

*The Cure • 38 Special • The Secret Origin Of Prince*

# MUSICIAN

\$2.25 NO. 34 AUGUST 1986 (ISSN 0091-9012)

*World  
Exclusive!*

*Inside*  
*the Jimi*  
*Hendrix*  
*Experience*

*Noel Redding's  
startling memoir of  
music, money  
& drugs*

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\*Contest subject to applicable federal, state and local regulations and restrictions. Void where prohibited by law. Full information available at participating Marshall dealers. All entries must be postmarked no later than Sept. 15, 1986.



# CONTENTS

## Standing Next to a Mountain

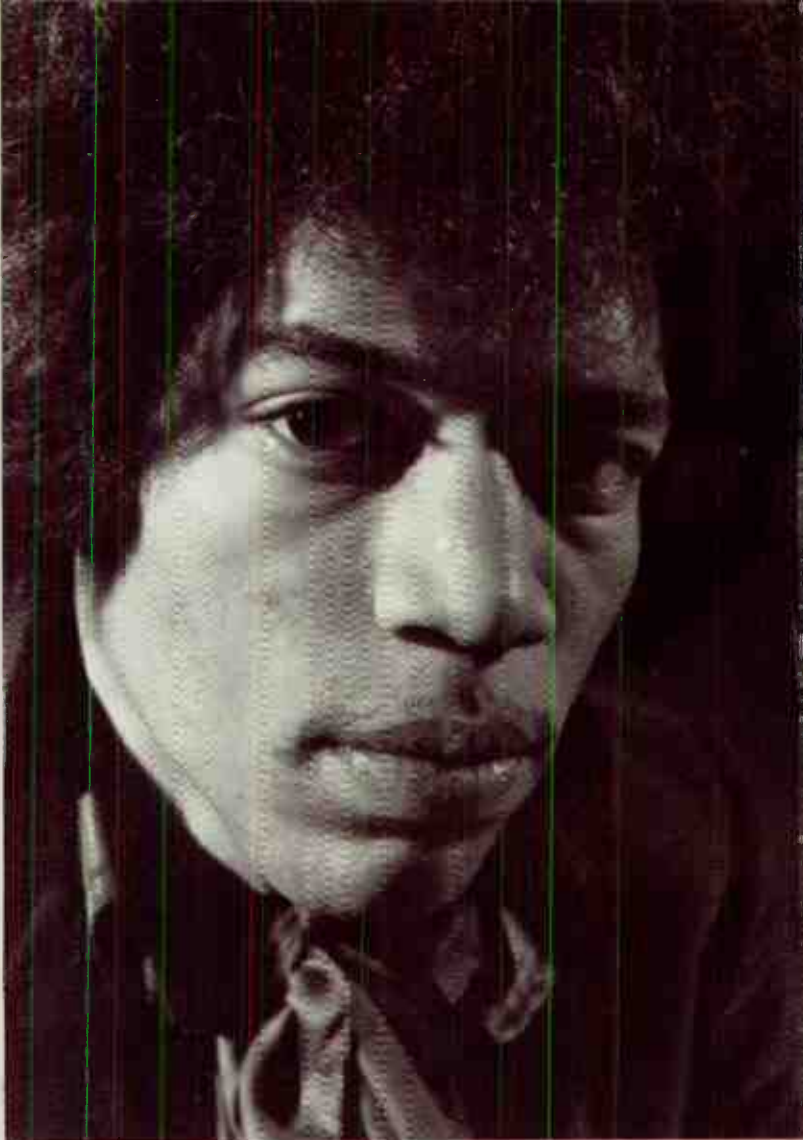
Devotion to Jimi Hendrix has passed from hero-worship to outright adoration. But no man's a god to his bass player. Here, for the first time ever, Jimi Hendrix Experience bassist Noel Redding writes about his memories of a wild and harried time—and a genius who lost control of his life.

By Noel Redding & Carol Appleby **62**

## Prince: The Early Years

A generation after Hendrix, another rock savant seized control of his music—and shaped an image right out of a school-boy's fantasy.

By Steve Perry **11**



**The Cure** ..... **19**

*By Charles M. Young*

**Hugh Padgham** ..... **28**

*By Richard Buskin*

**Tony Williams** ..... **36**

*By Robin Tolleson*

**Sly Fox** ..... **42**

*By Alan di Perna*

**Developments** ..... **46**

*By Jock Baird and Will Hunt*

**Bob Marley** ..... **98**

*By Jim Macnie*

**MASTHEAD** ..... **6**

**LETTERS** ..... **8**

**FACES** ..... **24**

**RECORD REVIEWS** ..... **82**

**ROCK SHORT TAKES** ..... **90**

**JAZZ SHORT TAKES** ..... **92**

**INDIE SHORT TAKES** ..... **94**

**CLASSIFIEDS** ..... **96**

**READER SERVICE** ..... **67**

## Southern Rock: Free Bird or Pterodactyl?

That old Allman's era is gone forever. Who will claim the new South?

**38 Special** by Bill Flanagan ..... **52**

**Let's Active** by Rob Tannenbaum ..... **56**

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## Rockin' Rollin' Stones

I bought the May issue because the picture of the Stones scared the shit out of me. But after reading the article, not only do I appreciate the cover but the album *Dirty Work* even sounds better. If Keith wants to make rock 'n' roll grow up, I'll be in my rocking chair listening.

*Diana Pimento  
Brooklyn, NY*

When I bought the Stones issue, the girl at the counter pointed to the picture of Keith Richards and said, "He's dead." I insisted that looking



dead is not tantamount to *being* dead and most importantly, he doesn't sound dead. The fact that the new album was created in Mick's absence could be the reason it is so enjoyable; following musical instincts rather than commercial ones result in the inclusion of great songs like "Too Rude." Thanks Keith for still being alive.

*Paul Zollo  
Hollywood, CA*

It's hard to define Ian Stewart's role over the years in the Rolling Stones. Covering the "memorial" by way of Keith's feature, I think you did a fine, "egoless" tribute to the man's meaning to the other Stones. The piece on

tours, blood-changes, etc., but Stu was always *the* blues piano player. His sound was part of their sound like Charlie's drums, Bill's bass and Keith's rhythm. The last thirty seconds of *Dirty Work* is the most beautiful (and haunting) piece of music the Stones have ever put on a winning-ugly album.

*A Fan*

Thank you for the behind-the-scenes story on the Rolling Stones, which managed to be insightful, ingenious, revealing, touching and hilarious all in one! Ultimately, it puts to shame any article on them by even the venerable *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Perhaps if Bill Flanagan wrote their next, umpteenth, biography, we'd for once learn something *new*.

*David Bissonette  
Sonic Arts Records  
San Francisco, CA*

Vic Garbarini's review of the new Rolling Stones' record, *Dirty Work*, read more like a book review of a new philosopher's work than a record review. What comes out the speakers is what counts! But as long as the Stones don't display progress (by the critic's standards), they will be lonely at the top.

*Corey Stevens  
Los Angeles, CA*

## Femmes Exposed

Thanks to Scott Isler, the Violent Femmes have been given a chance to show what they are really about. If INXS isn't the world's best live



what I needed to push me over the edge of acceptance with this group. Congratulations to Scott Isler for bringing the Femmes to everyone.

*Jay L. Noble  
Dayton, OH*

## Femmes Not Exposed

Why didn't the Bangles, who were featured in a five page spread in your May issue, merit a cover story? Instead, you slapped on the Schlep-ping, er, I mean, Rolling, Stones, even though Mick was on the cover just last April. In the two years that I've been a subscriber, Joni Mitchell has been the only female musician that I can recall as a *Musician* cover story. Is this supposed to be a genuine reflection of the number of female musicians making news? You've had great interviews recently with people like Joan Armatrading and Kate Bush, but they just don't seem to have what it takes to make it to the cover. Maybe if one of these gals urinated in her swimming pool, like Alex Van Halen did during his interview, or swilled Jack Daniels, like Keith Richards did during his interview, she could achieve the level of class required for a *Musician* cover story.

*Dara Monahan  
Brooklyn, NY*

England and metropolitan New York area.

It is very hard keeping an unsigned original band going, a struggle to keep it together. But it is so easy to get labeled, especially when it's in print. The Bangles' lawyer contacted me. Neither I nor anyone involved with the Bangs ever sent one letter to them or their lawyers. With my lawyer I met in Manhattan with their lawyer, and we were offered \$500.00 for the rights to the name the Bangs. I said "no," and that was that. And that's the honest to goodness truth.

*Gary A. Roupenian  
a.k.a. Gary Bangs*

## Old Van Halen News

What is all this crap in the May issue (Letters: New Van Halen News) about Van Halen? Even with Sammy, Van Halen has proved they're still number one. The article on Van Halen was the best thing this magazine ever featured. Please ignore the cries of the pompous wimps who call Van Halen "apes" or "immature," when actually Van Halen is the best thing to ever happen to music. We want more Van Halen!!!

*Brian Mulhern  
Keith Arsenault*

I'd like to address this to all the quick-shot artists who trashed Van Halen. Granted, they came off a little pretentious, but that's only because you and your fine magazine beat all the others to the punch with the story. While everybody else was off chasing ring-master Roth, you went after the heart of the subject. The *musicians*. No wonder you guys have *that* name for your magazine. Good luck to Van Halen, *Musician* magazine, and David Lee Roth, who needs it more than anybody (but always seems to find it).

*Brad Boyle  
Pauksboro, NJ*

## Errata

The vintage Bob Seger shot on page 53 of the June issue should have been credited to the Ken Settle Collection.

# LETTERS

Stu in the earlier issue was all that was fit to print—and certainly more than other newspapers and magazines bothered with obit-wise.

Ian Stewart was a living, contributing link to the Brian Jones days of their past. There have been a lot of piano players along with the Stones over the many records,

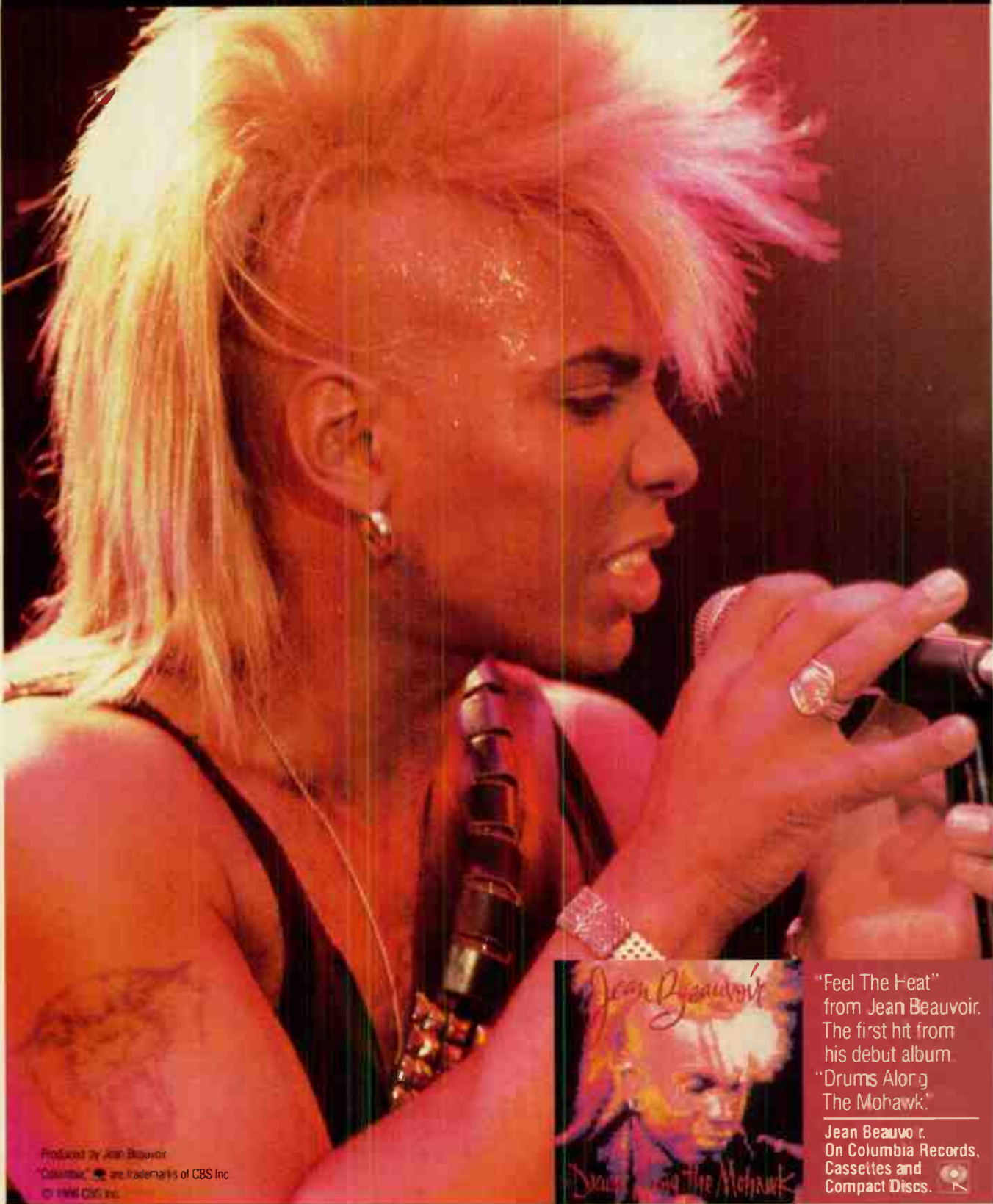
band, then the Violent Femmes are!

*Mike Purcell  
Milwaukee, WI*

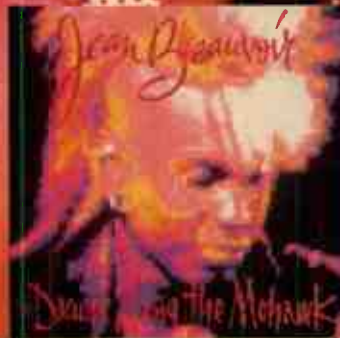
Finally the Femmes gain exposure in the proper market, with excellent text! My girlfriend turned me on to the Femmes and now I can't get enough! Your article was just

I would like to set the record straight. I am the founding member of the Bangs (New Jersey). The Bangs have been an original band for seven years, and have never played a song by Lynyrd Skynyrd. We have played in bars, also major clubs and concert halls, and numerous colleges throughout the New


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# PRINCE

BY STEVE PERRY

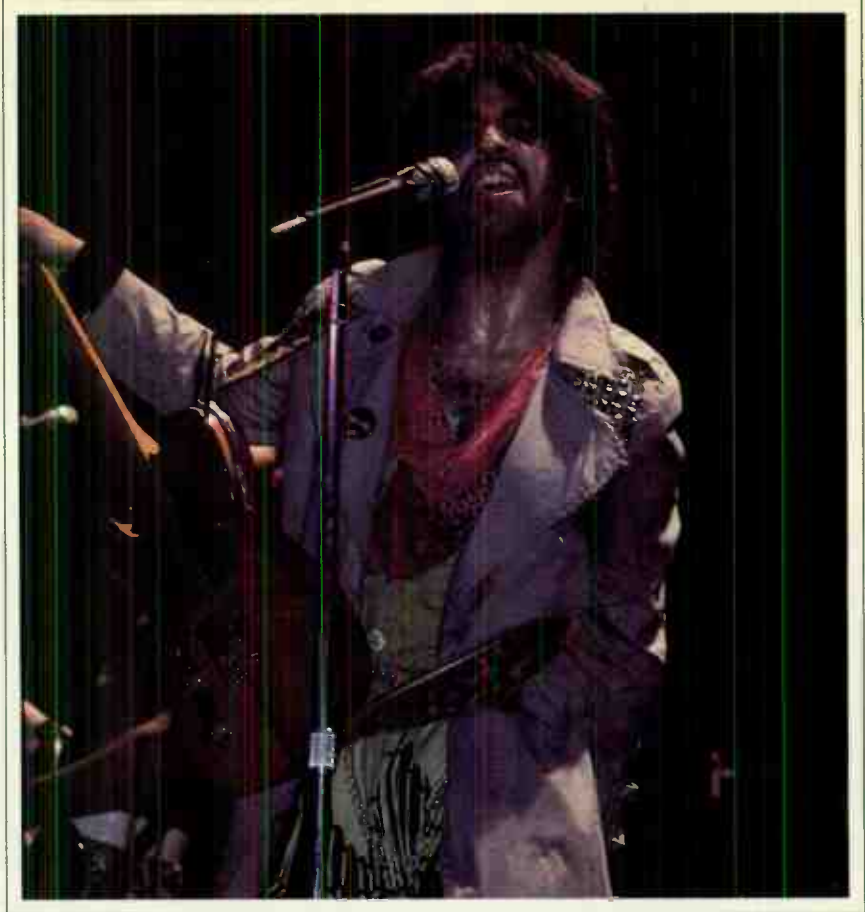
## THE EARLY YEARS: CREATING THE MINNEAPOLIS MYTH

**H**is parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about his father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end...but his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of inef-fable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain....

— F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Ever since *Purple Rain* hit the theaters, the corner of Seventh Street and First Avenue in Minneapolis has been a beacon for pop pilgrimages just a bit less radiant than Graceland and the spot where the Cavern Club stood. More than one awe-struck teenager has been known to gape across the street, Instamatic in hand, at the place where Prince got his start. Too bad it's not where

Prince really started. It's true that the First Avenue club has long been a favored hangout for the city's favorite son, and Prince has taken pains to stake out the turf as his own. In the middle of a surprise gig there in March he shouted a question to the crowd: "Whose house is it?" "Prince's house!" the crowd roared back. He repeated the litany several times over, and followed it later with a promise. "There's just a few more things I gotta do," he said, "then I'm gonna



GARY GERSHOFF

Young Prince went into the studio a boy and came out a self-made mystery man.

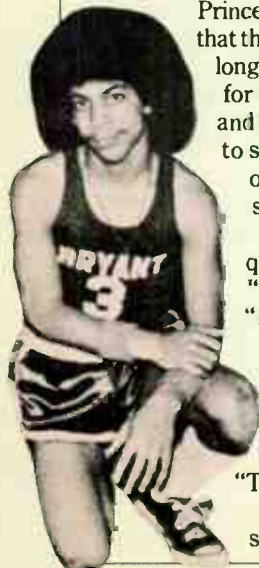
come back and build a big clubhouse where we can all hang out every night." Movie plots and cozy communal fantasies aside, though, the bar scene in WASPish Minneapolis was hardly the start of it all for any of the area's funk & soul artists.

Prince, the Time, Alexander O'Neal, Jesse Johnson's Revue, and Mazarati conceived their acts in the studio. In fact, the players who made up the Time weren't even assembled until after the first Time album was recorded; rumor holds that the record itself is all Morris Day and Prince.

Still the battle-of-the-bands scenario played out in *Purple Rain* makes for good myth, as do many of the other stories Prince has told on himself through the years. He's gone out of his way to mystify his age (now twenty-eight, he used to shave off two years to appear even more a prodigy), his identity (he used to maintain that Jamie Starr, his pseudonym for producing other projects, was a real person), and his sexual history (he's told of teenage orgies in pal Andre Cymone's basement; Cymone said privately that he doesn't remember

any such orgies). Perhaps more than any other pop star, Prince has strived to recreate himself for the public eye, adding and omitting details as freely as did Jimmy Gatz on the way to Jay Gatsby.

The real story of Prince's musical origins is less dramatic if no less intriguing. As a teenager in North Minneapolis, he played in a succession of youthful funk bands: Grand Central Junction (later the personnel shifted and the name was shortened to Grand Central), then Champagne—a band of future all-stars that featured Prince on guitar, Morris Day on drums, and Andre Cymone on bass. When it came time for Champagne to cut a demo tape, they went to MoonSound, a small recording studio in a gentrified South Minneapolis neighborhood, nestled amid the area lakes. MoonSound was operated by Chris Moon, a British-born twenty-four-year-old mover and shaker who landed in Minneapolis in his teens. A born entrepreneur, he recorded everything from rock bands to ad jingles in his home-made studio, and promoted an occasional rock concert on the side. Moon's easy enthusiasm, gracious British manner, and zeal to make a buck



made for a diverse career; over the years he's had his hand in advertising, professional photography, and real estate.

When I met Moon in late 1984 he was putting together a book about his days with Prince. We collaborated on the project until Moon dropped out of sight. I was told later that he tried to sell the rights to the unpublished book and some unreleased Prince tapes to Prince's management company.

At last report, Moon could still be seen cruising around town in his DeLorean.

Prince's self-conception, like Gatsby's, began at seventeen. Near the end of the Champagne demo sessions, Moon

said he started to notice the little guitarist with the big Afro. Prince R. Nelson never said anything, just did his job well and stayed out of the way. One day Moon approached Prince with a proposition: How would he like to write and record songs together, with any profits from the relationship split fifty-fifty?

Moon, who couldn't play music but dreamed of becoming a top forty songwriter anyway, chose Prince as a partner for reasons that turned out richly ironic. Quite simply, he liked Prince because he played his guitar well and didn't seem to have much of an ego. That suited Moon, who essentially wanted a talented pushover to take whatever musical direction he gave.

At first, according to Moon, that was how it worked. Prince spent an hour on city buses each day en route to the studio, where he would play the music he had written to accompany Moon's lyrics. If Moon didn't like what he heard, he sent Prince away to try again. Soon they started to lay down basic tracks. To Moon's surprise, the kid could play a number of instruments besides the guitar. Bigger surprises were yet to come.

As Prince gained confidence, he started to struggle for control. First he wanted to play all the instrumental tracks, including drums, his weakest suit at the time. When Moon suggested diplomatically that Prince on bass accompanied by a drummer might make for a tighter rhythm track, Prince called Moon a liar and demanded: "You don't think I can do it, do you?" Soon he began to resent Moon's requests for additional takes on instrumental or vocal tracks. "You can't even play anything," he said once. "Why should you be able to tell me what to do?"

According to Moon the conflicts were rarely direct. Instead, a power struggle developed, with the two constantly testing each other's limits. It started over recording issues. Once, in recording a song called "Aces," Prince flatly refused to repeat a track Moon didn't like. He sulked around the studio until he sensed that Moon wouldn't budge, then declared: "Okay this time—but only because you own the studio!"

The rifts caused by their differences in age, race, and background grew deeper over the months, owing both to Prince's resentment and Moon's callow, patronizing attitudes.

"Look at everything you've got here," Prince said, casting his eyes around the studio. "It was all just given to you."

Moon responded with a line straight out of Horatio Alger: He had worked hard to build the studio, anyone who wanted it badly enough could do the same, the world was fair to everyone in time...and so on. It isn't hard to imagine the contempt a kid from North Minneapolis must have felt for such middle class platitudes; he answered with a word that ended more than one discussion between the two:

"Liar!"

The power struggle that started over recording matters soon extended to the entire relationship. Prince never *asked* Moon for anything, but occasionally he made flat demands: a dollar for bus fare, five dollars, ten dollars. Once the patrician Moon took it upon himself to teach him a lesson. He threw a \$5 bill on the ground and told Prince that if he wanted



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the money, he'd have to stoop to get it. Prince wheeled and left the studio.

Another time, when Moon made himself a drink while they were mixing a track, Prince fixed him with a hard stare and told him not to drink it. And when Moon cancelled a Friday night recording session to go on a date, Prince demanded to know who he was seeing. Moon resisted the question at first—Prince hadn't even met any of his women friends—then relented and told him the woman's name.

"Aw, not *her*. She's not worth it." He persisted in pleading and cajoling until Moon agreed to cancel the date and go to the studio with him.

Moon noticed the small ways in which Prince evinced a fierce yet fragile pride. Though he had no compunction about demanding to get his way, Prince steadfastly declined even the slightest unsolicited gesture, whether it was a hamburger or a ride home. And Moon learned early on that teaching Prince to use the recording console would be an exercise in subterfuge.

"He was very anxious to learn," Moon recalled, "but you couldn't tell him, 'Look, here's how to do this.' You had to say, 'Uh, Prince, I need some help doing this, could you turn these knobs?'"

Within six months, Prince could handle most of the engineering chores as well as or better than Moon, who had worked with the equipment for five years. Those skills mastered, Prince wanted to be in the studio constantly—alone, if possible. As he came to understand the formula for the pop lyrics Moon was writing, he started to do that for himself, too. Where Moon had been the producer, the lyricist, and the critic in the beginning, Prince gradually absorbed all those functions, until finally it was Moon who was sitting almost idly by, vainly protesting that a bass riff or a vocal track wasn't good enough.

But if he was quickly and vastly outstripped by Prince artistically, Moon still made a lasting impression. Always a shrewd opportunist, he repeatedly emphasized to Prince the importance of marketing himself well. He encouraged him to think in terms of image. Prince began to practice his autograph—what about a heart instead of a dot over the "i"?—and his dance steps, many of which were lifted from early Jackson Five choreography. Moon took credit for counselling Prince to fudge on his age, and not disclose his last name. Moon said he told Prince more than once that the key to success was scoring with the white crossover audience.

The last plank in Prince's emerging persona was nailed down one day when a

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hung-over Moon locked himself in an ad agency recording studio and wrote a lyric that began: "Angora fur/The Aegean Sea/It's a soft wet love/That you have for me." He took "Soft & Wet" home and showed it to Prince. The song eventually became the first single from Prince's first album.

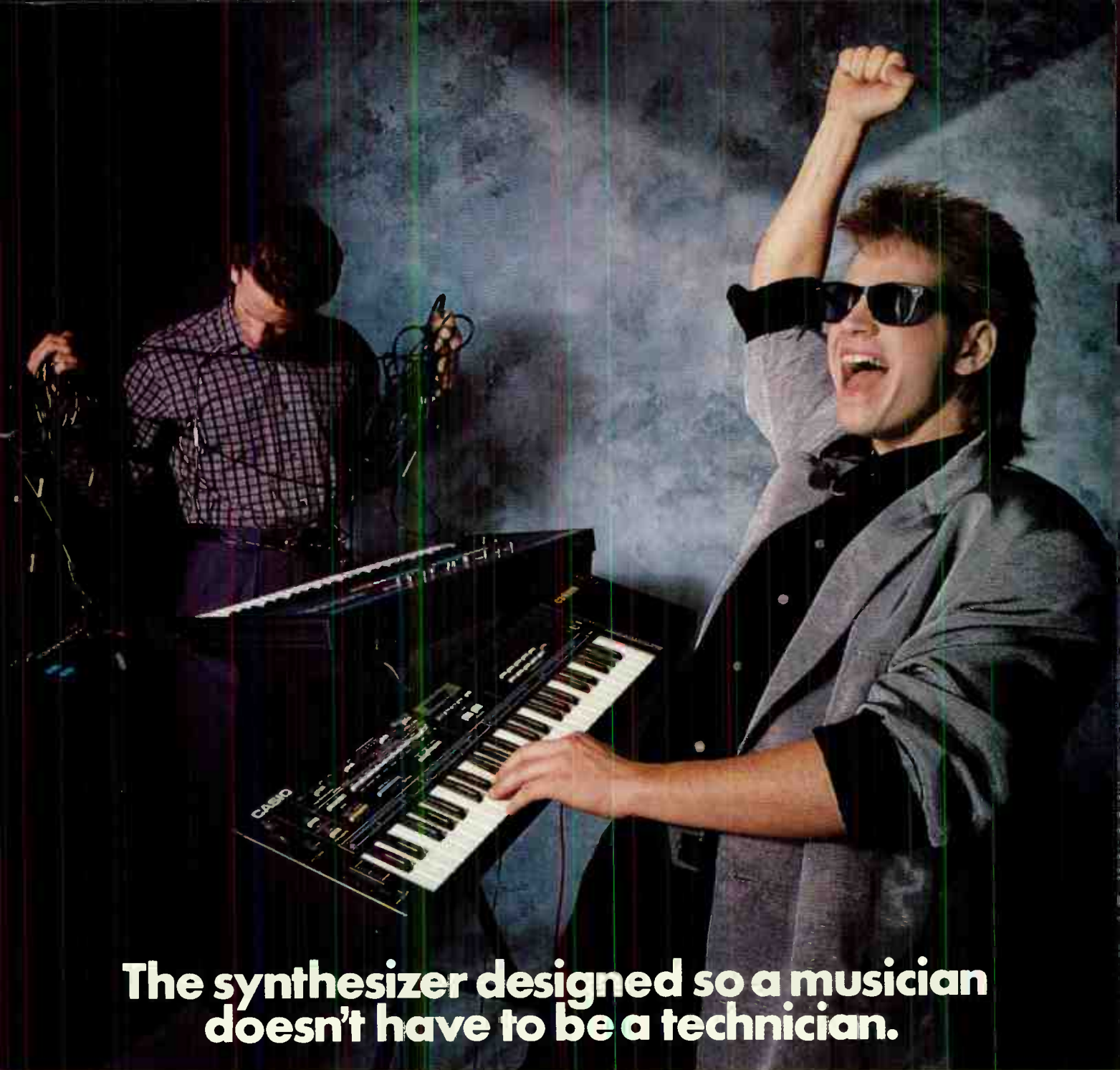
"I told him, 'I think we've got your marketing strategy worked out and a song to go with it. We'll have thousands of thirteen and fourteen year-old girls going crazy over you.' He smiled for once. He liked the idea."

Moon was convinced that "implied naughty sexuality" would put Prince across, especially with adolescent girls. Just how important the advice was to Prince is hard to say. It's scarcely believable that Moon's relatively tame song and suggestion led in a straight line to "Head" and "Darling Nikki." But it is clear that Prince has paid careful attention to his own marketing through the years.

By the end of their nine months together, Prince and Moon had completed the demo tape that would help Prince win his Warner Bros. contract, and Moon had introduced Prince to Owen Husney, his first manager. Moon said Prince's personality changed remarkably over the months, from a shy, introverted kid who could never look anyone in the eye to a budding megalomaniac, full of talent and purpose—who still wouldn't look anyone in the eye. To paraphrase Fitzgerald, he had created just the sort of prince that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to dream up: manipulative and egocentric, tireless and endlessly inventive.

After he signed with Warners, Prince went to California, where he spent several months working on his first album, *For You*. He stopped calling Moon. Moon, out of naiveté or a failure to grasp what was happening to Prince, continued to believe they would write together. On the few occasions when they did talk in ensuing years, the conversations were cordial but distant, as if a connection had been made and broken long ago. Moon said later that the break seemed altogether routine, on Prince's part, without any lingering malice. And maybe that was so: Prince's eyes were already fixed on the next green light. ☐

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# THE CURE

BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

## ONTOLOGICAL UNGLUEDATION FOR YOUR DANCING PLEASURE

There's this school of modern singing, founded in certain songs by David Bowie and most prominently practiced by Simon LeBon, where the singer puts this crack into his voice and sounds like he's on the verge of tears, if not actually pulling the drain on his ducts, and you usually can't tell what his problem is 'cause the lyrics are too obscure. I hate this shit too much to figure out who's doing it, so I can't even tell you more names to build my case, but take my word: They are all over the charts. At this moment some professional lachrymoid has grabbed your little sister by the maternal instinct and won't stop squeezing until her allowance plops into his puddle of mewl.

One guy who transcends this neo-Gary Puckett tradition without skimping on the melancholia is Robert Smith of the Cure, a band I have to admit hasn't been under my microscope for most of its ten-year existence. They did, however, catch my attention with their last album, *The Head On The Door*, their first for Elektra who have also put out a greatest hits collection, *Standing On A Beach—The Singles*. I like Smith because he writes good lyrics, artful enough to hold your interest and specific enough so you can figure out what his problem is. His problem is existential despair, metaphysical distress, ontological ungluedation, and cosmic meltdown. You would cry too if it happened to you.

"When you ponder anything fundamental to your existence, you inevitably end up depressed if you don't have a sense of belief, which I've never had," says Smith in his manager's office in London. "I've always ended up in this... well, it's a bottomless pit, really. From time to time I've slipped into it and dragged the group down with me. But I think that what's come out of it is like a soundtrack for a lot of people's lives. Everyone I know has suffered the same sort of doubts and depressions. I've had certain

ideas of belief, but they didn't stick around for any length of time. A lot of the things I say I believe are determined by my particular situation at the time. The most difficult thing in a group..."

Uh, you have a spider in your hair.

"He's crawling around, isn't he?"

Yeah.

"I must have picked him up in the taxi coming over here."

Smith has your basic English rock star Inverted Gorilla Scrotum haircut, ratted to the sky with massive hairspray, and one of the errant strands is not a strand of hair; it is a strand of web, from which this cute little bitty spider (probably a she) is dangling. If this was Ozzie, he'd quench his angst by eating her. But this is Robert Smith, who writes songs about existentially arbitrary murder ("Killing An Arab," based on *The Stranger*) while having no heart for the real deed.

pen, apparently—which to me implies religious thinking somewhere in his mind, a belief in some outside governing force.

"It was a manufactured belief," he says. "I just wanted to believe it, be Nostradamus on a smaller scale."

Any other good dreams lately?

"I find myself murdering a lot in my more recent dreams."

Who? "Rugby players, and I don't know any rugby players. I don't even watch it on television. I don't like it. Maybe that's why I'm murdering them... Anyway, what I was saying before the spider: The most difficult part of being in a group is justifying to yourself that what you're doing is more than just another record. I really think a lot, 'Does what we're doing matter?' I mean, why spend so much time and energy creating something for other people?"



Smith manifested his powers after being bitten by a radioactive spider.

"Spiders are supposed to be lucky. Not so lucky for the spider if you don't like spiders," he says, brushing the diminutive arachnid gently aside.

This "lucky" business is, I think, a clue to the fundamental contradiction of Robert Smith: On the one hand, he's consciously an atheist colliding with random atoms in an absurd universe, and on the other hand, he's superstitious as hell and his songs are crawling with religious imagery. In the past year, for example, he had a dream and became convinced he was going to get killed by a plateglass window on Valentine's Day—didn't hap-

Well, you just have to convince yourself that someone will find it useful.

"Sometimes the easy way is just to say, 'What else would I do?' I don't actually enjoy vegetating."

Okay, person who is now reading this magazine, ask yourself what sort of bloke would play rock 'n' roll because he doesn't actually enjoy vegetating? What sort of person has to crawl out of the trough of despair every morning and convince himself that rock 'n' roll matters when there's all that money to spend and all those women to chase and that adulation to soak up?

Right. A lapsed Catholic.

"I went to this Catholic middle school and my two years were guinea pig years. It was a very free thinking and multi-denominational kind of school where they treated you like an adult and let you do what you wanted. It was a piss-up, probably the best two years of my life."

You were never tortured by nuns?

"No, I was very lucky. So many people seem to come out with an intense hatred of religion, which I've had too, but for different reasons. I see organized religion as a scourge on humanity, a source of evil along with nationalism."

So it's organized religion that bums

you out more than God Himself?

"I don't know. I just read this book by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross where she says you can't believe in your own termination. You always see it in the third person as an act. I've grappled with that for years. You can't intellectualize your own death, and faced with that, it's very difficult to say you don't believe in anything. But I don't. I can't believe in anything except existence. I see no reason that I should exist after I die. At the same time, I can't be rational about it. So what the fuck."

So we are now down to your basic existential dilemma and under the cir-

cumstances you might as well dance. Which brings us to the music of the Cure. They play deceptively (ain't it always) simple rock 'n' roll, spare with no snarl in the guitar and just enough synthesizer flourish to avoid sounding either too old or too new. Much as I hate the word taste, Smith has it. The rest of his band apparently has it too, they consisting of Laurence Tolhurst on keyboards, Andy Anderson on drums, Phil Thornalley on bass, and Porl Thompson on guitar and keyboards. None are a threat to Eddie Van Halen but neither do they so aspire.

The first time I set needle to groove on a Cure record it was *The Head On The Door*. I gave it a minute, figured my ears were in the clutches of a generically sensitive lachrymoid and went off to wash the dishes. But then through the rinse water I heard this flamenco rock tune called "The Blood," referring to the blood of Christ, which seemed to be about religious intoxication, the torment of unbelief, the torment of belief, and you could dance to it. The Compleat Works of Dick Clark and Fëdor Dostoevski boiled down to three minutes and forty-two seconds.

"The song has a very banal explanation, actually," says Smith. "'The Blood Of Christ' is just a very rough port wine that the working people drink in Portugal. And I drank it and was beset with visions. The label is actually a madonna, and instead of holding a child, she's holding a bottle. I became Portuguese for a short time and had this idea of using the flamenco guitar. In that type of culture religion is built up into a huge part of life, almost in a medieval sense. I thought it very peculiar, but my nature is susceptible to that sort of thinking."

My other favorite song on the record is "Close To Me," at first listen a simple dollop of pop with some heavy breathing fairly high in the mix that makes it very sexual and a bit tough to listen to on headphones. But give the riff half a chance and you get hypnotized and then you begin to realize certain overtones in the lyric: It works on the level of Smith

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## CURIOS

**R**obert Smith is supremely bored by equipment and feels that technical incompetence is essential to keeping his compositions simple and the recording fresh. He nonetheless concedes to playing a Fender Jazzmaster for the past ten years, recently switching to a Telecaster because the Jazzmaster "had become so comfortable it was like a prosthesis." He likes the Telecaster because it's "anonymous," an accolade he drops on Peavey, whose amps the Cure use in concert. He also credits them with sounding "alive and very robust."

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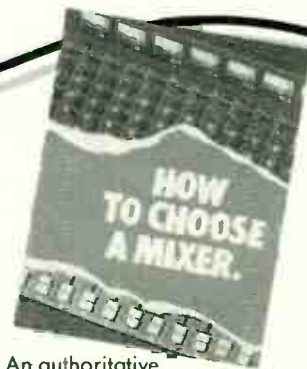
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trying to communicate a bad dream, but it is also about having no faith and having to live with the despair of knowing you're not going to get any either.

There is the final aesthetic matter of Smith's voice. While possessed of the telltale Crack of Despond, it also has a touch of Neil Young eccentricity. He doesn't quite hit the notes, sliding around them with a charming quaver, giving a human edge to his philosophy.

Smith divides the history of the Cure into four periods, during two of which he seems to have been suicidally depressed, and during the other two slightly less suicidally depressed. The Cure has released eight albums since 1976 with time out for Smith to join Siouxsie & the Banshees briefly on guitar (guy's idea of a vacation is to hang out with other suicidally depressed people). It is quite a large and surprisingly varied body of work, whose many hooks the nascent Cure fan can begin absorbing with the current greatest hits collection, which has gradually more greatest hits as one upgrades from album to cassette to CD to video.

"It was quite cleansing, sitting down and listening to everything as a critic would, never having had the distance be-

fore," says Smith. "I've got a very clear picture of what the Cure means to a lot of people."

Well, what does the Cure mean to a lot of people? "Obviously a lot of different things, because the periods are so different. I always imagine the audience to be like me."

College students looking for confirmation of their Advanced Existentialism seminar? "That would have been my impression in America. When we went there last year, it had changed drastically."

More teenybops because of songs like "Lovecats" and "Let's Go To Bed"?

"Yeah, a very odd audience. Plus a lot of people who remember the first tour, that very downbeat period. It was more of a spectacle than they were used to. The live show used to be... almost religious. There was no applause between numbers, like a church service. People would just sort of wake up at the end. We can still command that kind of attention, but now they'll dance when we do 'Boys Don't Cry.'"

Did they feel betrayed?

"Some of them, although enough appreciated the reasons we had to change. I think they trust us enough to believe

that even when we come out with pop, it will still mean something. What usually happens is a band will put out a lot of pap to get rich and then want to be taken seriously as artists. We were in the opposite dilemma, taken seriously as artists but no one was going to listen to it.

"The other thing is that we don't take ourselves so seriously now. With this particular lineup of the band, we just can't have deep conversations anymore. Someone always thinks the other person is talking shit and either an argument starts or we retire to the pub. No one is in this band because of technical proficiency, they are in it because of something they bring as personalities. Laurence, for example, was an atrocious drummer and he's even more atrocious now on keyboards but I can't imagine him not being in the group because he's fun. And that dictates the tone of the music, if not the direct content of the words. We have to have that balance between fun and the bottomless pit." ☐

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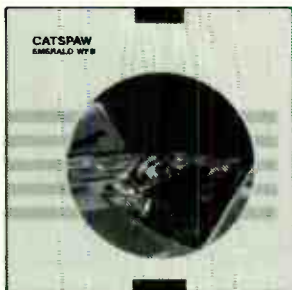
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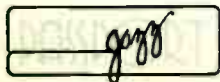
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## SIMPLY RED

### *Carrying Soul from Manchester*

**S**imply Red isn't simply Red Hucknall. The band is an amalgam of vocalist Mick "Red" Hucknall and his five compatriots from the dead textile-factory town of Manchester, England. And, judging from their debut album, *Picture Book*, the soul-tinged sextet fully deserves its slow-fuse success.

*Picture Book* appeared late last year, wandered around for a while, and finally hopped into a top-of-the-charts racecar with "Holding Back The Years." "We were big in Europe right from the start," Hucknall drawls tiredly. "In England, we had one hit and a series of flops, and now we're doing well there again. Now it seems we're a hit in America. I don't understand how the marketing works,

but I'm not surprised, really. There are so many untalented musicians in this business that if you have a modicum of talent, you'll do well."

Few interracial R&B bands even exist, let alone score a hit. *Picture Book's* producer, Stewart Levine, has helped guide the Crusaders, B.B. King and Randy Crawford; here he's helped craft an album smooth as rayon. "R&B is very big in Manchester," Hucknall embellishes, "but we're also lovers of trad jazz and of old reggae—Lee Perry, King Tubby." The mix of influences tickles *Picture Book's* R&B belly. Then, too, there is Hucknall's amazing voice.

But commercial considerations aren't really on the band's mind. Simply Red plays simply "what we want to do," Hucknall says. He adds, "Most commercial music today, especially from my country, is rubbish, isn't it?" — *Frank Lovece*



# FACES



## BODEANS

*All Roots, No Moss*

**B**eau BoDean (okay, his real name is Kurt Newmann) has this to

say about state-of-the-art recordings: "With technology came *sound!*" He says "sound" like a dirty word. "For the past five or ten years everything's been focused on the *new sound* of records. Someone's got a new snare

News Stories by Scott Isler

drum sound! Someone's got a new synthesizer! A new Fairlight! Somewhere people lost track of the *song*. If you just concentrate on the sound you lose a lot."

Easy to say when you've got songs as good as the BoDeans'. The Wisconsin quartet manage to make rootsy rock 'n' roll without sounding either precious or like a 50s revival. Maybe their secret is in not setting up a lot of arbitrary rules for themselves; the BoDeans are not above straying into reggae or even pseudo-Chinese riffs if it serves the almighty Song.

But most of their stuff features the ringing acoustic guitar and big drum rock practiced by John Mellencamp. Singer/guitarist/songwriters Beau and Sammy (Llanas) BoDean started the group as

a rocking two-piece too exuberant for folk clubs and too weird for the rock bars. Eventually they hooked up with drummer Guy Hoffman, and then bassist (and old pal) Bob Griffin.

Their demos attracted both Slash/Warners and Rounder/Capitol. The BoDeans went with the former; most of their debut album *Love & Hope & Sex & Dreams* was cut live in the studio, letting the enthusiasm come through.

Still in their mid-twenties (except Hoffman, an ancient thirty-two) the BoDeans play with a young man's noble naiveté—and a young man's impatience with the business side of music. "Radio made me want to live," Sammy declares, "and later on it made me want to cry. Somewhere it went really wrong. I would like the day to come when radio would play *anything*. Because there's just as many good songs being written today as there ever were. People just don't get to hear them." — *Bill Flanagan*

# AMERICAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

## A Concert-Hall Controversy

**T**he American Jazz Orchestra should slide down intellectual gullets like cool cream: It's a repertory organization started last year by critic Gary Giddins, conducted by the Modern Jazz Quartet's **John Lewis** and featuring everyone from studio sax king **Walt Levinsky** to **Hank Jones** and **Jimmy Heath**. The intent, Lewis says, is "to preserve the big band's very special contribution to western culture. The AJO has the same purpose the western symphony has: to save and recreate the masterpieces of a specific tradition."

Not exactly a controversial platform. But dissent erupted

Count Basie—for being too reserved. Wynton Marsalis, who had demanded free tickets, made a show of walking out during the performance, reportedly mumbling that the Orchestra "was killing Ellington." A few days later, shoving matches broke out among critics. You'd think the Rosenbergs had just shot Sacco and Vanzetti.

But beyond the verbal slugfest, the AJO serves a valuable function. It allows pieces heard only on record to come alive with their original sonic brilliance. The AJO plans to commission new works—Henry Threadgill has already been signed up—and rehabilitate overlooked composers and arrangers like **Jimmy Mundy** and **Hall Overton**. With its respectful approach, the Orchestra sets back the idea that America's



after the Orchestra's New York debut concert in May (they plan four more in the fall). **Francis Davis**, in the *Village Voice*, earnestly bludgeoned the performance—which included works by **Duke Ellington**, **Fletcher Henderson** and

classical music comes from Europe. And at the concert, the audience, mostly invitees with only a passing familiarity with jazz, gave the orchestra a standing ovation. That bodes well for the AJO and jazz itself, no matter if the critics grumble. — *Peter Watrous*

## RCA Gets Hep

Considering that RCA is one of the country's largest record companies, its lack of even one jazz signing is hardly exemplary. Over the last ten years the label has phased out its jazz issues to near-extinction. But that situation is on the upswing. This fall the company will debut a new label presenting jazz—both current and vintage—and

"new age" music. (No snickering, please.)

Heading the new division is **Steve Backer**, who's contracted for about ten new jazz releases, ten "new age" albums and fifteen catalog reissues in his first year. Among the reissues will be a five-record **Duke Ellington** box, and repackagings (some as two-fers) of **Coleman Hawkins**, **Charles Mingus**, **Sonny Rollins**, **Louis Armstrong** and **Bunny Berigan**, among

# STEVE STEIN

## Terrorism on the Dance Floor

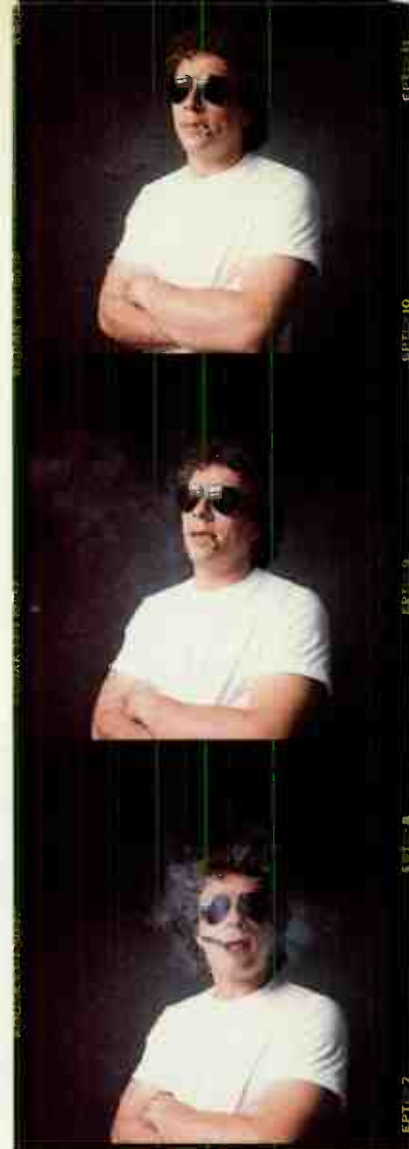
**H**e doesn't look or act like the urban terrorist of hip-hop: no suspicious movements, no darting glances, no extra carry-on luggage. To all outward appearances, **Steve Stein** is a friendly, humorous guy. Why, then, did he create "The Motorcade Sped On," which places a tribal beat alongside **Walter Cronkite's** newscasts of the **John F. Kennedy** assassination and its aftermath?

"I just wanted to make something as strong and disturbing as possible," Stein replies with typical candor. "I didn't do it with any reaction in mind other than getting people's attention." Virtually anyone who's heard this four-minute history lesson would say Stein succeeded. "The Motorcade Sped On" opens with a cheery **Ed McMahon** announcing "heeeeere's Johnny!" before the drum program kicks in underneath **Cronkite**, **Kennedy's** own voice, police sirens and other effects. "I'd play it for people," Stein says. "I'm really into the beat. Then I look up and notice the blood draining from their faces."

The track is merely Stein's latest assault on dance-record conventions. As one-half of **Double Dee & Steinski** (with former partner **Doug DeFranco**), he co-produced dizzily eclectic mixes for **Tommy Boy Records**. Unfor-

others.

As for new jazz, **Backer** foresees "a fairly eclectic roster. The 80s are about eclecticism in jazz." Besides his three-year arrangement, **Backer** is encouraged by **RCA's** recent corporate reorganization; the new regime, after all, gave him the green light. "The cycle is going back up now," **Backer** says of the jazz scene. "There's a real renaissance." Let's hope that applies to **RCA** as well.



unately, none of them could be released commercially; their eclecticism insured that at least one copyright holder would refuse to cooperate. "Motorcade," credited to **Steinski & the Mass Media**, has a similar problem: **CBS** refuses to grant clearance on the **Cronkite** recording. So once again **Tommy Boy** is pressing promotion-only copies to get the opus on radio, if not in record stores.

**CBS's** objection, **Stein** says, is that the cut trivializes **Cronkite**—a charge **Stein**, now signed to **Island Records**, vehemently rejects. "It's B-boy history, man," he asserts, "taking information, cutting it up and combining it with beats. My basic impulse is quite a valid one." Whatever the impulse, the effect is powerful. To hear for yourself, stay glued to your radio—and don't touch that dial.

— *Scott Isler*

# TROUBLE FUNK

## How Far Can Go-Go Go?

**T**he big question for Trouble Funk: How to put its raw, unbridled go-go sound across to the public without musical compromise?

"It's a tough one," says guitarist **James Avery**. "When you go to a party you're looser than when you're riding in your car listening to the radio. We want to keep our live, stripped-down sound, but coordinate



it to the format of the radio. Put some melody in it, but not lose that bottom."

Trouble Funk has already scored on black radio with "Drop The Bomb," but the "bottom" which Avery says gives go-go its individualistic punch is more evident on their latest LP, *Saturday Night Live From Washington, D.C.* The band carries three drummers—a trap player trades rhythms with congas and timbales—but their version of the go-go beat isn't as

## Hailing Taxes

There may be a tape-recorder tax in your future after all. On May 21 the Senate Copyright Subcommittee approved the Home Audio Recording Act (*Faces*, February). The bill now awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As it now stands, the bill would levy a tax of five percent of wholesale price on

dictatorial as other modern-day funk. They shift it around so you can get on board in lots of places.

Unfortunately the record also shows the radio problems go-go faces if it wants to stay close to its "extended jam" origins. There are no songs per se, simply a non-stop groove-a-thon conjuring rhythmic images of Tito Puente, early Santana and funk overlord George Clinton. "Percussion is one of our strengths," Avery boasts.

"We go back to the African heritage; it's a dominant influence. No matter what you put on top, you're going to identify go-go by that percussion." What Trouble Funk puts on top are razor-blade

horns and growling vocalist "Big Tony" Fisher, who grabs the audience in a gospel-flavored call-and-response frenzy.

The band gets some helpful exposure in the go-go film *Good To Go*: They perform the title track. "The trade-off between rhythm and melody is very close to where we want it with 'Good To Go,'" Avery says, "but there's nothing like that live sound. You gotta be there to understand go-go." — *Jim Macnie*

tape recorders. Exempted are videocassette recorders, non-recording portable stereos, mono recorders, those without cable inputs, recorders for non-profit organizations, and recorders with anti-duping technology (should any of those ever exist). Dual-transport decks for tape dubbing would get hit with a twenty-five percent (of wholesale) tax. In return,

## Kennedys Bust

Dead Kennedys singer Jello Biafra (Eric Boucher) says that on April 15 three Los Angeles police and six San Francisco police broke into his home and searched for evidence that Biafra had been distributing "harmful matter to minors." At issue specifically was the inclusion in the Dead Kennedys' last album, *Frankenchrist*, of a poster of a painting by artist H.R. Giger depicting putrefying genitalia in varying stages of engagement. Biafra describes the poster as "the most effective metaphor for the consumer culture that I've ever seen" and part of a conceptual attack on "Rambo's America."

On June 3 Los Angeles Deputy City Attorney Michael Guarino announced that charges would be brought against Biafra and others for distributing harmful matter to minors—a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2000 fine. Guarino refused to comment on the alleged police break-in of Biafra's home. He further denied allegations that the case was part of a

noncommercial audio home taping of copyrighted music will no longer constitute copyright infringement. Significantly, the bill no longer calls for a penny-per-minute tax on blank tape.

Royalties—estimated at \$80-\$100 million a year—will be distributed to copyright holders, artists, songwriters and others in a manner intended to give fair represen-



nationwide right wing campaign to censor rock 'n' roll; the charges were brought, he said, because a Los Angeles housewife complained that her fourteen-year-old daughter had bought *Frankenchrist* as a Christmas present for her eleven-year-old brother.

Asked if the poster were not constitutionally protected political comment, Guarino said the poster would have to be proven "utterly without redeeming social importance for minors," and there was a "tremendous distinction legally and philosophically between 'redeeming social importance' and 'token social importance.'"

Biafra cited recent articles charging the City Attorney's office with lax enforcement of toxic waste laws, and pointed out that cancer was more harmful to minors than any poster. Also charged in the case are the album's label (Alternative Tentacles), distributors and manufacturer. (Contributions can be mailed to No More Censorship Defense Fund, Alternative Tentacles, Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

— *Charles M. Young*

tation to smaller companies. A two-percent tithe will go to the National Endowment for the Arts.

On the other side of Capitol Hill, the House of Representatives' own recording rights bill is still comatose a year after it was introduced. The House bill proposes a higher tax on recorders than the Senate bill, and includes a blank tape tax.



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**"For McCartney I was aiming for a harder sound. I think some of his records have sounded a bit wimpish."**

**"With Genesis ten days or so are spent jamming in the studio. Nearly everything is overdubbed later."**

# Quotations From Chairman Hugh

"Bowie will sing through a song once to get the lyrics and the feel, then I swear you'll have your vocal take in two passes."

**Chairman of the Board  
Hugh Padgham reflecting on  
producing in the British Big Time.**

"As songs and records go, I don't feel that they sound any better today than they did in, say, the 60s. Technically maybe, nowadays, because all they had then was an echo-plate, an echo-chamber and a tape machine for a repeat. No harmonizers, nothing. That's all they had, and yet you tell me if they don't still sound good. Stick on an old Yardbirds hit or whatever and it still sounds great!

"I tend to think—and I remember learning this years ago—that when you're in a studio with lots of different devices around, it's very easy to use a different sort of echo and sound on everything on the whole track, and the whole thing will end up sounding like a real mess! To me, one of the main things in the art of mixing is using your imagination together with one particular piece of equipment—such as one echo-plate—to give the whole thing a sort of cohesiveness. I think this is lacking on certain records where I listen and say 'My God, everything but the kitchen sink has been used on this!'

"I sometimes play a game with myself to see how little equipment I can use on a mix in order to achieve the sound that the artist and myself want, and that's quite a lot of fun.

**By Richard Buskin**

## Modus Operandi

I generally do records in quite weird ways. With Genesis, for instance, we start in the studio on day one with not one note of music! Ten days or two weeks are then spent jamming on drum machines, Phil on a vocal, and the others just messing sometimes around without even bothering to find out what key they are in! Ideas are put onto cassettes and things are then formulated from there. Some would say that is a very decadent way of doing things, but they have their own studio and so they're not wasting £100 an hour. Nearly everything on the Genesis albums that I've done—especially the new one—is overdubbed, although we always retain some parts from a backing track that has been laid down. Say Mike plays a guitar part he may keep some of it, because sometimes when you're playing without caring that's when the best stuff comes out!

"A pretty good thing about the SMPTE code and the SRC now is that if you do lay your backing tracks to a Linn drum machine or whatever—as we do with Genesis and Phil Collins' material—you can always go back and edit, or change things around, and you know that your tempo is correct. Probably what a lot of people don't realize about Phil's and Genesis' records is that the drums actually get overdubbed almost last. Sometimes Phil will play drums on a tune, and two weeks later he'll come back and say, 'No, I don't like that.' Because really he's still a drummer who sings—that's how he likes to think of himself—and so he'll come back and redo the drum track no problem, or even just redo the last chorus or something."

## So Who's Hugh Padgham?

Hugh Padgham entered the music business at Advision Studios in London. Later he answered an advertisement for a tape-op at Adrian Kerridge's Landsdowne Studios, and after several years there he left to embark on a five-month tour of Europe with the Jim Capaldi Band. On his return to the capital he joined Townhouse Studios as an engineer, where he helped wire in the first SSL desk to be installed in a commercial studio in Britain, and engineered for a wide variety of upstart artists, including PiL, the Jam, XTC and Spandau Ballet. Another of these was Peter Gabriel, and it was during the production of his album *The Third* that Hugh first met Phil Collins. This led to a fruitful musical collaboration which started with Collins' *Face Value* album in 1981. Thereafter Padgham left Townhouse to commence a freelance career, recruiting the manage-



ment services of Dennis Muirhead in the process.

This was clearly a wise move, as over the last few years his reputation as a producer and engineer has soared due to the quality of his work with a number of major artists in a variety of locations. These include the Police and their Grammy-winning *Synchronicity* in Montserrat (not to mention *Ghost In The Machine*); Bowie's *Tonight* LP in Canada; Frida's *Something's Going On* album in Sweden, and Split Enz' #1 Oz LP *Time And Tide* in Australia, in addition to U.K. collaborations with the likes of Human League and XTC. Most recently, Padgham has produced a single for Howard Jones, as well as the new albums by both Genesis and Paul McCartney.

## On Producing Paul

One thing that was sort of difficult to handle was being able to remember making a cardboard cut-out of a guitar at the age of seven or eight, and standing in front of the mirror pretending to be Paul McCartney! So to end up twenty years later in a studio with this guy, telling him what to do, was quite weird to start with! Generally, however, the way that I usually work is on a co-production basis, because I like to do all of the engineering as well. I like to get involved in projects in that way, rather than adopt the heavy-duty roles of the Trevor Horns and Ron Nevisons of this life. That's not to say that I won't get my own way if I want it either, but the idea is to work together in harmony in order to get to where you want to get to.

"Obviously Paul does need direction sometimes, like everybody does, and

I've worked with enough people not to let someone's fame and reputation worry me. But on the other hand there will also be times when Paul will say something and you're thinking the opposite, and you'll think, 'Hang on, this guy's got a lot more experience than I have,' but you've just got to have a lot of confidence in yourself! I'm not the sort of person who ends up having standing rows with anybody, but if there's any difference of opinion you sit down and talk about it.

"I for one was trying to give him a slightly different overall sound, not being one of his usual associates with Air-Abbey Road-EMI connections. I suppose, in a nutshell, I was aiming for a slightly harder sound. I've listened to some of Paul's records and thought, 'That's a little bit wimpish. I wish he could be a bit harder and rougher in a way.' So if, for instance, someone said, 'Oh, Paul always uses that mike for his vocals,' my first reaction would be 'Okay, well let's try another one!' Not because I didn't like his previous records, but simply because one wants to try something different.

"Paul's not a huge fan of drum machines or sequencers and that particular sort of modern tightness—although on this record we certainly did use drum machines and SRC boxes and all that type of thing—but many of his records in the past have been what I suppose you could call 'slick,' and so this time we've tried to keep away from that. Obviously one of his major assets—and he's got a lot of major assets—is his fantastic sense of melody, and when you've got a really nice ballad it's not that easy to do something to make it sound rougher or heavier; you can't get Eddie Van Halen

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World Radio History

to play guitar solos on it! But there are certain things that can be done, and hopefully when people listen to the ballads on this new record they'll notice the difference.

### Who's Going To Play Bass?!

**W**e put down the backing tracks in what I suppose is a fairly strange way for nowadays: When Paul was writing the songs I specifically asked him not to demo them—or at least not to demo them very well—so when we first arrived in the studio with the songs that



he had written on his own or with Eric Stewart [of 10cc], we just had Paul and Eric strumming away on two guitars. Then I got in Jerry Marotta—whom I'd worked with through Peter Gabriel—on drums, and that was basically the rhythm section. Jerry is a very good, solid, hard-hitting drummer, without being flash, and I thought that would be a very good basis to work on.

"Then at one point in the early stages when we were discussing things, Paul asked who was going to play bass. I said, 'What? You're going to play bass!' and he said, 'Oh right, okay.' I couldn't believe it when I learned that some other people had played bass on his last few records. Obviously they were good bass players, but to me if I had to choose a world band Paul would be my bass guitarist...although he'll probably hate me for saying that!

"As the songs were therefore not conceived in any way towards the bass, it needed a little more thought than just going into the studio and putting it down; we wanted to get a sort of band feel to it. So the way in which we put down most of the songs was to have Jerry playing the drums, and Paul or Eric on acoustic or electric guitar or piano, depending on the track. One of the tracks that was sup-

posed to be a real rock song ended up with just two acoustics and drums on the backing track, so it was quite a weird setup!

### Million-Dollar Voices

**W**hen choosing a microphone for a particular artist I do go on intuition to an extent: I've been doing this for quite a long time now, and so by just sitting in a room with somebody and listening to their voice—whether or not they lisp or have very pronounced 's' sounds, for instance—will help me to choose the right microphone. In the case of Phil Collins, for instance, he has a very definite vocal style and there is a very definite way in which we record this. The mike that we stick with is a Beyer M88, and he feels comfortable with that. We also use some other little bits of equipment which I'll keep a trade secret—I've given away too many secrets for too long—as well as echo and harmonizer through the headphones, and Phil—like any artist—will sing to a sound that he likes. Things like headphone balances are therefore very important when people are singing, in order to get the right feel and vibe onto the tape as quickly as possible.

"I'm not a man who particularly likes working on vocals because you can get bogged down in which take is the right one and whether or not it is good enough. It's magic, therefore, working with people such as Paul McCartney and Phil Collins, because they are so professional! Bowie is another one: He'll sing through a song once in order to remind himself of the lyrics and give a chance to get the sound, and then I swear to God you'll have your vocal take in two passes on the tape! He'll do it just like that!

"My big thing in the studio is not to let the technology of today—and there's a hell of a lot of it—hang up the artists. Sometimes it can be great just keeping things simple. For instance, with the Genesis material where we started without a note and worked it all out as we went along, the actual mixing side of it was not too difficult. A lot of the sound and echoes and things were recorded on the tape as we went along, so that even though we did it on 48-track when we came to mix it, was just a case of pushing up the faders. So it might sound as though there is an awful lot of outboard gear being used, but that actually is not the case.

"I often get the feeling that console manufacturers are making the consoles bigger and bigger because they make more money when they sell them, but whether or not it's actually contributing

to the music is another matter! Does the music want the 56-channel desk? In some ways I definitely think that all of this technology slows the record-making process down. It has to. In the old days they just used to go in and bang the song down and off they went! I'm not saying that should happen now, but at the same time I really don't think that records today are any better as a result of all this technology. I mean I love fiddling with knobs and things, but I do wonder whether or not the manufacturers are taking us for a ride really.

### All I Want is a Room Somewhere

**T**he most important qualification for a good studio is an efficient recording area. I don't give a damn about the control-room, although it is nice to have a big, airy control-room as is the trend now when you're spending a lot of time in a studio.

"I was shocked when I visited Mayfair Studios [in London] and could see the whole place was designed around drum machines and things, or recording drums and putting digital reverb on them later. I said, 'Well, where is the studio?' and they said, 'This is the studio,' and I find that a lot of places are still left over with this Eastlake thing from the 70s where everything is trapped and there is no sort of acoustic to it at all. I don't like that, and so the only studios I'll record in are those with a pretty decent live-room.

"The way that people record nowadays, always changing things around, means separation comes into it, and of course if you're using big live-areas your separation is reduced. So I start looking for studios where there is a live-room separated by big, thick double-glass doors to the other room, so people can still have visual contact but you've got different areas to put your guitars and drums and whatever in. For my dream studio I'd also like to have a lot of orange and green lights flashing like a disco, and it would all be incredibly psychedelic! Well, maybe not.

"I like to boast that there is little or no digital machinery used for Phil Collins' drum sounds. Occasionally we might use the AMS reverb on the bass drum, or something like that, for a special production sort of thing, but that big walloping drum sound that Phil is known for is really just him playing the drums in a particular room.

### The Fade

**I**'ve worked very, very hard in the studio for years, and I don't think one can keep that up forever. At the same

*continued on page 80*

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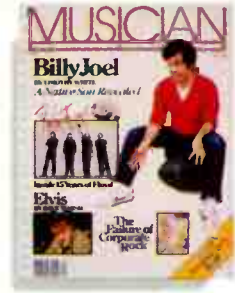
35  
**The Doors**  
Carla Bley, Bob Marley



41  
**Miles**  
Genesis, Lowell George



46  
**Pete Townshend**  
Warren Zevon, Squeeze



50  
**Billy Joel**  
Pink Floyd, Corporate Rock



54  
**Bob Seger**  
Todd Rundgren, Missing Persons



57  
**Bob Marley**  
Don Henley, Ramones



73  
**Springsteen**  
Miles Davis, PiL, Producer Special



74  
**Bowie**  
Summers/Fripp, Yoko Ono



81  
**Sting**  
Graham Parker, Getting Signed

## BACK ISSUES

- 8... **VSOP** . Al Jarreau, Herbie Hancock
- 9... **Ornette Coleman**, Frank Zappa
- 10... **Charles Mingus**, McCoy Tyner
- 13... **Tyner & Hubbard**, Woody Shaw
- 14... **George Benson**, Jazz Radio Special
- 15... **Chick Corea**, Ralph McDonald
- 17... **Art & Funk**, Charles Mingus, G. Clinton
- 18... **Pat Metheny**, Dire Straits, Marvin Gaye
- 20... **Steely Dan**, Session Players, Reggae
- 21... **Brian Eno**, Reggae Festival, Weather Report
- 23... **Sonny Rollins**, Townshend, Bonnie Raitt
- 24... **Bob Marley**, Sun Ra, Free Jazz/Punk
- 25... **Bob Seger**, Daryl Hall, Tom Petty
- 28... **Mark Knopfler**, Roxy Music, Van Morrison
- 29... **Mike McDonald**, Capt Beefheart, Surf Music
- 30... **Bruce Springsteen**, Miles Davis, Rock & Jazz
- 31... **Steely Dan**, John Lennon, Steve Winwood
- 32... **Talking Heads**, Brian Eno, John Fogerty
- 33... **The Clash**, Joe Strummer, Mick Jones
- 34... **Tom Petty**, Carlos Santana, Dave Edmonds
- 37... **Reggae**, The Rolling Stones, Rickie Lee Jones
- 40... **Ringo**, Drummers, Devo, Rossington-Collins
- 42... **Hall & Oates**, Zappa, Jaki Byard
- 44... **Graham Parker**, Nick Lowe, Lester Bowie
- 45... **Willie Nelson**, John McLaughlin, the Motels
- 48... **Steve Winwood**, Steve Miller, Brian Eno
- 49... **Neil Young**, Foreigner, Go-Go's
- 52... **Joe Jackson**, Men At Work, John Cougar
- 53... **Tom Petty**, Don Cherry, Ric Ocasek
- 58... **Kinks**, Marvin Gaye, Bryan Ferry
- 60... **Elvis Costello**, Motown, Culture Club
- 61... **Jackson Browne**, Eurythmics, Keith Jarrett
- 65... **Pretenders**, Paul Simon, ABC
- 67... **Thomas Dolby**, Chet Baker, Alarm, Marcus Miller
- 69... **Michael Jackson**, R.E.M., Charlie Watts
- 70... **Peter Wolf**, King Crimson, Bass/Drum Special
- 71... **Heavy Metal**, Dream Syndicate, George Duke
- 76... **Paul McCartney**, Rickie Lee Jones, Big Country
- 77... **John Fogerty**, Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
- 80... **Phil Collins**, Joan Armatrading, Josef Zawinul
- 82... **Brian Wilson**, Sting II, Jerry Garcia
- 84... **Cougar**, Bryan Ferry, Maurice White



83  
**Dire Straits**  
R.E.M., Brian Eno, John Cage



85  
**Talking Heads**  
Neil Young, Eurythmics



86  
**Joni Mitchell**  
Sinnpe Minds, Hall & Oates



89  
**Elvis Costello**  
Al Green, Mick Jones



91  
**Stones**  
INXS, Bangles

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	10	30	48	70	89
	13	31	49	71	91
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	15	33	52	74	
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	18	35	54	77	
<b>City</b> _____	20	37	57	80	
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	25	44	65	84	

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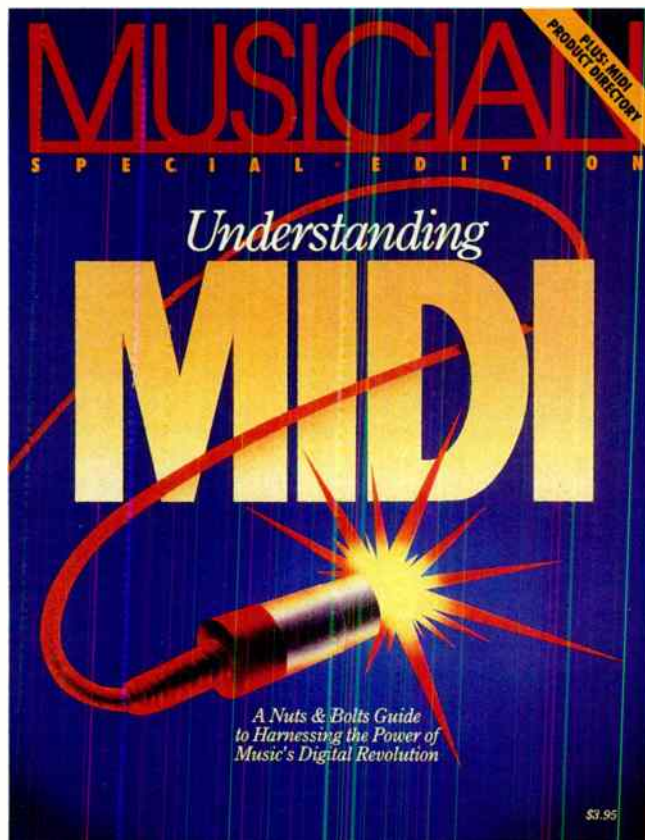
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<b>Back Issues</b> – P.O. Box 701, Gloucester, MA 01931-0701 .....	<b>34</b>	<b>Fostex</b> – 15431 Blackburn Ave., Norwalk, CA 90650 (213) 921-1112 .....	<b>77</b>	<b>RotoSound</b> – James How Industries Ltd., Unit One, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2HU, England (0732) 450838 .....	<b>16</b>
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## The World's Baddest Drummer Keeps Growing—in New, Intriguing Ways

PLAYERS

By Robin Tolleson

# TONY WILLIAMS: THE COMEBACK CONTINUES

Grammy Awards co-host Kenny Rogers had barely finished introducing the expanded jazz segment at this year's show when Tony Williams' four limbs went into a blur of motion, slamming and bouncing and generally throwing perfectly synched caution to the wind. At the end of the short fill, the roused all-star band fell right in. "I was better at rehearsal," the drummer said later with a customary quiet sincerity that sometimes impersonates modesty. "It's kind of a shock when you realize that thirty or fifty million people are watching you. It was fun doing it. I was happy to do it." Of all the marvelous musicians assembled on the Los Angeles stage that night—Dizzy Gillespie, David Sanborn, Stanley Clarke, Buddy Rich, Stanley Jordan, Gary Burton and others—if Tillmon Anthony Williams wasn't the Most Valuable Player, he was certainly the Comeback Player of the Year. Maybe of the Decade.

After successfully staying out of public eye and earshot for much of the last eight years, Williams came back in 1985 with a mostly acoustic jazz album of his own, *Foreign Intrigue*, and began testing his drumming talents in other waters. He recorded in a big garage on Johnny Lydon's latest PiL project, worked on Yoko's *Starpeace*, lent a hand on Miles Davis' track on *Sun City*, joined guitarist Alan Holdsworth once again in the studio, and sparked a very fine jazz album by pianist George Cables, *Phantom Of The City*. He's even been commuting to Paris to work on a full-length film about ex-patriate American jazz musicians, *'Round Midnight*. But more than his accomplishments on drums or before the cameras, Williams is currently most pleased with his progress as a composer. The well-received *Foreign Intrigue* album was written wholly by the drummer, and is get-

ting him his first fan mail in years.

Williams took a different approach to *Foreign Intrigue* than he'd taken to any album before, concentrating mostly on the compositions, and virtually asking the record company president to find him sidemen. The fact that he had performed some of the music earlier in the year with his long-time musical partners Ron Carter and Bobby Hutcherson made those two choices easy. Co-producer Michael Cuscuna helped land the fine pianist Mulgrew Miller and ex-Art Blakey band-

ferent things, I always want to be able to play the best kind of music in the best situations, things that are challenging. But then again, if they offer me a whole bunch of money, that's also a help." It's taken the drummer a long time and a lot of financial anxiety to develop such a cut-and-dry attitude about the music business, and he's still not completely convincing at it.

"I react to things emotionally, more so than any other way," he continues. "And in the music business or business of any kind, that's not the way to do things. I haven't been a good businessman in the past. It's been a real dichotomy, because playing drums to me is an emotional thing. That's why people have enjoyed the way I've played. But it's a problem when you deal in social situations."

The Chicago-born drummer's parents divorced when he was ten, and he had no brothers or sisters. He had to grow up fast starting in music so young, without a lot of friends his own age. He got a lot of encouragement from his mom, Alyce Juanez, who exposed Tony to classical music at an early age. His father, Tillmon Williams, a saxophone player in Boston, took Tony to gigs around town, where the youngster would pay close attention.

"When I was a kid there was this guy who I thought was really an insensitive drummer, you know, just like a clod on the drums. And one night he was playing so loudly and so badly that I just started crying. Tears were coming out of my eyes because it was so offensive. Not because it was hurting my ears, but it was just so offensive. I was so emotional about things.

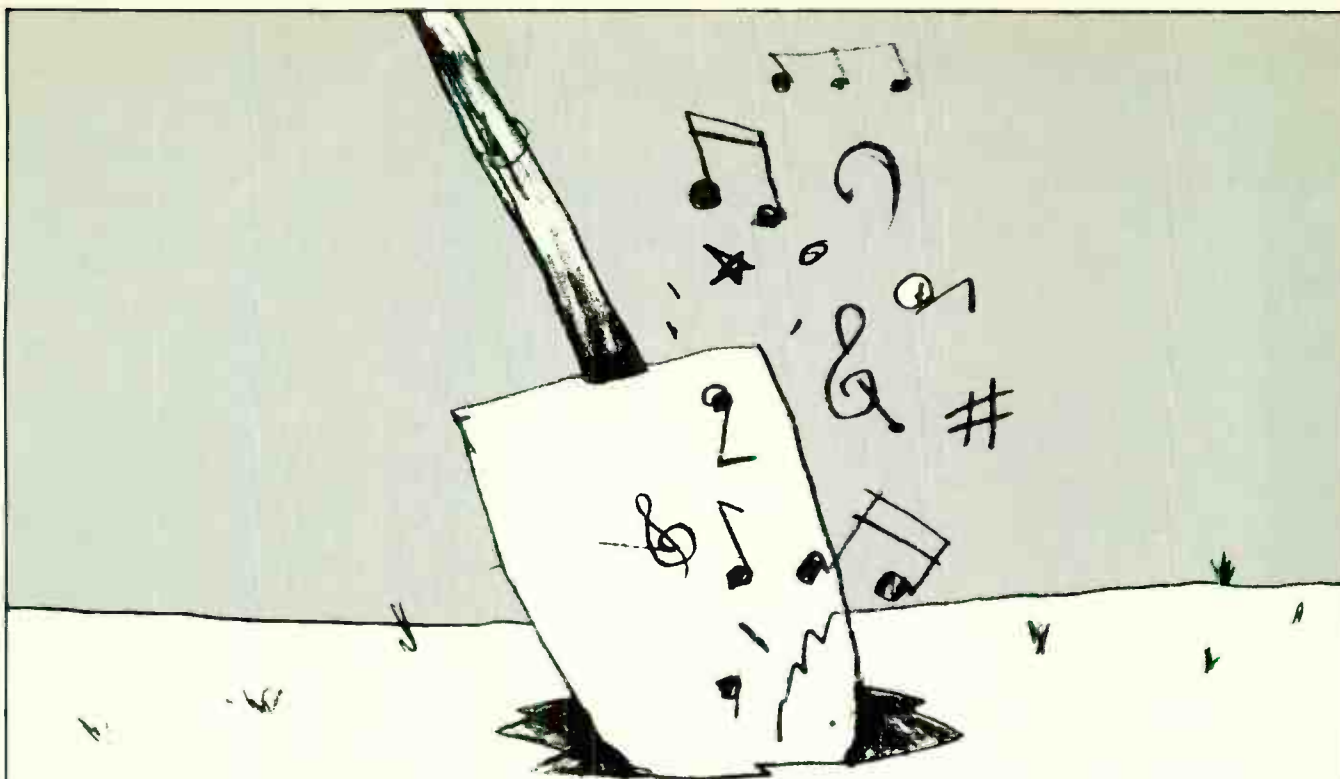
Several years ago the drummer found it was too painful for him to teach drums anymore, because students didn't take time to go back and listen to the masters



"I react to things emotionally."

mates Wallace Roney (trumpet) and Donald Harrison (alto sax) to finish out the lineup. "It made me feel as if I had made a lot of progress to be able to write the songs and complete them as easily as I had hoped to. That was a big part of this record for me.

"What appeals to me are things I haven't done before," he says. "When people take chances and call me to do dif-



# GROUND BREAKERS!



## Jackie King "Night Bird"

Jackie King's smooth and soothing guitar style reflects his jazz and classical training, but King has also been influenced by American Indian music and Texas honky-tonks. Clearly, the sound is meant to be enjoyed, not categorized.

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## Rodney Franklin "It Takes Two"

Rodney Franklin's keyboard skills are at their peak on "It Takes Two." Produced by Michel Colombier, the new album takes flight with "Broken Wings," Rodney's innovative instrumental treatment of the Mr. Mister hit, and the single, "Look What's Showing Through," featuring a highly-charged vocal performance by Brenda Russell.



## Weather Report "This Is This"

This is it! "This Is This" is the new Weather Report album that digs deep into new musical terrain. Co-founders Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul are joined by Carlos Santana on the exciting title track and the spectacular "Man With The Copper Fingers."



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of the instrument.

"When you learn how to express ideas that have been around, then you can express yourself," says Williams. "But guys think of themselves as more than drummers. They think of themselves as being more important, and they're just using the drums as a vehicle to make themselves look good. For years and years I played the drums because I wanted to play like someone else. I used to be upset because I couldn't play something like Art Blakey or like Philly Joe Jones or Max Roach. I would hear them play something and I'd work on it and work on it. If it was a Max Roach record I would play no more or no less than what he played on the record. I wouldn't add anything, but I would play everything that he played so that I'd get a sense of why he played it. What happened two bars before that made him play that, or what is coming up that he's setting up? Or something just happened and he's reacting to it."

Williams kept up his intense study of the masters from age nine to sixteen,

## TONY'S TUBS

**W**hen you talk to people in the music industry, all they want to talk about is music. When you talk to drummers, all they want to talk about is drums, equipment, and that's boring stuff to me. I have the equipment I need, but that's it. I've been playing Gretsch drums since I was fourteen—they're real good, the best drums. My snare has eight lugs around the drum, which makes the tension a little denser and makes for a nicer sound. And I order the snare with double lugs, one set on top, the other on the bottom. I play with bottom heads on all my drums, even the bass. It's not a flat, flappy sound—it's very round.

"My toms are a 13-inch and a 14-inch on the rack, 14-inch, 16-inch and 18-inch toms on the floor, and a 24-inch bass drum. The snare is 6½-inches deep. I also used a Simmons SDS 5 on the album—it's something I've wanted to do for a while, adding drum machine and electronic drums in that context, like a straight-ahead, acoustic jazz sound. It seemed like the next step for that kind of music. I just signed with Simmons; I've got their SDS 7 pads, with Selectapad, the rack, the cymbal mounts and the new MTM MIDI triggering thing. The SDS 7 is great! I also want to get an Emulator II sampler.

"My cymbals are Zildjians—mostly Ks, but the high-hats as As. I've got a 20-inch, a 22-inch ride, an 18-inch, and a cymbal in the middle that's a 16-inch. The high hats are 15-inch. They're all medium weights. I've got a couple of sets now; I like to have the same cymbals on each setup I have."



during which time he watched all the great drummers who came through Boston, studied for about a year with Alan Dawson, and played for two years with saxophonist Sam Rivers. "Miles was a big influence on me," the drummer says, lighting a cigar for a moment, "but his influence was before I met him—just hearing his music, and all the records I used to buy. Sam Rivers was an influence working with him, which is a different kind of thing. I learned more from Sam, because it was before I got with Miles. I think playing with Sam prepared me to play with Miles."

Williams was three years into his teens when he played with saxman Jackie McLean for a week at Connelly's in Boston. When McLean left to go back to New York, he had young Tony firmly in tow—maybe in a headlock. By this time the drummer had played like so many people, he had a virtual Rolodex full of colors and sounds to choose from, and could pick off a card whenever he pleased. "I was always playing with people, which was fortunate," he says, "I wasn't just playing drums at home all the time. I was playing at night from early on as a child, with musicians, in front of an audience. I had a chance to really develop and get people's reactions to what I played. I play drums so that people will like what I play. I don't play just to get off. I play for people. I like playing so that people feel what I'm playing. Early on I realized that I needed to play real clearly, so that you as a listener will hear what I intended you to hear."

From 1963 to '69, Williams kept the Molotov cocktails coming in the Miles Davis Quintet. He left the band in '69 to form the Tony Williams Lifetime—the first edition featured John McLaughlin. Through the 70s, the Lifetime kept up a steady turnover of personnel, including Allan Holdsworth and Tony's father.

But 1979 was a milestone year for Williams, in an odd sort of way. His album *The Joy Of Flying* was released and didn't contain a single tune written

by the bandleader. That fact bothered Williams as much or more than the fact that he was shuffled out of CBS' deck during that company's big jazz layoff. "I knew that I wanted to study," says the forty-year-old, "and that I didn't want to do anything until I thought I had the tools to make better music. But some of the time during those years off was spent just paralyzed too, not knowing if I wanted to do this anymore." Had Williams not been successful in increasing his knowledge of counterpoint, he might have opened a meat and produce market near his San Anselmo, California house by now. Instead, he's been driving from his shady, residential nook of Marin County a couple of times a week over the Richmond Bridge to Berkeley to study composition with Dr. Robert Greenberg. "Tony wanted to feel more in control, so that he wasn't just responding out of instinct," says Greenberg, a lecturer on the faculty of U.C. Berkeley.

## A DRUMMER'S DRUMMER

**O**ften bombastic, certainly flamboyant and with keen dynamic sensitivity, Williams' drumming has caught the ears of jazz and rock fans and fellow trappers alike. "Tony is phenomenal all-round, but especially in his cymbal approach," says Rod Morgenstein, drummer with the Steve Morse Band. "His whole approach seemed to revolutionize swing." "I would steal Tony Williams licks and write them down," admits Terry Bozzio, of Zappa and Missing Persons fame. "My whole way of learning was to write out licks that I thought were really cool, learn the technique involved, then make up my own licks using those techniques." "Tony Williams showed me, and I'm sure a lot of other drummers, that technically anything you want to do can be done, and with very limited equipment—if you get your technique up to par," says Ndugu Leon Chancellor, who has backed up Weather Report and Michael Jackson. And King Crimson's Bill Bruford listened to Williams while growing up in England. "The African tribes, the Ghanaian master drummers, things the Orient offers—it's all very interesting, but none of it has the speed of reflex or the sheer ability of someone like Tony Williams. It's just staggering what he can do on a drum set."

Carlos Santana, who has been recording with Williams for a future jazz album, has a little different perspective, but equally bold praise. "He's like absolute conviction," says the guitarist. "I don't think question mark or doubt is in Tony Williams' vocabulary. When he hits it, it's just so solid. It's almost scary. I told him that George Lucas could do a movie on one of his solos alone."



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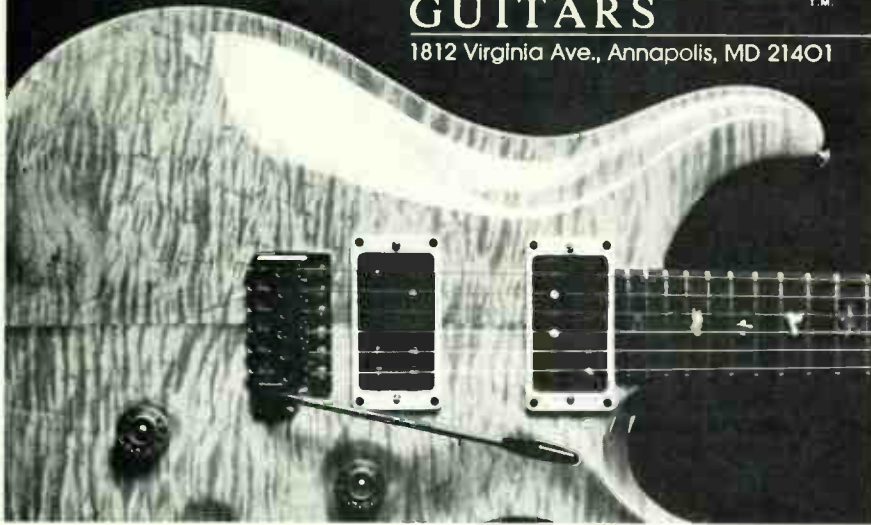


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"You learn how to look at your music and how to understand what it wants. Every moment is not a moment of inspiration. Composition is more an act of constructing, and I think he wants to be at the point where he's constructing and not just responding.

"As a student he's very committed and very curious," continues Greenberg, who has been working with Tony for almost six years. "It always struck me how flexible he let himself be. He wouldn't put his ego in the way terribly. If I said, 'Tony, this is not sufficient for three days work. You can do better than this,' then he would take it and nod apologetically. He's willing to be coached, and that's so important."

Williams' living room is decorated in what might be called 21st Century Music Emporium. Synthesizers have taken over the sofa, along with a few armfuls of home recording equipment. A yellow Simmons electronic drum kit adds to the general confusion, and a brighter yellow set of Gretsch acoustic drums sits across the room. This is where he works on his lessons, and where he is now composing for the followup album to *Foreign Intrigue* on the revamped Blue Note label. He is also working on demos of a more electronic pop music with Bill Laswell.

Rows of videotapes line a bookshelf in Williams' office, marked Monaco, Austria, Germany, Long Beach, Caesar's Palace and such. At first it looks like an extensive catalog of live performance video, but the poster on the wall nearby of Formula One drivers Nigel Mansell and Nelson Piquet clues the real subject matter of the tapes—Grand Prix racing events from around the world. It's a passion. Williams even gets printouts of race reports from UPI over his computer and has attended races in Europe and the U.S. If ESPN shows the Twenty-Four Hours of Le Mans, Tony will probably pull an all-nighter.

"I'll drive *anything*," the drummer says softly, with a grin. "Buses, jeeps, trucks. I just like driving." In a musical sense, Williams has driven a lot of the Rolls Royces in his time, and maybe some Ferraris. As he sits in a large office chair in his Marin County home, stabbing at a Sony TV monitor with remote control, feet dangling, touching the floor only when he points his toes, it's hard to imagine Williams has already been one of the world's premiere drummers for twenty-three years. He looks half his age as he intently flips from the sports network and MTV before hitting the Disney Channel.

At forty, Tony Williams has had the highs and the lows, seen the glory and  
*continued on page 51*

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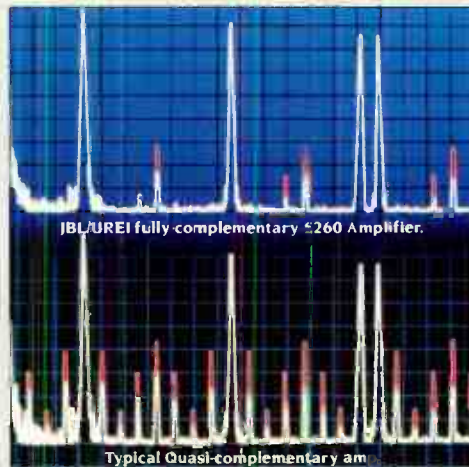
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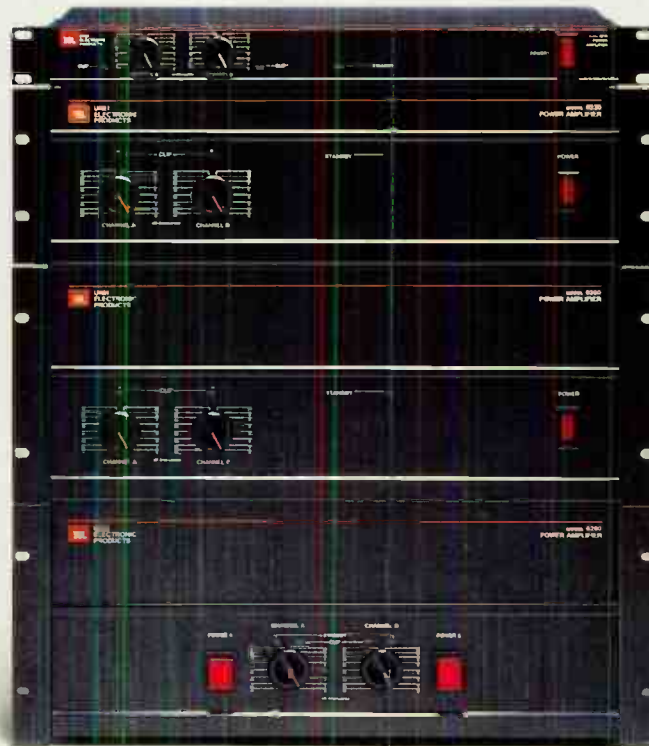
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By Alan di Perna

# SLY FOX: DOO-WOP ENTERS THE 80S

**G**ary Cooper and Michael Camacho of Sly Fox could easily be the two lead characters in a network detective series. You know, one of those shows where two guys with completely opposite personalities and backgrounds get thrown together and somehow become a great team. Like Crockett and Tubbs or agents Scott and Robinson from *I Spy*, the two men who make up Sly Fox are a trendy bi-racial duo. But the characteristics that set them apart are more than skin deep.

Camacho apparently relishes his role as Sly Fox's resident Romantic. An actor, dancer and mime as well as a singer, he pens most of the ballad material, quotes Shakespeare and deals a lot in Big Abstractions like Love and Art, frequently dropping his voice to an emotive whisper for added emphasis. Gary Cooper, on the other hand, looks you straight in the eye and seems eager to get to the practical side of any question. Camacho's natural ebullience makes the perfect foil for Cooper's understated

Michael Camacho, Gary Cooper

street cool—gleaned, presumably, from growing up in the inner cities of Baltimore and D.C. and from years of active duty in the P-Funk/Bootsy Collins Army of Funk.

But different as they are on the surface, Cooper and Camacho share the same ruling passion: singing. Unlike your basic vocal/instrumental duo—Blancmange, OMD or the System, to whom Sly Fox are often compared—Cooper and Camacho are a vocal duo first and foremost. Their debut album, *Let's Go All The Way*, is rife with skillfully layered vocal arrangements, all aimed squarely at the top of the pop charts. And in many territories, the album's title track has hit the mark.

"People always tell us we sound like one voice," says Camacho. "And one thing that makes it a joy to work in this situation is the fact that Gary and I both sing lead *and* background. We both think vocally, in terms of arranging. It's like having a choir, you know. So as a duo, that's what makes us unique. With most duos there's only one featured vocalist."

"We feel we're the pop version of Sam & Dave," Cooper injects.

Both members of Sly Fox have been singing professionally for quite some time. At the tender age of nine, a pint-sized Gary Cooper began regularly climbing on stages and doing a turn as "Baby James Brown." Some time after he'd outgrown his little sequined cape, Cooper became a member of the mad mob that kept Parliament-Funkadelic and Bootsy's Rubber Band on top of the funk scene throughout the 70s. Gary sang and did vocal arrangements. He became a drummer almost by accident, during a vocal session with George Clinton for Parliament's *Chocolate City* LP. The regular drummer had left for the day when funkmeister Clinton decided he needed to lay a drum track against the vocals he was cutting. It was Bootsy Collins who kicked a duly reluctant Gary to the fore.

"I had done some jams on drums with Bootsy down his basement. So he said, 'Why don't you just go out there and lay down the track?' The first recording ses-

sion I did as a drummer was part of that album. It turned out okay. So after that, they started sticking me on tracks as a drummer *and* a vocalist."

Vocal music (sans drums) played no less of a role in Michael Camacho's musical development. He was only thirteen when he started performing with neighborhood bands around Flatbush, Brooklyn. By age fifteen, he was doing session work at New York's Electric Lady studio, but it wasn't until he was seventeen or so that Michael discovered a cappella doo-wop singing. With characteristic Romantic élan, he calls the genre "my true love; my pride and joy."

"The great thing about singing a cappella out on the street is that you get an immediate and honest response. People are either going to like you or not. And believe me, they'll let you know which way it is. Every time we got out on the street and started doo-wopping, we had two hundred people gathered around.

A slight exaggeration? Well, it was during a street corner rehearsal for a doo wop party that Camacho and his old a cappella group, Change of Pace, were "discovered" by an ambulatory New York casting director. He put them in one of those much-praised TV commercials for Levi's 501 jeans. They wrote and performed the music themselves.

Camacho was introduced to Cooper by Ted Currier, who produced *Let's Go All The Way*. The by now oft-repeated story goes something like this: Upon meeting, Camacho and Cooper and Gary repaired to a nearby ice cream parlor which, as chance would have it, was equipped with a piano. (Do these guys *always* rehearse in public?) Sly Fox was born.

"Let's Go All The Way" furnishes a prime example of what Sly Fox's vocal-oriented approach brings to arranging. Along with the infectious melody and harmony vocals, Cooper and Camacho also used their voices to do what might ordinarily have been a synth part—the "zhum zhum zingingeeeee" riffs that are easily the song's best hook. "That was just a natural thing for me," explains Cooper, who wrote the tune. "Coming up in your basic ghetto environment—





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with no finances and that whole situation—we'd just sit around and beat on tables and make instrumental sounds with our voices. It was what I had to do to get my ideas across, until I could afford instruments."

The riff was inspired by the street but executed by means of high-end technology—in this case, an Emulator II, which was used to sample and manipulate the basic vocal sounds. "Those parts were sampled four or five times," Cooper elaborates. "They were put through harmonizers, done an octave lower, an octave higher.... There's a lot going on."

Although synthesizers—programmed and played for the most part by David Spradley, the album's co-producer—have a major role on *Let's Go All The Way*, Camacho and Cooper firmly resist being cast as "just another synth duo." (Come to think of it, it's highly unlikely that the Pet Shop Boys ever sang for spare change on street corners.) According to Gary, the generous use of synths on the album was largely "a budgetary consideration. You know, a new act, first album and all.... There are certain things you almost have to go with just because you are a new act."

For the followup to their debut album, the duo would like to go for fuller or-

chestrations and fewer electronic instruments. They've had a lot of time to think about it—*Let's Go All The Way* was initially released in mid-'85. For a while, it looked as if the record was going to stiff, but the title cut began picking up momentum and Capitol reissued the album. Now Camacho and Cooper are hoping it will yield at least one more strong single.

*continued on page 89*

### SLY FAX

**B**oth members of Sly Fox favor AKG 441s and 414s for vocals. "But sometimes we'll go with other mikes," adds Camacho, depending on the system or the hall we're in." Both Foxes have personal studios where they do a lot of their writing. Gary Cooper's place is equipped with a Yamaha DX7 synth, Yamaha QX1 sequencer and an Oberheim DMX drum machine. He also plays a Kramer bass occasionally. Michael Camacho has a Tascam Porta One 4-track cassette recorder at home. He cuts tracks on it using his Yamaha grand piano, Casio home keyboard and a Roland TR-707 drum box.

"We even write songs with no instruments at all, when we're driving in the car," Michael adds. Presumably, any make or model will do.

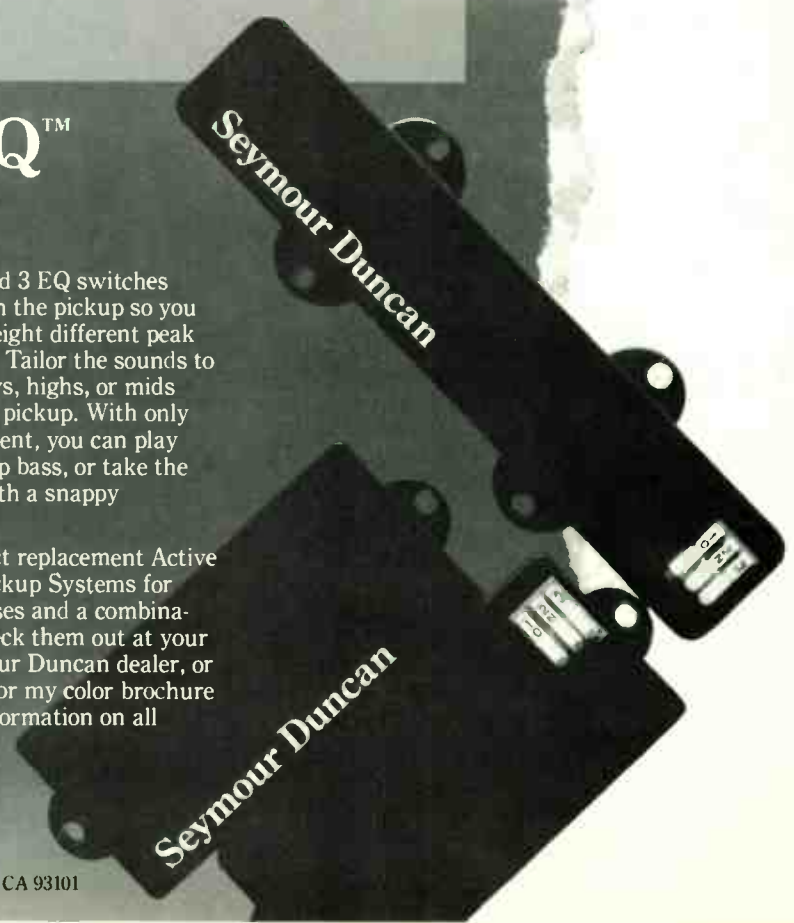
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## MIDI Guitars Make a N.A.M.M. Show, Software Goings and Coming Attractions

### PRODUCTS

By Jock Baird

## DEVELOPMENTS

One pratfall of the musical instrument press is the elevation of the N.A.M.M. show to Olympian proportions—we're always telling you the current show was a turning point or a disaster or a bitchin' party you should be sorry you missed, but rarely do we shrug and say, eh, just another N.A.M.M. show. So when I begin by saying that this summer's show in Chicago is one of the most important in several years, you'll no doubt figure we're up to our old tricks. Especially when one of the reasons is our old coming-next-month pal, the MIDI guitar. But please bear with me, and I'll try to elaborate.

Let's be frank. Despite all the ink we MI writers have been spending telling you about fret-switching and optics, there's still no MIDI guitar in the stores. **Ibanez**, a year after showing a fairly complete prototype, is only now ready to ship its first two hundred guitars. The **IVL/Kramer** seemed swell, but where can I buy one? Why has the universally hailed **Octave Plateau** MIDI guitar which knocked us out last summer been kept under wraps? And if the vaunted **Photon** guitar isn't up and running this time....

In a nutshell, it's time to put up or shut up, not just because we're so tired of waiting, but because we're beginning phase two, *Attack of the Majors*. We told you about the **Charvel/Akai** MIDI guitar—sure it's behind Ibanez, but a strong charge could put it right in the game. And more importantly, the sleeping giant has finally awakened. **Roland** has been sitting on its guitar synth lead for two years now, and hasn't even bothered to put a MIDI in port onto the GR-700. They are sitting no longer, and

Roland GK-1 Synth kit



all eyes will now be turned on their new GM-70 converter, which converts ordinary guitar and bass signals into MIDI data, and the GK-1 guitar modification kit which MIDIifies any guitar. Roland is also debuting a new rack-mount synth, the MKS-70 Super JX Module designed especially for guitar.

So what does this mean? It basically puts a time limit on the whole shooting match. Once the Roland MIDI conversion system is ready to roll, those that haven't found a niche are in big trouble. Sure the Roland system is adapted from the hex pickup, pitch-to-voltage system of the GR series, so it won't be high-tech, sexy and blindingly fast, but at least it will be Here. Already promo for the new Steinberger/Roland bass (a logical next step after the GR-70 bass synth) is emphasizing it'll be available in both regular GR format and/or "MIDI interfaces from Roland, Ibanez and others," so standardization is coming. That means large-scale manufacturing capability much sooner. So let's hear no longer about those shadowy hotel suites with the MIDI guitar that will soon dominate the market. Show it, or throw it.

Chicago N.A.M.M. will also be a new rite of passage for the software brigade. Two companies serve as perfect examples. On the one hand, there's **MusicData**, one of the original computer movers and shakers. Despite two years of refining their C-64 sequencer into one of the best around, the company went out of business at the end of May, a victim of the great non-appearing computer-music wave. Interestingly, MusicData software may not die—company head Ron Wilkerson announced he is presently negotiating with several companies to rerelease some of the programs. That provokes some interesting questions: Here's a program that is already developed, debugged and musician-tested. Can another company pick it up inexpensively and sell it at a profit? And as more software firms drop, who will be picking up those pregnant pieces? Will it be the majors?

But the computer shake-out cuts both ways—witness the incredible resuscita-

tion of Atari under Jack Tramiel and his godchild, the Atari 520ST even as the Commodore Amiga has had a rocky year (it seems only **Mimetics** is still involved in Amiga music products). This has helped propel **Hybrid Arts** into the entrepreneur of the year. Hybrid even sells Ataris with its programs, offering ludicrous package deals just to get people using their software, and it's worked for them. Hybrid's newest wrinkles are two-fold. First, it's joined forces with

Kawai K3,  
Atari 130XS,  
Hybrid Arts  
MIDI mate



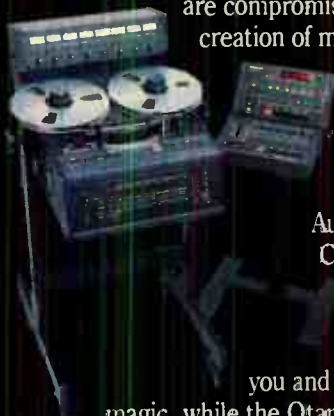
another underdog company, **Kawai**, in writing voice editing programs for the new Kawai K-3 digital synth we saw at the last show. Kawai plunged into heavy system-exclusive MIDI development for the K-3, and needed a good program to get the most out of its user-generated digital waveforms. Hybrid and Kawai are now selling a 130XS computer, disk drive, interface and Miditrack III sequencer program to go with the K-3. Hybrid is also plunging into a joint development program with Atari itself for 520ST software. Chicago N.A.M.M. will certainly clarify the Amiga-ST contest. Don't bet the farm on the Amiga....

Some individual companies are staking a lot on this show. **Kurzweil** is not taking Anaheim's digital sampling explosion lightly. It's coming out with a \$3000 expander unit that promises to become a big part of the sampling landscape. The Kurzweil 150 Expander is a 16-channel multi-timbral job with banks of presampled voices aboard—three acoustic pianos, two electrics, harpsichord, two basses, vibes, marimba, organ, steel and nylon string acoustic guitars and four

*continued on page 50*

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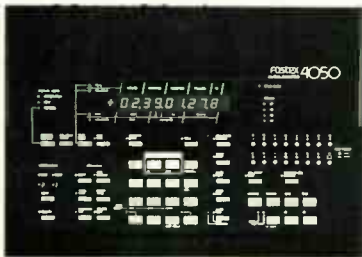


# TEMPUS FUGIT-ET TU FOSTEX?

By Will Hunt

There's been a great deal of talk in musicianly circles lately about time code and the possibilities it opens up. Tape recorder synchronization is already fairly commonplace in pro studios, allowing 30- or 46-track setups using double decks. This all started, of course, as a spinoff of audio-to-video or audio-to-film synchronization, and was led by Synchronous Technologies' SMPL System. The next generation of SMPTE control systems has started to filter down to the semi-pro market, epitomized by three new Fostex units that are eminently affordable. The time had come to quit the talk and see some action, and soon I had my hands on not only these three units, but a serial-interface-equipped Fostex B-16 1/2-inch 16-track and a Model 20 2-track (with center timing track), all nestled in my attic wasteland of wires. Just try and get 'em back, suckers!

So what did I make off with? The centerpiece of the Fostex system is the 4050, a full-function pro autolocator that reads and generates SMPTE time codes and synchronizes MIDI systems to SMPTE recorded on tape—the best of both worlds. In the sixteen hours it took to get the system operational, I learned a number of impressive things about the 4050: it remembers ten locations, loops or repeats between any points, lets you set up to 99 seconds of pre-roll time and basically automates all your punch-ins and punch-outs down to the hundredth of a frame. It also switches up to sixteen tracks in and out of record. (Those tracks have to be Fostex's



4050 Autolocator

though—the 4050 only works with the 20, 80, B-16, E-2 and E-22.)

The rack-mount 4030 synchronizer and the 4035 controller are not so exclusive—there's software to make them compatible with Tascams, Otaris, Studers, Ampexes and all manner of video decks. The 4035's panel is similar to that of the 4050, and it has most of the same memory and control abilities. Its display will read out the time code recorded on either master or slave deck, as well as the difference between the two. This difference is called offset. When both decks are running, the offset can be locked at zero, increased, or decreased.

Particularly useful for syncing music to video, offset can also be used for fine tuning all the way to wild echo effects when using two tape recorders.

My path into synchronicity was a rocky one and the manual was not a great help at times. One essential point that was blithely ignored and of course seems obvious to me now, is this: *The same stripe of code must be on both decks!!!* When first setting up to

tape recorders had made one version of the four-minute song about three seconds longer than the other. I would have to compensate for *that* if I wanted the songs to play together! Never say die. I divided the three seconds into ten increments of offset, stored them in the 4035's running memory, then activated the chase function every twenty-five seconds as the song rolled. It worked!!



Synchronization made cheaper. Fostex' new synchronizer and synchronizer controller.



run, I generated about four minutes of SMPTE code from the 4050 autolocator onto one tape, then another four minutes onto the tape on my other deck. Since I hadn't zeroed the generator, the first stripe read from three hours, ten minutes, fifty seconds to three hours, fifteen minutes. The second stripe read from three hours, fifteen minutes to three hours, nineteen minutes, ten seconds. When I tried to lock them together, they had nothing in common. Save yourself some tooth-gnashing and take a line out of the first deck into the second and record the same stripe onto both at the same time.

Now that I was a little more conversant with time-code, I had a challenging project for the 4030. I wanted to combine two versions of the same song, each recorded on 1/4-inch tape. One version was a mixdown of the other, with new parts added. Since the song was recorded over a simple drum machine pattern, I figured that all I had to do was record time code on each tape, synchronize them, and mix away. This wasn't too hard. I managed to find an offset interval of one second, four frames which started off the two versions perfectly in sync. But wait! Twenty seconds later, one version was getting behind. I checked the 4035. Both tapes were locked together. What was wrong? Then I realized the problem. I'd recorded the time code *after* I'd recorded the two songs. A slight difference in speed of the

Another area I barely scratched the surface of was interfacing with a MIDI system. The 4050 acts as a master clock as well as gives real-time commands—and you can store tempo changes at specific bars and beats. The on-board metronome even has a little speaker (which you can disable). It can also do requantizing of MIDI tempos—that is, if you write a 22-second piece of music for a 19-second video spot, it will alter the MIDI timing data to make it fit without changing the pitch. Not all MIDI gear is smart enough to work with the 4050, though, so ask before you buy.

One nice bonus to the whole Fostex system is that it's completely software-based, so if you change decks or new improvements are made, you just slap in a new EPROM. The 4050 lists for \$1250, while the 4030 and 4035 go as a pair for about \$2000. Incidentally, the B16D also surprised me with its overall sound quality. I used to be a "narrow gauge" snob, but now I'm a repentant one. For the moment, though, you'll find me scouring the neighborhood for frustrated video-makers who haven't made the music hook-up yet. Why, a few good jingles and I'll be able to afford the whole system.



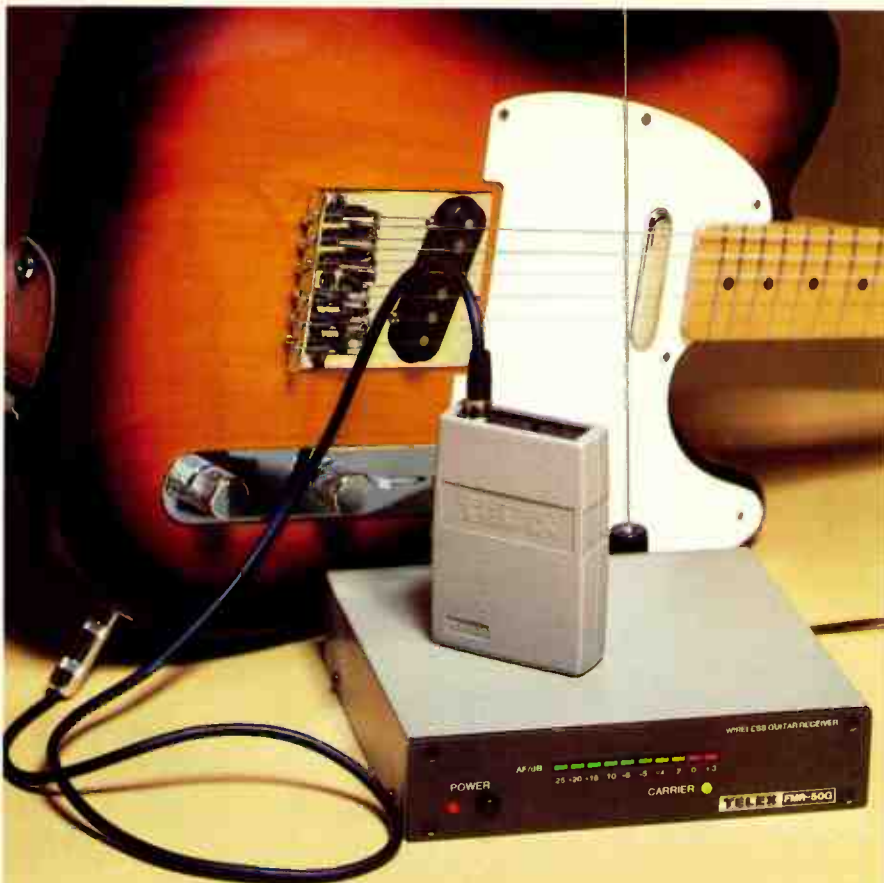
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**TELEX**®

### Developments from page 46

synth voices. You can layer up to seven of these, altering the overtones with a so-called Timbral Shift system, and split your master keyboard into three control regions. The 150 also has chorus, vibrato and an 8-band graphic eq, and lots of program memory to save all those splits and layers. Only drawback: You can't do your own samples; you can, however, buy new sounds from Kurzweil and plug them into one of five expansion sockets. This little machine is



**Kurzweil 150 Expander**

Kurzweil's best chance yet to turn its coveted technological lead into some real-time sales numbers.

Casio has had its toe—and most of its foot—in the pro waters for some time now, but for Chicago they're finally diving in. Casio is launching a Professional Products Division and is getting velocity-sensitive, the last hurdle the CZ series had to make. Ergo the CZ-1, similar to the 5000 in voice architecture but with a fully touch-sensitive keyboard. Priced at \$1400, it now faces the DX7 eyeball to eyeball. Casio is also bringing out just the keyboard as a \$550 strap-on remote dubbed the AZ-1. Sales of the new RZ-1 sampling drum machine are also brisk.

Korg is being challenged the RZ-1's low-price side of sampling hegemony with a new drum machine of their own, the DDD-1. This one throws in an EPROM-burner, folks, and the drums can be tuned. Eighteen sounds? Touch-sensitive pads? A front panel ROM card slot to load thirty-two more samples? Where will it end? Someday, will everyone, everywhere own a sampling drum machine? Korg is also flexing its new-found muscles (it reconstituted itself at Anaheim N.A.M.M. as Korg USA) in other directions, most noticeably in acquiring **Schecter** guitars, one of the class acts of the solid-body world. In honor of our Jimi Hendrix cover this month (no, not really), Schecter is releasing a Jimi Hendrix model, with reverse pegheads and single coil pickups in a reverse stagger pattern. Of course Jimi never got to use the Tremlock locking tremolo system that's aboard, but with all his tuning problems Noel Redding talks about, I bet he wishes he had. And speaking of tuning, there's a new generation of those ubiquitous Korg tuners, the DTM-12. It tunes by LED or by reference tone, and has a digital met-



ronome with visible downbeats. Nifty.

But you never know. Jimi might have preferred the new Strat copy that the ever-resurgent **Guild** has just debuted. After all, anybody who played the national anthem would dig that this guitar is made in the U.S.A. Called the S-261 and well-priced at six bills, its body and hand-shaped neck are maple, its fingerboard of rosewood. High-output pickups are a humbucker and two single-coils, with Grover tuning pegs and a Kahler Pro tremolo battening down the hatches. All hardware is black chrome. Now I know Jimi would've dug that last part. ☐

#### Williams from page 40

been the goat. He's been hurt by a lack of support from within the music industry, and half-seriously says he'd prefer to own a grocery store. Williams has engaged himself at getting back into the public eye, and at becoming the more fully balanced musician that he wants to be.

"I don't sit around listening to records from years ago and say, 'Oh man, the good old days.' Anything that I listen to that's old is probably Brahms or Beethoven or something that I have to study," Williams confides. "When I'm driving the car, if I'm listening to the radio for music,

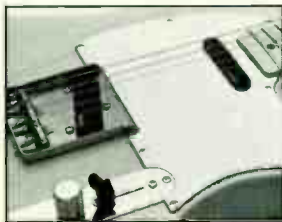
it'll probably be a classical station. The only things that I listen to that excite me are in the rock 'n' roll or popular field, just because of the sheer sound of it. I listen to ZZ Top and get up and start dancing. I'm not saying I can't enjoy stuff that doesn't do that, more cerebral kinds of things, but they really have to be magnificently cerebral, almost. I went out to hear Miles' band last year, just because it was Miles. He sounded like he was really playing a lot, and I enjoyed that. But I haven't bought a Miles record since I left the band in 1969. I haven't followed his different bands, just because, I mean, I know it. I guess I'm real jaded.

"There were so many groups that I listened to when I was a kid," he says, as if talking about old friends. "Groups like the Clovers and the Orioles, before it was even called rock 'n' roll. Before Bill Haley and way before Elvis. Listening to the radio. And then TV came along and you started watching movies and hearing television music. Or going to the movies and hearing all this orchestra music. Remember that atonal music from the show *Combat*? Remember the theme to the *Alfred Hitchcock Show*? I remember thinking, 'Wow, that's nice music. It makes you feel something. I'd like to be able to do that.'" ☐



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# 38 SPECIAL AND THE SOUTH'S FALLEN STANDARD

BY BILL FLANAGAN

Don Barnes was home in Florida, driving along and listening to his car radio when the announcer said Gregg Allman was at the station to plug a local club date. That perked up Don's interest. As a kid Don had watched the Allman Brothers Band form, become local favorites, achieve fame, and finally fall apart. Now Gregg was playing bars again while Don's band 38 Special scored hit singles, platinum albums, and sold out arenas. 38 Special had spent a long time trying to earn the respect of Allman's generation of Southern rockers.

"Tell me, Gregg," the radio announcer said. "What do you think of the new South-

ey Betts and Butch Trucks. Eventually a Daytona Beach native named Duane Allman started sitting in. As the weeks passed Duane's brother Gregg appeared, too. It made a big impression on Barnes—and on his pals Jeff Carlisi and Donnie Van Zant. The Allman Brothers Band was born before those kids' wide eyes.

And from the Be-Ins to the arenas, all 38 Special (Barnes, Carlisi and Van Zant on guitars and vocals, along with bassist Larry Junstrom and dual drummers Jack Grodin and Steve Brookins) hoped for was to be accorded the respect due equals. But always they were condescended to, always they were treated like little brothers.

Except by the one guy who had a right to treat them that way; except by Donnie's real older brother, Ronnie Van Zant. Ronnie and his band Lynyrd Skynyrd always had time for the apprentices. They palled around, shared musical ideas, and eventually Skynyrd let the fledgling 38 Special open their shows. Don

Barnes says Ronnie was the greatest man he ever knew. What Ronnie said stuck, and to this day his dictums ("Never go onstage on a full stomach—you won't be hungry enough to play good.") are quoted and adhered to by his younger brother's band.

"That attitude has stayed with us. We feel like we're still the underdogs," shrugs Jeff Carlisi. "We don't feel like we've been totally accepted. We enjoy headlining now but we used to *love* playing second bill, opening for somebody. It was always, 'Follow *this* up!' That's what the South taught us. Skynyrd was the second band to make it really big out of the South. It was funny. They shared the camaraderie with the other Southern



bands—but they looked out for number one. They were friends with Charlie Daniels and all but when they took the stage it was, 'Screw everybody else! This is it and there's no way you can touch us!' Yeah, after the show we'll tip a glass and say, 'This is great! We're all from the South and everybody's friends and all that...*bullshit*.'" Carlisi laughs. "It's a big joke. Sure you have something in common and respect each other as players. But the attitude we learned from Ronnie was, when you go out there to play you ain't friends with anybody. You're out there to fight and kick everybody's ass." Carlisi suddenly smiles and adds, "Without sounding *too* much like a redneck."

Ronnie Van Zant died in the 1977 plane crash that finished Lynyrd Skynyrd. He was twenty-eight. Donnie, Jeff and Don are all now around thirty-three. 38 Special sell more records than Skynyrd ever did. It's been an inch by inch struggle, but more than a decade of hard work has paid off. And still they aren't taken quite seriously, still they are made to feel like little brothers.

Southern rock was born of a pride bordering on self-consciousness, of young pop fans recreating themselves in the image of world-weary bluesmen and country singers. The kids who would grow up to become the Allman Brothers Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd started out playing Beatles hits in cover groups. The Jacksonville scene, like most

Junstrom, Van Zant, Grodin, Carlisi.



ern rock bands?"

"Well," Allman's voice came back, "to tell you the truth I don't think much of 'em at all."

"How about 38 Special?" Don Barnes could feel it coming.

"I don't think much of them at all."

And Barnes felt sorry about that. In the late 60s—when he was in his early teens—Barnes was playing in Jacksonville, Florida garage bands. Every Sunday a local club sponsored an all day concert dubbed (in true hippie lingo) a *Be-In*. The garage bands would play in the afternoon and then stand by the stage to watch the local heavies at night. The heaviest of the heavies was the Second Coming, a group that included Dick-

cover circuits, valued instrumental virtuosity above all else—above originality, fashion or songwriting. When the first British guitar heroes—Clapton and Beck—emerged, Southern cover bands—like journeyman players everywhere—focused their energy into hot chops and long guitar solos. And when those English guitar wizards publicly genuflected to American blues, the kids were shocked to realize that their heroes' heroes came from the Southerner's own previously unhip backyard. This brought Southern pride to the surface with a new passion.

So when Southern Rock emerged as an identifiable genre, around 1970, it was with great emphasis on technique, long solos, and blues structures. Players like Dickey Betts and Charlie Daniels added to the gumbo the C&W stylings that were in the air everywhere anyway. Southern rock's fashion was post-Woodstock back-to-the-farm, with the added twist of never having gotten all that far away from the farm in the first place. The music, as originally typified by the Allmans, was great for drinking beer and

the Allmans straight on to narcolepsy. But all of them, until 38 Special, remained obviously—even defiantly—*Southern*.

38 Special started out playing generic Southern boogie—but began selling lots of records only after they modernized their sound, adding lyrics about love (often a wounded man admitting his dependence on a woman), smoother vocals, tight construction, and the sort of chukka-chukka rhythm associated with the Cars.

Some critics—fellows of Gregg Allman's disposition—feel that by evolving as they have 38 Special have betrayed Southern rock. Guitarist/songwriter Jeff Carlisi figures 38 Special are dragging Southern rock kicking and screaming into the 1980s. "After our changes," the guitarist recalls, "people always said, 'Do you still consider yourselves a Southern rock band?' Well of course we do! We're still from the south, we haven't moved to Michigan. We're a Southern band and we're proud of the heritage. For a while we tried to dodge it, to avoid the issue. We'd say, 'We just like to call ourselves a rock 'n' roll band.' Then we realized, 'Yeah, we *are* a Southern band!' A lot of the other Southern bands died out, fell along the wayside. People started telling us, 'You're now the front-runners of Southern music in the 80s.'"

"We started realizing—without sounding too pretentious—that we're fortunate enough

by a band called Free! Wait'll you hear this! We were going 'Holy shit!' And of course the Stones. We didn't *care* about that lightweight country playing! That's cool and all, but we were into the stinging style of playing—the real rock 'n' roll approach. All the perfect guitar arpeggios were good and



Skynyrd's Ronnie Van Zant.

well, but that's not where our souls really were. Duane Allman had both sides of it and could express both sides on his instrument. After Duane's death the Allmans just didn't interest me any more. Forget about his tremendous talent as a guitar player; Duane had such a spirit and an energy about him. He had that magic element you can't put your finger on. When he led them, that band was great. And when he was gone, their magic was gone. You always wonder, if Duane was still around would that band have been able to roll with the punches and continue? Would Skynyrd have been able to? There was an *awareness* in those bands. But when that key element is taken away it doesn't work anymore."

38 Special say the greatest lesson they learned from Ronnie Van Zant was not to try to be another Allmans or Skynyrd, to look to their own influences and be themselves. "We missed the point on our first two albums," Carlisi admits. "We wrote about the same type of thing and made up the same kinds of songs. All we were doing was what

Team players Van Zant and Carlisi.



nodding off. It was great for picnics; some poor fools found it great for heroin.

Lynyrd Skynyrd woke things up with a nastier, more aggressive style. Some later bands, like Molly Hatchet, turned Skynyrd's fire into pure heavy metal bombast. Other Southern bands took the laid-back style of

to have the opportunity to create the new Southern music. This is the new Southern sound. And why not? Someone else had it in the mid-70s, but times change. We were influenced by a lot of English music. Skynyrd was, too. We used to hang out together a lot. 'Hey, I just got this new record

everybody else had done before and not doing it nearly as well. We weren't doing anything fresh or new.

"We realized we were much smarter, more intelligent as songwriters than people thought. We said, 'As songwriters what do we want to do? Let's analyze this.' We started listening to radio a lot more, to newer music, following trends. We said, 'Let's try something different and see what happens.' And from our third album on this change has steadily taken place."

The first two 38 Special albums sold thirty or forty thousand copies each. *Rockin' Into The Night* (1979) sold ten times that number. That was the first album on which Donnie Van Zant let guitarist Don Barnes try a lead vocal. The boys didn't need to be told they were on the right track. Barnes' smoother singing style—and his romantic lyrics—appealed to AOR radio programmers a lot more than did Van Zant's gritty vocals and songs about rough-housing and blood-letting. The band's next release, *Wild-Eyed Southern Boys* (1980), featured the Barnes-sung hit "Hold On Loosely" and sold a million and a half copies. Just as the Allmans had honed their skills on the early Beatles, 38 Special looked to late-70s pop groups for new inspiration.

"The Cars were a big influence on us when we made our change," Carlisi says. "Not so much the style as that you could take very simple music and, with melody, make it something unique. The Cars music bent our ear when we first heard it. 'Something's weird about this band! This guy sings weird!' Then we listened a little and said, 'Ah! I see what they're doing! That's pretty cool!'"

*Special Forces* (1982) and *Tour De Force* (1984) kept the hits coming, even as the group's split personality became more pronounced. When 38 Special moved into bigger halls they found their audience divided between rowdy boys yelling for Van Zant numbers and star-struck girls mooning to Barnes tunes. No matter how pop the hits got, though, Barnes and Carlisi's dual guitar attack kept the band on the safe side of the wimp rock line.

But more and more, original lead singer Van Zant was nudged from the spotlight. The band released singles sung by both Barnes and Van Zant; and radio kept playing the Barnes love songs and ignoring the Van Zant rave-ups. Before the band started cutting their most recent album, Van Zant said that 38 Special was a team—and as long as they keep scoring touchdowns it didn't matter who carried the ball.

"I'm a firm believer in variety," Van Zant explained. "Certain people are going to like what Donnie Van Zant does better than what Don Barnes does, and certain people are going to like what Don Barnes does better than what Donnie Van Zant does. There's guys down there in red bandanas jumpin' up and yellin'. And you see nicely dressed young ladies who love the romance. We're trying to broaden our audience. A few years ago there was nothing but those boys in red bandanas. Then Don came in on the vocals. We broadened ourselves musically and in every other way. It's been for the best."

Maybe so, but on their new album, *Strength in Numbers*, 38 Special finally bowed to the commercially inevitable—Donnie Van Zant was mostly relegated to background vocals. The band denies any hard feelings from any quarter. They figure it's just part of growing and changing and staying alive.

"We never prostituted ourselves," Carlisi says intensely. "We've never just sold out. We've found a way to make something work using some elements that are popular or part of a trend—but done in a way we're proud of. Plus, you really *can't* be something you're not. We couldn't do electronic dance music. We couldn't be a Duran Duran."

"Obviously we changed for the better. The old Southern clichés just weren't putting the food on our table. And we wanted to branch out, expand, explore our craft a bit more. We had die-hard fans who thought of us as a Southern band. We wondered how they were going to accept this. But the bottom line is, if you've got a hundred thousand fans who think of you as *that*—but *nine* hundred thousand like you better for doing *this*, that's all that counts.

"And we still have the fans we had originally! We realized it wasn't the music so much that the die-hard Southerners were fans of; it was the Southern attitude, the aggression and spirit in which we played. So we changed our style. We got a bit more pop, put in a bit more melody and romance, got *smarter* as

songwriters. But that attitude that we learned from Skynyrd and the Allmans was still there. I think that made a unique combination—more modern sounding songs and yet that same old spirit."

That spirit is heavy with competition. In 1984—riding their hit "If I'd Been The One," 38 Special headlined a tour supported by Huey Lewis & the News. The opening act was just scoring big with "I Want A New Drug," and the rivalry between the two groups for the heart of each night's audience was fun to watch. "Huey & the News are a great bunch of guys," Jeff Carlisi said after one show. "We have a lot of respect for their band. They play good and they have good songs. We'll hang out in the hotel bar together and have a few drinks. But when the bands get by themselves there's things you say about the other band. Either, 'We kicked their ass tonight' or 'We'll get them tomorrow.' It's all part of the game. Everyone does it. No one's completely humble."

At breakfast the next day I mentioned Carlisi's philosophy to Lewis. "I agree," Huey declared. "I think he's dead right.

That's what live stage is about. But it's a friendly competition and those guys are real men about it. There are markets where we go down so well that, quite frankly, if I were the headliner I'd be worried. But those guys have never said a word, never taken a light away, never taken away one bit of P.A. They've been wonderful. Real men."

38 Special attribute their sports-like competitiveness to their mentor, Ronnie Van Zant. "We learned a lot from Ronnie's attitude, his philosophy about how to play music, how to deal with your competition," Carlisi explains. "He approached it very much like a football player. 'You may be underdog for this game, you may be opening the show, but when you're onstage it's *your* stage, and you're there to *take out* whoever stands in front of you. Because there's nobody better than you are.'

"That attitude has stayed with us. It's survival of the fittest. And I know that all those (Skynyrd) guys liked the Rolling Stones a *lot* more than they liked any other band that came out of the South. It got to be almost a *social clique* for a while. 'Who's friends with who?'" Carlisi sneers. "Who gives a fuck?"

When Allman buddy Jimmy Carter was running for presi-



**Donnie Van Zant: too gritty for top forty.**

dent, 38 Special reluctantly agreed to join the other big Southern bands at a huge rally for the candidate. All the other bands got souvenir belt buckles; 38 Special got squat. They shrugged it off. They liked Ronald Reagan better anyway. Donnie Van Zant says of the president, "He's the only one up there with balls." On the tour bus the band reads football and fishing magazines, watches shoot-em-up movies, and talk about the new rifles they're going to buy when they get home. One can imagine a band poster with the caption: "We are the NRA."

But watch out for stereotypes. That 38 Special are conservative Southerners, doesn't make them simple. Carlisi's father was an ivy leaguer and career naval officer. Jeff finished college in Atlanta before launching 38 Special.

"As far as the press was concerned," Carlisi says, "I think a lot of the negative feelings toward Southern music through the years came from this feeling in the back of everybody's mind that the South was *dumb* because they lost the Civil War. It's like, 'The Industrial Revolution hasn't hit the South yet. They're still pickin' cotton. Good ol' boys and footstompin' music. Ignorant, illiterate people.'"

Which may be a valid assessment of Northern prejudice: Northerners probably still do expect Southerners to fit a certain cliché—and when they don't they're accused of being ashamed of their roots. But an awful lot of Southerners bought that good ol' boy image, too. And an awful lot of Southern rock bands perpetuated those clichés.

"All these other guys," Don Barnes sighs, "came along and tried to write about swamps and alligators and whiskey and bad women. Well, you can only do that for so long before people get tired of it. Lynyrd Skynyrd's last album, *Street Survivors*, saw them getting away from all that and writing more love songs. They would have been *huge* by now.

"Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers used to have a California image," Barnes says. "Now they are seen as a *rock band from the South*. Groups like R.E.M. make mention that they're from the South. It seems like it's in vogue again."

"It's funny," Carlisi says. "There was all this *Southern camaraderie* between Dickey Betts and Charlie Daniels and Marshall Tucker and all those people—

**We never prostituted ourselves. We've found a way to make something work using some elements that are popular or part of a trend.**

the Who's Who of Southern rock. We never really felt we were accepted by them. We felt we were different."

The guitarist's voice takes on an edge as he continues, "It's almost like we were a little kid's band or something. We used to make jokes about it: 'Hey, Charlie didn't mention *our* name in 'The South's Gonna Do It Again'.' It's funny now to look back on the situation. We're here now and you don't hear much about them. One day we won't be here." Carlisi shrugs. "Time goes on." ☐

## STUDIO STRENGTH

To make 38 Special's *Strength In Numbers*, Don Barnes and Jeff Carlisi turned their band over to an outside producer for the first time in years. "We adopted a philosophy of 'less is more' from Keith Olson, our producer," Don said. "Jeff and I co-produced the last four albums, and we didn't want to make the same album again. When we were in control we used to put down on tape everything that came into our minds. 'Yeah! This would be great!' We'd pack everything we could think of in there, and then when the mix came around everything was fighting to be heard. It's a real exercise in control to put just little *stabs* of things in there; that creates more dynamics. One rhythm guitar turned up real loud can make the track. Keith taught us it makes a bigger sound if you're not layering all the time. After a while it's like mad bees. A sound spectrum has only so many frequencies; if you've got a guitar in one frequency band, you don't need to add another one there. Add something that's over the top of it."

"Then," Jeff adds, "the songs just about end up mixing themselves. It's an exercise in control," Don continues, "in learning to hold onto the reins of recording. When you put on one power guitar you tend to say, 'Is that powerful enough? Let's add another and make it real powerful!' That defeats your purpose. One power guitar turned up loud enough is going to be powerful."

"It's easy to put everything on and say, 'We'll decide when we mix it,'" says Jeff. "Then when you're mixing you're pressed for time and you try to use everything. You never throw things away: 'I spent so much time on that! Use a little bit of it anyway!'"

On some tracks Carlisi, Barnes and Olsen brought in bassist Mike Porcaro and a couple of drummers.

Don says, "The rhythm guitar tracks were done with this kind of bastardized version of a Telecaster these people in Memphis (St. Blues Guitars) made for me. They made a mistake and turned the pick-up

around—it was backwards. For some reason it just rang like a bell. Instead of that distorted break-up that usually happens with power chords, it rang true. It made big Pete Townshend chords sound like bells. It's the rhythm track on every song on the album except 'Hearts On Fire,' which is Jeff's Purple Monster, a customized Explorer with a tremolo bar with a locking system on it."

Jeff says, "If you hear the shimmering acoustics, it's a couple of Strats we thinned out to sound acoustic."

For many of his recorded solos—and onstage—Don plays "the trusty Les Paul Junior I've had since I was sixteen." Onstage Donnie Van Zant strums a Peavey Predator. And that's just the beginning of 38 Special's Peavey loyalty: Larry Junstrom plays a Peavey Dyna-bass and he, Barnes, Carlisi and Van Zant all use Peavey amps: Peavey pre amps, Peavey power amps and Peavey International cabinets—all loaded with JBLs. Drummers Jack Grodin and Steve Brookins both use Tama drums and Paiste cymbals. These guys have some endorsement deals, eh?



Don Barnes has the voice radio loves.

# Easter Rebellion

*"This town is really kind of coming along."*

These were the words of a local businessman who planned to open the first topless bar in the Triad, the Greensboro/High Point/Winston-Salem area of North Carolina. When a reporter from the Winston-Salem *Journal* interviewed the controversial entrepreneur, he pulled out all the stops in the above appeal to civic pride.

In the past, Winston-Salem was known mostly as Howard Cosell's birthplace, the home of Wake Forest University, and the corporate base of the R.J. Reynolds tobacco empire. But for the last several years, young musicians from all over the country have come to Winston-Salem, of their own free will, to record at Mitch Easter's Drive-In Studio, and the city has emerged as an epicenter of 80s pop music. R.E.M., Marshall Crenshaw, Beat Rodeo, Marti Jones and members of the dB's and the Bongos have recorded in Easter's casual workshop, as have such acclaimed indie bands as the Windbreakers, the Individuals, Wham-A-Rama, Dumprtruck, UV Prom, Pylon, Art in the Dark, Oh-OK, Fetchin' Bones....

As the bands became more numerous, North Carolina became the hub of the *Southern Pop phenomenon*. When Easter toured with his band Let's Active, they were showered with cassette tapes ("the way the Beatles had jelly beans thrown at them") from bands who wanted to come to the Drive-In.

Now it's Saturday night of Memorial Day weekend, just a few days before Easter, thirty-one, begins a six-month tour with Let's Active; he's looking for some entertainment in this pop mecca. There must be dozens of these Southern Pop bands jangling away in local clubs—why, the Next Big Thing is probably playing in the Triad tonight. So what are the evening's options?

Well, the Winston-Salem Spirits of the Carolina League are in first place, but they're on the road tonight. The NCAA men's golf championship is a week away. It's luau night at Penelope's, and that means 50¢ drafts, but a couple of cold ones would probably level the slight Easter, who's worn out from his recent schedule. Down the road, toward the ball park, the Spongetones are doing a Monkees set at Baity's, but Easter already heard the band when they recorded at the Drive-In. The



## *Let's Active's Mitch Easter*

*By Rob Tannenbaum*



ReActivated: Easter, Carlson, Ambrose, Allman, Marshall

*Is Sick Of Being Cute & Jangly.*

Brass Bucket Tavern is across the street from Baity's, but there's something dissuasive about a dress code that warns, "No biker attire."

This town is really kind of coming along.

Ah, but there's an aging eyesore next to the Brass Bucket, a peeling white shack called Ziggy's. This is the happening nightspot in this burgeoning burg. There's a tarp over the outdoor stage at Ziggy's, to discourage electrocution in case of rain. Tonight's band is Fetchin' Bones, a local quintet whose *Cabin Flounder* album was recorded at Easter's studio. It's impossible to get more than an infrequent glance at the band, since the stage is at ground level and every hepcat within driving distance is assembled here. Back inside, a sign over the bar proclaims *Occupancy by more than 55 people is unlawful and dangerous*.

Maybe Easter's thinking that about half the people in the audience tonight have recorded EPs at the Drive-In. As locals slalom through the crowd to greet the Captain of Southern Pop, he doesn't seem very comfortable with the modest scenario he helped conceive. So Mitch Easter goes home, where the special Jimmy Page issue of *Guitar World* is waiting for him.

"I'm definitely aware of Southern Pop being a *thing*. There's a time when those labels do you good, because it leads to more exposure. But it gets to be a tired horse. And then a dead horse. I think it's at that point now."

Easter is relaxing the next morning in the Winston-Salem house he shares with Let's Active member Angie Carlson. The house is a bit unruly, since Easter has been in New York, pro-

*Southern Pop is supposed to mean you listened to the Velvet Underground for a year, then you learned guitar, but you didn't get too good. Then you formed your band.*

ducing his first "real-budget record" with Suzanne Vega.

"As I interpret it, Southern Pop is supposed to mean that you listened to the Velvet Underground for a year, then you learned guitar, but you didn't get too good, and then you formed your band. The band is kinda dreamy and kinda pop, but not too heavy, and you hate all that guitar posturing, but the word synthesizer makes you run to the toilet. If that's what it is, I don't like it. And I don't think Let's Active is in it."

The whole Southern Pop phenomenon developed under Easter's patronage, yet he now finds himself "tired of that jangly business," and saddled with a reputation he dislikes. Although the bands he's worked with are hardly clones, their styles aren't radically dissimilar either. He admits he's created his own problem. "I was pretty sloppy about running the studio. I had this Communist view of how I wanted it to be: 'for the people, man.' I wanted to do every session that came along, help everybody. So if I got a flood-tide of R.E.M. imitators, I just let that happen. I didn't feel I had to watch my profile. That's been a mistake.

"I've done some sessions that weren't so hot, and if I'd turned them down, I'd have been able to do some better ones. It's strange how self-selecting the clientele has been. It's been such a word-of-mouth scene, so it figures that the bands have

similar tastes. And it amazes me that there hasn't been a single heavy metal band or country band to record here." Would Easter agree to produce a metal band? "It'd be fun," he nods, "to record some guys with a balls-to-the-wall ethic."

The metal factor explains Easter's biggest reservation about Southern Pop. "My taste is more...tacky isn't the word, but I'm less worried than most of the Southern Pop bands. They're pretty timid. If they turn up their amp and it gets fuzzy, they go, 'Oh my!' They're just daintier people. There's been a whole lot of politeness in the Southern rock sound that I could do without. As Don Dixon says, one of the great things about the Replacements is that they've got a big, loud, fucking guitar player, man, in the grand tradition. You haven't seen much of that in a long time."

Although Let's Active's new LP, *Big Plans For Everybody*, features its own surprising dose of loud fucking guitar playing, Easter has been a new wave anti-hero for some time. On the band's last tour, he played Led Zeppelin songs during visits to college radio stations "mainly to be offensive and wake up the DJs that thought we lived in Athens." Easter feels that his age gives him a historical perspective that his younger audience lacks. "A lot of our crowd seems to think the guitar was invented by Elvis Costello," he's said.

Easter's ambivalence about the sound he helped found reflects the way Southern Pop has coagulated within its self-imposed structures. In the 70s, the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd inspired a flock of mediocre boogie butchers like Molly Hatchet and Black Oak Arkansas. In much the same way, R.E.M.'s ascension has instigated jangly mediocrity in the 80s.

"There are obvious differences," Easter reflects. "The audience of this New South business aren't bikers. It's actually quite non-macho. As far as it being the sound of the times, you're right. And the mediocrity factor is right, too. It sounds like some old guy complaining how no one sings like Sinatra anymore: 'All those fuckers strumming those chords, they can't do anything like what Duane Allman did, man.' But it's true." Nevertheless, while he was growing up in North Carolina, Easter refused to listen to bands like the Allmans even as he was "regularly threatened with death for having long hair."

On the July 4th weekend of the summer of 1969, fourteen-year-old Mitch Easter and 140,000 others gathered at the Atlanta Pop Festival. Amid a star-packed lineup, the band that caught Mitch's eye was Led Zeppelin. "I was attracted to them because they looked really bitchin'. They had the best hair and the best guitars, and all that equipment." Easter had taken up the guitar, after an unsuccessful stint with the clarinet, and he'd been in bands since the fourth grade. But after the Atlanta Pop Festival, Easter discovered rock's long tradition of playing hot and looking cool.

He bought a Gibson guitar and a stack of 100-watt Marshall amps to get "that big heavy sound," some velvet pants and ruffled shirts, and he grew his hair until his ears had vanished. He joined Sacred Irony, a local band which used a hearse for transportation and frequently opened for Arrogance, Don Dixon's band. At one of his first parties, when all his classmates were requesting the first Allman Brothers album, Mitch kept playing *In The Court Of The Crimson King*. The bands were expected to play covers, and he wanted Sacred Irony to play original material. At fifteen, Easter learned the meaning of "artistic differences."

Easter later formed bands with three of the four future dB's. The demos they sent to record companies in New York were routinely rejected as "too weird." "We had written all these songs that no one could get into except us. We imagined getting a record contract twenty-four hours a day, but none of us felt like there was a hope in hell."





**Way down inside; one more; you need...KUDZUUUU!**

Up north, things had begun to change; one weekend, bandmate Chris Stamey came back from New York with a copy of Television's landmark indie 45 "Little Johnny Jewel" and a new punk haircut. "We started buying *Rock Scene*, a real dumb picture magazine, but it had pictures of Johnny Thunders sitting at a table at Max's Kansas City with Wayne Country and David Johansen. Chris started trying to write real songs that people would really like."

But punk never supplanted Easter's boogie affections: "My friends were all hipper than I was. I remember buying Aerosmith's *Rocks* and feeling slightly sheepish about it. I was really glad when the Ramones came along, but it wasn't like, 'That's when I discovered myself.'" When Stamey and company moved to New York and formed the dB's, Easter stayed in Chapel Hill, listening to David Bowie's *Low* and *Heroes* and writing the first songs he was proud of. Later, when the dB's were doing well in Manhattan, Easter sold a house his folks had given him so he could afford to buy studio equipment. Then he and girlfriend Faye Hunter moved to New York and joined the good-ole-boy network.

"But I wasn't willing to pay off a building inspector to give me permission for the studio. I was spending a lot of time walking the dog and driving a van around to make money. And I wasn't getting any songs written. I thought, 'If I move back down there I won't be in the middle of a scene, but I'll have more time to write songs.'"

When he returned to Winston-Salem in the summer of 1980, Easter discovered that a local scene had developed. There were clubs for bands to play in, and local musicians were wearing skinny ties. The Carolinian expatriates in the Big Apple were anxious to come home and make records. And a group called R.E.M. came up from Athens, Georgia to record a 45. "At the time, it wasn't a bigger project than anything else, but

you could tell something was gonna happen with them. They had the now sound, and they seemed like stars." "Radio Free Europe" and the *Chronic Town* EP came out, and by 1982, Mitch Easter's reputation was growing.

Easter was still writing and demoing songs, but with his old network committed to other bands, he didn't know how to start his own group. Faye Hunter began learning the bass, and Sara Romweber, a drummer in a Chapel Hill band, jammed with her and Mitch while hanging around R.E.M. sessions. "I knew we could form a weird group together," Easter says. R.E.M. invited them to come play in Athens, which meant the trio needed a name. Easter had seen an article on Japan's craze for meaningless English sweatshirts, and the phrase Let's Active struck him with the force of John Bonham's bass drum.

"Actually, some of the kids here in town started calling us Led Active because we've gotten sorta heavy." He flashes a proud smile most people reserve for the Grammys. "That's pretty great."

The back of Mitch Easter's battered car is littered with unraveled C-90s mailed, thrown, or left on his doorstep by hopeful bands from around the country. Those early R.E.M. records galvanized the American underground just as the Sex Pistols had done in England. "It was like, 'You can join our nice gang,' instead of, 'You can join our window-breaking gang,'" Easter reflects as he makes the short drive from his house to the Drive-In Studio. "R.E.M.'s songs are easy to figure out if you've just started playing. And they can sell more records to the Mr. Mister audience than Hüsker Dü."

Soon, every town big enough to have a Baskin-Robbins also had an R.E.M. clone, and they all wanted to come to the Drive-In. "It was a great image," he says, pulling into the driveway of his parents' 45-acre property. "The sleepy and vaguely enig-

matic South, with its kudzu and easy livin' lifestyle... And along with that was this comfy, cheap little studio."

Although it's not so cheap anymore, since Easter upgraded much of the equipment, the Drive-In is definitely comfy. The studio occupies three rooms at the back of his parents' house, and because it's not soundproofed, the Cars' "It's Magic" drifts in from Mrs. Easter's kitchen radio. Then the dog walks in. There are lava lamps all over, plus dozens of guitars, Aerosmith stickers, and a handwritten sign which quotes that famed production wizard Ralph Waldo Emerson, "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

"I like studios," Easter sighs. "The equipment, all the lights... It's a great job." Yet he also says, "Hearing another band's record finished is fine. But hearing my record finished is better." After opening for R.E.M. that first night in Georgia, Let's Active spent most of the summer of '83 touring with them and making demos. That led to a contract with IRS Records. The demos were later released as the *afoot* EP. Easter acknowledges that having two women in the band helped Let's Active get signed. "I thought that was really cool," he says, approaching the subject carefully. "I've always had a contrary streak, and there aren't that many women playing rock 'n' roll. Not only were they women, but they were unlikely musicians." Because the band was playing Easter's devious songs, the results were often erratic. "They were both surprisingly good, but it wasn't the same as playing with guys who'd been doing it for ten or fifteen years. We weren't the tightest group in the world, but I enjoyed having a big crazy noise sometimes."

Let's Active went on tour in the midst of Easter's androgynous phase, and the next several months were spent sharing Aero-Lak hairspray with tour headliners Echo & the Bunnymen. "I know some of our fans liked us because we had fluffy hair and you couldn't tell which one was the guy. We were all 5'1", and you couldn't tell how old we were."

Though Easter thought it all in fun, it led to the first of The Two Words That Make Easter Violent: *cute*. A video for "Every Word Means No" which showed the band cavorting with puppies didn't help. While he disliked being compared to the Monkees, Easter understands how *afoot* could be seen as cute: "It's kinda bouncy and the guitars are boingy. 'In Between' has a jolly sound, but it's a grim song about a love triangle. I don't think anyone knows that. There is something in every one of those songs that messes it up a bit, makes it a little cloudier. If you bother listening to the words, you get that glumness, even though the music is sorta *hey!*"

The follow-up album, *Cypress*, suffered from a similar problem. Easter's fragmented, impressionistic lyrics are often inscrutable because he doesn't have the kind of voice that duets with Marilyn McCoo on prime time, and because he dislikes the "Stevie Nicks vibe" of lyric sheets. But as anyone who ever sang "There is a bathroom on the right" knows, mumbling allows for some creative interpretations. Like the reviewer who thought "Easy Does" began, "The Russians are enemy agents / Go home" and praised Easter for being a patriot. Other reviews were equally exasperating, focusing mainly on variations of "cute" or "jangly" (the second of the Two Words That Make Easter Violent. "That's my death word," he grimaces). *Rolling Stone*, for example, likened Easter to "a wispy-voiced Charlie Brown bewildered by the war between boys and girls."

As we pile back into the car to search for a backroad chicken restaurant, Easter reflects on the album: "*Cypress* was hard to make. The sessions were polite, but not very inspired. We weren't communicating. Since we were a band, I couldn't go back and erase Sara and Faye's parts and play them myself." Soon after the following tour had begun, Sara Romweber quit the band. Easter plugged the hole with a couple of musicians

who'd recorded at the Drive-In. Although the sound was stronger, he and Faye were in the process of ending their long romance. "Faye stayed in the band anyway," Easter says. "I deliberately didn't want it to be like, 'Okay, now you have to leave my band.'"

But when it came time to make another album, Easter decided to avoid the problem of group politics and record *Big Plans For Everybody* himself, with various contributing musicians called in as needed. His own big plan was to make a strong record no one could mistake for Southern Pop. "I was convinced for a while that if we made a record that sounded like Motorhead, somebody would say it was jangly pop. We'll see if people are listening to the record or not, because I don't think it's the least bit jangly or New South."

*continued on page 89*

## LET'S ACTIVISTS

**W**e all have lots of stuff we're fond of," says **Mitch Easter**, "but since we don't have a fleet of semis yet, this is all we have room for on this tour. I use a 1968 regular red Gibson SG Special with vibrola, a yellow '62 SG Special, an '82 Rickenbacker 330, and a Robin Octave.

The electrics all have GHS Bear Wire strings, a special medium gauge assembled for Sam Moss Guitars in Winston-Salem. I run the guitars into a RAT fuzz, then into a Korg PME-40X pedal thing, which contains an overdrive, chorus, graphic eq, and delay. The amp is a 100-watt Matamp, with an Orange 4 x 12 speaker cabinet with Fane speakers.

"**Angie Carlson** has either the real cool or real silly guitars, depending on your point of view: a 60s Kustom with a metallic blue sunburst finish, and a Takamine flying-V acoustic with a built-in pickup and Adamas strings. She also uses a RAT fuzz box. Her keyboards are the Ensoniq Mirage and Roland Juno 60. All this stuff goes into two Fender Twin Reverb amps from the late 70s, which have been fitted with Electro-Voice EVM speakers, which make the amps sound immensely better and weigh immensely more.

"**Dennis Ambrose** uses a Hamer Cruisebass with GHS Stainless Steel strings, plugged into a Gallien-Krueger 400 RB amp with an Acoustic 2x15 cabinet containing Electro-Voice EVM speakers. And sometimes he uses the band's Dallas Arbiter Trem Face tremolo device.

"**Eric Marshall** plays black Premiers with a 24-inch bass drum, one mounted tom, and two floor toms. This is essentially the John Bonham set, down to the sheet aluminum lining in the bass drum. Cymbals are mostly Zildjian. We also use a Yamaha drum machine on a couple of songs."

Drive-In Studio sports an AMEK Angela console. It's tape deck battery has a 3M M79 24-track, an M56 16-track, an M64 2-track, an M23 4-track, an MCI JH 110 2-track and a TEAC 2340 4-track job. Cassette machines are NADs. Mitch's compressors are a Drawmer 1960 B, a Urei 1178, Allison Gain Brains, a Symetrix 501 and a Universal Audio 175 B. His noise gates are a Roger Mayer RM 68 and a Drawmer dual gate.

The Drive-In digital delay section includes a DeltaLab Effectron 1024, a Lexicon Prime Time, a Maxim and an Audio Instrument Co. tape delays. For better road handling there are Pultec EQP-1 and Biamp 210 graphic equalizers. Reverb is handled by the Ecoplate II plate and Lexicon 200 digital jobs. There's also an Orban/Parasound 3-channel de-esser and a DeltaLab Harmoniccomputer around to foil radar.

House monitors are ADS 8 10 IIs, Yamaha NS10s, JBL 4401s and Auratone 5Cs. These are powered by Dynaco, Adcom GFA-1 and Hafler DH 220 amps. Drive-In's trunkful of mikes has an AKG 414 EB, Neumann KM 84, EV CS-15P, EV RE-20, Shure SM-7 and SM57, AKG D-1000 and D-190, Sennheiser 421, and Beyer M201. Somewhere around there's also a lava lite, a Leslie speaker, some odd instruments and an inflatable dinosaur.

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# STANDING NEXT TO A MOUNTAIN

## INSIDE THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

BY NOEL REDDING  
& CAROL APPLEBY

**T**wenty years ago this September a scuffling British guitarist strapped on a bass to audition with a scuffling American guitarist. They hit it off. A week later they added a drummer. (A week after *that* they played their first gig.) The birth of the Jimi Hendrix Experience took about as long as the Biblical creation of the world—and has had almost as far-reaching consequences.

Certainly the world of pop music was never the same. The Experience was bound to attract attention: a biracial, binational trio—with a left-handed guitarist, yet—that dressed outrageously and sported electric-frizz hairdos. But the band's appearance was only a come-on. Hendrix, of course, was a musical genius, taking the electric guitar where it had never been before. John "Mitch" Mitchell's furious drums competed with Hendrix as virtually a lead instrument. The daunting task of anchoring this sonic whirlwind fell to bassist Noel Redding.

It was an odd route to stardom for Redding, who'd virtually never played bass before. As a guitarist, though, he was a seasoned pro. Since leaving school at age sixteen he'd developed a hefty rep in his native Kent county. Then he paid his dues touring Britain and Germany the hard way behind singer Neil Landon, and with his own bands, the Lonely Ones and the Loving Kind. By the time he was twenty, Redding had enough experience (and booze and pills) under his belt to be in need of a serious rest. He returned to Kent, recuperated, and auditioned in London for Eric Burdon's new batch of Animals.

Burdon didn't give Redding the nod. But Animals bassist-turned-entrepreneur Chas Chandler approached him about playing bass with a then-unknown guitarist Chandler had brought back from the States. Chandler and his business partner, Animals manager Mike Jeffery, were determined to make Jimi Hendrix a star. Before it was three months old, the Jimi Hendrix Experience had generated interest from

the Beatles on down, and released a debut British single which went top ten.

Redding was on his way to fulfilling his dream. But the dream rapidly turned into a nightmare. While the Jimi Hendrix Experience became a recording and concert sensation—first in Britain, then in the U.S.—the band members were on a hellish schedule of nearly non-stop touring interspersed with studio sessions. When they had time to think, they wondered who was getting the money. Redding says he has yet to receive any artist royalties from his Hendrix recordings.

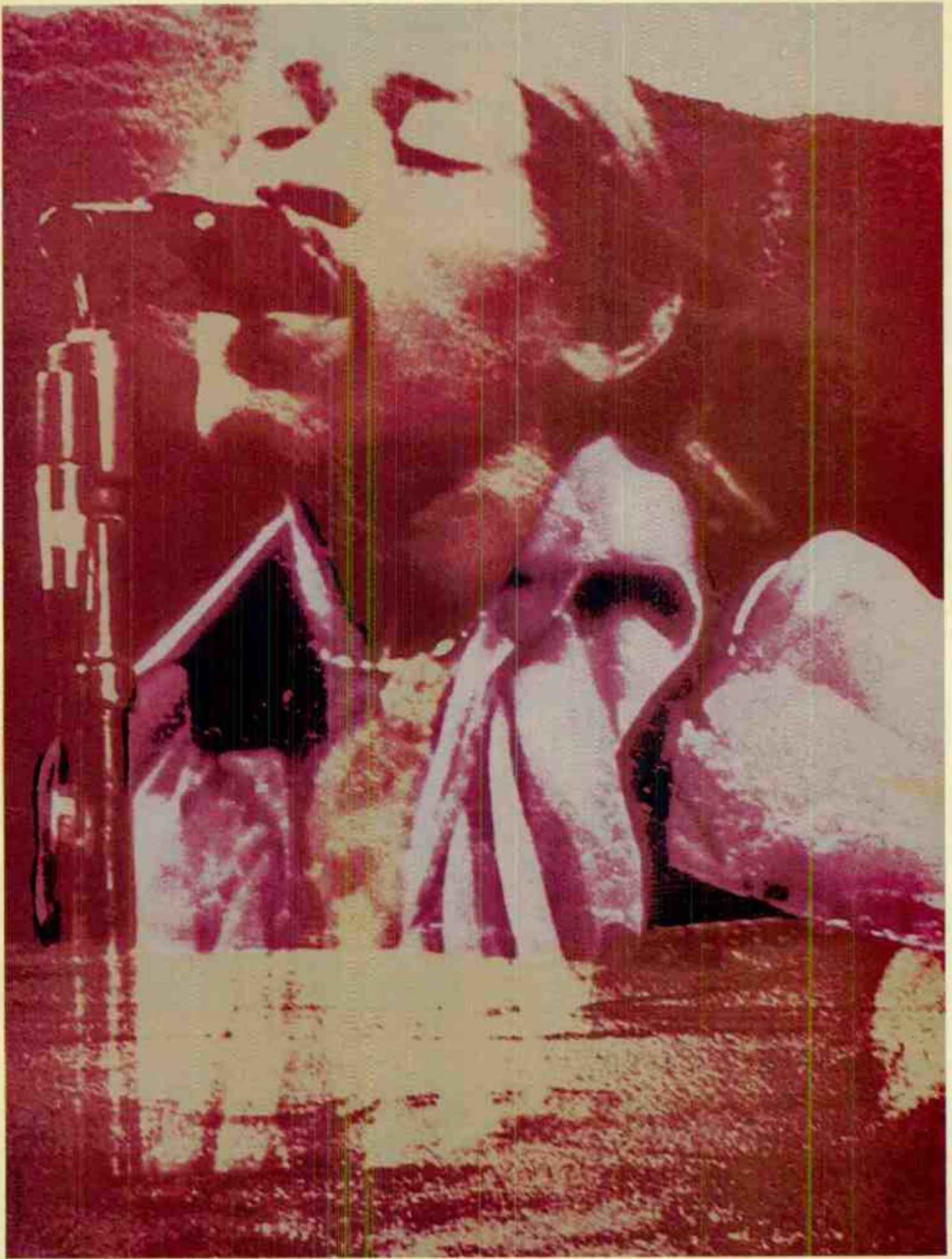
After an increasingly manic three years together, the Jimi Hendrix Experience played its last show. A year later, Hendrix was dead at age twenty-seven. His legacy will remain as long as anyone uses an electric guitar—or, to put it another way, as long as law-

suits are fought over pieces of his financial pie. It's your guess which will last longer.

Nine years ago Redding started organizing his thoughts about Hendrix and the Experience with feelings of revenge for what he considered a thorough rip-off. Fortunately, he had kept a diary throughout the period. Redding and Carol Appleby undertook research and wrote hundreds of letters asking thousands of questions. Redding's advice to aspiring popstars is, "Study hard, get into mathematics and any business course you can, and play as much as you can. If I had to do it over, I'd go to law school and carry a machine gun."

Redding found Hendrix personally to be "a very quiet guy"—at least for the Experience's first three months together. "As the band escalated, it changed a bit," he laughs. "Towards the end of the band we were like strangers, really." Hendrix never communicated very much to his musical partners. Redding says no one knew what the guitarist was thinking about: "If he was on his own, just with us in a room, he was a nice guy and very polite. But when he was in the public eye later on, he became a different person."







“A black Englishman who played with his teeth.”

And Redding continues to be “highly proud” of his recordings with Hendrix, especially *Axis: Bold As Love*. “I didn’t play the albums for a while,” he admits, “but now I can. They still sound very good to me.” Any disagreement?

At the turn of 1967 things were changing so fast that our only constant was lack of money. We were virtually broke; even Jimi borrowed a few shillings from me here and there. There were so many more expenses now: fancy stage clothes and cleaning bills. The accelerating pressure was also accelerating our drinking. After a British radio appearance on January 17, we ran up a bar bill of £2.25; even pooling our money, we couldn’t pay it.

On January 11, 1967, Michael Jeffery and Chas Chandler signed a contract with Track Records two months before Track was fully set up. Only Jimi was mentioned in the contract, which was for three years and called for four singles and two LPs each year. There was a £1000 advance and recording costs to a point. Had Mitch Mitchell and I known that Jimi was the only one being signed to contracts (and we didn’t even know there were contracts) the Experience would have ended. We always worked on the basis that we were a group and that the business was being done as such.

Costs were forever catching up, so it was no big deal when we got a £20 bonus and a raise to £25 weekly in mid-January. Then up to £30 in mid-February. We hated to complain, but it became obvious that unless we did nothing happened. Like most musicians, we hated to speak up, preferring to avoid any form of upset. It’s nearly impossible to play music when you’re upset. We’d mumble and complain until we were desperate and forced into confrontation.

Musically, the group was working away and picking up steam daily. By the end of January, thousands were showing up at gigs. The demands on the gear were incredible. In our efforts to get the proper volume to deliver the music of a three-piece to the crowds, we blew amps left, right and center. Jimi and I would have one of each other’s speakers on our side in order to hear each other, and poor Mitch would have to beat his brains out in the middle to keep up with us. The miking of drumkits was unheard of at that time. Our electrical demands were even pressurizing clubs as we fused their mains. Jimi broke his guitar with his strenuous playing, and I had to run around and borrow an old guitar of mine that another group was using so we could play and play and play.

February 1 was a bad gig. We were late. The revolving stage

was just set to swing round when Jimi’s amp blew up. He plugged into mine and I managed to grab a tiny amp the other group had been using—about a five-watter. The bass buzzed like mad as we swung around. I plugged into the P.A. amp, but then there was no vocal except in the breaks and it sounded like a whisper. At the end as we started to be revolved again the audience grabbed us. I hung on to Jimi, he hung on to Mitch, and we nearly got crushed against the wall as we spun.

The star treatment was overwhelming. Gone were the days of a quiet pint. I’d go to a club and they’d announce my presence—to applause! People rushed up for autographs. It was wonderful and horrifying at the same time. I felt like a split personality: the image, and the one who was surviving by living with two friends, who also fed me for £1 per week. I kept wondering why I had no cash, remembering my earlier bands that made less and took home more. It was costing more and more to hang out every night, but it was necessary in order to relax and unwind from shows. The unwinding soon became a wind-up, as more and more people started hanging around us and we were invited to parties every night. We continued drinking and smoking, and using pills for needed energy—sleep was reduced to two to six hours per night now. So who had time or the frame of mind to ask questions?

Planning the future, Jeffery signed with Warner Brothers Records in America on March 21, 1967: a five year, million-dollar contract. I couldn’t get a copy, but I have heard that the advance was \$150,000, with eight percent artist royalties and two percent to Jeffery as producer. The advance never showed up



in the accounts, but there was money around. Chas couldn’t set up his new £330 stereo—so I did it for him.

Personally, publicly, it was getting crazy. I tried to go ice-skating and got pulled apart by schoolgirls. We got mauled going to gigs. Girls in the audience started screaming all our names, although management allowed the group to be billed as “Jimi Hendrix.” That created more ego problems in the group than anything else. Mitch and I began to feel as if we were being put down, when we were playing well and going down just as well as Jimi. It was hard becoming stars and we only had each other to hassle with. To top it off, the exclusiveness back-

JIM MARSHALL

JIM MARSHALL

fired by being hard on Jimi also; he began to feel the pressure.

On March 31 we began a month-long British tour with the Walker Brothers, then the biggest sex symbols in England. Jimi and Chas now began to use the flash act they had been working on. The other groups on the show hated it as we knocked out audience after audience. But if Jimi did a sexy bit one night, the tour managers would be tackled by the theater managers and we would be told to clean up. The first night, *New Musical Express* writer Keith Altham had the idea to set fire to the guitar during "Fire." It was miles more dramatic than anything else on the tour, especially as we could see Jimi was having trouble getting the fluid lit. But it generated a lot of ill feeling and little things began to happen—like the house lights being turned up full in the middle of our set, or Jimi's guitar being found untuned just before we went on.

As the hysteria built up, the "wild man" image Jimi and Chas had been working on began to pay off. It gave the English press something to write about, because they didn't understand the music at all. And a black man in England could stand out and be different with no effort. Jimi's image made it possible for him to "get away with" his sexiness; blatant sex just wasn't "English."

Once the media picked up the image, Jimi and our look became fashionable. The tour sold out between our popularity and the Walkers'. And Jimi began to realize that personally he could be successful, which boosted his confidence. Our egos grew and sometimes clashed. After I went home with a girl he fancied, Jimi freaked out and hit her. But our fights, almost all

TOM HAMMANG



I WALKED OUT OF THE "ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER" SESSION. DAVE MASON PLAYED BASS, AND JIMI PROBABLY REPLAYED IT.

over women, were soon forgotten. A bigger problem was tour hysteria. People climbed onstage during our act. We could no longer go out and cool off between shows. We had no option but to sit around in "dressing rooms" with nothing to do but get smashed.

Our first LP, *Are You Experienced*, was released May 12. We managed to finish it on our "off" days. There was a furor in the press over the barrage of Experience recordings; we'd also released two singles in the previous two months. But Chris Stamp, speaking for Track Records (our British label) said, "We really couldn't wait as advance orders were already at



25,000." Besides, they wanted to be ready for the Experience's bill-topping appearance at the Saville Theatre in London on June 4. And it would be necessary to have an LP in the U.S. before the Monterey Pop Festival, June 18. Record reviewers were at a loss for words to describe our drug-crazed energy, though they tried: "musical nightmare," "raw nerves recorded," "electrical neurosis."

Immediately upon the album release we were off touring Europe for two weeks. Indeed, we worked nearly every day for five months. We were still borrowing spare change to survive. Hangers-on expected us to buy them rounds of drinks, and our own habits were getting expensive. Drink, smoke and pills got us in the right frame of mind for performing, or just to enable us to stay awake long enough to perform. Being the Experience was like making a pact to get at least *that* stoned every night. The music was built around a stoned frame of mind. And you'd have to stay awake long enough to relax with a jam at a club later.

Our changing status was changing us. We got a creeping suspicion that all was not right with our earnings. Mitch and I were cheesed off over the picture on the new single; it wasn't a group shot. We'd all get too stoned. Jimi was out of his head one night in Germany. I apologized, saying he was ill, and even had to tune his guitar. I discovered he'd taken acid just before the show. He couldn't do anything but sit there laughing. It made me angry that he didn't keep himself together for shows; I felt that that was the essence of being professional. We had a serious discussion about the group that night. I found out we were making over £300 per night—a fortune then. Flights were cheap. We'd use average hotels and share rooms.

Back in England, we geared up for the States. Jimi's British work permit was expiring. The "farewell" show at the Saville was bound to be a biggie. We even rehearsed for it and did a special photo session. The show, run by Beatles manager Brian Epstein, was huge: opening with the Stormsville Shakers, then Procol Harum, the Chiffons, Denny Laine and his Electric String Band, and we closed. In spite of amp trouble,

we did a really good show—real loose. Jimi got the idea to roll around onstage and shouted it to me. We wrestled together and fell rolling to the stage. Such freedom! Hundreds were turned away from the door and we were rebooked for whenever we returned. We were definitely out of the small-club circuit. Afterwards there was a party at Epstein's house. I freaked from the moment Paul McCartney opened the door. I felt out of my depth surrounded by "real stars."

People started to hassle me for money. I was asked to guarantee loans, and investments presented themselves regularly. I was glad to get away to the States; I felt I was escaping. On June 8 we did a special photo session at Kew Gardens for the cover of the American LP. Actually we weren't allowed into Kew, and had to stand outside. Photographer Karl Ferris used infrared film.

And someone *gave me* something: Rotosound started sending me strings!

## WE MADE UP A STORY ABOUT THE D.A.R. DEMANDING WE BE PULLED FROM THE MONKEES TOUR.



First class to New York! I flew next to Brian Jones, who had shown me a taste of the other side of life by taking me around with him in his Rolls. And I do mean flying: Brian had just given me my first two tabs of acid—which I swore didn't affect me. What could be trippier than my real life?

Arriving in San Francisco, we all attended the first two nights of the three-day Monterey Pop Festival as spectators and fans. Paul McCartney and Rolling Stones manager Andrew Oldham had suggested us to the festival committee. Our debut was scheduled for the third day. The excitement was almost unbearable. Everyone knew something big was happening; the whole concept of the concert was such a stupendous idea.

On our day we went over early for a run-through with the Who, the group we were scheduled to follow. That simple fact filled us with more apprehension than anything else. Nobody knew how it would come off. The Who had just taken America by storm with their "smashing act." The only thing we had going was that we were new, Jimi being hyped as "a black 'English' guy who plays with his teeth."

That night Brian introduced us and we took off for our forty-minute set. We were in great form, as was the audience. We always fed on the crowd's enthusiasm and it affected our playing. That night the rapport was great, and we flew through the set. Jimi finished by burning his guitar—for the last time. He had a terrible time getting the lighter fluid ignited. But it finally went and the audience took off. (Later, when he got into

smashing guitars, he'd use the same "breakaway" one each time.) It took ages to calm down the crowd. We'd gone down a bomb! Chas Chandler arrived just in time to rescue us from a terrible tongue-lashing from Mike Jeffery because Jimi had damaged a mike stand. But then Bill Graham offered us a Fillmore stint with the Jefferson Airplane, and we started into the tons of drink and smoke that appeared for the after-gig party.

Next day, it all started to catch up with us. We tried to rest in preparation for our Fillmore gigs—six nights with two shows each—but San Francisco was freaking us out. Mitch and I were seeing hippies for the first time. England was never like this! I wandered out unsuspecting to Haight-Ashbury, coming back smashed on wine and smoke and spiked with acid. It affected me this time.

Jeffery hadn't a clue where our destiny lay. After our run-in with him he flew off to New York, getting in touch only to bring

us down again. "I've got a great deal for an American tour. You'll be with the Monkees. They're where it's at." And we were scheduled to tour with them until August 24. When Chas dropped this bomb it was obvious that there was a bit of tension between him and Jeffery, who'd made all the arrangements without consulting anyone else. Chas knew it would never be right. If ever two people saw the same group differently, Chas and Jeffery did!

Our last day in San Francisco, June 25, was a memorable one. In the afternoon we played a free show in Golden Gate Park from the back of a lorry. Thousands of people were freaking in the open air, and we did a strenuous set. As a result we played a weak first set that night at the Fillmore, but we wound up with a good one—all of us being out of our brains. But we were having fun together. Hendrix grabbed me and promised me good food: a small place and great barbequed spareribs—a first for me.

Our gigs were a huge success; Bill Graham gave Chas a \$2,000 bonus. During this tour we were on wages of \$200 per week, and living close to the line financially. I could never understand how other bands would have thousands in spending money. Jimmy Page would buy antiques to ship back. If I had to spend \$100 on stage clothes it was a serious investment. I could never afford new guitars, but found out about pawn shops.

On the 26th we were off to tackle Los Angeles and start



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I FULLY ADMIT  
THAT DRUGS  
CONTROLLED OUR  
MUSIC. WE  
FELT WE HAD TO  
BE STONED TO  
PLAY PROPERLY.

work on our second LP. I became terribly intrigued with playing a twelve-string with a wah-wah pedal on a new number, probably the beginnings of "Burning Of The Midnight Lamp." Jimi first used the wah-wah on "I Don't Live Today." Jimi was starting to get into production, but the technical end of recording never did appeal to me. I would get bored with the repetition and waiting. My solution was to buy an acoustic guitar so I could mess around while Jimi and Chas mixed. This messing around was the start of my songwriting career. Chas and Jeffery were very surprised when I started coming up with songs. And of course, I was spending time working on bass technique and style. I ended up chording on my Fender, developing a melodic bass and working out simple or complex riffs according to what Jimi and Mitch were doing.

I really enjoyed creating *Axis: Bold As Love*. We all felt good and positive. It's still my favorite LP though I was concerned that the lyrics weren't as together as the first songs—good ideas but awkward verse. Many lyrics were just word substitutes for the verbal noises with which Jimi would accompany his guitar playing. Our whole outlook on life was highly experimental at that point. That included music, drugs, women... we thrived on experience.

We made our Los Angeles debut at the notorious Whiskey a Go Go on July 2. But this was a flop. We were tired and too stoned to care. We could hardly stand up and it didn't help to know we had a ten a.m. flight to New York the next day. We arrived dog-tired only to be refused admission to the hotel. Sometimes the attitude in America took me by surprise. I had always expected the States to be infinitely hip and groovy. You can imagine my shock at seeing a very fat man, balding, dressed in a gaping patterned shirt and plaid bermuda shorts and sandals standing in an airport pointing and laughing at me.

In New York Mike Jeffery was making a lot of heavy connections. The Monkees were "put together" as the American Beatles by a group of businessmen and lawyers to cash in on the scene. Jeffery was into this kind of thinking. We were more than a bit uneasy about it. Chas felt the tour would be a disaster and refused to go with us. But everything was long signed, and on July 8 we picked up Mike and joined the Monkees in Florida.

Our first show was twenty-five minutes. It was a funny audi-

ence for us—very young, about seven to twelve years old—but we went down surprisingly well. Then we went out to watch the Monkees. They were awful—not individually, but I couldn't believe they couldn't play without having a "spare" group behind the stage curtain. Definitely the first time we had seen anything like that.

In Charlotte, North Carolina we really died the death. Jimi pulled a moody. (Translation: turned his back on the audience and got unreasonably pissed off when out of tune, or his amp would hum. He'd say, "I can't play with this," and then perform sloppy.) Mitch and I carried on and pulled it through. The next night I was very surprised when we went down well in Greensboro.

The Monkees' tour manager was on Jimi's back to tone down the act. Jimi rebelled by turning the act off completely at Forest Hills in New York. We were told to get off the tour or else. I hated scenes and had to take two sleepers to get to sleep, but at least we were off. Our publicists made up a good press story about the Daughters of the American Revolution demanding we be pulled from the show.

The moment we left the Monkees tour we moved from the Waldorf-Astoria to the Hotel Gorham, a wonderful place with no air conditioning (and little else). We had ten days with no gigs, just a lot of time to kill. We did finish "The Burning Of The Midnight Lamp" and "The Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice." Working with Gary Kellgren as engineer, it took us forty-two hours to complete. Quite a difference from "The Wind Cries Mary" which took six minutes. None of us had any say about what single was put out. Sometimes we approved and sometimes we just grumbled among ourselves.

Money worries—like the nagging suspicion that something was going wrong—started to bother us. The fatigue, the drugs, the plebs following us everywhere, the people who steal our clothing from our hotel rooms made us feel on the edge of screaming. We were getting on each other's nerves. A good distraction was my desire to write songs. On July 29 I tried recording the roots of "Little Miss Strange." I had a cash shortage and began to see that writing was a definite help.

Scheduled to film a promo clip in Los Angeles, we started by my passing out beyond recall. We were tripping, of course. It was acid, acid, acid. We were spaced constantly. Chas stayed



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SOMETHING WENT WRONG IN JIMI'S HEAD AND HE STARTED FREAKING OUT AT SOME QUEER HANGER-ON. IT BUILT UP UNTIL HE STARTED SMASHING EVERYTHING IN HIS ROOM....THEY ARRESTED JIMI AND TOOK HIM AWAY.

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straight. He leaned toward whiskey, his cure for anything, including stage nerves. Jimi would talk to Chas like he disapproved of the whole scene while he was completely out of it. We felt that acid was the great cure, a way to find everything, past and future. Chas at least hoped it might help Jimi's lyrics, which tended to be spaced-out and hard to identify with.

But if acid wrote the lyrics, speed played our music. The combination of everything was making us more tense every day with the scene and the hangers-on. We would take turns losing our tempers in sheer frustration at being stuck where we were in life. A year ago we would have been ecstatic. Eleven months ago the band didn't even exist. As people, we were coming apart. The acid certainly helped. Others were reassembling us as they wanted us to be. We didn't have the time or perspective to analyze the situation. We just kept going.

In October we finished *Axis: Bold As Love*. We loved experimenting with things like "EXP," having fun with noises. Jimi did the speaking bit. Mitch, with his voice speeded up, was the announcer. Then we set up a couple of guitars, turned the volume up full and smashed them against the amps for the background. Other groups relied on using a variety of instruments to keep new, but we relied on Jimi who loved to create new sounds with just his guitar. He liked experimenting so much we doubted he would ever run out of ideas. With my bass turned up on full treble we got a tremendous variety of effects both onstage and recording.

Slowly studios got more advanced and with eight-track it was possible to experiment more. At first we would wait until we had some ideas stored up and semi-worked out, and then book a studio. Then Hendrix got into the habit of just hanging out in the studio and hoping something would come of it. He also got in the habit of recording all jams. Then he could listen back for possible usable bits or ideas. Many people write this

way. You never know what's going to come out of a jam that's flowing well.

I felt a bit pushed physically. Maybe it was just depression, but I gave in to the constant supply of insurance brokers that were always trying to sell us something. I took out a life policy. I could never relax anymore. I started passing out in trains, in cars (with others driving), in friends' flats—taking my sleep when I could get it, or maybe when I couldn't put it off any longer. We slipped into a routine of doing a gig and then heading to the studio for a night session. By this time, unless we were



Jimi with electric landladies

JIM MARSHALL

traveling, I rarely got up before two p.m. If I felt *really* bad I'd head for the doctor and a jab of B vitamins. We weren't into eating much; I usually only grabbed a burger or an occasional Chinese meal and a leaper.

*Axis* had taken so long to record. Jimi knew he needed a break and wanted to take six months off just to write. But besides the material being slow in coming, much of the delay was due to hangers-on. They would infest the studio and make it hard to get anything done. I fully admit that drugs controlled our music. Whether it was true or not, we felt we had to be stoned to play properly. Good dope equalled good music. It was lovely music to get spaced to. A good high allowed you to fuse better and generate a feeling that lived outside the players. This is what the audiences wanted—every night. Not just good music but a good buzz, too.

In lucid moments I was still writing songs. When I felt I had one together, I'd get in a studio and put down a demo. I'd play guitar and bass, or Jimi would play bass, Mitch drums. Guitar was my first love, and I always felt I was playing bass as an interim thing. But it was getting harder to be thought of as a guitarist as my reputation spread as a bassist. I only played guitar once onstage with the Experience, on "Red House" at the Olympia. The era demanded flamboyant guitar lines which isn't my style at all. I like rhythm—without it, what have you got? I feel drummers are the real heart of the group. A good drummer is worth his weight in gold, and should be pampered and looked after. No amount of guitar playing can overcome an unfeeling, repetitious, boring drummer. I can't understand how people can use drum machines so much. In the Experience, Mitch was free like Jimi to do whatever he wanted. He'd have a steady timekeeper in me. We could switch musical roles at will.

A lull in December 1967 was only the eye of the cyclone. The storm started with the new year as we polished off a few European gigs in preparation for a second round in America. On January 4, after performing in Gothenburg, Sweden, we headed for the clubs. Jimi didn't usually come with us when we went drinking. He couldn't handle drinking very well and that night we all got really pissed. Somehow we got back to the hotel and went to Jimi's room. But something went wrong in Jimi's head and he started freaking out at some queer hanger-on. It all got stranger and stranger, with Jimi even making an advance to me (which I passed on). It built up until he started smashing everything in his room. It was terrifying and we didn't know what to do. Jimi outweighed me, but I managed to get him down and sit on him until he began to quiet down. I tried this three times before I gave up and went to my room. The noise finally caused someone to call the police. I wasn't there when they arrived, but you should have heard the noise. They arrested Jimi and took him away about six a.m., charging him with disturbing the peace. No one woke Chas, but they released Jimi because we had to play. They also made us agree to come back to Gothenburg for a hearing after the tour.

The gig went very well in spite of it all; perhaps the scene had cleared whatever had been building up. We did two one-hour sets to a very appreciative audience. But I felt the band was drifting apart and discussed it with Mitch before the next show. As if to accentuate my premonition, Jimi had a sore throat and did only thirty-five minutes when he could easily have jammed instrumentally for much longer. I suppose he was depressed and upset, but his moodiness stretched on and it began to piss me off. We just worked our frustrations out on each other. None of us had anyone close that we could talk to and expect to understand—no one to ask help of, no one we could yell at. The only relief from loneliness were the girls. Every day became depressingly alike: get up, go to the bar and get pissed, feel rough, bathe and get stoned, get drunk, get



"Tire tracks all across your back."

smashed, collapse shattered.

When we returned to Gothenburg, we couldn't find a hotel that would take us. Then we discovered we needn't even have returned; they just wanted someone to pay damages. Jimi was fined £475. We were all furious on hearing this. What we really didn't need was a few extra flights. We caught the first boat back to England.

Interviews were becoming incredibly difficult. We'd done so many that there wasn't much left to say. Most of my free time was spent seeing others play, like Jimmy McGriff. Mitch and I were hanging out together more. Jimi was still living with Chas. The distance was growing at recording sessions. None of us were good at verbalizing our problems. When I got fed up with long, fruitless sessions with too many people, I'd protest by not turning up.

In February we kicked off a three-month U.S. tour with the Alan Price Set, Soft Machine and Eire Apparent—all of us under the same management. As our concerts got bigger and bigger, they became fewer in number as we reached thousands of people at every show. For the management it was less trouble, less expenses and more income.

Things were getting weirder. We were snorting DMT. I started to be horrified by the girls who were constantly forcing themselves on me. But the shows were going well and were packed. Bill Graham gave us each a gift watch. Was he trying to tell us to be on time? Should I retire? Should I take some acid to cheer me up? Of course.

This tour really took it out of us. Jimi and I were a bit at odds.



JIMI FREAKED,  
SMASHED HIS EQUIP-  
MENT AND SAID TO ME,  
“I DON’T NEED  
ANYONE TO  
TALK TO!”  
JIMI WAS NEVER  
HEAVY ABOUT  
BEING *BLACK*.  
HE WAS INTO  
BEING JIMI.

I felt he was being temperamental when he fucked up an Anaheim, California show by only half-heartedly singing the occasional word. Even the reviewers noticed that one. I refused to be sympathetic to his star attitude. And I resented him flatly refusing to play “She’s So Fine,” my song on *Axis*, when people requested it. It made me feel detached and withdrawn. Girls were becoming “groupies” in my mind. People seemed less like people. I began to catch the moodies.

For the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles we had new amps: Sunn. I loved them, and the company was good to me. If an amp blew, with one phone call I’d have one the next day. The stage was beginning to look like a wall of speakers with three midgets playing in front of them. Quite often we’d get police calls and radio stations coming through our amps. Mickey Dolenz and David Crosby were head amp-sitters that night and it was a great show. We celebrated by taking acid. Then I couldn’t sleep as even acid was changing: it was cut more and more with methedrine. So besides the ego question-and-answer time, there were hours and hours of bone-tired teeth-grinding in every trip—and paranoia.

In Seattle we met Jimi’s family for the first time. They seemed like nice, relaxed people and I got stoned with Jimi’s brother Leon. Jimi was awarded the key to the city of Seattle.

In Denver, another moody. If something was bothering Jimi we never did find it out. He wasn’t a talker, but his uncaring attitude towards the audience would make me very angry. By San Antonio more than Jimi’s moodies were bringing us down. We had management troubles; we *never* saw them. I wanted us all to sit down together and have a good long talk. By this time there was getting to be so much to talk about that you wouldn’t know where to start the conversation. Fort Worth, Texas was the beginning of the end of the band. For the first time we had separate dressing rooms. It was like guaranteeing that you went onstage cold.

Still, the shows were going well. We changed the act slightly according to where we played. At a straight middle-American gig we played hits and a couple of new things. But in San Francisco we just jammed all night because the audience was stoned enough to feel what you were trying to do. One night Mitch tried to do a Keith Moon trick: jump up and stand on his tomtom. Only by this time Mitch was getting rather thin, and when he jumped up he bounced right off the drum.

I had been keeping up the pressure about having a talk. It really rubbed Jimi the wrong way. At one show he freaked, smashing his equipment and saying to me, “I don’t need *anyone* to talk to.” Chas was at this show, so I talked to him. He agreed



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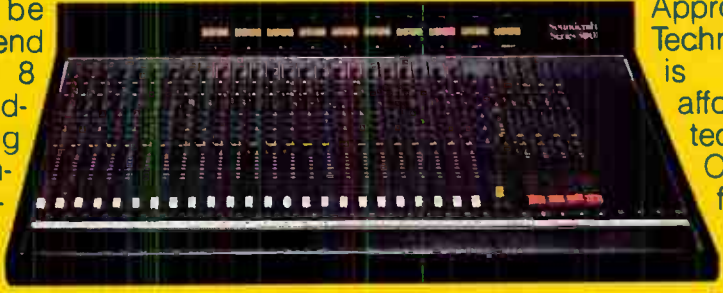
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**Soundcraft**



**“Will the wind ever remember...”**

“nude” cover of the upcoming *Electric Ladyland* album. As gigs got fewer and fewer, my contacts with life in general got less frequent. What to do when not gigging?

Argue. On May 1 I finally said what I thought of the whole scene, of the tons of people getting in the way. It was a party, not a session. Jimi just went, “Relax, man...” “We’ve been relaxing for months and we’ve nothing done.” I left the studio not caring if I ever saw him again. Luckily our blow-ups never lasted long. But our next studio day was totally shot because it was being filmed, I don’t even know by whom. We played only one number all day. I kept trying to talk to everyone about the crowds; the next day I showed up and no one else did.

I talked with Chas about my argument with Jimi. If I had been more drug-free I might have had better insight into the situation, but I was much too involved. Chas was able to look at it with more perspective. It was a matter of seeing how long they could keep us running as a product. I think they knew they were treading a chalk line. They filmed our May 10 Fillmore East shows—more “product.” It seemed to me that more and more live gigs were being recorded. Was this for lack of new stuff or just catalog padding? Later several LPs were augmented by judicious use of these live recordings.

Sometimes I think Jimi might have known more about what was going on than he let on. He must have wondered why we were broke. He was the last person anyone wanted to worry; like me, he avoided the business world. But he did sign contracts on his own, unless he thought that on group contracts we all had individual copies. One night at a back room at the Scene club in New York, we were all offered a million dollars to sign with a prominent mob-oriented organization. Did anyone give in?

At the end of May we took off on a European tour. Our equipment was in bits from our U.S. tour which had just ended. Jimi screamed at our roadie constantly. The amp tubes were shot, and the power went up and down like a yoyo. Since we played everything at a volume of ten with bass and treble full up, the amps would last about one show. I found Sunn ever-reliable; Jimi ended up with cranked-up Marshalls. He started out with seventy-five watts and ended up with six 4x12” speaker cabinets and four 100-watt amps. And lots of gadgets like the fuzz, wah-wah and Univibe.

I was now serious about getting a sideline together to supplement my Experience income. I felt highly insecure about my financial position. Michael and Chas were very blasé. I began a long relationship with Mandrax (a sleeping pill).

Chas thought he could help me get something together. That’s all I wanted to hear. At times, none of us could imagine the group going on any longer. We were confused about how much we’d worked, how big we were, and how broke we were. And we were getting bored with our shows. Audiences still wanted the same old tunes and same old act we’d been doing for two years. Jimi wanted to change his style of writing and be accepted on a more serious level. Neither of us had that driving energy anymore. And we were losing our sense of humor.

In a funny way, both Jimi and I were heading in basically the same direction: softer, more melodic songs with more instrumentation. But we could see only our individual need for change, and a break seemed the most efficient way to achieve it. If we tried to change the Experience we would get static from the management. They felt our growing (younger) audience wanted to hear hits, not the serious stuff.

The novelty wore off. Screaming girls and persistent

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groupies—who cares? When not playing, I was in a void, but it was safer away from the cons and conmen. Jimi, Mitch and I were rarely hanging out together. Jimi had his own flat now and was making a life of his own.

We went back to the States at the end of July. Waiting for the flight, we met Jerry Lee Lewis. I was thrilled to meet an original rock 'n' roller, and we could hardly wait to shake hands. Only when Jimi offered his hand, Jerry Lee declined to notice it. That moment horrified me. Wasn't life hard enough?

Our resumed American tour began with no messing about. We left New York for New Orleans, and then on by road to Baton Rouge. I made the mistake of expecting to be able to play my new six-string Epiphone without any practice. It was difficult because of the spacing between the strings. I never got a second try as it was stolen instantly. Great start.

The next morning we all missed the plane and had to drive to Shreveport. But this quiet traveling helped us get our old group feeling back. I even had the chance to get an insight into Jimi's black realities. Suffering badly from the stoned hungries, we decided to stop at a cafe near town. Only we were surprised and perplexed that Jimi was *very* hesitant about coming in. We really had to coax him, but once through the door it hit us: The entire cafe went quiet as everyone turned to look at us and at Jimi, who was very black in a very white situation. Mitch and I, in our best English accents, ordered politely. We ate quickly and as nearly invisibly as four people in full popstar attire can. The scene was scary and such a drag. Jimi and I had shared each other's lives so much. I took him to pubs; he took me to rib restaurants. I had never seen this heavy, evil Southern vibe before. But it helped open the doors of a common existence. The barriers that business had been building disappeared as we got to know each other again.

We settled down to the monotony of touring, but the thrill was gone. We were getting bored with the Experience material. Jimi wanted to change styles. I wanted to try my own material. We thought we'd each form our own groups. We'd reunite as the Experience twice a year for tours, with our "solo" bands as opening acts. Mitch's group was to be called the Mind Octopus, mine Fat Mattress and Jimi's the Band of Gypsies—the name was originally planned for an Experience jam-type LP. Everyone liked the idea and it gave us hope for the future.

Near Boston, we sampled our first "grass pills," THC. You can get terribly paranoid on THC, but fortunately we played a good show to a receptive crowd in a circus tent. Then we had to drive back to our New York base. We left at one a.m., with the driver—and myself—too stoned to drive. Only Jimi could keep it together at all—very loosely together. He drove, taking over five hours to do it and borrowing my glasses to see properly. I remembered other occasions when he borrowed them briefly to check on something. I realized he really needed them but wouldn't wear them. Then I remembered all the other times he had driven.

Whenever we had a day off, we still tried to get into the studio. We were taking forever to finish *Electric Ladyland*. On August 27, speeding and coking, we worked from early evening all through the night until ten the next morning. We had to cancel the next day's activities, waking up with a snort of coke in time to go out jamming with Larry Coryell until six a.m. Day has no meaning. We blew out the studio time again and then we were on our way to Salt Lake City. At least we were staying the night; we had a chance to go up into the mountains, look around town and see the Everly Brothers—great! Usually we never saw where we were. We would arrive after dark, go straight to a hotel near the gig (if we even stayed), to the gig in a car and right back afterwards.

We returned to the recording studio in Los Angeles in Oc-



Hendrix before his world turned over

tober. Eric Clapton and George Harrison were hanging out in Los Angeles, but we couldn't. We had to concentrate on getting the LP together. First session, we played one song all night. I would get crazy by the 2,000th take. I was always of the mind that if it couldn't be done in three takes it should be put aside for the time being. Perhaps we couldn't get anything done in the studio because Jimi was doing more than he could handle, producing other groups besides his own.

It was nearly a year now since we'd released an LP of new material. Lee Michaels and Buddy Miles came down to the sessions, which were very casual; we managed only the slightest amount of work in several days. It was totally insane. I walked out of the "All Along The Watchtower" session. Dave Mason played bass, and Jimi most probably replayed it. Jimi wanted to be experimental, but most of the time he was so stoned and confused he didn't know what he wanted to do and changed everything a million times. Sometimes the frustration would get too much for him and he'd go off the deep end—like taking it out on two girls in Los Angeles. I wish he'd taken it out on the creep that showed up at our house and ripped off my six-string Fender and two leather jackets. Sometimes Jimi would just smash a car. When he got like this, you couldn't talk to him.

The chicks he jumped on complained to the police, who decided to raid us at the house. Luckily, I got a tip that the drug squad was planning a party. Jimi wasn't in, so Mitch and I cleaned up the house. The state of Jimi's room knocked us out. We found an amazing amount of everything, in every pocket, every drawer, on the floor, under the bed. Even I was speechless—and eternally thankful to the person who tipped us off. We buried everything in the garden. When the squad showed that night—phew! ☑

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**Next month:** *The Black Panthers move in; the Experience bids farewell in a cloud of tear gas; the Band of Gypsies; Hendrix's death.*



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World Radio History

Padgham from page 32

time there are things that I haven't done and which I have no inclination to do, such as twelve-inches for people. I'm known for what I do, and although to a certain extent I like twelve-inches I do tend to think it's a little bit of a fad, and I don't want to get caught up in that. I'd rather stay clear of that sort of thing and let other people do it, such as the 'New York crew' and the Arthur Bakers. Also,

if I've worked on a record, engineering and producing it from the word 'go,' it can be difficult for one to be totally objective about it in order to achieve what some of these guys do on twelve-inch, and so it can be great farming stuff out to some of these people in the States and hearing what they come up with. They've never heard the music before, whereas I've been living with it for four or five months, and they'll pick up on

something that I may not have done.

"Certain songs are suited to twelve-inch and some are not, but at the moment it seems to be the thing for all singles to have a twelve-inch version. I'd rather stay away from fads like that, and hopefully I'll come out the other end stronger for it, but I'd certainly like to be around in twenty years' time making records if people still want me to make their records for them!" ☒

### My Favorite Things

**P**aul's album was done in his own studio in Sussex, in what I would call the usual studio setup nowadays: a 56-channel Solid State Logic desk with total recall, along with two Studer A-800's with a Q-lock synchronizer. So basically we did this album in much the same way as I've done most other albums for the past two or three years: on 48-track.

"Paul's got a pretty good range of outboard gear, and we rented in anything else that we needed to have. We already had an echo-plate, a Lexicon 224X, a Yamaha REV7, two stereo AMS delays—Paul has always had quite a good relationship with Stewart Nevison from

AMS—with quite a lot of delay in each channel with harmonizers as well, and the new Publison sampler, known as 'the infernal machine.' Also, through Paul's long relationship with Abbey Road Studios we were able at the drop of a hat to get some old valve limiters on loan for quite a time, and old valve microphones, although we tended not to use too many of these on this album.

"When it comes down to it, I suppose my favorite pieces of equipment do tend to get hauled in. There's usually an AMS reverb and delay about. A Lexicon 224X with a Lark is also handy, because I'm a sucker for those really long reverbs where you can get those little finger cymbals and out them through the 70-second delays; it sounds brilliant!

"Then there's my pair of mini-

monitors that I carry around with me; Acoustic Research AR18's, which are not made any more, so I bought up virtually the whole stock that the factory had left! I've got hundreds of pairs of them, scattered around the world! I really don't use big speakers at all when I'm mixing. Trevor Horn uses AR18 speakers all of the time, and it seems that you either use (Yamaha) NS10's or AR18's. I think more people use NS10's, but I'm an AR18 man."

"Another old favorite of mine is the Gain.Brain compressor. Nowadays, a lot of the compressors have got VCA's in them which I'm not a huge fan of, but of course once you realize that you can't do without them when mixing on an SSL if you want to use the computer, then you get used to the idea!

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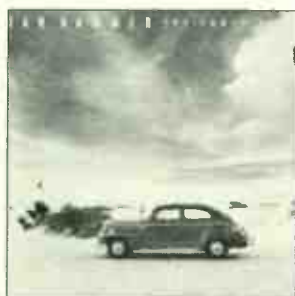
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JAN HAMMER

*The Early Years*  
(Nemperor)

Many are called but few are chosen, and for Czech expatriate Jan Hammer the road to recognition has been a long and circuitous one. It's led from Eastern Europe to America, from acoustic piano to synthesizer (and drums); from classical music to jazz and rock ...and finally, something akin to the sum of those parts as the aural scenic designer for television's most trendsetting show, *Miami Vice*. In the wake of that enormous success, this CBS affiliate has seen fit to repackage a series of instrumental totems from Hammer's Nemperor period (*Like Children*, *The First Seven Days*, *Oh, Yeah?*, *Melodies*), and the result, *The Early Years*, certainly serves to cement Hammer's reputation as a soundcraftsman.

*Movies* might have been a more appropriate title for this retrospective, because these electro-acoustic tone poems are all vividly imagistic. Their titles suggest thematic moods which the music goes on to evoke ("The Seventh Day," "Plants And Trees," "Bambu Forest," "Oceans And Continents," "Your Love," "Night," "I Remember Me"), the lis-

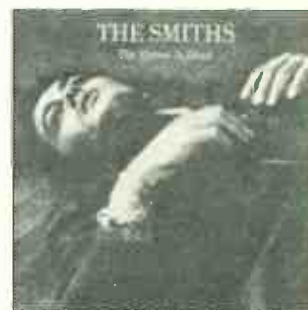
tener filling in the visual blanks on the canvas of his or her mind. Hammer's background as an accompanist and musical director for so accomplished a vocal virtuoso as Miss Sarah Vaughan (or so taut a melodist as Mr. Jeff Beck) has given him a sense of cinematic dimension, and here he creates a shifting cycle of backgrounds, foregrounds and commongrounds with the dominant voice. On "The Seventh Day," for instance, the piano sets the scene while violin takes the main theme, which is then shifted to synth as an escalating number of counter-melodies echo its central idea.

Other miniatures like "Plants And Trees," "Oceans And Continents" and "Your Love" display a sense of structure that suggests a mini piano concerto or piano trios (as in Brahms). Hammer gracefully interpolates shifting harmonic moods in a manner that might evoke Bill Evans for the more traveled listener. It's worth noting that Hammer was, and probably still is, a first-rate jazz pianist. (His emotive work with Elvin Jones at Slugs and the Village Vanguard forms the bedrock of my own early listening experience, and his contributions to Elvin's *On The Mountain* made that one of the drummer's most satisfying albums.)

It's also probably been forgotten that Hammer was the first musician to really put the Mini-Moog on the map, and to find musical uses for synthesizers as improvising and arranging tools. In many ways he was a key architect of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra sound (and a fine drummer as well). So it's instructive that Hammer's programmatic strengths reach full fruition on his electric-rhythmic workouts "Bambu Forest" and "The Animals." On the former Hammer lays claim to Mahavishnu's "Dance Of Maya" odd time cycle, while the latter is a beautiful jungle book of percussion,

stereo panning and musical colors, all very funky and subtle.

The key word I guess is subtle. *The Early Years* and *Miami Vice* represent a summation of musical learnings and yearnings, as good as his work as a sideman with Beck, Jagger, et al, and considerably better than his group recordings (notable for erratic results, questionable taste and one of the most sexist rock album covers in history). They indicate that somewhere down the line Jan Hammer is more than capable of putting his classical, jazz and rock scenarios together into a coherent vision. When he does, watch out. — Chip Stern

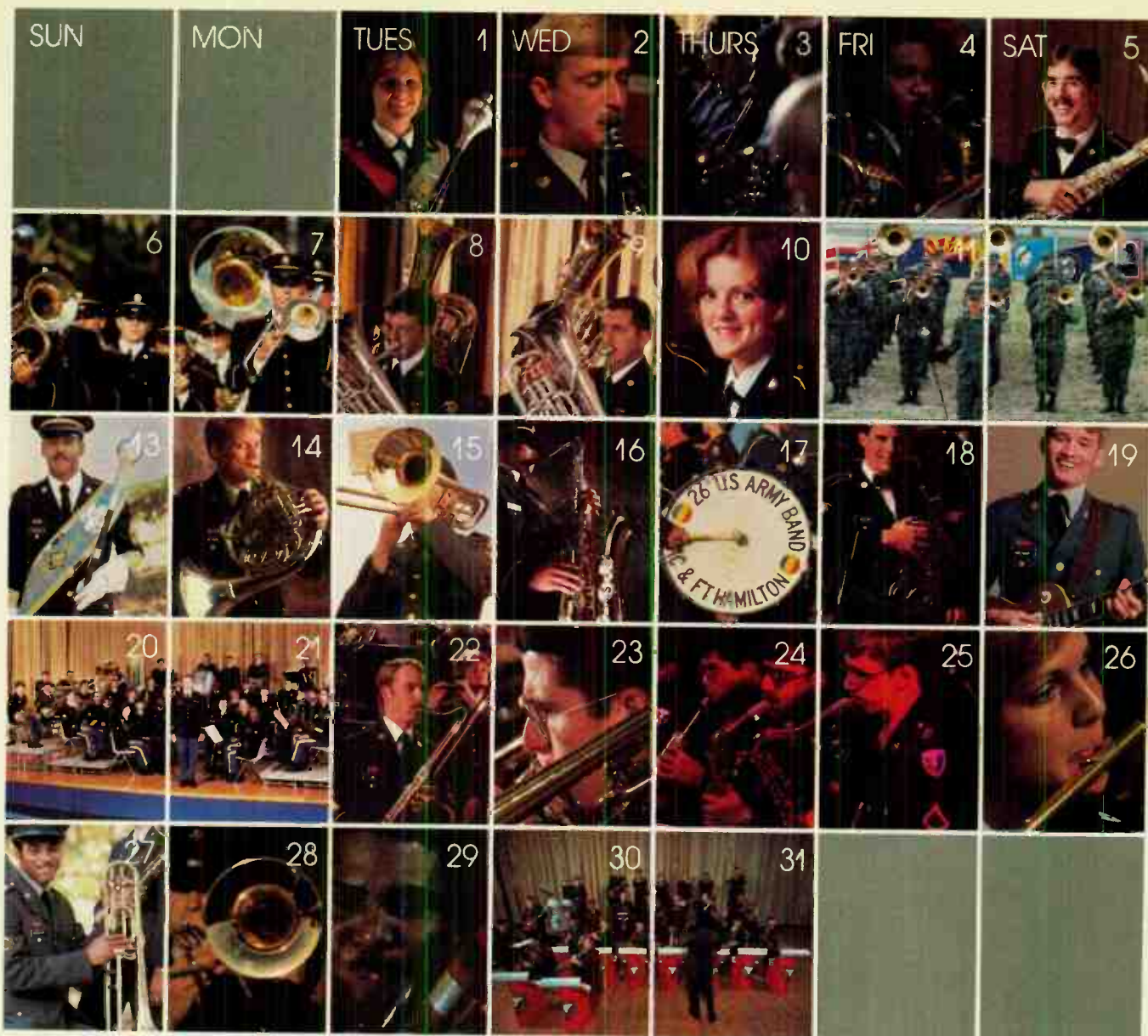


THE SMITHS

*The Queen Is Dead*  
(Sire)

Ya gotta say this about the Smiths' hyper-romantic bard Morrissey—he's not afraid of criticism. On the title track of his band's third and most accomplished album, he breaks into the Royal Palace only to be told by her Majesty, "Eh, I know you, and you cannot sing." In the Kinks-like music hall refrain "Frankly, Mr. Shankly," Morrissey takes his own writing to task: "I didn't realize you wrote such *bloody awful* poetry." For





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confessions like "Bigmouth Strikes Again," "Vicar In A Tutu" and the single, "The Boy With The Thorn In His Side," the singer/songwriter deflates his own pretensions by playing the divine fool.

After an impressive debut and eccentric successor (*Meat Is Murder*), the Smiths figure to follow fellow arena-rockers U 2, Simple Minds and Tears For Fears into the big time. *The Queen Is Dead* melds polish with power, and despite Morrissey's modesty about his vocal ability, his nasal plaints are developing into a distinctive croon. From the slow, dreamy ballad "I Know It's Over," to the sing-song twang of "Vicar In A Tutu" and the jaunty nursery rhyme verse of "Frankly, Mr. Shankly," he exhibits an expressive range previously only hinted at.

If Morrissey is one of rock's more evocative voices, his partner, guitarist and musical director Johnny Marr, has turned into a composer adept at building the perfect mise-en-scène to surround it. Morrissey's otherworldly mournfulness is reflected in the lush backdrops of the mostly instrumental "Never Had No One Ever" and the life-after-death celebration of "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out" (the LP's next single).

What I like best about the Smiths is that people either love 'em or hate 'em. Too many of the latter trip over Morrissey's effete politics and droning fatalism, and miss the pie-in-the-face sensibility that has defined U.K. popular culture since before the Beatles injected rock. For the rest of us, Morrissey's antic disposition (the vicar in the tutu, the boy with the thorn in his side) is displayed with such unabashed gusto, it's impossible not to smile, even as he stands on the edge of a bottomless precipice.

"So easy to laugh, it's so easy to hate, it takes strength to be gentle and kind," he sings to his critics in "I Know It's Over." Turning to his public he asks, "And if they don't believe me now, will they ever believe me?"

Well, they should. *The Queen Is Dead*. Long live the Smiths. — **Roy Trakin**

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## RUN-D.M.C.

*Raising Hell*  
(Profile)

**R**un-D.M.C. is the baddest group in the universe. Okay, I should scale that back a bit. After all, as Carl Sagan points out, there may be even fresher home-boys chillin' out in some far distant galaxy whose def jams we've never heard. But I'd be plenty surprised if they've re-

corded anything as impressive as *Raising Hell*.

It isn't just that Run-D.M.C. sound tougher than ever, spitting out syllables aggressively enough to make even LL Cool J. sound mush-mouthed. What really makes this record sizzle is the way Run-D.M.C. have broadened rap's musical basis.



By now, most listeners are aware of this duo's predilection for heavy metal; their cover of "Walk This Way" has earned Run-D.M.C. more publicity than "Rock Box" and "King Of Rock" combined. But "Walk This Way" is actually one of the duller tracks here; though its guitar-based groove is solid, it's more a matter of tribute than experimentation. Much more impressive is the title tune, in which co-producer Rick Rubin finds common ground between Run-D.M.C. and AC/DC, not to mention the way Jam Master Jay cuts "My Sharona" behind "It's Tricky."

But the best stuff here is purely rhythmic. "My Adidas," for example, is a perfect picture of B-Boy pride not so much for what it says about their shoes as for what the swaggering swing of the high-hat says about their walk. There's a lot of flexibility to their beats too, from the wonderfully articulate live drumming on "Perfection" to the unexpected stop time Jay provides by dropping a bit of Bob James (!) in the middle of "Peter Piper." Even Run's human beat-box routine avoids cliché in "Hit It Run," thanks to the way Jay's cutting and D.M.C.'s rap frame each sputter.

Maybe you're looking for more than crunchy guitar and inventive rhythms in a record—melody, for instance. But why quibble over minor points? *Raising Hell* is the kind of album that will either elate or offend you, and anyone who's read this far shouldn't worry about being offended. — **J.D. Considine**

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## SCOTT JOHNSON

*John Somebody*  
(Icon/Nonesuch)

**T**he two compositions on Scott Johnson's *John Somebody* are as dense as classical pieces, with textural, stylistic, and rhythmic ruptures coming at you like credit card bills. But Johnson, a guitarist and composer, has an ear for rock 'n' roll and country music, so the chunks he glues together include a parody of heavy metal, almost high-life sounding guitar, and thumping bass riffs. He also throws in free sections, and uses tape loops to tour this century's various avant-gardes, and without diminishing his appreciation for the contemporary beat. Nonesuch was planning on putting out the title tune as a twelve-inch, an unusual fate for music this intellectual.



Johnson worries about the conflict between high and vernacular music—not such a new idea. His kind of structural postmodernism is now evident everywhere from rappers to Christian Marclay to Falco to Art of Noise. If there's a line between art and vernacular music, I'd place Johnson's position as far to the art end as George Clinton's is to the other, with Johnson's dance impulse as deep in the shade as Clinton's avant-gardisms. The main motif in "John Somebody" for instance, is a tape loop of women repeating the line, "You know who was in New York? Remember that guy John Somebody? He was sort of a...." It isn't music in a traditional sense, more like a sound playing the part of a melody—but similar to the way Clinton uses rhythms as melodic hooks.

"John Somebody"'s glints of rhythmic and textural genius—chiming, looped voices set against stuttering and syncopated fingerpicked guitar lines—will probably show up on the Talking Heads' next record. Since many of the loops use women's voices, and uncaring ones at that, the piece speaks from a decidedly feminine perspective—even the name suggests male exclusion and indifference. A repetitive cadence in the background accentuates the tension.

My initial objection to Johnson was that his guitar lines seemed too polished, and that the music's veneer was too

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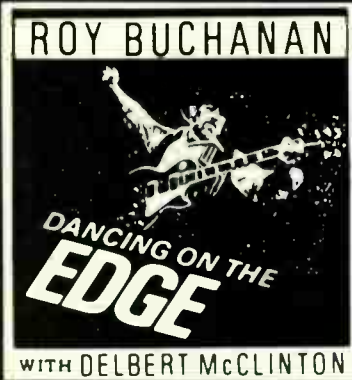
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cute. But pop is shiny and cute. If that's where Johnson wants to work, better he manipulates the real thing. That way his effects remain that much more intense. — Peter Watrous



**EURHYTHMICS**

*Revenge*  
(RCA)

Master pop craftsmen Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox definitely know how to make records sound good. He uses studio smarts to construct tracks that are models of streamlined efficiency, while she takes firm command of a melody from the very first line. Typically slick and self-assured, *Revenge* neatly sums up the Eurythmics' strengths and weaknesses. Although most of these sparkling cuts could become hits, few of 'em do more than scratch the surface.

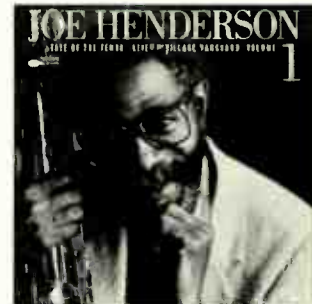
Annie Lennox's singing is the Eurythmics' identity, of course. Where Stewart delights in defying expectations with ever-changing grooves, she maintains a familiar poise throughout. In fact, Lennox usually seems above it all, which means the affectionate "When Tomorrow Comes" has the same tone as a snarling put-down like "The Last Time." Less politely, she's a bit of a cold fish.

That's why Lennox's soul-mama affectations, however hammy, are so welcome. At least the joyous lust of "Let's Go" and "In This Town"'s desperate blues find her grunting and sweating like a mere mortal. Best of all, "I Remember You" uses storm-tossed strings and an ominous tempo as the backdrop for her unearthly wailing about the end of an affair. Not so coincidentally, perhaps, it's also the album's least commercial song.

Give the Eurythmics high marks for versatility: From the blithe folk-rock shadings of "Thorn In My Side" to the solemnly devotional "Miracle Of Love" to the elegant melodrama of "A Little Of You," Dave 'n' Annie can adapt to just about any style. Rock 'n' roll? Yes, they even do that on "Missionary Man," a crash-bang raveup highlighted by wailing

harmonica, big-noise drums, and defiant vocals. (Hard to believe this is the two-some responsible for the turgid "Sweet Dreams.") And given the preponderance of truly witless music elsewhere, it's probably picky to penalize a smart effort like *Revenge* for sounding superficial. Dave 'n' Annie do convey a refreshing enthusiasm that other artists and jaded critics would do well to observe. But somehow, I don't think a hipper Abba is what this duo really had in mind.

— Jon Young



**JOE HENDERSON**

*The State Of The Tenor*  
*Live At The Village Vanguard, Volume 1*  
(Blue Note)

Good record here. To oversimplify for those who came in late (and with apologies to Henderson), in the 60s Joe Henderson was to Sonny Rollins what Wayne Shorter was to John Coltrane, viz an acolyte capable of independent thought and fresh invention. Not that Henderson has had anything like Shorter's impact as soloist or composer. He withdrew a bit early to northern California, which is to flirt with banishment, and sans big conceptual coups proceeded to evolve as an improviser, softening the brawling tone that had helped make his debut so exciting and vastly expanding his technical range and harmonic subtlety in compensation. What do you know, this brings us to the album in hand.

One of the surest indices of Henderson's current mastery of his materials is the enormous amount of time he has in which to do what he pleases within the chord changes and the bar lines, which wait for no man; time to play one idea, refinger it, set another beside it, revise both, play a third and fourth and fifth, streak away on a run and then pause on one foot as if to reconsider the beginning from the perspective of the end, all of this in one extended breath, in phrases that parade their exquisite length before you and then bat their eyelashes lengthily in farewell: a trilling experi-

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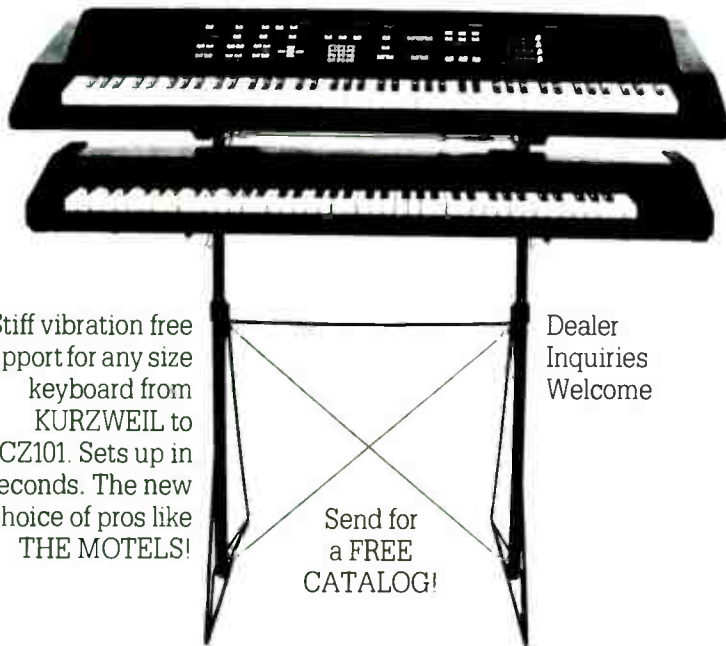
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ence. In this he is closer to the voluminous Rollins than ever, but in his softened tone there are more-than-hints of the warmer felicities that Hawkins and Webster and Young blew through the music before the panic of bebop squeezed them partway out. You can get to love this album. I went through three phases, with affection first, love third, and a middle stretch in which I thought it too low-keyed. But I learned.

Henderson's sometime recessiveness opens the way for Ron Carter to do a lot more than superlatively walk; it awakens the contrapuntalist in him, who nearly dominates the album. The brilliant Al Foster does not come off as festively as he can in person, though his fine collection of thumpbangery here makes me wonder how he would have played behind Monk. The interplay is exemplary, but all the instruments sound muffled, incomprehensibly so since the nonpareil David Baker engineered the session. But anyway, Sonny Rollins' classic 1957 Blue Note, *A Night At The Village Vanguard*, with the same instrumentation, this album's papa, was no sonic marvel in its day. Special thanks to the artists on this date for restoring to common memory Sam Rivers' beautiful tune, "Beatrice." Long may it wave. — Rafi Zabor

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## PHIL ALVIN

*Phil Alvin*  
(Slash)

Throughout his tenure as lead singer with the Blasters, Phil Alvin has managed to avoid the common excrescences of white blues singing—fake ethnicity, overstatement, and specious soulfulness. The elder Alvin brother continues to exude genuine feeling on his first solo outing, and dismantles plenty of other expectations in the process.

Alvin could have played it safe by clinging to the Blasters' familiar repertoire of blues and rockabilly. Instead he opted for a riskier course, interpreting older jazz and pop standards with such unlikely collaborators as the Sun Ra Ar-

kestra and New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

The tracks recorded with Sun Ra are this LP's prime file. The great band-leader's skewed traditionalism rubs excitingly against Alvin's unmannered, non-sense vocal style. The Arkestra romps and stomps on a pair of tunes associated with Cab Calloway (the "Minnie The Moocher" sequel "The Ballad Of Smokey Joe" and "The Old Man Of The Mountain"). On their take of the Depression-era sobber "Brother Can You Spare A Dime," Alvin sings with admirable restraint and emotional power, while the massed horns moan and Ra's fingers skitter across the keyboard. It's a crusher.

The Dirty Dozen track, "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn," is a hard-swinging brawl. Nearly as effective is the gospel-styled "Death In The Morning" (with sprightly vocal assists from Jubilee Train Singers Bobby King and Herman Johnson) and the countrified "Collins' Cave" (Richard Greene on fiddle). Switching gears, Alvin offers an appealingly straightforward rendition of the gutbucket "Gangster's Blues." Only "Daddy Rolling Stone" suffers from relatively stiff and conservative execution.

Phil Alvin could have become another Blasters album; instead, it's a fascinating corollary, at once respectful of its sources and and daring enough to have fun with them. Best of all, it swings like a muthuh. — Chris Morris

#### Easter from page 60

Asked if he's worried about becoming the world's oldest cult producer, Easter answers, "I may already be that." The mainstream clearly regards him as an outsider: a recent review in *USA Today* called *Big Plans* a "formalist exercise [and] a potential favorite for 60s fans."

"I know what they mean when there's a song like 'Last Chance Town,' which is a composite 1972 T. Rex/Mott the Hoople song," he nods. "But in that case, the entire roots movement is formalist to hell and back. I think my songs are interesting, and beyond the 60s rap they always get. I'm not one of those guys who is slavish to a period.

"But they're not the most obvious things in the world. I probably don't sleep in garbage enough," he says, holding an after-dinner ice cream cone. "If something about us came across as more alcoholic, if there were more stories about us swinging from chandeliers, it would probably get rid of terms like formalist." Easter admits that Let's Active's idea of trashing a hotel room is leaving their beds unmade.

A wiser Mitch Easter is being more selective about his production schedule. Although he admits he's out of touch ("I've heard of the Pogues, but I haven't heard them"), he hasn't been turned on by any "unique and warped vision" lately. "Lots of times, I'll do a record for some indie band and they'll send me some of their other things. They're all terrible. I don't know who buys them and where they get played and what it's all being done for." Still, he's in touch enough to find newer, better musicians: On Let's Active's last tour Easter was flanked by Angie Carlson on keyboards and guitars, bassist Dennis Ambrose on floating loan from Crossfire Choir, and Eric Marshall on drums, clearly his strongest ensemble to date.

With R.E.M.'s upcoming album produced by Don Gehman, it's clear that Southern Pop is outgrowing its Smurf phase. The romanticization of amateurism had threatened to stifle the music, and Mitch Easter isn't nostalgic for the old days. "I do enjoy records that are blissfully incompetent, but those guys are going to get better and want to do slicker things. And that's okay. Bands deserve to develop. A populist scene is a trap if you make the same record over and over and keep using shitty studios and crummy guitars to satisfy some aesthetic. Every era imposes new rules.

"The next time I hear somebody say

'jangly,' I want them to be talking about the keys in my pocket." ☐

#### Sly Fox from page 44

That's the way they planned it when they first wrote and recorded the album. "We took our time and tried to make each song very good, so that each could have a chance as a single," says the ever-practical Cooper.

Meanwhile, Camacho has done some more ad work and contributed to producer/artist Gerald McMahon's new album. Cooper has been busy on sessions with Mtume, Roy Ayers and Bootsy. But what both of them are really betting on is the well-coordinated Crockett and Tubbs teamwork of Sly Fox.

"Sly Fox is really the freshest thing for me," says Cooper, summing up the feelings of both. "Projects like Mtume's new album are just another aspect of the funk. I really admire that, but it's old-school to me. Once the funk, always the funk, as they say; and I can always go back to that and fall right into place. But Sly Fox is really what has the greatest element of surprise for me. I like that. We both do." ☐

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**Beausoleil***Allons à Lafayette* (Arhoolie)

Beausoleil is to Cajun music what K-Paul's is to blackened redfish: authentic enough to be chic, and too devoted to business to really care. The group is polished enough to cover all aspects of the sound—zydeco, waltzes, Creole blues, prairie two-steps—while somehow sounding as rough-hewn as the originals. But the best thing about Beausoleil is the sense that they'd play that way whether in a studio or some roadhouse outside Eunice. Which is all anyone could ask from a Cajun band. (10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530)

**Nu Shooz***Poolside* (Atlantic)

Between their prefab production and Portland origins, it's tempting to dismiss Nu Shooz as just another Quarterflash in the pan. But "I Can't Wait" is too winning a single to be written off as mere luck, and the best songs here suggest that writer/producer John Smith has more going for him than studio gloss. Can't wait to hear what he has up his sleeve.

**El DeBarge***El DeBarge* (Gordy)

To call El DeBarge a quintessential Motown talent is a nice way of saying he's a good production vehicle. Which is not to demean "Who's Johnny," a great single by any reckoning, or to ignore the fact that, as a singer, DeBarge offers the perfect compromise between Jeffrey Osborne's suave assurance and Michael Jackson's giddy energy. So how come the album's most interesting moment is Jay Graydon's Stevie Wonder exercise, "Someone"? After all, you'd think El was priority enough to rate the real thing.

**Camper Van Beethoven***II & III* (Pitch a Tent)

The name is a gag, but the band's no joke. Although the Campers carry on the obligatory flirtation with C&W (on one side) and psychedelia (on the other),

they somehow manage to poke fun at California trendies while simultaneously showing how it ought to be done. It's an ideal combination of irreverence and mastery, and so delightfully off-handed that something like "ZZ Top Goes To Egypt" sounds even better than its title. (Rough Trade, 326 Sixth St., San Francisco, CA 94103)

**Emerson, Lake & Powell***Emerson, Lake & Powell* (Polydor)

They may have a new drummer, but the only audible difference between this and the old ELP is that Keith Emerson gets better "voices" from his Kurzweil than he did from his mellotron. Is that why they call this *progressive* rock?

**Microdisney***The Clock Comes Down The Stairs* (Big Time)

Microdisney is so delightfully disarming they sound like an underpolished Prefab Sprout, but without the Sprout's smugness. Instead, the lyrics bubble with teasing wit and unsentimental affection, while the music shores things up with loose, jazzy harmonies and an unerring melodic sense, making the likes of "Horse Overboard" or "Genius" utterly irresistible. (6410 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90038)

**Hank Williams***Lost Highway* (Polydor)

The chronological completeness of this project is almost off-putting—until you start listening. Hank Williams was both genius and journeyman, as at home with the blunt realism of "Mind Your Own Business" as with the high-minded hokum of "I Heard My Mother Praying For Me." This third volume in the series includes much of both, virtually all exceptional, and expertly annotated.

**Milton Cardona***Bembe* (American Clave)

This exquisite recording finds one of the most gifted percussionists in Latin music

today working in what is perhaps his true element—the Santeria liturgy. The spiritual power of this Afro-Caribbean religious ceremony, sung in Yoruba to the accompaniment of a three-man percussion *bata*, is awesome, but it's the intense articulation of rhythm that makes this music so devastating. Incredible. (N.M.D.S., 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10013)

**Box Of Frogs***Strange Land* (Epic)

From the slick, Graham Parker-ized "Get It While You Can" to the growling, Rory Gallagher blues of "House On Fire," the Frogs bring out the best in their guests. And though a couple of cameos are scene-stealers—like Jimmy Page's incandescent "Asylum"—mostly it's the ensemble that shines.

**GTR***GTR* (Arista)

SHT.

**The Ordinaires***The Ordinaires* (Dossier/N.M.D.S.)

This oddball ensemble takes the notion of chamber rock to an alarming extreme, employing not only violins and cello, but indulging in complex time and other arty constructs. Yet it still rocks like the dickens, maintaining melodic ideas and even managing a few hooks despite an utter avoidance of vocals or pop song predictability. Not for eggheads only.

**Whodini***Back In Black* (Arista/Jive)

No, the title isn't an AC/DC allusion, and there is none of Run-D.M.C.'s heavy metal hip hop here. Nor, aside from the scratch-driven "Funky Beat" and the bass-happy "Last Night," is there much musical muscle. Guess they put all their effort into lines like "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" or "You win some, and then you lose some." Chalk this up to the latter.



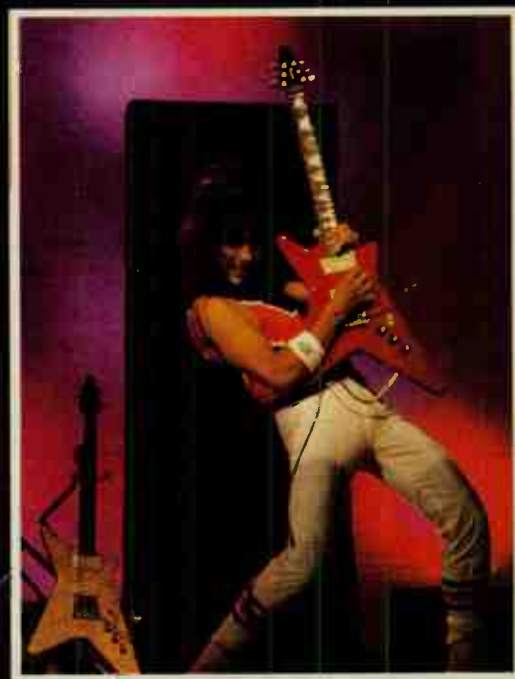
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**Duke Ellington/Count Basie**

*First!—The Count Meets The Duke*  
(Columbia)

Any queries beginning with “What is Jazz?” can be answered by this CBS “Right Price” classic, now available again after a long hiatus on the lost ledger line. Don’t even be reading this column if you don’t plan to own a copy. This is no “Battle Royal,” although *that* opening fanfare is undoubtedly the gaudiest, Dodge City shootout in big band annals: A mastodonish fourteen-piece brass section and the Kansas City vs. Cotton Club rhythm sections face off in delightful early stereo. It’s also a compendium of moods, tempos, syncopations, reminiscences, shadings, solo styles, stylistic devices, pianistic temperaments and mutual love, by America’s true Kings of Swing. Duke and Basie’s vision of life in the 20s, 30s and beyond is now ingrained in the very engrams of our pop unconscious—the way we rhyme, the way we slang, how we sing and shake that thang. America’s gift of joy to a downbeat world—long may she wave.

**Charlie Parker**

*Bird At The Roost, The Savoy Years—The Complete Royal Roost Performances, Volumes One & Two* (Savoy Jazz)

Ditto! Jack Towers’ masterful restoration of these Symphony Sid airchecks is a significant historical event. Now we can hear the seminal 1948-49 Quintet with Miles Davis and Kenny Dorham, Max Roach’s drum responses, indeed the whole feeling of the rhythm section as they interact with Bird in a live, uninhibited environment (and without the fear of making studio VU meters jump). A distant reminder of post-war America’s faster, darker pace, as swing moved to bop on the blue wings of Bird’s animated ellisions of hope, rhythmic celebration.

**Roy Haynes**

*We Three* (Fantasy/OJC)

Along with the equally magnificent *Out Of The Afternoon* (Impulse), this collab-

oration with pianist Phineas Newborn and bassist Paul Chambers clearly states the case for the drummer as auteur. Haynes’ critical neglect as a stylist and innovator has always baffled me. Coming onto the New York scene around 1945, he played with Luis Russell, Lester Young, Bud Powell, Charlie Parker and others before landing with vocalist par excellence Sarah Vaughan in the mid-50s. Through it all he emerged as the progenitor of displacement schemes, triplet cross-rhythms and funky foot-workings, paving the way for personal extensions by Philly Joe (with whom he’s often been linked, simplistically), Pete LaRoca, Elvin Jones, Billy Higgins and Jack DeJohnette. This trio stands as a masterpiece with the Roach/Herbie Nichols, Philly/Elmo Hope, Jo Jones/Ray Bryant recordings. Like Bryant, Newborn is a sanctified, bluesy graduate of the Art Tatum school who’s often been criticized for excessive playing. That’s bullshit; Newborn plays the piano like a mini-orchestra (not a horn player), and Chambers’ telepathic basslines complement Haynes’ patented snap-crackle-pop to give this record the perfect symmetry of a great after-hours set.

**Jimmy Lyons & Sunny Murray Trio**

*Jump Up—What To Do About It*  
(hat ART)

A spirited, bold, singing voice of modern alto, Jimmy Lyons passed away recently. It’s my bittersweet duty to report that these open-ended trios with drummer Murray and bassist John Lindberg perfectly represent his breakthroughs in tone, phrasing and rhythmic figurations both within and without the Cecil Taylor fleet (where he served as first mate for over two decades). The trio skitters meaningfully around time figures and riffs in a pulsing, joyous manner, as Murray’s ominous diminuendos, crescendos and personal colorations (he’s never been recorded better) provide the momentum for Lyons’ splintered subdivisions of the beat and his ascending, heraldic lyricism—at once Bird-like in

motivation, yet completely personal and circular in conception. Jimmy Lyons was an individualist in an era of clones. He’ll be missed. (Available through New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

**David Grisman**

*Acousticity* (Zebra Acoustic Records)

Grisman’s evocations of turn-of-the-century string bands and Djangoish hotcha never sounded so compelling as in this recent production. He’s buoyed by West Coast drum legend Hal Blaine, whose light, funky earth rhythms—understated and canny in emphasis and release—swung everything from Phil Spector and the Byrds to Simon & Garfunkel. Though these sessions are hardly as radical as his extraordinary duets with Andy Statman, Grisman’s spring-loaded mandolin flights and loose accompaniments (on a notoriously chunky sounding instrument) are moving in bop, swing, latin and R&B settings as well as modern bluegrass. Fun.

**Arthur Blythe**

*Da-Da* (Columbia)

As this big-voiced altoist has become more stylized he’s been casting around for appropriate settings to showcase his talents without endlessly repeating himself. Here he reprises his own “Break Tune” in a vaguely reggaeish/New Orleans manner; “Odessa” as an Afro-Middle Eastern incantation, and Coltrane’s “Crescent” as a nod to a personal influence. Long-time collaborators John Hicks, Bob Stewart, Cecil McBee and (especially) Olu Dara are most satisfying, and the ballad “After Paris” lingers like a bittersweet memory. Still, while I’m known to be tolerant of fusions, I have little use for contemporary R&B which contains neither rhythm nor blues; so much for “Corners,” though “Splain Thang” has a certain EW&F charm. And couldn’t they have found a real live drummer to play these tracks? A conservative, lyric voice like Blythe’s needs more rhythmic agitation and pure funk to effectively plumb David Sanborn country.

BY CHIP STERN

World Radio History

# Scott Johnson

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# Indie

## Solomon Burke

*A Change Is Gonna Come* (Rounder)

The studio sequel to 1984's *Soul Alive!* is old-fashioned in the merriest sense of the word. The crowned King of Rock 'n' Soul shines here, crooning and testifying mightily against the sympathetic backing of a crack New Orleans studio band. In the main, it sounds like one of Burke's classic Atlantic LPs—clean arrangements, sound compositions (some by Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham), and righteous singing. In this day of processed-cheese R&B, ain't that good news, baby? (1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140) – *Chris Morris*

## Tito Puente & his Latin Ensemble

*On Broadway* (Picante)

If Machito was the Ellington of Latin music, then Tito Puente remains its Count Basie, a brilliant bandleader whose arrangements soothe the soul even as his timbales set fire to your dancing feet. His zillion or so LPs are all worth the price, but none meld his salsa-meets-jazz sensibility with quite the élan of this 1982 release, which features a dream ensemble (pianist Jorge Dalto, saxophonist Mario Rivera, and both Gonzalez and Rodriguez brothers, among others) and selections which range from a lilting "Sophisticated Lady" to Milton Nascimento's "Soul Song" to his own blistering "T. P.'s Especial." By turns sweet, spicy and sublime, it's an album for all emotional seasons. (Concord Records, Box 845, Concord, CA 94552) – *Mark Rowland*

## E★I★E★I★O

*Land Of Opportunity* (Frontier)

Countrified new wave bands have become such a cliché that it's hard not to feel guilty raving over another, but E★I★E★I★O is an exception. For one thing, this Milwaukee-area quintet plays well enough to make its allusions work, from the So-Cal country flourishes of "Get Back To Arkansas" to the Appala-

chian undertones of "Blue Mountain-top"; for another, there's pop sense aplenty in the writing, from the Beatlesque "This Time" to the revisionist Chuck Berry of "Go West Young Man." Mostly, though, E★I★E★I★O rocks, and that's what really makes their influences work, and this record matter. (Box 22, Sun Valley, CA 91353) – *J.D. Considine*

## Cover Me

*Various Artists* (Rhino)

This collection of other singers performing Bruce Springsteen songs plays better than it sounds. The LP not only unveils gems like Dave Edmunds' "From Small Things" and Southside Johnny's "Hearts Of Stone," it also *omits* monstrosities like Manfred Mann's "Blinded By The Light." The compilation includes great songs unrecorded by Springsteen, with incisive covers of more familiar tunes; just listen to Johnny Cash sing "Let 'em shave off my hair and *burn* Johnny 99." There are many bad Bruce imitators on the charts right now; buy this instead. (1201 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404) – *Bill Flanagan*

## Tex Thomas & the Danglin' Wranglers

*Dare To Dangle* (Pennies From Heaven)

Tex Thomas (Harvey Young, Jr.) is a poignant-yet-twisted lyricist whose gruff singing suggests the vocal merger of Tom Waits and Billy Joe Shaver. *Dare To Dangle* showcases these multiple talents in a lush blend of country, jazz and rock. Thomas' swinging, eccentric songs shine as unique little gems; all that's missing is the hilariously insulting stage patter that's made him an Austin legend. (909 Chote, Austin, TX 78702)

– *Ben Sandmel*

## Huey "Piano" Smith & the Clowns

*Serious Clownin'—The History Of Huey "Piano" Smith & The Clowns* (Rhino)

Those of us who associate "Sea Cruise" with ShaNaNa, "Rockin' Pneumonia And

The Boogie Woogie Flu" with Johnny Rivers, or even "We Like Birdland" with Patti Smith, ought to hear these wild-spirited, down and dirty, infinitely superior originals. Smith encapsulates New Orleans pop history on one hand ("Little Liza Jane" harkens to Dixieland) and completely sends it up with the other, a mix of technical aplomb and anarchy that Little Richard could admire. (1201 Olympic Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90404) – *Mark Rowland*

## Cootie Williams

*Echoes Of Harlem* (Affinity)

Most jazz fans know Cootie as the master of mute through his tenure with Ellington's orchestra; less are aware of his own big band, assembled in the early 40s, and which included the bluesy vocal stylings of both Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and (surprise!) Pearl Bailey, plus a promising young pianist named Bud Powell, whose first vinyl appearances are documented herein. Among this cast Cootie was still king; whether coaxing a ballad like "Sweet Lorraine," interpolating Monk's "Round Midnight" or breezing through his own "Flooogie Boo," his virtuosity and range of expression was matched only by Roy Eldridge among his pre-war peers. (Street Level Trading Company, 5298/1 Valley Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90032) – *Mark Rowland*

## Sonny Boy Williamson

*The Chess Years* (Chess)

Ever wonder where Bob Dylan learned how to phrase? You'll know after a side or two of this wonderfully packaged six-record set, and you probably won't stop listening either. Sonny Boy was a good-not-great Chicago blues man, but his casual command of the idiom is engaging, and the collective musicianship—mostly from house hands like Willie Dixon, Robert J. Lockwood and Otis Spann—purty much defines the genre. (5298/1 Valley Blvd., L.A., CA 90032)

– *Mark Rowland*

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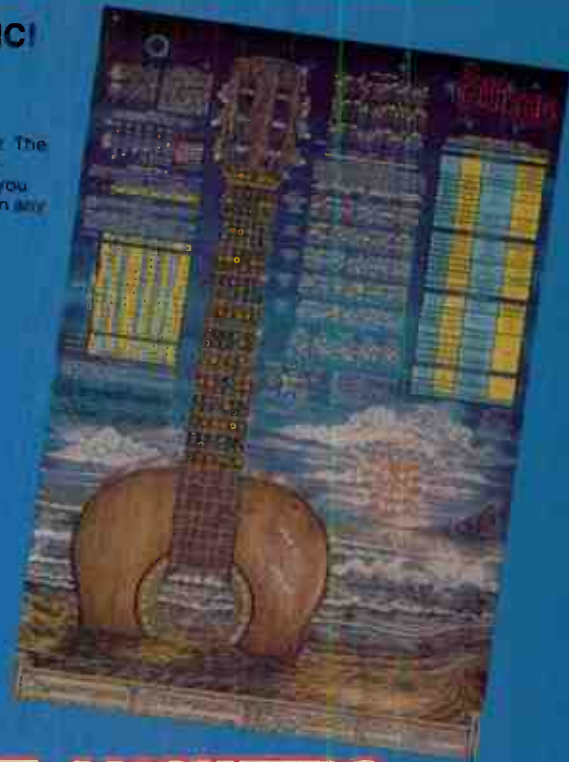
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Major 21st	Minor 21st
Major 23rd	Minor 23rd
Major 25th	Minor 25th
Major 27th	Minor 27th
Major 29th	Minor 29th
Major 31st	Minor 31st

TABLE OF KEYS	
Major	Minor
Major 7th	Minor 7th
Major 9th	Minor 9th
Major 11th	Minor 11th
Major 13th	Minor 13th
Major 15th	Minor 15th
Major 17th	Minor 17th
Major 19th	Minor 19th
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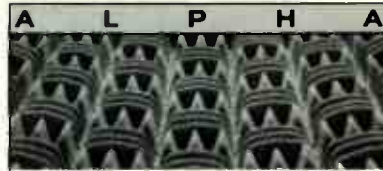
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Marley from page 98  
land Records states that very little releasable music is left in the Marley vaults ("The *Confrontation* LP was the cream of the material that was left," says Island rep Rob Partridge, "and even some of those tracks required heavy surgery"), Garrick mentions four songs Lee Perry produced which might make it into the audio-visual room: "One track equates politics with the game of dominos." Island has just finished putting together a compilation of previously released political tracks, *Rebel Music*. In the museum, a pattern of bullet scars remind that rebel

music seldom escapes some sort of retaliation.

"I remember being blasted at in this house when they tried to assassinate Bob," says Downie. "I'd never swam on the ground before, but I did then, trying to get away. When I came back the next day, there were two bullet holes where I'd been sitting."

These cracks and holes are a more vivid reminder of the power of Marley's music than any souvenir in the house.

The sparsely filled museum/merchandising concern seems at odds with the memory of a man whose music teems

with the vigor of the struggle. Are rows of souvenir ganja pipes and Marley Rum in the future? Kingston radio is currently dominated by "Boopsie" songs, a string of novelty hits à la "Roxanne Roxanne."

"The work isn't finished yet," cautions Ziggy. "Not only one man is important; it's the whole people." "Like Bob said, 'Soon we'll find out who are the true revolutionaries,'" Rita says.

"The mentality moves back and forth," she continues. "This 'Boopsie' business is bad. But don't worry, the time will come when the music will swing back to Jah." ☐

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# SELLING MARLEY BY THE OUNCE

BY JIM MACNIE

**M**arley, Marley, Marley," Big Youth laments. "It's a hell of a fix; it's like he's still here." Youth is leaning up against the wall of Gregory Isaacs' record shop on a scorching Kingston afternoon, considering whether or not to attend the opening of the Bob Marley Museum up the street at 56 Hope Road, the original site of Tuff Gong recording studios, and Marley's one-time home.

"Marley is such a foundation of this music," he muses. "He reached people's minds. He spoke the truth, and the system doesn't always like the truth. There used to be a vision in reggae, but now it's gone. And when there's no vision, people perish. Like Yellowman—a guy has a good voice, but he's like a porno star, X-rated. Reggae was a force, but it's slipping into a commercial gimmick; I came back from the States and they were selling Reggae Rum! That's why the music misses someone like Marley; he sung philosophically, he told the truth. Word sound is the greatest power on Earth,

and Bob had strong word sound."

"Bob is not gone," claims Rita Marley with reverence in her voice, and to take random samples of Kingston street opinion, or check the sales of the Marley record catalog, it would seem she is right. It's five years since Robert Nesta Marley passed on, but many fans simply don't acknowledge his passing; his music and message are enjoying a brighter spotlight now than when he was alive.

As the museum festivities begin, Big Youth isn't to be found, substantiating his claim to dislike being "where the politicians are." The opening is by invitation only, and the ceremony is inundated with speeches and more speeches. Bureaucrats, local celebs, family members, and administrators of the Marley estate all have something to say, setting the stage for Prime Minister Edward Seaga's address wherein he waxes brotherly with Marley's ghost. As the Prime Minister runs the "I knew him when..." spiel, recounting all *he* had in common with Jamaica's most popular export, strategically situated Rastas shake their heads and shoot off their mouths: "Jahhh, Rastafariiii!" Caustic glances from the front row plead, "Anytime but now." In the back, thirty to forty members of the Nyabingi community, one of the oldest Rasta sects, conduct their own proceedings with ceremonial smoke, engulfing drum rhythms, and low-ebb, high emotion chanting.

"We were told to come here," says John Dred, spokesperson for the group. "Nyabingi were very close to Bob. Most of what he sang was Bible-related; he would come by our headquarters and we would chant and discuss the Bible. It was there that he started, before carrying his thoughts into the reggae scenario." But this night the Nyabingi seem like country cousins, allowed only to chant at the back of the bus. "I don't know what happened," continues Dred. "I thought we were part of the celebration. Nyabingi are more civilized than some think. We're organized now and we're running a vendors' group to help people on the street." Dred believes in the promise that Marley's work shed a light on: fend for yourself, maintain self respect, give thanks to Jah, and your reward of Zion will be prefaced by the reward of dignity.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it turned into a shrine atmosphere," says Neville Garrick—designer of Wailers LP covers and main architect behind the Marley Museum. "The extent of people's love for Bob is amazing. I was getting some supplies for this place last week—aluminum stripping and such—and I said to the shopkeeper, 'Okay, how much?' The guy said, 'Listen, Bob has given so

much already, I couldn't charge'; that's the feeling around here."

But the bet on devotion is hedged with dollars. The museum is also out to peddle Marley memorabilia. "We have two goals," Garrick continues. "This is actually the headquarters for the Bob Marley fanclub right now. We receive literally thousands of requests in the mail for info on where to get T-shirts and other paraphernalia; the museum will be the official office for that, providing a service for merchandising. The second thing is to show what Bob's life and lifestyle were all about. It's a growing museum, we must build and build."

Back onstage, the speeches are ending, and a night-long performance by the Wailers and friends finally starts. Both Barrett brothers are present, as well as Tyrone Downie and Junior Murvin. Marley's mother, Cedella Booker, does a gospel-flavored tribute to her son, "Mama Don't Cry (I'll Be Alright)." The other vocals on the all-Marley set list prove why the Wailers were one of the best *backup* bands in the music. Strained vocal attempts by both Murvin and Downie go quickly awry. When Ziggy Marley joins them, they at least find a focus; the timbral similarities between the elder and younger Marleys' voices are striking. "He looks and sounds like his father," says Downie later, "yet he's his own man. But just to hear him emote like that makes me feel something like I used to when I played with Bob. Playing with Ziggy...it's a tease." Everyone wants to get inside the museum, but the ribbon-cutting has been postponed.

Around the grounds multicolored murals depict the various stages of Marleydom: Bob, Rita and the kids; Bob's role as a link between Seaga and his predecessor Michael Manley; Bob's musical roots with the young Wailers; his hobby of soccer; a performance portrait with the Haile Selassie countenance behind him; and finally, Rita alone.

A surge forward signals that the Marley Museum doors are finally opening; the shoving isn't rewarded by much. Inside, only a few rooms are open. Two hold nothing but the wallpaper—made from shellacked newspaper and magazine stories about Marley. The bedroom is a sparse resting place embellished with only the great man's cutchie (clay ganja pipe). Garrick's quote of "It's a growing museum" rings in my ears. An alleged audio-visual room "isn't quite prepared," and the section which houses Marley's gold records is out of bounds.

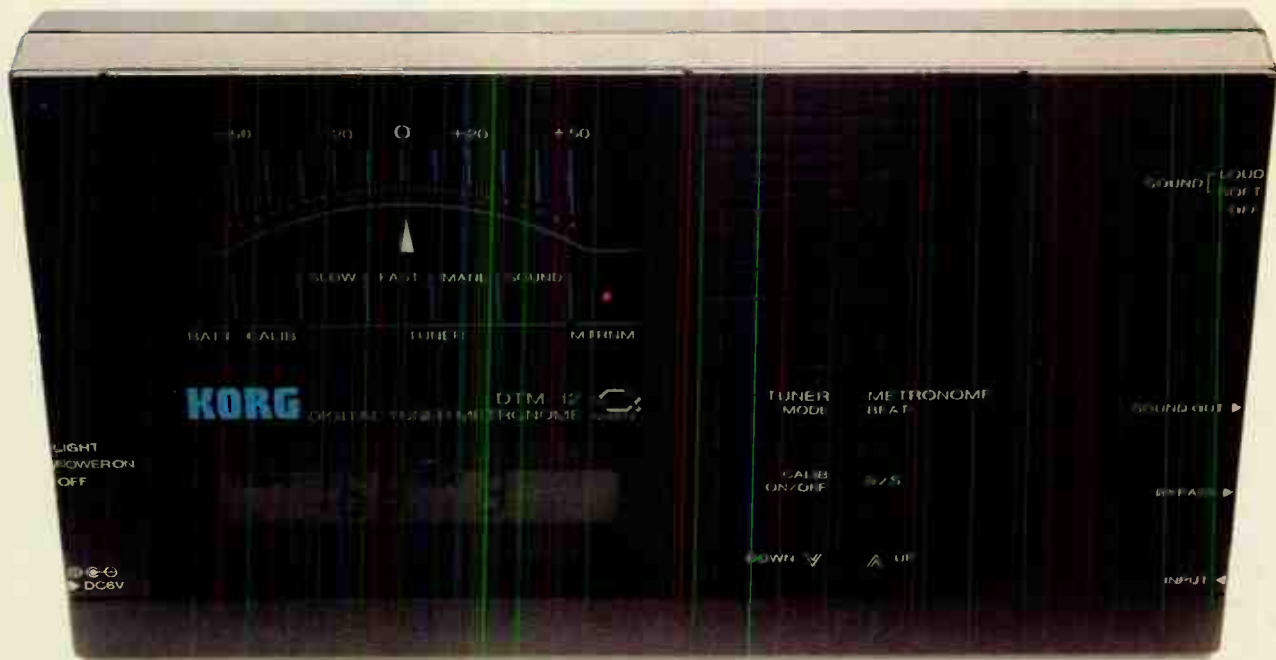
"There are still quite a few things I'm trying to get from Rita, and Bob's mother," claims Garrick. Although Is-

*continued on page 97*





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