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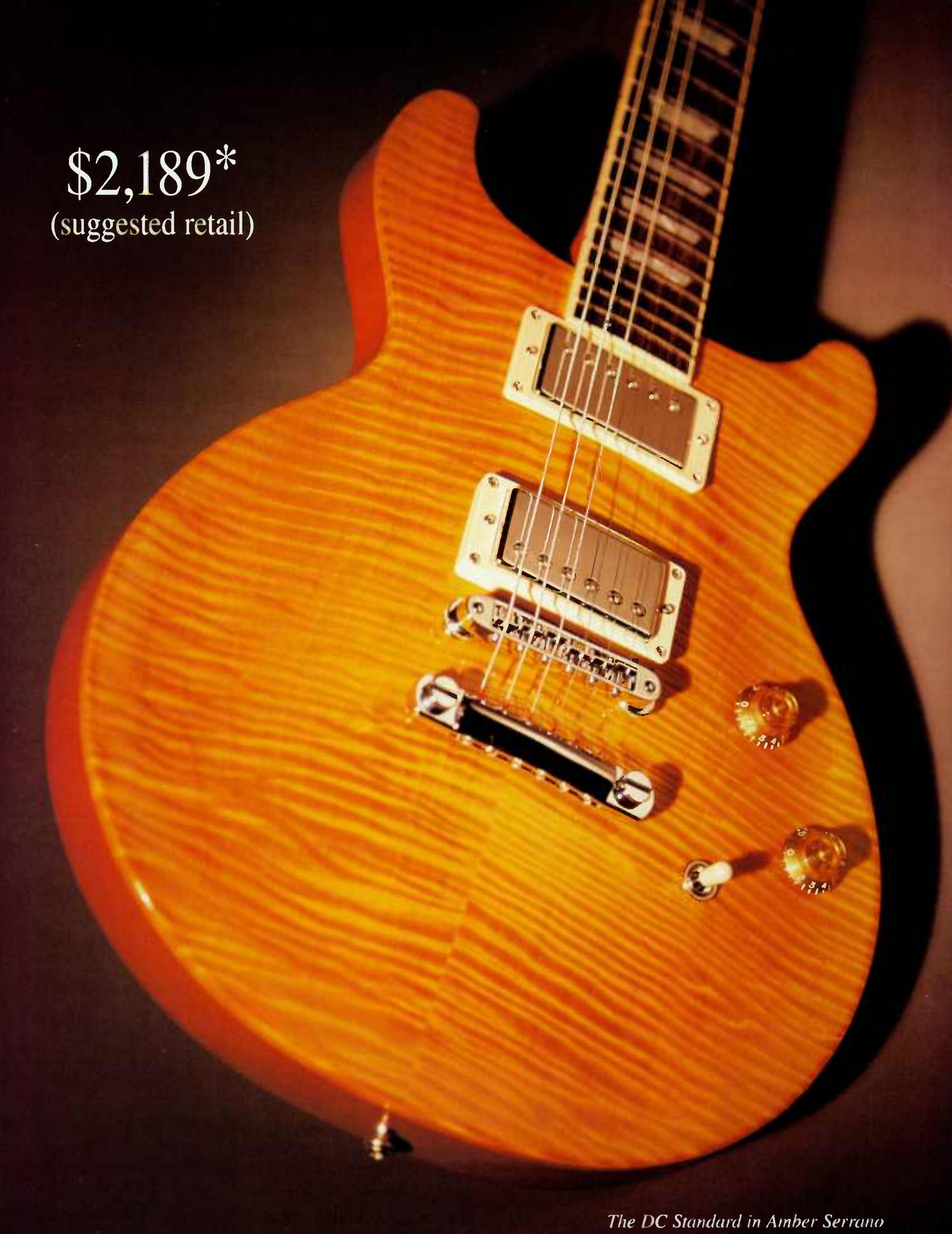

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MUSICIAN
THE ART, BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY OF MAKING MUSIC
July 1998/Issue no. 236

contents

departments

frontman
ICE CUBE
A rapper's perspective on scoring for film.
by mark rowland 11

sideman
TOM BARNEY
On the road with Steely Dan.
by howard massey 12

working musician
Work for big (six pieces and up) bands, trademark tips for your group's name, a guide to building your own cables, how to find gigs overseas, and an intro to song publishing. 14

private lesson
CHARLIE HUNTER
How to apply eight-string guitar techniques to your six-string. by mac randall 18

songwriting
BILLY BRAGG MEETS WOODY GUTHRIE
A collaboration across the borders of distance, culture, and time.
by mark rowland 22

records
Inside tracks on today's top albums. Also, NIN's Chris Vrenna takes the cello test with Rasputina. 83

backside
There's more to this biz than scales and sight-reading.
by reverend billy c. wirtz 98

product index 80

ad index 70

classifieds 92

letters 8

features

the musician interview
TORI AMOS
Can a notoriously idiosyncratic artist find happiness with her first real band?
by maureen herman 28

business
LAWYERS & LABELS
Two top music attorneys clear up the fine print on label deals. by blair r. fischer 46

headlines
WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM?
It's all about getting return bookings. (Hint: Leave Wild Man at home.)
by reverend billy c. wirtz 54

products & applications

home studio
TORTOISE
The room that hatched today's most adventurous instrumental sound.
by maureen herman 24

fast forward
Cool new stuff from Sennheiser, Fishman, Remo, eMedia, Parker, and Lexicon. 64

editor's pick
AKAI DR16
Hard-disk recording just got a bit easier.
by howard massey 67

studio techniques
SOUNDS FOR CD-ROM
Lessons in sound design from the makers of *Myst*. by robert raines 72

technology
LIFE AFTER KRAFTWERK
Techno pioneer Wolfgang Flür rates the state of modern electronica.
by e. d. menasché 76

power users
CHEMICAL BROTHERS
A sample lover's guide to Steinberg's ReCycle.
by e. d. menasché 78

Cover photo: Jonathan Mark

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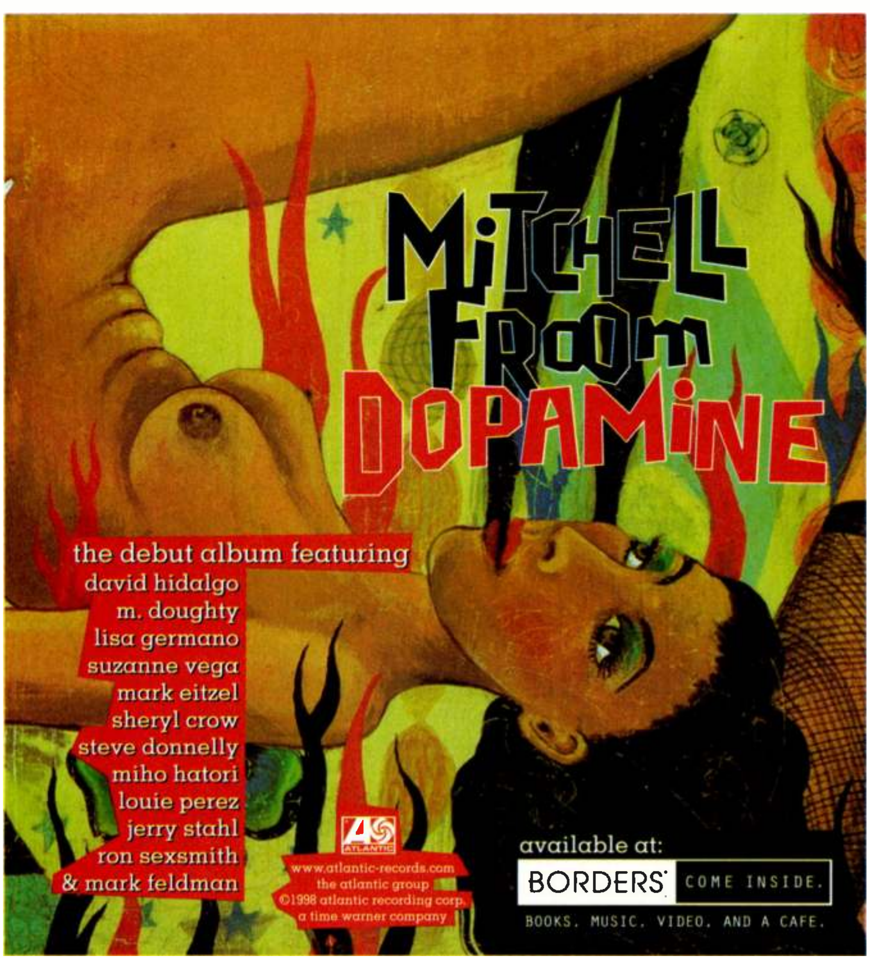

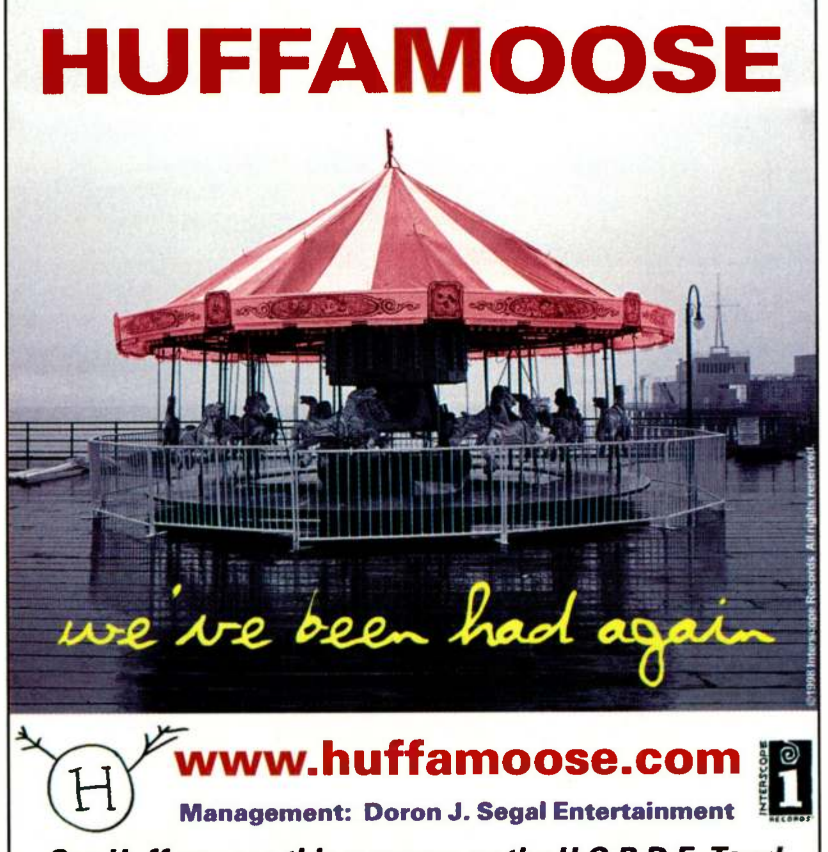

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JEFF FELLERS
classified
(800) 407-6874

KAREN OERTLEY
group publisher

EDITORIAL
49 Music Square West
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 321-9160 (Phone) • (615) 321-9170 (Fax)

RECORD REVIEWS
5055 Wilshire Blvd.
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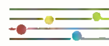

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mysteries of a&r

Pete Ganbarg's article "The Truth About A&R" (Headlines, Apr. '98) was interesting, yet I must question what exactly Ganbarg means when he writes, "Don't send your music to a label unless you're objectively convinced that it's amazing." What constitutes "amazing"? If Hanson, the Spice Girls, Marilyn Manson, or Hootie & the Blowfish represent amazing music to A&R folks, we surely need to see more articles in *Musician* like the one on Ani DiFranco.

tom cioppa
tcioppa@lamar.ColoState.EDU

I used to play guitar with a band in Philadelphia. We cut a CD and built a good following in New Jersey, New York, and Delaware, but every time we were approached by A&R reps, it was the same thing: a meeting, a handshake, and "Sorry, your singer isn't right. Fire him." When we pointed out that he wrote all the lyrics and wouldn't give permission for us to use them, their response was always, "Screw you. Goodbye." Thanks to Pete Ganbarg for having the guts to tell the whole truth about A&R.

silver foxx
philadelphia, PA

too old to rock?

I was dismayed to read Mark Rowland's "Don't Sign Anyone Over 30" (Headlines, Apr. '98). As a 39-year-old guitarist, I've been practicing, playing, and writing since I bought my Les Paul nineteen years ago. I've always believed that the age of the artist means nothing, for the power of the music, lyrics, and show are the key to success. Sure, teeny-bopper bands have always been signed, but except for a small number of them, all were burdened in their adult careers by their early reputations. As for material, it's impossible for a child, a late teen, or even a mid-twenty-something to play and write as well as a seasoned middle-aged adult. Life experience, the ability to reflect on societal issues, and sheer time is what young musicians lack. It's sad that many musicians who have spent countless hours working on their craft will be denied their chance in a business that selects bands on the basis of their youth. But I won't be discouraged. I love my guitar and my work, and I'll keep reaching for my dream of sharing my music with the world. I also encourage others like myself to keep pushing on.

marc katz
marc@agate.net

As a musician in his middle forties, I like to think that the maturity and wisdom I've gained over the years helps me put out better music. Unfortunately, as your article states, the music biz is just that: business. This is a shame for us old farts who still like to buy CDs but see nothing that appeals to us. It's criminal that a tribute to Lowell George, by such well-known and proven artists, can't get released here. Guess I'll buy it as an import.

The sad thing is that the record industry treats the older buying public like we don't even exist or have no taste except for classic hits radio and revived dinosaurs like Fleetwood Mac. In a just world, for every Hanson and Spice Girls, there should be a similar success story for a Marc Cohn or Anders Osborne.

DProDurock@aol.com

I'm a 21-year-old musician, and when people say to me "You'd better hurry up and make it," I disagree. People should only "make it" when they are fully developed as artists, doing music that is truly *them*. The record labels throw together young singers with a little talent and some songs that the executives think can be hits, then throw the results to the radio. That's not how art is born. It should come from the heart.

Beyond that, musicians shouldn't think that making it big is the only option. You can make a wonderful living as a working musician, no matter what age you are, if you have talent. You could make more money doing live shows and selling independent records than some of those one-hit wonders on major labels—and with fewer headaches. It's never too late for anything.

brooke rely
brookeandgavin@worldnet.att.net

ani difranco

We at Hamer enjoyed your article on Ani DiFranco (Interview, May '98), and all of us are very pleased that Ani has chosen our Artist Custom guitar as her only electric for the reasons mentioned. But there is one error in your story: "The position of the onboard preamp" that gets in the way of her "womanhood" clearly must refer to her Alvarez guitar. The Hamer Artist Custom's electronics are on the front of the guitar and in no way would interfere with a player's body.

frank rindone
product manager, hamer guitars
blumenfield, CT

Send letters to: *Musician*, 49 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203.
Email: editors@musicianmag.com.

from the editor

Over the past couple of years you may have noticed an ecclesiastical byline on some of our Backside pieces. From his lessons in coiling cable to his guide to knowing whether your band has checked into the Motel of Hell, it's clear that Reverend Billy C. Wirtz has the skewed view of the world that you'd expect from someone who's done time in the musical trenches . . . which is where he still spends much of his life.

Reverend Billy has long been preaching a unique gospel that involves rockin' keyboard chops, a deep knowledge of American roots music, and a comic touch that that deftly blends elements of Spike Jones, Frank Zappa, and WWF's *Monday Night Raw*.

You can hear the Rev's message on his five Hightone albums—titles include *Deep-Fried and Sanctified* and *Backslider's Tractor Pull*. But you can also expect to read more from him in these pages as Billy tackles the issues that all touring musicians face. His experiences can fill a book—in fact, they will; between gigs, assignments from us, and work on his upcoming CD, he's writing a survivor's guide for performing musicians, to be published—naturally—somewhere down the road.

"I've been out there," Billy says. "I've made it to the good solid middle. A lot of people have gone from small-time to big-time, and there's a huge middle out there that isn't being addressed. Being in the middle doesn't mean you're a hack or you have to play bullshit music. In fact, you can be true to yourself musically, but you have to know how to do it."

That's where the Rev comes in. Check out his first full-length article for *Musician*, a practical reflection on professionalism, in this issue. In fact, don't leave home without it.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

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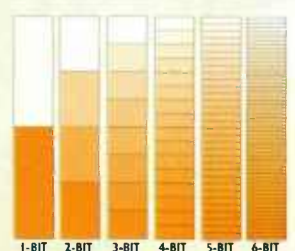

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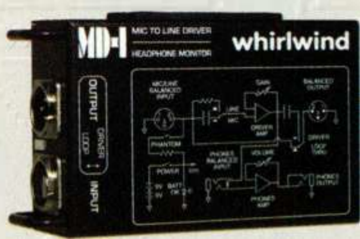

In the studio, the Hot Box™ is Whirlwind's top-of-the-line DI for sending your pure guitar sound direct to the mixer. The ultra-high input impedance, super-wide bandwidth and vanishingly low noise mean you won't find better sonic performance anywhere.

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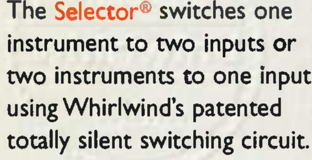

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"Great singers [work] from the heart. So do great rappers."

Ice Cube

You recently directed your first movie, The Players Club, *and produced the soundtrack for that film as well. How did you choose the music?*

I had a mock soundtrack laid out before we did the movie, and I prepared for scenes that way. You try to get a vibe from your temp music. If a song seemed to work for a scene, we had a team here that was writing songs, so I would tell them, "We need a song that sounds similar to such-and-such." Then all we'd need is a famous singer to come in and sing it. That happened with Brownstone and Public Announcement and a couple of the R&B songs. Sometimes you can run into the problem where you call someone and say, "Send me a song," then it doesn't work, but you've paid the money.

And licensing well-known songs can be expensive.

Yeah. It really makes more sense to do original recordings. The licensing can be ridiculous, including samples. I wish they would come up with a standard [licensing] fee for all that, 'cause if you have a song and it dies out and then a guy comes and puts it in a movie, that's gonna give that song new life, so you shouldn't charge that guy and arm and a leg to use it. How many people went out and bought "Jungle Boogie" after they put it in *Pulp Fiction*? Don't rape the people who are trying to sell your catalog.

You directed several hip-hop videos before making The Players Club. *How did that affect the way you used music in the movie?*

In hip-hop, the best videos go right with the song. It's like a straight picture. Alternative videos and rock & roll videos are more like Picassos—all these images that are interesting to look at but don't necessarily fit with the song. That formula rarely works in rap. If, in "We Be Clubbin'," you don't see people dancing or in a club, you're out of bounds. In rap the music drives the picture. In a lot of movies the picture drives the music; the music is for a montage or transition from one act to another. But in my movie the music is part of the picture, 'cause it's all based in a club; it wasn't just moving the scene. In a movie you'll hear a song for thirty or forty seconds; in this one some songs go on for four-and-a-half minutes.

The soundtrack is coming out on your own Heavyweight label, which is distributed through A&M. How does that affect the project?

It cuts through one layer of fat. But songs that might be good for the movie might not be good for the soundtrack—and there are 29 songs in the movie. A&M wanted certain songs [for the soundtrack], but I had to lock the picture in February, so there was constantly a tug of war. If we have a successful movie, we'll have enough songs left over to put out another soundtrack [album].

The music in the movie is divided fairly evenly between rap and more traditional R&B. Do you see similarities between those two genres, particularly in terms of vocal performance?

The common ground is, the great singers sing from the heart, and so do the great rappers. They both have powerful, distinct voices. Great songs are songs that you feel, that you relate to, and great raps are usually the raps [that] you can relate to where they're coming from.

In terms of subject matter, though, modern R&B has really narrowed itself—it's almost always about love and romance.

I guess they figured the rappers were covering all the other topics and they needed to keep love covered. Right now they're banking on love. But they'll get hip sooner or later.—***Mark Rowland***

Photo: D. Stevens

World Radio History

sideman

Tom Barney

I would think that playing with Steely Dan is the most challenging gig in the world.

It's certainly the most musical gig I've ever done. It's also the most rewarding—but you can't sleep for a minute. Whenever you think you're gonna take a right turn, you can be sure it's a left turn. You hear all the Steely Dan stories about how strange and weird they are. I haven't experienced that at all, but I have experienced the fact that these guys actually know where the groove is; they know where "1" is. They can hear it when it's not there, and a lot of people can't.

They seem to spend hundreds of hours pushing things forward and backward a millisecond at a time.

Absolutely, but they understand where it is. I will say that they are fanatical about drummers. You know, some drummers play just ahead of the 1, some play right on it, some play just after it. Fagen and Becker do their homework; they know what they're gonna get from different drummers. With this new record, they asked me to recommend a drummer, because Ricky Lawson couldn't do all the sessions.

"It would be nice if artists trusted their musicians more."

It makes sense to ask the bass player to bring in a drummer.

Yeah. It would be nice if more artists did that, if they trusted their musicians more.

Does Becker insist that you play his bass lines note for note on tour?

No. That's the beauty of those guys. Their hiring of sidemen is very purposeful. No player in his right mind would change the bass line that Chuck Rainey laid down in "Peg," because, you know, it ain't broke, don't fix it. But they do allow and encourage you to embellish. You live within the part, but you can also stamp it.

A lot of session players tell us that personality is almost as important as talent.

Sure. You may think that playing with someone is heaven, and it turns out to be the least fun you've ever had. Sometimes you go into a situation where you think you're going to learn something musical that you can take with you and keep for the rest of your life. But what you actually take away is how low human beings can be in dealing with other human beings.

There's a difference between being musically demanding and being an asshole.

Exactly. You may be a great player but, as a person, you may be a total jerk. Sometimes you have to deal with artist's insecurities. But a lot of artists who have bad reputations are just people who know what they want and are adamant about getting it. A lot of singers, for example, are not necessarily musicians. When you find one, you're fortunate. Someone may be a great singer but musically illiterate. You have to deal with it and read between the lines.

You're saying a good session player also has to be a good psychologist.

It definitely helps. You have to understand people and where they're coming from.

I see you've set up your own studio.

All the great ones have their own studio [*laughs*]. Studio time will kill you, so having your own is the way to go. You're broke, of course, but it gives you the time to create what you need in your own music. [*Grabs the tape recorder and starts gesticulating wildly.*] And I want to go on record as saying that [Steely Dan engineer] Roger Nichols is the reason I'm in the predicament I'm in today. This is all Roger's fault, the dirty rat bastard. . . . ***—Howard Massey***

résumé

Steely Dan
Eric Clapton
Miles Davis
David Sanborn
Herbie Hancock
Kenny G
Chaka Khan
Vanessa Williams
Judy Collins
Conway Twitty
Saturday Night Live band

Photo: Melanie Weiner

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If you think it looks gorgeous, wait 'til you play it.

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Eight Guys, a Van, and You
How to Survive in a BIG band

Okay, admit it. There were too many of you to begin with and you never figured it would get serious, but now you're a six-, seven-, or maybe even eight-piece band and your career's lifting off. You came together on a lark with some friends, but now you're on the road looking to generate real interest with your unwieldy musical caravan, which we'll affectionately refer to as a "circus band." Though the project rocks and the crowds are diggin' it, those long, smelly trips in a sardine-can van make you ache to play in a trio again. Then there's the money issue. How should you cope?

"Tensions can get pretty hot," admits Christine Quigley, road manager for the Ontario-based Celtic ensemble ***Leahy***, whose line-up includes five brothers and four sisters. "Spending so much time together is difficult, but maintaining a high degree of professionalism is the most important thing." Though the band's been touring for nineteen years, they've only applied themselves to a recording career for the last couple. "There's always stuff under the surface, but being in control really helps. It also helps being a family; we've already learned how to share."

Then there's the question of sharing profits. With Leahy's debut album out in stores and a tour in full swing since last April, the money's been decent. How do you slice the pie? "Some in the band have more work than others," says Quigley. "For example, Donnell does almost every interview; he has to be on all the time. So that provision is built into our contract." Songwriters also get bigger cuts. "Our contract states that whoever writes the song gets the rights."

Whether you write pure pop, hip-hop, alt-rock or experimental shock-rock, there's a movie or a TV show out there that needs your music. The hard part is getting the producers, directors, licensing agents and music supervisors of the world to take notice of your undeniable musical genius. Few of us can be as fortunate as ***Elliot Smith***, who landed some of his songs on the soundtrack to last year's Oscar winning movie, *Good Will Hunting*—director Gus Van Sant had Smith's sound in mind while he was shooting the film—but according to Carol Sue Baker, owner of Ocean Pa Music Group, you don't have to have frienc relationships with high profile movie directors or maj label record contracts in order to get your foot in the doo

Lots of indie bands and labels sign up with firr like Ocean Park, whose business it is to place music films and TV, but unsigned acts *can* do it on their ow "Unknown bands have just as good a chance [getti their music] in certain projects as known ban because the song is the most important thing," sa Baker. "We can pitch [the song] for days, but if the so doesn't work in the mixing stage it's not going to wo and they're gonna find one that does," says Baker. "Y

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Everything else, including all the public domain material the band performs, comes under the Leahy umbrella. "When you're dealing with a big group, try to keep the contract simple," Quigley advises. "Set financial policies that don't confuse people or cause resentment among band members."

If money isn't—and will likely never be—an issue, learn a lesson or two from ***Hepcat***, a nine-strong ska outfit from Hollywood, whose new record, *Right On Time*, is on Tim Armstrong's Hellcat label. "We do this primarily out of love for ska," says bandleader Greg Lee. "If it ever changes from that, Hepcat won't be any more." One problem that arises out of the band's "love for ska" is a social one. "Some guys in the band run pretty hard," says Lee, who admits he's run past those times. "I guess everyone goes through those periods, and when you do, you have to look out for the other guys."

Early on the band contented itself exchanging their gigs for dinner and gas money, but Hepcat's notoriety— and their earnings— have risen with ska's popularity. Now the band divvies up its earnings nine ways so as to remain copacetic. But touring becomes a balancing act, *i.e.*, making money to continue touring to make money. "It's definitely expensive to travel with all ten of us," says Lee. "We spent two nights in New York City recently and it cost us $3,500." The band splits three hotel rooms, but they still travel cozily in a single van. Sure, the accommodations are unpretentious and the pie wedges each takes away may be thin, but the joy of performing makes up for it. "[The gig's] too much fun, and life's too short to be miserable," says Lee. "We work off each other, look out for each other, and the chemistry's good. We call ourselves 'the hopeful village.'"—***Bob Gulla***

tures

just have to get the music to the right person."

Getting the music to that mythical "right person" often requires some sort of professional representation, but for bands who can't—or don't want to—afford these services, the process can be handled on a perseverant DIY basis. "The *Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety* list all the films and TV shows in production, and you just *pound* them on the phone," she says.

According to Baker, unsigned bands should shoot for movies-of-the-week: "A lot of times [the movie] needs music and won't be able to afford bigger bands. They're looking to pay $200-$300, but even if it only plays for a second, the band gets a network movie placement, which means performance and publishing hits—or $1,000 for that one little song in the first airing that week—and I know for a fact that these movies don't have money to pay for source music, so they end up finding unsigned bands."

When sending out your music, Baker suggests that you put it on a CD-R and include brief "sounds-like" descriptions for each song. "If they want Tom Petty, the odds are that they'll go for Tom Petty first, but when they can't get him, they'll go for something that sounds like him."—***Michael Gelfand***

DIY MIC CABLES

Nine times out of ten, the best way to line up the quality cable you need is to go to the local Mom & Pop and buy it yourself. But if you own a home studio, you know that sometimes you need more of that snaky stuff than you can easily afford. Though time-consuming, it may make sense in these circumstances to make some cable yourself.

Start by picking up a 30-watt soldering iron, rosin-core solder (not acid- or solid-core), a wire stripper, and a small vise (to hold the parts while you're soldering) at a reputable hardware store. Cable and plugs can be found at pro audio stores; Canare and Mogami make excellent shielded cable, and Canare and Neutrik offer rugged 1/4-inch, XLR, and RCA plugs. If you don't know how to solder, check out some electronics books for instructions or open up a couple of plugs on your current cables to see how it's done.

To make a mic cable, place the plug barrel on the cable, strip off an inch of the cable jacket, unravel the braided shield, and twist the strands together. Now strip about 1/4-inch off the two wires inside, then twist the strands of each wire. Tin each wire and the shield by touching the soldering iron to them for a few seconds, then touching the solder to the place where the iron meets the wire. Now tin the connectors inside the plug. To attach the wires to the connectors, hold the two parts together and touch them with the soldering iron. (You may need to apply extra solder.) Make sure the solder joint looks shiny, not dull, and check for stray wires or solder globs that could cause a short. And always try the cable before the gig!—***Brent Butterworth***

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The NameGame

TM!

Anyone who's ever tried writing a respectable song knows how hard it is to come up with an original musical idea, so it comes as no surprise that so many bands struggle to find the perfect name to represent their musical vision. And if you ever do, you want to keep it forever, but with the limited supply of names, more and more groups are encountering problems with their moniker. So does it make sense to trademark your band's name?

According to attorney Ken Anderson of Loeb & Loeb (who represents Ben Folds Five and the Beastie Boys), trademarking serves two purposes. "One is to make sure that you have continuing rights to use the name," says Anderson. "The second reason is to protect it in the event that someone else is using a name that's causing real confusion."

The general consensus among music lawyers is that trademarking your name is a good idea. "If you're going to be investing serious time and energy into a band, it's a worthwhile expenditure," says Anderson, "but it's one that many bands skip over for quite awhile because they feel they don't have the resources to do it."

You don't have to have a registered mark to have rights to a name, though. Attorney Matt Greenberg of Grubman, Indursky & Schindler (who represents Fun Lovin' Criminals and Gov't Mule) says bands can have trademark rights by simply "making people associate a mark [band name] with a particular individual or company [band]." However, filing a trademark is still helpful because it provides an official measure of who came first.

The process begins by a having a trademark search done. The most basic search involves finding out if anyone has registered a federal mark with the patent and trademark office (although a more sophisticated search can be done).

Searches are handled by independent search companies or by an attorney that specializes in trademarks. After a search, your lawyer should evaluate if there are any problems out there, and if not, a trademark attorney (trademark law is a specialized practice) prepares and processes your application. Be forewarned—if someone already has rights to your name, that might necessitate an agreement to buy the name.

In any case, the procedure costs $600-$2,000, but in the long run that may be a small price to pay, says Anderson. "You want to avoid a situation where you spend years building up an audience and then find out that someone has the same name and has been using it longer than you have and then having to change your name. That is disastrous to your career."—***Jason Zasky***

Chasing a Publishing Deal?

If you think you've written a great song and can stomach the notion of someone else turning it into a hit, you might want to pursue a publishing deal. But how should you proceed? "First of all, you need to get your songs representational," says ***Max Carl***, whose songwriting for the likes of Joe Cocker and Aaron Neville over the years enabled him and his band to record the eclectic Mississippi fife and drum record, *One Planet, One Groove* (Mission Records). "Make a really good recording of your songs. You don't need to make a record—just make it so you can hear all of the words and so the music isn't distorted."

According to Carl, you should try to live in an area where people like the style of music you write, and when you find that place, look for publishers who are interested in the kind of music you write. And don't expect any divine intervention. "It's really a miracle when you get a song on a record," says Carl, "and it's getting more difficult as time goes on because the field is getting more and more crowded." Instead, go with your strengths. "It's like sports: If you're a role player, don't try to be the guy who hits the home runs every time, because that guy is that guy. You're as valuable to the team—and you will be paid commensurately—by playing to your strengths." ***—Michael Gelfand***

Carl

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Rising young jazz guitarist Charlie Hunter holds forth on the virtues of digital independence and extra strings.

by mac randall

You

Sitting on a comfortable maroon couch in the living room of the airy Brooklyn apartment where he's lived for the past three months (his first residence ever outside California's Bay Area), guitarist Charlie Hunter launches into a solo rendition of "Enter the Dragon," a tune off his latest album, *The Return of the Candyman* (Blue Note). After a rhythmically staggered intro featuring a thorny rising chord progression and judicious use of the open high E string, the fun really begins: Hunter backs his single-note lead work with a figured bass line that seems almost entirely independent, to the point where, if you closed your eyes, you'd be forgiven for thinking that there was another musician cutting loose in the room. And not a guitarist either—definitely a bassist.

Aiding significantly in this aural illusion is Hunter's choice of instrument, an eight-string Novax electric, with the top five strings tuned (low to high) A-D-G-B-E like a regular guitar, and the noticeably heavier-gauge bottom three strings tuned E-A-D, inhabiting the usual range of a bass. For further jollies, the Novax's signal is split in two: Hunter plugs the bass strings' output into a bass amp, and the guitar strings' output into—logically—a guitar amp, with different processing for each.

"Separate but equal" is a fair description of Hunter's philosophy regarding the guitar's two sections: His right-hand (picking) thumb always handles the bass lines while the other fingers always handle the chords and soloing, and neither part of the hand ever strays into the other's territory. "Playing this way can be strangely limiting," he acknowledges. "The more soloing I do, the less complex the bass lines become, and vice-versa. But I know that eventually I'll find a common ground that's satisfying to me. I've only been playing eight-string for six years now; I've got a ways to go yet."

Hunter's interest in playing a guitar with extra low end came out of his love for players like Joe Pass and Tuck Andress, especially the way they incorporated bass lines into their comping and soloing. "First I had a seven-string made out of an old Vega six-string," he recalls. "I played that for about three years, and then I decided I wanted to get a little *more* bass happening, so I had Ralph Novak build me an eight-string, the first one he'd made. That opened up a lot of doors for me; it's a real full-service instrument."

If you're a regular six-string plectrist, you may be asking yourself what relevance all this has to your own playing. True, you're probably not going to rush out to buy an eight-string any time soon, but the techniques that Hunter has had to develop to master his instrument are both applicable and helpful to players of guitars with any number of strings. Principal among these is digital independence—in other words, the ability to move the fingers of both hands out of tight rhythmic lockstep with one another and get them to perform a number of separate tasks at the same time.

Beginning with the left hand, Hunter says, "You should try and familiarize yourself with all the possible combinations of notes that your hand can perform. Start by picking a bass note and putting your first finger on it. Let's say you pick a B [seventh fret on the sixth string]. Now see how many voicings of a B chord you can play in that position, and then see how many variations you can play on those voicings—augmenting, diminishing, flatting the fifth or the seventh, and so on. Then pick another chord over the same note, and find all its voicings and variations. Then pick another bass note, and do the same thing as you did with the B. You'll find there are lots of possibilities without even moving your hand. The next thing to do is work out a bass line and find chords you want to put on top of it. Start with one inversion for each bass note and multiply from there. Find out what chords work where. Eventually, when you've got it down, you'll know which combinations work and which ones don't.

"It's important to know all these combinations," Hunter continues, "because knowing them gets you out of that mindset that's the main problem of guitarists, which is that they can play certain licks in a certain position and that's it; they never trained their ears to hear the other ways things could go, and so they're stuck in one place. When you're trying to hold down a bass line while comping or soloing, it changes your objectives. You might not want the bass line to move out of a certain position, so you've got to know what you can play that'll work in that particular position. And if you work on

World Radio History

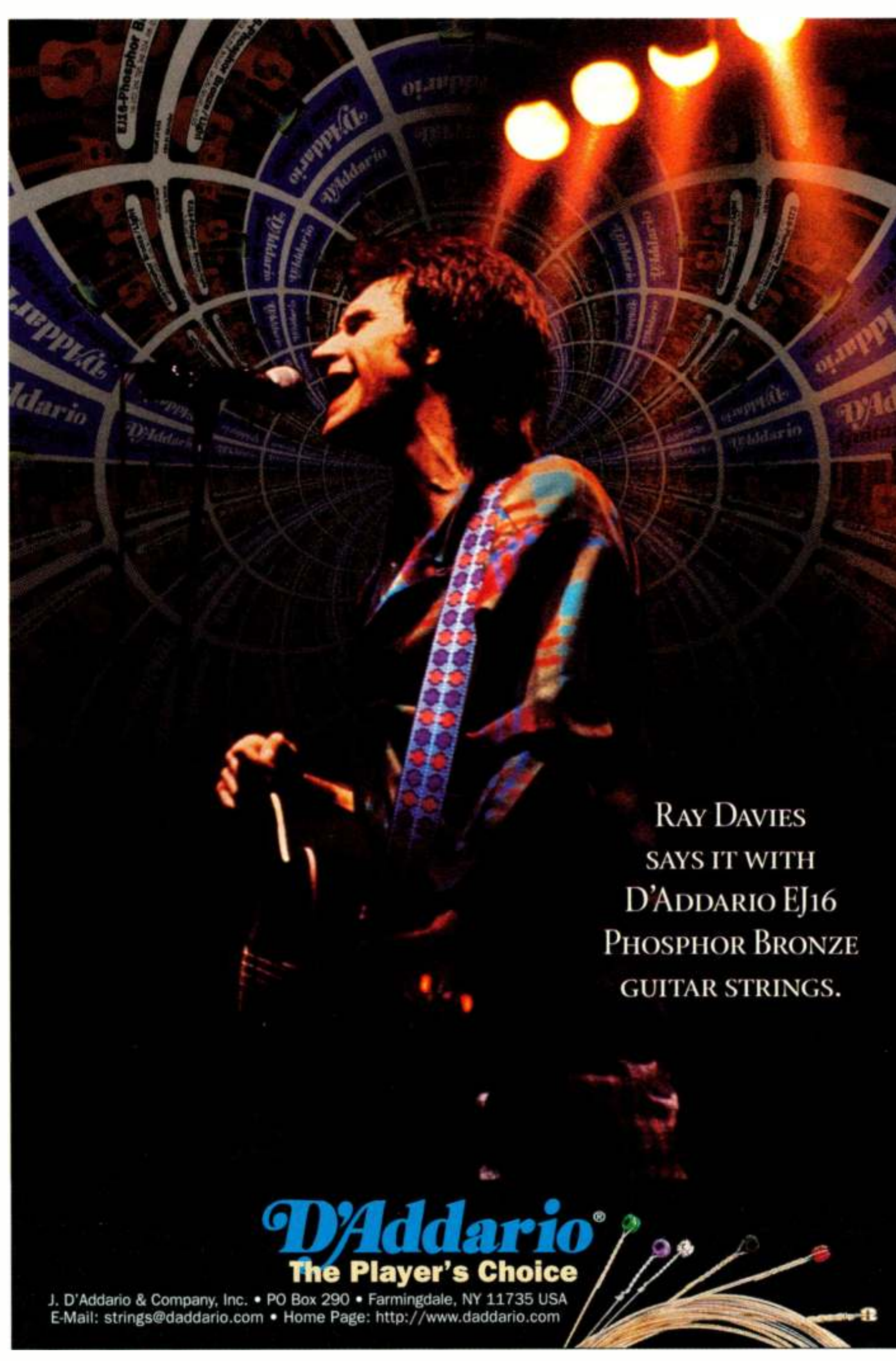
finding that out, you realize, boom—there are 35 chords right there in one note."

For the right hand, Hunter recommends working on music that will get your fingers to move independently of one another, preferably in between the notes of a thumb-plucked bass line. "Try to work on more complex rhythmic combinations that you can divide up between the fingers," he says, illustrating with a heavily syncopated Latin groove; though the pattern is tricky, thumb and fingers never land on a string at the same time. "Another good thing, again, is to practice walking bass lines with chords on top of them. You know your bass line is always going to be four beats to the bar, so you can play chords in whatever rhythmic permutation you can think of over that bass line. Even working with a single inversion of a single chord—say C minor—there are so many possible rhythms that you can go for a couple of hours and not even crack the tip of the iceberg."

For advanced study, Hunter recommends checking out the work of past masters. "The best thing to do for building up your fingers' independence is to pick any James Brown tune, learn both the bass and guitar parts, and practice them until you can play them at the same time. Another great thing is to listen to jazz organists and transcribe what they're doing for guitar. It can be done: I've transcribed almost every solo Larry Young ever recorded. He's especially good for guitarists, because he liked to play in fourths, which I think came from listening to McCoy Tyner, and that kind of voicing is perfect for guitar because it's a great shape." He plays an example, barreing his first finger across the fourth and third strings at the seventh fret and adding his second finger on the second string at the eighth fret. If you like naming things, call it a Dsus4, but it could easily be related to any number of chords, and the form is eminently movable.

"Learning and transcribing other players' stuff is important because if you're able to hear someone play something and play along with it, it makes more sense," Hunter says. "It's always better to try to play music rather than an exercise when you practice. Playing real music is more challenging than any exercise you could make up, and it's more interesting and fun too."

Hunter stresses that this kind of separating skill doesn't come easily. "The hardest thing is when you're doing something a little more complex, and you've got to get both the bass feel and the guitar feel right, and get them right at the same time. You're playing two things, but you're always trying to make it one thing. Classical guitarists have to deal with a similar technique of playing independent lines, but I think it's easier for them because what they play is usually less rhythmically taxing—there isn't as much syncopation. It's still tough for me," he confesses. "Every day I'm trying to get better, trying to evolve what I'm doing on the instrument. Sometimes I wonder why I'm doing it, because it's so hard. But when you get it right, that's all the reward you need." Ⓜ



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Notebooks o

Though Billy Bragg's folk-based, politically informed style of songwriting and performing has often been compared with Woody Guthrie's, it seemed unlikely that they would ever actually write songs together. For one thing, Bragg is a Brit, while Guthrie was the quintessential American. Also, Bragg's music draws as much from contemporary rock & roll as from the folk traditions Guthrie usually employed. Then there's that sticky matter of mortality: Woody Guthrie died in 1967 from Huntington's chorea, nine years after Bragg was born.

But reports of their inability to collaborate have been greatly exaggerated, as Woody Guthrie left behind over *one thousand* complete sets of poems and lyrics not yet set to music. His daughter Nora, who along with Arlo Guthrie is the conservator of their father's work, met Bragg at a Central Park concert in 1992 celebrating Woody's eightieth birthday. "She mentioned to me that she had these lyrics and my initial reaction was, 'Well, yeah, I'm gonna write Woody Guthrie's music, sure,'" Bragg recalls. "Subsequently, though, she mailed me some of these lyrics, and when I saw them I realized the uniqueness of this project. There are over a thousand finished lyrics—not scraps, but finished—in the archives."

To help the songs take musical shape, Bragg called on Jeff Tweedy and his band Wilco. Not because he was intimidated by the prospect of interpreting Guthrie's vision: "There's plenty of stuff in the archive for other people to have another go at it," he points out. "But it could have been a bit wrong for an English guy with an English band to make an English album; I wouldn't have felt comfortable with that."

We'll hear the results on a CD titled *Mermaid Avenue* (after the street in Brooklyn where Guthrie lived when he wrote most of these lyrics in the Fifties), due for a June release on Elektra. But for Bragg himself, the experience has forever altered his notions about Woody Guthrie, musical collaboration, and songwriting itself.

Billy Bragg taps the artistry of Woody Guthrie

by mark rowland

It must have been kind of a mind-blower to discover that Woody Guthrie had left behind more than a thousand incomplete songs.

Yeah, it is mind-blowing. You realize that not only is this gonna be a unique project, but that the majority of Woody Guthrie's songs have never even been heard. Also, there are songs in the archive on subjects that people would not expect. There's one called "My Flying Saucer." Then he would write some clues on it. [*Bragg opens a notebook.*] Look at this: It says "supersonic boogie." Now, are those words that you would associate with Woody Guthrie? Once you've seen that stuff, you realize that we're talking about someone who lived to hear rock & roll and was influenced by it. In the archive there's a complete rewrite of "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" by Sonny Boy Williamson, where it's written underneath what a great song it is and how much he likes it.

That revelation must have given you a lot of freedom.

Those two words there—"supersonic boogie"—unleashed my perception of what this should be. We think of Woody as a Thirties figure, so for those of us in rock & roll he's off the edge of the horizon. The second thing, he's not easy on the ear. He doesn't sound very good on a jukebox. And thirdly, McCarthyism did an incredible job on the culture of this country and still casts a shadow to this day. Woody suffered greatly from that; he did become, in some ways, a nonperson among the mainstream media. All these things have conspired to make it very difficult to get Woody into focus.

How did your experience change your perception of his legacy as a songwriter?

It's my conviction that Woody is the first singer/songwriter. I'm not knocking Jimmie Rodgers or A. P. Carter, but where in their canon is a lyric that goes, "Sometimes I think I'm gonna lose my mind, but it don't look like I ever do/I loved so many people everywhere I went/Some too much and others not enough"?

The difference is introspection.

The introspection of the singer/songwriter which Bob Dylan defined, and Woody is the first great practitioner. That's what these lyrics say. He wasn't just some guy writing folk music. But I have to say he's not a great *song* writer. Look at this "Jailhouse Blues," how many verses there are: fifteen on this page, then there's another five on the next page, and there's no middle eight. Any middle eights we've got we more or less had to impose. His style is almost stream of consciousness. He came from a folk tradition where songs had 25 verses, you know? Also, he was trying to get people to sing along with him, so his songs were verse/chorus/verse/chorus, even if it went on forever.

To what extent did you feel bound to that tradition as you wrote the music for these songs?

It's difficult to explain, but I wrote these songs from a background of English-language music, both modern and folk music, not against the backdrop of Woody Guthrie. In fact, I consciously didn't read his biography until I had written most of these songs, because I didn't want to know too much about his background.

How did you choose which lyrics would work for you?

I pulled more songs out of the archive than I could write the music

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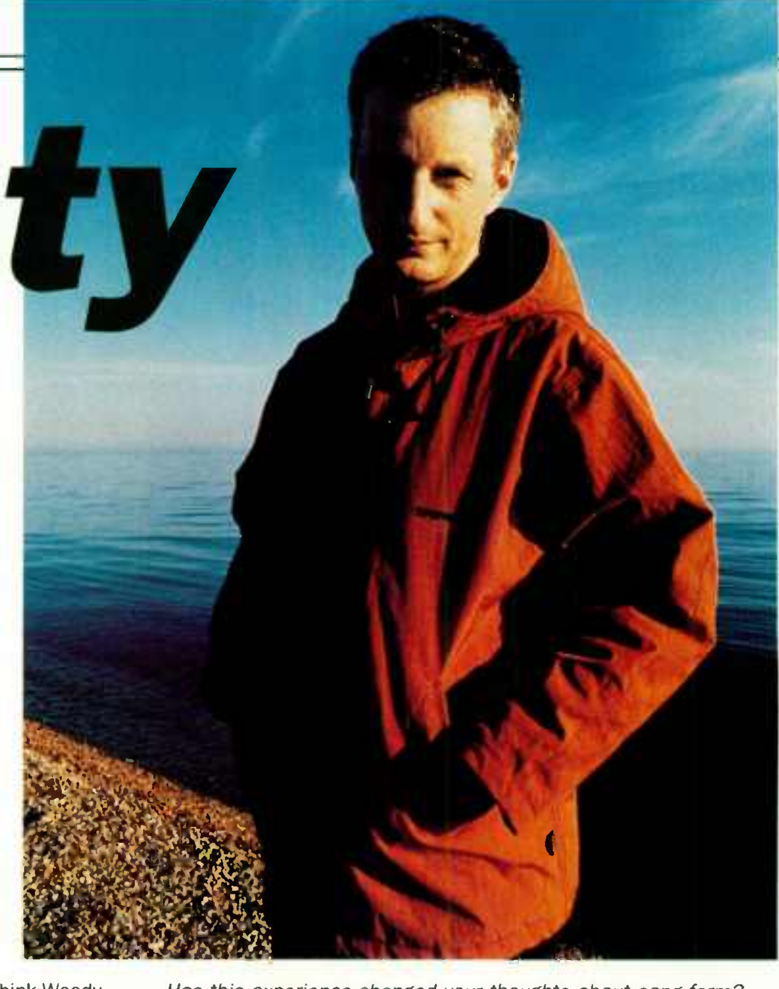
f Plenty



for, and some songs just didn't click, including ones that Nora really liked.

Was there any pattern to what worked or didn't?

No. I don't know why. Part of the reason is that there were so many songs, you didn't worry about it. If it didn't work, you passed on to the next stage.

I'm looking at a song from these notebooks called "Joe Dee-maggio Done It Again." Did you feel constrained by lyrics with these kinds of colloquialisms?

No. I don't know what a "raggy pill" is. And I still don't know what a "poos-eye cat" is.

I think it's a pussy cat. "The puppy dog barked at the poos-eye cat."

Oh, yeah! Good call! But I did write the music for "Joe DiMaggio," and then Jeff said, "You can't sing it, Bill, 'cause you don't know nothing about baseball." So Wilco recorded it without me. Then a week later Nora comes in; she's listening, and then she says, "I thought Billy wrote this song." Tweedy said, "Well, I ain't gonna let some limey that don't know nothin' about baseball . . ." And Nora, with a completely straight face, turned to him and said, "Do you think Woody knew anything about baseball [*laughs*]?" So, thanks, Nora. But he'll be really pleased when I tell him I know what poos-eye cat means.

Can you take me through the process of completing another song or two?

Well, there's a song here, "She Came Along to Me," which is really a poem that Nora took out of the notebook in the form Woody had written it. It doesn't scan: It's not in verse/chorus form, although by the same token it's such a great song with such great sentiments, I really felt I should do something with it. So the first thing I did was, I sat down with a typewriter and typed it as I was singing, so it looked more like verse/chorus/verse/chorus. I made up a form for it. And I made this bit at the end where he says, 'Never, never, never, never could it have been done if the women hadn't entered into the deal like she came along to me." I took that as the title, and we also used that as the chorus. But after we recorded it a few times, it still didn't sound right, so Jeff Tweedy wrote some chords as an intro and a middle eight, and we put those on as well and it all came together.

But you tried to remain faithful to his words.

Nothing extra was written, but some things were edited out. For instance, in this song, you cannot start with "Ten hundred books of just this size I could write about you" . . . it's too much. So I rearranged words. Nora came to the sessions; she'd be sitting between the drums and the keyboards with the lyrics while we recorded live. On this one she said, "Don't bother singing these two lines. He's not saying anything here. Get to the meat."

Has this experience changed your thoughts about song form?

Certainly it's changed my ideas about how strong simple melodies are. These songs are relatively simple, but you don't need to be very clever; the simplest framework is the most strong. So many of these have an internal rhythm that you can't bust up. You have to take it because of how the words scan.

What makes him effective as a specifically political songwriter?

He was non-ideological. He wasn't a Marxist, he was a humanitarian. He felt more strongly about people than about ideology. He didn't hate rich people, he just hated to see people treated like shit, whoever they were. One of the problems America has about Woody is he don't beat around the bush—he looks America in the eye and says what he says. And these are questions America cannot bring itself to focus on today, let alone in the Thirties; the questions he asked have still not been answered.

There are two verses missing from "This Land is Your Land," did you know that? The first is, "I went walking/I saw a sign there/And on that sign it said 'No Trespassing'/But on the other side it didn't say nothing./This land was made for you and me." The other verse is something about, "In the shadow of the welfare [line] I saw my people and I questioned if this land was made for you and me." These verses have disappeared, apart from people like Pete Seeger who keep it alive. Woody was aware of that. Arlo says one of the last things he remembers from Woody was when he could barely hold the guitar, teaching, trying to get Arlo to understand all the verses, 'cause he thought he was the only one who knew.

World Radio History

home studio

by maureen herman

photo by james crump

What do you do when one of the members of your band has lots of great equipment and plays a vital role in your band's sound but can't carry gear, can't drive the van, and can't pitch in for gas? It's one of those interpersonal problems that can cause stress in any band, and it's the problem of the moment for Tortoise. In an attempt to work it out, the band has gathered around the kitchen table in John McEntire's Chicago warehouse space to figure out what songs they can play for their upcoming tour without bringing their fifth member: McEntire's home studio.

For most bands it is just a matter of coming up with the perfect set list, but Tortoise has to consider its use of McEntire's home studio as an additional contributor. All of their latest record, *TNT,* was recorded here, using computers, samplers, funky old beat boxes, and a wide array of non-traditional and standard instruments to create what is often described as indescribable music. Perpetually resistant to the media's need for categorization, Tortoise has continued to write songs just to see where they might go—wandering through neighborhoods of rock, jazz, dub, funk, psychedelic, experimental, and instrumental music—and lucky for them, an ever-growing audience has gone along for the ride.

McEntire studied electronic music at Oberlin College and his interest in studio experimentation evolved throughout his involvement as a percussionist in Bastro, the Sea and Cake, and some Gastr Del Sol projects. While his notoriously shy persona can hide his impressive knowledge and enthusiasm for its creative possibilities, McEntire knows his gear and is gracious in explaining the ins and outs of the complex mass of equipment he has acquired over the years.

When you enter his small but organized studio, the focus is not only on the **Mackie** 24 channel board ❶, but also on his **Power Mac 7600** computer (located below the board) that's equipped with **Digidesign Pro Tools** software. The **Sony Trinitron Multi Scan 20sf II** monitor ❷ displays drum machine patterns using Pro Tools, which drummer/vibraphone player John Herndon programs via a Roland Rhythm composer TR-808 (not shown).

"Pro Tools is a really great recording and editing application but it's not a very good sequencing application," says McEntire. "So I use it in parallel with Pro Tools."

A late Seventies **Korg MS-20** mono analog synth ❸ resides in his keyboard rack. "It's interesting in that it has a dual-filter design that a lot of things from this time didn't incorporate," says McEntire. "It has patch points on the front panel but they're of limited use unless you have a lot of Korg equipment, because they don't interface well with too many other things, but it's still good for certain applications." McEntire also has a new **Nord D2** keyboard ❹. "It's got four separate outputs and sixteen voices per part. The voice architecture is a kind of classic analog design. The filter is multi-mode, it's got two envelope generators, sync on the oscillators, a ring modulator, and a very good modulation section. And, it sounds nice." He also has a **Memorymoog** ❺ with a MIDI retrofit that he describes as "the equivalent of the Nord keyboard made fifteen years earlier." Though the Moog is analog and the Nord is digital, McEntire says the voice structure and

World Radio History

World Radio History

Tortoise

architecture are similar. "The Nord is based on things like the Moog but both are great-sounding and very distinctive. The Moog is more temperamental because you have to let it warm up a long time and it requires more maintenance, but it's a classic."

Above the mixing board stand a pair of **Genelec 1031 A** monitors (6) of which McEntire is a hardcore supporter, citing their design and accurate low end. He enthuses, "they have really good stereo imaging and are the most real-world-sounding monitors I've used." To the left of the board is a **TC Electronic M2000** multi-effect processor (7) that McEntire lauds for its great ambience programs, two **Boss SE 70** multi-effect units (8) (9), an **EMS Vocoder 2000** (10), and a **Panasonic SV 3700** DAT machine (11).

Another rack holds a **Rane** headphone amplifier (12), a **Sytek** four-channel mic pre-amp (13), and an assortment of compressors: a **Drawmer 1960** Tube Compressor (14), a **Valley People 610** (15), a **Drawmer DL 241** (16), a **dbx 166** (17), and an **Alesis 3630** (18). Noise gates include an **Aphex 622** (19), a **Drawmer DS201** (20), and two **dbx 360X**'s (21) (22). Just below are two **Rane FPE 13** parametric EQ's (23) (24), and a **Kenton Electronics** full-channel MIDI-to-CV converter (25).

Along the wall is an **Akai S3000XL** (26) stereo sampler. "We use it a lot both live and in the studio," explains McEntire. Next to that is an **ARP 2600** analog synth (27). "That's an old design from the Seventies, a real classic. It's been modified recently with a new filter module that was put in by CMS. The stock ones just have speakers, but CMS pulled out the speakers, put in oscillators, and did a full overhaul of all the circuitry."

When asked what his favorite item in the studio was, he named the Pro Tools software, especially in tandem with the mint-condition **EMS Synthi AKS** (not shown) he bought in Australia for $1,500. "It's an old design from '69 or '70 and I was lucky I found it," he says. "A guy in Australia actually had it in a closet for twenty years. It's really good for sound effects because they don't have any standard voice architecture. You make all your patches with pins, so you have the option of routing things basically anywhere within the different modules of the units. It's great for processing. You can bring an outside signal in and filter it; it has a really good distinctive filter sound."

Set to tour through the summer in the U.S. and overseas, the band is rehearsing with their make-your-head-spin range of instruments and equipment. Not enough fingers indeed. Both with instruments and studio technology, McEntire believes in using something the "wrong" way to see what he can come up with. Having almost finished his degree except for refusing to take the ear training requirement, John McEntire and Tortoise clearly dance to their own tune, which is unusual, refreshing, and inventive, both onstage and in the studio.

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Tori Amos

spells out what it takes to give it and get it

R-E-S-

by Maureen Herman

Photographs by Jonathan Mark

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Tori

Amos is a busy woman.

Within the last month, she has finished her album, *From the Choirgirl Hotel* (her first with a full band), made a video for her first single, "Spark," gotten a touring band together, started practicing for a world tour, and somehow found time to get married along the way

to longtime live and studio sound engineer Mark Hawley. Besides this, she is doing the publicity required of an artist with a major release looming: photos, interviews, TV appearances. This kind of frenzy would make most people spin out of control, but strangely, Tori Amos is very *in* control and focused. What kind of freak *is* she?

And how does she handle this chaos without losing sight of the big picture and retaining control of the music? According to her long-time assistant and tour manager, John Witherspoon, she is uncomfortable with inactivity and is always doing three things at once. "I have no idea where she gets her energy," admits the friendly Englishman who, rather than seeming like the usual fussy, flustered road manager, clearly cares about Amos professionally. As I see throughout the day, this is the running theme with all the people around her: mutual respect.

At 11:00 A.M., I've already had breakfast with her band—a guitarist, bassist, and drummer from various walks of life. All were brought to this project for their talent and professionalism. Except for guitarist Steve Caton, who worked with Amos back in her now-infamous big-hair rock-chick L.A. days and has played on her records and done numerous tours, these guys find all this activity pretty new. Matt Chamberlain, the drummer, auditioned for Amos at the recommendation of Caton and played percussion on the record. Bassist Jon Evans, on the other hand, has only been a part of the project for three weeks and was in turn, recommended by Chamberlain. Apparently, it always comes down to who you know. Though long-time Amos bassist George Porter, Jr. performed on the album and will likely do so on future recordings, Evans was hired for the live shows because Porter has a young family and is not interested in doing extensive touring. (It's worth noting that many musicians would not be allowed this flexibility—again, respect and professionalism are the rule in this camp.)

When asked how it felt to be thrown into a major world tour at the drop of a hat, Evans said, "I was nervous about getting

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"It's about what's going on inside, not how fast you can play. That reflects in your playing: the mud oozes through your fingers."

here and not knowing all the songs. I had a tape of the record and I practiced at home, but once I got here, Tori was so professional and direct. I just try to play the thing that will make her start dancing around when she's at the piano. That's how I know I'm on the right track."

Later at their practice space, The Depot, with Hall & Oates doing their thing two floors down, I'm witness to her patience, and encouraging directness with the players. She knows what she likes, and when she likes it, she is all over her piano bench like a woman possessed, one foot stomping the beat and the other working the pedal of the Bösendorfer with impassioned focus.

Before practice though, we are driving in a big, black London cab through the winding, streets towards her hotel, oddly separate from her band's digs. This and the fact that she was with her personal trainer while I was having breakfast with the band that morning strikes me as smacking a bit of the pampered "pop star" lifestyle. But after spending almost nine hours around her, the band, and crew, a different picture emerges. It is one of a determined and talented musician who understands the pitfalls of stardom and thrives on the chaotic business that naturally accompanies a successful working musician cum pop star. She has made a separate peace with the business side of music, and she works out the rest with her piano and her voice.

At our first meeting, her excitement about doing an interview for a potential audience of musicians is disarming. Like a big sister talking to her little brother the night before he begins high school, she wants others to learn from her experiences, to help them avoid painful mistakes, and to celebrate being a musician regardless of their playing level. Her desire to communicate with others is strong, even in the middle

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of an already hectic day that shows no sign of slowing down. Most admirable is her commitment to professionalism in the way she conducts business and her considerable achievements of the past four weeks despite being under pressure that would make most people's heads blow right off.

How do you get the time you need to get ready for a tour when there is all this side business and distraction from what should be the most important thing: the music?

"Need" is a strange concept, because you always want it but at a certain point you're saying, "I can't do it if I don't have this much time;" you're limiting yourself. You can't control what the radio does, but you can decide what level your performance will be; that is in your control. I mean, I can see why people ask me, "Are you a control freak?" Well, you know, some people think I am; it depends on if it's Thursday. I think I'm an ant-fucker. [*Makes motion with hands as if trying to, well, fuck an ant, laughing.*] I'm trying to find ways of climbing on that little guy. But I'll do it and I'll sit there and it's getting that detail.

Yet, the engineers are much more like that than I am. They're interested in whether it feels good and gets the magic, if it was technically on. But there's going to be mistakes in every piece; for me it's much more about if we get the right feeling in that take. The conversation that you're having with the other musicians, I mean there's going to be bum notes, but to me it's not about that. It's like, what is kissing perfectly about? I don't know what that is. You know, the tongue is moved to the left every millisecond in increments of blah blah blah. What lip gloss you have on will change the whole thing. So I really encourage the guys to not play it the same all the time. Obviously there are elements that you always want there. For instance, in the bass there will be a beautiful line and you wait for it and everything's dependent on it for structure; there has to be a skeleton. But I'm building space into the new material; there's about a three-minute break in a few of the songs—the "groove" tunes. So off the new record, in songs like "Iiiee" and "Cruel," there are breaks, where at a certain point, you just play and Matt knows things can change within that time, and I don't have a set timeline; we know when it's time to get out. They come alive. If I didn't do that I don't think they would be fed. When I made the decision to get these players and play it live, I felt like it had to be constantly growing.

Which brings us to your choice of them as players. How do you find the right players?

I need a way for the excitement level for the band to be there, especially if it's going to be a long tour. They need to feel respected and challenged. That's my belief for both the band and the crew. We have about a forty-person crew with the band on the road. And of course, they're not there because they're my friends. Later they may become my friends, as with Caton [*guitarist Steve Caton*] who I've known for years. And Matt [*Chamberlain, drummer*] is becoming a friend and John [*bassist*] I just met. They become friends but that's not why they're there. And that's the greatest compliment. You're not there because your my friend, you're there because you're great.

A lot of people choose their musicians based more on the length of time they've known them, and then sometimes it is harder to deal with things musically because the friendship gets in the way.

Yes, but if you live in a small town, like if you live in Columbus, Ohio, right? And you can only choose between three bass players really? Your choice of people is different when you can network and say, "Who's out there anywhere in the world?" What an amazing thing. That's a gift to be able to have that opportunity.

But you've worked hard to get to that point of being able to choose.

Still, I think there's that thing where, it's not so much about how fast you can play. It really does come down to an internal thing with the musician: What's going on inside? That reflects in your playing; the mud oozes through their fingers.

Great musicians play because they have to, and your skill increases because of your emotional involvement.

And that's very different from pop stars.

What do you consider a pop star?

Pop stars are famous people who sell a lot of records, but don't really play music or really feel it. You know, they love music—and hey, good for them. They sing songs. . .

But they could live without it. They don't have the drive, or the vital need to express.

It's not about the music. I mean, they like music as much as anyone. Half the pop stars are not musicians. It's not a slag, but it's something musicians need to understand. Being a musician is a skill. It's not a fashion. Just because you think you're one doesn't mean you're one—sorry, sweetheart. I'm not trying to be vicious here, but I'm trying to give players pride. Because there's a lot of players that will never be on the Top 50 *Billboard* charts. And there are some great musicians in serious metal bands, where sometimes it becomes a bit tongue in cheek but still they are amazing players. And I think it's having them be aware that being a musician *is* a skill.

"Once you step into that commercial world, it's a minefield, and you've got to work it out internally."

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There are a lot of famous actors who don't have the acting craft. They're cute and they get by and they have good personalities, but they're not Judi Dench [*nominated for best actress for her portrayal of Queen Victoria in the film* Mrs. Brown.] But there are a lot of people who are really committed to being great at what they do. Some of them are very famous, but what I'm trying to really encourage musicians to understand is that they should feel good about having a skill. You may get famous because of your smile, not your skill. That's a skill too, but it's a different one. Because there are people I see—you know, singers—who can't play an instrument, but they have that magic when the light hits them. They sing really nice songs and they make a lot of people happy and I go, well, good for them, they've really achieved and taken themselves somewhere on not a whole lot of talent. They've got a magic and you have to give it up for them.

At the same time, musicians have a different skill, if they choose to develop it, and some of them don't. They think that if they play a few chords, they're musicians. That doesn't honor the music, that doesn't honor the muse. It's something that I really had to get clear in my head, because I don't think that's an understanding that musicians have and I see a lot of them in pain, and I've been in pain. It's not like two hours a day are set aside on every radio station for the encouragement of pioneering music. I think a lot of musicians are very frustrated because they may have this wonderful ability, but to merge that with the pop world, it can be very frustrating. It's one thing that I have to work through all the time; I really have to not become a number on a pop chart. It's like your worth, if they say you're only number 68.

You're presented in the media as a "pop star" but your lyrics are definitely more in-depth than usual pop fare.

For those writers who are listening and are going to read this article, there has to be a peace made within regarding what your integrity is. Sometimes you find a way to put it in a language where you don't feel like you've dishonored your skill. But you put it in a form that

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isn't so hard to grasp. Sometimes it's writing the anti-pop song in your mind that you're always doing and you ask yourself, why am I resisting? You have to decide where you stand on confrontation. I don't necessarily mean political issues. I just mean, does it put your back up? Does it take you to places that might not be warm and fuzzy, whatever warm and fuzzy is to some people?

Sometimes warm and fuzzy is another person's nightmare and vice-versa.

I do think that there is a level where not everybody likes anything overly challenging, whether it's rhythmically or a chord progression that makes them feel familiar, and I've had to honor that there's a place for that—and it's taken me a lot. There are sides that as a musician I've had to come to terms with that are a bit. . . pukey. Like why isn't there a radio station in every town that advertisers put money into that is really not about, "Is this programmable?" To succeed you have to come to terms with what your choices are. You make those choices and say, "Okay, this means I'm anchovies, and I know that."

You're saying that you need to know the parameters and not necessarily feel like they're limiting you, but in choosing to work in that context, you must make concessions.

When you make the choices, you have to face the consequences, and the consequences can be fantastic.

Well, once you reach the stature that you have, you're better able to call the shots in the way that you tour and record. But you have to give a little to get a little as far as power goes.

That makes sense, I mean Johnny [*Witherspoon, tour manager*] said last week, "You know the album is coming out and you know you made a choice not to make Ford Fiestas." When you make cars by hand, well, some people don't want that and it's a specialized thing. But you can't go, "Yeah, but everyone else wants this other thing." Sometimes you

Whatcha got?

Tori Amos' practice space basics

Tori Amos, keyboards, *vocals*: A shiny black Bösendorfer grand piano, a Kurzweil K2500XS MIDI piano with Zip drive connected (yes, she can play both at once), and Neumann KMS 140 and 150 hand held mics.

Steve Caton, *guitar*: Two Schecter Trad guitars, a Schecter guitar tuned to Bb with a bass string for the "E," two ESP Eclipse guitars, a Renson Strat-style guitar tuned to Db, a '78 Valley Arts Strat-style guitar, a Roland Jazz Chorus 120 guitar amplifier with ElectroVoice Series II 12" speakers, a Roland GP100 guitar preamp processor, and a Roland FC200 MIDI foot controller. "I'm trying to organize the patches on the foot controller. I really don't want to step on the wrong pedal during a live show."

Matt Chamberlain, *drums*: An Ayotte Wood Hoop drum set with a 12" mount top, a 15" floor tom, a 22" kick, and a 14" Keplinger Metal snare. He uses Sabian cymbals: 14" hand-hammered duo hats, a 20" duo ride, a 16" AAX Studio crash, an 18" Sizzle crash and an 8" mounted saw blade. "You never know when you might need it." All his hardware is Drum Workshop. Interestingly, he has Taos Native American kick drum and snare. On the other end of technology he has a MIDI FAT PAD, and a Roland MS1 sampler. He pounds out the music's disparate rhythms with Vic Firth sticks.

Jon Evans, *bass*: A '72 fretless Fender Precision Bass, a '92 Tobias five-string bass, a DART Bi Level acoustic bass, and a Pikart Upright Bass. For amplification, he combines a Boss SE 70 effects processor, a Groove Tube preamp, and a Crown MicroTech 600 all shot through Acme LowB4 cabinets.

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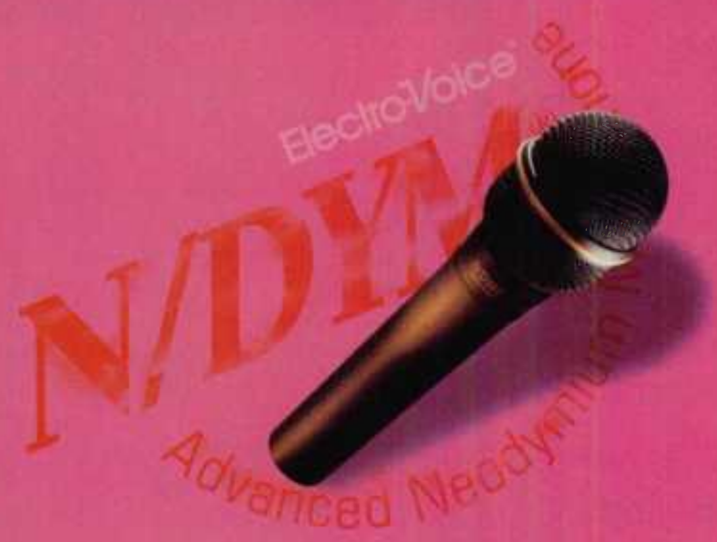

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"I'm trying to talk to musicians who are frustrated, because I see their pain."

really have to not live your life by your number. You know your music gets out there, but when it's just with you and musicians and everything it's one thing. But once your record gets out and you get your number. . . I mean, every week, it's like, [*cringing*] "I don't want to know!" Don't tell me I'm 170. It's like, is that what I'm worth, this number?

It's like gauging your worth by what order you get picked in gym class in grade school.

Yeah, and then you go, wait a minute, what if we did this to the great painters, some of whom had never sold a painting in their lifetime? I'm really trying to talk to musicians who are frustrated, because I know, I understand, and I see their pain. I'm not complaining; I'm very lucky. I don't have to work three jobs, but I used to, and I got where I am today. I created this. I'm thankful that I had encouragement and stuff, but sometimes I didn't—I just knew I wanted to play music. I didn't want anything else. I didn't want to be a music teacher, it wasn't in me. Even though some of them were so patient to have me as a student. I didn't think I could do it. I'm fortunate and yet, once you step into that commercial music world, it's a minefield and you've got to work it out internally. You really can't buy into self-worth by what your number on the *Billboard* chart is.

It's vital that the musicians who read this interview know how important it is to be strong to achieve personal success in the music business.

To go back to the word "musician," you can get confused about your intention. There is a fame issue that most musicians don't want to own. That is the dark side of the whole thing. But you must recognize it: It's part of the truth, it's part of what it is. A lot of times you'll go in saying, "I don't care about that," but that's not really true or you would have stayed at home in your living room. You've got to be honest about it.

There's so much shame around the fame issue, whether you call it recognition or fame or you just wanted to get chicks or you wanted to feel hot, whatever it is. If you don't want to be crawling out of your skin because you're lying to yourself all the time, you've got to admit that you do want to put it out there, because you *do* want to communicate; you want to connect, and if you do get some attention there will be a fame issue and you're going to have to deal with that. Fame is an amazing teacher.

How have you dealt with the fame issue?

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Check one: ❑ Lyrics included ❑ Instrumental composition

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Make your check or money order for $30.00 per song payable to: **John Lennon Songwriting Contest**

Check one category only

❑ rock ❑ country ❑ jazz ❑ pop
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For more information: **www.jlsc.com**

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Please read all rules carefully, and then sign your name in the space provided. If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.

Each entry must consist of:

- Completed and signed entry form (or photocopy). All signatures must be original.
- Audio cassette(s) containing one song only, five (5) minutes or less in length.
- Lyric sheet typed or printed legibly (please include English translation if applicable). Sheets not required for instrumental compositions.
- Check or money order for $30.00 per song (U.S. currency only) payable to John Lennon Songwriting Contest. If paying by credit card, $30.00 per song will be charged to your account.

Entries must be postmarked no later than August 31, 1998.

1. Each song submitted must be contestant's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously recorded and released through national distribution in any country will be eligible. Songs may have multiple co-writers, but please designate one name only on the application. **Contestant may submit as many songs in as many categories as he/she wishes, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, lyric sheet, and entrance fee. One check or money order for multiple entries/categories is permitted.** (Entrance fee is non-refundable. JLSC is not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, postage due, stolen, or misappropriated entries.)
2. Prizes: Twelve (12) Grand Prize Winners will receive $2,000 in cash, $5,000 in Yamaha project studio equipment, and a $5,000 advance from EMI Music Publishing. One (1) Grand Prize Winner will receive $20,000 for the "Song of the Year" courtesy of Maxell. Thirty-six (36) Finalists will receive $1,000. Seventy-two (72) Winners will receive portable CD players.
3. Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters. Employees of JLSC, their families, subsidiaries, and affiliates are not eligible.
4. Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges comprised of noted songwriters, producers and music industry professionals. Songs will be judged based upon melody, composition and lyrics (when applicable). **The quality of performance and production will not be considered.** Prizes will be awarded jointly to all authors of any song: division of prizes is responsibility of winners. Void where prohibited. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply.
5. Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility/recording rights/publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation.
6. Winners will be determined by January 15, 1999, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. Cassettes and lyrics will not be returned.

I have read and understand the rules of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

Signature ____________________ Date ______

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Very badly at first. It can become like, again, your worth is based on outside factors and yet it's a natural thing to want to know that you're being seen, that you're being heard, like you're being understood.

It's like mirroring back from your family, asking, "Am I doing okay?"

Exactly. "Are you hearing me?" I think that's a normal, natural feeling. But my ego got really confused. What are my intentions, what is the attention, and where do you put all this energy that's coming at you?

It's like a loop of energy from the stage to the audience and back again.

Recognition for a lot of musicians is, like, there's a pit in your stomach for some musicians because you've been playing so long, and your work isn't recognized; a wound gets created. And so sometimes when you get that recognition, it's like a truck. You think, "Maybe I am okay." You begin to doubt yourself when there's no response to your work. There's always one exception to the rule, but I think artists need their work to be responded to—even if it's eggs being pelted at them. Art is a life force, and when you put it out there it is a part of you.

Lenny Kravitz

5

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But the art is public too—

When someone says, "Oh, you know you can't take it personally," that's tricky. A friend once told me that once you're known, people don't see you as a human when they're looking at your work. There isn't a head and a heart, and they feel like you don't have that right, that if you've put it out there, you've given up that right. I sense that that's because the critics or whoever feel that if you get the perks of fame or success, you have to take the dark side of it. Sometimes the dark side is the perks, when you're sitting there going, "Oh my God, there's all this decadence around me." You can have anything anytime you want, and it's still not fulfilling. Sometimes it's never enough. That's why we go back to the ego and that internal recognition, saying, "You know what? We're doing the best we can and we're working on our skills." You're only as good as your job, and I think that's true in a positive sense.

Saying that you're as good as your job certainly applies to finding people who are good players, not necessarily your friends, for your band.

The playing comes first. I have a lot of friends who I didn't call. Because that isn't the first prerequisite; it's about being good—and then, obviously, not being a walking black hole. There's just no room for it. It's hard enough as it is; if somebody pulls everybody down, I can't have it.

On a day-to-day basis, having a negative or draining presence around can really affect performance and the crew's ability to do its job well.

It really does. It's different when you're a band breaking together than when you're calling in the players and you can afford to pay them properly. It's a different situation, but I still know fellow artists who pull in a band that is abusive or envious. That would never happen with me. No, I'll tear your throat out.

But this is where we go back to, I'm a player. I'm not solely a singer. And I feel for some of the girls who just sing but are very dependent on players. They may be talented, but they're not musicians. Some of them are good songwriters and good collaborators with other players. They have a gift, but you cannot command respect of seasoned players—it's very difficult. I mean, Tina Turner knows music, she can work a band; it's unbelievable what she can do. She's not a player but she knows music so well, it's so much in her soul, she can whip them into shape. She knows what she's doing and it's about respect, even though she isn't a player *per se*. Tina Turner *is* a musician—some singers are—but you have to strive to do that. You can't rest on your laurels. You have to understand rhythm and you need to know how to communicate with those drummers. You need to explain what you need.

...and you need to be able to listen.

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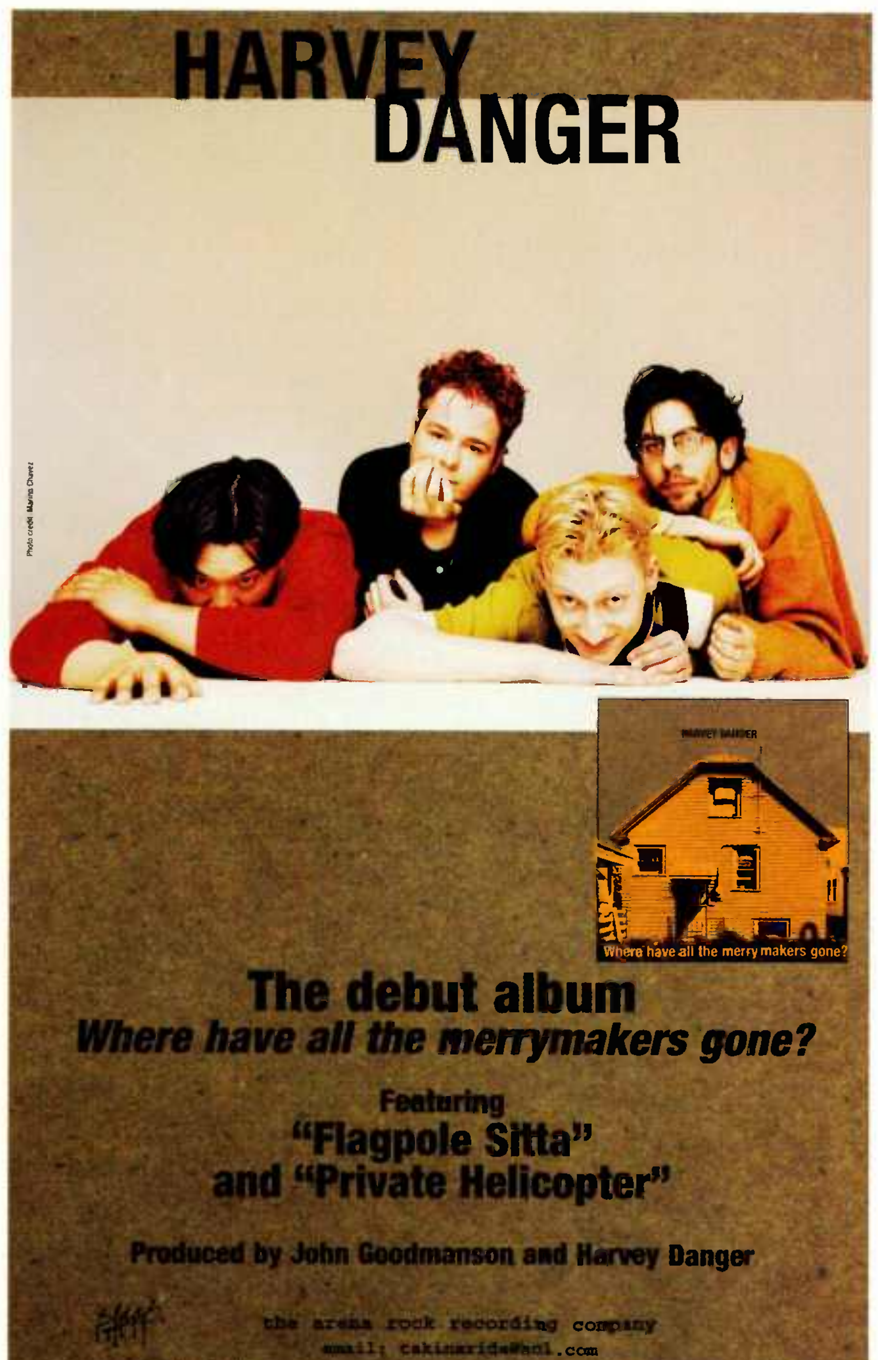

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BANDS' BEST FRIEND

Two top music attorneys reflect on what lawyers can offer to musicians—and vice versa.

Peter Paterno and Eric Greenspan, two prestigious Los Angeles lawyers, are in a plush suite in New York's Plaza Hotel, calmly reasoning why it's better to have a client on cocaine than heroin. They determine that while cocaine induces creativity and motivation, heroin encourages apathy and indolence. Given the choice, this unseemly topic would never arise, but it's an unfortunate, normally subordinate reality in their professional lives.

Paterno and Greenspan, both 47 years old, are in town for the fortieth annual Grammy Awards, although both are too busy to actually attend the ceremonies. For Paterno, who represents metal, alternative, and hip-hop giants like Metallica, Alice in Chains, Chris Cornell, the Offspring, Rancid, Silverchair, and Dr. Dre, it's a covert itinerary that includes a day of meetings in New York, a face-to-face with his newest client, Rubyhorse, in Boston, and another day of meetings and phone calls with industry brass in New York before returning to Los Angeles. "I went to the [Grammy] after parties," Paterno would say later, "but it's not like you're there drinking and having a good time. You're there talking to fat record company executives."

Greenspan, whose clients include the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Jane's Addiction, Stone Temple Pilots, Jewel, the Dust Brothers, Ice-T, and Chuck D, is equally secretive about his plans in New York, although a conversation with EMI Music about his latest coup, the band Wank, and Tool's litigation with their Volcano label are on the docket. Otherwise, there are at least a half-dozen other highly sensitive legal predicaments

by Blair R. Fischer ■ Illustrations by Joel Bower ■ Photographs by Brian Palmier

World Radio History

Greenspan must attend to but cannot talk about.

This "not talking" thing is particularly unsettling when it involves Paterno and Greenspan, two of the most forthright, affable, quotable, not to mention respected, men in the music industry. "There's the cream of the crop of entertainment lawyers, and they are two of them," says Phil Wild, senior VP of business and legal affairs for Atlantic.

Their perilous discourse ends when the phone rings and Paterno is reluctantly drawn to it. "This is the problem with staying in a hotel," he says with mild scorn. "You can't screen calls." No biggie for Greenspan, who methodically picks up the room's auxiliary phone and dials in to his Los Angeles office for messages. Back to work.

Paterno's top priority right now is Rubyhorse, an unsigned Irish band with a Britpop sound and ten different record labels salivating for its services. "I prefer that there wasn't this sort of intensity on this [deal]," he says. "I don't particularly like bidding wars because it just sets up too many expectations for the band."

> "Getting a record contract isn't the answer. It's just a starting line."

In Boston, Paterno will present Rubyhorse with the final offers, perhaps give a suggestion or two, and shuttle back to New York. "He basically gave us a rundown on how the companies are faring and the pros and cons of each company," Rubyhorse frontman Dave Farrell would later explain. "Then it was up to us to make our decision."

"We try not to get the most money, the biggest advance, or the most pressure on the band to succeed unless it's some useless pop band," Paterno says. "If I were representing Sugar Ray, they're either gonna have a radio hit or they're not. If they have a radio hit, God love 'em. If they don't, at least they'll have some money to go off and pump gas."

Ultimately, Paterno steered Rubyhorse in the direction of Interscope, a label with a small enough roster that the group would receive special attention but large enough to pay the piper. "Now there are nine labels that want them to fail," Paterno says. "They'll sit there and say, 'Oh, I wish them the best.' Bullshit. They all want them to fail."

"We didn't go screaming for money up front," Farrell says. "Five or six albums down the road, we'll be looking to make a classic album, so we explained to Peter we didn't want a company brilliant with throwing out one or two hit singles and flogging an album to death and then leaving it."

Wank had a similar objective when they chose Eric Greenspan to represent them. "He had a great track record," frontman Bobby Amodeo states simply. A week before the Grammys, Wank inked a new artist deal with Maverick which reportedly promises that the group will record at least three albums for Madonna's label. "We had talked to [Eric] about where the band was coming from and how we were looking for longevity in our career," Amodeo says. But the band wasn't sold on Greenspan until they got him on their turf. "When we met him in the office, he was all business," Amodeo recalls. "Then he came down to the show and was just jumping up and down, dancing, singing our songs. It was refreshing for us."

The opportunity to see Greenspan or Paterno in action—be it weeding through lucrative offers from giant labels or slam-dancing to a band's latest muse—is a bonus. Their client rosters aren't legendary by accident. Like connoisseurs of fine wine, Greenspan and Paterno never pollute their palates with also-rans. "I say to my bands all the time, 'If you go out and play fifty shows and you have one hundred people at your first show and you have one hundred people at your fiftieth show, you'd better think that you're not doing something right," Greenspan says, "because the more you play, the better you get. The better you get, the more people will come. It just works that way.

"If somebody sends me a demo tape and says,

World Radio History

'I'd like you to shop a deal for me,' I won't do it," he adds. "I won't even listen to the tape." Bluntly, he doesn't have the time.

Rubyhorse and Wank didn't dial 1-800-ROCK-LAW to attain Paterno and Greenspan. Paterno, for one, had to apply for Rubyhorse's business. "We probably had more lawyers coming to us than fuckin' record companies," laughs Farrell. "It was like a Harvard fuckin' reunion or something." What brought Paterno to Rubyhorse was buzz—that positive, contagious vibe that begins as a tremor and (hopefully) ends in a quake. For Greenspan, retaining Wank meant a simple phone call from the band's manager, Steve Stewart, who also manages another Greenspan client, the Stone Temple Pilots. But even that didn't convince Greenspan.

"Bidding wars set up too many expectations for the band."

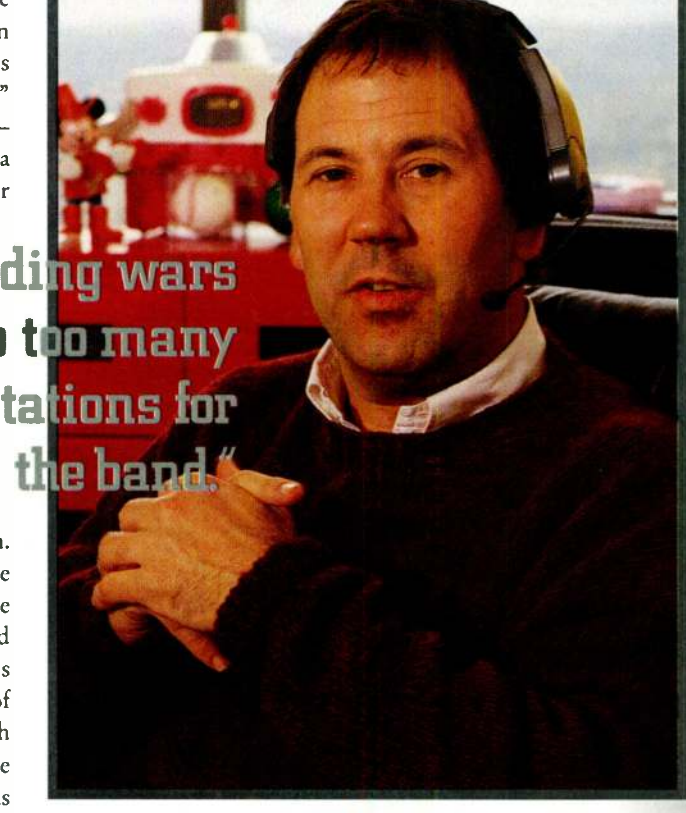
"I did go see them [live]," he says. "I did think they had hit songs, and I started telling people about them. But I really didn't kick it into much more aggressive gear until [their first single] was added on the radio." From there, Greenspan, like any good lawyer would, called his A&R peeps at major labels all over the U.S. The rest is only the beginning of Wank history. The same thing happened with another Greenspan client, the pop band Deep Blue Something. "I heard what was going on in Texas with [the song] 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' and reacted to that," he says.

An attorney with connections can flat-out cut through the bullshit. Sometimes buzz is nothing more than loud static, and it's Greenspan's and Paterno's job to make the distinction. "In one phone call I can find out who's interested and the level of interest," Paterno says. "Since we do have contacts everywhere, we can bring [bands] to people's attention. You can't make 'em wanna sign them, though. The more a band can do for itself, the more likely they are to be successful."

"If you build it, they will come," Greenspan adds, borrowing a line from the film *Field of Dreams*. "Getting a record contract isn't the answer. That's just a starting line."

In fact, according to Paterno, legal representation should be one of the last things on bands' minds at the outset. "Most of the successful bands I've been involved with have really done a lot on their own," he explains. "By the time I met Metallica [after their debut *Kill 'Em All* was released], they'd sold almost fifty thousand records." Not bad, considering that less than two percent of records sell that many or more units.

As cliché as it sounds, the benefactor of potential is passion and self-motivation. "I work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and I don't want to represent anyone who doesn't approach their job as



hard as I approach mine," Greenspan says. "You don't want an artist to say in your first conversation, 'I'm not sure I can tour because I'm going to school too. I have a wife and I don't want to leave my kid.' It's that hard. I know this sounds weird, but I don't have a choice to do what I do. If a musician doesn't approach it the same way, I don't want to represent them."

Greenspan singles out artists like the Dave Matthews Band and Hootie and the Blowfish as bands that built a regional following and turned a grass-roots fan base into a worldwide phenomenon. "If you can't create a buzz in a city like Toledo and you can't get anyone to see you, maybe you're not that good," he says.

Still, going it alone is a no-no. Both attorneys suggests that artists walk the long road with either a manager or a lawyer. "If anybody puts a piece of paper in front of you to sign, absolutely see a lawyer first," Greenspan says. "Make sure there are outs in the contract if there is no success. For example, if you were with a manager, make sure that if you don't get a deal within a finite period of time, you have the right to terminate the deal without obligation. Don't be in a situation where

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you have to buy your way out. That's really bad."

A rule of thumb is, don't sign with a manager or lawyer with less experience than you. "If the manager is the guy who carried your road equipment in high school," Paterno says, "I don't know if he's necessarily the right guy."

"I once had a job with a lawyer who had a whole bunch of gold records on the wall," Greenspan adds. "I thought that was great. The thing is, they were all ex-clients. I'd want to know how long the guy had represented the band and whether he still represents them."

Talking with other musicians is highly recommended by both lawyers, although most artists tend to plead ignorant in the legal area. ("All I knew was the bass and a bag of weed, so Eric had to explain it all to us," remembers Flea, bassist for the Chili Peppers.) Of course, perusing a CD jacket can shed some light. If Ice-T is deeming Eric Greenspan a "high-powered syndicate attorney" or Guns N' Roses tags Peter Paterno with a "Fuck 'em" middle name, both attorneys should be on the short list.

A lawyer who inundates labels with demos is doing a disservice to his or her entire roster. It's a simple case of "the boy who cries 'wolf.'" If an A&R rep

An attorney with connections can cut through the bullshit.

gets a demo a week from an attorney, how will he or she know which one is actually worth listening to? "There's a band I met with six months ago," Greenspan notes, "and I said, 'You're not gonna want to hear this, but shopping your tape doesn't do any good and calling you every fifteen minutes to tell you what A&R people think doesn't do any good. The best thing to do is to go out there and play and do the kinds of things that go with that. Whether it's releasing an independent record, touring, or doing whatever to get

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Don't sign with a lawyer with less experience than you.

people's attention, do it: There's a very large herd mentality out there.'"

In a twisted way, the herd model offers certain advantages to musicians. Paterno says there's a large contingent of young, hot-shot lawyers who "run with the pack"—the pack being A&R people. "They all talk to each other, and they all hype each other up on the same groups," he explains. "That's why [A&R reps] all get in big bidding wars for these really bad groups: They have no self-esteem, no self-confidence, so they have to have their buddies, their peer group, validate that this band's really good, when in fact, normally, they're not. So there may be an advantage for a young band to have a lawyer who runs in the pack, especially if they're bad."

Provided the planets align and a band gets signed, an attorney's role will change from negotiator to protector. A hypothetical scenario: On line one, some photographer is suing the Stone Temple Pilots because their security guard allegedly roughed him up backstage and confiscated his camera. On line two, some girl says Chris Cornell crippled her when he took a stage dive onto her bad back. On line three, Lars Ulrich says some manufacturer is

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licensing bicycle accessories under the Metallica name without the band's consent.

"I'm sure we're being sued by a few people right now," says Flea, matter-of-factly. "As soon as you become famous in any way, that's the deal. I bet Madonna hasn't had a day in the past fifteen years where she's not been sued."

Metallica certainly hasn't. "There are the obvious ones, like some guy goes to a gig and complains about hearing loss or some guy caught up in a mosh pit," explains Ulrich. "We get shit like that on a weekly basis." And it's Paterno and Greenspan who clean the shit up—or, as Ulrich says, "make it go away."

"I'll see a show where the lead singer will throw an Evian bottle into the audience," Greenspan says. "When I was young I'd think, 'Wow, that's really cool. Wouldn't I like to be that kid who caught the bottle.' Now I'll look at it and go, 'I hope the kid doesn't get hurt.'"

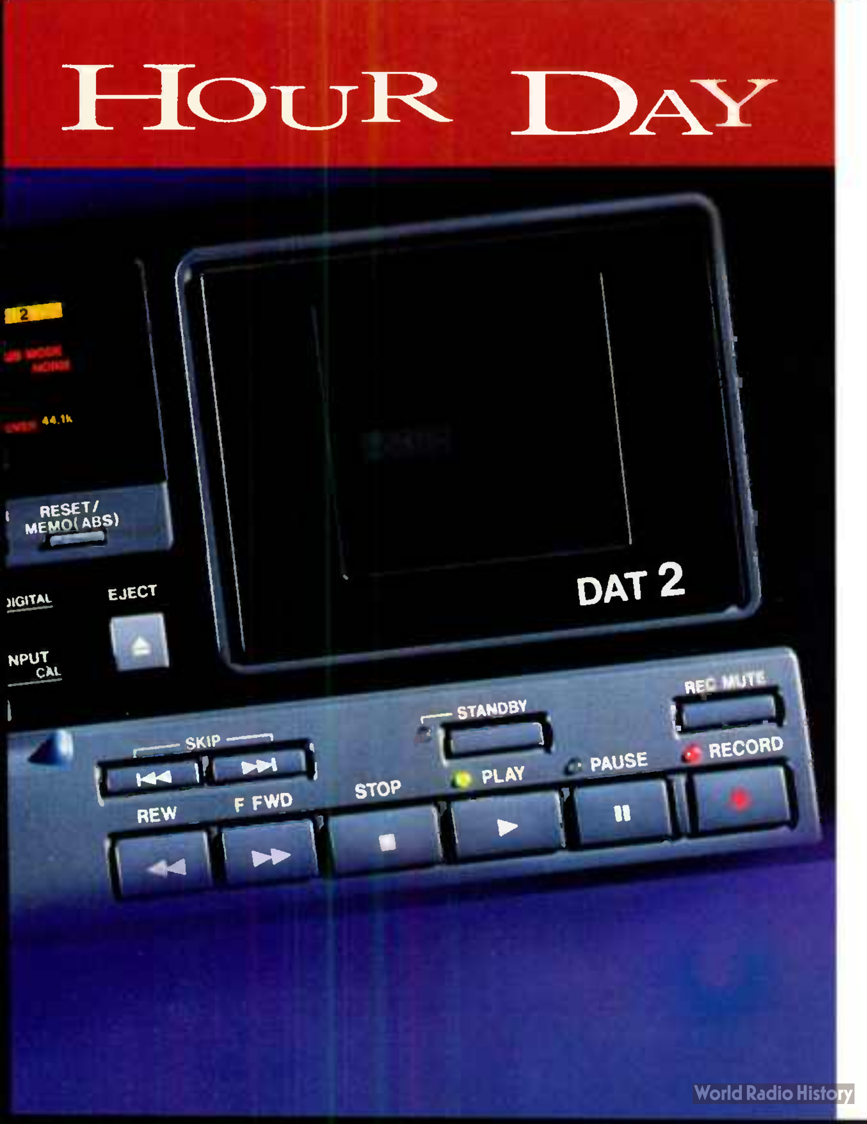
Two floors below Paterno's Plaza suite, Arista is hosting a pre-Grammy party. Both attorneys are invited and will attend, even though neither represents an artist on that label. The soirée began more than an hour ago; cocktail hour's already over. A dapper Greenspan, sporting a shiny new tux, is getting fidgety; he keeps checking Paterno's watch for the time. His plan is to make an appearance at the party and then refuel with a late dinner. Paterno, on the other hand, doesn't look like he's going anywhere. He's dressed casually for the black-tie affair because he hasn't found time between phone calls to change clothes. Sunk into the couch, they chat about the Stones' uninspired performance in Las Vegas, take pot shots at a haughty Canadian chanteuse, and try to define themselves.

"Nobody gets it," Paterno says, referring to his prestigious trip to the Grammys. "Spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends—they don't get it. They think it's all fun. It's really not very much fun."

"For years I said to my wife, 'I chose to do a profession that I enjoy, but it doesn't mean it's not work,'" Greenspan adds.

Paterno listens to his colleague, then sums it up for *Musician*. "If you're gonna be a lawyer, doing what Eric and I do is probably the top of the line," he says. "You're a lawyer. You're in a service business. You work all the time. You don't make bad money, but you don't make the money your clients make. I mean, *I* couldn't afford to hire me."

***Contributors:** Blair Fischer has been published in* P.O.V., Live!, Maxim, Bleach, *and* The Hollywood Reporter. *This is his first article for* Musician.



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It's what makes the difference between getting and not getting the gi

BY REVEREND BILLY C. WIRTZ - I

When my editor assigned me to do a full-length article on a particular "P" word, I was a bit hesitant. It's a word that veteran musicians are familiar with and often pursue relentlessly. It's a word that most young players learn about the hard way. By now, I'm sure you've guessed that it's one of two words, and you're right—it's the second one. *Professionalism*.

Professionalism is really a simpler (and less clichéd) way to describe Taking Care of Business. Being a fresh, original, and competent player is important, but if you don't have your personal and business act together, you'll find yourself with a lot of open weekends.

If you're like me—free-spirited, creative, humble, and with the attention span of a gnat—you really hate reading long-winded, bone-dry articles about career strategies. (Not that you've ever seen them in *this* magazine.) So I'll make this one easy, by breaking the subject down to four other "P" words. Add 'em up, and you've got a sure-fire formula for finding more and better work for you and your band.

PUNCTUALITY

In writing this article, I interviewed three agents, two promoters, several musicians, and my favorite soundman, Chris Murphy. The first area of concern expressed by all of them was *punctuality*.

Unfortunately, the rest of the world doesn't understand that, along with Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific, there's a fifth time zone in which musicians live. If the Musicians Union was a little stronger or more influential, we might increase awareness of this problem through flyers and public service announcements. Until then, my advice is to abide by this simple rule: When in doubt, do it the day before.

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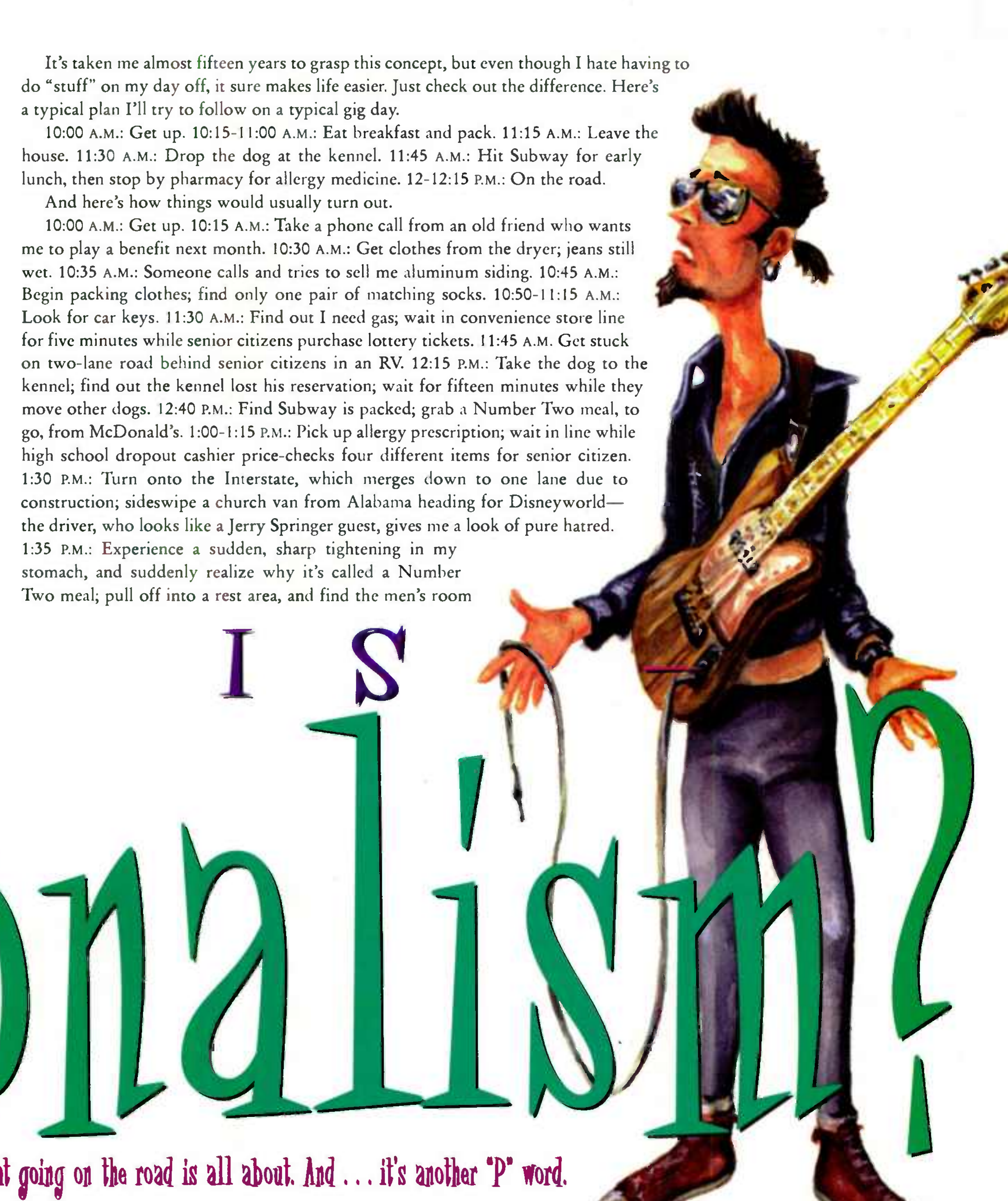
It's taken me almost fifteen years to grasp this concept, but even though I hate having to do "stuff" on my day off, it sure makes life easier. Just check out the difference. Here's a typical plan I'll try to follow on a typical gig day.

10:00 A.M.: Get up. 10:15-11:00 A.M.: Eat breakfast and pack. 11:15 A.M.: Leave the house. 11:30 A.M.: Drop the dog at the kennel. 11:45 A.M.: Hit Subway for early lunch, then stop by pharmacy for allergy medicine. 12-12:15 P.M.: On the road.

And here's how things would usually turn out.

10:00 A.M.: Get up. 10:15 A.M.: Take a phone call from an old friend who wants me to play a benefit next month. 10:30 A.M.: Get clothes from the dryer; jeans still wet. 10:35 A.M.: Someone calls and tries to sell me aluminum siding. 10:45 A.M.: Begin packing clothes; find only one pair of matching socks. 10:50-11:15 A.M.: Look for car keys. 11:30 A.M.: Find out I need gas; wait in convenience store line for five minutes while senior citizens purchase lottery tickets. 11:45 A.M. Get stuck on two-lane road behind senior citizens in an RV. 12:15 P.M.: Take the dog to the kennel; find out the kennel lost his reservation; wait for fifteen minutes while they move other dogs. 12:40 P.M.: Find Subway is packed; grab a Number Two meal, to go, from McDonald's. 1:00-1:15 P.M.: Pick up allergy prescription; wait in line while high school dropout cashier price-checks four different items for senior citizen. 1:30 P.M.: Turn onto the Interstate, which merges down to one lane due to construction; sideswipe a church van from Alabama heading for Disneyworld—the driver, who looks like a Jerry Springer guest, gives me a look of pure hatred. 1:35 P.M.: Experience a sudden, sharp tightening in my stomach, and suddenly realize why it's called a Number Two meal; pull off into a rest area, and find the men's room



It's what going on the road is all about. And . . . it's another "P" word.

LUSTRATIONS BY KIRSTEN D. HAMMER

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closed for cleaning.

Sound familiar? At least half of these stops could have been made the day before, resulting in a speedier departure, a more gradually digested Number Two meal, and a few less terrified senior citizens. It's all a part of our second, closely-related topic. . . .

PLANNING AHEAD

If you've sent the club a contract, rider, and stage plot, good for you! If you haven't, check back at least a week ahead of time; you may be in for a few surprises. Once again, making this call imposes on your day off, but it's worth the effort. When you call a club, make sure you're speaking with the right person; don't discuss important logistics with a day bartender who, in between pouring drinks, promises to "mention it to somebody." Once you get hold of the right person, always try to cover the following important points:

Setup and load-in times. Is there a specific time by which they want soundcheck done and the stage cleared? Will you be setting up with another band? Does the club serve dinner? (In other words, will you have to contend with early-bird senior citizens covering their ears and shaking their heads as you try to sound-check?) Most important, *where* do you load in?

I can tell how professional an act is by what time they show up.

Pay, door percentages, and ticket prices. Your contract says $700 versus 80 percent at $7.00 per head. The "revised" contract, which they swear was sent to the agent, reads $700 versus 75 percent after $1,200 at $5.00 per head. If you don't deal with this ahead of time, you could have the makings of an extremely unpleasant confrontation at the end of your performance.

Accommodations. This is often the most common area of miscommunication. There are few scenarios more aggravating than driving six hours, setting up in a frenzy, and then being told, "Oops, we forgot to make the reservation." They also forgot that it's homecoming weekend at the local Baptist college, and you end up squeezing for musicians into two double-beds and a threadbare cot at the local "Rooms By the Hour, Day, or Week" flea farm. *Always* double-check to make sure the club knows exactly how many rooms (and beds) you will need. Better still, call the motel and make sure the rooms are indeed reserved and paid for. Some clubs and promoters are notorious for skimping on accommodations. If the ones they offer aren't suitable, ask nicely for better ones, and offer to pay the difference. *Avoid band houses at all costs.*

Food arrangements. Does the club provide free or discounted meals for the band? Will the kitchen be open during soundcheck? What about after your show? Do they serve meals, or just sandwiches and hot wings? If the club doesn't provide food, figure on an extra 45 minutes (weeknights) to an hour (weekends) to feed the band.

Equipment rentals. Most smaller promoters and clubs don't know the difference between a DX7, a CP-70, and a 1099. Many local music stores will gladly tell them a specified model is available and at the last minute switch it for a "substitute" model, often in a dilapidated state and minus such essentials as

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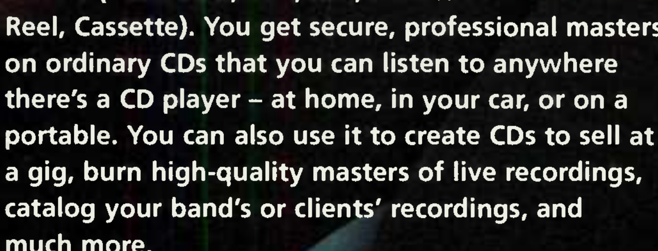

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power cords, footpedals, and instructions. If prior arrangements aren't made, expect the usually-outrageous rental charges to be taken out of your pay.

Getting to the gig. *Make sure to get good directions.* If the person on the other end of the line says, "Well, let's see. I don't drive, myself, but I *think* . . .," try again later. If you are flying and will arrive during rush hour, you may need some alternate routes. When driving into metro areas after 3:30 in the afternoon, listen to talk/news stations for traffic reports. If you are traveling anywhere between Washington, DC and New York City between 3:30 and 6:00 in the afternoon, God help you—and be sure to allow yourself at least one hour extra travel time. When you're in the Indiana/Kentucky/Tennessee region, be aware of screwball time zone changes. Be sure to make gas and rest stops *before* you enter densely populated areas. Locating a gas station, paying for the gas, finding a rest room they'll let you use (especially in Delaware), and getting across traffic back to the Interstate can add another thirty minutes in some places.

Now that you've planned ahead, had a smooth ride, and checked into the motel, you'll need to concentrate on . . .

PERFORMANCE

There are countless ways to approach a live performance. Your style of music and your image will often determine how to come across to an audience. But if you want to come across as a *professional*, regardless of style, heed these words:

When in doubt, do it the day before.

Look like a band. There's a funny psychology to an audience. They want to relate to you personally and musically, but they also want to see you as just a slight cut above them. Whether you're trying to look sharp or sloppy, bad-ass or androgynous, push it to the limit. Make sure that anyone walking into the place can tell immediately who the musicians are.

Once you start playing, **establish and maintain a flow.** There's a certain feel, a rhythm, a groove, to a well-paced show. Learning to establish that groove begins with two basic premises: the twenty-second rule, which is to try not to take more than twenty seconds between songs. And the sandwich rule, which sounds slightly obscene but actually entails sandwiching new, unfamiliar songs between two of your strongest uptempo numbers. That way, when it bombs or everyone forgets the bridge and turns the thing into a "clambake," you can regain momentum with the next song.

Unfortunately, the band can't always control the flow, especially if it's forced to deal with . . .

Drunks, hecklers, and local characters. Welcome to the wonderful world of alcohol and its effect on the human brain. Personally, I think every music school in the country should have at least one mandatory seminar on this subject, but until they do, here's a crash course.

Drunks. Two types, friendly and mean. If they're friendly,

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tolerate them and sit through at least one recollection of the night they were kicked out of a Denny's in New Orleans with David Allen Coe. If they're mean, don't antagonize them. If they act at all threatening, let the club handle them immediately.

Hecklers. Two types, *Sphinctus genericus* and *Sphinctus genericus maximus*. Two heckler comebacks will work for you 75 percent of the time: "Excuse me, sir, but please don't come here and tell us how to play music, and we'll promise not to come down to where you work and help you dunk the fries." And, "Excuse me, ma'am, but please don't talk while we're trying to play, and we won't come and sit on the end of the bed and talk while you're working." (These comebacks, of course, should always be punctuated with at least one annoying rim shot.)

Local characters. In almost every bar there's a waitress who's a would-be Bonnie Raitt or an old guy named Walt who begs every band to let him sing "Jailhouse Rock." If you really want to endear yourself to the staff and the regulars, what the hell, let 'em sing one. (But *only* one!)

If it's the waitress, don't bother to ask, just count off "Love Me Like a Man" in A, down from the V chord. As for Walt, start in E but be prepared to modulate quickly up to Ab minor. In a small town chances are that the waitress is engaged to one of the staff, Walt's related to half the town, and by giving them five minutes onstage you've made their day (or even their year), guaranteed yourself a return engagement, and dramatically bettered your chances for a good deal on some tires at the filling station on your way out of town.

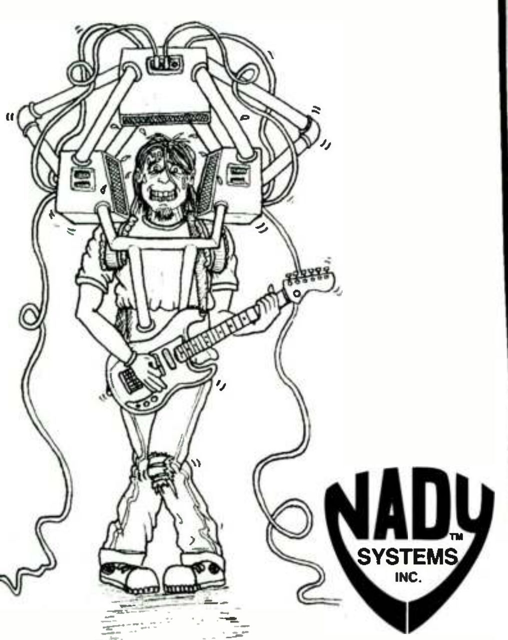
Since we're drifting over toward the area of public relations and dealing with co-workers, we're about to encounter the only cardinal, etched-in-stone rule of professional live performance, and that is . . .

DON'T PISS OFF THE SOUNDPERSON

Very few musicians wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, comb the shag over their bald spot, and say to themselves, "Tonight I'm going to piss off the soundperson." Likewise, very few soundpersons wake up, fold up the sofa, and think to themselves, "Tonight I'm going to hit the SUCK button." You may not know this, but every P.A. board has a secret SUCK button. It's controlled by the soundperson and usually stays in the "on" position when high levels of attitude emanate from the stage. The focus of this third concept is to help keep your soundperson's (middle) finger *off* that button. How do you do that? Glad you asked.

Show up on time. I know, you're sick of this one, but in the words of Chris Murphy, "I can tell how professional an act is by what time they show up."

Treat your soundperson as a co-worker, not a subordinate. Be patient. Try to utter as few "I *must* have"s as possible. Referring to yourself or the band in the third person—*i.e.*, "Reverend Billy never has fewer than three monitor mixes."—identifies you as the proud owner of a *prima donna* starter kit.



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Every P.A. board has a secret SUCK button.

Once you've started playing, **communicate with hand signals (not that one)** whenever possible. Never yell at, taunt, or make observations about the soundperson's grooming habits. Remember, most of the newer boards have *stereo* SUCK buttons.

If they've done well, **give 'em a tip.** A mic cable went bad, the prehistoric monitor blew up, yet you made it through the night sounding good. A small donation, usually twenty bucks, is the right thing to do, and it will dramatically increase the chances of the dreaded button being left in "standby" mode on future gigs.

Apply the tipping concept to other co-workers, especially waitstaff, who have been helpful during the show. As a rule, most waitresses over the age of 25 are working their way through school and/or trying to support a family as a single mom. If they're attractive, you can bet that they get hit on by every band and/or drunken customer who's passed through the place. They've heard *all* the lines, and even if they do find you as adorable, cute, roguish, creative, and talented as you know you are, they'll really be turned on if you say please and thank you and leave a large—make that huge—tip. You'll be amazed at how fast your drinks make it up to the stage.

Keep an eye on your friends. This often-overlooked area includes spouses, dates, and friends nicknamed Wild Man who come in as guests of the band. Make sure that spouses and friends understand that your quality time with them will be limited: Audience members will want to meet you, buy you drinks, and even hit on you. It's all part of the job. Be aware that if Wild Man lights up a joint in the dressing room or drops his pants in the middle of the dance floor, your agent will be getting a call on Monday.

At the end of the show, before your last song or the encore, **introduce the band members, acknowledge the staff, promoter, and any other acts on the show,** and thank the audience for a good evening. Everyone will appreciate it—they'll probably rip up your bar tab and maybe even call a cab for Wild Man.

I don't know a single musician who likes to be told what to do or how to act. It's part of the reason why many of us are in this business in the first place. That's why I've tried not to make this yet another list of do's and don'ts, but rather a series of suggestions to help you avoid getting sidetracked by the less exciting aspects of the business.

You'll find that the longer you play music, the smaller the circle gets. Guys who were once soundmen are now chief engineers at major studios, former waiters now own bars in Daytona Beach, and bussers are now extremely powerful promoters. When you approach them for gigs, the waitress will remember the night you put on an incredible show for ten people as a snowstorm raged outside, that soundperson will damn sure remember whether he or she had to use the SUCK button, and the busser will remember that, for Uncle Walt's sake, he owes you one.

Contributors: Rev. Billy C. Wirtz is a keyboardist, recording artist, road veteran, roots music authority, former wrestling manager, and a frequent contributor to Musician.

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1 Sennheiser HD400 Headphones

When you're in the fifth week of a two-month long club tour in a van with your increasingly annoying bandmates and facing a seven-hour drive to Bozeman, Montana, a nice, comfortable, and very loud pair of headphones can be more valuable than the most expensive piece of gear under the loft. And since your *per diem* affords you breakfast at Waffle House and a Slim Jim for lunch, cheap would be nice, too. Get yourself a set of Sennheiser HD400 headphones ($40) with their ergonomic fit and comfort in a light (4.6 oz), forward-looking design. You get Sennheiser quality sound reproduction with tangible treble and powerful bass. You won't even smell the dirty socks in the door well anymore. ➤ ***Sennheiser, 1 Enterprise Dr., P.O. Box 987, Old Lyme, CT 06371; voice (860) 434-9190.***

2 Fishman Pro-EQ

This compact little doohickey can work wonders for your instrument's sound whether you're playing acoustic or electric. As an outboard instrument preamp and four-band equalizer with slide controls—bass, middle, treble, and brilliance—it can be used with any type of piezo or magnetic pickup (though it was developed with Fishman's Acoustic Matrix active pickup system in mind). The Fishman Pro-EQ ($180) matches the impedance of piezo pickups with the input of instrument amps and mixers to get the best sound quality in performance, loudness, and pitch from your pickup. To avoid boominess in the low end, a handy sub-bass control adjusts lower frequencies. There is also a phase switch for control over the interaction with your sound source. Especially handy for reproducing authentic acoustic guitar tone, the Pro-EQ accomplishes this without a lot of fuss on its basic flat setting. ➤ ***Fishman Transducers, Inc., 340-D Fordham Rd., Wilmington, MA 01887; voice (978) 988-9199.***

3 Parker Nitefly guitar

Imagine having one guitar that could produce both electric and acoustic sounds but weighed about half as much as your typical electric. Now imagine you could mix the guitar's dual sounds to a single amp or send it to two different ones, all with your standard guitar cord and the flip of a switch. Stop drooling, and check out Parker's new Nitefly guitar ($1,399), a 22-fret, bolt-on neck, 6.5 lb., dual pick-up wunderkind. Featuring Fishman piezo-transducer and DiMarzio magnetic pickups, it also offers a choice of hum/single/single or the single/single/single structure. A maple body and basswood neck make up this unique guitar, which comes in white or black pearl as well as transparent colors red, blue, or sunburst. ➤ ***Parker Guitars, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY 11747-3201; voice (516) 333-9100.***

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ward

4 eMedia Guitar Method 2

For guitarists who want to improve but who don't want to enroll in hair guitar school, this intermediate, interactive CD-ROM tutorial is a great way to learn guitar independently and at your own speed. The eMedia Guitar Method 2 ($60) allows you to learn via standard notation or guitar tabulature and is available for Windows or Mac. In one disk you get a built-in tuner, metronome, and recorder along with an on-line Guitar Archive guide for getting your hands on any song not included in their lessons. Lessons covering rock, blues, classical, country, and folk (ranging from Beethoven to Hendrix) speak to both the acoustic and electric player. You can master vibrato, hammer-ons, slides, bends, melodic solos, scales, fingerstyle, and other techniques in the order and pace you want. ➤ ***eMedia, 2403 Aloha St., Seattle, WA 98112; voice (206) 329-5657.***

5 Remo MasterEdge Special Edition snare drum

Those smarty pants at Remo are at it again, making interesting technological advancements on what most would think to be a technically stagnant market–in this case, snare drums. If you're on the lookout for a well-crafted, high-performance snare at a reasonable price, the MasterEdge Special Edition snare drum ($375) is a very wise choice. The newly designed thinner, stronger drumshell material (called Acousticon High Density) allows for greater low-end warmth and high-end projection for the distinct tone of a great snare. Another feature combines a seamless, level, perfectly round "edge" design made of a "space-age" resin. Named the "Molded Bearing Edge," it is designed for longevity and durability in shape retention. The shape, angle, size, and position of the hoop's bearing edge greatly affects the balance of performance characteristics such as stick response, dynamic range, tone control, and tone quality. This snare promises long-term, high-quality amounts of all of these. ➤ ***Remo USA, 28101 Industrial Dr., Valencia, CA 91355; voice (805) 294-5600.***

6 Lexicon Lexiverb

The words "reverb" and "Lexicon" have become almost synonymous in the minds of most studio pros. Now Lexiverb adds that great Lexicon reverb sound to Digidesign Pro Tools. A way cool full-color graphic display actually shows you the reverb you're hearing, with onscreen faders that allow you to change parameters on the fly. (The latest Digi software even allows you to automate reverb changes along with your mix.) The basic reverb algorithm, CHAMBER, provides even, subtle reverberation suitable for most material, while PLATE's heavy but smooth effect works well with percussion. GATE is good with snare or vocals for that renowned "cut-off" effect. The fourth algorithm, INVERSE, is similar to GATE, but has a longer rise time and is suitable for backwards or pre-reverbs. If you're not into tweaking, Lexiverb provides 100 factory presets, configurable user preferences, and on-screen help. ➤ ***Lexicon, 3 Oak Park, Bedford, MA 01730-1441; voice (781) 280-0300.***

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editor's pick

A Step Ahe
for Hard Disk Rec

Back in the Paleolithic Era when analog tape recorders ruled the earth, progress was measured by the number of tracks. First, monophonic monsters emerged from the primeval ooze, then stereo sound-on-sound machines crawled from the ocean, followed in rapid succession by four-, eight-, and sixteen-track club-swinging, oxide-shedding Neanderthals. Finally, the 24-track *homo recordus* came forth and gazed proudly into the bright sunlight—only to be killed deader than a dinosaur by the onslaught of digital recording technology.

And so the cycle begins anew. The earliest affordable digital recording systems of the Eighties (products like the Sony PCM/Beta system and Digidesign's Sound Tools) were stereo only, followed shortly thereafter by various four-track configurations. Just a few years ago, eight-track digital recorders became the norm, using both tape (Alesis ADAT, TASCAM DA-88) and hard disk (Akai DR8, E-mu Darwin, Roland DM-80 and VS-880) media for data storage. And now the sixteen-track digital era is upon us.

One of the best—and certainly one of the most affordable—of this new breed of machines is the Akai DR16. Its base price of $2,995 makes it equivalent in cost to most popular eight-track recorders. But having more tracks alone doesn't make a system better—it simply allows you to put off more decision-making until the final mix. More importantly, the DR16 sounds great, is highly expandable, can interface with almost anything, and is built like a tank. And if sixteen tracks isn't enough for you, you can link up to eight of 'em, for a whopping 128 tracks!

Some manufacturers would have you believe that all so-called "CD-quality" (*i.e.*, 44.1 kHz) recording systems sound the same. If you swallow that, I have a bridge I want to sell you. There can in fact be a world of difference between such systems, depending largely upon the quality of the analog-to-digital (A/D) and digital-to-analog (D/A) converters used. The converters employed by the DR16 are excellent; I found them every bit (pardon the pun) as clean and accurate as those used by my Yamaha 02R mixing console and Alesis ADAT-XT recorder. In fact, I found almost no difference in fidelity between analog and digital input signal; nor was there any appreciable difference between the DR16's analog or digital outputs. Adding to this is the fact that the DR16 stores its data in an uncompressed linear format, so there's no audio degradation and none of the nasty artifacts that data compression often engenders. Sure, 20- and 24-bit recording systems are almost upon us, and, at least in theory, they should provide more "realistic" sound, but the fact remains that as long as CDs are the popular form of music delivery, we're still living in a sixteen-bit world. The DR16 is as good-sounding a sixteen-bit device as you're gonna find anywhere, at any price.

Akai's DR16 sounds great, is highly expandable, interfaces with almost anything and is built like a tank.

Out of the box, the DR16 provides eight 1/4" analog inputs and sixteen 1/4" analog outputs, all balanced and with switchable level controls, as well as both professional AES/EBU and consumer S/PDIF stereo inputs and outputs. Up to eight tracks can be recorded simultaneously, using any combination of analog and digital inputs. There's also a SCSI port so you can connect up to six external hard drives, though for an extra

editor's pick musician magazine

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ad ording

by howard massey

$400 you can order the DR16HD model, already outfitted with an internal 2 gigabyte hard drive. You can freely store any number of "projects" on a single hard drive, memory permitting. (Each project can be a completely new song or simply a new arrangement of previously recorded audio data.) Archiving is made easy, too: You can back up either your entire hard drive or just a selected project onto DAT or onto other hard drives, including removable media such as Jaz or SyJet drives.

In addition, an internal mixer allows you to combine the sixteen ...f audio inside the DR16. There are no physical faders here— ...rnal controls for adjusting the level, panning, and send levels ... individual tracks (two of the analog outputs can double as ...o external signal processors), but there is internal time code ...apshot automation (with programmable fade times between ...ots) so you can perform reasonably complex mixes. If faders ...t you desire, you can add Akai's optional DL16 ($1,795) or ...799) control surface.

... any digital device, the DR16 is actually a computer at heart, ...t may not look like one. One of its most computer-like features ...rovision of a number of slots that allow for expansion if and ...eed dictates and budget permits. Happily, every one of these ... is reasonably priced. For example, a MIDI interface will set you ...st $299. This not only enables the DR16 to output MIDI Time ...nd slave to MIDI Machine Control, it also permits fairly extensive dynamic mix automation with the use of a sequencer and/or MIDI control surface; mutes, levels, pan controls, and send levels can all be assigned control numbers, and snapshots can be called up with program change messages. A SMPTE interface, which enables the DR16 to read and write standard linear time code in any of the popular formats, will set you back $379, and an ADAT interface, which allows you to port eight channels of audio to and from an ADAT—all in the digital domain—runs just $249; a 16-out, 8-in ADAT option is available for $299. There's also a very sweet-sounding digital EQ card for $699; this adds three-band ...ization to all channels but unfortunately can only be used for ...ack through the internal mixer and not for recording.

...ut simple multitrack recording, playback, mixing, and ...hronization is just the tip of the iceberg. The most compelling ...on for buying a digital recording system—especially a hard-disk-...ed one like the DR16—is non-destructive editing. Once you've got your audio safely stored on disk, you can start slicing and dicing, adding a verse here, shifting a chorus there, even erasing a misplayed note or flying in the correct one—indeed, creating entire new arrangements without in any way affecting your original recording. The DR16 provides a slew of cut/copy/paste/insert/erase editing operations, and the front panel jog/shuttle wheel makes it easy to "rock the reels" to locate precise editing points, of which more than 100 can be stored.

It's amazing how much we humans depend on visuals, even when doing audio editing. That's why computer programs such as Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge or Steinberg's WaveLab (our May '97 Editor's Picks) are so popular. Make no mistake, you can easily fly tracks in and out of the DR16 for editing in computer programs if you want to, but Akai has an option called SuperView, which may make you rethink that approach. This is actually a meek, mild-mannered video output card ($699) that makes the DR16 more powerful than a locomotive and allows you to edit faster than a speeding bullet. SuperView lets you connect any standard VGA computer monitor and QWERTY keyboard directly to your DR16. A colorful screen display shows the contents of all sixteen tracks, making it easy to pinpoint locations and see precisely what you are doing. Familiar computer-like keyboard shortcuts are used (such as Ctrl-C for copy, or Ctrl-V for paste), and you can use the keyboard to quickly name "clip edits" (the snippets that you cut and copy for pasting and insertion), "takes" (five alternate recordings), or "cues" (entire collections of editing parameters). It's not a full-blown computer audio editor by any means, but it makes basic editing operations a snap and greatly adds to the functionality of the DR16 at minimal extra cost.

The physical construction of the DR16 is equally impressive. The good news is that there's lots of metal here, so you can take one on the road with confidence; the bad news is that you'd better have a strong back, 'cause this is a heavy sucker! But it's hard to imagine anything less than a major mishap putting a dent in the DR16, and that's not something you can say about most digital recorders.

The DR16's operating software is robust too. I can't say it's entirely crash-proof, because it did lock up on me every once in a while (what computer doesn't?). But during weeks of extensive use it never lost any data, and it never failed to completely resuscitate immediately after being powered up again. Basic recording and playback operations are comfortably familiar and analog tape-like, but when you go to more advanced operations there can be a fairly advanced learning curve in terms of remembering which buttons to push in what order. This isn't helped by the somewhat obtuse and poorly organized owners manual, but if you stick with it you'll soon find your fingers flying around the front panel. I also found that the operating system occasionally gets confused when switching between takes (although, again, no data is lost). Also, snapshot switching during mix playback can be less than instantaneous when there are lots of level and/or pan differences between adjacent snaps. But these little bugs are a relatively minor price to pay for a recording system that is so phenomenally cost-effective, flexible, and clean-sounding. Once you try the DR16, you'll never want to go back to the cave again.

Special thanks to Dave Whittle.

World Radio History

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE'S

1998 Best Unsigned Band Competition

SEMIFINALISTS

Group 1

The competition is underway, and our national panel of music judges is busy sifting through your entries. This list is only the first installment of semifinalists, so don't worry if your act is not included. Check out next month's issue for the remaining bands/artists that survived the first round. For now, let's congratulate these groups...

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NIKATI, CA
THE SLIPPIN MICKIES, CA
ANT FARM, AZ
NICK DASTARDLY AND THE ESCAPE ARTISTS, DC
PLASTER SANDALS, NY
MONEY PENNY (TOM FLOWERS), CA
BELLA ROSE, OH
LANDFILL PARK, WI
TRIPROCKET, TX
KITTY'S KITCHEN, ON
GIRLS NEXT DOOR, CA
BRIAN DAVIDSON, OH
THE SWEATERS, BC
THE LANES, MB
ICE HALO, MI
MORRIS BROTHERS BAND, NY
PAT MATTINGLY, NY
BINK BRAHMS, NH
MICHAEL LORD, CA
FRED MOSLEY, WI
COZY BONES, BC
LINEE, MA
DUNSTON ASHE, PA
DAL-DIL-VOG, BC
17 REASONS WHY, OR
VIPERHOUSE, VT
JOE BELL AND THE SWING LIZARDS, OH
MINERVAH, AB
MULBERRY LANE, WI
ANGRY PLANET, AZ
Q SIGN, GA
THE HOUSEMARYS, IN
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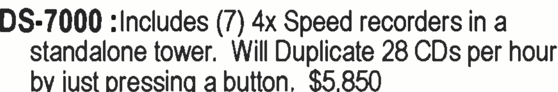

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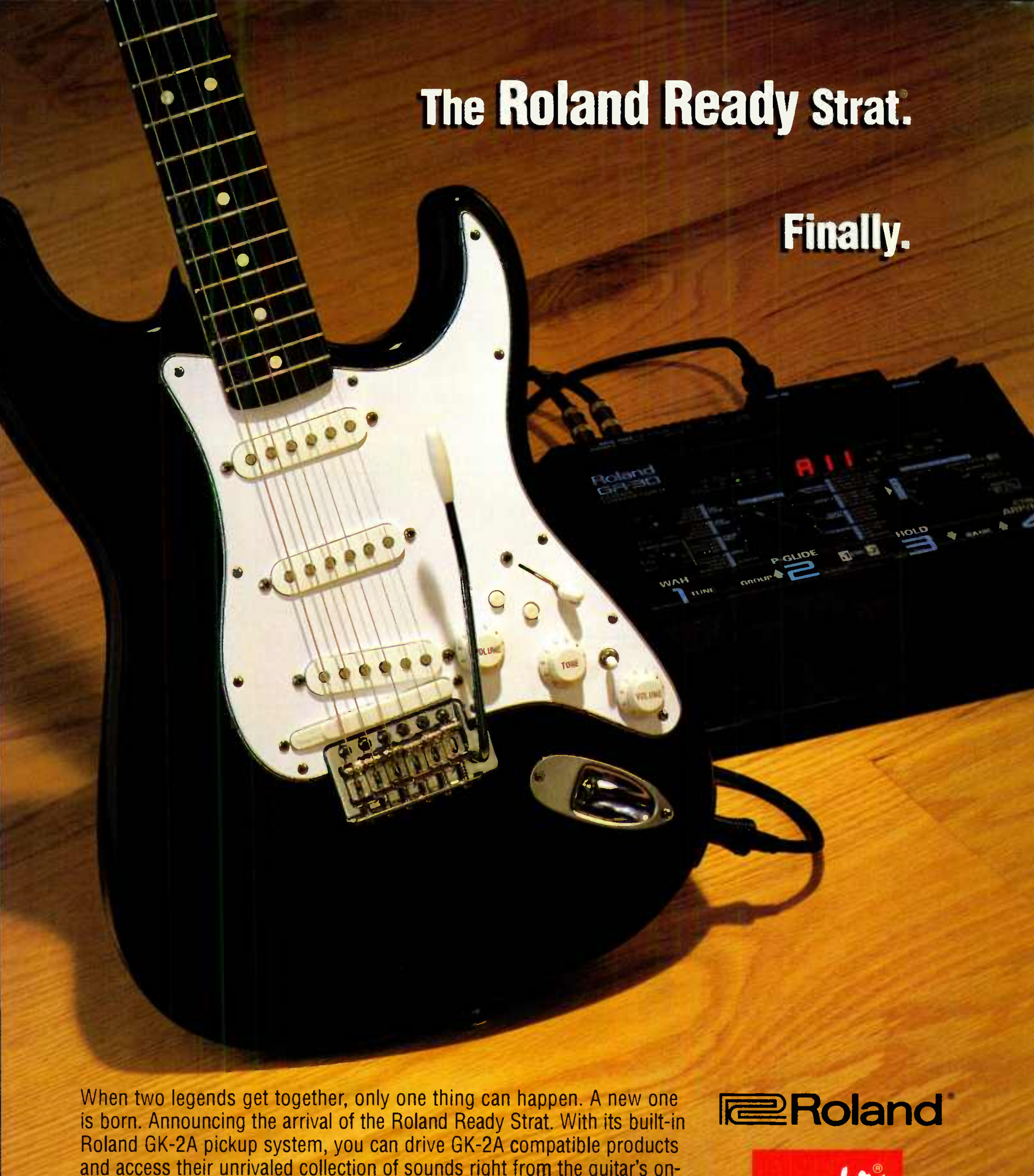

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Sound Ad

Define New Conversion
Conversion name Untitled Conversion
Convert file type to AIFF
Convert sample rate to 44100.00 Hz
If no Digi board, use quality Polyphase (slower)
Convert number of bits to 16 bits
Change # of channels Make split stereo
Process regions by Extract
Fade in and out time 174.0 mSec
Copy markers, regions & loops
Use dither
Add or replace extension .AIF
Gate Silence
A silence is longer than 200.0 mSec
and lower than -30.0 dBfs
Attenuate silences 0.0 dB
Boost non-silences with Look Ahead Peak Limiter
First normalize to full scale
Then amplify 8.6 dB
Then limit at 0.0 dBfs
Cancel
Add

As shown by this screen shot from BarbaBatch 2.0, today's batch programmer software offers many options to specify for converted files.

Imagine you're standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking a stormy ocean. It's a foggy day; the sun and horizon are hidden by the gloom. Behind you a forest of tall pines drips from a recent shower. To complete the experience, now add the sounds of the waves crashing below, the moan of the wind in the pines, and an occasional seagull call from far away.

If you've ever played the CD-ROM game *Myst*, you'll recognize this scene and appreciate the effect that the sound has on the incredible illusion of reality that's achieved by the Miller brothers, who created *Myst* and its newly released sequel, *Riven*. [*For a review of the* Riven *soundtrack, see page 90.*] The sound design for *Myst* is an excellent example of just how much the imaginative use of sound can enhance a CD-ROM project.

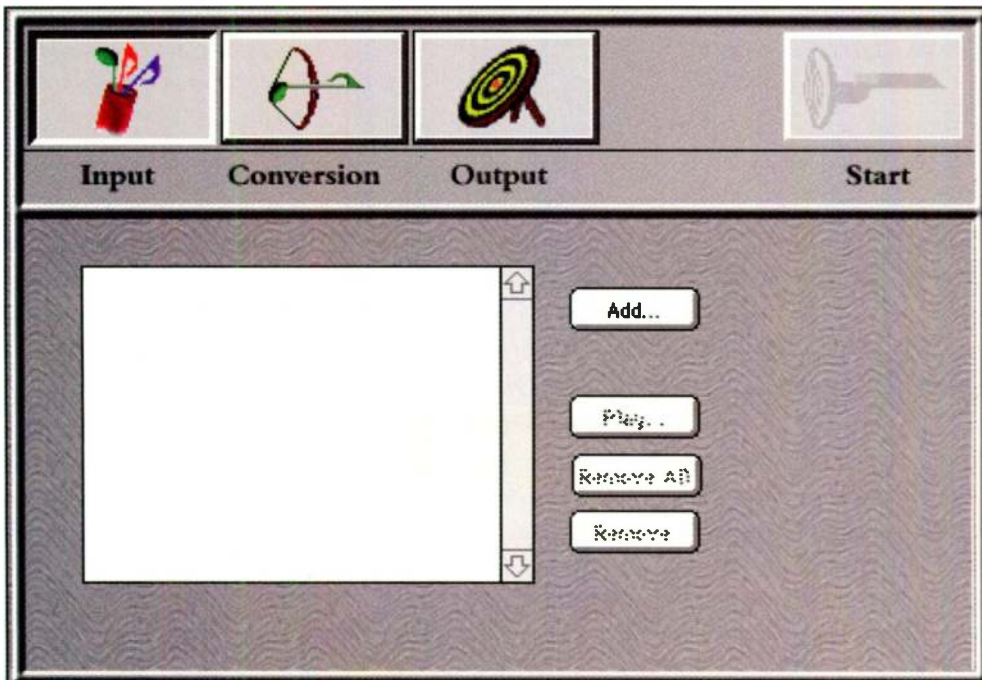
How to clear the Myst from your audio tracks for CD-ROM projects.

Creating sound for a CD-ROM requires a number of skills and tools. Musicians with prior recording experience will find some of the techniques familiar. But a successful CD-ROM sound project goes beyond composing and recording music. If you're about to embark on your first CD-ROM sound project, you can avoid major pitfalls by taking a few tips from those who have been there. For starters, invest some

World Radio History

by robert raines

vice for CD-ROMs



BarbaBatch's screen for gathering final set of converted files.

money in a few CD-ROM titles and set aside an afternoon or two to explore them carefully. And be prepared to listen on computer speakers when you start creating your sounds because your files will sound completely different than on your studio monitors.

organize!

Most CD-ROM sound projects involve three kinds of sound: voice-over, sound effects, and music. If you're working alone (as I often do), you'll be wearing the hats of the composer, arranger, producer, and

(continued on page 74)

World Radio History

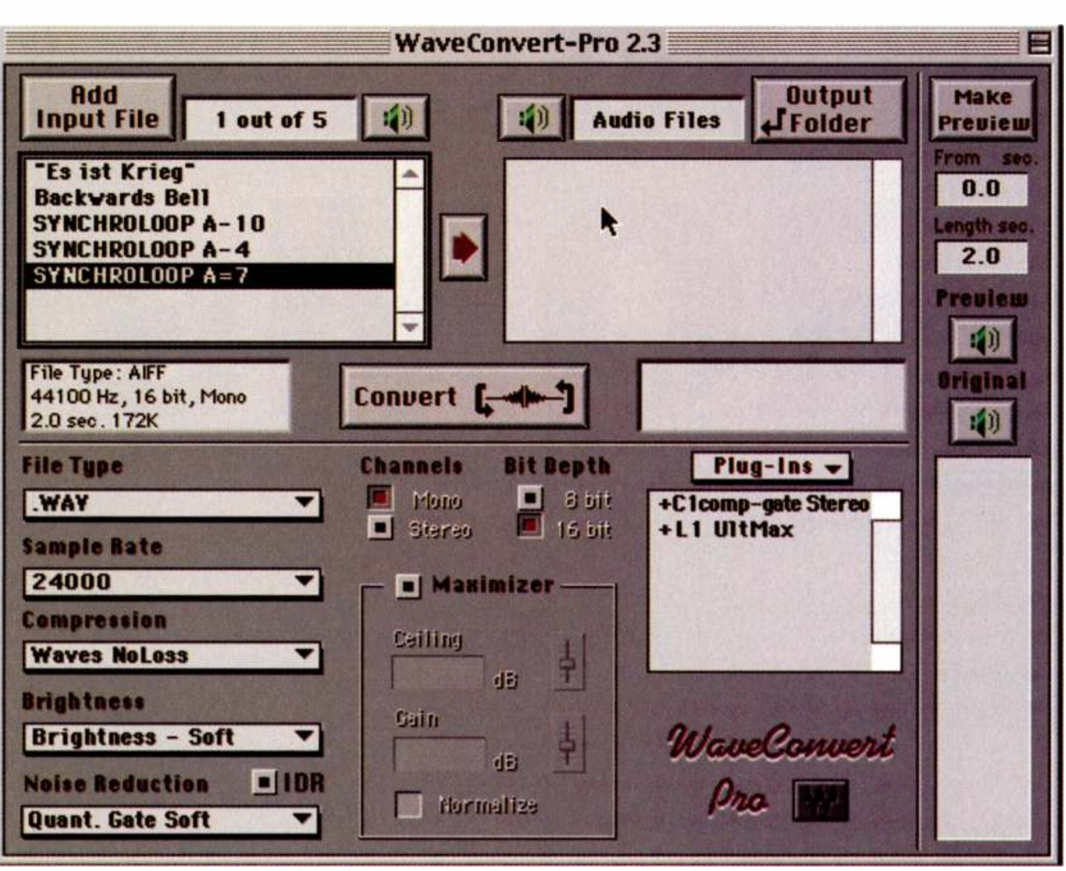
(continued from page 73)

sound designer. You'll need to put lots of forethought into your project before you begin actually recording the sound or you'll quickly find yourself in a hopeless tangle of sound files and cues, so take it from me: Hyper-organization is critical.

I recently worked on a CD-ROM project that demanded a large number of voice-overs that needed to be re-recorded as we progressed through the project. Even after the second set of sessions, I became aware that there was a problem: Our ears are particularly sensitive to isolated voices, and as a result the slightest differences in recording became obvious whenever I would paste one of the newly recorded voice cues in between older ones. This taught me a valuable lesson: I spent a lot of time getting the sounds of the voices to match up with the sound quality of the first one that had been recorded. It became a real headache to remember exactly how I had set up the original voice-overs, and it was even more tedious to go through each file and adjust the various parameters until they matched the old voice-over files. From that point on I took detailed notes about each recording setup so that I wouldn't have to go through that hassle again, and I strongly recommend that you do the same.

A flow chart and exacting file-naming procedure can be keys to your success. I like to create a cue sheet that outlines all of the various scenes and actions that the user might experience while exploring the CD. I make this cue sheet a graphic representation of the steps that a user may take while moving through the CD. Then I assign cues at important event points and name them accordingly. For example, if a user opens a door in a room, I might call that event cue point *c1*. Then I'll create a master list of all these cues—music, sound effects, and voice-overs—that'll show me exactly where each sound will fall in the "script."

It's best to name files in a way that lets you quickly understand whether each one is a voice-over, a sound effect, or music. For example, a file named *sfxdr2c1.aiff* would mean the file is a sound effect, door sound number 2, used at cue point c1 and saved in the AIFF file format. This particular naming scheme may be more complicated than what you'd want for your own project, but I strongly urge you to put some thought into coming up with a system for naming files that works for you.



The WaveConvert Pro main screen.

use the best ingredients

The secret to creating sound for CD-ROM is to end up with sound files that are as small as possible (so that they'll load quickly and play without a glitch on a wide variety of computers) while retaining as much fidelity as possible. Until fairly recently, the standard for CD-ROM sound quality was generally accepted as 8-bit mono, 22 kHz. With the increase in quality and speed of both CD-ROM drives and CPUs, many developers now push their files on up to 16-bit quality while remaining at 22 kHz.

Most musicians I've spoken with agree that 16-bit is now the standard to aim for. Take William Schulze, a product manager at Macromedia with ample experience in CD-ROM sound production. Schulze, who was the programmer and producer on the Residents' *Gingerbread Man* (Ion) CD-ROM and also worked on Brian Eno's *Headcandy* (Digital Entertainment) CD-ROM, advises that it's best to work in the highest possible resolution until the final stages of the project. At that point, he says, you can work on reducing the "memory footprint"—the size of the sound file—by downsampling the file.

"I take a studio approach when creating my sound files," he says. "I use the best microphones I can, the best compressor available, and I watch the signal-to-noise ratio carefully. Then I'll have excellent-quality sound files to work with when I start optimizing them for the CD-ROM." For the Residents project, Schulze created a CD-ROM with mixed-mode audio; the audio that played with the CD-ROM was downsampled and optimized for computer playback, while

World Radio History

the original set of audio files was also provided for normal CD audio playback.

the tools

Macromedia's SoundEdit16 version II is an especially useful and easy tool. It has a wide range of useful functions for CD-ROM sound production, including simple EQ, basic editing, and cue point insertion, which sets markers on the visual display of the sound file's waveform. These can then be read by Director, which enables the cue points to control the animation tempo and other parameters of the CD-ROM's performance.

Getting the most out of your files before downsampling can make all the difference to the quality of the final product, and these days **Waves** plug-ins—audio processing software programs that work with your computer software to process your sound files for effects and optimum output—are the hottest item out there for maximizing the potential of your files. (For detailed information, check out the Waves Website at www.waves.com.)

Waves plug-ins support a wide range of third-party Mac and Windows programs from Adobe, Digidesign, Macromedia, Opcode, E-Magic, Sonic Foundry, Steinberg, and other companies. Among these plug-ins, I recommend MultiRack, a real-time processing plug-in that allows you to hear changes to your sound as you play your instrument into your computer, and the Ultra Maximizer, which is better than most normalizing functions that come bundled with typical audio programs.

Once you're well into your project, you'll find that you're working with many, many files—perhaps numbering in the hundreds. Converting and optimizing all of these files one at a time can take weeks. There are programs that allow you to convert large numbers of sound files with little or no hassle. Two examples are **Waves**' WaveConvert Pro (for Mac and PC) and the newly released BarbaBatch 2.0, which is produced by **Audio Ease** (ease@knoware.nl.com). These flexible programs let you work with a mix of input file formats in various sample rates, and will also run in the background so you can continue to use other programs as they do their thing. And there's no need to run a file through them several times in order to achieve a complex conversion. Instead, you can define the parameter for mass file conversion by combining format parameters for a customized conversion setup. There's another major plus for those who, like me, tend to click the wrong button and ruin their work: It's impossible to overwrite your master files with converted files. WaveConvert Pro is available for both Mac and PC, while BarbaBatch will run only on Power Macs or non-Power Macs equipped with a floating point unit. Use either program, and, you'll be one happy camper.

Contributors: *Robert Raines was recently hired to work on sound development for the next version of America Online.*

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The Soul in the Mac[hine]

Kraftwerk alumnus Wolfgang Flür ponders his band's legacy in electronica.

by e. d. menasché

The very fact that you're reading a music magazine with the section titled "Technology" in it owes a lot to Wolfgang Flür and his former colleagues in Kraftwerk. It was twenty years ago that these four unfashionably short-haired Germans planted the seeds of a truly alternative music—and not just in terms of its determinedly inorganic rhythm, intimidating gear, and vaguely sinister persona. No, they were much more subversive than that; by actually leaving the stage and turning their performance over to a bunch of bleeping machines that might have been lifted from the *Star Trek* set, they suggested that technology itself may take the artist's place in a world where computers fight our wars, beat our chess champions, and set the tempos of our lives.

None of which, incidentally, appealed that much to Flür. In the mid-Eighties, at the height of Kraftwerk's fame, he left the band specifically in order to escape its "robot image" and began pursuing other projects. Today, his creative philosophy owes less to the mighty microchip than you might expect from one of the fathers of the musical industrial complex. His current project, Yamo, is a partnership with Andy Thoma from Mouse on Mars and Jan Werner. Their debut album, *Time Pie* (Hypnotic), is a highly personal document populated by characters who tell their stories inside a lush, sometimes quirky, electronic landscape. The humor and poetic intimacy of the pieces contrasts pointedly with Kraftwerk's precise constructions.

What, then, does Flür forecast for the role and future of technology in music? Over coffee and pastry one morning in New York, he pondered the question and expounded on electronica past, present, and future.

First, why involve yourself with a project as different as Yamo is from Kraftwerk?

I wanted to go beyond my industrial robot image to get a little bit of warmth from the music and a little different handling of synthesizer sounds. I didn't want to make it sound so obviously synthetic, as you would with techno. In fact, I don't like that style; it's too dark for me and too loud. This project has much more to do with big fantasy, humor, and warm sounds. My goal isn't to make electronic pop music that shows off the electronics. That is not new.

Kraftwerk defined "machine musik." What do you see as the role of machines in the creative process?

We use machines only a little bit in the end. We start with feelings and ideas long before we make any sound at all. It's much more about understanding that we make music that goes from brain to brain, from sense to sense, before any one of us goes to any instrument or tool to find something. This is absolutely necessary. It precedes the intellectual part of the process.

Do you use technology to write?

No. I go to the nature site near my home as often as I can. I get most of my ideas by walking around. But I don't write in a traditional way. I don't know why, but if I speak a phrase the melody comes by itself, develops at the same moment in my head. I don't need anything beyond a notebook and my dictaphone. I have a friend go over my lyrics with his special English—the English English, not the German English. Once all that is done, I pass it on to Andy and Jan to see if they can connect with the theme. Usually things happen very fast because Andy and Jan have very big fantasy . . . big ears. When we speak about the song, I give as many details as I can. For example, if the story happens outside I give them the temperature and the color of the surroundings. I might say the forest must be dark green, or "Aurora Borealis" must be very ice cold and so we have to construct very ice cold sounds for that song.

After the surroundings and the story textures come the rhythm. The rhythm often depends on how I speak the lyric. *Time Pie* has to do with time, and the lyrics are totally frantic steps; it's so fast you can barely understand the words. Only then do we choose the parts and arrangement of the music, the smell of the music, the patterns of the music and melody inside. After that, we go into the studio.

Describe your recording process.

Everything we create with the synthesizer is immediately sampled on a pair of old Akai samplers so that we do not lose it. It can take us a long time and a lot of work to build a complicated sound. [*Flür imitates a nasal filter sweep.*] We could never develop a sound like that a second time. If it's lost, it's lost.

"The you

Andy is a collector of old electronic tools [instruments], so we have lots of very old-fashioned things from the Seventies and Eighties. They are much more fun to play with; you find things that are really astonishing. Maybe sometimes it's only a snare drum or cymbal sound that you cannot find in any very expensive modern thing. We use anything that fits. We'll even record objects we find: This beaded pearl curtain made a certain sound I'd been looking for, so I recorded it with a portable DAT. I've also used the sound of stroking skin.

Do you do any traditional playing?

I'm not a drummer anymore—the machine does that. But on one track, "Guiding Ray," I did play a set of drums. First time in 25 years! And it worked, although I got a cramp in the leg after some minutes of kicking the bass

World Radio History

generation works with synths very differently than Kraftwerk—they're much more intelligent and refined."

drum. But enough of it was okay that we could record it and correct it with our computer and use it as a sampled loop.

What do you use for sequencing?

Emagic Notator and Steinberg Cubase. Then we track everything on an old Otari 24-track analog machine. Andy has a 16-track digital Akai, but we like analog and a good microphone best for sound recording. It's especially important with vocals.

In many ways Kraftwerk laid the groundwork for the current dance music scene. Would you say that electronic technology has changed or influenced the way people relate to dancing?

I don't think it's changed so much. Back in my clubbing days—and I can tell you it was a long time ago—we had our disco fever nights. That was not electronic music, but it had the same feeling. It was also about *boom, boom, boom.*

Is it possible to write dance music that has some emotional depth?

I don't think so, because everything is the same from band to band. The important thing in this music is the rhythm and the loudness. It really has to go *boom, boom, boom.* The kids like it very loud, very fast. It was the same thing with Kraftwerk. We would go clubbing all night until we felt exhausted. That was all we really wanted: to feel exhausted, like we had sport. You don't come away with a memory of what went on musically.

Is electronic music the most relevant reflection of life in these high-tech times?

It is only one possibility. It's my way of performing and transporting [*sic*] stories of the end of the twentieth century because I like the sounds of electronic instruments, because there are so many possibilities outside of dance music. If you are a person with big fantasies, this tool will speak your personal voice.

Kraftwerk is frequently cited as the main inspiration for young electronic acts. Has electronic music in fact been nothing more than a variation on the themes you explored twenty years ago?

I've been playing the synth since the early Seventies, and I have the idea that we are just beginning to understand that instrument, twenty years later. The younger generation works with synths very differently than we did with Kraftwerk—they're much more intelligent and refined. You see so many artists using synthesizers in different ways. You could never play a guitar so many millions of different ways, no matter what kind it is. But you can really make something fresh with a good synthesizer. You can spend the whole afternoon and have your own joy. You put your earphones on and you go to another world. You really feel that you can find the way to your soul. This sound is me, my soul. Nothing could be better than a synthesizer to let your soul listen to others.

Contributors: *E. D. Menasché composed the score to* Parallel Sons *(Eureka Pictures), which opened in New York on May 1.*

World Radio History

Chemical Engine

by e. d. menasché

Tom Rowlands (left) and Ed Simons, a.k.a. the Chemical Brothers, have risen to the top of the electronic music scene on the wings of a trademark brew that combines high energy, psychedelically twisted grooves, and break beats. From the kicker, last year's acclaimed *Dig Your Own Hole* (Astralwerks) gets in your face with the intensity of a live performance—no small feat for two guys immersed in the supposedly cold science of digital sampling. "This kind of technology gives you all this freedom," Rowlands explains. "Our music is kind of an amalgam of a lot of synthesis, a lot of sampling, and a more traditional approach to writing music; it's all these different things together. I grew up with the technology and with a feel for acoustic instruments as well; the fact that I play guitar doesn't mean I have to apologize for using a sampler."

That's probably just as well, because with the arsenal of fully-loaded samplers at his disposal, including an E-mu E64 and a cachet of Akais (two S3200s, an S1000, an S2800, and an MPC3000), he might be apologizing 24 hours a day. "We've always used our samplers the way other people might use a multitrack recorder," he says. "In fact, we've only recently gotten into [disk-based] digital recording with Steinberg Cubase VST, and we use that to handle things that are too complicated for the samplers. Otherwise, we'll load the samplers up with tons of sounds and then just play around, improvising to come up with ideas."

Because of their heavy reliance on samplers as composing/recording tools, Rowlands places Steinberg's ReCycle software (available for both Mac and Windows) at the center of the way they make music. "It was the first piece of software that I felt was designed for my way of looking at music," he says. ReCycle's mission is quite specific: A sound wave, usually a drum loop, is transferred into a computer, where the software can edit it non-destructively. Waves can be uploaded from supported samplers via either SCSI or MIDI connection, or culled from other sources, such as sample CDs, WAV, AIFF, and Sound Designer II files. But unlike other waveform editors, which focus mainly on editing audio, ReCycle is used primarily to build, fine-tune, and deconstruct grooves and loops—the cornerstone of sample-based music. "We use ReCycle two ways," Rowlands explains. "We've got two computers in our studio: a Mac G3 has ReCycle working with Cubase VST, which can read ReCycle REX [audio] files directly; the other, an old Mac LC475, is used exclusively for connecting ReCycle to our samplers [via SCSI]—all that computer *does* is ReCycle stuff."

To understand why the Chemical Brothers find ReCycle so vital, you must first get a handle on their musical M.O. "Before I got ReCycle, I would get loads of samples together, set up a program in the sampler, and then move the samples' starting point around by hand to build grooves," Rowlands explains. "When we'd be asked to do a remix, we'd have like three days to get the whole thing done. We'd spend two of those

World Radio History

The Chemical Brothers bring life to their loops with ReCycle

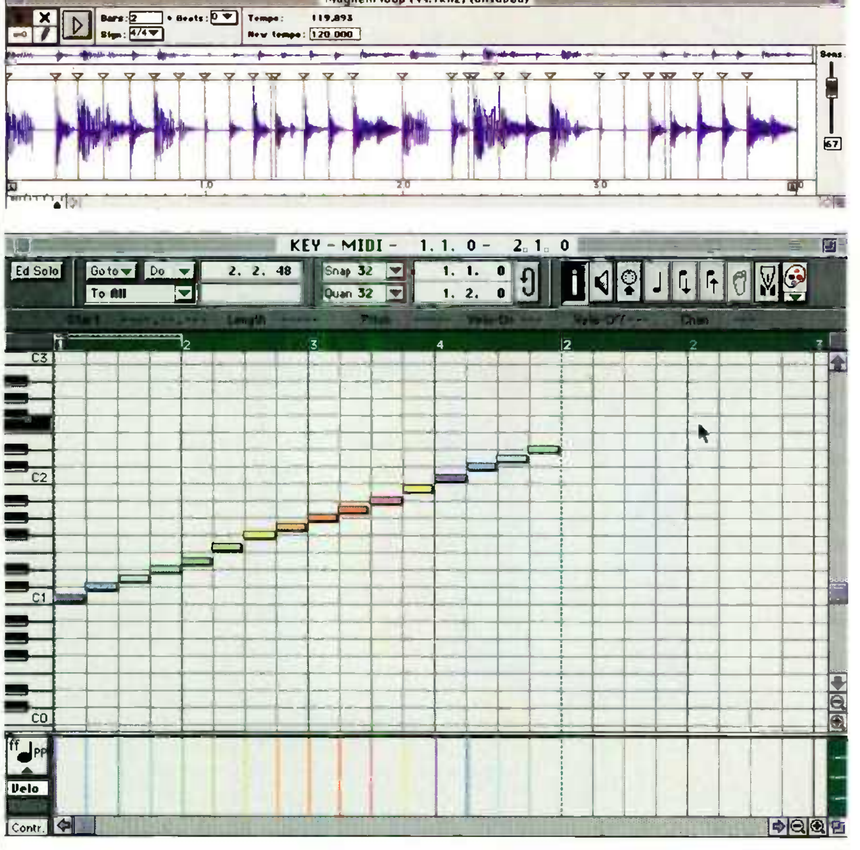
ring

days loading loops and breaks into our samplers and then cutting them up into pieces of audio [using the sampler's internal editing functions] so we could make them groove together. We'd take a one-bar loop and chop it into maybe twenty pieces, then shuffle the pieces around into something new, mixing in bits from other loops and samples and so on. It would just take forever. ReCycle came along and made the work of cutting up the loops go much quicker."

When you load a loop into ReCycle, the software reads the wave's amplitude, looking for zero-crossing points, most of which will correspond with a specific hit in a loop. You can tell the program how many sections into which to slice the loop, adding or subtracting slices manually. Also, you would determine the boundaries of the loop and define its length in bars and beats. ReCycle then has the information it needs to calculate the loop's tempo. Because the software uses the waveform's amplitude to determine the slice divisions, the integrity of the groove is preserved: If the hat is behind the pocket, so are the slices. When ReCycle sends the audio back to the sampler, it offers the option of having each slice become an individual sample triggered by its own MIDI note. "Not only will ReCycle help you chop up the wave," Rowlands points out, "it produces a MIDI file that recreates the original groove as a pattern of MIDI notes." That MIDI file can be imported directly to Cubase or any other sequencer. In so doing, ReCycle allows you to change the loop's tempo without changing its pitch, analyze the groove for use with other drum sounds, and reconfigure the groove, using the original sounds to play a new pattern.

"The more I use it, the more I find it to be a creative/composing tool as well as a time-saver," Rowlands says. "I might load a two-bar bass line into ReCycle. I can copy that same loop five or six times, then go about moving the start points of the loop on the different copies with the software. I'll start developing rhythms and melodies that I'd never naturally think of. If writing melodies isn't your strong point, it's an interesting way of getting something to happen. I like software that allows you to find the random element. I play bass and guitar but I'm no virtuoso, so I like the way the software lets me do things I couldn't humanly do."

Though ReCycle loops can be imported directly into Cubase, Rowlands usually prefers to transmit the audio back to his samplers and tweak the grooves beyond recognition. "Once I've split up the loops, one of my favorite tricks is to use MIDI velocity to control the sample's start point," Rowlands says. "We'll chop up a sample into really small slices, like sixty-fourth notes, and program a loop with varying velocities. You get a weird thing that sounds like time-stretching, but it's a lot more precise. You can stretch beats like there's no tomorrow! We did that a lot on our last album." He laughs. "I guess I'll have to find something new for the next one."



ReCycle's EDIT window (top) and MIDI file as seen through Cubase.

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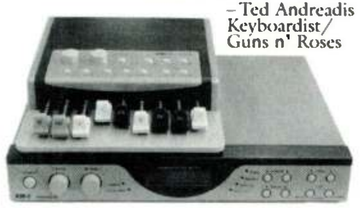

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The Sound That Set The Standard.

productindex

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

AKAI, 7010 Soquel Dr., Aptos, CA, 95003, (800) 433-5627: S3000XL stereo sampler, **26**; DR16 digital recorder, **66**; 16-track digital machine, **77**; samplers, **78**

AKG, 1449 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN, 37217, (615) 399-2199: C414 mics, **85**

ALESIS, 3630 Holdredge Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90016, (310) 558-4530: 3630 compressor, **26**

APHEX, 11068 Randall St., Sun Valley, CA, 91352, (818) 767-2929: 622 compressor, **26**

AYOTTE DRUMS, 2060 Pine St., Vancouver, BC, V6J 4P8, (604) 736-5411: Wood Hoop drum set, **37**

BOSS, 7200 Dominion Cir., Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: SE 70 multi-effect unit, **26**; SE 70 effects processor, **37**

CROWN INT'L, 1718 W Mishwaka Rd., Elkhart, IN, 46517, (219) 294-8000: MicroTech 600, **37**

DBX, 8760 S Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT, 84070, (801) 568-7660: 166 compressor, 360X compressor, **26**

DIGIDESIGN, 1360 Willow Rd., Ste. 101, Menlo Park, CA, 94025, (800) 333-2137: Pro Tools software, **24**

DIGITECH/DOD, 8760 South Sandy Pkwy., Sandy, UT, 84070, (801) 566-8919: Johnson Millennium, **85**

DRAWMER, Charlotte St., Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England, WF1 1UH, 44 019 24378669: 1960 Tube Compressor, DL 241 compressor, DS201 compressor, **26**

DRUM WORKSHOP, 101 Bernoulli Cir., Oxnard, CA, 93030, (805) 485-6999: hardware, **37**

E-MU, 1600 Green Hills Rd., Scotts Valley, CA, 95066, (408) 438-1921: E64 sampler, **78**

ELECTRO-VOICE, 600 Cecil St., Buchanan, MI, 49107, (800) 234-6831: Series II 12" speakers, **37**

EMAGIC USA, P.O. Box 771, Nevada City, CA, 95959, (916) 477-1051: Notator, **77**

FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, 7975 N Hayden Rd., Scottsdale, AZ, 85258, (602) 596-9690: '72 fretless Precision Bass, **37**

FISHMAN TRANSDUCERS, 340-D Fordham Rd., Wilmington, MA, 01887-2113, (508) 988-9199: Pro-EQ, **64**

GENELEC, 39 Union Avenue, Sudbury, MA, 1776, (508) 440-7520: 1031 A monitor, **26**

GIBSON, 641 Massman Dr., Nashville, TN, 37210, (800) 283-7135: guitar, **84**; 330 semi-acoustic guitar, **91**

GROOVE TUBES, 12866 Foothill Blvd., Sylmar, CA, 91342, (818) 361-4500: preamp, **37**

KORG, 316 S Service Rd., Melville, NY, 11747-3201, (516) 333-9100: MS-20, **24**; Trinity, **90**

KURZWEIL, PO Box 99995, Lakewood, WA, 98499-0995, (253) 984-0275: K2500XS MIDI piano, **37**

LEXICON, 3 Oak Park Rd, Bedford, MA, 01730-1441, (617) 280-0300: Lexiverb, **65**

MACKIE DESIGNS, 16220 Wood-Red Rd. NE, Woodinville, WA, 98072, (800) 258-6883: 24 channel board, **24**

MARTIN, 510 Sycamore St., P.O. Box 329, Nazareth, PA, 18064, (800) 345-3103: guitar, **84**

NEUMANN USA, 6 Vista Drive, Old Lyme, CT, 6371, (203) 434-5220: U47 KMS 140, 150 hand held mics, **37**; U57 tube mic, **85**; U87 mic, **91**

NORD LEAD, 923 McMullen Booth Rd., Clearwater, FL, 34619, (813) 796-8868: keyboard, **24**

OPCODE, 3950 Fabian Way, Palo Alto, CA, 94303, (415) 856-3333: Studio Vision, **90**

OTARI, 378 Vintage Park Drive, Foster City, CA, 94404, (415) 341-5900: 24-track analog machine, **77**

PANASONIC/RAMSA, 6550 Katella Ave., Cypress, CA, 90630, (714) 373-7277: SV 3700 DAT Machine **26**

PARKER, 316 S. Service Rd., Melville, NY, 11747-3201, (516) 333-9100: Nitefly guitar, **64**

RANE CORP., 10802 47th Ave. W, Mukilteo, WA, 98275, (206) 355-6000: headphone amplifier, FPE 13 parametric EQ, **26**

REMO, 28101 Industry Drive, Valencia, CA, 91355, (805)294-5600: Master Edge snare drum, **65**

ROLAND, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA, 90040, (213) 685-5141: Rhythm composer TR-808, **24**; Jazz Chorus 120 guitar amp, GP100 guitar preamp processor, FC200 MIDI foot controller, MSI sampler, **37**

SABIAN, 1 Main St., Meductic, NB, E0H 1L0, (506) 272-2019: cymbals, **37**

SCHECTER GUITAR RESEARCH, 6920 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90038, (213) 851-5230: guitar, **37**

SENNHEISER, 1 Enterprise Dr, Old Lyme, CT, 6371, (860) 434-9190: HD400 Headphones, **64**

SONIC FOUNDRY, 100 S. Baldwin, Ste. 204, Madison, WI, 53703, (608) 256-3133: Sound Forge, **67**

SONY ELECTRONICS, 3 Paragon Dr., Montvale, NJ, 7645, (201) 930-1000: Multi Scan 20sf II monitor, **24**

STEINBERG/JONES, 17700 Raymer St., Ste. 1001, Northridge, CA, 91325, (818) 993-4091: Cubase VST, **82**, WaveLab, **67**; Cubase, **77**; Recycle software, **78**

TASCAM, 7733 Telegraph Rd., Montebello, CA, 90640, (213) 726-0303: Portastudio, **84**

TC ELECTRONICS, 705-A Lakefield Rd., Westlake Village, CA, 91361, (805) 373-1828: M200 multi-effect processor, **26**

TOBIAS, 1050 Acorn Dr., Nashville, TN, 37210-3781, (800) 743-6456: '92 five-string bass, **37**

VALLEY AUDIO, 625 E Pawnee, Wichita, KS, 67211, (316) 265-9500: 610 Compressor, **26**

VIC FIRTH, 65 Commerce Way, Dedham, MA, 2026, (617) 326-3455: drum sticks, **37**

YAMAHA, 6600 Orangethrope Blvd., Buena Park, CA, 90622, (714) 522-9011: 02R mixing console, **66**; QY70 sequencer, **86**; VL1 synthesizer, **90**

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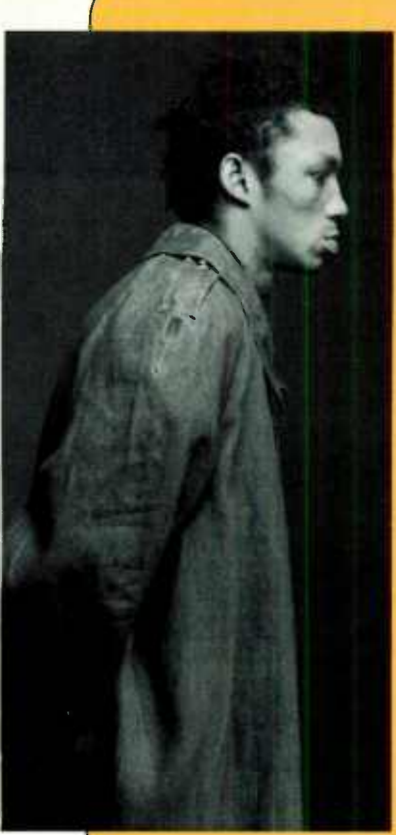

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feel the noise

records

Back in 1981, when Sonic Youth introduced their overt dissonance to the rest of the world, I was a simple suburban teen who couldn't comprehend their noisy, anti-rock star shtick. Nowadays, with the deeper perspective that time can bring, I can better appreciate the vision this band evolved out of the No Wave noise-rock days of the early Eighties and continues to develop even now.

Sonic Youth

A Thousand Leaves

(DGC)

That's part of what makes *A Thousand Leaves* such a treat. Working with engineer Wharton Tiers (a mainstay from those salad days), Sonic Youth has returned to its youth and found ways to explore the spellbinding discord of its early records without losing the focus that maturity and longevity endows. From distorted dirges to bizarre stompbox effects, the band's music has always had a strong element of spontaneity and psychedelia, and *A Thousand Leaves* maintains that rough-hewn, trippy dynamic without sacrificing coherence.

Aggressively recorded and mixed on a 24-channel '79 Neve Broadcast board and a Studer A800 Mk III, *Leaves* covers a full spectrum of expected sounds, but the individual mood of each song here is determined by the guitarist who sings it. "We wrote this material without the concept of a key for the vocals, so we created these instrumental songs and figured the vocal elements in later," explains Thurston Moore. "What's in your head and what comes out of your mouth doesn't always match, and it can be problematic that way; there's not always a tonal center." So, whether by accident or necessity, Moore handles the breathy, pop-friendly songs ("Sunday," "Wildflower Soul"), while Lee Ranaldo croons the dreary "Hoarfrost" and the Doors-like "Karen Koltrane," and Kim Gordon (who plays guitar on all but two tracks) tackles the more unearthly and aggressive movements that course through "Contre Le Sexisme," "Heather Angel," "Female Mechanic Now On Duty," and "The Ineffable Me." In each case the vocals are distinctive and the results are spine-tingling.

The most consistent musical theme throughout *A Thousand Leaves* is the absence of bass. Instead of letting Gordon's high-octane brand of pure bass energy build a foundation for Moore and Ranaldo, the band chose to adapt it to her guitar—which she played through a Mesa/Boogie 400 bass amp, where it could imply the bass while adding to the guitar fray. "At some point I suggested that they might

Illustration: Christian Gentry

World Radio History

want to add a bass into certain parts of certain songs to add fullness," says Tiers, "but they weren't into that idea and wanted to keep it more like they could play it. So having made the suggestion, I just abandoned it."

Tiers ended up adding a significant EQ boost at 250Hz when it came time to mix the record, but he's happy the band stuck to its guns. "I've always been into that thick mid sound anyway, and that's taking the place of true bass on this record," he says. "It's warm enough and full enough so that you don't really miss it." Miss what?

—Michael Gelfand

David Garza

This Euphoria (Lava/Atlantic)

Anyone who thinks that the words "four-track cassette recorder" and "lo-fi" are synonymous ought to punch up track seven on this disc, a little ditty called "Discoball World." Over a goofy drum machine beat taken off a cheap Yamaha portable keyboard, Garza strums a luscious spaghetti-western chord on his old Gretsch, then launches into a song that meets all the requirements for five-star classic pop—chordally, melodically, and attitudinally. Not only does Garza write melodies worthy of prime Lindsey Buckingham, sing in a no-holds-barred style that recalls the late lamented Jeff Buckley, and practice wordsmithery on a level that's up there with Elvis Costello (dig the several layers of meaning in this couplet: "I fell for your coffee eyes/your half-and-half white lies"), he also manages to get a crisp, immediate, absolutely fantastic sound out of an antiquated TASCAM Portastudio.

david garza

"I've always thought of the four-track as the tape machine of choice," says the Austin-based 27-year-old. "What people have inside them is good enough, and the four-track is a great mediator, or regulator: It equals out everybody. That doesn't mean that I'm a lo-fi snob, because I love to take my four-track tapes to big studios and use all their EQs and effects and compression. But I just love that sound. Actually, 'Discoball World' was recorded with just one mic, a beyerdynamic. The drums, congas, and twelve-string are all on one track, and they were all recorded using one mic in my bedroom."

Aside from "Discoball World," which appeared last year on an indie EP appropriately titled *The 4-Track Manifesto*, the remainder of *This Euphoria* was recorded in "proper" 24-track two-inch surroundings, with Garza handling most of the instruments, aided by a few guest bassists and drummers. But the quality is consistent throughout. High points include the dreamy "Lost" and "I Know," which feature the rich tones of vintage acoustic guitars (a Thirties Gibson and a Twenties Martin, respectively), and the string section-enhanced "Baptiste." The closing "Flower" sounds like Donovan winking his way through some great lost Thirties show tune, while on more hard-rocking cuts like "Kinder" and "Glow in the Dark" Garza's singing conjures images of *Presence*-era Robert Plant. This guy runs the gamut, and does it all brilliantly.

This Euphoria is Garza's major-label debut, but it's certainly not his first full-length release. He's been putting out limited-edition albums on his own Wide Open label for nearly ten years—many of them, like "Discoball World," recorded on a measly four-track. "I know how to make records," he says. He may not be the most modest fellow in the world, but he sure is right about that one.

—Mac Randall

Massive Attack

Mezzanine (Virgin)

Though present at the creation of that hugely influential, dope-hazed sonic brew which has its origins in the late-night scene of their native Bristol, Massive Attack—the DJ/rapping wild bunch of 3D, Mushroom, and Daddy G—has been overshadowed by their sonic brethren Portishead and Tricky. But Massive Attack's innovations have exerted a bigger pull

World Radio History

Rasputina meets Chris Vrenna

Smooth as Strings, Hard as Nails

Pablo Casals never had to schlep his cello out into a garage and record amidst a clutter of parked pickups. Then again, Casals never worked with an engineer named Critter or a producer known for slamming savage rhythms with Nine Inch Nails.

This explains why Rasputina, the extremely idiosyncratic trio of female cellists, found themselves sawing away in the reverberant parking space next to Chicago's Grandmaster Studios, with Critter, whose credits include sessions with the Jesus Lizard, Ministry, and Filter, sticking mics in the back of nearby pickup trucks. But they also worked in the facility's acoustically dry wood room, more live-sounding concrete room, and in a huge warehouse space appended to the studio. Throughout Rasputina's new album *How We Quit the Forest* (Columbia), the nuances of the string sounds were the highest priority.

Which makes it seem strange that the band would choose Chris Vrenna as their producer. The ex-NIN drummer has few rivals in recording and remixing aggressive outfits like Marilyn Manson, Metallica, and Skinny Puppy. But had he ever captured an orchestral string instrument in the midst of all that racket? "Never," he cheerfully admits. "But one of the things Rasputina has always done, which I thought was so cool, was that they played through amps when they performed live. All their cellos have pickups, and they have various stomp boxes and combo amps. So I knew there would be some heavy stuff."

On the other hand, Vrenna adds, "a few songs were so beautiful that we didn't do anything more than tighten the arrangements a little bit. In a way those became the most important, because they serve as breathing spaces that let the heavier tracks settle into place."

"Rose K" is typical of these R&R (rest & recovery) cuts, which Melora Creachy (right, with Vrenna), Julia Kent, and Agnieszka Rybska recorded very traditionally in the studio warehouse, their cellos framing Creachy's lyrical daguerreotype of Rose Kennedy. The warm, intimate sound owes something to Critter's experience at taping classical recitals while in college. "You want to let this kind of music sit in its own space," the engineer explains. "So in addition to the close-miking we did on pretty much every song, with the mic about six inches off the soundhole, we set up three remotes, with [AKG] C414s for the overheads, and a collection of old tube mics—primarily Neumann U57, 47, and 87—as room mics."

On the more aggressive tracks, the cellos were direct-miked through distortion, octave, and wah-wah pedals into amps, which were mostly beat-up vintage Marshalls, Voxes, and other models which Vrenna borrowed from friends. The one modern amp they used was, in the producer's view, a "marvel": "The DigiTech Johnson Millennium was absolutely brilliant," he says. "It's a modeling amp, but it's so real! You could put up a preset that had spring reverb in it, then pound the cabinet, and it would set the spring off. God!"

This array of amps helped the cellists emulate guitar songs—a trick Rasputina often does but seldom acknowledges. "We only did that on 'Leechwife,'" Creachy grudgingly admits, "but that's because the song is so sarcastic. Chris was very excited about it, like, 'This is the cheesiest song I've ever heard!'"

Vrenna laughs. "The whole thing was to make that track sound like a rock band. We had fuzz bass, lead and rhythm guitar, all on cellos. We tried to bring that out through different EQ, mic pre, or mic, so each cello would have the right texture. We'd start with the bass, then get a slammin' sound that worked with the drum programming. Then we'd work in the rhythm and lead parts, and each would have its own space." For the drum tracks, Vrenna sought a sound and feel that were "straight-ahead heavy metal, complete with double-kick fills," obtained by triggering E-mu E64 and E4 samples from his Roland V-Drums.

This meeting of aesthetics and techniques apparently had an impact on Vrenna. "The way I'd always worked with Nine Inch Nails, everything was written to the computer," he explains. "With Rasputina, I wanted to keep it as much performance as possible, so I tried to not get into the computer unless I absolutely had to. I tried to get into the mindset that performance is good. That's becoming lost today: Vocalists don't want to sing a song six or seven times. They'll sing it once and go, 'I was a little off. Run it through a tuner. I'm going to dinner.' Nobody wants to perform their song, but this album is as live as possible. Because that's what Rasputina is."

—Robert L. Doerschuk

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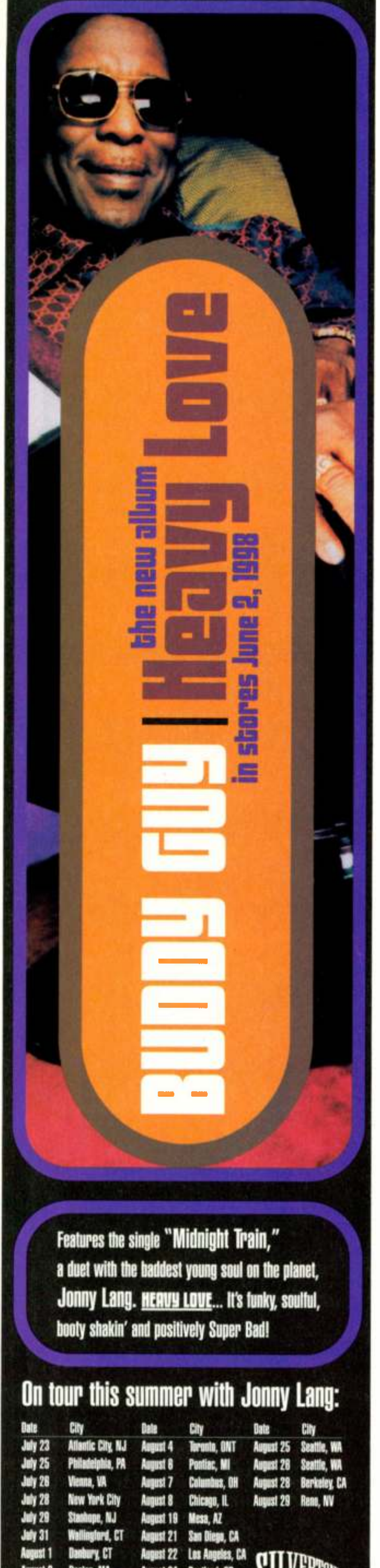

on the direction of modern music, from gorgeously textured productions such as "Unfinished Sympathy" (from their CD *Blue Lines*) to darkly atmospheric soundtracks for films like *Batman Forever* and *The Jackal*. Now comes *Mezzanine*, at once the best and most personal album of their career, and a record that seems destined to thrust the contributions of this talented though relatively faceless group back into the spotlight.

Massive Attack mastered the studio-as-instrument long ago, and *Mezzanine* shows them creating exotic, bruised backdrops for battered relationships that feel as strangely alienating as a night out with Travis Bickle. The first single, "Risingson," is chilly and dangerous, its buckling beat, queasy bass, and radio-frequency distortion dissolving into an ethereal, billowing vocal chorus. "Inertia Creeps" explores Middle Eastern melodies and rhythms, as 3D whispers spookily *à la* Tricky. "Man Next Door," a reggae/metal grind, describes urban misery, while the slow pummel of "Angel" suggests hard metal-gone-Jamaican. The lovely "Teardrop," with Cocteau Twin Liz Fraiser cooing melifluously over sparse piano chords, brings needed light, as does "Black Milk," which brings to mind Ennio Morricone in a smoky Forties Turkish bar.

"We wrote the tracks very simply," explains Robert Del Naja, a.k.a. 3D, "with a sample and some keyboard lines. Then we brought in Angelo Briuschini on guitar, Andy Gangadini on drums, and Winston on bass. We'd jam for forty minutes or four hours on one piece, recording straight to [Digidesign] Pro Tools on [Steinberg] Cubase Audio, using loads of old Neve modules. It was nightmarish but an interesting way to build up these puzzles."

3D's Bristol studio is a simple affair, complementing his writing methods. "I've got a Yamaha QY70 sequencer at home," he says. "It's good for writing rhythm patterns and sequences, and it's got a lot of voices in it. But I also use paper and pen. Being impatient, my best ideas go down on paper. That way, I can describe songs visually and verbally. With a big home setup, by the time you get all the sounds right, you've lost the idea."

As for *Mezzanine*'s air of inertia, malaise, and romantic desolation, 3D has another simple explanation. "We're spiraling downwards towards oblivion," he laughs. On this album, it's a surprisingly soothing ride.

—Ken Micallef

Santana

Santana, Abraxas, Santana III
(Sony Legacy Expanded Editions)

Spiritualist/guitarist Carlos Santana has kept listeners under the spell of his Black Magic for thirty years. To celebrate this anniversary of the band's formation, Sony Legacy's sonic wizards have made its first three albums reappear, each appended with additional live recordings from around the time of the original sessions.

These CDs are more than the repositories of familiar hits like "Evil Ways," "Jingo," the epic instrumental "Soul Sacrifice" (from 1969's *Santana*), "Oye Como Va," "Black Magic Woman" (1970's *Abraxas*), "Everything's Coming Our Way," and "Everybody's Everything" ('71's *Santana III*). They are epochal works. Inspired by Miles Davis' jazz-rock experiments and John Coltrane's free flights, Santana and his abettors created an explosive fusion of Hispanic-edged rock, Afro-Caribbean rhythms,

massive attack

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and interstellar improvisation.

Three decades later, Sony reissue producer Bob Irwin is the kid who gets to romp in this candy store. "Carlos has a wonderful combination of technique and tone that has survived and evolved no matter what equipment he was using," says Irwin. "One of the things I'm privy to, listening to the studio tapes, is hearing him dial in that tone. Most of the time on the first album (which was released literally the day after Woodstock) they were discussing arrangements or spontaneously creating them. 'Soul Sacrifice' was improvised. Take three became the master, but takes one and two are completely different. The whole album was done with remarkably few takes."

Irwin says the Scotch master tapes were in fine shape, and he was never tempted to tinker with their mixes. "I kept all three albums absolutely true to their original sound. Second- and third-generation masters were used for further lacquer pressings and for the previous CDs of these albums; the originals were not used to death, as many others have been. I take no liberties, outside of fixing anomalies. The music is always first."

And for Irwin, it's always analog. "When these albums were recorded, their rich sound was the result of technology that would not afford you the latitude to sterilize anything," he says. "There are real organ sounds, real guitar sounds," so the playing muscles out of the speakers, especially on roaring improvisations like "Taboo" and "Toussaint L'Overture," from *Santana III*, where the band seems determined to shatter its earthly bounds and paint the sky.

Irwin worked at Sony's studio on West 54th Street in New York City. "It's a perfect blend of old and new technology," he explains. "They have vintage gear: Pultec EQs, Fairchild compressors, EMT reverb plates—and that's before we look in the microphone closet. We had a Studer tape machine for the two-track masters. A vintage Neve board was used on anything that was mixed, such as the live Woodstock tracks."

Those tracks appear on *Santana* and include the unreleased jam "Fried Neckbones" and "Savor," plus the *Woodstock* album version of "Soul Sacrifice." *Abraxas* and *Santana III* each feature three previously unreleased live performances; those on *Abraxas* date from a 1970 gig at London's Royal Albert Hall, while the *Santana III* cuts are from the Fillmore West in '71. Unfortunately, "Fried Neckbones" falls flat and the other beautifully played yet well-known numbers don't add much to these epic albums. The good news is, they don't need to.

—Ted Drozdowski

Money Mark

Push the Button (FFRR/Mo' Wax)

Though still probably best known as the Beastie Boys' longtime keyboardist, Mark Ramos Nishita, a.k.a. Money Mark, appears to be turning into a solo artist with great style. Better make that *styles*, as this album, like his previous release *Mark's Keyboard Repair* (1995), zigzags across the genre map, taking in guitar pop, Latin jazz, drum 'n' bass, and just about all points between. Such seeming rootlessness could lead to incoherence, yet *Push the Button* hangs together, thanks to a well-chosen sequence (alternating instrumental and vocal numbers) and Mark's irreverent personality, not to mention some damn fine songs.

If all this diverse material can claim a common ground, you'll find it in the pop, soul, and funk of the late Sixties and early Seventies. "Sometimes what I do just naturally ends up being in that period," Nishita agrees, "because that was when I was like a sponge, soaking up music." Thanks in part to a vintage suitcase Rhodes electric piano, strong traces of *Innervisions*-era Stevie Wonder come through on the gorgeous ballad "All the People," while the Beatles' aura of "Rock in the Rain" is helped along by a Lennonesque vocal and what sounds like an electric twelve-string but isn't. "That's an old Harmony acoustic guitar that I converted into a Cuban instrument called a *tresillo*," Mark explains. "The sound's similar to a twelve-string, but it's got three pairs of strings [instead of six]."

Other odd sounds on *Push the Button* include an overdriven Hohner Melodica on "Destroyer" and the distinctive tone of an Indian drum machine on "Dha Teen Ta." "It's a rhythm box designed to teach tabla players different rhythms," Mark explains. "You can change the tuning of the tabla sounds; it's pretty cool." Adding to that track's exotic ambience are a drone from a battery-powered oscillator bought at a garage sale and heavy use of an old Roland SH-101 analog synth's pitch wheel.

Recorded primarily at Mark's digs in the SoCal desert and at producer Mario Caldato's place in L.A., with extra tracking in San Francisco and London, *Push the Button* is mostly a one-man-band performance. A skilled keysman, Nishita is a formidable bassist as well; check out the propulsive line on "Tomorrow Will Be Like Today," which Mark calls "Elvis Costello-ish" even though it ends up sounding more like Sebadoh. The few tracks where Mark doesn't go solo incorporate an interesting cast of ringers, from veteran bassist Al McKibbon (on the jazz-dabbling "Crowns") and drummer Jim Keltner (on "Rock in the Rain" and "I Don't Play Piano") to, of all people, Sean Lennon, who plays bass on the infectious, Wurlitzer-driven "Hand In Your Head."

There's only one major problem, and that's an overabundance of musical in-jokes, particularly toward the end. Both "Power House," which Nishita describes as "my take on drum 'n' bass," and the brief piano-and-harmonica wheeze on "Harmonics of Life" are amusing at first but don't stand up to repeated listening. Still, too much humor is better than not enough, and the vast majority of *Push the*

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Button is well-crafted, vibrant, catchy . . . in other words, right on the money.

—Mac Randall

Robyn Miller

Riven: The Soundtrack (Virgin)

Exterior: a wide-angle shot. The camera pans slowly from left to right, revealing a vast alien expanse. Almost imperceptibly, the music enters, evoking not only the feel of this exotic locale, but also preparing viewers for the gripping action that will soon commence. Ah, the magic of the motion picture score! But there's neither action nor very much motion in *Riven*, for this soundtrack album accompanies a CD-ROM game, albeit one of the most cerebral, intriguing, and commercially successful ones ever. Rather than underscoring timed sequences propelled by plot points or dialog, Robyn Miller had to create cues to enhance still images without overwhelming them.

"A normal piece of music tells much more of a story," Miller explained, "with distinct contrasts and climaxes. The *Riven* music couldn't have that, because it's a non-linear world. People might spend a great deal of time at one location, and I couldn't allow the music to provoke them too much in any one way. The music had to remain somewhat generic, and that could be frustrating at times."

Given the limitations of this nascent genre, Miller achieved his aims admirably. He kept things simple and focused, allowing subtle timbral shifts to breathe life into relatively static motifs. Though nearly all of *Riven* seems to exist in G minor, Miller adds some variety by bringing percussive and noise elements in and out, which also offers visual cues for us otherwise clueless Earthlings. "The Boat Ride," for instance, opens with a giant pitch-bend moan, which suggests some sort of craft launching lazily into a swampy bayou. "The Red Cave" uses a lengthy reverb to establish a sense of containment and depth, but adds twinkly bell-like sounds to remind us that stalactites (or jewels, perhaps?) hang from the cavern's ceiling.

Miller constructed the *Riven* sound world using a Korg Trinity and a Yamaha VL1 synthesizer, sequencing parts with Opcode's Studio Vision on a Macintosh. Because he needed to focus on mood rather than action, texture had to play a more important role than melody or harmony. To get the sounds he wanted, Miller often tweaked factory presets, injecting bits of noise into more pristine patches. "There was not one sound I used raw," he says. "One of the nice things about the Korg is that

robyn miller

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it's got a whole slew of effects built into it, and those gave me the ability to skew a sound in a different direction."

Ultimately, the *Riven* soundtrack demonstrates the expressive power of minimalism. Miller feels that he tried to be too clever in writing the music for this game's predecessor, the phenomenally successful *Myst*; this time around, he insists, he arrived at something purer. Miller also admits that music is more of a diversion for him—he and his brother Rand created the concept and visuals behind these CD-ROMs—and that consistency of tone, rather than technical know-how, was what he brought to the *Riven* score. Whether this music will attract anyone other than fans of the game remains to be seen. It's not the most arresting stuff, but it serves its intended purpose very well.

—Bob Remstein

grant lee buffalo

The Jesus and Mary Chain

Munki (Sub Pop)

What happens to rock & roll iconoclasts when they grow old? A few turn lovable. Then there's the Jesus and Mary Chain, who emerged as the unholy spawn of Phil Spector and the Velvet Underground in the mid-Eighties, riding tidal waves of wonderful guitar feedback. Narrow and proud of it, leaders Jim and William Reid offered variations on the same theme in ensuing years, the way a traditional bluesman might build a career on one great riff. The Reids' saving grace has been the enduring appeal of their scruffy guitars and deadpan vocals, along with the obvious delight they take in their craft. That unironic enthusiasm has never been stronger than on *Munki*, perhaps the band's most likable record yet.

The group's trump card remains its brilliant use of guitar noise, with searing feedback, menacing fuzztones, slashing power chords, and delicate strumming often thrown into the same song. According to Jim Reid, they've refined their working methods over the years. "When you lay down ten tracks of guitars, it can be a nightmare, because one might have just half a bar you like," he notes. "Now we try to edit as we go along, be more concise." Though both Reids cite a Gibson 330 semi-acoustic from the early Sixties as their favorite guitar, Jim downplays technical issues, observing, "People shouldn't get hung up on having this or that. Whatever you've got, you can do something with it."

To guarantee his voice a place amidst the turmoil, Jim lays it down last. "It's more inspiring to sing as close to the mix as possible," he explains. "If you're only hearing a couple of guide guitars, it changes the way you sing." Preferring the "transparent" sound of a Neumann U87 mic, Jim says he's "gone off reverb. Often the only effect I'll use is extreme compression, which evens things out at loud volumes."

However intense the chaos, Jim makes himself heard—he's preaching the gospel, y'know. "Rock & roll is the most important thing in our lives," he insists. "We hate all the business shit, but we appreciate the fact that we have this fantastic lifestyle and get to travel all over the world. Sometimes you forget how privileged you are."

Boasting seventeen songs and running an hour-plus, *Munki* can be faulted for overkill, though smaller tracks like the nightmarish "Perfume" and the wispy "Never Understood" make a case for the band's versatility. The flaunting of historical influences eventually wears thin too, even for those who cherish the Velvets as much as they do. But the lads merit full respect for their rockin' cool and devotional sincerity. If you've heard it all before, no matter—it's worth hearing again.

—Jon Young

Grant Lee Buffalo

Jubilee (Slush/Warner Bros.)

Grant Lee Buffalo's music is for people who want it both ways: to dance *and* to dream. The fourth album from this trio—and the first without bassist/producer Paul Kimble—remains very much the brainchild of singer/songwriter/guitarist Grant Lee Phillips, and producer Paul Fox wisely steers its sound around the leader's fervent Jim Morrison-like vocal delivery while extending the band's sonic turf beyond melodic grunge and into areas of mysterious sweetness. Such dynamic contrasts, from electric fury to acoustic calm, also suits the turn-of-the-century aura of Phillips songs, which thematically reflect the end games of the 1890s as well as the 1990s.

Phillips writes slinky, sensual, Beatlesque melodies that slip between major and minor, eluding resolution. The first single, "Truly Truly," is in E minor but keeps bouncing between D major and A minor, leaving the listener on shaky tonal ground even as Phillips croons his vows of fidelity. Similarly, album opener "APB" revolves around an almost sinister-sounding minor chord progression before bursting into the major-chord brightness of a falsetto chorus that suggests sunshine cracking through clouds.

"It's a spontaneous song," Phillips says, "written on the bus in the rain. It's a pretty unconscious passionate outburst, and maybe the beauty of it is in its lack of editing." Indeed, many of his songs, such as "Testimony" and "Super Slo-Motion," are stylistic hybrids, wedding Sixties-era melodies with the rhythmic propulsion of hip-hop and R&B. "The drums are lifted from 'Ain't Too Proud to Beg,'" Phillips says of the latter tune, "juxtaposed against chords that have more to do with the Beatles and Buzzcocks than with Marvin Gaye."

Phillips, who has been known to call New Orleans hotel clerks just to quiz them about the local voodoo, recorded *Jubilee* at A&M's allegedly haunted recording studio, on the lot that originally housed Charlie Chaplin's movie studio. "That was the most inviting idea," Phillips says, "that the ghost of Chaplin might still be roaming around and might find his way into the music. I'm a firm believer in ghosts that come into play." Those spirits sound especially playful on the title song, a honky-tonk tack-piano excursion originally called "Spirit Raps in Broad Daylight," which was inspired by an old magic book.

"The Shallow End," which closes the album, sports another of Phillips' sweetly spectral melodies, and fleshes it out with an assortment of colors: vibraphone, celeste, Mellotron, and an especially haunting pedal steel. Like much of *Jubilee*, this arrangement shows off GLB's broadening range—a move that should serve them well as the centuries turn.

—Paul Zollo

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Life's Little Fake Book

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Good evening, graduates and faculty. Thank you for allowing me to be your commencement speaker here at the Tommy Tedesco School of Applied Music. You've survived those classes in voicing and ensemble playing. You've even stayed awake during those 9 A.M. *How to Be a Better Player* clinics. Now it's time to put everything you've learned here to use.

But before you walk out that door, head held high and floppy disks in hand, be aware that a lot of what you've learned in school may have a slightly different meaning out there in the real world. For example . . .

Musical Terms. There's more to the lingo than *pianissimo* and *mezzoforte*. Learn and memorize the following.

"The gig is 99% sure!" (Translation: It's not going to happen.)

"It's great exposure!" (Translation: They'll charge you for beers, and you can't use the dressing room.)

"It's a laid-back venue." (There are two possible meanings here. West Coast Translation: It's a tiny room on the first floor of a vegetarian bed-and-breakfast place. They'll monitor your volume with a dB meter. There's no smoking in the club, on the terrace, or in the dressing room. The soundperson is a fetishist with multiple piercings. East Coast Translation: It's a beach gig. There's no stage or A.C. Half the patrons are middle-aged acid casualties who claim to have played with the Turtles. The other half are bikers who have had their driver's licenses suspended.)

Tempo Tips. Forget all you've learned about *moderato* and *allegro*. Here's all you have to remember: When a fight breaks out, don't quit playing. And be prepared to play "Last Date": This beautiful, soothing piano classic by the late Floyd Cramer is the musical equivalent of St. John's Wort for agitated rednecks.

Reading Charts. Sure, you can sight-read all those badass Gm7+5-9/C configurations. But there's another mode of sight-reading you'll need to learn as well. In order to tell how the gig went, memorize *this* chart:

RESPONDEE	THEY LOVED YOU	NOT BAD	THEY HATED IT!
Bartender at the club	VERBAL: "Awesome! What are ya drinking!" NON-VERBAL: High fives you while nodding head enthusiastically.	VERBAL: "All right!" NON-VERBAL: Points index finger and winks. Continues talking with blonde at the bar.	VERBAL: "That was...different." (Inflection rises at the end of sentence) NON-VERBAL: Makes no eye contact. Continues watching ESPN2.
A&R Person at SXSW	VERBAL: "All right, guys! By all means, call me, here's my card." NON-VERBAL: Hugs band members, ignores ringing cell phone.	VERBAL: "Personally, guys,... I like it. Listen, send me a tape." NON-VERBAL: Makes "I'm sincere" gestures with hands. Answers cell phone.	VERBAL: "Guys, that was interesting, really, you know, different. NON-VERBAL: Gives you brief thumbs-up sign, in between making cell phone calls.
Highly Attractive Audience Member	VERBAL: "Dude! that absolutely ruled!!" NON-VERBAL: High fives and hugs you. Shows you tongue piercing.	VERBAL: "Right on, Dude." NON-VERBAL: Smiles, lights clove cigarette, checks beeper.	VERBAL: "Dude! That was, uh...like, different, know what I'm sayin'?" NON-VERBAL: Smiles, gets in car.

Chord Structure. Always remember Wirtz's Universal Chord Law: "*Never* use a maj7 chord in any bar that is named after a deceased NASCAR driver, a large-calibre firearm, or an intoxicated farm animal."

In closing, let remind you to always be kind to your soundman—especially if she has multiple piercings. Thank you, and good luck.

—Reverend Billy C. Wirtz

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