrics to me, I get out my AK-47. But I got this brainstorm and thought, 'They're right! These lyrics suck!' So I changed them. And even though



Peter Figen

## TOP TEN WAYS FOR POP MUSICIANS TO BREAK INTO THE SOUNDTRACK BIZ

- 1 Hang around film schools, find the most talented director and offer to put your music to his movie. The UCLA Graduate Film Students Program approached Warner Bros. for someone to score first-time director Jeff Fines' *No Easy Way*, and ended up with American Music Club's Mark Eitzel.
- 2 Take a movie by a director you'd like to work with and create your own score for it. When Robert Rodriguez first asked Los Lobos to do the score for his movie *Desperado*, he suggested they get a tape of his first film, *El Mariachi*, and put their own music to it as an exercise.
- 3 Find out who the leading film and video editors are and send them your music. Editors often put their own "temp" music track on films they're working on to liven up the cuts and sometimes they and the directors become so enamored of it, they end up using the music as the final score.
- 4 Learn how to work on a computer. We've come a long way from the first synthesized movie soundtracks, but now everybody is using a Quadra, a PowerMac and MIDI sequencers. Get used to it.
- 5 Let your publisher, ASCAP or BMI know you are interested in film work. Rights agencies are in touch with the film community and know if a movie is coming up that is looking for someone to do a soundtrack.
- 6 Establish a distinct musical identity, but be prepared to abandon it in favor of a diverse vocabulary. Sound like yourself. Artists like Hispanic-American Los Lobos and Irish-American Seamus Egan originally broke into films of very specific ethnic genres but have managed to convince directors they can either work outside that style or make the style work apart from its normal connotations.
- 7 Be able to work as part of a team and accept direction. Your typical modern pop artiste is used to being his own boss, answering to no one and having absolute creative freedom. In movie, TV or commercial soundtrack work, the musician must answer to a director, a producer or a client.
- 8 You must communicate with people who know nothing about music. Says Lobos' Steve Berlin, "You have to forge a new language to reach that common ground."
- 9 Deadlines, deadlines, deadlines. A rock star can work on a record for as long as he wants. Soundtrack and score composers are working on strict timetables.
- 10 And if all that fails, according to David Was, there's always the old-fashioned Hollywood way: "Bang a producer's secretary or get out the family tree and prove you're distantly related to Steven Spielberg."





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they didn't use the song, it was great for me to know I could change the motherfucker. It's a good thing to be challenged.

"The problem with most bands trying to do sound-track work is they don't understand the professional side of it," adds Mark Isham, composer of evocative soundtracks for *A River Runs Through It* and *The Moderns*. "Stuff like finishing on time, synchronization and getting the music to really fit the picture. You can't just say you're not inspired or you don't have the cue. You have to stay up all night to finish it if that's what it takes because tomorrow everybody's coming to the studio to hear what you've done."

Sometimes that so-called "blank creative slate" given recording artists isn't all it's cracked up to be, either. Says Was: "I've often said songwriting's like strapping a lightning rod on your head, going out and looking for lightning. Sometimes it's



almost a relief to have someone say, 'Can you do this for me?' And give you parameters so you're just not having to plumb

**David Was: "You could write 'walk the fuckin' dinosaur' as long as the chorus drives itself into your head."**

your own soul everyday."

Most pop musicians turned soundtrack composers, though, claim the different hats they must wear make them better artists. "My professionalism as a composer vastly improved," insists Isham. "I noticed

a distinct difference in my ability to sit down and produce an album's worth of material as a recording artist. It was like I was hiring myself. I did it on time, on budget, with very little vacillation from the initial concept."

Mark Eitzel points to his use of outside musicians like the Turtle String Quartet on the *No Easy Way* soundtrack as broadening his experience as a recording artist. "I've always been so non-musical in my approach," he says. "I used to think music was secondary to the emotion you're trying to evoke. But it's funny how I now see a certain level of musicality as a beautiful thing. I'm definitely at my computer more. I also really like synthesizers now and I never did before. And I'm sold on hiring real string quartets."

The music of Seamus Egan, the 26-year-old Irish prodigy who plays banjo, mandolin, tin whistle, flute, banjo, the uilleann



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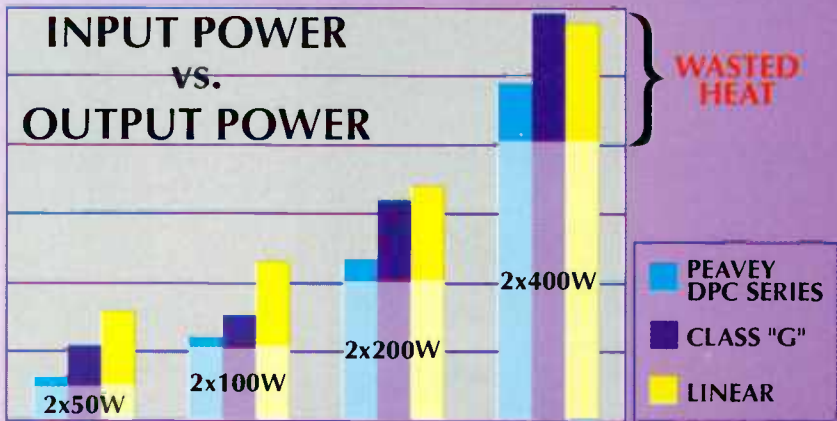
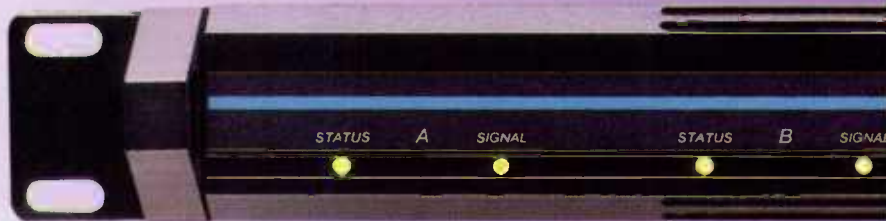
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pipes and the bodhran, became the score to the sleeper indie hit *The Brothers McMullen* quite by accident. When the car

topher Franke, whose group practically invented the electronic music soundtrack in a break with past tradition, also tries to

Having a niche at first is very important. But leaving it at the right moment is just as important. Just like it is in all art."

Thomas Dolby is another musician who pioneered electronics, "but I kinda grew out of synthesized music a decade ago," he admits. "It was a great challenge

**Seamus Egan: "It's nice that people can look to Irish instruments**

he was touring in **without being blinded by the** maintain a fresh broke down a couple of **traditional element."** approach. "I went back years ago and he was to using traditional

forced to stay at a friend of a friend's house in Rhode Island, he left a cassette of his '90 Shanachie album *A Week in January* as a token of gratitude. It just so happened the family's son was working as a technician on *The Brothers McMullen*. He played it for director Ed Burns, who eventually used Egan's traditional instrumentation to conjure an eternal, fairy-tale mood.

Egan had previously done soundtracks for the PBS series *Out of Ireland*, and more recently, Tim Robbins' *Dead Man Walking*. "It was gratifying to play traditional Irish instruments in a different sort of context in *Dead Man Walking*," he says. "More and more, this Irish music is showing how malleable it can be."

Erstwhile Tangerine Dreamer Chris-

to maintain a fresh approach. "I went back to using traditional instruments, but to make them sound fresh, I tried to combine them with technology." Franke has his own ensemble back in Germany, the Berlin Symphonic Orchestra, which he records for his soundtrack work by using a fiber-optic connection through ISDN digital phone lines.

"The important thing is to find your own style and stay within it. But as soon as you have that down, you have to leave it again. Otherwise, people won't believe you can do anything else. Timing is important.



for me to make records entirely on my own using these new machines. But now, there are a million other people doing it. On the other hand, there is a new uncharted territory in the area of interactivity. That's what interests me now. But I haven't completely given up conventional ways of writing and recording music. I can see myself in a couple of years in a smoky club, playing an acoustic set on piano of my more romantic songs."

Too old to rock 'n' roll, too young to die? [cont'd on page 86]

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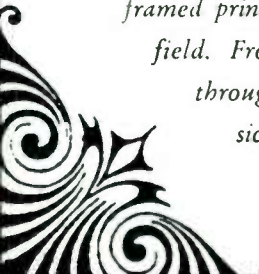
## IN THE

by **Robert L. Doerschuk**

photograph by

**Mick Rock**

# ASA



*Late autumn in Surrey, England. Gray sunlight illuminates the afternoon mist. An empty swimming pool, incongruous in this landscape of trees, ponds and horsepaths, cuts a rude gash into green loam. Skies are overcast; clouds rush toward the east, toward the cold horizon, racing the darkness. † This is the picture seen through the windows of Jacob's Studio, near the village of Farnham. We're in a spacious room, with high beamed ceilings. To our right is the breakfast chamber, where scones grow stale and coffee cools below framed prints of schoolboys on a soccer field. From our left, music booms through the wall—a demonic harpsichord figure, repeated, repeated again, and again.*

**Spirit**  
**Tripping with**  
**Tori Amos**

**B**ehind us is a Bösendorfer grand piano, big as a battleship, black as velvet. Next to it, fragile by comparison, is a harpsichord. A single bench sits between them, empty.

Tori Amos is listening. She's a foot away, and she's somewhere else, in the music. Or even further away, in the place where the music was conceived, a place whose spirits hover and visit, not always at the most convenient moment.

After a few seconds, she's gone, past the Bösendorfer, out the door, up the steps to the right, and into the control room. The sound here is clear and loud—supernaturally loud for a harpsichord. There's no drawing room delicacy as we hear Tori tearing through "Blood Roses": Cranked through twin Genelec monitors, the instrument snarls and sneers, reflecting the primal passions of the vocal.

"When chickens get a taste of your meat, when he sucks you deep, sometimes you're nothing but meat." We've come a long way from Scarlatti, baby.

Engineers Mark Hawley and Marcel Van Limbeek stoically man the Neve faders. Their concentration is remarkable, considering Amos's turbulence. She's anchored herself, one foot up and one foot back, like Robert Plant leaning into Zeppelin's roar, rocking back and forth, eyes closed. Momentarily she sinks into a nearby chair, but then she rockets back

**"I was communicating with other essences from the beginning."** up, shouting through the din for this tweak, that fix. One hand whips out to yank Hawley's pony tail; she wants what she wants now. Without a blink, Hawley nudges a fader, and Tori claps with delight.

"Haulin' 'er in," she beams, her right hand winding an imaginary fisherman's reel. "We're having tuna for dinner."

The changes that Hawley and Van Limbeek make in this mixdown session for "Blood Roses" are matters of technique. In this case, the amount and type of reverb on the vocal is the issue. But Amos, making her production debut on her third album, *Boys for Pele*, isn't thinking in terms of technique. She knows her way around a mixer, and her ears are as big as

any in the business. Still, she's way past technique at this point—in the way she plays, like Landowska being exorcised; in the wild *Sprechstimme* and abandon of her vocals; and in her writing, which is more like channeling.

the bases with one more hit. This is a time when I totally stay out of the way, because I'm not useful until the bases-are-loaded situation. Let's be fair: Right now, we're only dealing with harpsichord/vocal, or piano/Marshall, or piano/Leslie.



In mixdown, she's a terror. And, most of the time, she's right. By the end of the session, with dinnertime long past, Tori has finally completed several hours' worth of microscopic nudges on the reverb. And damned if it doesn't sound a hell of a lot better than it did that afternoon, when we watched her drift into the call of the music, the prickly filigree of "Blood Roses" . . .



**S**omething just happened. Your attention wandered. What's going on?

[Long pause, listening. Then, suddenly. . .] What happens is, the guys get it to a point where they think they've got the bases loaded. We usually have the bases loaded, but then the guy on second decides to do something stupid, so then we have to load

We're not even in the big tracks, the involved arrangements. But one little thing can completely change who she [the character in "Blood Roses"] is. So I'll sit there and go, "This woman is five years younger than the woman who's singing this song. The woman who's five years younger does not know this song. She cannot sing it."

*So you're dealing with issues this fundamental even in the mix?*

I'm talking about a quarter of a dB on the reverb. It's not me: *She* has got me by the fucking throat right now. Really, I'm just translating. Once I accepted that, that this isn't really about me, it's just about tapping into different sides of Woman. Then I can take on these parts. I don't necessarily think they're parts of me. I'm a part of that, but it's just part of this . . . this . . . *being*. That's what my life is. These beings . . . I don't know what a shrink would call me. I don't want to know. But they come in and out, these

Chuck Pullen/Starfile





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fragments. Like, I couldn't record "Blood Roses" for days. Technically, I could play it. But she had not come. A lot of times, it's what's happening around me, for me to get to that stage. It's who I run into, the phone call that comes. Then it's like [*snaps fingers*]. That's why we live here, on location, because it's like, "She's here. Let's go."

*How would you describe the technical challenge of capturing these nuances?*

Well, the dynamics of this piece are very extreme, and I have to get it on tape without squashing things too much—especially the harpsichord, which they *did* squash. But what it is is, *they harnessed her*. Just like they—quote, unquote—"had to do." I *know* when we've lost a frequency of her. The "c" word is not "cunt" these days for me—it's "compression." That's what I told them: When you have a woman coming out of a

church, and she's yelling and expressing something, and she's *screaming*, you do not try to make that okay. You get in trouble when you try to trim the edges. But at the same time, she's all over the road. I was *ramming* into that Neumann. I'm sorry, but that mike was a fucking fried egg. We kept changing the reverb to

**"The 'C' word is not 'cunt'—it's compression."**

make her a plate [reverb] instead of a room. She kept telling me, in my ear, "Get me a plate." Then the plate worked.

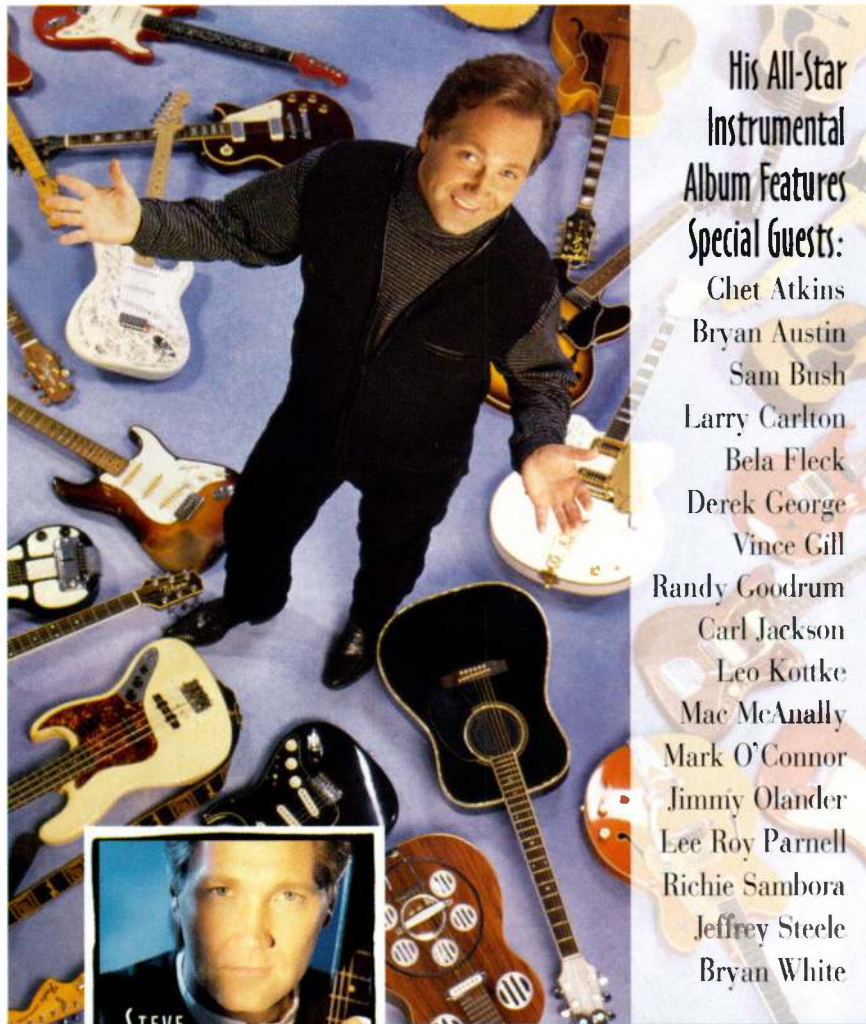
The problem with the plate, though, was that we kicked it up half a dB in parts because that's what's telling a story. Mark said to me, "Yeah, I like the plate, but it's not sitting in the track the whole time." There are times when she's removed, in another room from the track. So it's about kicking that reverb up beneath the plate reverb. And it's changing everything.

*There's a tension in the process between the purity of the character's essence and the mechanics of recording.*

Well, I want to be part of the team in that mix room, and I know that I have something to offer. Before, I would be standing on top of mix desks, going, "A quarter of a dB! Get me a quarter!" They'd say it doesn't matter, and I'm like, "That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Why can you make it happen, then? If it doesn't matter, then why does the increment even exist?" But at this stage, I'm tapping into her spirit. That girl is existing [*snaps finger*] now. The "Horses" girl. . . . You'll hear what we do with the mix on "Horses." I'll tell you that story, but she's not here right now. . . . [*Very long silence.*] It's funny how anything can change her personality, so that you almost feel, "God, there's no compassion in her."

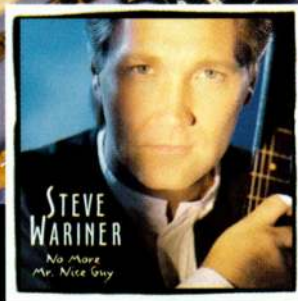
*A big part of your job must be to nurture that concept in the minds of technicians who are used to hearing music as something more tangible.*

I see it as Formula One racing. They're serious car racers in there, but I built the car, so I know what it can do. I'm trying to translate it. They know that, and they're trying to do the same. We all want the same thing. What's the



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point of capturing what's getting me off today because I had greasy eggs this morning? I want to *hear* her. I want to capture the frequency. When you hear "Beauty Queen," you are hearing this girl in that moment: She's standing in that bathroom, watching those girls put on that lipstick. I don't want us to be talking to her 15 minutes later about what she realized in that bathroom. I want her to go back to that moment in the bathroom: It's white. It's that funny fluorescent light. It's that tile, with the green crud in between. It's those old toilets with the beautiful handles. You can hear the sound of the water dripping. Time doesn't exist in that moment. I wanted you to feel that kind of swimming, where you're almost coming back from 15 feet under water, and you're coming up, and you're almost up. That's what it's like in that bathroom, when you're looking and you're realizing what's really going on at your table. That's what I want to catch. This is not a confident girl. You are not at acceptance level. You are in her brain, getting triggered. The little windshield wipers are going, and you're starting to see it from the other side.

*You want to bring that moment . . .*

**"I want to explore the dark side of Woman."**

*that?*

Well, the one thing I know is the smell they're giving me. I don't hear anybody telling me anything; they're giving me pictures. I love it when I have this moment, 'cause she's with me now. The energy I feel rushing through my body is different than when I play live. That's adrenaline, a response to the outside; this is "come inside." It's like I've got my little plug, and she's let me plug into her. That whole thing of is it inside or is it outside? She's in me, and I'm in her. There are times when her particular volume is down and another volume is increased. But some of the others are not present: They're sleeping, or they're having tea. . . It's interesting that "Horses" and "Zebra" are coming out of this conversation around "Blood Roses." "Horses" opens up "Blood Roses," so there is an intertwining.

*Was it written that way?*

Actually, "Blood Roses" was written to

. . . *always* onto the tape. Every time you hear it, that girl is in the bathroom, putting on that lipstick. *Every* time.

*How do you do*

be the first song on *Pele*. I didn't finish it until I walked in to record it.

*Is there something about this song that's harder to get to where you want it?*

Oh, yeah. "Zebra" gets invited to all the parties. "Blood Roses" doesn't get invited out a lot. She's all right about that. She's very aware of a thing that I haven't dealt with: faithful anger. Anger expressed faithfully. I think she's come to visit me to explore that side that I've blocked away. There's a real stigma that gets put out on a woman's anger. You become a madwoman, instead of, "I'm very loose about this moment, and you have just really pissed me off." I'm trying to use compassion—passion coming into its fullest—so that I can explore these "dark sides" of Woman: the anger, that power, the destruction, the manipulation, the parts that lead to a label of "hysterical" for women, to bring them into balance, the balance of destruction and creation.



**Hawley and Van Limbeek**

are sharing a room at Jacob's Studio during the mixdown period. It's an attic, really, with a couple of mattresses on the wooden floor beneath a sloping roof; a small window overlooks bucolic surroundings. Everyone on the *Pele* session refers to this garret as "the dorm room."

After hours of knob twiddling and pony tail pulling, Tori and her team give their mixes their toughest test. With DAT in hand, she leads the way up to the dorm room and pops the tape into a machine. They flop onto a mattress as the music plays through tiny speakers on severe, Shaker-style wooden cabinets, with Marcel and Mark in attentive repose, Tori rocking back and forth, stopping frequently to whisper some urgent observation into their ears. More often than not, they grab the tape and head back to the studio for another round of tweaks.

Both guys have been with Tori since her *Under the Pink* tour. Mark was, in fact, a specialist in live sound; his credits include tours with Curve and the



Chuck Pullen/Starfile



Beautiful South in the U.K. He had heard and admired the *Pink* album, so when word went out that Tori was looking for a road crew, he was among the first to apply.

It was Mark who came up with the idea of building an acoustic box around the piano when Tori recorded basic tracks at an Irish church at Delgany, County Wicklow. "*Under the Pink* was done in Tori's room, as far as we know," Van Limbeek explains. "To avoid crosstalk from the vocals to the piano mikes and the other way around, they covered the piano with blankets. Mark and I could tell this immediately, because we'd been working with her on the road for a year and the sound of each room had such a great effect on the piano—even if you had your head under the lid. You'd think that there's so much direct sound that the room wouldn't matter that much. As it turned out, that's not true at all."

**"I don't know what a shrink would call me. I don't want to know."**

With the box separating the live piano and vocal tracks, crosstalk was not a problem, and room ambience wasn't compromised. The piano was close-miked with two Neumann U87s, positioned near each other under the raised lid, pointing outward toward the bass and treble ranges. Brüel & Kjaer omnidirectional ambient mikes added depth from about halfway toward the back of the church at the critical distance, which Van Limbeek defines as "the distance from the microphone to the piano where the amount of reflected sound is equal to the amount of direct sound." At the very back, where the sound was most diffuse, they positioned other Neumanns. Everything was recorded onto a Sony digital four-track; once tracks were filled, they were digitally bounced to a Tascam DA-88 for storage, opening up more free space on the DAT.

Everyone involved describes the trio's working relationship as ideal, though living at close quarters doesn't exactly encourage mutual idealization. "I won't say Mark is arrogant," Tori says (or doesn't say). "But

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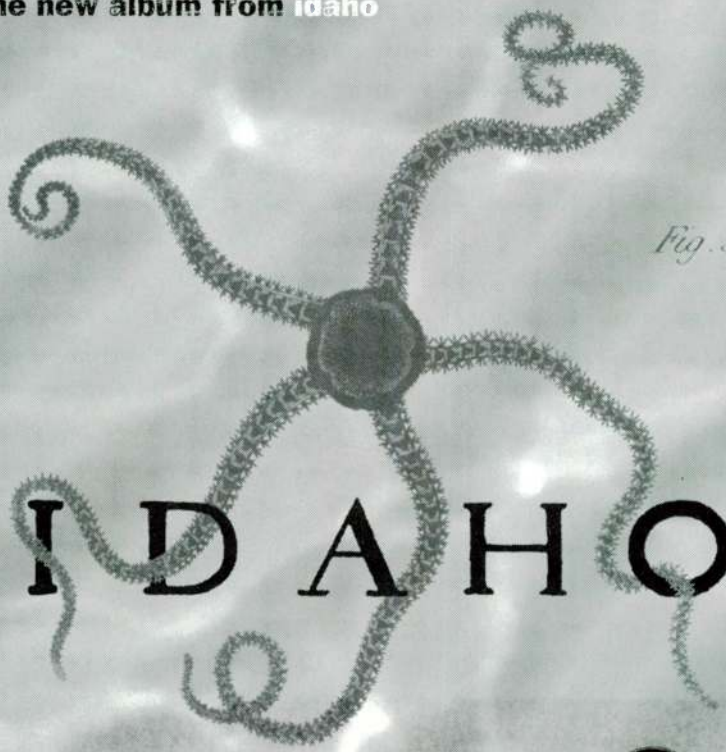
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## three sheets to the wind the new album from idaho



*Fig. 3.*

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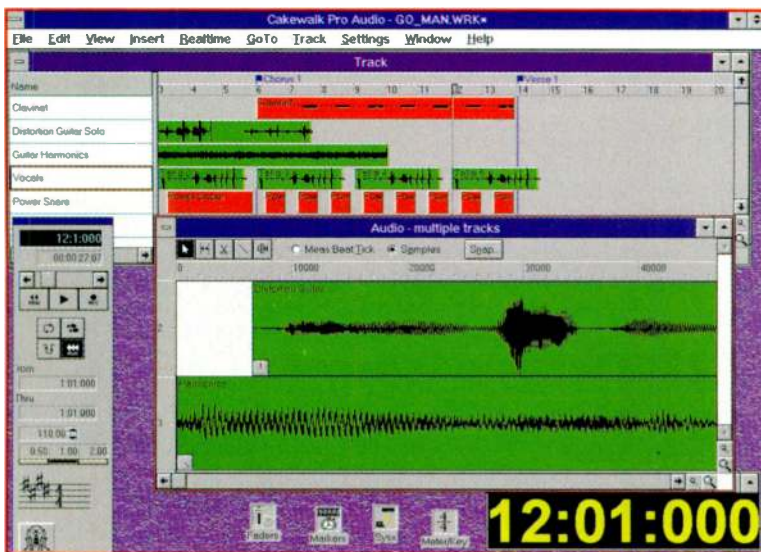
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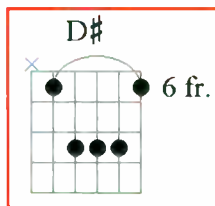
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he's very committed to his beliefs, and he just kept stating and restating his approach. John [Witherspoon, Tori's assistant] would come back with, 'Well, this other engineer suggested. . . ,' and Mark would just say, 'No, *this* is the approach.'

"Mark and I in a room together are very volatile; that's what makes it exciting. Mark knows my pictures: He knows when I say, 'Girl in a bathroom,' that 'Beauty Queen' is the front for 'Horses.' He's trying to translate what a bathroom is. He'll scratch his head, look at Marcel, and come up with another element. He was a prodigy drummer as a four-year-old, so he comes at this as a musician first and plays the board like it was another instrument. But Marcel is a physicist. His world is my belief in something you cannot tell me exists. That's what gets him off. Still, Marcel thinks I'm a bit of a kook."



**N**ew York now, in the brisk freeze of early winter. The only fields in sight are iced over in Central Park; everywhere else, from our vantage point in Tori's suite, nature seems to have packed up and abandoned us. With the album finished and ready for release, Tori seems calmer here, above the muffled racket of civilization. Serenity, though, may be just another visitor, even less of a presence than those who spook songs out of her and dance amidst the DATs and detritus of recording.

*Your beginnings as a musician were fairly conventional. At what point did you become aware that something different was going on?*

When I was very little. My career as a musician was conventional when I got to the clubs, but it's what preceded it that fights convention. I was playing before I could talk, so I didn't have the same judgment when you learn music. I was playing without anybody's judgment, without anybody's idea of what was good or bad. I just played anything I could hear. It's no different from a little child who learns bilingually. It was very similar for me, because the music was so complex

that it wasn't like one language. I learned rhythm, tone, phrasing, all those things, from Bartók to Mozart to *Sgt. Pepper* to Gershwin, through the ear as a very wee lassie, at a very instinctual level.

*But many musicians don't materialize characters as you do. At what point did some other character say, "Hey, I need you to materialize me through music"?*

From the beginning. I was communicating with other essences. It was almost

become a wall. This was mostly relationships with different men. They were all just showing me different parts of myself that were dependent. Each man in my life represented a need that I wasn't fulfilling for myself.

*When you're an artist and you're with someone who is artistic, there's almost an invitation to eventual breakdown.*

Yes. I think on some level, that these men weren't used to being muses. Yet I



Jane/Starfile

like I had a window to communicate through music. They all carried a piece of me in them; we're separate, but we're whole. . . . But eventually, with the loss of the relationship I was in, it occurred to me: "What if I couldn't do this?" Eric [Rosse, Amos's former producer and lover] knows all this. He knows how intertwined we were, or I thought we were. Sometimes I feel like I really shouldn't talk about Eric, yet there's no way around not giving him a nod here and there because he so affected my life at so many levels. The separation was the cliff I jumped off. When that happened, that was the catapult of this record. Then many other things happened, all at once. I'm not saying, "When it rains, it pours." It's more than just one building fell down in the earthquake. It's all around you. In a lot of my relationships, whether friends or mentors or loves or parents, so many things started to

was never their muse, because I wonder if they thought I was going to critique their work. The one thing that any man I've been involved with knows is that I know rhythm and tone—yet I just want to go with Oreo cookies and peanut butter and ice cream and garlic; I just want to have a party! That's always been, shall we say, in my weave. The loose thread has been that the musician in me is so ready to play and do a free-for-all, still knowing what felt right or what didn't feel right, the more I developed my music. I had boundaries as a musician, and yet I didn't need boundaries, because I just know we're not going to F#. It's just not

**"I had separated them from birth: the girl from the musician."**

# In Tune With Tori: Old Twists in Harpsichord Voicing

Piano technicians know the secret of good tuning: temperament. No, not being in a good mood while tightening the strings—temperament is how tuners resolve the mathematical impossibilities in reconciling the perfect octave with the natural perfect fifths between the perfect fourth and the major third. Many solutions to this problem have been devised, some more effective for piano than, let's say, harpsichord. And that is the crux of the issue for Tori Amos, who wanted to play piano and harpsichord simultaneously on *Boys for Pele*.

"The harpsichord comes to life in other temperaments," says keyboard technician Tania Staite, who tackled the challenge for Amos. "So every week we tried different

tunings. I had to tune the harpsichord as an average, shifting the pitch of C very slightly in order that everything was midway between notes of equal temperament, rather than sticking C [*i.e.*, the C scale] in tune, which would have made some notes vastly out of tune. The idea of using other temperaments is that you end up with a lot more pure fourths and pure fifths, rather than the way everything is equally out of tune in equal temperament. The reverse side is that in certain keys you end up with the most horrific beat rates on a couple of fourths and fifths.

"We used four temperaments in the end, the earliest of which was the Werkmeister III, which dates from 1691. The instrument Tori used was made in

Hamburg by Christian Zell as a copy of an instrument dating from 1728; Werkmeister being German, it was probably the temperament that the instrument was played in from its origins. Chronologically, the next temperament was developed by Vallotti (c. 1754). Then we went on to the Kirnberger, devised by a pupil of Bach around 1779. The latest temperament, which Tori used on 'Caught a Lite Sneeze,' is by Thomas Young in 1800."

Judging by the results on *Boys for Pele*, the impact of these alternate tunings is subtle, if not subliminal. Says Staite, "I love the album, although except for 'Caught a Lite Sneeze,' for the life of me I can't remember which tunings she used for which songs."—Keith Powers

gonna happen. But as a woman—and I have to bring this up, because this is where the content of the work comes from—I didn't have this access that I had as a musician. I had separated them from birth: the girl from the musician. For the most part, *Pele* is about my response. The women really held the space for me to dive into on this one. My women friends knew that only I could go after this. They would be dragging me back by my hair, going, "Hello? Are you aware of what you just did to yourself?" And I'm sitting here with veins ripped open, licking a little blood from my chin, going, "No!"

*When did they ask you that question?*

When they saw me during this period of time. Some of them would have to converse with the musician in order to talk with the woman. It's almost like I've developed this compositional understanding—and very little else. The musician has had more access than anybody to the different sides, and yet sometimes she's not always completely interested in communicating with the other side. Maybe they'll exchange phone numbers [*laughs*]. And so the men I've pulled into my life are reflections of pieces of myself. Some were obviously bigger pieces than others: an

eight-year relationship is a huge chunk of being. The whole record, though, is a gift to myself. No, let me rephrase that: What's been given by these songs is a gift to me.

*Did any of these songs frighten you as you wrote them?*

"Professional Widow." "Blood Roses." *Both of those are harpsichord songs.*

That was instinctive. Sometimes I know I have to do something, and then a little later I understand why. But "Mohammed My Friend" surprised me too. I was singing in Christmas services [in '94]; I was with my parents. I was watching the Nativity, and after a while I said to myself, "Wait a minute. There's something wrong here." We were singing "Away in a Manger." [*Amos sings the first two bars of "Away in a Manger," then sings the opening line to "Mohammed My Friend," with the identical first three notes.*] I kept getting more and more into the perfect little love with the lullaby of "Away in a Manger." I started to get husky in the throat. I started to wonder who, with everybody speaking of the baby Jesus, should come up to the cradle. And I found that, of all people, I wanted to have a chat about it with Mohammed, because the Prophet is the one who supposedly knows the Law.

So I decided that they needed to talk about the Law—the Law of the Feminine that had been castrated with the birth of Christ. I believe that Magdalene was the Savior's bride, the High Priestess. And that Magdalene was not a blueprint for women—meaning that this was a woman who was honored as the sacred bride, not a virgin. We're talking about a Woman. We have a Virgin matrix, but they needed the Woman blueprint: the compassion/passion, wisdom, wholeness. But this blueprint was not a structure that one could relate to Woman—*until now*. Think about it. It's just been uncovered in the past twenty-some years. Even though women have been given power to be heads of corporations, we're talking about not just power within the hierarchy but access to the different fragments that make up the whole of Woman.

*Do many of your listeners understand what you're getting at with these lyrical references?*

Well, sometimes I kind of chuckle to myself when I hear some girl saying, "Who cares about Mary Magdalene? That's done and over with." And I'll watch her as she needs to seduce the men in the room and play the little girl, do the pedophile dance, do the whole



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thing that girls have done for centuries to get power from the outside instead of power from the inside. Yet so many of these girls will come to me with tears in their eyes and scratches all over their wrists from self-mutilation, and I'll say, "I actually do understand the obsession to be difficult." I mean, I was in absolute horror that I allowed myself to be raped. "Blood Roses" is the on-the-knees version of that, the ripped-open

veins and the blood dripping, going, "Why is it my fault now?" Just trying to negotiate on any level—"Mr. St. John, just bring your son" [from "Caught a Lite Sneeze"]. You know you will not gain strength from this path. You know you will not get peace from this path. But you are addicted and on this path. You just know you need energy from an outside source because you don't know how to access it for yourself. Now,

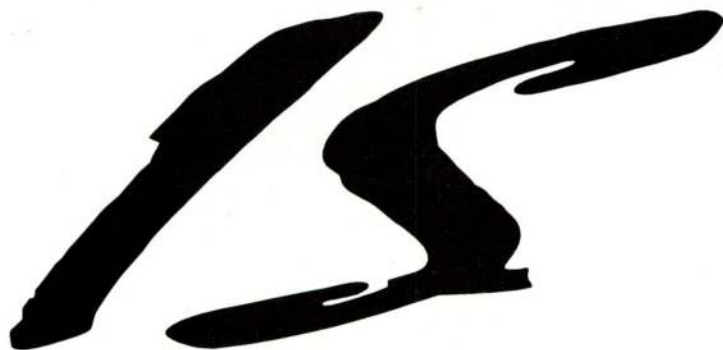
there's some energy that I did know how to access, and men would be drawn to me for that.

*What did "Professional Widow" mean to you?*

As I got to know "Widow," I began to really adore her candor. She was so cut off from so many other parts of being, but here she is, deliciously convincing him [*i.e.*, the black widow spider's doomed male mate] to kill himself so she doesn't have to leave fingerprints on his body. She'll make sure he showers before this all begins. She's ready to extract what she wants from him, the current that she wants, and the current won't be what she wants until he's dead. Whatever his addiction is, she's convincing him that Mother Mary will supply it.

*What other songs stand out for you?*

There's one called "Agent Orange." Naturally, if we're talking about the boy/girl matrix, there's going to be a war zone at some point in our story. It's kind of been a war zone from early on in the record. As the record goes on—and on and on and on [*laughs*—the vulnerability starts coming. Then you start sleeping with one of the lieutenants from the other side because you ended up at a country village and you forgot that you were on different sides. You know how it is when war begins: The strangest, craziest things begin to happen. That's when we start moving into something else with that break on the record after "Jupiter," with "Amsterdam," with "Talula." Now we're in the South—that whole smell and taste. And we go into "Agent Orange." If we're gonna have war, we have to bring warfare in. I decided to make him a bodybuilder because that memory has to transmute also—the skin. To become like tango, the idea of Tang, or the idea of Orangina, an Orange muscle secret agent who we love. . . . That song, "Agent Orange," is the one o'clock cabaret moment, where you've had a couple of Amarettos on the rocks, and there's just a sadness. But you know that sadness when you know your relationship is over and you're still alive? You know you're not dead. You've got all your body parts. You're all there. You've got a date. He's got a new love. [*Long dreamy pause.*] And you go on with it. ♪



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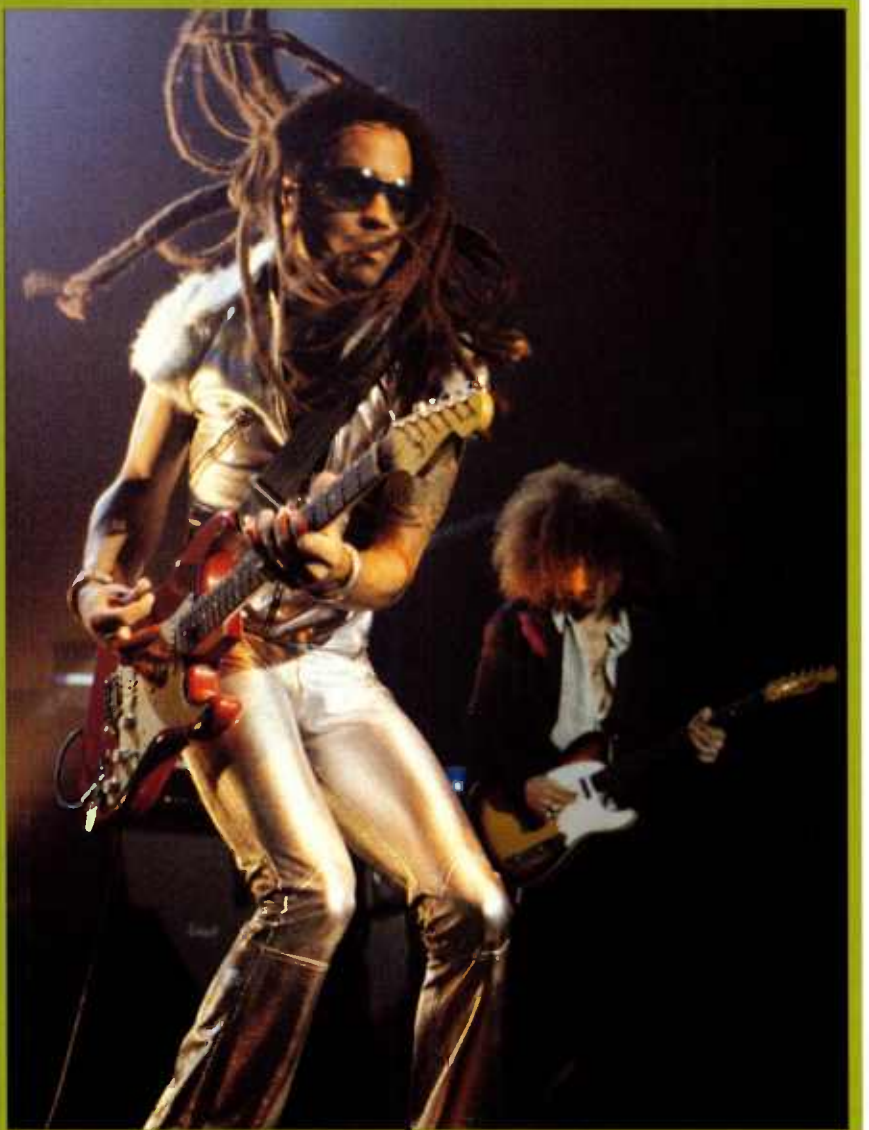
## lenny kravitz

**T**his scene may or may not have really transpired. *Lenny Kravitz*: “Bones, we’ve got to get that plush, studio raw sound when we play live.”

*Bones*: “Damn it Lenny, I’m a simple country soundman, not a magician.”

Which gives you some idea of how the traveling Lenny Kravitz circus operates. After the release of each Kravitz album the sound team gets together, tries to figure out what the hell Lenny did on the album and then how to translate that to the live set. For an artist renowned for recording tracks in different rooms, on different days with different microphones, this could be a problem. According to soundman Tom Edmonds (his nickname really is Bones), “What Lenny does live is play with the instrumentation and arrangements a little bit, but we try to capture the rawness.”

For both Lenny and Edmonds it all starts with the drum kit, so that’s where they do the most experimentation. Says Lenny, “We’ve got to wind the drums up to get them more bombastic.” During the European and Japanese legs of this tour the duo put drummer Cindy Blackman in a Plexiglas cone so that they could mike the drums from four to five feet away. The Maxwell Smart ap- [cont’d on page 103]



Jay Blakesberg





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Amps: Marshall 50-watt and 100-watt (purple and red) heads, Park 50-watt head, Mitchless D/C-30 crumbo, two blackface Fender Twins, two blackface Fender Supers, two Fender Wood Delivers. Cabinets: four Marshall 1950 TV 4X12s. Effects: Boss SE-70 multi-effects and OC-2 octave pedal, Prescription Electronics Yarbbox, and Clean Octave Blend Banez Tube Screamer, Electro-Harmonix Soul Preacher and Electric Mistress, MXR Phase 100, Fender reverb, Custom Audio Electronics Super Tremolo, Amp Selector and RS-10 MIDI foot controller.

Misc: Otari MA050 tape machine (for delay).

### Strings: D'Addario

Graig Ross: Guitars: Epiphone Casino, Gibson J200 acoustic, Gibson 6/12 double-neck, Guild ST, three Gibson Les Pauls ('93 flame, '91 gold and '55 black), Gibson cream SG, Gretsch Tenorlessie, Fender white and sunburst Strats ('65 and '94), Fender red and white Telecasters ('65 and '94), Gibson '58 Les Paul Special TV, Guild D-35 acoustic.

Amps: two Fender Dual Showmen, two Fender tweed Tremolux combos, Fender Super Champ, two Tolek Works MV-942s, three Marshall 50-watt Plexiglas heads, Boss MA-1 Mascot, Magnatone Starlet. Cabinets: Fender 2X15, four Marshall 1960 TV cabinets.

Effects: Fender spring reverb, Boss CE-1 Chorus Ensemble, CH-1 Super Chorus, and DB-3 digital delay, Custom Audio Electronics Amp Selector, Custom Amp Splitter and RS-10 MIDI foot controller, Dallas Arbiter Fuzz Face, Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Electric Mistress, Black Finger and Soul Preacher, Danez TS-3 Tube Screamer, Maestro FZ-1A and FZ-1B Fuzz Tones, Maestro PS-1A Phase Shifter, Midman 1X4 thru box,

MXR Blue Box, Distortion Plus, Dynacomp and Phase 90, DigTech PMC-10 MIDI foot controller, Dunlop Crybaby and Rotowheel, tube Echeplex, Ernie Ball volume pedal, Rapoo AB-100 A/B box, Sho-Bud volume pedal, Univox Univibe, two Vox wahwah pedals, Whirlwind A/B Box, AMG BX 10/11 spring reverb.

Misc: Otari MA050 tape machine (for delay).  
Strings: D'Addario

George Lakis: Keyboards: Two Minimoogs, Wurliar 200 and 140 electric pianos, PATAR studio and, Roland PC-200, Emu Emix II, Digital Music MX8, Roland FP-1, Electro Music Leslie 147 TREM II, Hammond 100 CK0-1 organ, Hohner Clavinet, ARP String Ensemble, Hohner piano pickup, Kuzwell MicroPiano module, Kawaga Zip Drive, Yamaha MS107, Schubert Piano Mixer, Emu ESI-32, Furman AR117 voltage regulator.

Effects: Boss PN-2 tremolo/pan, Boss NS-1, Ernie Ball volume pedal, Dunlop Crybaby wah.

Amps: '67 Fender Twin Reverb, Fender Pro Reverb, Roland PC-150.

Jack Daley: Basses: '73 [continued on page 109]

# the rentals

**W**hether playing live or recording, Matt Sharp, the Rentals' lead singer, bassist and main mastermind, applies one clear musical aesthetic: "I always try to keep everything basic." For this six-piece band of retro futurists, Sharp's approach spans the gamut from attire (drab and utilitarian) to setup.

"Everything's cut and dried," explains bespectacled guitarist Rod Cervera, who doesn't even use a stage tuner. "Keyboards going right to an amp. Guitars going right to an amp. Everything maybe has one pedal, and there's no chorus or flanging on any of those effects."

"Or any of that stuff these whiz-bang guitar players have these days," adds Sharp.

Not too many bands travel with three Moogs either, but these keyboards are essential to the Rentals' vintage-new-wave-by-way-of-*A-Clockwork-Orange*



vibe. "They're all Moog Sources," Sharp specifies. "A lot of people think we use Minimoogs, but that's incorrect. We own four—one's a backup, because they break down occasionally."

Vocalist and novice keys player Cherielynn Westrich uses one Source to double up on Sharp's basslines. Jim Richards uses his Source to sculpt

melodies, while the harmonies and mellower lines are layered on by second vocalist Maya Rudolph. In addition, Richards uses the string sound of Sharp's ARP Omni to fill the gap left by the absence of that dog's Petra Haden, who played violin on the Rentals album. To replicate Haden's multitracked sound live, says Sharp, "we would have had to take

Jay Blakesberg



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**ALESIS**

## The Rentals

**M**att Sharp. Bass: Fender Precision. Strings: GHS Heavy (.115). Pick: Ernie Ball (.80). Effects: SovTek Big Muff 2. Amplification: Gallien-Krueger 800, Ampeg SVT cabinet. Matt's Boss Dr. Pad feeds into a Boss DS-1 distortion pedal.

Rod Cervera. Guitars: Fender Jazzmaster, Gibson Flying V, Fender Mustang. Strings: Ernie Ball Regular Slinkys (.010). Picks: Dunlop Medium (.66). Effects: SovTek Big Muff 2. Amplification: Ampeg V-4. Strings: Ernie Ball Regular Slinkys.

Jim Richards. Keyboards: Moog Source, ARP Omni. Amplification: Polytone Teenie Brute, Kustom cabinet.

Cherilynn Westrich. Keyboards: Moog Source. Amplification: Orange Matamp, Yamaha cabinet.

Maya Rudolph. Keyboards: Moog Source. Amplification: Ampeg V-22, Kustom cabinet.

Mike Fletcher. Drums: Ludwig Vistalites, w/ 14"x4" snare, 13" rack tom, 16" floor tom, 22" kick & Drum Workshop bass pedal. Heads: Remo, w/ coated white Ambassador for snare,

clear Ambassadors for rack & floor toms, 22" CS Black Dot head for bass drum. Cymbals: Zildjian, w/14" A custom hi-hats, 18" AA custom crash, 18" A custom crash, 18" A custom ride, 16" A custom China type. Tama hi-hat stands, cymbal stands & booms. Sticks: Vic Firth Anton Fig model.

Microphones. Vocals: Audix OM-7. Guitar & bass: Sennheiser MD-421. Drums: Shure SM-57 for snare top & bottom, Sennheiser MD421 for toms, Beyer dynamic M-88 for kick, Shure SM-81 for hi-hat, ride and overhead cymbals.

out more than one violin player; it would have been, like, ten people in the band."

The final touch—besides the spare, clear plastic Vistalite drum kit that Mike Fletcher plays, purchased by Sharp while

devoting time to his other band, Weezer—is the Boss Dr. Pad. Positioned on its own pedestal at center stage, Sharp hits it at various points during a performance. "The sounds out of the Dr. Pad really suck," he

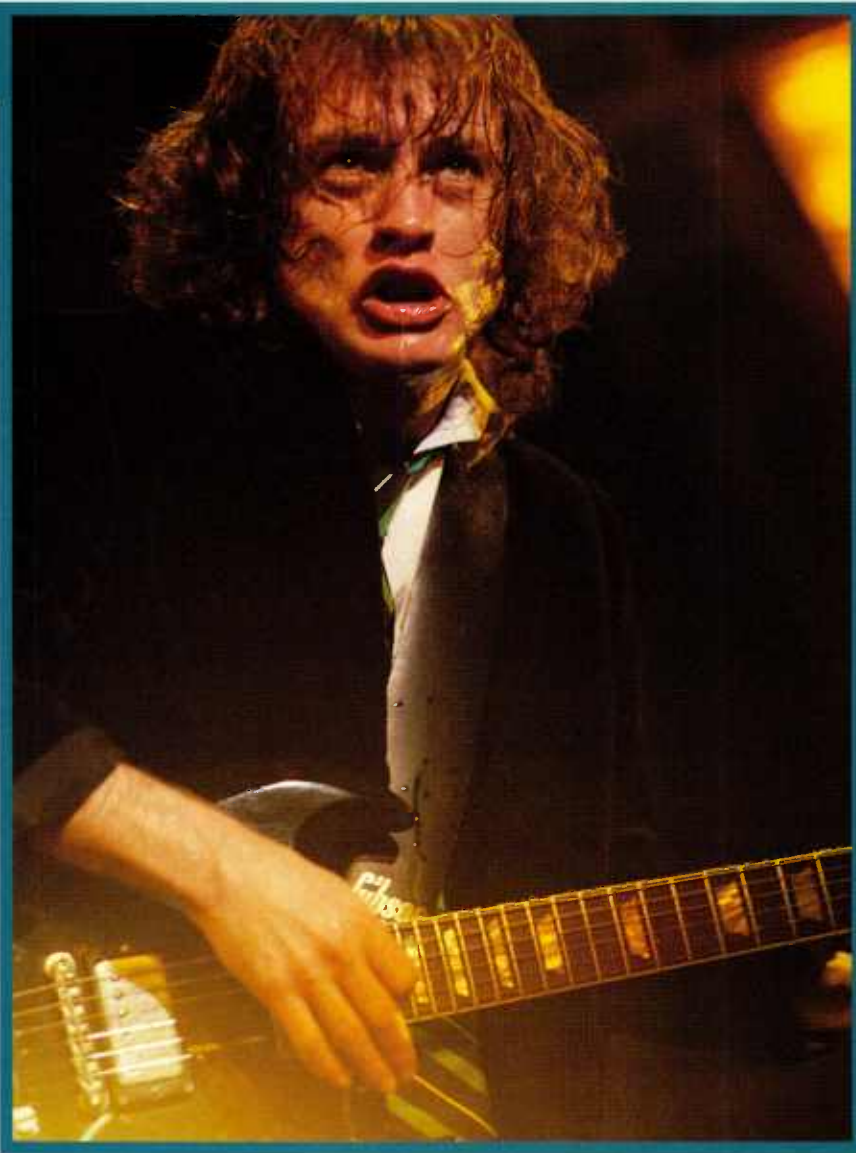
admits, which is why it's hooked to a Boss DS-1 distortion pedal. His goal? "We're just trying to simulate the clap sound that Gary Numan used on *The Pleasure Principle*."—Chris Smets

## ac/dc

**O**kay, here's the secret behind AC/DC's live sound . . . um, there is no secret. "There's no racks of gear, no refrigerators of compressors. All these guys with all this stuff, you get this weedy little sound." That's Graham Lilley, Malcolm Young's guitar tech, talking. "Whereas this band is all about, you have a guitar, you have an amp, you have a cabinet, you turn it up. They're very straightforward with the gear, as are the lads. They just get up there and do it every night. No trouble there."

"They are what they are," echoes Paul "Pab" Boothroyd, the band's soundman. "I don't want to do a lot of it, because the sound that Angus produces is the sound of Angus." Same with Malcolm, bassist Cliff Williams and Phil Rudd on drums.

The only real special trick that AC/DC has pulled to grab a sound has been to mutilate the hell out of Malcolm's '63 Gretsch. After he first got the guitar from his older brother, George, Malcolm added a humbucking pickup between the two stock Filter Tron pickups. Then he took the middle one out, leaving the hole there because he liked the sound. Next he took the neck pickup out. The original bridge pickup was the sole survivor of Malcolm's six-string surgery, and so it



Jeffrey Mayer



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## AC/DC

**A**ngus Young. Guitars: '64 Gibson SG. Amps: Marshall SLP 59. Cabinet: Celestion Vintage 30s. Strings: Ernie Ball Super Slinkys.

Malcolm Young. Guitars: '63 Gretsch Jet Fire Bird. Amps: Marshall SLP 59. Cabinet: Celestion Vintage 30s. Strings: Ernie Ball and Gibson.

Cliff Williams. Basses: Two Fender

Precisions, two Music Man mid-'70s Stingrays.

Amps: Ampeg SVT. Strings: D'Addario XL.

Phil Rudd. Drums: Sonor maple heavy shells (12", 16", 18", 22"). Cymbals: Paiste: 20" Signature Full Crash, five 19" 2002 crashes, 18" Signature Full Crash, Sound Formula 14" Reflector Heavy HHats. Heads: Aquarian. Sticks: Easton Ahead Dynamic 700 series.

Mikes: Beyer dynamic 700 series.

remains. Unless Malcolm breaks a string or goes out of tune, the Gretsch is the only guitar he'll play during the band's two-hour-plus set.

Since the boys don't use any effects—seems as if Angus is just too damn busy running around or mooning the crowd to hit a pedal—the only other thing that

Boothroyd has done to get their sound out there is to drop a couple of sound isolation boxes under the stage. Basically, these boxes are extra-large road cases in which Boothroyd places a speaker (blasting the signal from the onstage amp) and a microphone. Boothroyd uses these leakage eliminators for both guitars and bass so he has a bit more mixing control.

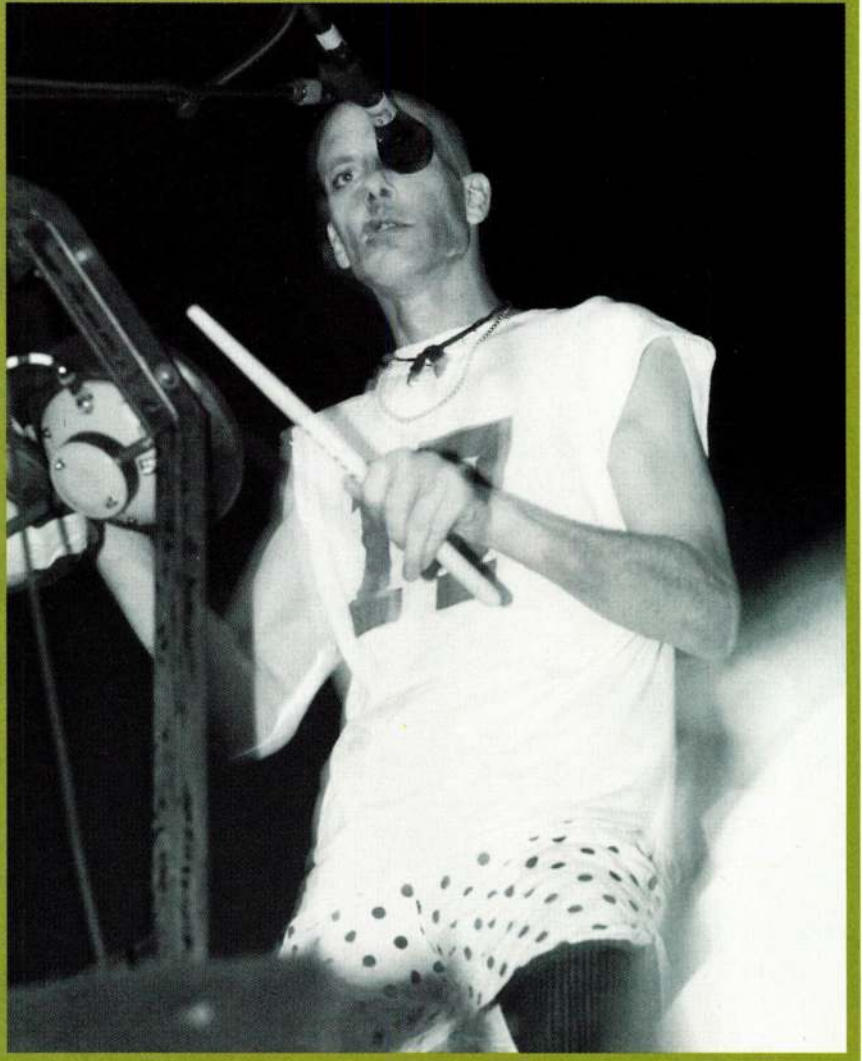
At the end of the day, as Pab says, there's only one thing to keep in mind: "It's got to be loud. It's AC/DC after all. Nail 'em to the back wall, in a pleasant sort of way."—David J. Farinella

## kmfmdm

**I**f you caught KMFDM's last tour, in support of their brain-pummeling album *Nihil* (Wax Trax!/TVT), you couldn't have helped but notice the risers. On either side of singer Raymond Watts, En Esch and Sascha Konietzko stood on 5'x6' steel and plexiglass platforms, bashing drum pads built right into the framework. A distinctive setup, to be sure, and somehow it's not surprising to learn that Konietzko designed those risers himself, even down to some of the trigger bars—"they're basically contact mikes," he says. From these custom pads, Sascha and En Esch triggered loops, sequences from an Alesis ADAT, and drum sounds (it's the Alesis D4 for En Esch, while Sascha favors E-mu ProcuSSION).

What was the impetus for the creation of such cool-looking (and sounding) gear? Boredom. "I was getting bored with just standing around onstage," Sascha explains. "At the same time, En Esch [originally the drummer] was tired of sitting behind the kit; he wanted to be a guitarist. Well, his guitar playing didn't work out so well, so he got sent back to being a drummer again. But since it was clear that we were both front guys, we decided to build these risers. We don't want this to look like a stage with gear on it; it should look theatrical, like the set of a play."

KMFDM is a remarkably self-sufficient organization; besides hauling the usual musical gear on tour, they also bring their own elaborate lighting, P.A. and monitor system, all of which their



Rudolphe Baras

fiendishly dedicated crew can set up in a little over three hours. Harsh road experience has taught this band to look after itself. Sascha recalls an infamous gig from their formative years in Europe. "One time we were stuck with a lighting desk

with three outlets: one for the red light, one for the yellow light, and one for the blue light. The blue one was burnt out, so we had to put in an old green one." Obviously, those days are long gone.—Mac Randall



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*Frank Serafina, Sound designer on Star Trek, Virtuosity, Lawnmower man, VR5, Hunt for Red October.*



## KMFD

**S**ascha Konietzko. Keyboards: Roland D-50, Sequential Circuits Pro One. Bass: Custom Machine Gun three-string bass (in the shape of an M16) with built-in ProCo Rat distortion box. Percussion Sounds: Emu Percussion, custom pads. Microphone: Audix OM-7.

En Esch. Percussion Sounds: two Alesis D4s, custom pads. Microphone: Audix OM-7.

Gunter Schulz and Mike Jensen. Guitars:

Two Gibson Les Pauls, one ESP Les Paul copy, Fender Stratocaster, Fender Telecaster, Paul Reed Smith, Ibanez, Zveilana Zombie. Amps: three Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifiers and one Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier into four Boogie 4x12 cabinets.

Raymond Watts. Microphone: Audix OM-7.

Mikes for Instruments: Shure SM57, Shure Beta 58, Audix B-3, AKG D112, Electro-Voice RE20.

Effects: DigiTech GSP-1, two t.c. electronics 2290 digital delays, three Yamaha SPX900s for

harmonizing and distortion, Eventide H3000SE harmonizer, Yamaha Rev 7, MXR flanger (primarily for vocals), Brookes Siren 960 stereo EQs, Klark Teknik 360 EQs, dbx 900 compressor, Brookes Siren DPR404 compressors, Klark Teknik DN544 noise gates. Mixing Console: Yamaha PM3500. Power: Crest 9001 and 7001 power amps.

Miscellaneous: Custom risers and stands, two Alesis ADATs (one for sequences, one for backup).

# bad religion

**O**ne piece of gear that won't be touring with Bad Religion behind *The Gray Race* (Atlantic) is bassist Jay Bentley's prize possession, a '60s Hiwatt Bulldog combo that he acquired for a killer price. "I saw it sitting in the corner at Guitar Center," he remembers. "I asked the guy how much it was and he said, 'It's broken.' The only thing that looked broken about it to me was that the speaker wires were cut. So I said, 'I'll give you \$100 for it.' I made the deal first. Then I asked for a 12-foot speaker lead, plugged it from the head into a 4x12, cranked out a few chords, and rolled it around the corner, thank you very much." Bentley uses the Hiwatt exclusively for recording; on the road he takes a Mesa/Boogie 400+.

Even when they're playing a large venue, the boys in Bad Religion set up close to one another. "The first time we played on a big stage," Bentley says, "we made a dreadful mistake by spreading our equipment out so that it looked like we filled up the stage. We quickly realized that we couldn't be comfortable that way, so



Kristin Callahan

now if you see us at a big show, we're really tight so we can work with each other."

Still, no one gets too close to guitarist Greg Hetson. "We give Greg plenty of room for his little guitar world," Bentley

says, "and we never enter that world because it's just ear-piercing over there." Hetson answers: "I don't think I'm that loud. Our soundman's got a different opinion on that, though."—Mac Randall

## Bad Religion

**G**reg Hetson. Guitar: '71 Gibson SG with Seymour Duncan Alnico II pickups. Amps: two modified (extra preamp volume and gain boost button) '70s Marshall 100-watt heads through two 4x12 Marshall slant cabinets. Strings: Dean Markley Blue Steel (.009).

Brian Baker. Guitar: '90 Gibson Les Paul

Standard. Amps: two 1979 Marshall JMP-100 heads through two Mesa/Boogie Rectifier cabinets with Celestion speakers. Strings: Dean Markley Blue Steel, .010-.052.

Jay Bentley. Bass: '78 Fender Precision. Amp: Mesa/Boogie 400+, Ampeg SVT cabinet (sometimes two). Records with 1960s Hiwatt Bulldog combo into a KK Audio front-loaded 12" cabinet

with Electro-Voice 12L speaker. Strings: Dean Markley Blue Steel.

Bobby Schayer. Drums: Mapex, with Drum Workshop hardware and Remo Coated Ambassador drumheads. Cymbals: Zildjian. Sticks: Vic Firth Classic Metal.

Greg Graffin. Microphone: Beyerdynamic M88.



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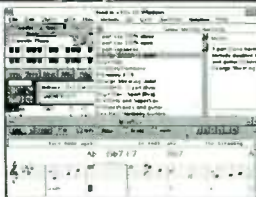
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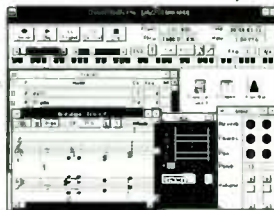
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# fast fo

## 1 peavey evh wolfgang

Guitaristically speaking, the biggest buzz at the 1996 NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) show in Anaheim, California was the Wolfgang, an ultra-sleek single-cutaway arched-top instrument designed by Edward Van Halen in conjunction with Peavey (price still TBA at press time). Combining a basswood body with a bird's-eye maple neck, the Wolfgang's got two humbuckers, a Floyd Rose-licensed locking tremolo, and an optional Tune-O-Matic bridge that can automatically drop the low E string down to D—as EVH himself demonstrated with glee several times during the show. • Peavey, 711 A St., Meridian, MS 39301; voice (601) 483-5365, fax (601) 486-1278.

## 2 mooses kp series bass

If you wanted to get your hands on this baby at Anaheim, you had to stand in line. Moses has made 115 models of replacement necks for guitars and basses, but the KP is their first complete instrument: a 42"-scale all-graphite electric upright bass, available in four- and five-string models (\$3100 and \$3825, respectively). A unique air coupled sensor pickup system delivers a warm tone without the usual piezo/transducer ping. And at approximately 11 pounds, this is one upright that's transport-friendly. • Moses, 32591 Fox Hollow Rd., Eugene, OR 97405; voice/fax (503) 484-6068.

## 3 pearl 50th anniversary snare

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6



3

2



# Forward



## 4 electro-voice RE1000

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## 5 motu digital performer software

Don't worry, we're not leaving out the computer-literate. Mark of the Unicorn's Version 1.7 of Digital Performer ought to keep them happy. This latest upgrade to MOTU's sequencer/digital audio software allows users to time-scale, transpose, and change the tempo of digital audio tracks together with MIDI tracks without the tonal distortion typical in conventional audio pitch-shifting. Speed up your vocals without munchkinizing them. • Mark of the Unicorn, 1280 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; voice (617) 576-2760, fax (617) 576-3609.

## 6 uptown automation system one

And finally, for the folks who like nothing more than watching faders move of their own accord, there's Uptown Automation's System One. Taking the software and system design from their earlier System 2000 and System 990, Uptown has produced an automation unit that can be easily patched into any console in a matter of minutes. The System One is available in eight-fader modules, up to eight of which can be linked together; a full 24-channel system can be yours for under \$10,000. • Uptown Automation, 6205 Lookout Rd., Unit G, Boulder, CO 80301; voice (303) 581-0400, fax (303) 581-0114. For more on NAMM '96, check out *Fast Forward's* full report next month.



# Meet the New Boss

by howard massey

Unless you're dead or have been living in a cave for the past three years (neither of which would make you the typical *Musician* reader), you're no doubt already aware of the phenomenal impact the Alesis ADAT has had on not only the average muso but the recording industry in general. Hundreds of hit records have already been created in project studios and/or converted bedrooms using this technological wonder which, for the price of a couple of months' rent, gives you eight tracks of CD-quality digital recording onto a standard S-VHS tape. In fact, our informal yet admittedly unscientific survey has revealed that every musician on the planet either (a) owns an ADAT; (b) knows someone who owns an ADAT; (c) wants to own an ADAT (or a second or third ADAT); or (d) all of the above. To date, Alesis has shipped some 70,000—and that doesn't count the licensed clone machines by Fostex and Panasonic.

With the recent release of the second-generation ADAT-XT (list price \$3499), Alesis has taken a good thing and made it better. The XT pulls off the hat trick of outperforming its earlier incarnation in a number of important areas, adding in several new features, and costing less than the ADAT originally did (its initial list price was \$3999, but this was dropped to \$2999 late in 1994). Most importantly, the XT is completely compatible with its older cousin—it plays back tapes recorded on any ADAT (or Fostex/Panasonic clone machine) and, conversely, tapes recorded on an XT will play back equally well on other ADATs. Alesis' grand design allows up to 16 ADATs to be interconnected, essentially turning multiple units into one giant digital multitrack, and the XT fits right into this scheme—you can freely link it to other XTs or ADATs.

Cosmetically, the XT is quite different from the ADAT, despite their basic similarities. In its brushed black casing, the ADAT always looked like a VCR on steroids, while the XT, housed in a heavy-duty aluminum chassis, feels much more solid and roadworthy. In addition to power on-off, tape eject, and the ever-present tape recorder-style transport buttons, the front panel provides eight record-ready buttons (one for each track) and 30 additional buttons, each of which is admirably dedicated to a single task (no nested menus or "hidden" functions here, bunky!). There's also a large multi-color fluorescent display, which not only provides tape time readout and peak level meters for track inputs and outputs but also offers a host of dedicated icons which light when various functions are invoked. A quick glance at this display shows you exactly what's going on with your XT at all times—a nice touch, particularly in contrast to the somewhat spartan appearance of the ADAT's front panel.

The rear panel of the XT is only marginally different from the ADAT. Both units provide sync input/output as well as Alesis' proprietary fiber-optic "light pipe" digital I/O. You'll also find balanced and unbalanced analog inputs and outputs (these can be used simultaneously if required), with both units

is a connector for Alesis' optional meter bridge, which, if your mixer provides decent metering (and most do), is no great loss. As with the ADAT, there are 1/4" input jacks provided for the connection of the supplied remote control and optional footswitch, both of which you'll find handy if your XT isn't within easy arm's reach.

Many of the operations that previously required the use of the optional Alesis BRC remote control are now available directly on the XT. For example, there's an Auto-Record function that enables you to set automatic punch-in and -out points, and a

## editor's pick



neat Rehearse function so you can practice these punches without going into record. The XT also permits you to copy tracks dig-

## Alesis' ADAT-XT takes success and

employing the same industrial-grade 56-pin ELCO connector for the balanced I/O. (Don't even think of soldering one of these cables yourself unless you've got a serious masochistic streak—your local music dealer will be glad to sell you one pre-wired, and the \$200 or so it costs is well worth the savings in aggravation!) The XT uses RCA phono connectors for its unbalanced I/O, while the ADAT used 1/4" jacks, but that's no big deal. Missing from the XT rear panel

itally within a single machine (or, in multi-ADAT setups, from machine to machine), facilitating the assembly of composite tracks that contain the best performances from multiple takes. If you have a multi-ADAT setup, a Tape Offset feature gives you the ability to shift the tape position of one machine relative to another, so that you can



perform modern miracles like flying a cool take from one tape into a completely different tape. You can even delay individual tracks by up to 170 milliseconds, making it possible to push a frenetic drummer back into the pocket, or to wake up a somnolent bass player. Incidentally, this same feature can be used to move tracks forward in time—simply delay all of the tracks except the one you want to move by an equal amount. Since this feat of audio magic is being performed in the digital domain, there's no adverse effect on the sound quality at all.

Speaking of sound quality, here's a good

off tape to the sound you hear), and everyone agreed (and continues to agree) that the original ADAT sounded just fine. But the XT ups the ante in this area, using 18-bit A/D converters and 20-bit D/A converters, with increased oversampling as well. (Don't get me started, it would take the rest of the article to explain oversampling—let's just say the XT does more of it than the ADAT.) This translates to a subtle but perceptible improvement in sound quality. It's hard to describe on paper, but there is more "air" in the sound of the XT—sounds are slightly more defined and transients (short bursts of audio, like snare drum hits) seem to come

When connecting an XT to an ADAT, you'll want to use the XT as the master and the ADAT as slave. In this configuration, however, the speed differences between the two will be very apparent, with the XT consistently parking itself obediently at the correct point, patiently waiting for the ADAT to chase-lock.

Another important improvement is the XT's ability to easily operate at the same 44.1 kHz sampling rate that most of the rest of the digital audio world uses. (This is the sampling rate used, for example, by audio CDs.) The original ADAT uses a 48 kHz sampling rate (like professional DAT



excuse to put my two cents in on the ongoing "bit wars." Audio CDs, as you undoubtedly know, sound real good, largely because they use 16-bit resolution. In general, the greater the number of bits used, the better the sound, but everyone agrees that CDs are

## proves on it

the audio fidelity standard, at least for now. The original ADAT used 16-bit analog-to-digital converters (these are the chips that convert the incoming signal from your instrument or microphone into the digital stream encoded on tape) and 18-bit digital-to-analog converters (these chips do the opposite job, changing the digital code read

across with a bit more impact. I don't want to overstate this, because the difference is slight, but it is there, and it's an important area where the XT outperforms the ADAT.

Probably the biggest complaint people had about the original ADAT was its somewhat sluggish performance when shuttling tape around, and here's where the XT leaves its predecessor in the dust. Fast-forward and rewind times are about four times faster on the XT, along with speedier search and locate times. In fact, getting around your tape is generally easier on the XT than on the ADAT, thanks to the provision of 10 auto-location points (as compared with ADAT's three) and to handy Auto-Play and Auto-Return functions, which enable looping.

recorders), although it can be fooled into sampling at 44.1 kHz if the tape is slowed down using the front panel pitch controls—an action which, unfortunately, has the side effect of throwing off tape counter readings. The XT sports the same pitch controls, but there's now a dedicated switch that allows you to select between 48 kHz or 44.1 kHz. The 48 kHz rate will automatically be used when playing back or overdubbing onto formatted ADAT tapes, but I recommend that you work at 44.1 when starting new sessions on an XT. This makes it easier to edit and master your tracks and eliminates any need to go through sample rate conversion, which tends to degrade signal quality. If you need to directly import or export

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digital audio data to or from the outside world (i.e. from a DAT, a digital mixer or keyboard), you can set the XT to operate at 44.1 kHz and use Alesis' handy-dandy AI-1, which converts standard AES/EBU or S/PDIF digital signal into the proprietary Alesis fiber-optic format.

I had a blast doing all sorts of recording on an XT—both it and the older ADAT in my studio performed flawlessly and delivered not only extraordinary sound quality but a boost to my musical creativity as well. If you've had any experience using a multi-track tape deck, you'll be operating an XT like a pro within a couple of hours. If you already own one or more ADATs, adding an XT is a snap—all you have to do is hook up one sync cable and a couple of fiber-optic cables, and you've got the equivalent of a 16-or-more-track digital recorder, with many of the advanced features of the XT automatically added. The bottom line, as Casey Stengel used to say: "Amazing, amazing, amazing." That is, amazing technology, amazing functionality, and amazing price.

Shameless Plug For Next Issue Department: Join us next month as Editor's Pick takes a closeup look (and listen) to two new exciting tube products specifically designed to enhance the ADAT and ADAT-XT.

*Special thanks to Jim Mack at Alesis and to Audiotechniques and Sam Ash Music for their assistance.*

### WILLIE & DWIGHT

*[cont'd from page 33] melody and the chords are closer to Hoagy Carmichael than to traditional country. You must have been aware of that, too.*

**NELSON:** Yeah, I also knew that before I could get the audience to listen to that, I had to do something they knew and understood. When I was opening for Ray Price, for instance, I'd do Hank Williams and a few Little Jimmy Dickens jokes and a waltz—and then, "Funny How Time Slips Away." And I had a lot better shot. To get them to say, "Well, that guy is a pretty good country singer," and then say, "Here's something I wrote."

**YOAKAM:** One of your great songs was "Me and Paul"—chronicling that moment. Many times I've been in bars playing and I'd think about that legacy, and that experience for you. I think it serves as an inspiration for people to persevere, persist, be tenacious.

And the irony is, you were already in the business, and still having brick walls thrown up in front of you.

**MUSICIAN:** *You'd already made it as a songwriter in Nashville by then, so you weren't an outsider.*

**NELSON:** Yeah, because the song was the thing. I guess it still is, you know. So if they had a writer, whether he sold records or not, if he had songs, they'd pay for him to go in and make an album and they'd press up a few.

**YOAKAM:** Which makes it more insidious, in a way.

**NELSON:** They're capturing you for your songs.

**YOAKAM:** Almost like being made prisoner.

**NELSON:** You're in prison, yeah. You've accepted money, you've set up a budget, and now you're fucked, more or less. . .

**YOAKAM:** Exactly! *[laughter]*

**MUSICIAN:** *Did you suspect that Red Headed Stranger might be different, might finally give you the success that it ultimately achieved?*

**NELSON:** Well, it was something I thought would sell to the people I was working for. But it was difficult to sell to the people I was recording for. It was difficult because when you're sitting behind a desk in Nashville, you don't have any idea what's going on at Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin. But if you don't know, you shouldn't be sittin' at that desk.

**YOAKAM:** Then they'll always chase what is happening—after the fact. They'll try to find four more, and you know what? That exit on the highway has already been passed.

**NELSON:** It's the same kind of situation today. Plus if you're over 40, you don't get any air-play. So the challenge is even greater today than it ever has been. At least back then, there was a country station you could count on to play you. Now they'd all be glad to see us go to pasture. Makes more room at the top, you know, if we would decide to let these young flatbedders run us out of business.

But the people are still coming. We just did a tour where we turned them away at every show, and it wasn't all old people either, you know; there was a lot of kids. So I know the crowd is there. You've got 300 radio stations controlled by a couple of folks, but those couple of folks won't be around forever either. *[laughs]* We can outlast them, too.



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# Unplug Yourself In

**The legacy of MTV: amplifiers for acoustic (!!) guitars.**

by **E.D. Menasché**

Until recently, capturing any kind of decent acoustic guitar sound on stage meant lugging a P.A. system to gigs—or praying that the house system and its operator had the wherewithal to divine your personal tone from a direct feed or microphone (in many cases, a major act of faith). Traditional electric guitar amps, with their strong midrange and rolled-off-the-table high end, just didn't make it. Enter the self-contained acoustic guitar amp.

As the novelty of the first wave of portable acoustic sound reproduction has worn off, manufacturers are looking for unique concepts of what an acoustic amp should be. While all four units tested here share the similarity of wide frequency response and clean reproduction, they're more notable for their differences—in tone, power, features, size—a much wider gap than would exist in a similar collection of electric guitar amps. It's imperative to test an acoustic amp with all the instruments you plan on playing through it—the conclusions you draw from plugging in an Ovation might be very different from those you'd reach with a less "electric" acoustic/electric.

**Jarrold Lee: HKR Hooker**

Tube amps are the electric-guitar standard, of course, but seeing an acoustic amp sporting those glowing bulbs is something of a novelty. Jarrold Lee's expensive (\$2250) but impressive Hooker should serve



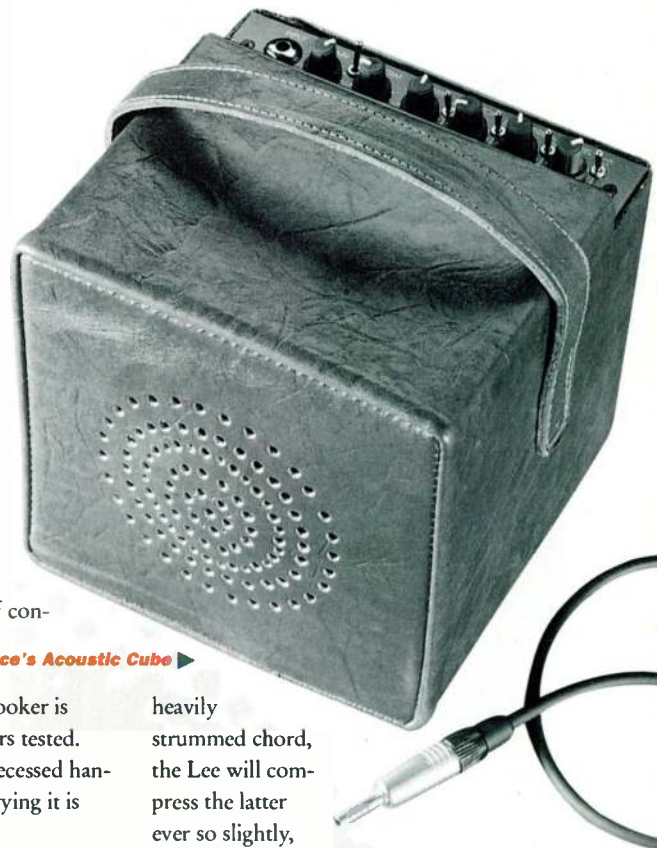
notice to those who think tubes are only good for overdrive: this combo delivers a breathtaking blend of clarity, presence and punch.

The Hooker resembles a compact electric amp on first appearance, with a single row of controls, angled cabinet and front panel 1/4" inputs.

Though small, the 40-pound Hooker is somewhat heavier than the others tested. The cabinet has side-mounted recessed handles, so it's easy to grip, but carrying it is definitely a two-hand job.

Both channels have their own gain and tone controls; master volume governs overall level. Digital effects are provided, with 128 presets including reverb and delay, though switching between them is less intuitive than one might wish. Like most tube amps, the EQ is interactive: treble settings will affect the range of the bass control, and so on. Dialing in your tone takes some care—high treble settings can be blindingly bright—but patience is rewarded. The Hooker offers no dedicated notch-filter for feedback control; instead, a rear-mounted

phase switch can reduce howl without chopping the meat out of the tone. The Hooker is loud, dynamic and dramatic. There's ample high end, and low notes speak with authority, but the real story lies in the smooth midrange. If you play a complex fingerstyle arpeggio with a strong, full tone, then jump on a



Trace's Acoustic Cube ▶

heavily strummed chord, the Lee will compress the latter ever so slightly, enough to keep the level jump from decapitating the front row, but not so much that the sound will become pureed squash. Though high gain levels can result in overdrive, there's ample headroom to get both channels loud and clean.

Due to the tubes and the internal fan needed to cool them, the Lee creates slightly more ambient noise than a solid-state amp. For added flexibility, it can be connected to external speaker cabinets, though the custom Radians on board respond to transients exceptionally well. It might be overkill if you pick in a supporting role, but if you're looking for an amp that can handle a full range of technique, the Hooker Series is worth serious consideration.

◀ Jarrold Lee's Hooker

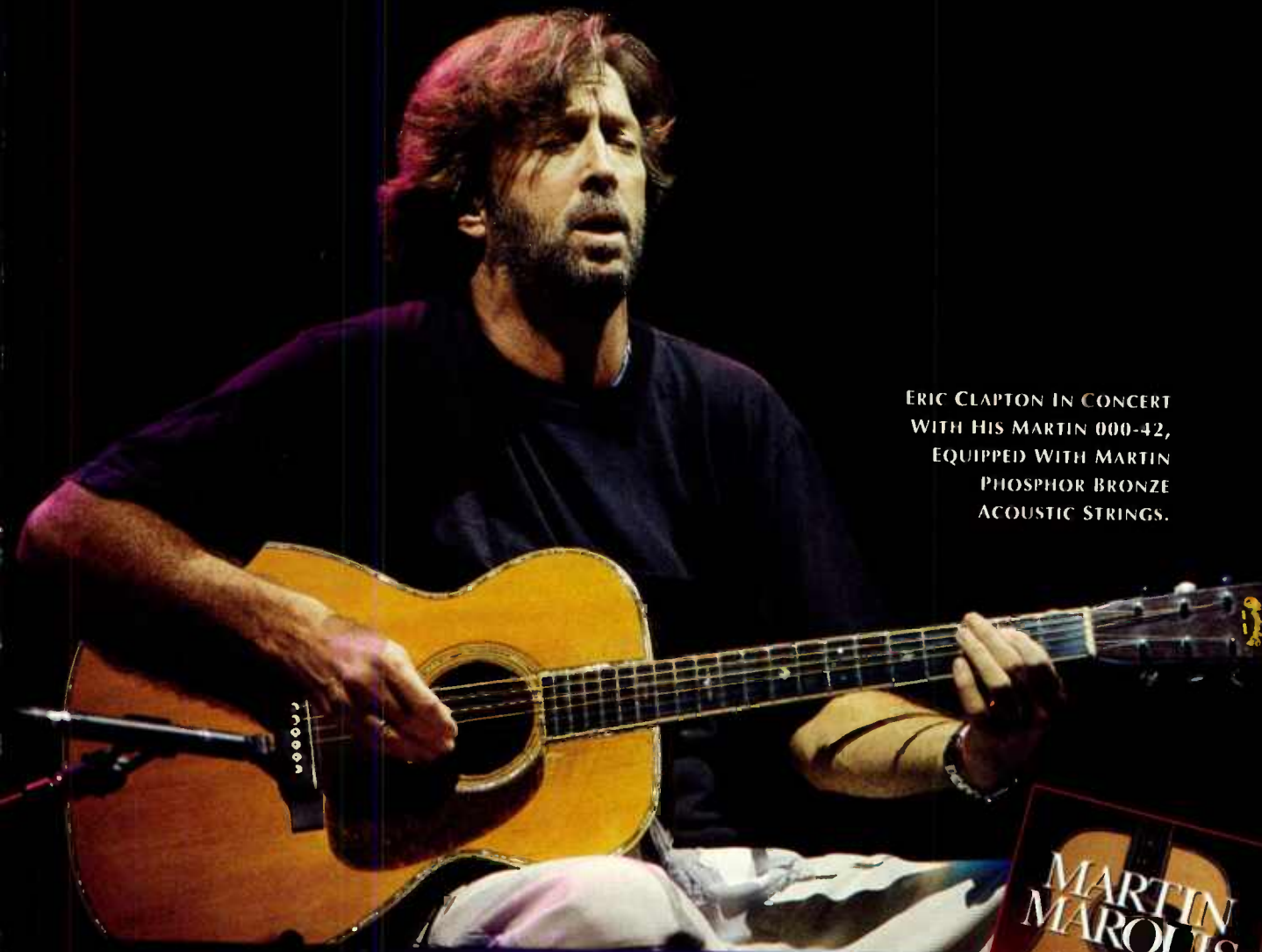
**Fishman: Acoustic Performance Pro**

Fishman's Acoustic Performance Pro (\$1995) is less combo amp than compact, self-contained, bi-amped P.A. system, with 230 watts feeding an 8" woofer and 30 watts a one-inch tweeter. The musical payoff is startling: vivid high frequencies and natural response to pick/finger attack. Tone is near your face, but never actually in it. It also gets quite loud.

With rear-mounted inputs and outputs



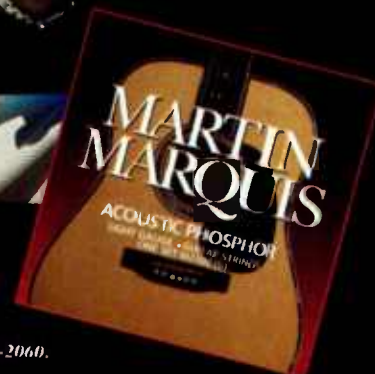
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and (mostly) front-mounted controls, the Fishman has an uncluttered layout that belies a substantial set of features. Channel 1, optimized for microphones, has both 1/4" low-impedance and XLR inputs, with switchable phantom power. Channel 2 has a 1/4" high-impedance input for preamps and piezo pickups. A TRS 1/4" input splits the signal between the two channels, suitable for instruments employing a combination mini-microphone/pickup system. Each channel has its own trim control, effects loop, and pre-EQ XLR line out; Channel 2 also boasts a tuner output. As if that weren't enough, the Mix section has a tweeter level control, for optimizing overall high-end response, post-EQ mix output and effects loop.

Each channel's three-band EQ shapes tone without over-coloring it: the complexity of your instrument's character comes through. The master section's notch filter lets you select both frequency and depth, a useful option because less extreme notching can solve your feedback problem while doing less damage to your tone.

The onboard digital reverb has five simple, smooth-sounding presets and can be activated for each channel separately. The Fishman's effects loop runs in parallel to the dry signal, so you can mix in your outboard gear without having it disrupt your basic tone—nice. There's also a mute switch, for silent tuning or to avoid feedback during set breaks.

For further reinforcement, you can add the Acoustic Monitor Pro, a \$1345 satellite unit, which we didn't have the chance to test. Both units can be positioned vertically, horizontally (as a monitor wedge), or stand-mounted. It's another illustration of how well-conceived and executed design makes the Fishman a serious tool—particularly if you carry several guitars with different pickup systems to the gig.

### **Marshall: AS80R Acoustic Soloist**

There's no denying the Marshall AS80R's flexibility. The \$1149 combo offers three

discrete channels, a 40-watt per side stereo power amp, a pair of effects loops, stereo reverb and chorus. It's easy to carry around too (35 lbs.), with a design reminiscent of a small vintage combo.

Most acoustic performers will concentrate on the transducer channel, which is equipped with a switch to match impedance and level between the amp and either piezo or preamp sources. Controls include gain and three-band EQ, with sweepable midrange. In addition to the EQ is a trio of "Acoustic Controls." Pick Attack is designed to modulate the high harmonics that help define and articulate individual notes; it's especially effective at letting strummed chords fight through the mix. The pair of notch filters can mitigate feedback—having a second filter lets you tame two offending frequencies at a time—but like most notch filters, you'll notice their impact on your tone.

Each of the other channels offers input (XLR with switchable phase for the microphone; 1/4" for magnetic), three-band EQ, volume and a chorus switch. The magnetic channel also has a "shift" switch, a roll-off filter to optimize the channel for use with an electric guitar. If you play a piezo-equipped electric like the Hamer Duo-Tone or Parker Fly, you'll appreciate it: you can get a good "electric" rhythm through the magnetic channel, while maintaining the transducer channel for a credible acoustic tone. In fact, this feature alone might make the Marshall the ideal companion for "hybrid" players.

The Marshall reaches moderate volume levels. You'll have to use the line out to the P.A. to cut through a major din. Its tone can get papery in the high end, and you'll need to adjust the midrange controls with care, but overall sound is satisfying. The cabinet design, combined with the impressive chorus, contributes to a wide sound that seems as though it's coming from a much larger unit. Overall, the Marshall is a practical, cost-effective workhorse, ideal for a player who needs to wear several hats—electric guitarist, acoustic guitarist,


vocalist—in the course of one performance.

### **Trace Acoustic: Acoustic Cube/ Power Cube**

Even the purest unplugged troubadour will find Trace Acoustic's remarkably compact Cube amps portable enough to warrant consideration. The Acoustic Cube (\$650) and its stripped-down companion, the Power Cube (\$450), each consume less than a cubic foot of real estate, weigh under nine pounds, and even come in their own little shoulder bags. Both offer 35 watts through a single 5" full-range driver housed in a sealed aluminum enclosure equipped with a slot for mounting atop a mike stand—very cool if you need a personal monitor, or simply want to raise your amp high enough to reach the audience.

The difference between the two lies in the controls: the Acoustic Cube's front panel includes instrument input, gain control (with level LED), low and high EQ, a switchable 18-dB notch filter, reverb, output level and a "shape" switch, a Trace Acoustic trademark that boosts highs and lows and cuts midrange for extra sparkle. The controls are spare but effective at tweaking, rather than radically sculpting, tone.

The Power Cube offers both instrument and line inputs, line out and a gain control, but no EQ or effects. It can function as a satellite, taking the Acoustic Cube's line output for extra reinforcement, or serve as a power amp if you already own an outboard preamp. Missing (and missed) are gain and power status LEDs. It's nice to get a visual cue as to whether the amp is on, especially if it's across the stage from you.

On its own, the Acoustic Cube offers enough reinforcement for small solo gigs; team it with the Power Cube if you need to compete with a larger ensemble. You could also connect the Acoustic Cube's XLR preamp output to a mixing console, letting the house system feed your audience and the Cube feed your ears. Either way, this cost-effective rig makes a good starter system that can grow as the need arises. 



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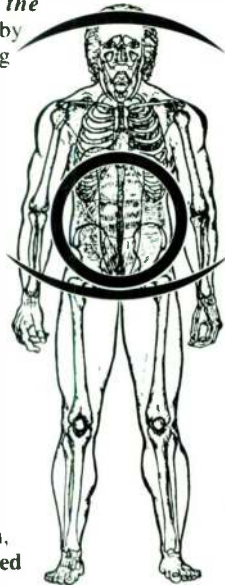
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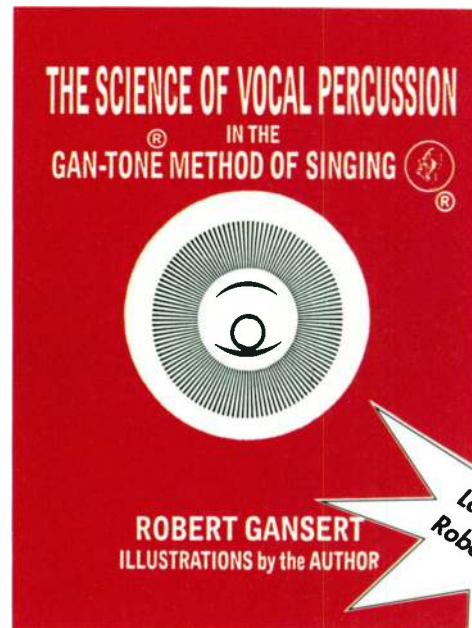
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# Full Model Racket

**Recent developments in synthesis might get you breathing funny.**

by **Greg Sandow**

I couldn't believe what happened the first time I punched up the creamy flute patch on Yamaha's VL7 monophonic synthesizer. First of all, I could phrase as if I were playing a real flute, sustaining even the longest notes with no loss in sound. That didn't surprise me, really, because I knew in advance that the VL7 requires breath controller expertise. But something else happened that I never would have predicted. I slipped, entirely unconsciously, into circular breathing, an advanced technique in which you breathe in while you play, and thus create endless spans of uninterrupted tone. I've never played a wind instrument. If the VL7 could make me leapfrog years of lessons . . . well, this was a miracle. I couldn't come closer to having a real flute in my little home studio unless I ran out and bought one.

But couldn't I do the same thing if I hooked a breath controller up to any synth? I tried that, patching the breath control from the VL7 into a flute preset on an Emu UltraProteus. The results were hopeless. The music had soared on the Yamaha; now it stuttered. That Yamaha flute is married to the player's breath—the result of a revolutionary technology that Yamaha calls “virtual acoustic synthesis,” Korg calls “physical modeling,” and Technics named “acoustic modeling.”

To be simple, I'm just going to call it “modeling,” but by any name it's the coming thing in synthesizers. And even if there's no consensus on how to implement it right now, the basic idea is really simple. Buried

deep in the VL7's chips, where other synths carry the digital memory of somebody playing a few flute notes in real life, is a mathematical model of how a brass or wind instrument physically creates sounds. Stored along with it are mathematical descriptions of how that sound would vary as different aspects of the model change—if, for instance, the player supplies more or less air, or puts a little more lip on the mouthpiece.

So that's why the VL flute seems to float on the breath; it's reacting just as it would if breath really created it. And it behaves in



▲ **Yamaha's VL7**

other real-world ways as well. Blow too softly, and all you hear is air. Relax your lip—an action you mimic by whirling one of the VL7's two mod wheels—and the pitch and tone both sag. Change the pressure of your lips on the

VL7 trumpet, and something else happens: The tone slorps and chortles in and out of focus, moving up and down the harmonic series, just as it does on a real brass instrument. Manage this synthesized mouthpiece carefully enough, and you can play the VL trumpet just like a bugle, changing pitch without the keyboard.

All this is astonishing. But it's not without problems. To do all this, you need vast computing power, which is one reason the VL series costs so much (\$2995 for the VL7, \$4995 for Yamaha's original modeling synth, the two-and-a-half-year-old VL1). Even



▲ **Technics' SX-WSA1**

that great amount of power doesn't get you any stringed instruments, keyboards or percussion patches. And while the VL series can produce sounds with no counterpart in the real world, these weren't wildly impressive.

Essentially, the VL1 and VL7 do just one thing that justifies their price—they imitate the full range of wind and brass instruments with unparalleled realism. Even then, there's a stupendous learning curve. First you have to learn exactly how each instrument is played. Then, on your VL synth, you need to practice something almost like a performing monkey act. You blow in the breath controller and finger notes on the keyboard, while generating the subtleties that bring the instruments alive—slides and growls on a

▼ **Korg's Prophecy**





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tenor sax, for instance—with frantic busy-work on the pitchwheel, mod wheels, and whatever footpedals you may have attached. Yamaha has introduced a few updates designed to make the VL7 more responsive when you skip the breath controller and play it only with the keyboard. Still, I think its ultimate usefulness remains limited.

No wonder other companies took a simpler approach. Roland, for instance, has its VG-8, which models a wide range of guitars—and is controlled from a guitar, so any guitarist can use it. Korg, similarly, came out with the WaveDrum, which imitates a vast battery of percussion. Its performing interface is simply a drumhead, so any drummer can sit down and play it. And now Korg has released the \$1599 Prophecy, a three-octave solo keyboard that—in a brilliant conceptual stroke—models analog synths. Or, more precisely, it models the way analog synths work, the way you can generate waveforms from built-in oscillators, then tweak the resulting sound.

And can you tweak on the Prophecy! The thing has, just for instance, 29 shapes of LFO. Plus, you get an overflowing candy-store of real-time controls—the best being a touch-sensitive ribbon that rolls up and down, functioning like a second mod wheel, while producing a subversive array of programmable sonic disruptions.

On top of everything else, the Prophecy models a handful of acoustic instruments—reeds and brass mostly, though there's a generic "pluck" generator that can imitate basses and guitars. These aren't really what the instrument is about, and they don't sound as rich as Yamaha's; the trumpet, for instance, seems a bit thin. But they do behave in lifelike ways.

What you want to do, though, is play around with these presets. That's yet another benefit of modeling—if you don't like the instrument the math describes, why not vary the math and build a different one? So you take that high, harsh trumpet . . . paging through the complex menus, you relax the lip on the mouthpiece . . . reduce the blare of the sound . . . oh, yeah, and add some more breath noise . . . now you've got a more inti-

mate, even troubled kind of trumpet, a patch I'd call Miles Davis at 4 A.M. (on lots of drugs). That's the rule on the Prophecy; tweak everything, and make it your own.

As for Technics, they've taken yet another approach. After years of success with home keyboards, they're entering the pro market, and wanted to make an impression. So they've used modeling to create a full range of pop and orchestral sounds in their elegant SX-WSA1 workstation, which comes complete with 64-note polyphony, a sequencer, a disk drive, two joysticks that function as real-time controllers, and a luxurious 4" x 5" display.


Now, if the monophonic VL7 costs \$2995, this ought to cost, what . . . 64 times as much? But you can buy one for \$3395 (or \$2995 for the SX-WSA1R rack module, with no keyboard). Why? Because the sounds aren't modeled from scratch. Technics takes sampled sounds and models how they behave in performance. Their engineers would study, let's say, a clarinet sound, and extract a characteristic part of its essence. Then they'd store that as a sampled clarinet "driver," which (in the guts of the SX-WSA) gets shaped by a more generic woodwind "resonator," the same one that's used for a flute.

Advantages? Practicality, along with a smoothness and consistency you don't always hear from sampling alone. Disadvantage? Not all the modeled instruments behave like real ones. I didn't get breath without tone when I played flute sounds lightly. And I couldn't refashion the trumpet the way I could on the Prophecy and VL7. All I got were shadings that sounded like some new kind of filter, not like a change in the trumpet itself.

The same is true when you match a guitar driver with, let's say, a reed resonator—when, as Technics boasts in their advertising, you "strum a sax" or "tongue a drum." Again, you haven't really made a mutant new instrument. But that doesn't mean you're not having fun. Let a crash cymbal vibrate like a violin string, for instance, and it sounds like you'd bowed it. Bounce human

voices off a drum membrane, and they dry out, turning into fascinating whippers.

Try this for a while, and you realize one strength of the SX-WSA—it's great for making pads. You can filter them through any resonator, then fine-tune the result by adjusting modeling parameters, until you find just the color you're looking for. Orchestral patches are another strength, on balance equal to the current synthesizer standard, E-mu's Proteus. And then we get endless fine details—a beautifully sensitive keyboard, three flavors of saxophone breath effects, and a deep simulation of organ drawbars and Leslie.

You could argue that the SX-WSA1 doesn't really offer full modeling. But then Technics deliberately compromised, concluding that full modeling isn't yet ready for affordable prime-time use. What they've done in the meantime is give us an elegant, musical workstation. And just by mentioning modeling and 64-note polyphony in the same breath, they've subtly raised the stakes—and maybe brought the day closer when we'll find this promising technology in every new synth. 

WHITLEY

*[cont'd from page 17]* there as quickly as possible. Forget the meet-and-greet deal, as you find it very difficult to breathe, let alone talk. And why is it that so many of these gigs have the worst sound gear ever?

Still, there's no doubt that the residency format works. The free days give you time to do radio, interviews, in-stores, etc., and spread the word about your band. By the third night we'd won over lots of people who normally wouldn't have been accommodated in a one-night stand. (And of course, true fans come every night.) Residencies really do help to establish a fan network in each town. And just ask a group like the Grateful Dead how valuable those networks can be.

*Over his nearly 30-year career, Stuart "Dinky" Dawson has mixed artists including Fleetwood Mac, the Kinks, Lou Reed, Jeff Beck and Steely Dan.*



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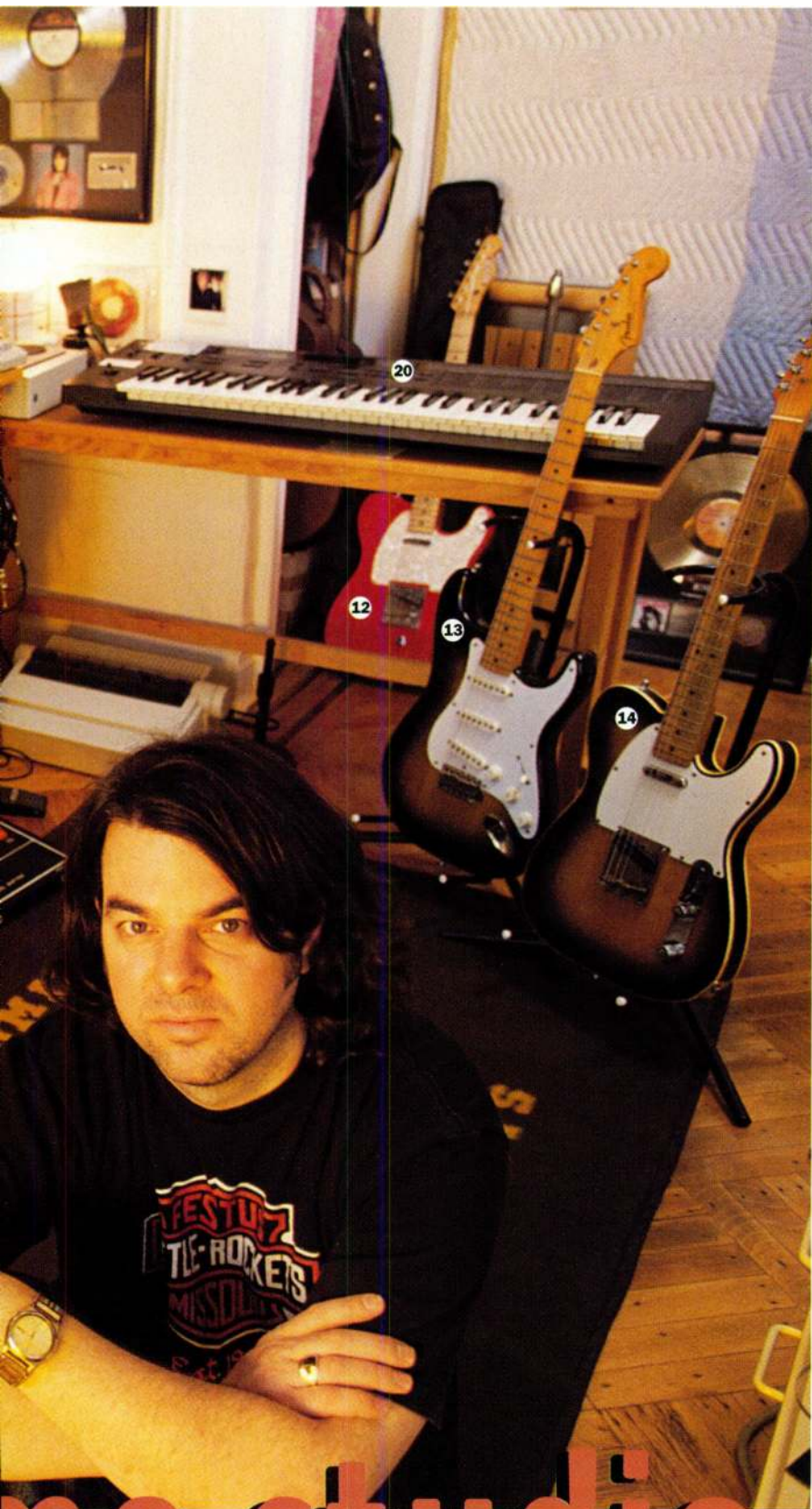
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# Eric Ambel's ho





Photograph by Isa Brito

# me studio

## fast forward

KNOWN TO his close personal friends as 'Scoe, known to his less personal friends as Roscoe, known to listeners of WFMU in the New York area as the guy who does those hilariously free-associated "State of the Vibe Reports," Eric Ambel has accumulated a classic live-by-my-art-or-starve résumé: lead guitar for Joan Jett, the Del Lords, Roscoe's Gang and the Yayhoos; production for Nils Lofgren, Blue Mountain, Bottle Rockets, Blood Oranges, Go to Blazes, Cheri Knight, Greg Trooper and Los Dudes; plus lots of songwriting, publishing demos, movie soundtracks, masters and pre-production in his Dog With Nose In Wind Towards River Home Studio.

Stuffed into a space larger than a closet but smaller than a bedroom, the DWN-I-WTRHS has that unmistakable 8'x16' ambience that makes Manhattan such a wonderfully intimate place to live. Two can sit there and play guitar, but must remain cognizant of where their headstocks and elbows are located in all 26 dimensions of time and space, lest they bash some of Ambel's cool equipment.

"The studio just took a big step forward with two new additions," says Eric/Roscoe, who was wearing Foot Joy golf shoes (not pictured) for all his recording long before VH1 started broadcasting celebrity tournaments. "I got this *big* microphone, an **Audio-Technica 4050** ①. It's the mike they gave to the oldest Ramone—Phil—and he liked it so much that he wouldn't give it back. I'm not going to give mine back either. It's a large-diaphragm condenser, which is great for voice and acoustic guitar. You could use it as an overhead, too.

"My other recent addition is an **ART Tube MP** preamp ②, which has phantom power. These big microphones need electricity sent to them. It's got a tube in it, which warms up the sound, and it's real cheap. I got mine for \$110."

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

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For compression, Eric goes both low and high-end. If you're on a tight budget, he recommends his **Alesis Micro Limiter** ⑨, "a great stereo compressor that they don't make anymore. You can buy it for \$100 in a pawnshop. It's very simple to operate with just input, release and output. It actually works a lot like this **Manley Electro-Optical Stereo Leveling Amplifier** ⑩, a hand-made tube recreation of the LA-2A, which was *the* classic compressor but isn't made anymore. Everything Manley makes is super high-tolerance recreations of old equipment that can't be improved on. You can't get an original LA-2A anymore. Or if you do happen to find one, it has to be refurbished. I decided to buy my own stereo compressor because I was renting them whenever I recorded. Now I rent the Manley to myself and keep the money."

When Eric got married a few years ago to singer/songwriter Mary Lee Kortez, they each sold their four-tracks and pooled their resources for an eight-track **Tascam 688 Midistudio** ⑪. "It's a combination tape machine, mixing board and sync box—especially good where space is at a premium. My tip to anyone with a cassette-based portastudio is to leave the vari-speed wide open at the fastest speed for the best fidelity."

He finds the **Apple Macintosh Plus** ⑫ with **Mark of the Unicorn Performer** software useful for songwriting. "I can put myself in the center of a band while I'm working on the song. I got the computer with a second-hand copy of the software and learned how to use it without the manual. It says something about how easy it is to use that I could figure it out with no instructions."

On his **J.L. Cooper Syncmaster** ⑬, he uses track 8 to fire the keyboard bass and drums, and the other seven channels to "indulge my guitar and vocal thing so when I go into the studio for real, I'll only need one or two tracks for guitar."

When Eric produced *Crooked Line* for Nils Lofgren, they rented an EMT 250, a futuristic-looking digital reverb that is both hard to find and expensive at around \$5000. One night Eric sat down and calibrated the sound parameters on his **Alesis Quadraverb** ⑭ to the EMT 250. "It'll never sound exactly as good as the EMT 250, but it's close and it only cost \$350. I like the Alesis because it's inex-

pensive and quiet."

Renowned for his great guitar tones, Eric uses a '91 **Gibson Montana Advanced Jumbo** acoustic ⑮, **Paul Reed Smith McCarty** model ⑯, '85 **ESP Strat** painted by P. Michael Keane ⑰, '80s **ESP Telecaster** with **Parsons-White** B-Bender ⑱, '57 reissue **Fender Strat** ⑲, and a '66 **Fender Telecaster** ⑳. He generally prefers anything with lower-output pickups on the grounds that then you get to hear more of the amp. The amp he most prefers for recording is an ancient eight-watt **Supro 606** ㉑ with three tubes (power, rectifier and preamp) and an 8" Jensen speaker. He's modified it with a custom power amp out circuit, which he runs through a **Hughes & Kettner Red Box MK III** cabinet simulator ㉒ before going to the board. "It doesn't sound direct," he says, "and it's under a hundred dollars."

If you don't want to hassle with pawn shops, Eric gives a strong endorsement to the **Fender Pro Junior** ㉓, an all-tube practice amp for under \$250. "Fender has a couple of guys who know what they're doing now," he enthuses. "It's a recording miracle and it's a great second amp for live shows."

For percussion, he prefers the **Alesis HR-16** ㉔—"the first good cheap drum machine." For bass, piano, organ and other digital sounds, he uses the **Korg 3RW** sound module ㉕ and the **Korg DW-8000** keyboard ㉖ ("the Korg '80s knockoff of the DX7"). The **Roland RE-150 Space Echo** ㉗ he rates as "the classic tape delay."

Eric does NOT tune up with his **Peterson** strobe tuner ㉘. "I haven't used it for years, but anything with a cool light gets to stay. The **Boss TU-12-H** ㉙ is the best tuner for me. It's chromatic and under a hundred dollars. It has the lights and the needle. I like the needle, 'cause you can cheat on the major third, and you can't do that with ones that just have lights. The major third can inherently conflict with the one and the five. It's just the way they designed Western music. I don't use the major third that much—it's the happy note—but you do need it with open tunings."

Eric's favorite pedal is the **Boss PN-2 Tremolo/Pan** ㉚, which he calls "the high water mark of modern tremolo technology, a pedal so good they had to stop making it." So look for yours at the pawn shop.

For equalization, he inherited an **Ashley SC-66** stereo parametric EQ ㉛ and has no plans to

upgrade. "That's top-notch '70s technology. It was given to me by the guys at Coyote Studio. Their rack was full."

Also pictured: **JVC RK-100** stereo receiver ㉜ ("I know I need a real power amp"), **Maestro PS-1A Phase Shifter** ㉝ ("An absolute classic that a friend of mine from Wyoming gave me. It speeds up and slows down like a real Leslie"), **Korg SDD-1200** dual digital delay ㉞, **Alesis Microgate** ㉟, **Roland MT-32** sound module ㊱, **Sony DTC700** DAT machine ㊲, **AIWA AD-S15** cassette deck ㊳, **Shure SM58** microphone ㊴, **Yamaha NS-10** monitors ㊵ ("They're not the finest studio monitors, but they're indestructible and every studio has a pair, so you might as well get used to them"), and **ProCo** patch bays ㊶. ㊷

## FILM SCORING

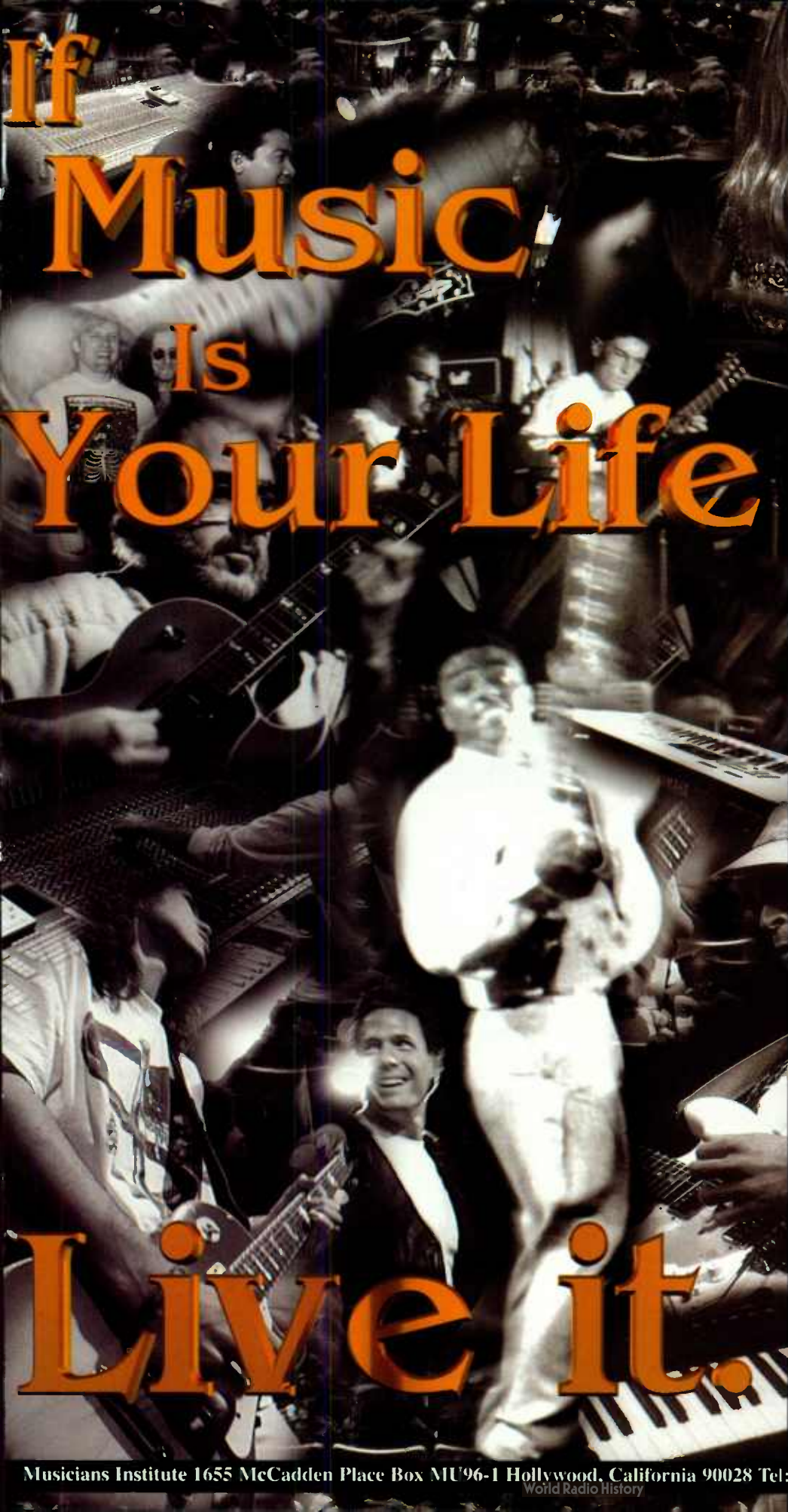
[cont'd from page 41] "I know a lot of bands who've had hit records, played the Forum and never get over it for the rest of their lives," says Mothersbaugh. "When Devo did its last tour six years ago, we played sold-out houses all over Europe, but we were on the bus, traveling in some pattern that made no sense and I ended up watching *Spinal Tap* three times. Long before the third viewing, I realized, when we got back to L.A., it was time to set aside this era in my life. We had fun. We played in front of 100,000 people. We played Budokan and the Forum. But I feel like I'm in a nice part of my life right now. I can live a normal life, if I want to."

While the worlds of pop music and soundtracks come ever closer, with albums like *Friday*, *Dangerous Minds* and *Waiting To Exhale* topping the charts and selling multi-platinum, it's left up to David Was to remind us there are still some differences.

"The twain isn't supposed to meet. The communities are distinct for a reason. The people who are good at making these little neutron bombs called pop songs are different kinds of characters from the ones that want to sit in a dark room wondering how to make a chase scene sound."

Increasingly, though, those different characters can exist in a single musician. ㊸





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# products index

Our all-new products guide lists the equipment and page number where the players talk about the gear they use. Feel free to call the manufacturers listed below for specific info on what the best players play.

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# MUSICIAN MAGAZINE'S

# 1996 BEST UNSIGNED BAND COMPETITION

## SEMI-FINALISTS

### ROUND 2

Our diligent judges are wearing their fingers to the bone and our cassette decks are gasping for air. But it's all in the name of finding some of the best unsigned bands and artists out there, so on we go. Keep in mind, this is only the second round of semi-finalists (we're going as fast as we can, man). So, if you don't see your band listed here, be sure to check out the June issue of Musician for Round 3. (Round 1 appeared in the April 1996 issue, in case you missed it). In the meantime, let's have another hearty round for the following semi-finalists:

No Such Animal, MI  
Elderberry Jam, ME  
Amos, MI  
Plastik Monday, WA  
Jake, AZ  
Agona Hardison Band, MA  
Black Male Faces, SC  
The Wackers, IL  
Bonghi, SC  
Soda, ME  
America UK, IL  
Chris Schrader/Jean Bull, MD  
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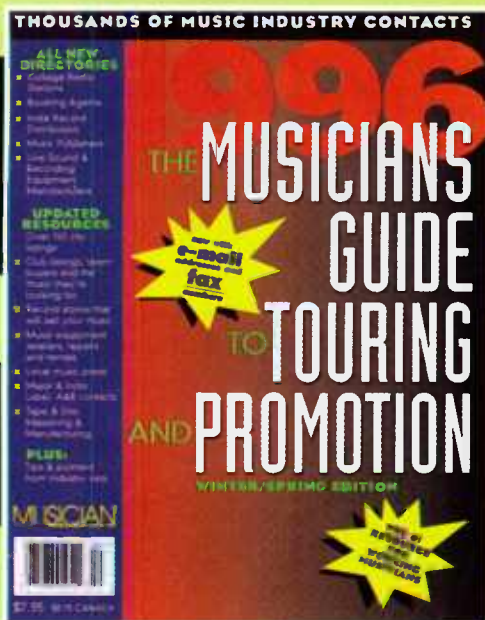
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Word Bongo, IL  
Iris Anvil, KS  
The Unbeatables, ONT  
Everything, CA  
The Daily Blues, NE  
Ivan R.G., NY  
Freddie Catalfo, NH  
Green Eden, FL  
Champion Bubbblers, OH  
Squirrel's...GONE!, MA  
Leslie Nuchow, NY  
Two Worlds Collide, FL  
Emily's Porch, NC  
Stuck On Chelsea, IL

Marc n' Jeff, NM  
Sugardaddy, FL  
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Wellcurbs, NJ  
Lemon James, MI  
P.L.O.W., NC  
Apocalypse, MI  
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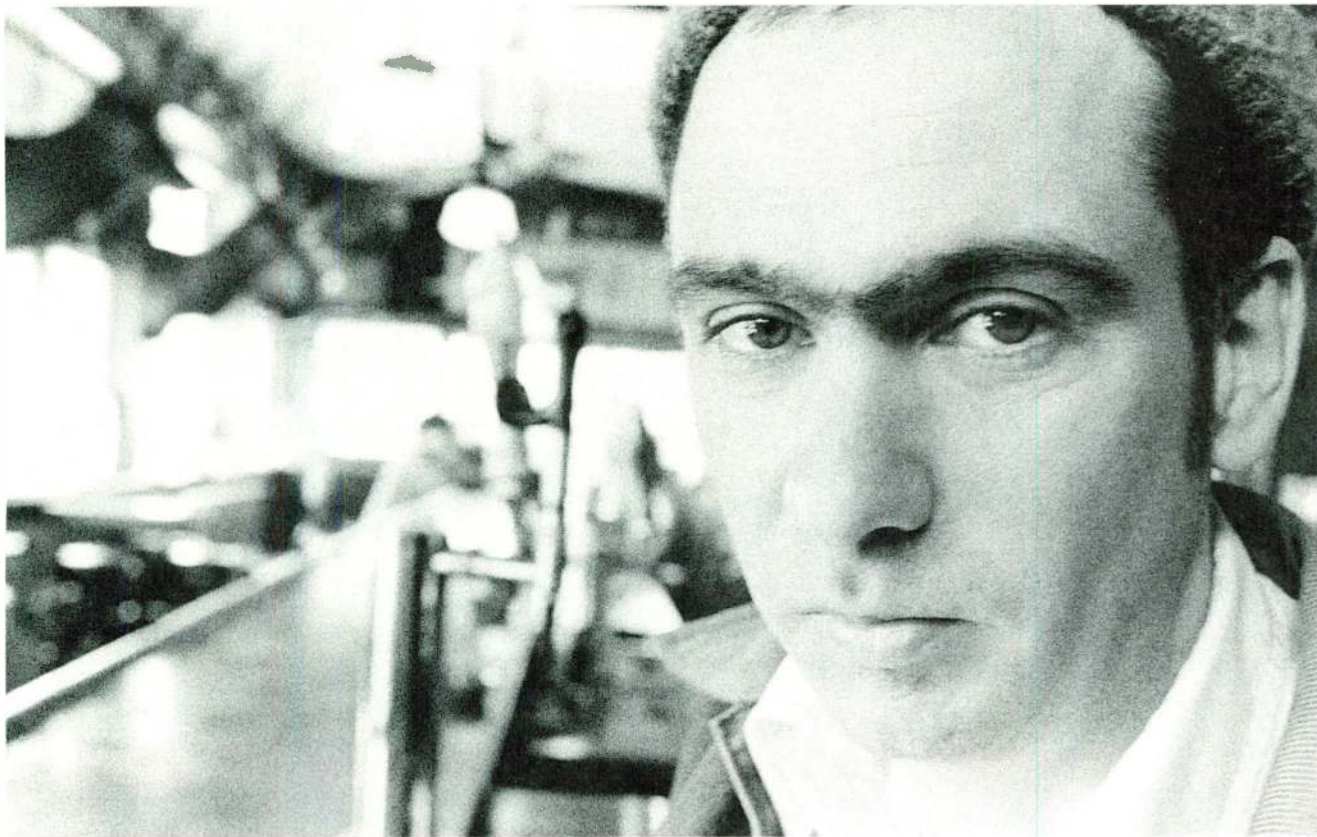
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## Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy

**D**epression. Resignation. Lonely brooding. Abject misery. These are the things we've come to expect from Mark Eitzel. Over the course of six albums with his band American Music Club, Eitzel presented a worldview nearly unrelenting in its gloom; he may not have been entirely original in doing this, but at least you never doubted his sincerity. *60 Watt Silver Lining* is his first release since breaking up the Club (two other AMCCers, Bruce Kaphan and Daniel Pearson, help out), and its message is pretty much the same as always: Life is a loser's game, with only a few brief, relatively cheerful moments to keep us going through the muck. As Eitzel puts it himself on one of the songs here, "Your love is all I'll have to take with me/When my plane finally goes down."

The thing is, such sentiments take on a slightly

**Mark Eitzel**  
*60 Watt Silver Lining*  
(Warner Bros.)

different nature when they're coupled with delicate, graceful music of the sort on offer here. Sure, the overall mood of *60 Watt* is somber, heavy on the piano and acoustic guitar, with strategic use of Mark Isham's trumpet for late-night film-noir ambience. But in truth, it's hard to feel down for long while listening to these songs. A couple tunes could even be called happy, if you ignore lyrics: "Cleopatra Jones" skips along with ease, while the loping groove and catchy horn parts of "South End" are decidedly upbeat. Depression has rarely sounded so inspired, or so inspirational.

Then there's Eitzel's voice. Whenever he raises it

above a whisper, two major influences shine out: Elvis Costello and Van Morrison. Like Costello, Eitzel has a fondness for belting out tough melodies, doesn't quite have the pipes for it, but doesn't care. It is that refusal to shy away from risk that makes his singing so thrilling—listen to the seasick slides between notes on "Mission Rock" for proof. Van the Man's presence is felt most strongly on "Wild Sea," a two-chord song (except for a brief instrumental interlude) over which Eitzel ruminates about nature, human and otherwise. As the music builds, Eitzel begins repeating choice words and phrases over and over with Morrisonesque intensity; by the time he's gotten to the part about "the source of your heart in the undertow," he's pretty worked up. It's a bravura performance, and the rest of *60 Watt* isn't far behind. Listen to it alone if at all possible. If not, check it out with your favorite fellow loser(s).—**Mac Randall**

Jay Blakesberg



## Lee Morgan

*The Complete Blue Note  
Lee Morgan Fifties Sessions  
(Mosaic Records)*

Philadelphia in the '50s teemed with jazz talent. McCoy Tyner, Kenny and Bill Barron, Ray Bryant, Hank Mobley, John Coltrane, Benny Golson, Philly Joe Jones, Reggie Workman, the Heath brothers, the Dockery brothers—and Lee Morgan. As a teenaged trumpet virtuoso, Morgan had already made a splash in Dizzy Gillespie's big band when the music in this boxed set was recorded. Representing seven sessions between 1956 and 1958, by which time Morgan was still only 19, they present incontrovertible evidence that the "young lion" phenomenon is far from new. They also bear witness to a talent that has rarely been surpassed on trumpet by anyone.

Jazz luminaries surround Morgan on these dates—Paul Chambers, Horace Silver, Wynton Kelly—and the music they create together retains a vitality that swings as hard in 1996 as it did four decades past. On Disc I, we are privy to some rough edges, and a tumble of youthful ideas as they pour out of Morgan's trumpet—he quotes "Pop Goes the Weasel" while soloing on the debut recording of "Whisper Not"—along with a straightforwardness of performance that points up the distinction between improvising and noodling. Horace Silver's "Roccus," spare on the surface, shifts shape throughout; on Philly composer Owen Marshall's "The Lady," Morgan's early promise as a champion of the ballad is glimpsed.

## Gerry Mulligan

1927-96

*[The death of Gerry Mulligan closes an important chapter in the annals of jazz saxophone. More than a unique stylist on baritone sax, Mulligan was a driving force in the "cool" movement pioneered by Miles Davis in the late '40s. Many of his experiments, including charts written for his pianoless quartet of the early '50s, helped bring jazz writing and improvisation to an unprecedented level of sophistication for smaller groups. Here, a modern giant of jazz saxophone, Blue Note artist Joe Lovano, offers his appreciation of Mulligan.]*

Disc II might well be subtitled "The Benny Golson Story," featuring eight compositions that typically, for Golson, are arranged to showcase intricate ensemble playing. "Mesabi Chant" provides a vehicle for Morgan to exhibit fleetness of execution and a lustrous tone, while the peerless Chambers anchors the rhythm section(s) throughout playing not just the right notes, but the *best* notes, and swinging like nobody's business.

By Disc III, Morgan's growth and increasing confidence are audible. His solo on "Just One of Those Things" is an astonishment—you'll be pressing the rewind button to make sure you really heard what you did. While an alternate take exemplifies the high level of musicianship sustained

I was first drawn to the music of Gerry Mulligan on recordings that my Dad had. The things he did with Paul Desmond, Bob Brookmeyer, Art Farmer, Stan Getz and Chet Baker—those two-horn frontline and pianoless groups—were incredible. How they showed how to shape lines and create music together. His beautiful sound and expansive concepts of interplay and dialogue with other horn players were so influential to me as a young player. Some of the groups I play in today have two or three horns and no piano, and I still think of Gerry as we accompany each other—not just standing up and playing a solo but playing things within the ensemble that lead and accompany at the same time.

throughout these sessions, what set Morgan apart was the emotional content of his solos, the way he riveted the ear by grabbing the heart.

The closing chapter here includes Morgan's *Candy* album, a quartet recording with Sonny Clarke, Doug Watkins and Art Taylor that is a gem in itself and a precursor of killer albums to follow. "All the Way" houses one of the more brilliant illustrations of lyric interpretation wrought by an instrumentalist, as Morgan's phrasing of "*taller than the tallest tree is*" mirrors the undulating fall of a leaf. Taken together, this collection comprises a dense chunk of jazz history; it also documents fourteen months in the too-brief career of one of the greatest trumpet players who ever lived. (Mail order only; 1-203-327-7111.)—*Karen Bennett*

## No Stone Unturned: Ivan Neville's Reverie With Keith Richards

New Orleans lies somewhere past the snow-dusted hills and woods that stretch to the edge of Keith Richards' house in upstate New York. But here is where we find Ivan Neville, pedigreed singer and multi-instrumentalist, moments after being roused from the couch in the basement den where he and Keith passed most of the night talking—what else?—music.

Ivan is in the neighborhood while finishing up his next solo album, untitled as we went to press. It's supposed to hit the stores by the first week of May on Iguana, distributed by Alliance.

The rough mixes we heard that day were raw and spirited, with low-key but steaming bass and funky fills from a Wurlitzer electric piano that turns out to be a tweaked Old EP patch on a Korg O1/W, played through a seriously overdriven Fender Vibroverb amp. Neville laid down the band parts himself, although there was room for some guitar from that wild-haired,

headbanded gent refilling our coffee cups.

Keith is unfazed at adding his parts before Steve Jordan and Steve Williams come in to play over the Korg O1/W sequencer's reference

rhythm. "The difference is, you don't get those accidents when you look that drummer in the eye, and they go 'Oh, boy!' and make a sudden move," he admits. "At the same time, it can be good

practice to work with something impersonal that just goes *duh-duh-duh*, because you can hear the moves that need to be made.

"Some guys are better than others at being able to play to drum machines," he adds. "Ivan is very natural with it."

"When I'm writing stuff by myself in the studio, I tend to play with an imperfection thing," Neville explains. "Especially on the bass. It comes out a little bit more human if I play behind the beat instead of trying to be precise."

"He's got the feel," Keith insists. "He's always had it. So have I." He laughs, a cigarettes-and-whiskey chorle. "And we're arguing about who has more."—Robert L. Doerschuk





Gerry wasn't a typical baritone saxophonist. He came from a Lester Young/Ben Webster approach, in terms of sound and melody. He could play heatedly too. His work with Stan Getz was really exciting in the intensity of the melody and the rhythm and the attitude. That dialogue among horn players, of challenging each other melodically and harmonically without beating each other over the head, helps you learn to play with piano players, drummers and bass players at a different level too. But it was as a lyrical player that he really transcended his instrument. That's the key; once you develop to a certain point, you leave the technical things behind. Gerry never played like a technical wizard; he played beyond technique, like a beautiful songbird. —Joe Lovano

**Trey Anastasio**

*Surrender to the Air*  
(Elektra)

**Warren Cuccurullo**

*Thanks to Frank*  
(Imago)

From the jarring blasts of dissonance that introduce both of these records, you'd get the impression that Warren Cuccurullo and Trey Anastasio had been in catharsis withdrawal for quite some time. Probably Warren more so than Trey; as an improviser, he hasn't been put to the wall since spending the start of his twenties with Frank Zappa (in the years since, he's been part of Missing Persons and Duran Duran). You can never predict what happens to a young man who leaves his roots that far behind.

The even younger Anastasio gets to do pretty much whatever he likes with Phish, which makes the major-label release of his *Surrender to the Air* seem downright nihilistic. Or, perhaps, even more like the gig of a rich

Michael Ray and saxist Marshall Allen turned the trip into a free-jazz free-for-all, with admirably fluctuating levels of adrenaline. But because he lays back, or even out, in that tasteful way dictated by the improvisational democracy he's striving for here, Trey assumes a Teo Macero role over a consistently perceptible voice. At times, the music sounds so much like *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*, you'd swear this was a tribute album to his anarchic heroes past, present, and present in the studio. Is it? Absolutely, and at that, Sun Ra, Frank Zappa, even Miles, would have smiled.

As betis someone committed to a public life in pop, Cuccurullo privately favors huge, grinding vanps, harmonically dark and usually at a bone-crunching mid-tempo, which on *Thanks To Frank* are pumped along by drum genius (and Zappa vet) Vinnie Colaiuta and fretless virtuoso bassist Pino Palladino. Coming from the same global space—and I don't simply mean the New York City boroughs—as Joe Satriani and Steve Vai, Cuccurullo fashions solos with a wet but tightly processed sound, with the Indianish "Hey Zawinul" and lovely "Tardinha" serving as breathers, and allowing Pino his deserved space. It sounds like Warren shook off the sideman arthritis as the session progressed, finding his liquidity in the wickedly mistitled "Low-Speed Chase" and the obligingly titled title track, which closes this set of first or close-to-first takes. There, on a concert piece which vacillates between two chords, the guitarist goes gently, then assumes a recklessness condoned mostly by the same cats who, sadly, aren't around to hear what they've wrought. Somewhere in their cry lies a clearly articulated statement about creative energy unhinged, and at that, Frank, Miles and Mr. Ra would have smiled. —Matt Resnicoff

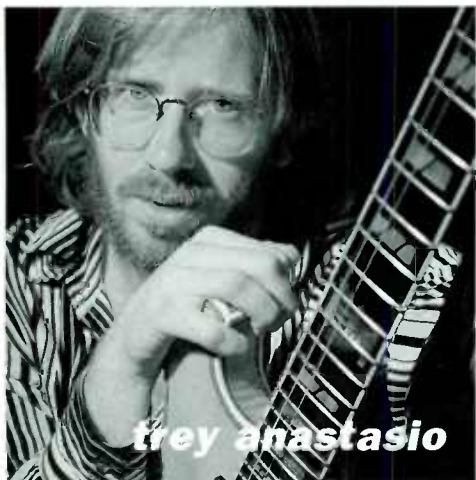
**Los Lobos**  
*Colossal Head*  
(Warner Bros.)

Fans of Los Lobos can be expected to wonder what the band's first studio release in over three years might sound like. Will it harken to the catchy guitar pop of early albums like *Will the Wolf Survive?* or the more ethereal textures of *Kiko*? The classic Chicago blues that is Cesar Rosas' forte or the Beefheartian sonic pastiche of '94's *Latin Playboys* CD, courtesy of David Hidalgo and Louis Perez, with help from Tchad Blake and Mitchell Froom?

The answer is all of the above, sort of. While the *Latin Playboys* sound is the most obvious touchstone

here (Blake and Froom co-produce with the band), this is very much a Los Lobos record, proffering a polyglot of familiar roots music in unpredictable and frequently thrilling combinations, from a New Orleans funeral march to a hip-hop street party. You'll hear fuzz-toned field chants (in "Manny's Bones"), a vamping jazz flute ("Can't Stop the Rain") and an east/west techno vibe through "Little Japan," replete with wah-wah effects and a cheesy synth line that pokes fun at its own theme. From the jagged, avant-funk of "Revolution" and the Santana-meets-U2 attack of "Mas Y Mas," the band segues smoothly into the sentimental swaying rumba of "Maricela," and an updated slice of delta blues, "Everybody Loves a Train." By the time Hidalgo channels T-Bone Walker on the closing instrumental, "Buddy Ebsen Loves the Night Time," the album has taken on the qualities of an aural dreamscape—or a trip through the Smithsonian on hallucinogens.

Fans of the group's more familiar, melodic pop-rock may not embrace this brave new world of funky collage music, but that's their loss. Los Lobos has managed to straddle several borders at once, from language to culture



Jay Blakesberg

trey anastasio

fan's dreams: Trey set up instruments at Electric Lady Studios and invited some friends and heroes to extemporize for two days, asking only that they observe a few of his prepared transitional motifs. He captured some profound stuff, bouncing off manic guitarist Marc Ribot and keyboardist John Medeski while Sun Ra trumpeter



Jay Blakesberg

los lobos

to musical genres—not to mention the trick of trying something new after 20 years together. They're a great American band, but you already knew that. More to the point, they're a great American band that's still growing. —Roy Trakin

**Afghan Whigs**  
*Black Love*  
(Elektra)

Some cult faves take notoriety as a license to coast, but Afghan Whigs bossman Greg Dulli has bravely done the opposite, seeking new and inventive ways to depict a soul on fire. On *Black Love*, he portrays lust, revenge, anger and other juicy stuff with his usual impressive fervor; at the same time, he burdens these tales of



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passion with so many pretensions that the project eventually buckles under its own weight. While never boring, thanks to Dulli's relentlessness, this album seems oddly static, deprived of vitality by too much contrivance.

Dulli's electrifying contributions to the soundtrack of *Backbeat*, portraying John Lennon on killer versions of golden oldies, showed that he understands the value of directness. But here, aspiring to nothing less than a profound masterpiece, Dulli delivers a sprawling melodrama that sputters as often as it sizzles.

The Whigs grind out uneasy chords, starting softly and building to a stormy crescendo in the familiar manner of other hip bands, as the singer groans and howls, the epitome of swaggering desperation. Kicking off with "Crime Scene Part One," a hushed farewell to friends and foes, Dulli lays out themes he revisits repeatedly, pondering truth versus lies, ignorance versus understanding, and tenderness versus suspicion.

Avoiding specifics, Dulli obliquely depicts restless lovers searching for... well, something important. He faces adversaries in "My Enemy" and "Honky's Ladder," succumbs to jealousy on "Double Day," admits weakness in "Blame, Etc.," and tries to decipher the cosmos throughout. Bryan Ferry trod similar existential turf in a different vein, and was a lot more fun.

Subordinated to Dulli's grand ambitions, the other Whigs resemble hired hands rather than a genuine unit. In fact, the most distinctive noises come from non-Whig Harold Chichester's keyboards, not Rick McCollum's axe. The tantalizing blend of Clavinet, wah-wah guitar, congas and strings that opens "Blame, Etc." recalls the freewheeling spirit of "Shaft." Unhappily, it's a spirit sorely lacking elsewhere.—*Jon Young*

## Sting

*Mercury Falling*  
(A&M)

What, no polkas or Irish aires? Sting's sixth solo album, and his first of new material in three years, boasts just about every other genre. He not only dabbles in country, soul, jazz and gospel but detours into French bossa nova ("La Belle Dame Sans Regret") and eerie Celtic music ("Valparaiso"). Such rampant genre-hopping can often sink an album, but not here. Sting hopscoches comfortably across these varied styles, even the gospel lite of the warm, uplifting "Let Your Soul Be Your Pilot." Where you'd expect him to stumble—on the soulful "All Four Seasons," featuring the punchy underlining of the Memphis Horns—he cruises along smoothly in low gear, sounding like Marvin Gaye at half speed.

Mostly moody and subdued, *Mercury Falling* rarely rocks. Deep into his introspective troubadour mode, Sting wails of lost loves, assorted heartbreaks and bitter twists of fate. On past albums, his poetic tendencies have sometimes careened over the top, sounding annoyingly pompous or at least self-consciously arty, but lyric imagery is more subtle here. There's a grim tale of murder, "I Hung My Head," but unlike the songs on *Ten Summoner's Tales*, he's mostly kept the celebrated angst in check.

Co-produced with Hugh Padgham, *Mercury Falling* does have something in common with Sting's other solo



works—brilliant instrumentation. Strip away the narratives and you discover that his starkly arranged instrumental passages featuring guitarist Dominic Miller, keyboardist Kenny Kirkland, drummer Vinnie Colaiuta and himself on bass, could stand on their own.—*Dennis Hunt*

## Victor Wooten

*A Show of Hands*  
(Compass)

Far be it from me to rail against prevailing humanistic tenets, but Victor Wooten is proof that all men are not created equal. Wooten is a bass guitar hero for the '90s, pushing the instrumental envelope forward much as James Jamerson, Jaco Pastorius and Jamaladeen Tacuma did in past decades. Whether it's a product of practice, providential genetics or plain old soul, *A Show of Hands* provides a strikingly original showcase for the solo bass guitar—with a master's class in duh groove.

Think I'm jiving? Sure, many contemporary bassists are capable of complex thumb-slapped syncopations and sweltering waves of harmonics—so long as there's only a single chord or tonal center. But on the title cut, Wooten modulates rhythmically and harmonically with such dizzying élan, he suggests numerous possible directions for futuristic groove music.

*A Show of Hands* is a live-to-ADAT production: That is to say, no overdubs Jim, just him, on either a regular four-string bass guitar or the brighter tenor bass guitar (tuned A-D-G-C). There are odd bits of aural sweetening, and verbal interludes which speak to matters of plain ol' fun, peace, justice and human potential. "Medley" showcases some remarkable jazz variations (particularly on "A Night in Tunisia"), which Wooten accomplishes by tapping away rhythmically à la Stanley Jordan, while the harpsichord-like flurries of "Classical Thump" are the product of an elaborate hammer-on/hammer-off technique.

But Wooten also shines in more tightly focused settings—check out the graceful accumulation of octaves, harmonics, moving bass and chord-melody passages on "The Vision" and "Overjoyed"—while "More Love" is an affectionate slice of reggae twang. Wooten is oven-

ready for the 21st century, and *A Show of Hands* is his witty, inspiring calling card.—*Chip Stern*

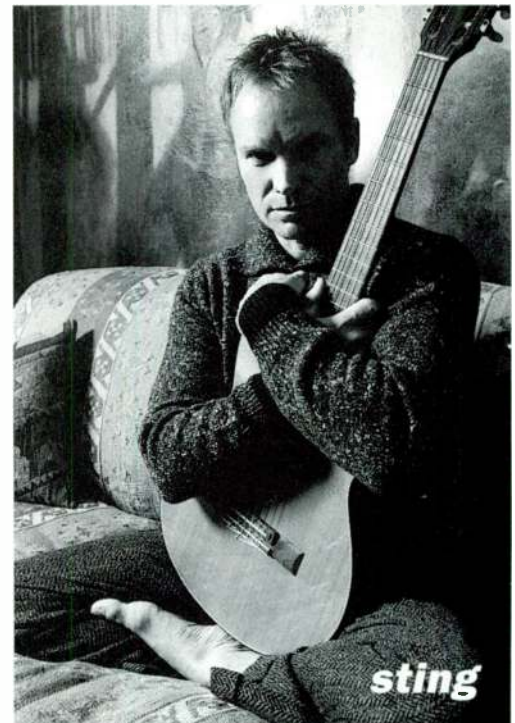
## Various Artists

*Cocktail Mix: Bachelor's Guide to the Galaxy/Swingin' Singles/Martini Madness*  
(Rhino)

Drink up! There is sudsy, urbane kitsch aplenty on Rhino's new three-CD series, following hot on the heels of Esquivel-mania. In retrospect, "easy listening" is one of the misnomers tossed at this branch of "background" music. In an era when the genuine inanities of new age and contemporary jazz—abrasively "easy" listening—accost us where we live, this music sounds positively vibrant and ear-tweaking by comparison.

Due attention is paid to the atmosphere of the swank 'n' suave on the Rhino set, but, beyond the party favor credentials of the package, there are history lessons to be learned here. Taken from the late '50s/early '60s, these tracks represent cheezy Americana richly deserving wider recognition, a secret cultural cachet hiding in plain sight.

Much as it's a gas to hear the vocal charms of Miss Ann-Margret singing "Thirteen Men" and the likes of Dean Martin, Mel Tormé, and Robert Mitchum's swizzle-sticky, mock-tropical "Not Me," the best tracks are instrumental, mostly on the *Bachelor's Guide to the Galaxy* CD. From the splinkery wit of "Will You Still Be Mine," by Dean Elliott & His Swinging Big, Big Band, to Lenny Dee's organ-ad-



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Age \_\_\_\_\_

All entries must be accompanied by a complete roster (name, address, phone & age) of all band members. All information provided is confidential.



dled "China Boy (Go Sleep)" to Dave Harris and the Powerhouse's "The Penguin," this music sits, audaciously, between jazz and camp. Alvin Rey, the slide-guitar hero who added glissando grease to Esquivel, provides the aptly-titled "Rock Gently," and the Bobby Hammond Quartet take the Raymond Scott classic "Powerhouse" at a perilous tempo. This is my kind of galaxy.

During the '60s this music ran counter to the counter-culture, quickly disappearing into thrift shop vinyl archives. Of course, trendiness is a suspect thing, but the current fashionability of the Cocktail Music Craze does nothing to diminish its clever sting or its soothing red naugahyde-textured sensations.

—Josef Woodard



### Husikesque

**Green Blue Fire**  
(Astralwerks/Caroline)

So far, it's been tough to predict the course of Lida Husik's career. Emerging from the fringes of the DC hardcore scene in the late '80s, she cut a series of albums for Shimmy-Disc that weren't punk so much as defiantly odd. Nineteen ninety four's *Evening at the Grange* EP, a collaboration with British techno wizard Beaumont Hannant, delved into dance and ambient music with surprising success. And last year's *Joyride* was one of the unsung rock gems of '95. Now she's back again with Hannant, under the moniker Husikesque, for another round of electronic experimentation. What next, soukous?

Whatever it is, let's hope it's as topnotch as *Green Blue Fire*. This is one rich-sounding album. Handling guitars, vocals and most of the keyboards, Husik builds a warm soundbed that's heard to best effect on the gorgeous instrumental "River Ouse." Meanwhile, Hannant and co-conspirator Richard Brown devise the percussion sounds and beats. Half the album is made up of heavily ambient pieces; the other is based around enticing grooves (one component of this half, "Starburst 7," originally showed up on *Grange* and was redone on *Joyride*). Over it all Husik's wispy voice floats angelically. When she chooses to overdub several layers of herself, it's almost too much of a good thing, but not quite.

Make no mistake, these 10 tracks aren't mere mood music. They're real songs, with real melodies and

words (okay, the lyrics are a bit fragmentary, but they sound good). And at their best—the swooping chorus of "Bad Head Day," the E-Bowed guitar and phased vocal of "I Haunt Me"—they put the trip back in tripphop.—Mac Randall

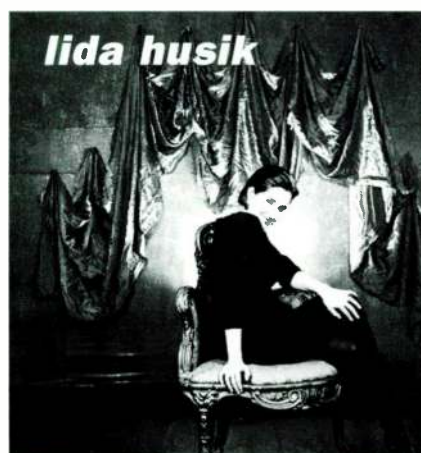
### Ali Akbar Khan

**Ali Akbar Khan Presents: Legacy**  
(AMMP/Triloka)

A quiet sitar drone rises from silence, quickly pierced by the twang of strings plucked on the sarod—25-string cousin to the sitar—which is all to be expected on a recording of classical Indian music by virtuoso Ali Akbar Khan. What makes this effort different is the presence of Asha Bhosle, India's most recorded singer, whose voice ascends from the hypnotic rumble of strings, navigating the exotic twists and turns of melody.

Indeed, *Legacy* marks the first time the master of Hindustani music has recorded with any singer. (They met 45 years ago, when he was composing music for a film and she was laying down vocals; Bhosle has since been dubbed "The Nightingale of Asia.") Khan, who has flirted with fusion on a previous pair of Triloka releases, here selects compositions from

the 16th-century court of Emperor Akbar. Furious taps on the tabla, particularly on "Tarana," lay down complex rhythms as Khan and Bhosle complement each other with a sensitivity that a jazz singer and accompanist could only envy. Khan's



playing is delicate and reverential, as always. But it is Bhosle's highly controlled instrument, moving freely in tone from robust to pinched and nasal, that seduces the listener on these rare, exotic bandishes, as sarodist and singer bend notes in unexpected ways. The result is music of quiet, prayerful virtuosity.—Chris Rubin

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shorts

**Gerry Mulligan**

*The Gerry Mulligan Songbook*  
(Pacific Jazz)

Gerry Mulligan was one of jazz's few master baritone saxophonists, but his greatest influence was as a writer. This classic 1957 session teams Mulligan with a dream horn section (Lee Konitz, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims and Allen Eager) and a pianoless rhythm section with Dave Bailey (drums), Basie stalwart Freddie Green (guitar) and future avant-gardist Henry Grimes (bass). Featuring seven Mulligan originals with arrangements by Bill Holman, who was greatly influenced by Mulligan during their early-'50s stint in Stan Kenton's orchestra, the album is a perfect distillation of Mulligan's balance of simplicity and space with rapidly moving lines. As the horns weave in and out, creating an ineffable sensation of irresistible forward motion, Mulligan's witty and graceful melodies insinuate themselves in your ears. An added treat is a session featuring Mulligan with a guitar-bass-drums-violin-and-cello sextet covering four jazz standards by Horace Silver, Tadd Dameron and Milt Johnson.—*Andrew Gilbert*

**Dale Fielder Quartet**

*Dear Sir: Tribute to Wayne Shorter*  
(Clarion Jazz)

Rather than covering the obvious Wayne Shorter tunes, such as "Infant Eyes," "Black Nile" or "Footprints," L.A.-based saxophonist Dale Fielder dug up lesser-known gems for this tribute. Of the four Shorter originals, the most striking is the haunting, impressionistic "Dear Sir" from Lee Morgan's Blue Note album *The Procrastinator*. On Shorter's arrangement of Gil Evans' snappy "Barracudas," Fielder's tenor work shows he's listened closely to James Moody, while his six original tunes display a fertile imagination influenced by Shorter but not beholden to him. Fielder's working group, with Mingus and Rahsaan veteran Jane Getz on piano, Bill Markus on bass and Thomas White on drums, plays with the intuitive cohesiveness achieved only through dues paid on the bandstand.—*Andrew Gilbert*

**Johnny Hartman**

*For Trane*  
(Blue Note)

With his deep, rich baritone and relaxed delivery, Johnny Hartman was one of jazz's great ballad singers. He is also a case study in undeserved obscurity, remembered chiefly for the classic, eponymous 1963 album with John Coltrane. Little of his scant discography has been reissued since his death in 1983, which makes *For Trane*, a combination of two albums he recorded in Japan in 1972, especially welcome. With his voice in fine form, accompanied by capable Japanese rhythm sections (and trumpeter Terumasa Hino), Hartman endows standards such as "Nature Boy," "The Nearness of You" and "S'posin'" with almost tangible longing and smoldering sensuality.—*Andrew Gilbert*

short takes

by j.d. considine

**Cocteau Twins**

*Milk and Kisses*  
(Capitol)

Celebrated for their gauzy textures and soft-focus production, the Cocteaus' emphasis of mood over melody hasn't exactly produced a raft of hummable tunes. That changes markedly with *Milk and Kisses*. Not only is the writing more linear, but there's a far greater attention to craft—harmony vocals, counter-melodies, even the odd chorus or two. The emphasis is on texture, of course, but it's not all dreamy drones; "Violane" toys with rough-edged grooves and buzzing techno-style synths, while "Eperdu" owes its flavor to the well-manicured strum of phase-shifted acoustic guitar. Too bad the album's most memorable melody—"Half-gifts"—is, erm, "borrowed" from Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne."

**Tracy Bonham**

*The Burdens of Being Upright*  
(Island)

There are few arranging tricks simpler than a sudden shift from soft to loud, and few singer/songwriters do it better than Bonham. Though she plays dynamics for maximum drama, Bonham also appreciates the emotional release of untrammelled volume, a trick she uses to excellent effect on the lies-told-to-parents tantrum "Mother Mother." She's also a whiz at making the music's sound match its lyric intent, whether it's the emotional fixation implicit in the explosive chorus to "The One" or the awkwardness underscored by the blatting bass line beneath the "oh-I" refrain in "Kisses." An album as smart as it is tuneful.

**Clannad**

*Lore*  
(Atlantic)

Bigger isn't always better, particularly when it comes to something as ethereal as the sound of Clannad. Yet with *Lore*, the group has managed to amplify gossamer melodies and airy harmonies without distorting their music's quiet beauty. It helps that arrangements tend toward the cinematic, as with the wide-screen sprawl of "Croi Cróga," but there's more to it than that, for the best tracks here benefit from the breadth of the band's palette. "From Your Heart" slips from Celtic cadences to hip-hop-inflected funk, while "Seanchas" mixes rhythmic momentum and melodic uplift with all the confidence of a hit single.

**Neil Young**

*Music From and Inspired by the Motion Picture Dead Man*  
(Vapor)

At first, having Neil Young create itchy, edgy soundscapes that directly reflect someone else's onscreen drama seems a great idea. But after 20 minutes of effect-drenched noodling and incomprehensible slices of dialog, you may find yourself screaming, "Cut!" Turn it off, *Dead Man*.

**Amédé Ardoin**

*The Roots of Zydeco*  
(Arhoolie)

Everybody knows that it was Clifton Chenier who brought electric blues into Creole music, thereby creating zydeco as we know it, but few are as aware that Amédé Ardoin fused French folksong and country blues to form the music Chenier grew up on. Hearing his sweet, plaintive voice on these 78s (recorded in 1930 and '34), it's easy to understand how zydeco developed its unique spin on the blues. But the real revelation is instrumental, as the stark syncopation of Ardoin's accordion and the tart drone of Dennis McGee's fiddle bring a rhythmic energy that leave these songs sounding as fresh as anything Beausoleil has recorded.

**Kris Kross**

*Young, Rich & Dangerous*  
(Ruffhouse)

Two out of three, anyway.

**Magic Dirt**

*Life Was Better*  
(Dirt)

On the one hand, Magic Dirt epitomizes everything admirable about Australian punk: aural aggression, emotional honesty and egalitarian spirit. But for each of those strengths there's a corresponding weakness—self-indulgent noise, undisciplined writing and willfully unpolished playing—that suggests, in this band's case, *Life* definitely could be better.

**Aimee Mann**

*I'm with Stupid*  
(DGC)

Seven months ago, when it looked like this album was going to be released on Reprise, I wrote a review lauding its intelligence, tuneful elegance and lyrical bite. Now that it's finally in the stores, those compliments still hold. Guitar pop doesn't get better than this.



## Yabby U

King Tubby's Prophecy of Dub

## Keith Hudson

Pick a Dub

(Blood & Fire)

As rasta would say, give thanks and praise to Blood & Fire Records, an English imprint that is working overtime to bring the best in "golden age" reggae of the '70s back into print. These two classic dub albums show a pair of ace mixers at their apex. *Prophecy of Dub*, originally issued in 1976, displays the formidable talents of Osbourne "King Tubby" Ruddock; the great dub originator has a field day with tracks originally cut by Vivian "Yabby U" Jackson, mixing them into a dense, richly detailed sonic bombardment. *Pick a Dub*, from 1974, is a rawer sound-fest on which producer Hudson utilized some of Jamaica's best instrumental talent—the Wailers' Barrett brothers, guitarist Earl "Chinna" Smith, and Melodica virtuoso Augustus Pablo. Blood & Fire has also released *Dub Gone Crazy*, a terrific compilation of early King Tubby dubs; singer Horace Andy's sublime *In the Light*, with dubs included; Burning Spear's magnificent 1978 roots manifesto *Social Living*; and the essential *Heart of the Congos*, producer Lee Perry's 1977 magnum opus, reissued in a spectacular-looking two-CD package. Make it easy on yourself (if not your pocketbook) and pick them all up. —Chris Morris

## The Grifters

Ain't My Lookout

(Sub Pop)

Vocals are more often trotted than not, the lyrics detail the seamier side of pop culture, and the spirits of Pavement, Guided by Voices and Sonic

Youth, among others, hover in the background. Who cares? You should. What makes this Memphis foursome, now on their fourth album, worthy of interest is the clever way they juxtapose killer hooks with weirdo noise. "Covered With Flies" follows nifty harmonies with backwards tape effects and feedback, while "Parting Shot" bookends a jet-propelled chorus with the rattles of an unhappy amplifier. And those are just the first two songs. The Grifters revel in such unholy combinations, and rock hard while doing so.

—Mac Randall

## Matt Darriau

Paradox Trio

(Knitting Factory Works)

Paradox Trio is the name of the band and fittingly enough, they're a quartet; all-purpose woodwindist Darriau is the leader. The liner notes say they play "original music inspired by Balkan, jazz and downtown traditions," and who are we to argue? The group sound is generally quiet and subtle, but even so these pieces convey the same sense of hurtling recklessly toward some mysterious goal that one gets from the music of the great Bulgarian clarinetist Ivo Papasov. Complex time signatures are favored; Darriau's rippling sax, flute and clarinet lines often

form thick mists of ethnicity that are ruthlessly dispelled by angular guitar bursts from Brad Schoeppach. Highlights: "Rufus 7," a showcase for five-string cellist Rufus Cappadocia and dumbek master Seido Salifoski, and "Pump Up the Goat," on which Darriau plays the gaida, a bagpipe made from—yes—a whole goat. —Mac Randall

## The Dixie Nightingales, the Jubilee Hummingbirds, the Stars of Virginia, and the Pattersonaires

Disturb My Soul

(Stax Sessions)

Here's a compilation of revelatory stuff from Stax's obscure gospel subsidiary Chalice, most of it circa 1965, a good chunk of it unreleased until now. Though with only a couple of (possible) exceptions the back-up has nothing to do with Booker T. and Co., they play with the same spirit of selfless economy and confident soul as the masters, and all four singing groups keep right up. For a change, a lot of the unreleased stuff really stands out, especially the Nightingales' "All I Need Is Some Sunshine In My Life," the crown jewel of a treasure that should convert heathens and faithful alike. —Thurston Kelp

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**STRESSFEST**

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# records

## Die Knödel

**Overcooked Tyroleans**  
(Koch)

**M**odern, playful chamber music, very structured, played by a Swiss octet that includes viola, violin, three dulcimers, bassoon, clarinet, trumpet, and harp. Neither dissonant nor conservative, Die Knödel are very melodic and otherwise impossible to categorize; perhaps somewhere between a much more interesting version of Combustible Edison and what Zappa might've approached if he hadn't fallen in with the electric guitar crowd. That's right! No electric guitars! No drums!—*Thurston Kelp*

## Slim Harpo

**The Scratch**  
(AVI)

**A**VI has been doing a superlative job of trolling Excello Records' swamp-blues catalog; the present compilation devoted to harmonica ace Harpo includes unheard takes of such hits as "I'm a King Bee" and "Baby Scratch My Back" that are only marginally less exciting than the originally issued versions. The real prize, though, is a 1961 home-equipment recording of Harpo and his group performing live at a 1961 dance in a Mobile, Alabama armory. As the band reels off hits and such unlikely requests as "When the Saints Go Marchin' In" for a drunken, chanting crowd, you can smell the sweat and cheap perfume, and the spilled beer on the parquet is almost sticky under your feet.—*Chris Morris*

## Mary Lou Williams

**Zodiac Suite**  
(Smithsonian/Folkways)

**Zoning**  
(Smithsonian/Folkways)

**T**he recent re-release of *Zodiac Suite* and *Zoning* should go a long way towards validating Mary Lou Williams' place in the pantheon of modern jazz greats. From the tonal poetry which animates each of the bejeweled miniatures on *Zodiac Suite* to her recasting of contemporary blues on *Zoning*, Williams is an eternal modernist—which is why her music remains so fresh and free.

Recorded for Folkways in 1945 as a series of solos, duos and trios depicting her personal experiences with people from each of the 12 signs of the zodiac—and fleshed out by six fascinating alternate takes—the first album must've sounded pretty avant-garde to audiences at that time. Each tune renders a fulsome portrait of complex human personalities: "Scorpio" begins with an Arabic-styled Eastern theme, progressing to a contrasting blues motif; "Aquarius" explores modern harmonies of an almost folkish character through shifting variations, ending with sunny, bell-like chords; "Libra" begins with rhapsodic chords, moving through impressionistic variations; "Taurus," dedicated to Duke Ellington, explores several phantasmagorical changes in tempo and tonality before alighting on a misterioso blues figure; and the alternative take of

"Gemini" comes off like a Debussy boogie-woogie. A generous sampling of notes by Dan Morgenstern and Williams herself help fill out a portrait of an artist at the peak of her creative powers.

Electric bassist Bob Cranshaw and drummer Mickey Roker lend Williams loose, funky support on the 1974 *Zoning* session, which finds the pianist right in tune with her times, though in terms of harmony and taste, well ahead of the pack—it reminds me of Duke's wonderful recasting of fashionable blues forms on *Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*. The opening "Syl-O-Gism" sets a contemporary tone, in what was then a soul jazz groove, but listen to how the pianist's wonderful chords, shifting structures and great blues feeling explode the form. Likewise on the downhome "Rosa Mae," the Afro-hosannas of "Play It Momma," and the Coltraneish energy changes of "Medi II." Williams' deep spiritual convictions pervade every note, especially on her solo piano feature "Ghost of Love," which encapsulates her genius for formal design and tonal color. Long may she wave.—*Chip Stern*

## Frank Zappa

**The Lost Episodes**  
(Rykodisc)

**W**hen Frank Zappa assembled *The Lost Episodes*, he pried open his attic trunk and set loose an archival pack of bizarre creations. Its artifacts include electric sea shanties, bossa-nova jazz, rare orchestral cuts and the score to a Luden's cough drop ad. Captain Beefheart appears often, from a late-'50s blues spoof to the *Trout Mask Replica* sessions. Also included are proto-versions of FZ classics like "Any Way the Wind Blows" and "Sharleena," featuring such cohorts as Ray Collins, Sugarcane Harris, George Duke, and Jean-Luc Ponty. Made for Zappaphiles, it's obscure, diverse, and twisted, which makes it an appropriate intro for FZ novices too.—*Drew Wheeler*

## Wynn Stewart

**The Best of the Challenge Masters**  
(AVI)

## Merle Haggard

**Vintage Collections**  
(Capitol)

**A**s everyone knows, Haggard is the king of the Bakersfield sound; as Haggard fans know, Wynn Stewart was the man who gave Hag his career break, first by taking him into his band and then letting him cover Stewart's "Sing A Sad Song." *Challenge Masters* suggests that Stewart was a major talent in his own right, with a ringing tenor voice that bears comparison to Marty Robbins and a feel for feral rockabilly and for honky-tonk weepers whose loping basslines will nudge you to the dance floor. The Haggard collection is a distillation of the single "best ofs" Capitol and Rhino released a few years back, albeit with classier cover art. Secret weapon in both of these packages is the great guitarist Roy Nichols, who really cranks it up with Stewart—but the Flying Burritos paid attention to this stuff—and whose solos with Haggard are models of tasteful sizzle.—*Mark Rowland*

## Various Artists

**Stardust: Capitol Sings**  
**Hoagy Carmichael**  
(Capitol)

**P**art of a series that also includes tributes to such golden-age composers as Harold Arlen and George Gershwin, and just incidentally recycles Capitol's lush catalog from the '40s and '50s. The result is a fascinatingly uneven pop mosaic, reminding that even geniuses range from the sublime—this is the guy who wrote "Stardust" and "Georgia on My Mind," after all—to the ridiculous; hearing Betty Hutton squawk "Doctor Lawyer, Indian Chief" will make you nostalgic for Paula Abdul. Generally the crooners steal the show, which in this case includes Nat King Cole, Chet Baker, Dean Martin and ol' Hoagy himself: His rendition of "New Orleans" casts a line backwards to Stephen Foster, and forward to Randy Newman.—*Mark Rowland*

## Tortoise

**Millions Now Living Will Never Die**  
(Thrill Jockey)

**W**allow in the oceanic sweep of Dave Pajo's guitar work on "Glass Museum." Dig the dueling marimbas and Brian Wilsonesque bassline on the 21-minute "Djed"—and don't be surprised when that middle section of the piece suddenly morphs into a white-noise synth opus. Your CD player is not malfunctioning; the band's just punching back and forth between two different parts on two different tape machines (maybe). I wouldn't put anything past this instrumental troupe. They're twisted—in a nice way.—*Mac Randall*

# video

## Paul Gilbert

**Terrifying Guitar Trip**  
(REH Video)

**I**f Mr. Big's Paul Gilbert is one of two or three truly accomplished rock guitarists to have kept up a profile in the last few years, that success owes at least as much to his sense of humor as his phenomenal musicianship—maybe to his sense of humor about musicianship. What other player who's clearly spent so much time sequestered in the woodshed has also cultivated sufficient personality to carry three entertaining instructional videos?

Huge in Japan and more deranged than any known hard rock virtuoso (excepting Buckethead, perhaps), Gilbert turns what's essentially a tutorial on chops into a complete performance-art package. You don't want to let on about the contents for fear of spoiling the surprise, but it can't hurt to note the *Trip's* scenic points: a wrist-defying string-skipping exercise; the dissection of ripping hammer-on ideas; a harmonic minor study; an obligatory look at the ruthlessly simple acoustic solo on his mega-hit "To Be With You." Gilbert is abetted by goofy traditionalism, demonstrating most of the material on a fringed white guitar with painted f-holes, and flushing out virtually every cliché known to the instructional-video world. The result offers a few touch-



ingly hilarious moments, and more than a few inanities, but I'd defy any player of any style to *not* come away a better player after working through it.—**Matt Resnicoff**

books

**Jazz—The Rough Guide: The Essential Companion to Artists and Albums**

(Penguin Rough Guides)

This comprehensive guide covers just about everything that falls under the umbrella of jazz, from the genre's earliest pioneers to its youngest turks; more than 1600 entries in all. There's a glossary for jargon, essays on styles and movements and a selective discography. The Guide is well written, clear in its explanations for the beginner, yet sophisticated enough to engage aficionados.—**Chris Rubin**

**Charles Peterson**

*Screaming Life*

(HarperCollins)

Peterson's photographs, which appeared on innumerable early Sub Pop albums and singles, defined the look of the Seattle grunge scene. His smeary, low-rent, wide-open black-and-white shots, snapped from the heart of the mosh pit, screamed "This scene is about AK-SHUN!" to the uninitiated bin browser. This slim but dandy compilation of photos, which takes its title from Soundgarden's first Sub Pop EP, contains a vast number of classic Seattle images, from Kurt Cobain in mid-headstand to a startling belly-level closeup of mountainous Tad Doyle. Like the music itself, the shots get less interesting as the book gets further away in time from the scene's genesis, and the sweaty intimacy of the rogue clubs that bred the style. But mostly, this is a grainy, gut-level blast; the book is complemented by a free eight-track CD of Puget Sound favorites.—**Chris Morris**

LENNY KRAVITZ

[cont'd from page 58] approach didn't work too well, so they're back to a happy medium with a Sennheiser 441 stuck directly between the rack and the floor tom.

Although Lenny's traveling with two horn players (trumpeter Michael Hunter and Harold Todd on saxophone) and keyboardist George Laks (who plays all authentic gear, including a Minimoog, a Hammond B3 and a Wurlitzer), there's never a doubt during the set that this is a guitar band. And because the second requirement of any Lenny show is that it sound as natural as possible, Edmonds has come up with a pretty nifty vintage attraction. Rather than a standard digital delay, the delays on both Lenny and Craig Ross' guitars are real tape delays. It's something that Edmonds came up with while trying to replicate the sound of Kravitz's latest release, *Circus* (Virgin). "I mike the guitar cabinets, send it to a little mixer which goes to the tape machine (an Otari MA050) and then returns to another 4x12 cabinet," he explains.

Through it all, there's only one thing they are trying to do, says Kravitz. "The most important thing is letting

the musicians play and developing the songs. We approach it like how a lot of jazz is done, playing the melody, playing the song and then taking it somewhere else." Seeing, my friends, is believing.—**David J. Farinella**

KRAVITZ MI BOX

[cont'd from page 60] Rickenbacker 4001, Fender '64 Precision and '66 Jazz. Amps: Ampeg F2B preamp, SWR Interstellar Overdrive preamp, two Ampeg

SVT 300s, two Acoustic 360s. Cabinets: two Ampeg SVTs. Strings: LaBella James Jamerson flatwounds.

Cindy Blackman. Drums: a blend of '60s and '70s Ludwig and Gretsch. Snare: Ludwig 402s. Cymbals: old Zildjians.

Microphones: Sennheiser MD441, MD421 and MD409, AKG D112, C414 and C408, Electro-Voice RE20, Shure SM91, SM57, SM58, and Beta 87, Beyerdynamic 201 and 420, Neumann U-87, Countryman FET-86 DI.

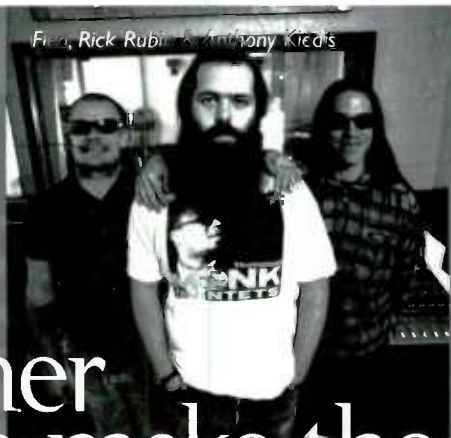


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[cont'd on page 101]

If you dressed Cindy Crawford in shredded jeans and a tattered black leather jacket, dyed her hair black and hung some round purple sunglasses from her nose, she could play Joey in "The Ramones Story." Long of limb, minimal of muscle, minuscule of ass, they both perambulate with a certain arachnoid grace. And with Cindy singing lead, the Ramones might finally get some exposure on MTV.

Back in the late '70s, I was thrilled when Elton John announced his retirement. I'd always hated the guy's music, and then was deeply annoyed to discover that every gossip column for the next four years had an item about Elton John coming out of retirement to play "Crocodile Rock" one more time with whomever happened to be playing the lounge at whatever hotel whose honeymoon suite Elton was occupying. As all rock stars discover in the dark of night off the road, the desire to be looked at doesn't retire until death do you part.

If I were a Las Vegas bookie, I'd put the over/under for a Ramones reunion concert at three years from the last date of their *Adios Amigos* tour. If I were betting, I'd take the under if Johnny Ramone makes some bad investments, over if Joey Ramone's purported

career as a nightclub impresario goes big-time. Whenever the Ramones weren't themselves on the road, Joey's been singing "I Wanna Be Sedated" and "Blitzkrieg Bop" for the encore of every band that has played New York since 1985. Which is only fitting, because, with the possible exception of the Rolling Stones, every band in the world started out playing Ramones songs in the basement. If anyone has the right to do the Elton-style non-retirement, it's Joey Ramone.

I predict that Joey's solo career will follow a pattern similar to Sting's. Once he ditches the rock 'n' roll band, we're not going to hear a lot of rock 'n' roll from him, unless he's singing somebody else's encore. It'll be standards and love songs. That's the kind of stuff

he wrote in the Ramones.

Dee Dee wrote most of the strange aggressive stuff that resonated with wounded masculinity. His songs were astonishing for their honesty and specificity, especially in the context of New York, the City of Big Lies.

The last time I met Dee Dee was a few years ago in an editor's office. He'd written a book that resonated with wounded masculinity, astonishing for its honesty but lacking in specificity. Sort of a cross between Friedrich Nietzsche and Tony Danza, it was mostly philosophizing and ranting. I tried to tell him that the book needed more anecdotes, and he didn't take it well.

He'd clearly been through everything, but he still spoke like a nine-year-old boy desperate to prove himself. This was, I think, the source of all the confusion about the Ramones. Dee Dee was not an *idiot savant*; he was a *pure savant*, a visionary genius of boyhood. Unlike Michael Jackson,

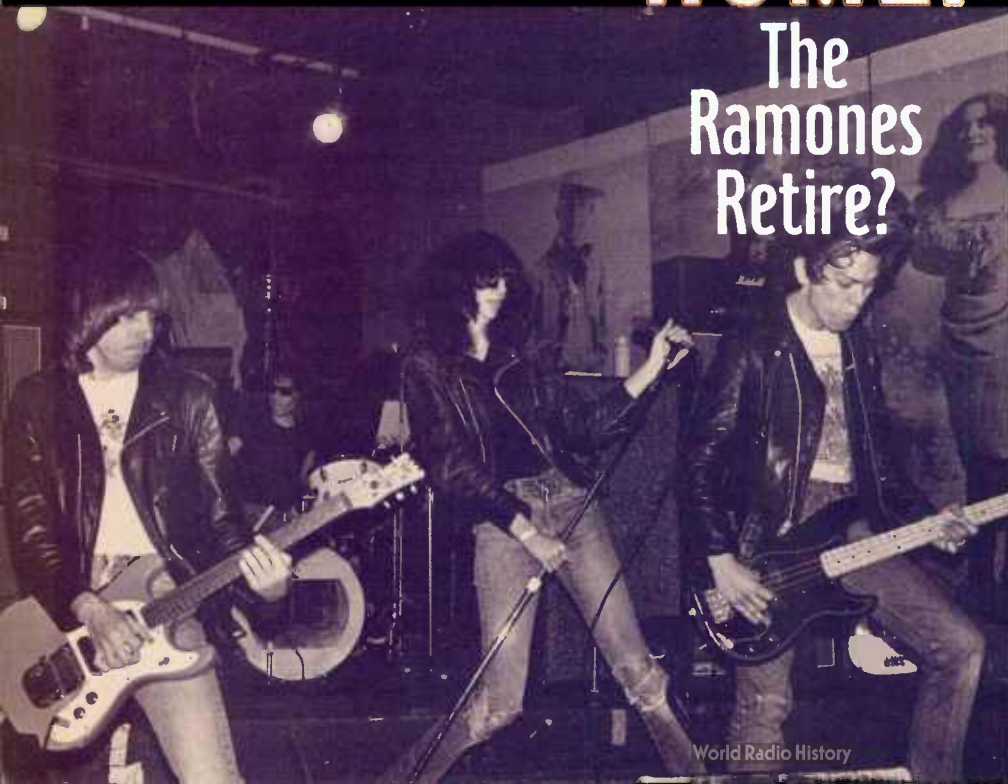
Dee Dee wanted to be a man and never would have named his estate Neverland if he'd made big money.

As Malcolm McLaren once told me, they invented MTV to sell socks. In this, the Ramones were far more successful than Cindy Crawford. Besides inspiring thousands of punk bands, they sold millions of "m.c. jackets" (m.c. for motorcycle), as black leather jackets are called in the garment trade. The Ramones' fashion influence has been evident at virtually every rock concert I've attended since the late '70s, and will live on into the foreseeable future. In the ultimate scheme of things, in this country, we're all just salesmen anyway. At least the Ramones had something unique to sell.

I first saw the Ramones in the summer of 1975 at CBGB. Talking Heads opened. They were such obvious art students that I found them annoying. Then the Ramones came out and did one of their legendary six-songs-in-twelve-minute sets. It was certainly the fastest and probably the funniest thing I'd ever seen on a stage. It was the birth of punk as a subculture, and it put a whole generation of geeks on a new Road to Ruin. Much as I've wanted to be sedated over the past couple of decades, I am, on balance, grateful for all the laughs and exhilaration.—**Charles M. Young**

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