

SPECIAL ISSUE: LIFE ON THE ROAD

# MUSICIAN

JUNE 1992 \$2.95

## GUNS N' ROSES

Axl and Slash explain themselves,  
Nirvana, U2 and fighting the fans

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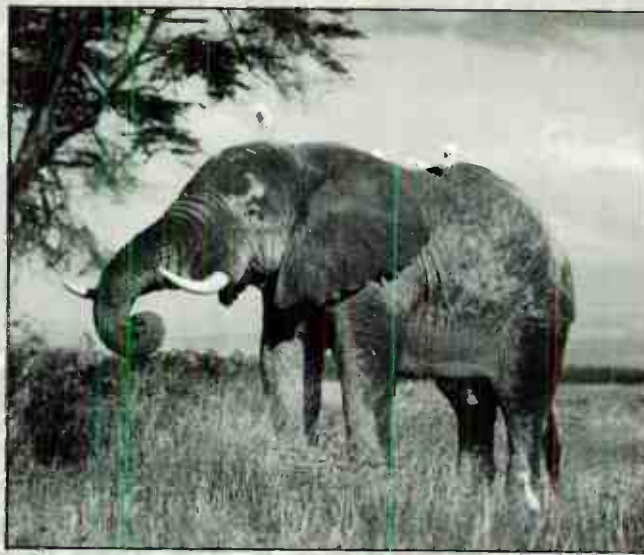
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Grammy, Rock Performance Solo, "Luck of the Draw"  
Grammy, Rock Performance Duo, "Good Man, Good Woman"*

Vaughan *Best Blues Artist, Guitar World*

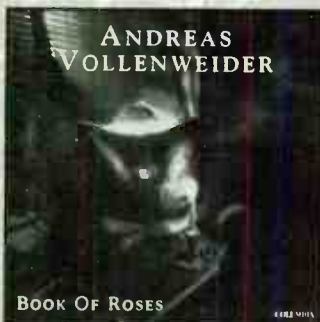
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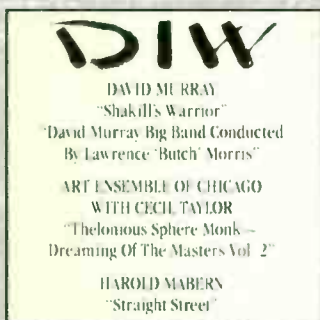
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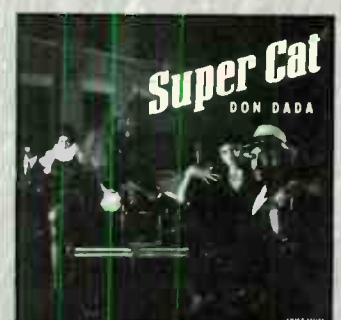
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# CONTENTS

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE

JUNE 1992 • ISSUE NO. 164

## SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ROAD

Lots of great music is found on recordings, but even more great music is made by musicians playing live. This issue *Musician* focuses on life in the halls and on the road. Here's the view from the stage and the view from the wings. Keith Richards said it: The greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world is a different band every night.

### 7 FRONT MAN JOHN MELLENCAMP

In the middle of a seven-month tour, Mellencamp ponders how the gypsy life has changed. BY CHARLES M. YOUNG

### 27 PERRY FARRELL & LOLLAPALOOZA II

Last summer Jane's Addiction put together an alternative caravan—and cleaned up in a rotten market. This year Jane's is no more, but leader Farrell is determined to keep the Lollapalooza alive. BY CRAIG ROSEN

### 29 SUMMER TOURS '92: THE ODDS

In 1991 the concert business took a big bath. In 1992 we surveyed the people who put up the money to see which acts they're betting on—and which they're avoiding. BY TONY SCHERMAN

### 30 THE PROMOTER: DON LAW

Boston's Law has been a talent-buying kingpin since the late '60s. But he warns that if his industry doesn't change its thinking, the days of the regional concert promoter will soon be over. BY STEVE MORSE

## WORKING MUSICIAN

79

### THE SOUND ENGINEER

Queen Latifah's Rebekah Foster mixes pre-recorded tracks with live musicians.

BY TOM MOON

82

### THE GUITAR TECH

Alan Rogan's handled the axes for Clapton, Richards, Townshend and AC/DC and kept his head the whole time.

BY MATT RESNICOFF

84

### THE LIGHTING DESIGNER

What do megastars Madonna, Paula Abdul, Michael Jackson and Michael Bolton have in common? No, besides that. Lights by Peter Morse. BY RICK MATTINGLY

86

### THE BACKUP SINGER

Dolette McDonald on hitting high notes and harmonies with the Police, Talking Heads and Steve Winwood. BY CHIP STERN

88

### THE HORN SECTION

A brassman's confessions: how the Uptown Horns jazz up everyone from Robert Goulet to the Rolling Stones. BY CRISPIN CLOE

106

### BACKSIDE

### THE T-SHIRT GUY

Okay, now you know what everyone's job is. But who has the most fun on the road? Meet the man with a shirt in one hand, a big bag of money in the other and a smile on his face.

## DEPARTMENTS

8 MASTHEAD 10 LETTERS

13 NEW RELEASES

20 FACES

*George Harrison's British debut, Chico Hamilton, the Arc Angels, Charlatans UK, Terry Reid and Aster Aweke.*

92 DEVELOPMENTS

94 RECORDINGS

100 PERFORMANCE

*INXS play the biggest-ever Australian concert.*

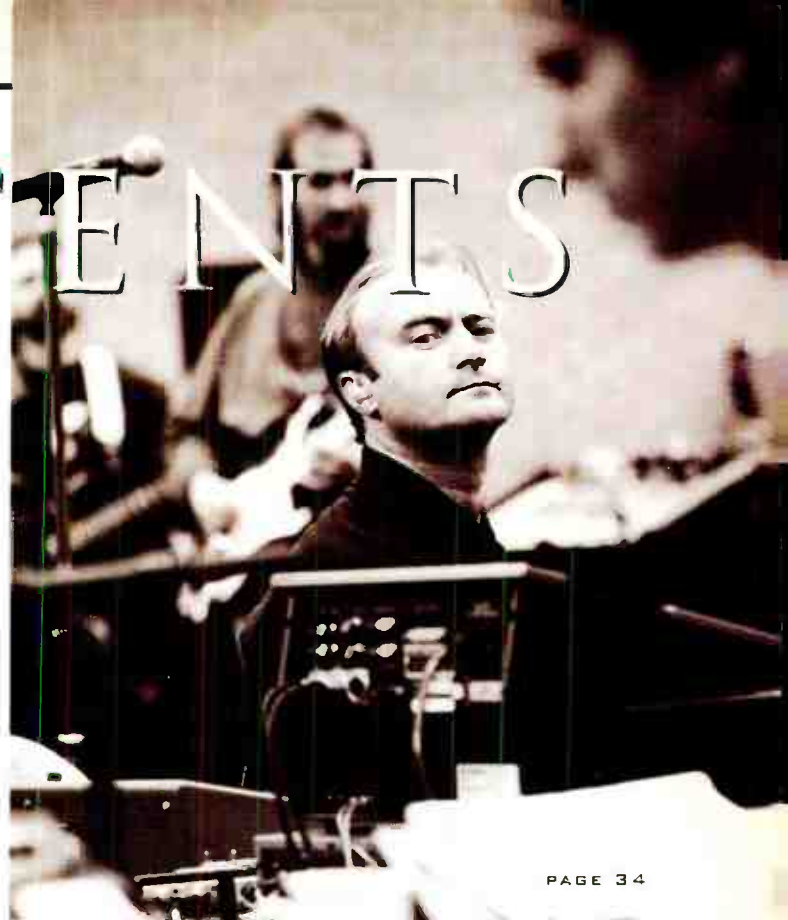
102 CHARTS

*Leapin' Leppards*

105 READER SERVICE

### COVER

*Axl Rose photographed on the road in Oklahoma by Robert John, April, 1992*



PAGE 34

### 32 CAN SCALPING BE STOPPED?

U2's management think they've worked out a system to keep tickets out of the paws of touts—and get them to the fans.

BY THOM DUFFY

### 34 GENESIS: STADIUMS HERE WE COME!

In a quiet studio in rural England, Phil Collins, Tony Banks and Mike Rutherford are rehearsing music to fill football fields. We hang around practice, ask lots of questions and try to help the boys trim down that enormous set list. BY J.D. CONSIDINE

### 44 METALLICA:

### THE VIEW FROM THE SNAKE PIT

This summer they're touring with Guns N' Roses—which should produce a noise loud enough to be heard on Mars. We jumped on Metallica's plane in the heart of Dixie, crawled around under the stage during their concerts and got spit on by their guitarists. BY JIM MACNIE

### 54 AXL ROSE: FIGHTING WITH THE CROWD

Before teaming up with Metallica, Guns N' Roses had to work out how to grow out of being the brash upstarts and get used to being the established superstars. Frontman Axl Rose talks about learning how to overcome his rage, what the crowd takes out of him, why he wishes Nirvana would join the tour and why he's teaching the band U2 songs. BY BILL FLANAGAN

### 57 SLASH FACES THE MUSIC

Rebellion vs. acceptance and the great vodka controversy.

BY MATT RESNICOFF

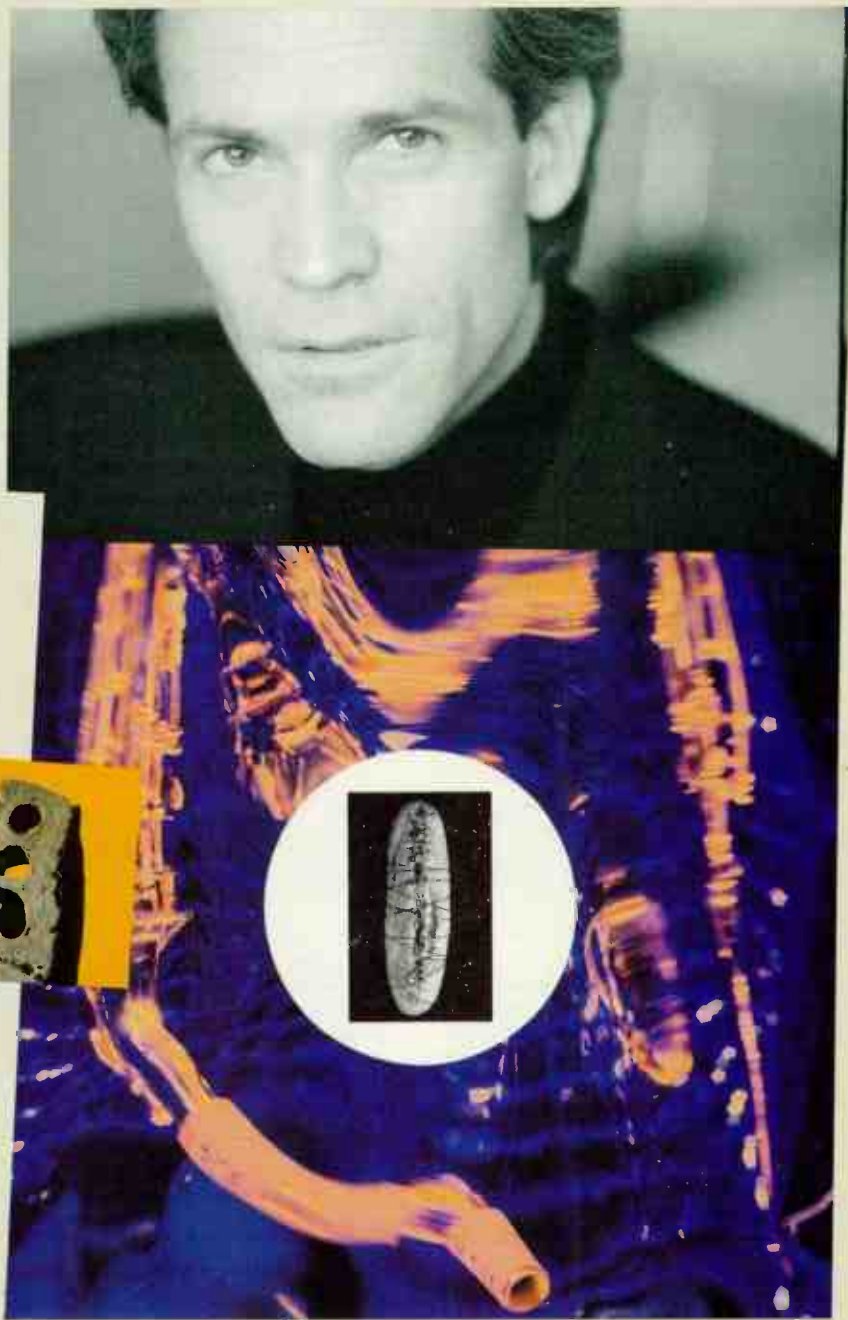
### 69 MITCH RYDER: THE ROAD GOES ON FOREVER

Not every great rocker plays in arenas. Twenty-five years after his glory days, Mitch Ryder is still on the road, making music in bars in the middle of nowhere.

BY FRED GOODMAN

# upfront-david sanborn

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# JOHN MELLENCAMP

## FRONT MAN

*What are you doing to keep yourself amused on the road?*

Last night I went to sleep at 3:00. I got up at 7:30 and I've been painting ever since.

*Don't you get paint all over the hotel suite?*

No, I'm a neat painter. Don't wear a smock. I rarely even get paint on my hands. I'm working on a portrait of my new girlfriend.

*How about sports?*

We're playing basketball before the shows. We get a day off, we might get a touch football game up. And of course there's poker. The road is very calm compared to what it used to be. The blatant difference is there isn't any womanizing going on. After 30 shows, I don't think anyone has even given a girl a backstage pass. The days of recreational sex are over.

*So you compensate with poker?*

The stakes have to be high enough to hurt a little, high enough to feel it's out of your range. People get real excited when there's a thousand dollars in the pot.

*What can go wrong at your level of touring?*

Not very much. This is my fourth tour with this crew. I made a couple of suggestions in the beginning, and that was it. They know what to do. The band is getting along better than it ever did. We adjust a little here and there—drop a song, add a song. We don't close anymore with some '60s cover. I'd be embarrassed to do "Land of 1,000 Dances" or "Like a Rolling Stone" now. Too many teenage faces going "Huh?" So now we close with "Cherry Bomb." I never knew how many people loved that song.

*What's the difference between your audiences this tour and last tour?*

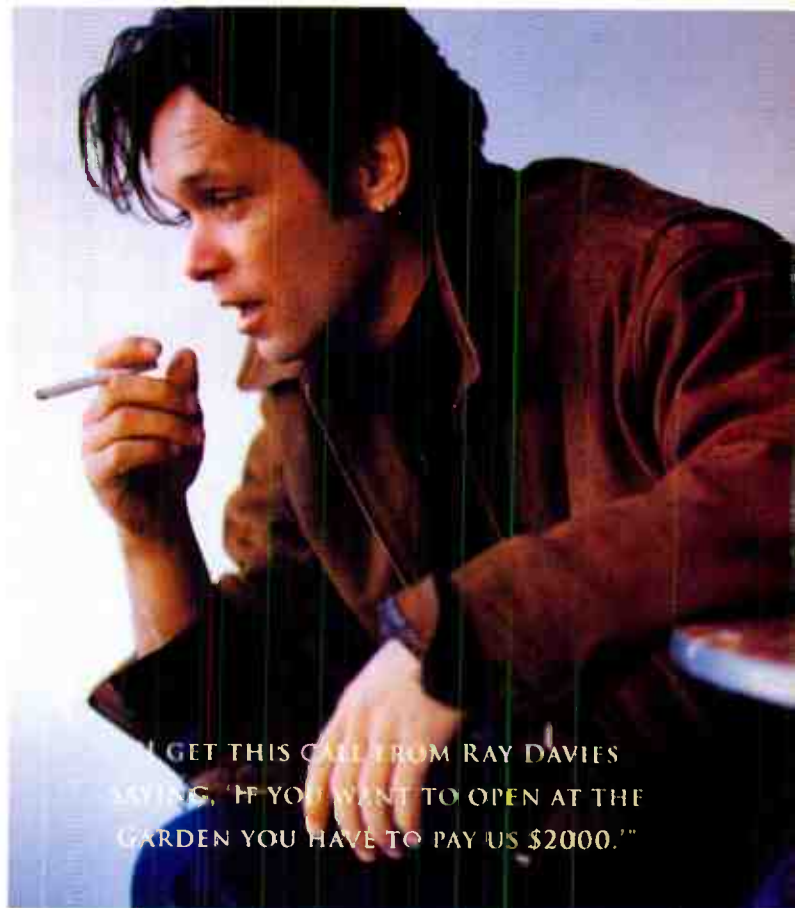
I had to drop my speech against corporate sponsorship. They just weren't getting it. The average kid is thinking, "If you can get five million dollars from a beer company for a song that you wrote a long time ago, why *not* take it?" I grew up in a time when music meant something different, I guess. It's scary out there now. It feels like our economy is one step behind communism on its march to the grave. I keep thinking how lucky we are to be able to tour this way. Most cities we're doing multiple nights, and that's a result of 17 years of doing this and a lot of hit songs. I don't think these younger bands, even ones who are selling a lot more records than we are, can pull off a big tour in this economy. When someone plunks down \$25 for a concert ticket in 1992, it means something. You feel a heavy responsibility to give them their money's worth.

*So you play all your hits.*

Yeah, it's the Mellencamp jukebox. The other day I heard David Bowie say he wasn't going to play any of his old hits. I thought, "Fine, I'm not going to pay any of my old money to hear him, either." We can't even fit in all our hits. We had to drop "I Need a Lover" and several others.

*Even without an opening act. Why have you never let other bands open for you?*

I swore I wouldn't do to anyone else what was done to us. If there was even a chance we could screw a band by denying them a soundcheck, I couldn't live with it. You know who was the worst to us? The fuckin' Kinks. Ray Davies and his brother Dave, they beat each other up all the time, and they paid us \$250 a night and gave us half the sound system. We



I GET THIS CALL FROM RAY DAVIES SAYING, "IF YOU WANT TO OPEN AT THE GARDEN YOU HAVE TO PAY US \$2000."

were coming to Madison Square Garden, and we were all excited 'cause we'd never played there, and I get this call from Ray Davies saying, "If you want to open at the Garden, you have to pay us \$2000." I said, "No way." So they got this band Angel City to fly in all the way from Australia and pay them the \$2000. Heart was the only band that treated us fair when we opened. Paid us fair, let us do what we wanted with the sound system.

*Got any political wisdom in this election year?*

No, I sure don't. Over the years people have asked me a lot of questions I wasn't qualified to answer, but I answered them anyway. In Canada now they're in a state of shock over this free trade agreement. Basically, the government turned them into a part of the United States without letting anyone vote on it. So what I do now instead of my anti-sponsorship rant is, I talk about how hard it is to vote—registering, figuring out where you're supposed to do it, taking time off work. We can pay bills over the phone, shop over the phone, have sex on the phone. I don't know why we can't vote on the phone. The technology's there. They just don't want poor people and black people to participate seriously.

*Are you ever going to quit smoking?*

No, I'm smoking a cigarette and watching IU basketball on TV. That's as exciting as it gets on the road these days. —Charles M. Young

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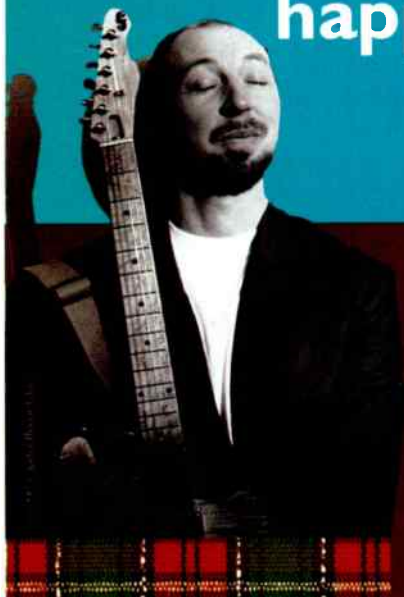
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MUSICIAN (USPS 431-910), 33 Commercial St., Gloucester, MA 01930 (508) 281-3110, is published monthly by BPI Communications, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. © 1992 by MUSICIAN, all rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Gloucester, MA 01930 and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions \$17 per year, \$32 for two years, \$49 for three years. Canada and elsewhere, add \$12 per year. U.S. funds only. Subscription address: MUSICIAN, Box 1923, Marion, OH 43305. Send address changes to above address. Call 1-800-347-6969 for subscription in the cont. U.S. and 414-382-3322 elsewhere. Current and back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Billboard Publications, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer: Gerald S. Hobbs; Vice Chairman & Chief Operating Officer: Arthur F. Kingsbury; Executive Vice Presidents: John Babcock Jr., Martin R. Feely; Senior Vice Presidents: Paul Curran, Robert J. Dowling, Ann Hysie, Howard Lander, Rosaloe Lovett; Vice Presidents: Georgina Ciallis, Glenn Heffernan, Theo Roos

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May 1992 Issue

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"The View from the Edge" (March '92) was an excellent, insightful interview with the man who changed the sound of the guitar. Thank you for shedding some more light on this genius. It really is ironic that Edge stood among those giants of the guitar (Clapton, Page and Beck) at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Even though Edge tried to dismantle the whole concept, he has gradually become somewhat of a guitar hero whether he likes it or not.

Jon Solomon  
Santa Barbara, CA

It is nice to know that someone can conduct an interview with someone and not read about what brand he or she wears for underwear. Bill Flanagan's interview with Edge was thoughtful and remained focused on his own music and U2. An old classical musician I know once said that it was the silences between what you play that make what you play have life. I feel this applies to Edge. I truly hope that U2 will continue with their literate approach to music. If you see Edge again please thank him for me and tell him that I am glad you never asked him about his brand of underwear.

Felice M. Holloran  
Raymond, NH

I am a part of a generation that has been raised on the music of the legendary Irish band U2. In the past I have viewed Bono as a prophet due to his words and the Edge as a savior due to his guitar playing. But since the release of *Rattle and Hum*, their pedestal has been crumbling. After reading the interview with the "savior," the Edge, the pedestal fell even more so. The reason is due to the article completely worshiping U2. The last two albums have been extreme disappointments. They no longer

are the eternally holy U2, but just another band trying to make it in the '90s.

I do commend you for a seemingly honest interview with Dave Edmunds [*sic*]. I suppose I got used to the cliché he hinted at in the interview, a quiet man who they call the Edge.

Marcelino A. Galang  
Milwaukee, WI

## FINALLY A HIT

I enjoyed the terrific article in April's issue on k.d. lang by Sheila Rogers. I have been a big supporter and fan of k.d. lang's since her early years of crazy glasses and sawed-off cowboy boots. I believe that her new album will get her the recognition that she has long deserved.

Diane Tricomi  
West Buxton, ME

The opening review (*Recordings*, April '92) implies that the "revolution" of women "daring to create strong music without acting cute" is for the most part, having been successful, over. If it has been indeed so successful, why is it that Michelle Shocked, Tracy Chapman and k.d. lang had to share the same approximate space awarded to each of the five individual male artists/bands in this section? Further, the ratio of attention given to male artists/bands as compared to female artists/bands in the *Recordings* and *Short Takes* review sections combined is 22 male to five female (three of which are the aforementioned major artists sharing space). To say that women in music have made progress is, without a doubt, true. However, it is clear that the revolution must continue to reach a true level of equal

support by those who care about and appreciate music.

Linda Bottlik  
Los Angeles, CA

## "ON HOME"

The April *Faces* column on Willie Dixon featured an inaccuracy when it claimed that Sam Cooke recorded Dixon's "Bring It On Home to Me." While Sam did have success with Dixon's "Little Red Rooster" at the end of 1963, he never recorded "Bring It On Home," the actual title of the Dixon song. Sonny Boy Williamson did have a good run with the tune, however, and Led Zeppelin did it on their second album *listing Jimmy Page and Robert Plant as the writers* (another reason why Willie had to dedicate his later years to developing a fund to help old bluesmen that were ripped off).

Sam Cooke *did* record his *own* composition called "Bring It On Home to Me" in 1962. It was released as the B-side to "Havin' a Party" and wound up outperforming the A-side on both the pop and R&B charts. Ultimately, that song has turned into one of the most lucrative copyrights for the Cooke estate, having been recorded over the years by the Animals, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Dave Mason, Van Morrison and, the man who did backup vocals on the original, Lou Rawls.

Lou Simon  
RCA Records  
New York, NY

## NICE CURVE

I was really happy—and astonished—to see an article on Curve in the April issue of *Musician*. I'm glad more people are slowly

becoming aware of all the wonderful things happening to pop music these days.

Elisa Staneff

## HURLER

I must take exception to my esteemed colleague Charles M. Young's remark about French vocalists (les chanteurs français) in the March issue (l'édition du Mars) of *Musician*. While it is certainly true (vrai) that the nation's musical achievements stink worse than its cheese (sentent pire que le fromage de la France), it is an outright lie (c'est absolument faux!) that Philippe Marcade of the Senders is "the only Frenchman in the entire history of the universe who can sing blues and rock 'n' roll" ("le seul homme français dans l'histoire d'univers qui peut chanter les bleus et le rock & roll"). You simply didn't think hard enough (vous n'avez pas se fouler!) and are, in fact, one hundred percent wrong (vous avez cent pour cent tort): There are two (il y a deux) such claimants to that distinction. The one you have forgotten is (ce que vous avez oublié est) Bob Piazza, firebrand vocalist of the incredible (incroyable) Little Bob Story. I recommend 1976's *High Time* or 1978's *Little Bob Story* (both on French Crypto) or the group's lone British release, *Off the Rails* (Chiswick, 1977).

Je suis crevé, je vais pousser un roupillon. (Pardon my French.)

Ira Robbins  
Woodside, NY

## ERA-TUM

In the May '92 *New Releases*, page 93, the title of Bobby Watson's album is *Present Tense*, not *Bobby Watson*.

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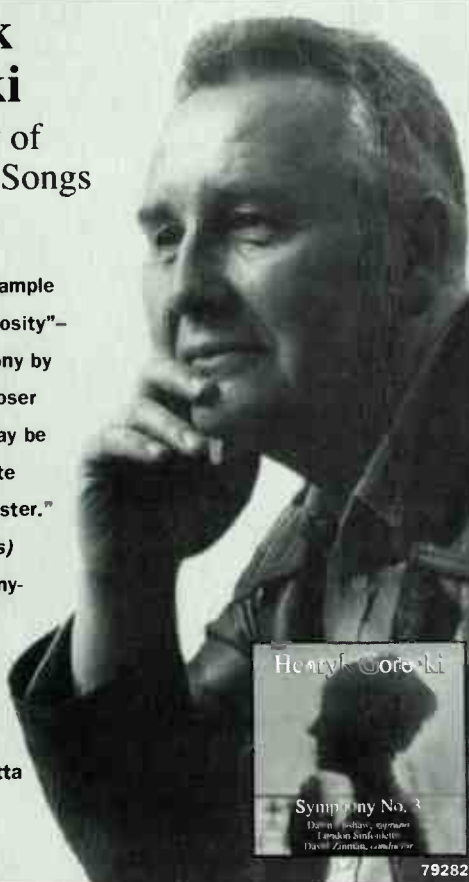
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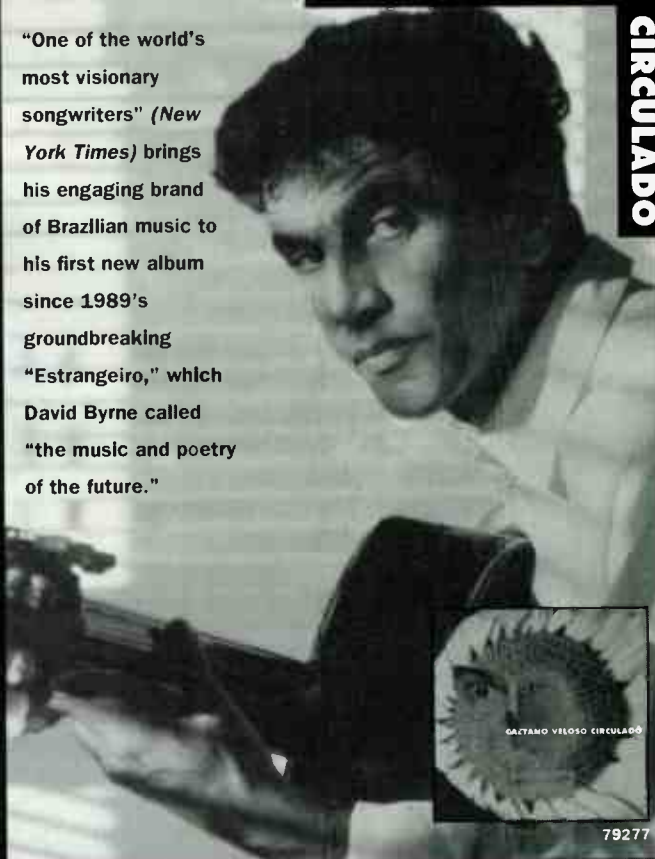


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CAETANO VELOSO

CIRCULADÔ

“One of the world’s most visionary songwriters” (*New York Times*) brings his engaging brand of Brazilian music to his first new album since 1989’s groundbreaking “Estrangeiro,” which David Byrne called “the music and poetry of the future.”



79277

photo: Pierre Dubour

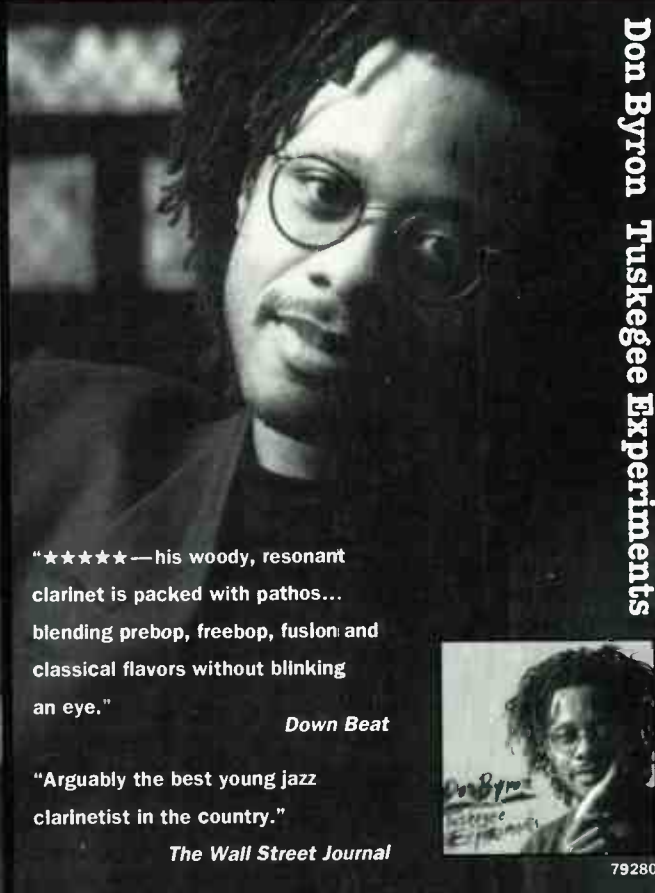
Don Byron Tuskęge Experiments

“★★★★★—his woody, resonant clarinet is packed with pathos... blending prebop, freebop, fusion and classical flavors without blinking an eye.”

*Down Beat*

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## NEW RELEASES

## ROCK

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

## TERRY REID

*The Driver*

(WARNER BROS.)

ANYONE ABSENT AS long as Terry Reid needs one hell of a re-entry vehicle, and with *The Driver*, he has one. Proving him equally at home with classic English blues (Reid, remember, was Jimmy Page's first choice for Led Zeppelin) and contemporary angst (the Blue Nile's Paul Buchanan owes him more than a little), its performances range from the Stones-style kick of "If You Let Her" to a tender retelling of the Waterboys' "The Whole of the Moon." Marvelous.

## SOUL II SOUL

*Just Right: Volume III*

(VIRGIN)

ANCHORED AS USUAL by the hypnotic bass-and-percussion groove that has become this group's trademark, the songs here offer only the subtlest refinements to Soul II Soul's sound: a bit of extra bounce to the afterbeats in "Mood," for instance, or a broader range of dynamics behind the various vocals of "Direction." But that's more than enough difference to put some extra oomph into Caron Wheeler's spirited singing on "Joy," and allow Kofi to completely reclaim the Love Unlimited oldie "Move Me No Mountain."

## ELECTRIC BOYS

*Groovus Maximus*

(ATCO)

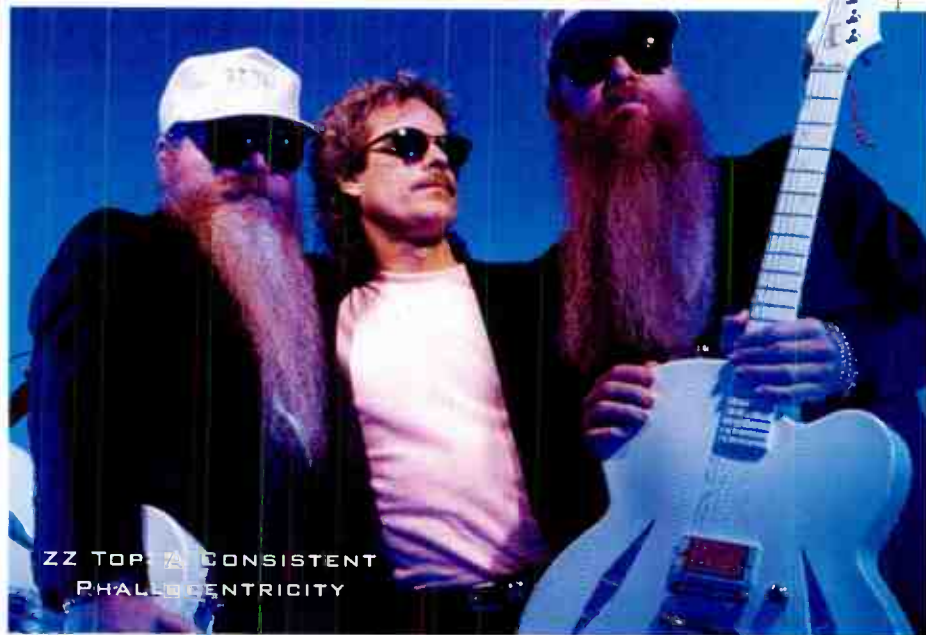
SURE, THESE HARD-ROCKIN' Swedes know how to groove, and songs like "Bad Mother Funker" prove they can work a boogie riff better than any band this side of Aerosmith. But their real gift is for the melodic, meaning that their most memorable moments are with the Beatlesque "Bed of Roses" and "Mary in the Mystery World."

## AFGHAN WHIGS

*Congregation*

(SUB POP)

CLEVER ENOUGH TO find hooks in the sort of gnarled riffs and guitar noise Fugazi plays for atmosphere, the Afghan Whigs are also canny enough to avoid most of the mannerisms that make much Amerindie rock seem so clichéd. But the best



ZZ TOP: A CONSISTENT PHALLOCENTRICITY

reason to join this *Congregation* is that the songs are catchy enough to hold their own against the best work of bands like Dinosaur Jr. or the Replacements.

## SPINAL TAP

*Break Like the Wind*

(MCA)

THERE'S A FINE line between clever and stupid...

## KMFDM

*Money*

(WAX TRAX)

DESPITE ITS PREDILECTION for distorted vocals and metallic beats, KMFDM is not just another post-industrial dance band. Not only is the group's approach elastic enough to fit both robotic synth loops and searing guitar solos, but its songs avoid the usual all-out assault approach, tending instead toward measured, melodic compositions with solid structure and a sure sense of drama.

## ZZ TOP

*Greatest Hits*

(WARNER BROS.)

LISTENING TO THEM all in a single sitting, it's astonishing how consistently kinky these singles are, from the safe-sex sleaze of "Tube Snake Boogie" to the it's-not-about-jewelry classic "Pearl Necklace." Naturally, the new tracks—a sample-heavy "Viva Las Vegas" and a phallocentric raver

called "Gur Love"—maintain the tradition with ease. The guitar playing's not bad, either.

## ANGELIQUE KIDJO

*Logozo*

(MANDO)

This is what Afro-pop should be—full of unexpected textures and rhythmic surprises, yet accessible enough to feel familiar after a single hearing. Of course, that sort of thing is always easier with a producer as studio-savvy as Joe Galdo, but his brains are only part of the story; the rest is Kidjo herself, a singer whose sassy, soulful delivery needs no translation. An entrancing album.

## JAZZ

BY CHIP STERN

## STEVE SWALLOW

*Swallow*

(XTRAWATT)

STEVE SWALLOW DEFINES a different kind of bass perspective. The sound is crystal clear (I believe his five-string bass has an extended treble range), more reminiscent of a cello, guitar, trombone or bata drum than of bass guitar. Swallow's accompaniments are as translucent as an acoustic bassist's. As a result you have to put your radar up to hear him, even though you can always feel it—a nice electro-Dixieland touch. After a while you toss out your

SHORT TAKES

preconceived expectations of bass guitar *bottom*, and his pristine melodic lines (Swallow employs a pick) take on a unique presence. *Swallow* further showcases the bass guitarist's lovely ear for cycling harmonies, with star turns by former employers Gary Burton and John Scofield; Carla Bley and Steve Kuhn are supple and supportive. The metallic cool of it all kind of sneaks up on you after a couple of listens—Steve Swallow's most fully realized offering as a leader.

THE MASTER MUSICIANS  
OF JAJOUKA FEATURING  
BACHIR ATTAR

*Apocalypse Across the Sky*  
(AXIOM)

DON'T KNOW WHY this is in a jazz column, but there is no neat corner where you can pigeonhole this untempered, untamed primal scream. The otherworldly moan of the reeds, the sweet simplicity of the strings and the cathartic interplay of the massed drummers suggest why musicians from Brian Jones to Ornette Coleman have sought out Jajouka revelations in the mountains of North Africa. (Which reminds me, when are

Ornette's three-LP collaborations going to see the light of day?)

THE JULIUS HEMPHILL  
SEXTET

*Fat Man and the Hard Blues*  
(BLACK SAINT)

AS IF JIMMY Reed, James Brown, Charlie Parker and Elliott Carter had conjugated and called the baby jazz and soul. Hemphill is that rarest of writers who defines a singular harmonic canvas, a universe all his own, and on *Fat Man and the Hard Blues* Hemphill fulfills the expectations of his trail-blazing arrangements with the World Saxophone Quartet. Yet for all the interactive energy of the WSQ, the author's fine hand is better served by this new band (Marty Ehrlich, Carl Grubbs, Andrew White, Sam Furnace and a formidable young tenor innovator named James Carter). Having six voices instead of four gives Hemphill richer possibilities for figured basslines and open voicings, and from the primal gutbucket of "The Hard Blues" to the swaggering vamps and boppish doo-wop of "Fat Man," this is a major statement by an American original.

DAVID MURRAY

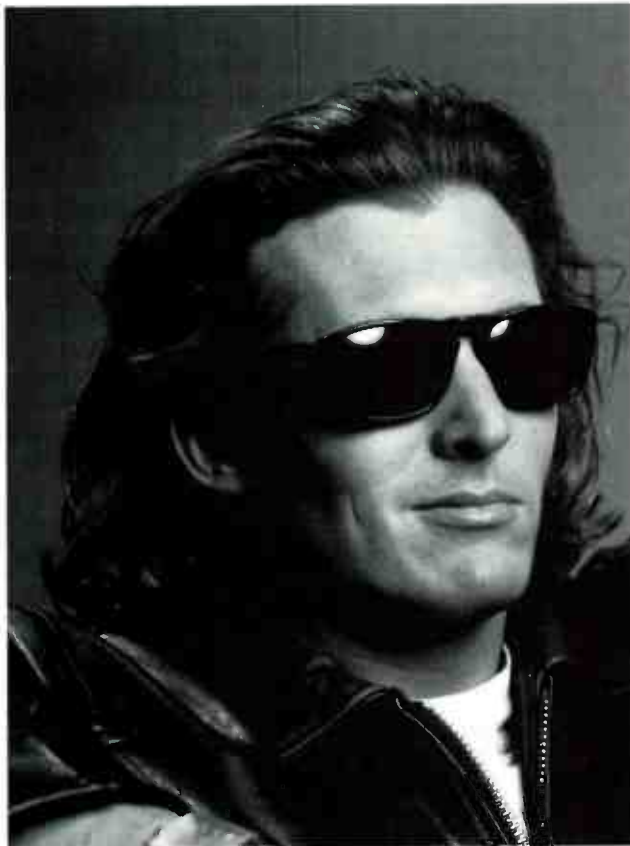
*Shakill's Warrior*  
(DIW/COLUMBIA)

DAVID MURRAY HAS flooded the market with so many albums over the years—eminently listenable, albeit rather casual, meandering jobbers—that it tends to deter admirers and uninitiated alike from taking a second plunge. *Shakill's Warrior* is soulful, well-thought-out and user-friendly as hell. Don Pullen's sanctified organ and Andrew Cyrille's soca-like swing help keep the focus on the singing, bluesy qualities in Murray's long lines and startling register leaps, without any diminution in rhythmic power.

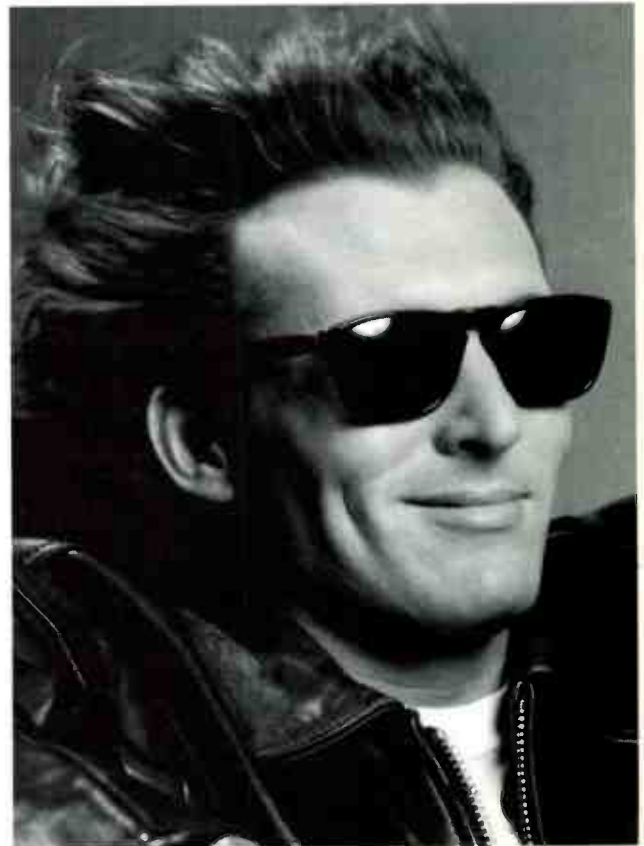
DICK HECKSTALL-SMITH

*Where One Is*  
(MAINSTREAM)

SOPHISTICATED TRAVELERS MIGHT recall this reedman's Rollinsesque turns and Rahsaan-like flourishes (look, Ma, two at once) from Jack Bruce's *Things We Like* (PolyGram, with John McLaughlin and Jon Hiseman, a real missing link of British modern jazz). Then there are those who'll recall with a shudder the bloated arena ges-



**NORMAL BIAS**



**HIGH BIAS**



SHORT TAKES

tures that undermined Colosseum. But forgive and forget: Dick Heckstall-Smith has been one of the leading lights of British jazz, blues and R&B since the days of Graham Bond and Alexis Korner. *Where One Is* melds all these styles together into a solid contemporary jazz recital, without falling into a generic fusion bag. The bold cubist strokes of Heckstall-Smith's arranging on "A Knite in Whoneedsya" recall the optimistic beatnik modernism of British jazz in the '50s, and the notion of jazzing up African high life is appealing.

ARTHUR TAYLOR  
*Mr. A. T.*  
(ENJA)

ONE OF THE best and most original modern jazz recordings to break through in some time. Arthur Taylor, having once codified the works of Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Max Roach and Philly Joe Jones (much as Dexter did with Bean, Prez and Bird), has grown into an exceptional stylist. The broad spacing between his snare and bass drum phrases, the easy propulsion of his cymbal beat, the muffled thunder of his brushes, let the music

fulminate with a relaxed, burnished kind of swing, especially on Jimmy Heath's "Gingerbread Boy."

JACK DEJOHNETTE'S  
SPECIAL EDITION  
*Earth Walk*  
(BLUE NOTE)

GOD WILLING, BLUE Note will get behind this truly modern, appealing fusion record. Substituting keyboards for guitar seems to open up DeJohnette's writing for horns (Greg Osby and Gary Thomas), and his loose jazzy interpretations of funk, blues and rock rhythms make for airborne interplay that always dances without any patronizing gestures.

INDIES

MARTA SEBESTYÉN  
*Apocrypha*  
(HANNIBAL)

SEBESTYÉN'S TREATMENTS OF Hungarian folk melodies possess an almost otherworldly beauty, but what makes this album so miraculous has less to do with her voice—which, admittedly, is as expres-

sive as it is exotic—than with the artful soundscapes Károly Cserepes wraps around it. Imagine if Béla Bartók had access to Joe Zawinul's electronics, and you'll have a sense of how special this album is.

—J.D. Considine

LITTLE JACK MELODY WITH HIS  
YOUNG TURKS  
*On the Blank Generation*  
(FOUR DOT)

BRINGING BRECHTIAN CABARET to Texas has got to be a thankless job, which is all the more reason to applaud Little Jack Melody. Deep in the land of Lone Star beer this guy has concocted a musical vision built around banjo, harmonium and tuba, upon which he spins tales of pillaging Switzerland (seemingly rankled by the cuckoo clocks and cheese), circuses from hell and a recasting of the Book of Genesis where God is Sinatra and Paradise is "Vic Damone at the Frontier Room and there's no cover." For good measure he also breezes through Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." It's all charming and refreshingly uncynical. Did you say you're looking for something different?

—Thomas Anderson



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TRIO ERIK MARCHAND

*An Tri Breur*

(SILEX-FRANCE)

MARCHAND IS A celebrated interpreter of *kan ba diskan*, a traditional Breton-language a cappella style that has found new practitioners since the Pan-Celtic folk resurgence in the '70s. When Hameed Khan's blooming *tablas* and Thierry Robin's undulating *oud* join in behind the folkie's pitch-perfect tenor vibrato, the chemistry is complete for an audacious new globalist experiment. Joined on some tracks by violin, bombarde and guest vocals, the trio taps into a more beguiling whole than even their tripartite cultural roots might suggest. (Harmonia Mundi USA, 3364 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034)

—Tom Cheyney

SCRAWL

*Bloodsucker*

(FEEL GOOD ALL OVER)

THEIR RECORD LABEL (Rough Trade) went under, they were unhappy with their last album, *Smallmouth*, so this all-girl punk rock trio went back to basics and with a little financial help from their

friends put out this seven-song EP. Though the covers of Cheap Trick's "High Roller" and Paula Abdul's "Cold Hearted Snake" are powerful, Marcy Mays' intense vocal pleading is weighted with the originals that shift convincingly from flat-out rockers to introspective piners. The instrumentation is spare, but the X-like harmony vocal call and response, between Mays and bassist Sue Harshe, keeps things moving at an exhilarating pace. Besides, who can resist the question "How many nights must I spray Love's Insecticide?" (Box 02058, Columbus, OH 43202)—*Rob O'Connor*

JOHN FAHEY

*Old Girlfriends and Other Horrible Memories*

(VARRICK)

THE WRINKLE THIS time is that acoustic guitarist Fahey has front-loaded an album with arrangements of schmaltzy rock 'n' roll ballads. (Still the sentimentalist: In the '70s he covered the '20s.) The rest of *Old Girlfriends* contains something borrowed (from earlier Fahey albums) and something blue—his resonant 12-bar constructions. Slightly uneasy listening.—*Scott Isler*

SANDY BULL

*Vehicles*

(TIMELESS RECORDING SOCIETY)

AS ECLECTIC MULTI-INSTRUMENTALISTS go, Sandy Bull is in a class all his own. In the open-ere era of the late '60s, Bull helped make music safe for exotic house blends. After a long hiatus, he's back in the ring with *Vehicles*, and it's just that—a grab bag that leaps from quasi-C&W to quasi-raga to Bachishness to funkbucket, joined together by some peculiar, Bull-ish inner logic. Bull plays pedal steel, sarod, various guitars, oud, glockenspiel, etc., etc. Parts of the package are downright cheesy, but the sheer pluck and generous spirit of the thing makes for disarming charm. (165 Brooks Ave., Venice, CA 90291)—*Josef Woodard*

MYRA MELFORD TRIO

*Jump*

(ENEMY)

SKIP THAT NEW Andre Previn troika and go for one of the more well-planned, well-executed piano trio discs to come along in a while. Melford's a modernist, and loves to display her yen for thick, skittish action, but she's a master of tempo as well,

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which is why each of these seven tracks is memorable. Both blues and backbeats hang tough, and her melodic excursions take you somewhere, too. Bassist Lindsey Horner and drummer Reggie Nicholson play like they're investing in the future, which they just might be; a new bandleader has arrived.—*Jim Macnie*

VENUS BEADS

*Black Aspirin*

(EMERGO)

VENUS BEADS REFLECT the impact of American masters of hummable grunge like the Pixies, Nirvana and Buffalo Tom on impressionable young Brits. Every track on this album has a concrete melodic core, whether scuffed up as gritty pop ("Blood Orange"), shrouded in gothic gloom ("End of the Line" and "Chloroform") or ablaze with hardcore fury ("One Way Mirror"). Rob Jones' vocals are exquisitely downcast; guitarist Anthony Price seems as comfortable creating a backdrop of acoustic strumming or a pretty electric filigree as he is generating edifices of distortion and feedback. Producer Brian O'Shaughnessy (Primal Scream, My Bloody Valentine) gives the dense layers of sound a lustrous

finish. (The CD version features four extra tracks Emergo released previously as the EP *Transfixed*.)

—*Sandy Masuo*

ROGER BELLOW AND THE  
DRIFTING TROUBADOURS

*On the Road to Prosperity*

(FLYING FISH)

AMONG THE KNOWING country covers on this collection are Merle Travis' "Kentucky Means Paradise" and "The Kind of Love I Can't Forget" by the great Texas fiddler Jesse Ashlock. That gives you some idea of Bellow's musical and geographic parameters. With charged, effortless swing Bob Wills would have loved, the Troubadours, featuring sharp soloists Gordon Terry on fiddle and Don Helms on steel guitar, provide the eminently danceable hardwood for Bellow's smooth, easeful singing. This music is as classic as a ranch dance under the stars (the beat's so hip you can't believe there's no drummer) but it's also becoming a lost art, and finding a band so attuned to that tradition while sounding this fresh is a treasure. Come back real soon, y'hear?

—*Mark Rowland*

ORANGE THEN BLUE

*Funkallero*

(GM RECORDINGS)

THIS BOSTON-BASED ENSEMBLE (ranging from 10 to 13 pieces here) has listened closely to the arrangements of Ellington, Evans and Mingus, and is both continuing and expanding the big-band tradition. The key innovation is the use of ethnic musics; "Ot Med Li Ti Sa Ustata" is a traditional Bulgarian song, while saxophonist Adam Kolker's "The Griff" has a pronounced Egyptian ambience. The ambitious nature of these pieces is admirable; better still, the band pulls off its ideas. At points, OTB constructs an almost tangible wall of brass and reeds, while the percussion section, led by George Schuller (Gunther's son), throws in all the bells and whistles you could want. Playing and arranging is fine, yet there's plenty of room for laughs—take Matt Darriau's slowed-down, reaccented version of "Moose the Mooche." And their rendition of Jack DeJohnette's "Ahmad the Terrible" demonstrates OTB can swing as hard as anyone. (167 Dudley Rd., Newton Centre, MA 02159)

—*Mac Randall*

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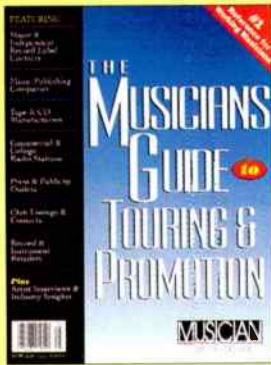
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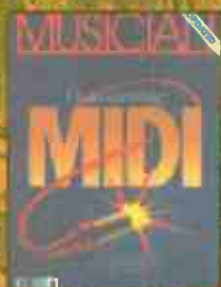
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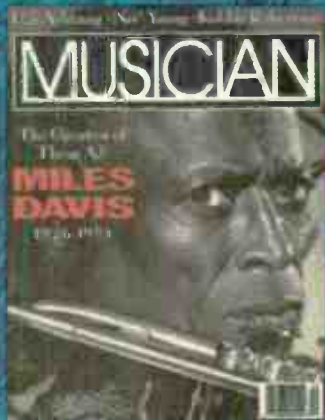
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- 36 10/81 **Grateful Dead**, Zappa, Kid Creole, NY Dolls
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- 64 2/84 **Stevie Wonder**, X, Was (Not Was), Ornette
- 70 8/84 **Peter Wolf**, King Crimson, Sly + Robbie
- 71 9/84 **Heavy Metal**, Dream Syndicate, Tina Turner
- 77 3/85 **John Fogerty**, Marsalis/Hancock, Los Lobos
- 79 5/85 **Jeff Beck**, Alison Moyet, John Hiatt-Ry Cooder
- 93 7/86 **Peter Gabriel**, Steve Winwood, Lou Reed
- 94 8/86 **Jimi Hendrix**, The Cure, Prince, '38 Special
- 97 11/86 **Eric Clapton**, Paul Simon, Ric Ocasek
- 102 4/87 **Robert Cray**, Los Lobos, Simply Red
- 104 6/87 **Springsteen**, The Blasters, Keith Jarrett
- 111 1/88 **R.E.M.**, Year in Rock, 10,000 Maniacs
- 112 2/88 **McCartney**, Stanley Clarke, Buster Poindexter
- 113 3/88 **Robert Plant**, INXS, Wynton Marsalis
- 115 5/88 **Stevie Wonder**, **Sonny Rollins**, **Joni Mitchell**, **Johnny Cash**
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- 159 1/92 **Super Deals!**, Nirvana, Earl Palmer
- 160 2/92 **Fear of Rap**, Eric Clapton
- 161 3/92 **U2**, Harrison & Clapton, Songwriting Report
- 162 4/92 **Def Leppard**, k. d. lang, Live
- SP1 **Best of the Beatles and Rolling Stones**
- SP2 **Masters of Metal**, Metallica, Def Leppard, more



# BACK ISSUES

8 13 15 21 34 36 45 64 70 71 77 93 94 101 102 104 108 111 112 113 115 116 117 118 119  
 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142  
 143 144 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 SP1 SP2  
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# ARC ANGELS

## ARC ANGELS

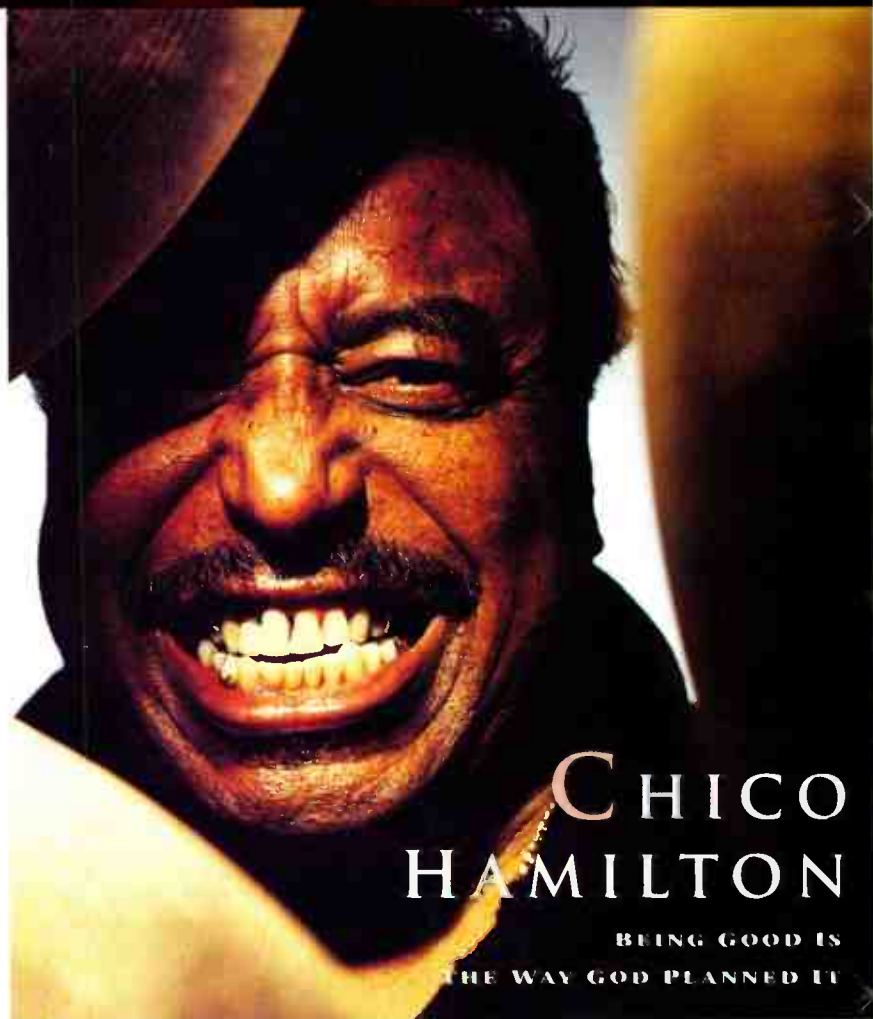
### *Double Trouble Redux*

IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE BRAINCHILD of a record mogul: Stevie Ray Vaughan's former rhythm section backing a pair of pretty-boy Texas guitarists. But the inception of the quartet known as Arc Angels—Double Trouble drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon, with 23-year-olds Charlie Sexton and Doyle Bramhall II—was anything but contrived.

"Before Stevie died, we talked about a band, just to play around and have fun," Layton says. "Jimmie and Stevie were maybe going to tour, so we had time off." After the bandmates began to recover from the August 1990 loss of their leader, the new group was viewed as a low-key vehicle to get them back into action around Austin. But after a set at Antone's, they opened for Robert Cray that December and labels came knocking; their debut was produced by Steve Van Zandt.

"I helped Doyle finish 'Living in a Dream' at Austin Rehearsal Complex (ARC)," recalls Sexton. "From there we went right and left, figuring out what the blues influence was going to be. Nobody was interested in making a blues record." Charlie says that he and Doyle, who played rhythm guitar onstage with the Fabulous Thunderbirds, "couldn't be farther apart, stylistically."

Shannon feels that the sum identity of their personalities is evolving. "There was a lot of conflict during the recording. And for a long time onstage it was Charlie in one corner and Doyle in the other. Now it's like a band." The music is hardly reminiscent of Vaughan, but he inspired its most impressive moment. "Tommy hounded me to finish this melody," Bramhall says of "See What Tomorrow Brings." "I stayed up all night and had 30 minutes of words. Before I did the lead, I remembered the first time I saw Stevie do an outdoor show. I heard this huge guitar a mile away, and the closer I got, the bigger it got—just coming out of the sky. That's the effect I tried to get." DAN FORTE



## CHICO HAMILTON

BEING GOOD IS THE WAY GOD PLANNED IT

**I** don't make a record just to make a record," says Chico Hamilton. "I believe that when you're at the peak of your powers, then you're ready to record. We did this album in less than 10 hours, first takes on everything."

Hamilton, who drummed in the original, groundbreaking Gerry Mulligan Quartet in the '50s, and whose own groups helped introduce such influential players as Eric Dolphy, Jim Hall and Gabor Szabo, is still keeping his ear cocked for new talent. *Arroyo*, his latest release, features Cary DeNigris on guitar, Eric Person on reeds and Reggie Washington on bass, young firebrands Hamilton is proud of. "I have three musicians who are the future. Listening to them, you don't hear riffs, you hear thoughts and phrases that go somewhere."

The fresh sounds on *Arroyo* are not easily labeled. Hamilton's scat-singing, DeNigris' fluid essays or a slapping funk groove juiced up with a touch of bebop—it all makes a surprising listen. "I've never made a straight-ahead album in my life," says Hamilton of *Arroyo's* trend-bucking. "There's nothing wrong with not being a bebopper. There are other directions. It takes all kinds of music to make music. Unfortunately, the record companies won't let these young guys play themselves. They're duplicating Horace Silver, Blakey, Bird things. What is that?! Lightning does not strike twice in the same place. Not as far as jazz is concerned."

After 40 albums as a leader and countless sideman sessions, what keeps Chico into the music? He turns introspective: "Music is my religion. I'm a believer in God, and I believe that music is one of God's wills. And because of that alone, I want to be good." KEN MICALLEF

PHOTOGRAPHS: (ARC ANGELS) EBET ROBERTS; (CHICO HAMILTON) JOSEPH CULTICE





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## TERRY REID

### *Past Imperfect*

**T**ERRY REID has a song on *The Driver*, his first album in a decade, called "Laugh at Life." He should. Reid, after all, was the teenage guitar phenom who once passed on Jimmy Page's offer to join a new group and recommended a chap named Robert Plant instead. Other strokes of fate have included the extinction of ABC Records the week Reid issued his first album for that label, and his abrupt pruning from the Capitol Records roster 10 years ago.

But Reid, now 41, remains relentlessly optimistic. "I thought, 'When it's right, it'll come along.' And I don't have a wooden leg and a parrot on my shoulder," he says with a chuckle, his Cockney accent still broad after 20 years in California. Reid has busied himself with L.A. session work over the years, ranging from Jackson Browne and Don Henley to the Replacements. His new album utilizes a Who's Who of notable musical associates from his past, with Joe Walsh, Alan White, Stewart Copeland, Howard Jones and Graham Nash among them.

Reid intimates that a version of his classy studio group could hit the road. "They were all my friends," he says, "and it's ended up as a band. I talked to Joe [Walsh] the other day, and he said, 'Whenever you want to drop the ball...'"

CHRIS MORRIS

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# CHARLATANS UK

## *Music for Sex and Revolution*

"I THINK THERE ARE A FEW explosions sprinkled all around it," says Charlatans UK vocalist Tim Burgess about *Between 10th and 11th*. He's right. The Brit band's second disc of technobeats and pop songs contains well-placed moments of blam and kablooeey that keep your mind on its toes. Though they're at odds with the hushed vocals, the resulting confluence of ethereal and earthy can be mesmerizing.

The Charlatans were part of the Manchester



onslaught that erupted in England at the end of the '80s. Along with the Stone Roses and Happy Mondays they tried to create a cross-cultural music which fanned the flames of revelry without putting the brain in neutral. "Pop was so feeble before the whole Manchester thing started," Burgess says. "Cliff Richard posters were on every kid's wall. That's why stuff like acid house was revolutionary." These days, he laments, the scene is veering toward listlessness. "It's controlled by the major labels. Tom, Dick and Harry think they're being rebellious by dancing at a club on Saturday night. Some of our music is escapist as well, but we do try to make the lyrics important."

British trends have a penchant for being blips on a cultural screen, so

when the singer states bluntly that "the public is going to have to decide" which of the Manchester crew will be in it for the long haul, he's being pragmatic but proud. "Our last record was a bit linear; all the action was on one level. I think this one is more dynamic, much better planned. Instead of a Hammond organ all the way through, maybe a backwards Wurlitzer shows up. Or xylophone, or marimba. Things pop out at the right places."

Like hooks. White-guy dream funk would be pretty boring without them, and *Between 10th and 11th* offers its fair share. Virtually each song contains a tantalizing turn. A disco fan who understands the beauty of Wire, Burgess has a goal for the Charlatans. "We want it to be music that you could have sex to and start a revolution by."

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## GEORGE HARRISON'S BRITISH DEBUT

"I'VE NEVER REALLY WANTED TO BE THE MAN IN WHITE, THE GUY AT THE front of the stage," George Harrison said the day before his first-ever British solo concert. "Even in my Beatle days I was happy to stand back. But Eric [Clapton] encouraged me to do the Japanese concerts, and those did give me the taste for live performance again."

Amid all the palaver of the British elections in April, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi took it upon himself to launch a new science-and-spiritualism political organization called the Natural Law Party. Harrison immediately signed on and agreed to publicize his old guru's cause with a live concert at the Royal Albert Hall on April 6th. The Quiet Beatle got a standing ovation from the usually staid English crowd the minute he walked onstage. Harrison began his set with a couple of low-key numbers from the Beatles years, "I Want to Tell You" and "Old Brown Shoe." He was backed by Clapton's band, minus Clapton and plus Heartbreaker Mike Campbell. The rapturously received set included "Taxman," "Give Me Love," "What Is Life," "Devil's Radio," "My Sweet Lord," "Piggies," "Got My Mind Set On You," "Cloud Nine," "Cheer Down," "Here Comes the Sun," "Something" and "All Those Years Ago." By the time the band completed the "Hey Jude"-style outro to "Isn't It a Pity," the crowd reaction was so extraordinary that Harrison was moved to say, "This is overwhelming...I'm always paranoid about how much everybody likes me." Then he drove the crowd completely wild by bringing out Ringo Starr. Harrison closed the show with "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and a version of "Roll Over Beethoven" that included a guest appearance by Dhani Harrison, George's 13-year-old son.

Harrison promises that after the release of the live recording from his Japanese shows with Clapton he will begin work on a new studio album, which he'll follow with a full-blown tour. "The effort that's gone into this show is a bit of a waste," he says. "Everyone has rehearsed really hard and so much effort has been put into the production that it should be a proper tour."

RICHARD BUSKIN





# ASTER AWEKE

*Ethiopian Songbird*

ASTER AWEKE IS A NIGHTINGALE FOR THE '90S. BACKED BY A Weather Report-ish quintet, her superfluid soprano soars Aretha-like to a melismatic stratosphere, then swoops, heart in throat, to a jazzy Anita Baker moan. The catch is, her lyrics—aching with bittersweet passion—are in Amharic, the principal language of her native Ethiopia. And her music sounds curiously Japanese. “Sometimes there is the same melody in Ethiopian music and Japanese classical song,” she acknowledges. “I don’t know why.”

Raised in Addis Ababa, she started singing at 17, covering Fontella Bass and Donna Summer tunes in a hotel band. At 24 she moved to San Francisco, then settled in Washington, D.C., where she performed her own material, sending a cassette back home every year before casting the spellbinding *Aster* for Columbia. Her latest, *Kabu*, sounds like Sadé with pipes (“That’s how they do it in Ethiopia,” she protests. “If it’s a modern band, that’s how they sound”), yet Aweke has never taken a lesson. “I don’t even know how to do the scales,” she claims. “I still believe I have a virgin voice, and one day, if I get somebody to help me to use the techniques, the real one will come out.”

LARRY BIRNBAUM

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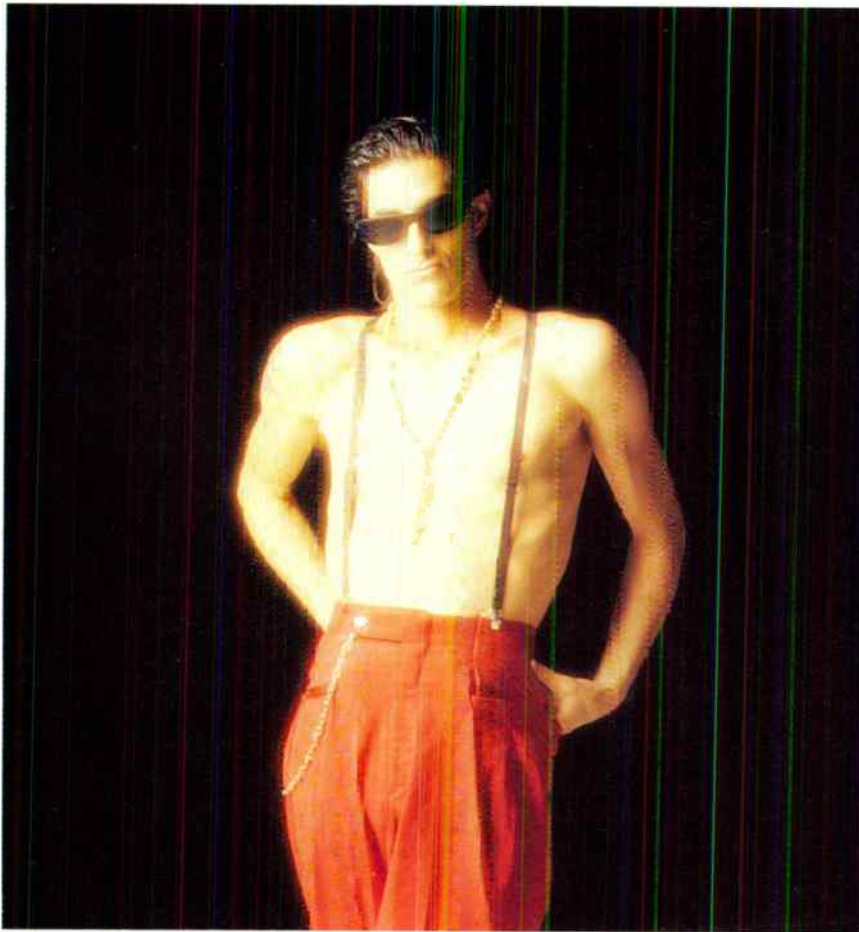
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# LOLLAPALOOZA RETURNS



**P**ERRY FARRELL IS A BUSY GUY. IT WAS ONLY LAST YEAR THAT he put Jane's Addiction on hiatus on the heels of *Ritual de lo Habitual*, the band's platinum-plus-selling breakthrough album. Now he's working with his new band Porno for Pyros. The band made its live debut at a Magic Johnson AIDS benefit concert in early April and will record its first album this summer. Farrell also just finished up a film he's making with his wife Casey called *The Gift*, which Warner Bros. will release on home video in June.

And then there's his pet project—a thing called Lollapalooza, a multi-genre concert-cum-traveling festival that in its first year, 1991, managed to be one of the few successes in the most dire touring season ever. While a package featuring dinosaur rockers Alice Cooper and Judas Priest fell flat on its face, and other multi-genre packages, such as a Gathering of the Tribes II, failed to fly, Lollapalooza stood tall, packed houses and made people take notice.

Sure, Jane's Addiction, having developed in a few short years from a club attraction to a rock 'n'

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BY CRAIG ROSEN

roll monster capable of filling arenas, was the major draw, but there was more at work there. The lineup featured rapper Ice-T, who debuted his thrash combo Body Count on the tour; industrial noisemongers Nine Inch Nails; the guttural rants of the Henry Rollins Band, plus the smart metal of Living Colour and veteran post-punks Siouxsie & the Banshees. It struck a chord with the youth of America that had been fed up with the usual superstar arena-rock attractions.

Lollapalooza '92, featuring the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ministry, Ice Cube, Soundgarden, the Jesus and Mary Chain, Pearl Jam and an opening act, will kick off on July 18 in San Francisco and hit 24 cities in a six-week period before concluding on August 30 in Los Angeles, the city that Perry Farrell calls home.

Farrell says the first Lollapalooza was successful because it gave concertgoers more bang for their buck. "There are a lot of people that want to make a dollar and are willing to work

## *Perry Farrell's alternative Woodstock*

very hard for it," he says. "If you just keep giving kids the same thing they have and keep working on the same old formulas, it's going to get boring."

Lollapalooza was created in part because Farrell, like the kids he's hoping to attract at Lollapalooza, had become bored with concertgoing. "I don't go out that much, because you go to a concert and it's the same fucking thing all the time," he says. "There are no surprises. What are you giving people? You are trying to entertain them, but are you giving them anything any different? It's almost like who the hell cares.

"How many times have you felt like you have already had it by the third or fourth song?" Farrell asks. "So if you do feel like you already had it by the third or fourth song, go and check out the short film festival."

A film exhibit will only be one of several attractions at Lollapalooza '92. Farrell says this year's tour will have several new elements, including street rods, landscape art, a charity gambling tent, a carnival sideshow and a cyberpunk computer tech exhibit.

Then of course there are the bands, ranging from funk-rock mainstays the Chili Peppers and controversial rapper Ice Cube to new wavers-turned-industrial madmen Ministry,

primal-rockers Soundgarden and their Seattle brethren Pearl Jam. (Farrell says he may show up at a few dates to check how things are running; he has no plans to perform, although he won't rule it out.)

"I wanted to try to find diversity in the lineup, as far as what each band was best at and what they represent in the musical field," Farrell explains. "You can't always get your exact dreams, but there are always a few that are the top of what they are doing and these bands represent that."

But the bands are only a part of Lolla-

palooza. "I consider the bands equal with what's going on at the festival—the politics of it all, the kick-back atmosphere, check things out, the learning aspects of it, all of that to me is as important as the music."

"I am working very, very hard to complement the music. It's as if you were at somebody's party—you wouldn't go over there to listen to the records. The music has to be great, but the music is background so you can kind of kick it with your pals."

Lollapalooza was created in 1991 after Farrell became ill in the middle of a Jane's Addic-

tion European jaunt. The band was scheduled to play the Reading Festival, but had to bow out. Marc Geiger, then an alternative rock agent for Triad and now an executive at Def American, suggested that he and Farrell put together their own festival to be headlined by Jane's Addiction.

Yet Farrell wanted more than the average rock show. He wanted Lollapalooza to be an event. So Farrell and Geiger rounded up artisans, political organizations, body piercers, etc. Farrell says he was happy with last year's tour, but he expects more this time around.


"Everything was done kind of on the run, because we were still touring and all the concepts and everything were phoned in," he says. "This year I was at home and I could keep a much bigger eye on the whole thing, make sure that the front of house is done even more efficiently and expand on the ideas and add to it."

While last year's tour mainly hit amphitheatres, Lollapalooza '92 will play whatever Farrell and company can get their hands on. "A lot of times, for certain reasons beyond my control, you end up in an amphitheater, and that's just the way it goes in that city.... If I had my way it would be giant fields everywhere. The better promoters will always come up with an incredible place. They're talking about some place in Seattle that has a stream that goes across it and it's out in the wilderness. That's a great idea."

Farrell also hopes to raise money for AIDS research and homeless shelters at the gaming tent. Once again he's attempting to get political groups with varying points of view to set up shop at each stop on the tour, but not everyone is cooperating.

"Most of the right wing don't want to come to the Lollapalooza," Farrell says. "I've tried to get the military involved. I've tried to get the National Rifle Association to come down and say their piece, and they don't want to. I think it is important to have both sides, otherwise you are preaching to an already converted crowd."

Politics aside, Farrell says the ultimate goal of Lollapalooza is to entertain: "I don't want to be bumming people out with too much seriousness."

If the whole concept of Lollapalooza has you thinking that Farrell's tour is sort of a traveling Woodstock for the '90s, that's okay with him. "I don't think Woodstock is a bad word," he says. "To be compared to Woodstock is an incredibly nice thing to say. But time marches on and things are a little different. At Woodstock people painted each other. Now they pierce each other," Farrell says. "It's a little bit different, but it's maybe a little bit the same as well." 



# HANDICAPPING THE TOURS: THE PROMOTERS' EYE SUMMER '92

## IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES, PERIOD.

Trapped mostly by recession but by other factors, too—their own inability to turn down high-priced artists, a trend towards ultra-expensive stage shows and a lack of bankable talent—concert promoters limped through 1991: perhaps their worst summer ever. Between May and September, when half the year's touring is done, the North American Concert Promoters' Association (which includes most of the country's big promoters) reported a collective loss of more than \$4 million; the year's 100 top-grossing shows earned 15 percent less than 1990's top 100.

NACPA director Carl Freed, meanwhile, infuriated band managers by releasing a list of summer '91's 10 biggest money-losers, including Whitney Houston, David Lee Roth/Cinderella, Huey Lewis, Diana Ross, Steve Winwood and the Doobie Brothers. At the opposite end, that amazing sociocultural phenomenon the Grateful Dead sat pretty, grossing \$35 million and singlehandedly accounting for *one-fourth* of *Amusement Business*' 100 top-grossing shows. Of 79 Dead concerts reported to *Amusement Business*, 76 sold out.

So what (or who) will go down in '92? To find out, we interviewed seven top promoters: Lewis Messina of Houston's Pace Entertainment; Jim Koplik of New Jersey-based Metropolitan Entertainment/Northeast Concerts; in Toronto, Arthur Fogel of CPI; Contemporary Productions' Irv Zuckerman in St. Louis; Los Angeles-based Avalon Attractions' Moss Jacobs; Mitch Slater at New York's Ron Delsener Enterprises and Arnie Grenatt of Jam Productions in Chicago. Most are upbeat. Are they whistling in the dark?

All of them say they're a little smarter. "You learn," says Jacobs, "there's such a thing as a market correction. With escalating artist guarantees and more and more new amphitheatres going up, we were bound to reach the point of a correction. That's what 1991 was, and it bit a lot of promoters on the ass."

"The main lesson is you sometimes have to say no," says Slater. "Pass, even though it's against your instincts, which are always to say, 'Yes! I want it!'" But habits die hard: "I just did two shows," says Messina, "Skid Row and BAD/PiL. Skid Row did good, BAD/PiL did bad. I was stupid to buy it. I knew it wouldn't sell, but I was worried someone else would do it. That's not a good reason to promote a show. The only good reason is if you really think the public is gonna love it."

"Instead of five shows," says Slater, "people now want to go to two or three. So this year we'll try to give them more bang for their buck." "More package shows," says Zuckerman, "theme shows: 'classic rock,' 'young gun country.'" So don't look for ticket prices to drop as much as for packages and dual headliners: "In general," says Slater, "we can probably still get a decent ticket price if we give people a couple of top acts"—say, Elton John/Eric Clapton—"instead of one. You've gotta buy insurance."

If you believe promoters, there's simply more music out there than last year. It's a mix of heavy-hitting mainstream rockers (Springsteen, U2, Genesis), nostalgists (Harry Connick, Jr., a newly retro Natalie Cole), back-from-the-crypt quasi-oldies (Moody Blues, Emerson Lake & Palmer) and MOR massagers (John Denver, Dan Fogelberg). One trend is country music's widening appeal, the perfect musical expression of promoters' newfound caution and sobriety. "We're doing Reba McEntire/Vince Gili and Hank Williams, Jr. at Jones Beach," says Slater, whose New York market is hardly known as a country stronghold, "and possibly the Highwaymen and Clint Black/Wynonna Judd. It'll be interesting to see how they do here." And though dinosaurs like Clapton are still their meal tickets, promoters say they're

## WHO'S WHAT IN SUMMER '92: A PROMOTERS' SURVEY

**Meal tickets:** "If these guys can't hit home runs—not triples, home runs—we're in trouble," says one promoter. "We need 95-to-100-percent business from them. Eighty percent means trouble." U2, Bruce Springsteen, Genesis, Elton John/Eric Clapton, Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Def Leppard, Lollapalooza II, Garth Brooks, Grateful Dead (1991's top grossers), John Mellencamp, Jimmy Buffett (virtually in the Dead's league. "Buffett," says one promoter, "just gets bigger and bigger").

**Could lose big:** Natalie Cole, the Ringo Starr package, Richard Marx, Wilson Phillips, Kenny G, David Byrne, Bonnie Raitt (if she tours. She reportedly doubled her guarantee to \$150,000, worrying at least one promoter. "Yeah, but she doubled her audience too," counters another).

**Dark horses (could make surprise bucks):** Allman Brothers, Donald Fagen's New York Rock & Soul Revue, Melissa Etheridge.

**Promoters are nervous about:** "Anything with five figures after it." Also George Thorogood/Little Feat, Iron Maiden, the Cure, Ozzy Osbourne, Paule Abdul, Emerson Lake & Palmer ("been away too long"), M.C. Hammer ("may have gotten too pop"). Older MOR artists without current pop product. James Taylor (also in several promoters' meal tickets column), John Denver, Dan Fogelberg, Chicago, Moody Blues.

**Hot first-time headliners:** Black Crowes, Soundgarden, Pearl Jam.

**Up from alternatives:** Social Distortion, James, Charlatans UK, Concrete Blonde, Jesus and Mary Chain.

**New trends:** Country, package tours.

finally glimpsing a new wave of bankable acts, like the ones in Lollapalooza II (Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ice Cube, Ministry, Jesus & Mary Chain): "smaller-hall headliners," says one promoter, "with the potential to headline arenas. That's a transition very few bands—R.E.M., U2, Madonna, Metallica, Guns N' Roses—made in the '80s."

"After last year," says Grenatt, "promoters are approaching everything with trepidation. Last year stunned everybody." Will '92 be as disastrous? "I pray it isn't. But when people can't put enough food on the table they're not gonna go to a show."

BY TONY SCHERMAN

# DON LAW: THE PROMOTER'S PERSPECTIVE



**B**OSTON PROMOTER DON LAW HAS A TRACK RECORD many would envy. He booked the first American dates for Led Zepelin, Dire Straits, the Clash and Elvis Costello. He's been the dean of New England promoters for a quarter-century, dating back to the psychedelic ballroom the Boston Tea Party, where he showcased Zeppelin, the Who, Jeff Beck, Jethro Tull and many others who put the rock industry on the map.

But Law, like most regional promoters, is not resting on his laurels. He can't. Not these days. He's seen royalties disappear, as giants like MCA and PolyGram descend on the concert market, making it tougher for regional promoters to survive. He's seen tight radio formats stifle the development of new acts, hurting his club business. And he's seen the price of talent skyrocket to the point where the bigger rock acts routinely demand guarantees of \$100,000–150,000 per arena show, plus 85–90 percent of whatever is left. "Though we're in a recession, we're dealing with 1980s guarantees in a 1990s economy and they don't lock in," he says.

BY STEVE MORSE

Law, 49, is the son of Don Law Sr., the famed record producer whose credits included Roy Acuff's "Wabash Cannonball" and Gene Autry's "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," plus seminal work by Robert Johnson, Johnny Cash and the Carter Family. Raised in suburban Connecticut, Law attended Boston University in the mid-'60s, when he first fell in love with concert promotion at the Boston Tea Party.

That love is still there, but so is a fair amount of anger at how the industry has changed. Law rarely grants interviews, but when he does, his low-profile tone can yield some very high-profile opinions. That happened when he sat down recently in the Cambridge office of his Tea Party Concerts and talked about how greedy and out-of-control the music business has become.

For starters, he feels concert tickets are too high—and applauds the efforts of younger acts like the Red Hot Chili Peppers to bring them back in line. "That whole movement of new acts is really healthy," notes Law. "Rather than saying, 'It's all *mine*, I've got my \$100,000,' they are saying, 'We control the ticket price. We can bring the ticket price down. So let's get it down, let's make it more accessible to our fans.' And I think these acts are breaking because they are dealing more directly with their audiences. It really makes the most sense, because the busi-

*"We've got a troubled business. We shouldn't be excessively greedy."*


ness of guarantees in a shrinking economy doesn't work. You've got to go the other way.

"First of all, we've got a troubled business. We shouldn't be excessively greedy. We've got to go out there with a lower ticket price that is going to require a lower guarantee. So if we want a \$15 ticket, that means the guarantees are going to have to be lower, so let's bring this thing in line."

Today's high guarantees mean that Law might book an act at the Boston Garden or Worcester Centrum, fill 11,000 seats and still lose \$30,000–50,000. "Obviously, if they sold out, you wouldn't have an issue," he says. "I mean, you don't go into a deal unless you think you're going to make some money. But the problem is that they don't always sell all the tickets. And because the deal is so heavily weighted in their favor, it's disastrous on your end."

Law makes an analogy between the music



A photograph of Paula Abdul on stage, leaning forward and holding a microphone in her right hand and a single red rose in her left. She is looking down at the rose. The background is dark with some blurred lights. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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## U2 BEATS THE SCALPERS

"Over the years, we've always tried to protect the environment in which U2 plays," says manager Paul McGuinness, who has represented the band since their pub days in Ireland.

The "environment" McGuinness describes is, in part, the frenzy U2 fuels on tour by deliberately underplaying markets, allowing ticket demand for their shows to far outstrip supply. Never has that been more true than on the first U.S. leg of U2's Zoo TV Tour, a 31-city blitz of one-nighters this spring.

From the start, however, everyone knew that "underplaying leads to scalping," says McGuinness—the big-bucks scalping that has long plagued major tours with ticket brokers reselling seats for 10 times their face value.

On this tour, however, U2 has done more than any major act in memory to keep tickets in the hands of the average fans and away from brokers, who serve the well-heeled and well-connected. It has not been easy.

"What we've been able to do is use the sophistication of the electronic ticketing system to weed out scalping," says McGuinness.

In most major markets, fans could order tickets solely through the Ticketmaster phone system, which can tie together as many as 450 operators in 15 phone centers nationwide. Fans also could buy only a single pair of tickets, which discouraged them from selling their own extra seats. More important, the Ticketmaster computer detected—and deleted—duplicate orders, including those made by ticket brokers.

"The technology we have today gives us a level of freedom we never had before, even two years ago," says Ticketmaster CEO Fred Rosen. In most cities, fans without credit cards could pay cash for tickets at concert venues, but only after getting a confirmation number on a Ticketmaster phone line. At the Los Angeles Sports Arena, when the fortunate ones showed up to pick up their tickets, they were met in the parking lot by ticket brokers (one rolled up in a limousine) offering \$700 per pair.

In smaller cities, a limited number of tickets were sold directly through arena box offices while McGuinness' staff at Principle Management closely monitored the rush via computer in New York. That's how a box office manager at the Providence Civic Center was quickly cut off the Ticketmaster system and later suspended when sales raced past an agreed-upon limit of 1200 seats.

Although Ticketmaster has allowed U2 to better control the sale of tickets to the public, professional ticket brokers depend on inside sources for their lucrative supply of seats—and Principle Management also is watching those sources more closely.

Generally, says U2 tour accountant Bob Koch, "you have three sources of problems—the building, the promoter and the act; no one else has access to the tickets readily. The horror stories you hear are when a building, a promoter or an artist hold the seats and then, either intentionally or through negligence, they end up going to brokers. That's what we're trying to regulate."

To ensure the success of their efforts, tour staff surveyed the U2 crowd each night, asking where and how they bought their tickets. "We've been able to satisfy ourselves that little scalping is going on," says McGuinness. "It makes the ticketing system more democratic."

Even in a ticketing democracy, however, some fans are more equal than others—or just plain luckier. Principle Management reserves the entire front row at U2 shows. Some of those coveted spots go to radio contest winners. To fill others, Koch explains, he heads to the upper decks to find a few fervent fans bedecked in U2 buttons and T-shirts. And he trades the astonished concertgoers their tickets for front-row seats. That, says Koch, "is what we call the 'Achtung Upgrade.'"

THOM DUFFY



business and pro sports, saying the former has "absolutely" been the model for the runaway salaries now being paid to the \$6-7-million-a-year ballplayers Bobby Bonilla and Ryne Sandberg. "The athletes always ask, 'Why can't I make as much as Neil Diamond?' And of course, what they're looking for is revenue sharing. Musical artists are walking away with 85-90 percent of net receipts. That kind of revenue sharing would be a baseball or football player's dream. Well, we've been living that now for more than 10 years... And we've always had free agency."

Law just scored a coup by buying out his longtime rival, the Rhode Island-based Frank Russo. But he takes little solace in it because, ultimately, the move represents a down-sizing of the market. "Fewer talent buyers is extremely unhealthy for the music business, because what it means is that less talent will get a chance. The whole pool starts to shrink." It also opens the door, he says, for giant corporations like MCA and PolyGram to come in and book national tours, thus bypassing regional promoters entirely. Already, MCA has bought out longtime promoter Barry Fey in Denver. And PolyGram has bought interest in the operations of John Scher in New York and Jim Koplik in New Jersey.

"At some point, you say, 'If this pool continues to get smaller, I don't need an agency. Why don't I, as a major corporation, just go to the act and then go to one of these giant building management companies like Spectacor or Ogden that manage 30 major arenas. I'll make a couple of phone calls and I'll have the whole tour. What do I need you for?'"

While the competition intensifies to book superstars, the bottom end of the business—the club end—is collapsing, says Law. He still books 400 dates a year in such Boston clubs as the Paradise, Avalon and Axis, but sees less of a return for it. Traditionally, acts would remain loyal to promoters once they rose up the ranks—and that loyalty is still shown by the likes of U2 and Sting, who remember Law once played them at the 650-capacity Paradise—but too often, that loyalty is now gone.

"If you can help develop this act," says Law, "then you deserve to have some participation. And if you don't, you really don't deserve to come in at the last minute and say, 'Hey, my checkbook is bigger than yours, and you're no longer there.' But that's what's happening."

Squeezed further by tight radio formats that preclude much new music (the lifeblood of the clubs), more promoters are tempted to quit the club business altogether. "When I run into other promoters," says Law, "they say, 'To hell with the clubs. If we're not getting any reward back for this, then do we need to support this other level? I don't think so.'"

It's reached a point where regional promoters like Law claim they need sponsorship. Law, for instance, has a long-term deal with Reebok. As a further shield from the tough economy, he's part-owner of the 15,000-capacity Great Woods Center for the Performing Arts, a successful shed that books 60 shows per summer. And he co-owns three radio stations—WKSS in Hartford, Connecticut, and WERZ and WMYF in southern New Hampshire.

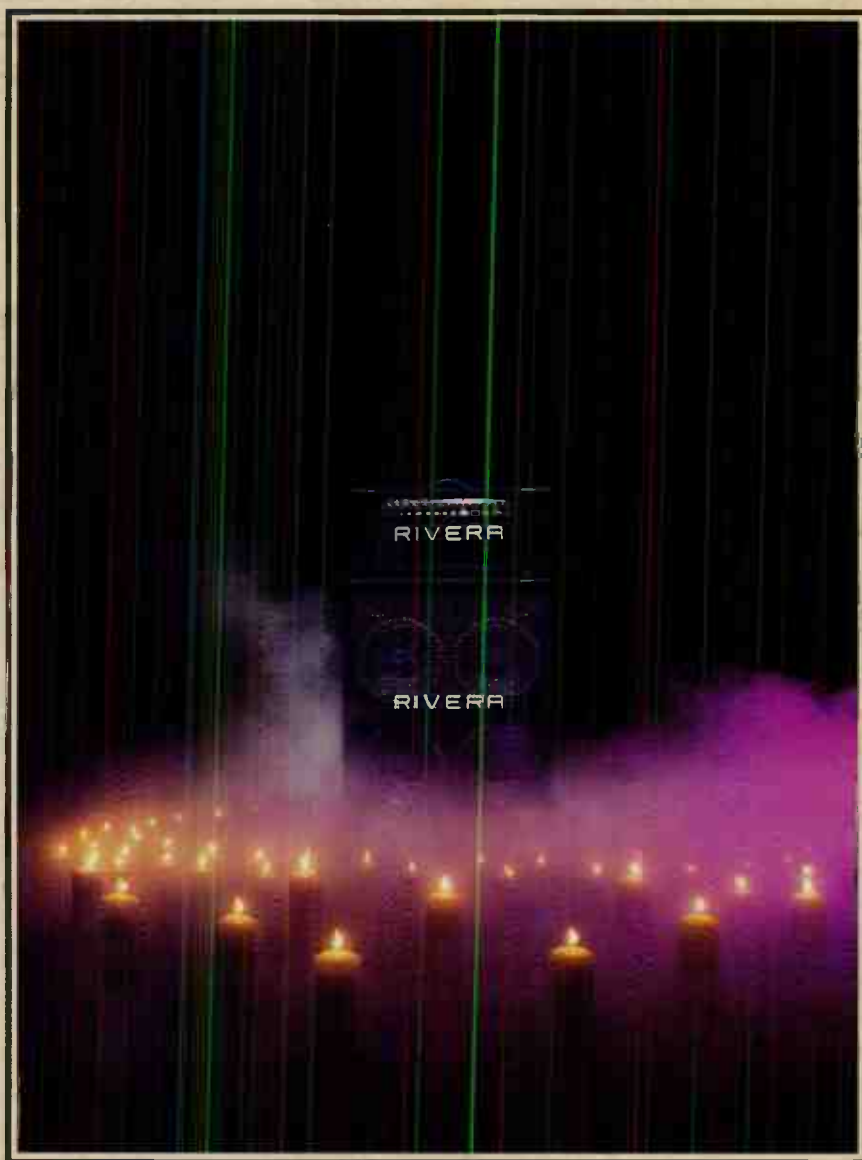
Looking ahead to the summer, Law is buoyed by the increased number of stadium acts on the horizon (U2, Genesis and a co-bill of Eric Clapton and Elton John), and by some strong amphitheater packages such as Lollapalooza II and double bills with Chicago and the Moody Blues, and George Thorogood and Little Feat. "You're going to see more acts with drawing power put together, as opposed to 'Let's get a bunch of acts and go on the road and call it a package,' which happened last summer. You'll see a lot more sensible packaging."

While his job is a constant scramble, Law sticks with it, he says, because there are still moments that make it all worthwhile. A case in point was a recent benefit by Bonnie Raitt, who played an acoustic blues concert to help out an old Cambridge friend stricken with leukemia.

"I still love a lot of the music—and it was a pleasure to contribute to a night like that. You get somebody like Bonnie, and you get all the pieces together, and there's magic. There are nights that really are just extraordinary." ❧



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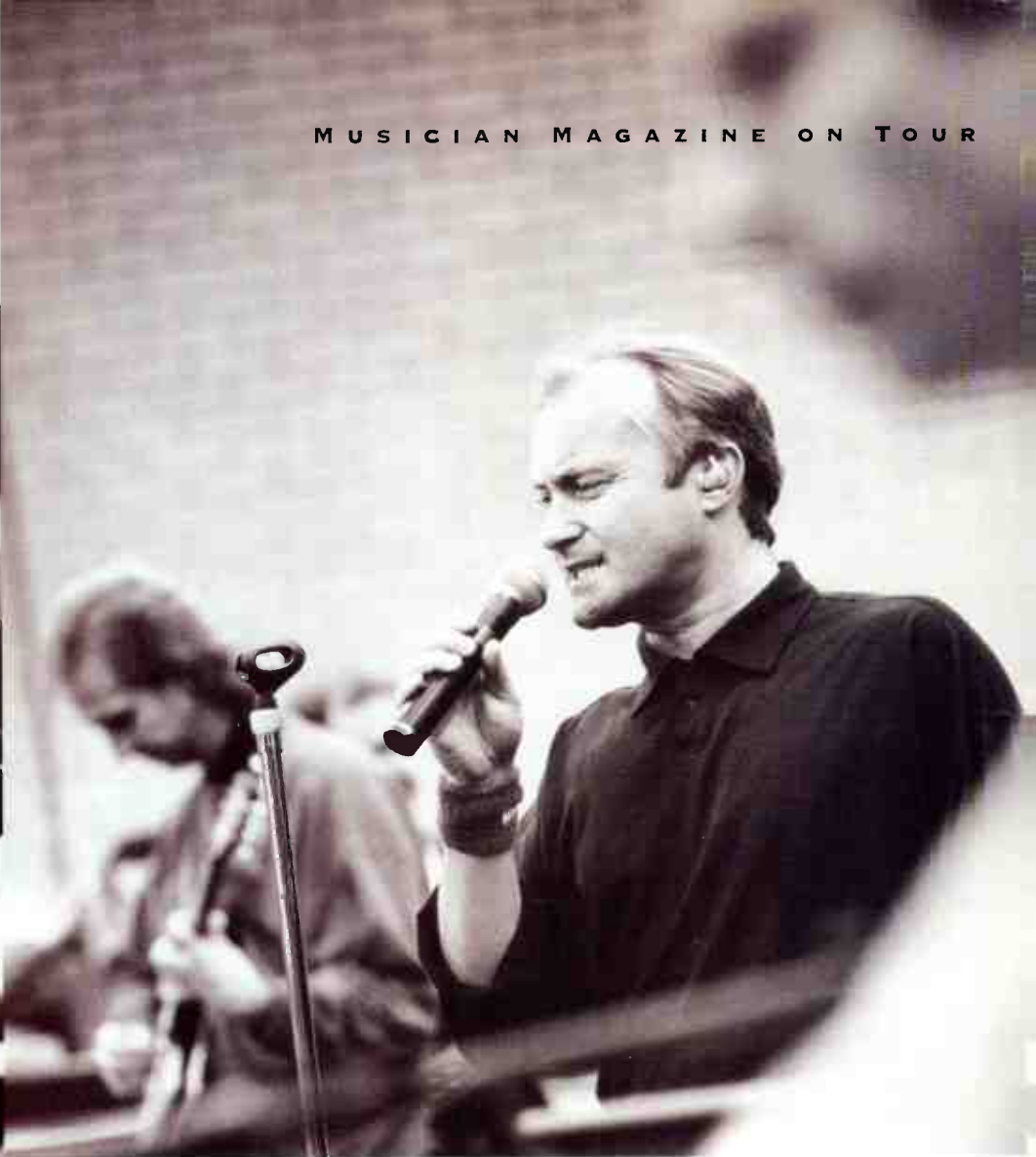
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# THREE FOR THE



IF YOU THINK OF BIG-TIME TOURING as a form of road roulette—a gamble in which the cost of a crew, a stage, a lighting rig and a fleet of buses and trucks is wagered against the profit potential of a band's fan base—then the sort of stadium tour Genesis is about to mount is the ultimate high-stakes game. ■ It isn't just the band's reputation that's at risk here, though anything less than a sell-out tends to be seen as a sign of weakness in today's anxiety-racked concert market. No, the bottom line here, as ever, is money. "I can't give you a number, but they are spending





VISITING  
REHEARSALS FOR A  
STADIUM TOUR

BY J.D. CONSIDINE



THE

ROAD

millions of dollars, out of their own pockets, prior to the first show," says Mike Farrell, the band's booking agent since the beginning. "We've had advance people on salary for eight months already. This project costs millions and millions of dollars before they even hit the road." ■ Nor is it difficult to see where the money went. In addition to the cost of the stage and the sound towers—all of which has to be built from scratch to the band's specifications—there are the lights and the \$5 million Sony Jumbotron video system to deal with. Not to mention crew salaries, rehearsal space and rent on the 39 semis production manager Morris Lyda estimates he'll need to get this show on the road. ■ Considering how much is at stake here, you might think that Genesis would be ecstatic over news that



the first American shows sold out almost as soon as they were put on sale. But as the touring version of the band—in which full-timers Tony Banks, Phil Collins and Mike Rutherford are augmented by guitarist Daryl Stuermer and drummer Chester Thompson—begins its rehearsals in the tiny town of Chiddingfold, Surrey, there are greater worries to be dealt with. ■ Like how to deal with the oldies. ■ With more than two decades of recordings to draw from, there's no way Genesis can represent every album in its catalog. Nor does it particularly want to; as each of the three makes clear, what they're most interested in playing are the songs from the current album, *We Can't Dance*. ■ “We made a list a few months ago, with some songs from the new album, some from the last couple of albums we're keen to play and some very old material in a kind of medley form,” says Rutherford. “It's a starting point, and eventually we move some of the things to a sort of a B-list. You rehearse much more material than you need, and the process now is to keep working on them, and see which songs fall by the wayside.” ■ “What's strange with our audience,” adds Collins, “is there are people that will read that we're not doing ‘In the Cage,’ and literally sort of go into mourning.” ■ “But, I mean, ‘In the Cage’—we've played it every tour since 1978 or something,” interjects Banks. “There's a time when you stop playing something. You've got to feel comfortable with what you're doing. What's the point if you're just going through the motions?” ■ None, really, except to placate the older fans. And though Rutherford points out that such listeners will constitute “no more than five or 10 percent” of the audience at the band's American shows, it's obvious that the band is loath to offend them. ■ Why? “They make themselves heard more,” answers Collins. “The old fans will stand in the rain and queue forever to get tickets. And though we do get letters saying how great they thought the tour was, we tend to get more letters from people complaining that we didn't play enough older material.” ■ “But it is a problem if you do the whole of ‘Supper's Ready,’ for example,” says Banks. “It's half an hour of a set, you know. The new album is 70 minutes long, and we wanted to play a large section of that, at least an hour of music. So that's an hour-and-a-half taken up already, and then





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OF OUR TIME THINKING  
ABOUT WHAT GOES ON  
THAT SCREEN,”  
SAYS TONY BANKS.





## INVISIBLE TOOLS

**T**ONY BANKS can't abide clutter. "I always resented players with stacks of keyboards," he says. "I think, 'If you've got 12 keyboards onstage, in a two-hour set that means 10 minutes per, even if you're playing all the time.' And it's probably a hell of a lot less in actual fact." So Banks will only carry four keyboards with him for this tour—but, thanks to a well-stocked rack and the miracle of MIDI, will have "a far wider range of sound probably on this tour than ever before." To his left, he'll have a Korg Wavestation and an Ensoniq SD-1; to his right, a Roland JD800 and a Roland Rhodes piano. Banks prefers the Rhodes to his old Yamaha piano; "I like the touch," he says, "and the basic piano sound is not bad, particularly if you combine it with samples." He also enjoys the analog portion of the JD800, but admits that "it's quite difficult to make it as fat as, say, an old Moog, Arp or Prophet. The difficult sounds, you can sample."

Sampling is not as easy as it looks. "It's a question of how many times you sample," he says. "With the more synthetic sounds, you can get away with once an octave. Modulations are a problem, so you have to leave off modulations while you're sampling and put them back on the sampler if you can. On something like the Synclavier, a lot of the tones use four different vibratos, and then chorus the whole lot at the end. What was nice about those sounds was that they never repeated, but you've got to be careful with that as soon as you start looping these things."

Fortunately, Banks' racks give him sampling power to spare. In rack No. 1, the big bruisers are an Emulator EIII and a Kurzweil, rounded out by a Roland M480 mixer, three Yamaha SPX1000s, an SPX90, a Roland reverb, an Alesis MMT-88 sequencer and a PLS1 audio switcher, which redirects the percussion in "I Can't Dance" to two separate P.A. channels instead of the keyboard mix. In the No. 2 rack is another M480, and a host of tone generators, including a Yamaha TX7, two Voce DMI-64s and five E-mu Proteus 2XR's. Only one of the 2XR's is factory-standard (it's used as a backup for the Kurzweil and the TX7); the others were prepared for Banks to handle sounds he had whipped up for the EIII. There's also an A110 and four MIDIGate units. To quote the tech notes: "We feed the unit a cowbell 'click,' and then a MIDI signal, and gate the MIDI out by adding note-off commands at whatever time you set on the front panel. This is used to recreate the gating the Quadra performed on 'Mama.'" All Banks' keyboards are played in "local off" and routed by a MIDITemp PMMS. In addition, Banks has no less than nine pedals on the floor, including a Proteus volume, an EIII volume, Alesis Pattern step-up, a Sustain, a JD800 volume, a MIDITemp Program Increment pedal, a VFX volume and a Drone pedal. His monitors are Yamaha 1502s, powered by P2700 amplifiers through a pair of C20 crossover/signal processor/EQs and a Y20 controller.

Apart from a Noble & Cooley piccolo snare, PHIL COLLINS' drums are by Gretsch, and include a 20" bass (with a Ludwig Speed King pedal), a 16" floor tom and four mounted toms: 15", 12", 10" and 8". All take clear Remo Ambassador heads. His cymbals are Sabian: a 22" Chinese swish, 14" hi-hats with a Slingerland pedal, 22" dry ride, 20" Chinese swish and three crashes, sized 16", 18" and 20". Naturally, he uses Pro-Mark Phil Collins sticks. His vocals are via a Ramsa headset, an M88 wired mike or wireless, and he'll be using IRPEQ earphone monitors. His kit is heard through two MC740 mikes (overhead, left and right), with M420s on his floor and 15" rack toms and M201s on the others. His snare takes an SM57 on top and an AKG 414 on the bottom; hi-hats use an AKG 460, and his bass takes an M88 and a 57. There are Simmons triggers on all drums and hi-hats, which feed into an SP-1200.

MIKE RUTHERFORD admits to being "not too fussy. Any guitar I pick up I'll play for three or four weeks, and that's my favorite guitar. I've got a roadie who deals in guitars. I'm a lost cause to him, really." As such, the material plays a greater role than personal taste in determining how many he takes on the road. "We may do 'The Musical Box' in the medley, and that calls for an incredibly weird tuning, which I'll be playing for three minutes. Then there's a song where I play a different guitar which has got a different funny tuning. You've got a guitar for each bit, which is a drag." What he's dragging along, then, are four Fender Strat Plusses ("Old ones don't do much for me"), three Rickenbacker 12-strings and a Guitar Factory electro/acoustic. He wants to play more bass. To that end, he'll also be packing a pair of Fender Precisions, strung with Rotosounds. His guitar strings are by Ernie Ball, which also makes his custom "M.R." picks. His amplification includes two Groove Tube Trio preamps and a Dual 75, MESA/Boogie 295 and 500s, and a Quad preamp. A Beck 6-to-2 mixer sorts the amp channels out, feeding them into an array of four MESA/Boogie 4x12s and two Marshall 4x12s. In the loop, he has an SPX90, a Roland SDE 3000 delay, a Lexicon PCM41 delay, and a Rockman rackmount unit, as well as Roland volume pedals. His bottom line includes a pair of Trace Elliot RX500 power amps, four GP11 preamps and four 4x10 cabinets. Rutherford does like "a little power behind me," and wants to keep some amplification onstage. The Groove Tubes will be "in two boxes on the side, blasting away, so I can play quietly. They come into my mixer, so I can have it soft, but still pushing the speakers." His guitar amps relay to the P.A. via Sennheiser 441 and 421 mikes, while his bass signal will be a mixture of D.I. and signal off RE20 mikes. And yes, he says, he still relies on his trusty Moog Taurus bass pedals. "Can't beat 'em," he says. "They have real depth and power. Why they never caught on, I don't know."

you're left half an hour to fit all the other albums in. This is why you end up doing a medley, really, so you can at least do something from all those eras. You're never going to please everybody."

Stadium shows, by their very nature, are built on a foundation of compromise and advance planning, and the Genesis tour is no exception. From the songs in the set list to the dates on the itinerary, virtually every decision made by the band and its team demands that the group balance art and commerce, convenience and feasibility.

"We're doing this tour of stadiums because we don't want to be on the road forever, like a lot of other bands are," admits Collins. "I don't think we can sit here and justify it and say, 'Well, we love stadiums,' because I don't think any of us do. But we just take on that challenge and see if we can try and make it work better than other people, really."

Making it work isn't easy, though. "It's been about a year since I started working on availability of the stadiums," reports Farrell. "When you take a tour of this magnitude, the routing has to be such that you can only make a jump of approximately 250 miles, so you have to get these stadiums in order. You can be faced with everything going great through the eighth one, and then the ninth one you can't get when you need it, and it screws the whole rest of it up. It's quite a puzzle to put together."

One major piece is the weather. Genesis begins its tour in May in large part because, as Banks points out, "it was the earliest we could do open-air venues. Weatherwise in the Northern Hemisphere, May is about as early as you can trust. That's also why we're doing America before Europe. The weather in Europe's rarely trustworthy, but it certainly isn't trustworthy in May."

Then there's the need to tailor the show to the stadium circuit. Quiet songs are usually the first to go. "The two songs we've not bothered to rehearse on this album," says Banks, "are both acoustic songs or soft songs: 'Since I Lost You' and 'Never a Time.'"

"That's actually less to do with acoustics than pure numbers," adds Rutherford. "We've learned from experience that as the crowd gets larger—to go from a 10- or 20,000-seater to a 40- or 60,000-





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seater—their attention span is just not as good. You just can't ask quite as much."

On the other hand, the band has no intention of letting the show's visual content detract from the music. "We were in Toronto on a promotional tour before Christmas, and happened to see the Stones' IMAX thing," says Rutherford. "It was quite a good indicator of what not to do. That was about as big as you can get—it was like a circus, with everything everywhere, all the time. So when we sat down with [production designer] Mark Brickman, he had an idea about making the whole thing much more focused on

the band. We're just a five-piece. We don't have any extra singers or horn players. In a funny way, it's a scaling down, although it's still very powerful."

Part of that process involves pulling away from the traditional band-in-a-box approach to staging stadium shows. "You've probably been to enough outdoor shows to know that there's usually two big P.A. stacks separated by a roof at the top and a stage at the bottom," explains production manager Morris Lyda. "Which, for all intents and purposes, just forms a great big black box. The Stones did a lot towards trying

to modify the look of that box, but our goal was to totally get away from that look. So we moved the P.A. wings apart further than they've ever been moved before—there's 140 feet between the P.A. stacks."

Not only does that provide an unheard-of degree of stereo separation, says Lyda, but it allows Genesis to take an entirely different approach to stage lighting and video. "In the past," he says, "Genesis has used lighting very dramatically to emphasize the mood of their music by using an enormous number of Vari-lights, enormous amounts of color. They've succeeded at it very well. But we're not trying to do a lighting show. What we're trying to do is light the band and be able to change the mood, the look of the show to suit the mood of the music. We're doing theatrical lighting, as opposed to trying to come up with tricks."

"It's like a good theater production," agrees Banks. "We've been going through ideas in great detail with the people who are doing things for the show. And when we get to the stage where we actually see the whole thing, we will sit down with the operators and go through the songs. If we could, we'd be out there operating the controls." (Banks, Collins and Rutherford do actually get to "see" the show during rehearsals, by the way, watching from the lighting desk as a rehearsal tape plays and mannequins—"Naked, limbless women," laughs Collins—take their place onstage.)

An additional complication this time is the Sony Jumbotron video screen. "Basically it's a 20-foot by 40-foot video screen," says Lyda. "The screen in Times Square is very similar to the one we'll have on the road." Unlike most concert video, which is useless in the daylight, the Sony system works just as well in full sun as it does in the dark. Moreover, instead of the usual concert approach, in which the screens flank the stage, the Genesis Jumbotron will be positioned squarely behind the band. "So that when you're looking at the screen, you're also looking at the band," Lyda says. "You're seeing the band and the video support simultaneously."

"What we're spending most of our time thinking about is what goes on that screen," adds Banks. "It's not just us, that's the point. So we're still working on that."

THERE ARE BASICALLY two realities in the concert business. One is the booking-and-production end, where time and money are major considerations, and results are the bottom line; the other is the creative end, where combining sound and image is as much a matter of instinct as anything else. And though some pop per-

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formers seem constantly aware of both, the members of Genesis insist on separating one from the other.

"We don't even think about any aspect of that when we're recording," says Banks. "We don't think about live performance, we don't think about videos, we don't even really think about an audience, actually. I know it sounds absurd. But if you start, you can get very confused by that, and I think you can start to let it affect you. We had a documentary team while we were doing this album. Every time they were around, we did no creative work at all.

Because you just can't. It's just not the way we work. As soon as they were there, we shut off."

That attitude has its advantages, of course. For one thing, says Rutherford, it allows the band to focus on the important creative elements of the production. "We spend our time on the music and the production, and make sure we've got it right," he says. "The logistical side, you just haven't got time of day to actually worry about that. And we've got people who, if they say it's going to be done, then it'll get done. They don't make decisions that are not possible."


That doesn't mean the band isn't worried

about the task ahead. "The difficult thing on this tour is the fact that we've said we're only going out for so long," Rutherford admits. "So our manager's cramming it all in. And they're going to have some pretty difficult drives; how they're going to get the equipment up and down each day, I have no idea."

It's Lyda's job to find out. "Since we're building so much of the stuff, we take into consideration how the equipment's packaged, how many people it will require," he says. "It's probably about the most ambitious outdoor schedule that anyone's ever contemplated with a single system. To achieve this, you have to have timing that is accurate down to the minute, nearly. The amount of drill work and practice that will go into the assembling and disassembling of the shows is tantamount to military precision."

That's not to say Lyda and crew will be the only ones feeling pressure once this show hits the road. "If I get a cold on this tour, we're losing shows straightaway," says Collins. "I don't, fortunately, get colds usually. But there is that kind of added thing where you spend the whole day worrying about it. You wake up in the morning and go, [sings high notes] 'Ooh, ooh—I'll be all right today.' Because if you have falsetto, chances are you've got everything else."

Collins does have one advantage on this tour, though: the IRPEQ Ear Monitor system. "They've done a lot of research and development on these monitors in your ears," he says. "Obviously all those years, I've been trying to fight against the band, just to be heard, and therefore wasting the voice. Now I'm singing so much more in tune and so much more effortlessly that I'm actually looking forward to the tour. 'Cause before, when we first started talking about it, I thought, 'This is going to be another four months of my life where I'm going to be worried every day whether I can sing.' I was starting to wonder whether the aggravation's really worth it."

On the other hand, there are also moments when Collins has no doubts whatsoever that the road is the right place to be. For instance, there was a show at Wembley on the last tour that found the band performing before a crowd of 82,000. During "Home by the Sea," Collins says, there was a bit where the band would turn the lights on the audience while the fans waved their arms. "That was fantastic," he says. "Looking out there and seeing everybody, even the people as far away as you could see, doing that, meant you were communicating. The fact that all around this arena, they were there to get involved—I think that shows that it can work." 



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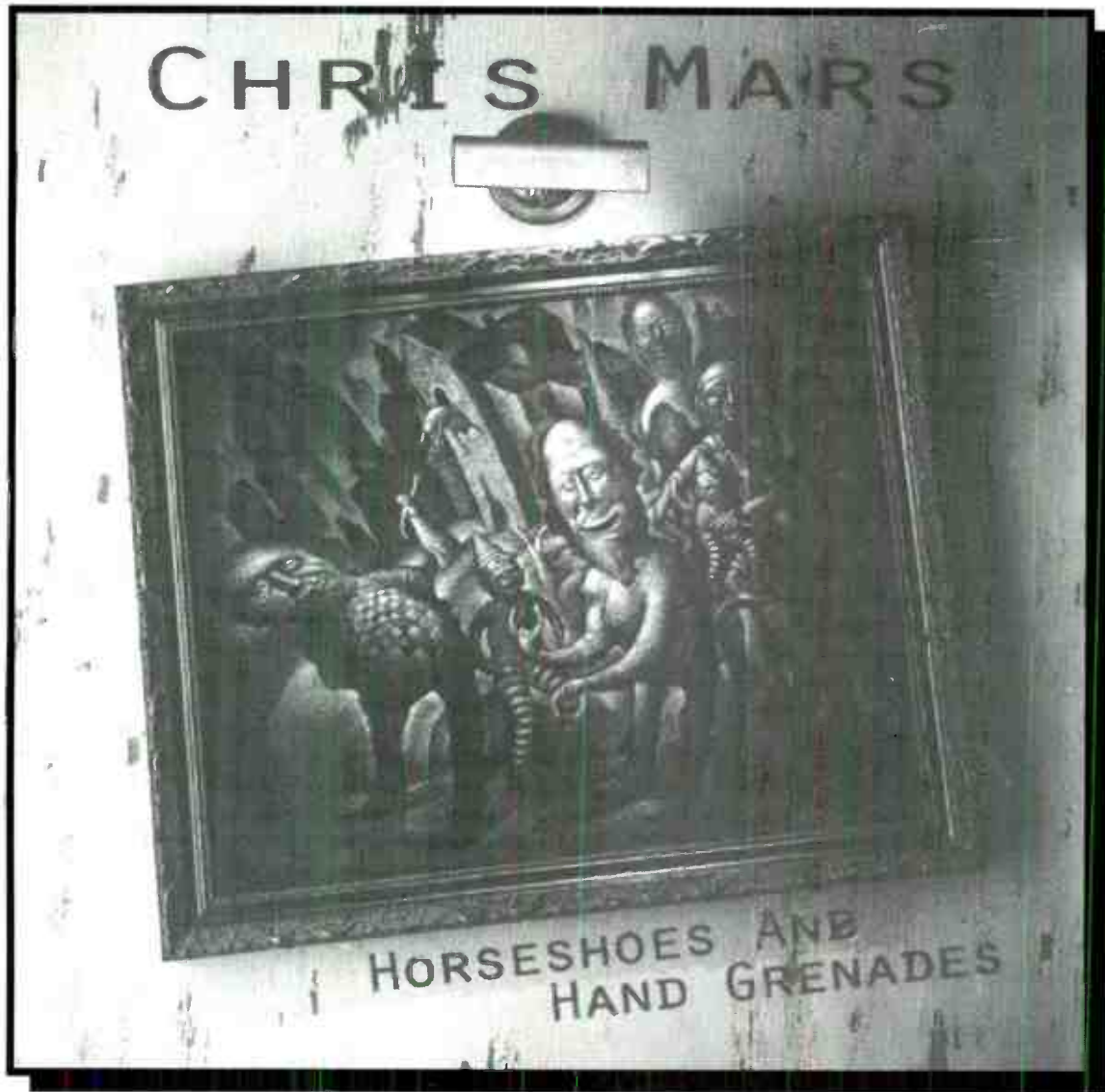
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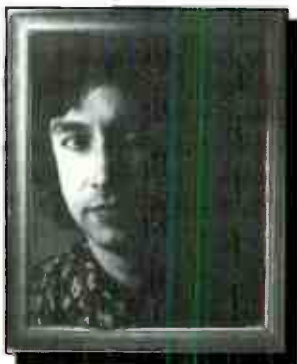
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# METALLICA

## THE VIEW FROM

*ate at night, all systems go  
you have come to see the show  
we do our best / you're the rest  
you make it feel real, you know  
there's a feeling deep inside  
that drives you fucking mad  
a feeling of a hammer head  
you need it oh so bad."*

THAT'S "WHIPLASH," THE SONG that anthemized the Metallica experience some 10 years ago, when speed metal was brand new. It was screeched out by the band's guitarist/singer James Hetfield on a record called *Kill 'Em All* and heard only by zealots. Tonight, in the massive Charlotte

Colosseum of North Carolina's capital city, Metallica bassist Jason Newsted is in charge of the tune's zooming dispatch, and about 17,000 pumped-up kiddos are hearing it. The number of zealots has multiplied.

Hetfield's there too, of course. In fact, the bottom of his lanky frame is about five feet from the top of my lanky frame. Looking straight up to see what's shaking above, some crap from the guitarist's boot falls into my eye. I'm in the Snake Pit, Metallica's answer to that old question, "How can we throttle the necks of our audiences a little bit harder, give 'em a more rabid version of that old hammerhead feeling?" Hetfield's on a catwalk that crosses the band's dauntingly spartan, wonderfully utilitarian and somewhat innovative stage. The Pit is the hollowed-out center of that stage—a triangle within a circle—and it's jammed with those Charlotte youth lucky enough to gain access through radio giveaways and other industry contests. The fans are going absolutely top-to-bottom bughouse because the music is genuinely compelling and because drummer Lars Ulrich's sweat is hitting them with each snare crack. About 30 feet away guitarist Kirk Hammett is playing to a more traditional front row, and the people over there are flipping out too. You can't help but react: The 81st show of Metallica's *Wherever We Roam Tour* is raging full-on, and hearing their maniacal precision as "Whiplash" scalds the audience ("not the kind of song you can coast through," says Ulrich later) is like getting a shot of pure adrenaline in your aorta.

The scene at the Colosseum was a bit calmer the evening before, when Newsted and a pal took in an NCAA playoff game. "I'm really into hoop," he says later with a friendly smile, "but when

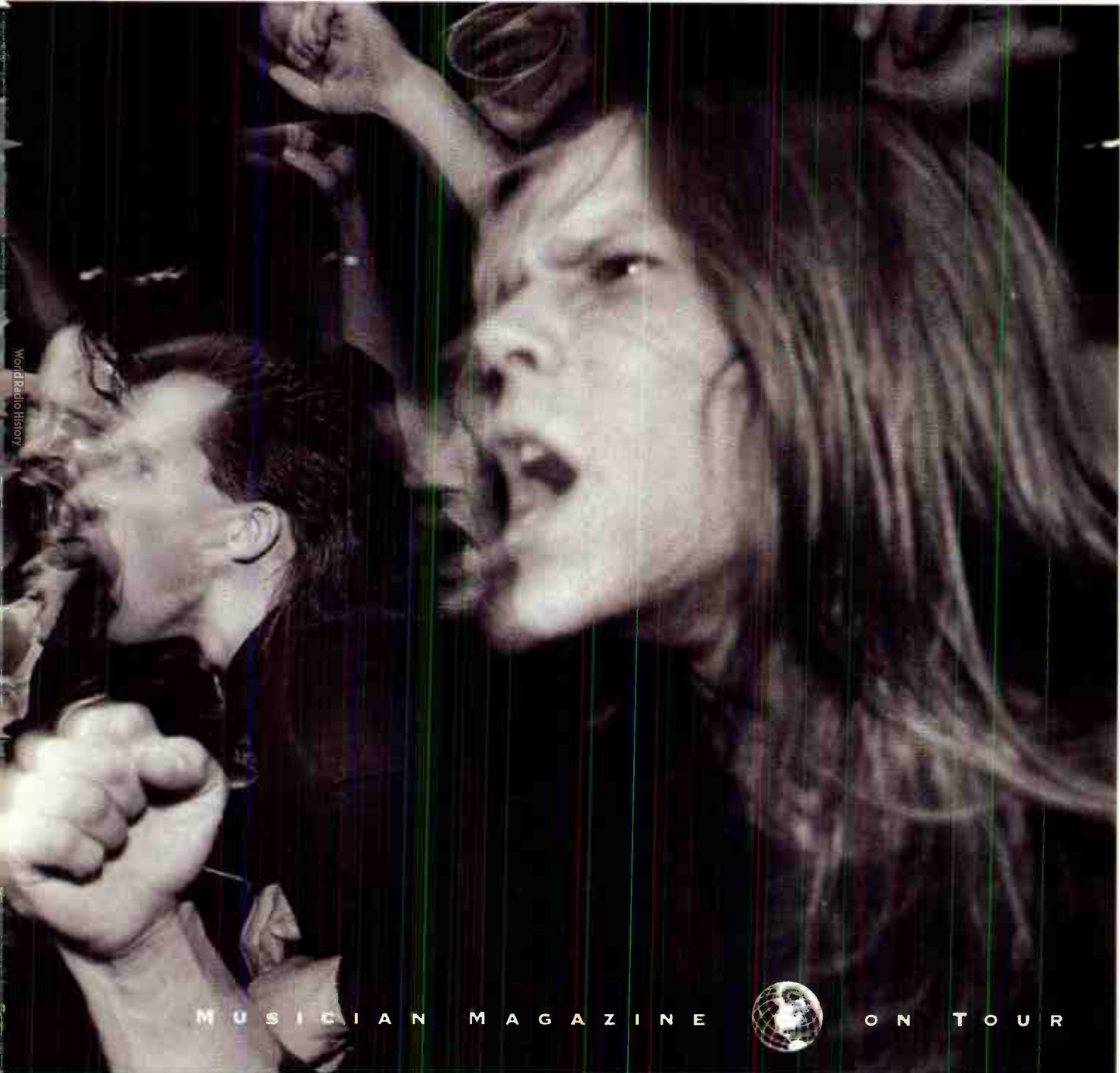


by **JIM MACNIE**



# ILLIICA

## THE SNAKE PIT



World Radio History

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE



ON TOUR



"NO ONE CHALLENGES THE WAY A ROCK SHOW CAN BE VIEWED."

I was sitting there I couldn't get the show out of my mind: where the kids were going to be, where the stage was going to be. I was thinking about all the different colors, too. The game was jammed with whites and pinks and yellows. You know, regular America. Tonight, Metallica: jet black."

Newsted's touched on the difference between happy-go-lucky sports nuts and the audience that the band has attracted since day one. Because their sound is so severe, and because Hetfield's lyrics have assessed everything from the unavoidable doom associated with technological takeover to the ruinous misfirings of the human psyche, their listenership has been a specialized one: largely male, buzzed on the rampaging hormones of post-puberty and defiantly proud of the fact that they can dig such drastic music. They're looking for an individual identity and for the last 10 years Metallica has offered it to them.

Metal, like dance pop and Ernest movies, is largely known for its escapist value: graphically cheerless imagery, blood 'n' guts delivery, tremendous amounts of machismo. Metallica utilizes all of those traits, but adds one that elevates the form: reality. Yes, things are quite rotten in the late twentieth century, but the evil that men do, remind Metallica, is done by men. We should be most afraid of ourselves. Up onstage, the band blasts through the captivating "Sad But True." Its dour message is blunt: "I'm your pain/I'm your life/I'm you/Sad but true."

Therein lies the crazed beauty of their current success. After a decade of antagonistic frenzy, Metallica have moved from being princes of a thriving underground scene to kings of the mainstream heap. Tonight's set list helps explain why. Though they don't neglect songs from past records, many tunes are from their latest disc, which checked into the number one position on the *Billboard* pop chart when it was released last fall. Subculture? Not. The band's records go platinum, double platinum; they took home a Grammy in early March. They have a buddy-buddy rapport with their fans. The tacit suggestion between the lines of their music is that we're all in this together. Ulrich maintains that nothing's worse than "a Sting or a Bono spouting off from a pedestal," but you can't command the attention of 17,000 people for three hours and not make some kind of dent on their opinion grid. Metallica speak to people.

Newsted was the only band member at the basketball game. He's the only one who takes it kind of slow with the intra-tour frolic. "I'm into vitamins," he says backstage before a Charlotte gig. Hammett comes in

unwrapping an Eric Clapton Stratocaster that he's just had shipped in from Fender. "Where's the pickles?" he mumbles. "I'm hung over, I need pickles!" Hammett, along with Hetfield and Ulrich, went out last night on one of their non-show social evenings. Blackfoot was playing at a local club and they drank some beers. And then they drank some more. "It was an Alka-Seltzer day, today," grimaces Hammett. He makes himself a sandwich, ogles the guitar and wanders off. Newsted, a chipper guy who is gregarious in the California sense, starts psyching me for the night's activities. "We're really proud of the Pit," he says. "Part of the reason for our success is the respect for our audience's loyalty. We try to give it back—we're very conscious about that. When we designed the stage setup, we put the Pit in to give them better access to the show. Down there you really feel it; the rumble is amazing."

Metallica has no opening act on this tour. They offered Skid Row the slot but the Skidmeisters want to leave behind their support-act status. So Metallica decided to go for an "Evening With" deal. An autobiographical video was put together; it rolls on several mammoth screens before the band takes the stage, and it's interspersed with live, simulcast, behind-the-scenes shots of the guys being rockers at each venue, i.e., giving the finger, taking leaks and generally primping for the prom. Due to the Blackfoot visit, Ulrich is going a tad slow himself. But when it comes time to turn on the hype, he rises quickly. "More Bon, more Bon," he bellows as a porto-camera moves in on him. An AC/DC vid is blasting out of the TV behind him. "Hey Charlotte, are you ready, you fuckers? You remember the last time we were here? We kicked your ass, and we're going to kick it again!" While Lars makes with more of the same exclamatory rhetoric, I stroll out to the bank of Sony monitors on which the tape is rolling. By the time I get there, Clint Eastwood's puss is on the screen; he's strolling through a spaghetti western boot hill and Ennio Morricone's dramatic soundtrack is giving the civic center a portentous tone. Then: blammo. "Enter Sandman," a gorgeous paean to dream paranoia, begins the two-hour-and-40-minute onslaught.

Metallica travel with a 60-person entourage which includes techies for sound, instruments, lights, video, transportation and money-handling. They have a personal pilot who flies the silver and black Gulfstream 1 with their coiled snake ("Don't Tread on Me") insignia emblazoned on the side, and they have a gangway with "Metallica" spray-painted on it



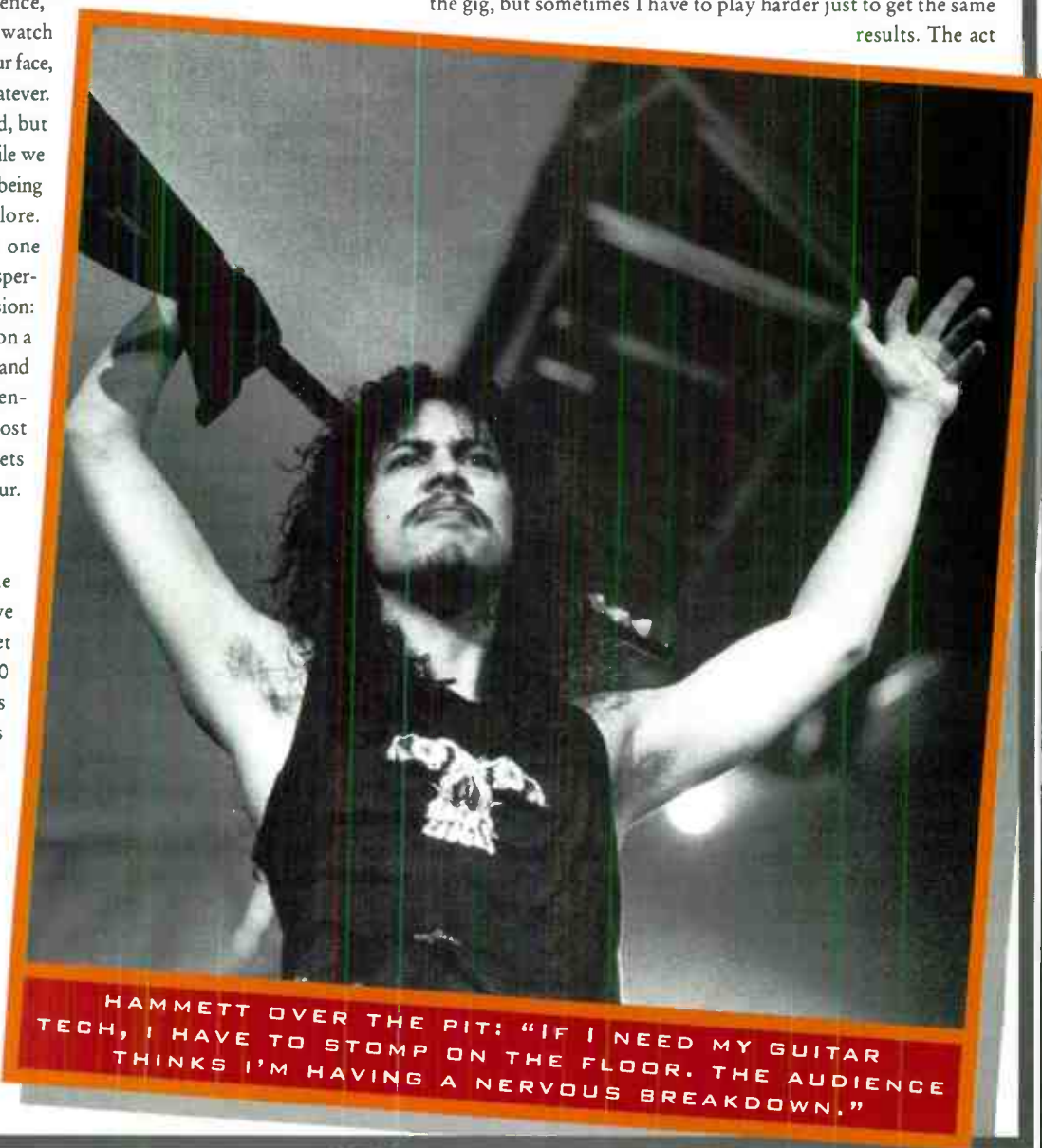
too. Large to small, this tour has got it covered—there's even a washer and dryer that does the next day's laundry while the band is in action. I've never seen anything like the coordination and teamwork that is the road crew disassembling the stage and lights. It takes but three hours to load out and get the 12 semis on the turnpike to the next destination. The moment the last player steps offstage—usually Lars, who gets wrapped in a bathrobe to avoid colds—the nuts and bolts are being undone. There's no back line on this stage; all the amps and equipment are housed underneath. The band runs around on their monitors, which blast up from the floor. "James and I are always looking for sweet spots," says Hammett, "places where we can get some good feedback. If I need to get the attention of my tech guy Fergie, and he's underneath changing strings, I have to stomp on the floor. The audience probably thinks I'm having a nervous breakdown." Drums rise and fall, guitars are dispensed from below. "It's a subterranean world down there," he adds. "I have a little table with a reading light, and those guys have made it quite cozy too. I'm not to the point where I take newspapers down there yet, but I have seen certain bandmembers reading scuba magazines while other guys solo."

From the Snake Pit you see all the action. "The audience has a completely voyeuristic experience," Hammett continues, "they watch you change guitars, wipe your face, talk to your bandmates, whatever. Sometimes it's a little weird, but it's always stimulating." While we talk, the video equipment is being boxed up; there's bustle galore. Perhaps such discipline is one facet of why Metallica's prospering in the middle of a recession: Eight months have passed on a planned 20-month schedule and they've been breaking attendance records, selling almost triple the amount of tickets they did on their '88 tour. Everyone's elated.

**B**y the time we all get back to the hotel it's 2:30 a.m., and Lars, who admits that the only time he stops talking about Metallica is when he's scuba-diving, suggests we go up to his room so I can get some straight poop on tape. I wearily agree. Plying me with spicy Danish licorice that he's addicted to, the drummer recalls how people in the office were wary of the band going out without an opening act. "They

thought we were nuts, they said that nobody was buying tickets and they were nervous about the whole thing falling flat on its face. Some days we were nervous too. It costs a quarter of a million dollars a week to carry our shit around, and although I won't name names, you can go ask five or six other hard rock bands what happens if no one shows up. First the equipment goes home and then you go home.

"But if there's a philosophy in this band it's 'Don't second-guess, be instinctual.' So we did it. And you know what? A lot of motherfuckers decided to show up." Lars is laughing. "It feels great, and one of the best feelings is knowing that they're all there for your ass and not some support act. We've got owners of the buildings giving us plaques: 'Metallica—Attendance Record.' It's wild." Newsted has told me that he loses three or four pounds a night from sweat. "What about you, as a drummer?" I ask Lars. "How do you physically propel a band like Metallica night after night?" "I used to run a lot," he begins, "but these days if I did anything that expended that amount of energy, I wouldn't have what I need for the gig. When I used to play tennis, I was like Agassi or Connors—hard hitters. As far as debauchery goes, I find I can go four nights in a row with drinking beer, then I need to cool out. It never really affects the gig, but sometimes I have to play harder just to get the same results. The act



HAMMETT OVER THE PIT: "IF I NEED MY GUITAR TECH, I HAVE TO STOMP ON THE FLOOR. THE AUDIENCE THINKS I'M HAVING A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN."



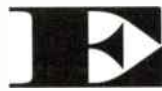
of playing is the exercise in itself. I stay in shape by playing wild music every night."

Lars handed out some tickets to the show at the club where Blackfoot was playing; I ran into a kid in the Pit at the end of the night and he was trying to see if he could reconnect with the drummer. Ulrich says that happens all the time, and that even though he's swamped by fans when he goes into a rock club, he's unwilling to play the holier-than-thou trip. "Your success shouldn't be allowed to mess up your life," he laughs. "I'm not going to be a prisoner in a hotel room like Michael Jackson. Sometimes it's a weird fish-tank vibe—50 people staring at me when I'm trying to have a beer with a friend—but hey, at the end of the day, signing autographs isn't a bother. If it was, we wouldn't go out.

"Sometimes we avoid all that by hanging around in strip clubs in each city. You can drink, hear good music, see all the pussy. It's clichéd, but it's fun. James goes to C&W bars sometimes when he's had it with the metal people and wants to be alone."

Hetfield better get his rest. Things are destined to get wider. As we speak there are plans being laid for the band to join Guns N' Roses for the summer leg of the tour. Won't have too many sales problems there. Ulrich says, "The amount of times that both of our bands have sat around in hotel rooms like this at seven in the morning after a night of 50 beers and said, 'We've got to play together...' is enormous. We really like each other. But right now we're figuring out what co-headlining really means; we both want to do full sets. Me and James talked to Axl and Slash, and said, 'Let's not let this fuck up over ego garbage.' A show like this has to be done right. With a late-night stadium deal there are local curfews, noise

problems and all that. We need to be real about it. If Nirvana joins up—wow. The three hard rock bands that the mainstream has embraced. It would be so cool."



Everybody sleeps late the next day. Charleston, West Virginia is the next date and the plane ride is a quick one—an hour. Brunch ranges from BLTs to French toast. Hetfield's perusing a wildlife mag. Hammett's reading the *New York Times* and mumbling to himself, "I guess no one should be surprised that Buchanan used to work for Nixon." No time to watch "Fawty Towers," *Death Wish 4* or the Mentors video that stock the plane's library. We set down, head over to the show, and everyone acknowledges the throng of kids who waited in the rain at the airport. There's a larger crowd positioned outside the arena itself. Once inside, everybody noshes and goes his own way. An NBC affiliate grabs Jason and Lars for an interview. I find Hammett warming up his fingers in the tuning room. There's a "KILL BON JOVI" sticker on his bank of Marshalls, and he's playing some loopy repetitive riff. "Know what that is?" he queries. "Nope," I reply. He points to my shirt. "That's the music Sun Ra comes out onstage to." Yup, I've got on a Ra shirt and Hammett and I have made a connection. All of a sudden he moves into the creamy phrases from Hendrix's "Castles Made of Sand."

"A lot of the Hendrix ballads have chord comps that are pretty tricky fingering-wise," he offers, "and that's why I play them. Not for strength per se, more agility. Keep 'em nimble." Kirk's lead work has gotten more sophisticated over the years. The breaks that he took onstage in Charlotte

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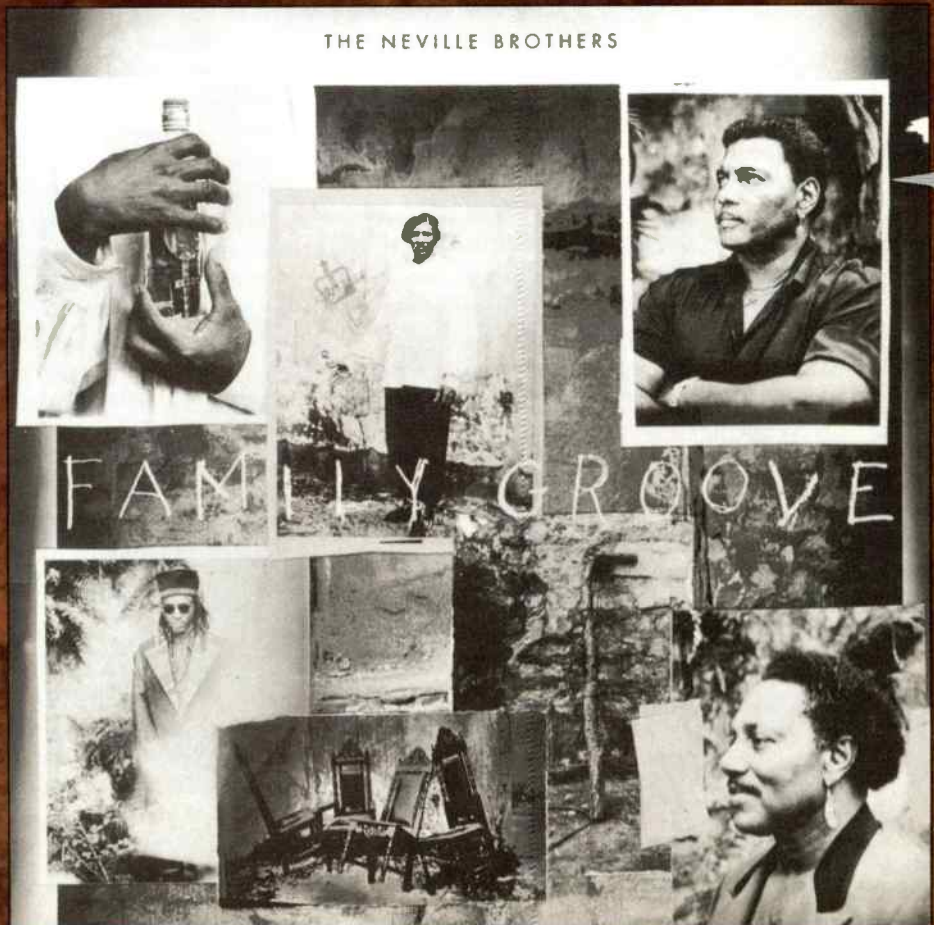
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were filled with trills that offer a respite from the midrange chug of Hetfield's rhythm. Hammett's still a little pissed, however; he says that his playing the previous evening was lame and didn't contribute to the psyche that he likes to have onstage. "Last night was my own fault," he says while plucking Jimi's "Gypsy Eyes." "I was hung over and never made it to that next level. Sometimes you can lift yourself out, and sometimes not. I've learned to judge a gig by my own performance, because the band can be having a real shitty set and people will still say, 'Oh, fantastic tonight!' You just gotta shake your head. But we can also rise above. If a show starts off so bad that we're snoring, we just give each other the look and say, 'Man, this has gotta kick in soon.' And it usually does."

"Sometimes we spit toward each other to wake up," laughs Hetfield, who has just ambled in. "A good loogie can really get someone's attention." Hetfield and Ulrich spit constantly onstage, and rather than a macho drama move, it seems like

concession to informality. "Keeping up with each other musically is weird," James goes on. "We're a strange band in that Lars follows my guitar. Most groups base themselves on the drummer, but I'm the only thing in his monitor. Guitar and vocals, that's it; everything else he picks up from

the general mix. If I fuck up, break a string or whatever, he's lost. He has to pull it back. But if he speeds up, we'll get a message to him."

The tuning room is a haven of sorts, a place for the guys to make connections before the gig. Hetfield comes in sans guitar. He moves over to the drums and starts playing a rudimentary shuffle beat. When Hammett joins in it becomes a full-blown raunch blues à la Johnny Winter And. Hetfield, who's sick and has been using a vaporizer to keep his throat in shape, breaks into the first beaming smile I've seen since I arrived. "Drums are fun for me," he says. "I'm no good but I've got a knack for moving more than one limb at once. My brother had a band when we were growing up and there was always a kit around.

#### ENTER SOUNDMAN

**LARS ULRICH** has two full sets of Tama drums onstage with him and a full array of Zildjian cymbals. His sticks are Regal Tips. **KIRK HAMMETT'S** main stage guitars are an ESP M2 and an ESP Flying V, which he plays through a MESA/Boogie Mark II C Plus. Kirk uses Dean Markley strings.

**JAMES HETFIELD** plays custom-built ESP guitars with various inlays, such as a wolf turning into a man and the "don't tread on me" snake logo. "I told the folks at ESP what I wanted—different wood, certain specs—and they worked with me, which is great because I hate people who say *we can't*. That bugs the shit out of me." Hetfield's notes go through a Nady wireless that transmits to a MESA/Boogie Mark II C Plus. His strings are Ernie Balls. On "The Unforgiven" Hetfield plays a Gibson Chet Atkins acoustic/electric.

Both Hammett and Hetfield run around all night so their guitar techies, Andy and Fergie, make all their setting changes for them with a custom Bradshaw switching system. **JASON NEWSTED** plays four-, five- and six-string basses by Alembic called, appropriately enough, Jason Newsted models. His strings are LaBella Hard Rockin' Steel. The only effects to be found onstage are Newsted's, a Morley Wah pedal and a Sansamp, which are connected to an Ampeg SVT II amp and an SVT cabinet.

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Something to make my mom mad. Lars never plays this warmup set, so why shouldn't I?"


The concert's promoter comes in with his wife, newborn and the rest of Metallica, looking to get some family shots with the band who like to remind us that "to live is to die." They all put on pleasant faces, shake hands and head back out. Only Newsted and Hammett hang. "You guys were talking about me before, weren't you?" Newsted asks. Yeah, I tell him. Kirk says you've been turning him on to the blues. "Damn straight," he says and breaks into an impromptu Willie Dixon tribute with "Hoochie Coochie Man." Hammett's into it, diggin' into the riff and letting buzz notes float a bit. "That's what I work on, blues stuff," he says, "especially back at the hotel at night. As much guitar as you think I might play onstage, it's a strict format, and I can't play other things that I really want to. After the show I play until late.

"The older I get the more I appreciate the less-is-more concept, you know? It only works in certain instances, but it definitely works. It's been seeping into everything we do, from simpler drum beats and song structure and vocal melodies to the packaging of the record. Nothing but black, yeah. We met Nigel Tufnel from Spinal Tap at the MTV music awards recently, and goofing around I went right up to him: 'Hey man, I'm Kirk from Metallica and our record is all black.' He looked at me very matter-of-factly and said, 'I can respect that.'"

Ulrich says, "I used to laugh at guys like Charlie Watts when I was a kid. Like, 'Is there a worse drummer around, can't the guy even do one fill?' Of course now I realize that he's great, and that the showy side of things, all that 5/16 time signature bullshit, is nowhere. I'm trying to get it

out of my system, because at the end of the day it's like jerking off. *Master of Puppets* and *Justice* were written around the drums, and they are the apex of that stuff. That's why the new record sounds different. The playing is just as hard, but simpler. The song structures are less formulated. I'm looking to put some swing into the stuff now—not jazz swing, but a little bit of groove."

The Charlestown set—number 52—is a vast improvement over Charlotte. Everything is tighter, and the reaction is wilder. Walking around the rafters, I see kids thrashing during "Battery" and older fans swooning a bit during Hetfield's love pledge, "Nothing Else Matters." James has seen that too, and it's freaked him. "It's scary to look out and see couples hugging during that song. Oh fuck, I thought this was a Metallica show." He puts on a weenie voice: "We played this at our wedding." He needn't worry too much; most of the show is closer to the sound of the band that inspired him initially, Black Sabbath. "You could feel their weight," he says about Ozzy's crew, "it was *heav-veee*."

It's 2 a.m.—the end of the night. The groupies are lining up and the truck drivers are waking up. I forgot to book a hotel and am lucky enough to amble across the street to a Holiday Inn to crash in a driver's room. All the load-out action is going on in back, so someone shows me out the front way. The city's a ghost town—totally quiet. In front of the civic center squats a lone fan, about 15 years old. "Everything okay?" I ask. "Ah," he shakes his head, "my friends took off on me, and I had to call my father. He'll be here in an hour." Are you pissed? "Nah," the kid says with an exhausted grin, "it was worth it, the show was awesome. Those guys are *heav-vee*." 

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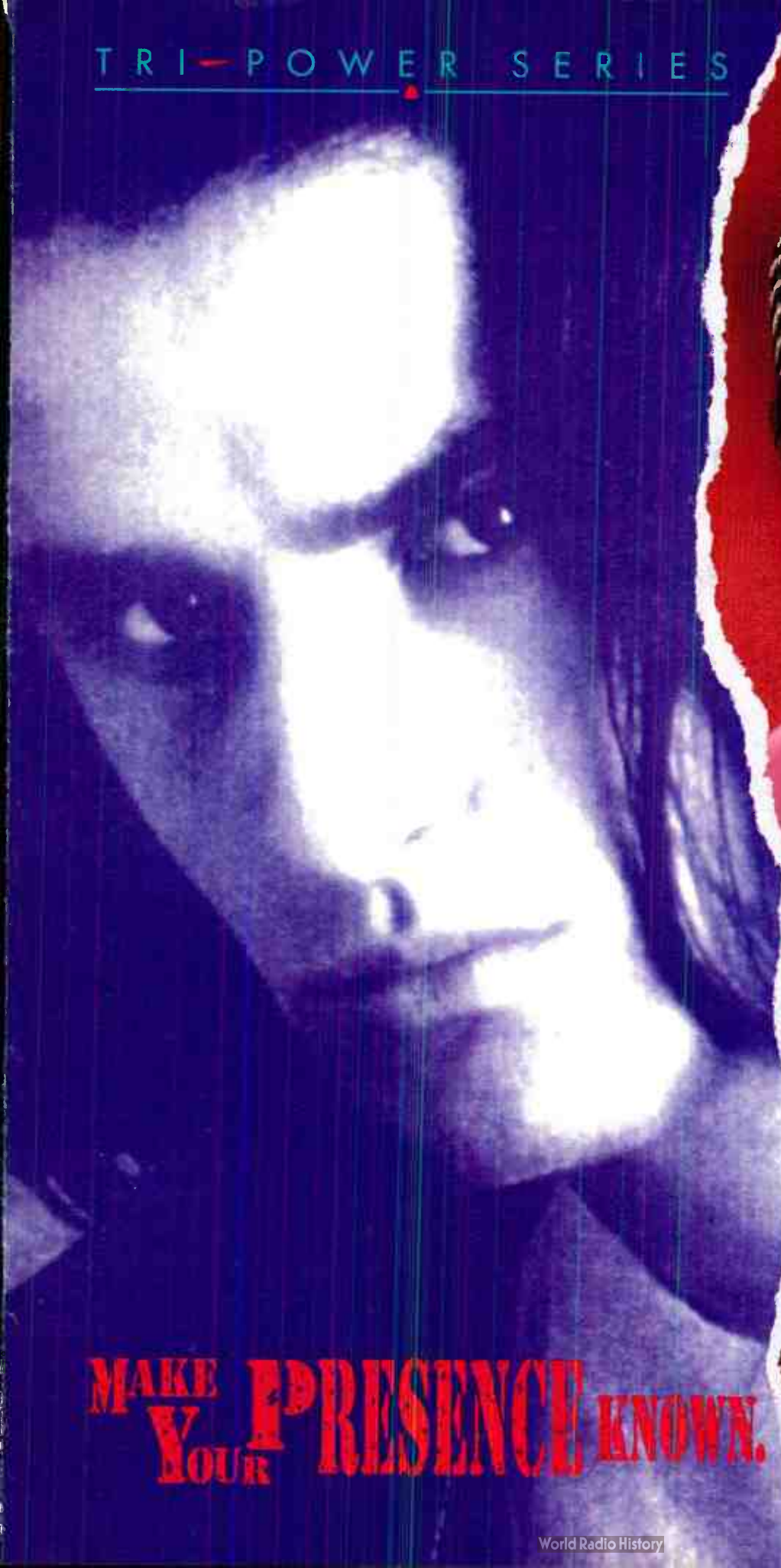
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MUSICIAN MAGAZINE



ON TOUR

World Radio History



## R O S E

## A W L

WHEN *MUSICIAN* LAST CHECKED IN WITH Guns N' Roses, in the summer of 1991, frontman Axl Rose was in a defensive crouch, slapping at his enemies. In the aftermath of a riot at a St. Louis concert, the media had labeled the controversial singer a public enemy, perhaps a dangerous nut, and Rose was defending himself, screaming to be heard above his accusers. ♣ Since then things have gotten a little rosier for Axl, though no progress in Guns N' Roses' career will ever be easy. The band finally released its long-awaited albums *Use Your Illusion* volumes one and two, which demonstrated the breadth of the group's ambition—and which have now been best-sellers for eight months. Having already gone through the tension of splitting with drummer Steve Adler, the band then faced the trauma of losing guitarist Izzy Stradlin—Rose's childhood friend and one of GN'R's main songwriters. ♣ Rose, who has been the subject of more psycho-

logical profiles than Gary Hart, threw himself into deep therapy and began, he says, unlocking buried childhood traumas (including being sexually abused by his natural father) that pointed toward the causes of his various neuroses and his rages. Rose has also been working extensively with a chiropractor and a masseuse to relieve physical traumas—some of which result from his athletic stage shows, and some of which he says are manifestations of the childhood abuses he is remembering. When this interview took place, in early March, Rose was awaiting the publication of a *Rolling Stone* interview in which he went public for the first time with his accusations against his father and stepfather. Far from nervous about the effect those revelations would have, the singer expressed feelings of great relief, even liberation, at having exposed his demons to the light of day. ♣ In his faith in the righteousness and healing power of public confession, Rose recalls another

B Y   B I L L   F L A N A G A N



"I'M TRYING TO LEARN TO TAKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS. I JUST WISH I DIDN'T HAVE SO MANY ACTIONS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR."

tortured rock star—John Lennon. But to understand Guns N' Roses one must understand that Axl is not a direct descendant of Lennon. Or Dylan, Presley or any of the other prototypes who first inspired most important rock musicians. A child of Indiana, strict discipline and the 1970s, Rose grew up piecing together his idea of rock 'n' roll from what he could glean from Top 40 radio in the era of Queen and Billy Joel. He still loves that music. He says that when he first heard Elton John's "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" the song had a power like no music he had ever known. He also says that while he was growing up, forbidden access to rock culture, the only music magazines he saw were the publications he could buy at the local grocery store: teenage poster mags such as *Circus* and *Hit Parade*. Axl Rose shaped his vision of rock 'n' roll out of rock 'n' roll's most insubstantial debris. Unaware of all the possibilities, he began his career expressing his talent through a limited vocabulary.

As a troubled child Billy Bailey looked at pin-up pictures of silly heavy metal bands and *thought they really meant it*. So he took that trivial style and infused it with a powerful creative vision. He brought integrity to a shallow genre through his own passionate belief. Billy Bailey was a sad, scared kid who recreated himself as a rock star named W. Axl Rose. And then, against all odds, he found himself again.

**MUSICIAN:** *Guns N' Roses are going on tour with Metallica this summer. I heard you've been trying to get Nirvana to join you and Kurt Cobain is saying no.*

**AXL:** It's back and forth. I just think that they're having a lot of problems

with who they are and who they want to be and trying to hold onto it at the same time. At least Kurt is. I'd like to be as supportive as I can, but I don't know how much he will allow support. To write a song like "Smells Like Teen Spirit" making fun of your songwriting and then have it used as an anthem has got to be a complete mindfuck. The man definitely has a mountain to rise above. I think there is a part of him that has the strength and desire to do it. I just don't know if he's able to get in touch with it. I had an advance copy of that record and it became my favorite. I would put it on repeatedly. Nirvana has helped me do my job. I think that the world has gotten really bored, really fed up and really pent up with frustration, and that comes through in Nirvana. I think a lot of people were aware of that feeling and he happened to find the song that touched it and was able to let that feeling out in people. And I'd like to do anything I can to support it. That's why we want them to play with us.

**MUSICIAN:** *How do you feel about touring now?*

**AXL:** I pretty much could do without touring in a lot of ways. I'm not a big fan of it. I like the transportation, I like flying in a private plane, I like riding in limos. I like the grandiose nature of those things and the material comfort. But other than that, I don't have a lot of time to really enjoy myself. I can enjoy that I've got a nice room and a police escort, but I don't have much time to take in a movie or TV or just sit and relax.

**MUSICIAN:** *Do the people who come to your shows and listen closely to your records really know you?*

**AXL:** No. I don't even know how necessary it is that they know me. If somehow through me they're able to know themselves a little better, that's



## SLASH SHOWS HIS FACE

*The rebellion you appear to represent has been undercut by your popularity.*

At the point we're at now, "rebellious" and trying to do something that's conducive to the art start to be two completely different things. It gets separated because what you started out as, which was sort of a rebellious, kick you in the ass, kind of fuck-you attitude, turns into, like, almost the element of the band that made it become commercial. [laughs] A lot of parents bitch at me for saying this, but when your mom and dad and grandparents and your girlfriend's parents like your band, it sort of kills the whole thing! [laughs] It's nothing against having your mom and dad like what you do, it's just that whole rebellious, anti-society attitude you

start out with, when it finally becomes accepted, doesn't make any real sense as far as where you're coming from, where your band's coming from. And that's what's happened, so you just have to deal with it realistically. And I don't think Nirvana's attitude about, "Now that we've got here, it's fucked, and we're not gonna do anything" makes any sense. That's copping out to some sort of—I'm sorry to say it—but pathetic, "It was easy to do what we started out with; now we have to deal with something."

*Is this in part a reaction to the fact that they don't want to tour with you because of some of your lyrics?*

No, it has *nothing* to do with that, they just don't want to work. Axl and I are supposed to go over to the singer's house and talk with him. I don't know them personally. They don't want to go out, and the vibe, from my point of view, is just because they're strung out, but from the public's point of view, it's just because they don't wanna fuckin' deal with "mainstream," which...there's no such thing as mainstream if you don't want it to be that way. I love their record, but I can't stand the fuckin' attitude. Because we spent our entire career as a band doing what we wanted to do in the way that we wanted to do it, going *totally* against the mainstream and getting to where we are now, which is great. If you have something important to say, you don't give up and flake out. [laughs] Because once you get there, it paves the way for other bands. We're in the mainstream only because the mainstream has become part of us. They've adapted to what we do.

*Rebellion is relative—it's funny how the music you're playing is based in everything from Kiss to Skynyrd.*

You know what it is? It's a rock 'n' roll thing. A lot of people have forgotten what that was all about. I listen to old ZZ Top records and go, "Fuck!" It's like history, and nobody even knows what they're doing anymore. It's that boogie and blues thing, and jamming and just improvising, you know? Everything's so preplanned and intense as far as business goes that everybody missed the whole fuckin' point somewhere along the way. And we get flak for maintaining what I thought got me into this in the first place. And sometimes you forget what got you into it; you start to go with the flow, and every couple of days you listen to an old record or even your own records, and go, "This shit's really screwed up now, isn't it?" [laughs] I've become really aware of how detached from the rock 'n' roll mentality this industry has gotten. You go to a concert, and even the people in the crowd are clueless. They're into it if you show it to them, but otherwise, they don't know what they're getting into *at all*. I mean, it's not like they're expecting to just hang out, have a couple of drinks and listen to music any-



BY MATT RESNICOFF

more; it's like some sort of bizarre congregation where you're gonna go in and listen to a certain amount of songs and there are going to be certain songs off certain records and it's gonna be *done*, and then they're gonna go back to school or home or back to their families and say, "Oh yeah, they played this song"—which they expected to hear—"Yeah, they did it." [laughs] I mean, last night we didn't do two of our biggest hits because we forgot to do 'em, and we didn't think twice about it until the end of the show. [laughs] But we had a great *show*.

*You're also getting called out over your vodka endorsement.*

Well, I ran into this vodka in Europe called Black Death, and on the bottle was a top hat and a skull, which is sort of my moniker anyway. It tasted great, so I

drank it for a couple of days and that was it. I did an interview where I said, "We don't do endorsements as far as cigarettes or beer or what have you. The only thing I *would* endorse would be Black Death vodka." A couple of weeks later I get a call saying, "Black Death was interested in you doing that," and I said, "Okay! Cool!" It was just in Europe at the time. Now that it's stateside, I'm getting all kinds of flak from people saying I'm influencing the youth of America. Fuck 'em, the vodka's great. Everybody's supposed to be smart enough to make their own decisions, you know?

*Apart from the anger you'd probably experience at being scrutinized...*

I don't even get angry, let's get that one straight. It's par for the course. I can understand where people can be pissed off because I'm endorsing something that is not necessarily healthy, and maybe I have some influence on younger kids, but at the same time, the way I grew up, and where I come from, I've done fine for *myself*. As far as influencing kids goes, I didn't know that was my fuckin' job, you know?

*You say people should know better, but you may be smarter or more fortunate than kids whose incompetent parents leave their minds in your hands. You've been given this power, and it's up to you what you do with it.*

There's no way I can condone some religious drug- and alcohol-free life. No way. This is an opinion; I don't want to force it down anybody's throats. You get involved in things, you make your decisions, and the only one that's gonna be able to figure those decisions out is yourself. Now, if you're so easily influenced and gullible that you have no idea what those decisions mean to you, then you're fucked, right? So I'm not talking to those people. [laughs] I can't recommend what I've been through to everybody, but if you're sheltered by your parents or some moral idea of what your life is gonna be like, you're missing a lot. You don't *have* to drink or do drugs or even have sex before a certain age, but you have to do what you think is fun, because life's too short. Be smart about it, though.

*You were lucky because people were depending on you, though. Even business people.*

No, I'm talking about way before that. I was 11! [laughs]

*You had drunk...*

I didn't drink when I was 11, I used to smoke pot. Look—in Italy, kids have a glass of wine with every meal. It's how you look at it. If you realize you're getting drunk, stop. Or if somebody offers you dope, it's your choice to get into that. Peer pressure is the lamest excuse for drug addiction. I got into dope because I thought, "Wow, all right, let's see what *this* is like." It wasn't because anybody *told* me to do it.



what's cool. It is hard when you are communicating with a majority of people who have no idea where you are coming from. They just know Guns N' Roses means party. Rock 'n' roll. Okay, that's cool, but it means a lot more than that and if you think that's what it's all about then you can go home. Because there are times when I just don't have the energy to continue fostering that belief in people—that rock 'n' roll is an escape. I can't find too many ways to escape anymore. I have to face myself and face things head-on in my life. And each day I'm rising to the challenge a little bit more.

**MUSICIAN:** *There's a part of your audience that's attracted to the possibility of disaster. There are people rooting for you to lose.*

**AXL:** Yeah, that's like a gladiator thing. That's a morbid part of human nature and it can be tough to deal with. Especially if you feel it from a crowd. It's very disguised. It's not like, "Aw, you suck!" They're screaming and they're happy but they want to see blood. To figure out how to rise above that and still satiate the crowd is a tough job. I've done shows where the naked eye it looked really positive, but onstage, being sensitive to it, it was a draining thing.

These people were out for every last drop they could get. If they're giving something back, you can give more.

**MUSICIAN:** *When the crowd's energy is negative, does that force you to follow them down the road, or can you turn it into something positive?*

**AXL:** It's been different at different stages of my career. It used to be more of a punk rock thing where a band would take that negative attitude and turn it on themselves. "You want to see blood? I'll give you more than you planned on, I'll even take my own life." I've tried that avenue until finally...it was too hard. You just go down the tubes too fast giving in to that kind of anger.

But it's really hard to stay positive when there's that kind of taking and that kind of anger in the crowd. There's places where we have played where we have turned it around. I think that's part of the job. Sometimes it's hard to stay focused when you're getting beat up by the energy. You can physically feel that you're getting beat up rather than getting inspired. It feels like a nightmare and to try to get above that is very difficult.

**MUSICIAN:** *Does the band respond with one mind, or might two of you be sensitive to the negative energy while two others are having a great time?*

**AXL:** I think it's pretty much on my shoulders and I don't mind that at all. The band works the stage and gets off on the crowd, but I'm kind of a shield. If I'm gone they don't really know how to get on top of it. If I'm out there and not handling it, no one can really rescue me. It's just very hard sometimes. We've done shows where I could feel that it was a very taking thing and I turn around and Slash is doing handstands because he's still getting off on the chaos of it. And I'm having the shit beat out of me. This happened in Vegas. My jaw was hurting, my back was hurting, my leg was hurting. I call it shadow boxing because it comes down to between me and the audience. And for Guns N' Roses to be successful, I have to win. And if I win everyone wins. If the crowd wins then a lot of people lose, including the crowd. They didn't get to be satiated, they get to go home pissed off because we crumbled under it.

**MUSICIAN:** *Yet if you gave in to the negative the crowd would love it.*

**AXL:** I'm such a *Victory or Death* type of person. I realized at one point that going onstage and just smashing everything around and singing "Jungle" wasn't getting me anywhere in my own life. It wasn't enough for me. And taking it farther and hurting myself or taking my life onstage wasn't going to do me any good. And if people are benefiting from the music it

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wasn't going to do them any good if I was gone. So I had to start working on other ways of dealing with it and other ways of working with the crowd. We still haven't risen above a lot of things but we've risen above some. And we're continually striving.

**MUSICIAN:** *When we go see Guns N' Roses now we're seeing three original members and three hired sidemen. You're one man away from a Steely Dan situation.*

**AXL:** Slash and I are avid Steely Dan fans.

**MUSICIAN:** *What's different about playing with guys you've hired, as opposed to guys you slept on floors with?*

**AXL:** In some ways it's not a whole lot different because in the beginning we were putting a band together to achieve something. It was always kind of a triad between Slash, Izzy and me. And when Izzy wasn't so much being a part of that triad, Doug Goldstein, our manager, kind of took his place. As far as keeping Guns N' Roses going and figuring out what we're doing, Izzy really wasn't that much involved anymore. He wrote songs, but those songs were on the record because I wanted them on the record and because the band agreed to learn them and liked them and we all worked on them. I really believed in Izzy. I was an Izzy fan for 15 years and I wanted his songs to be a part of this project. But it was like pulling teeth to make that happen. A lot of people might have liked the way Izzy was standing there onstage and it was kind of cool, but the truth of the matter was that Izzy wasn't handling any of the weight.

**MUSICIAN:** *It seems like you have the other guys in the band over a barrel sometimes. Everyone knows that you're capable of saying, "The hell with it, I won't go on" or won't record or won't show up. Doesn't that force the band to say, "We better do it Axl's way or it ain't going to happen at all"?*

**AXL:** Yeah.

**MUSICIAN:** *Does that take something out of the band? It seems as if Guns N' Roses has gone from being a shared vision to being your vision. Is that fair?*

**AXL:** Yeah, it's somewhat fair. That's definitely the case with Izzy. Izzy wanted the financial rewards and the power rewards of my vision. Izzy's vision was much smaller. The other guys in the band just thought I was crazy. In order to make certain things happen, certain people had to think certain ideas were completely their own. I definitely knew what I wanted. I didn't know quite how to get there. And sometimes the only way to have everybody going the same place is to allow them to think that

they're the ones who thought of it.

It's not so much that way anymore and it's been real difficult to uncover that reality. It's been hard for people to accept. But it has been a basic reality of Guns N' Roses since the beginning. It just wasn't seen. Because I wasn't someone who had all the answers and all the plans, I just had a vision. I wasn't necessarily someone that people wanted to follow blindly and say, "He's got the plan, let's go." I've finally earned respect from Duff and Slash that wasn't necessarily fully there before. And Slash and I, more than anyone else, are very much a team.

**MUSICIAN:** *In "Garden of Eden" you talk about "kiss ass sycophants." Are there people around you who can look you in the eye and say, "Hey, you're being a real jerk, knock it off"?*

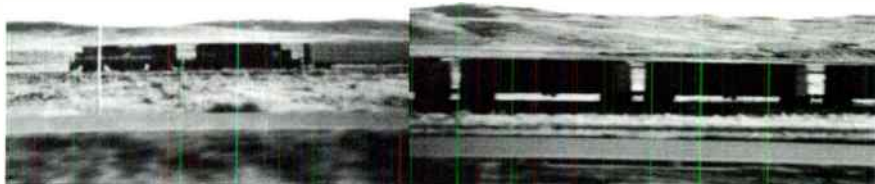
**AXL:** Yeah. I have some close friends in the band and in our organization. That's why I'm friends with them. We pretty much can lay things on the line with each other.

**MUSICIAN:** *Use Your Illusion has been out for a while now. Do you find that one volume holds together better than the other?*

**AXL:** No, I've never really looked at it as two separate albums. That was Geffen Records'

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marketing plan. I've always looked at it as an entire package. For me it fits together perfectly for the 30 songs in a row. Everything that we decided to record for the album made it. Actually there were 29 songs and "My World" just kind of presented itself.

**MUSICIAN:** Did you suddenly say, "Hold on, there's another song coming"?

**AXL:** Yeah. That also happened with "Don't Cry." While I was recording the original version I started hearing another melody and words in my head. It really surprised me. I told Mike Clink, our producer, "Put me on another

track! I don't know what's happening here but I've got a different song coming through my head and I want to get that on tape."

"My World" happened when we were sitting around being a bit bored. We had been working on "Live and Let Die" all night and it was early morning. I'd been listening to a lot of industrial music and all of a sudden I said, "Hey man, let's do something. Let's see what happens. Let's just make it short and sweet and see what we come up with." In three hours we wrote and recorded the song.

**MUSICIAN:** In it you refer to your "socio-psy-

chotic state of bliss."

**AXL:** I'll expose a little more of myself—we were also on 'shrooms. A friend of mine had stuck some mushrooms in my tea and I didn't know it. All of a sudden we were being really mellow. So it was kind of a socio-psychotic state of bliss.

**MUSICIAN:** Some musicians mess up their personal lives in order to keep the music coming.

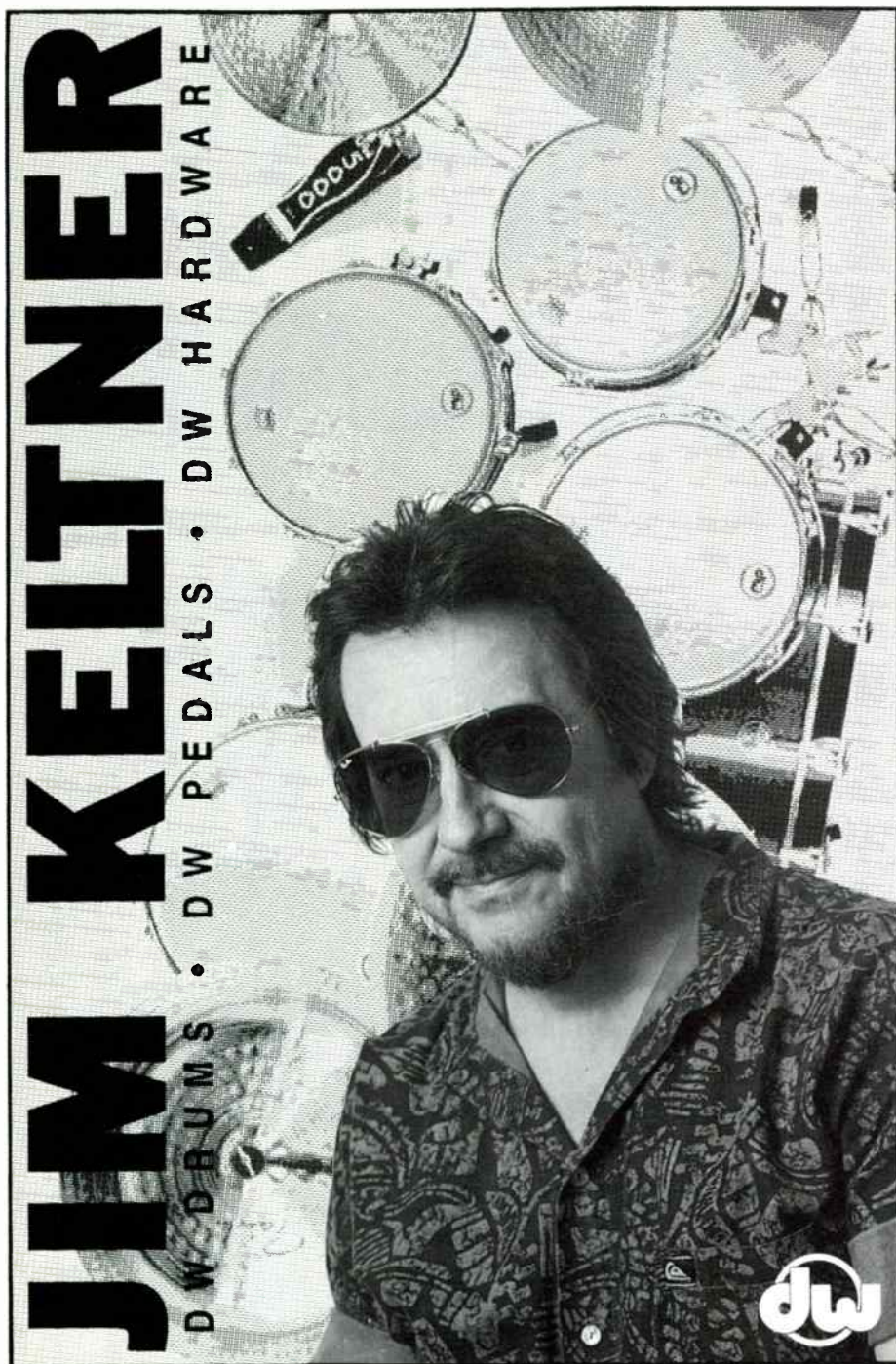
**AXL:** I think everybody's different. A lot of people, myself included, will choose to stay in certain situations whether you like them or not because they are what you know. That's what you're used to. You can even leave one set of conditions and move into another and it's a whole other mess, but there's some of the same essence in that mess, the same type of chaos. I think that a lot of people hold onto these things because it's pretty natural to have fears of moving beyond something. Like feeling you need to keep a certain anger in your life because that's how you defend yourself and deal with the world, rather than learning how to let it go. You hold onto certain fears or frustrations because it's so much a part of you that you don't know what you'd be without it. The truth is that you'd be better, but try convincing your unconscious mind of that.

**MUSICIAN:** It would be tough for anybody to peel back those layers, to confront those demons and let go of that anger. But it must be even tougher for someone in your position. You have been rewarded for your anger, you have had lots of reinforcement. When you go out onstage and express your rage people cheer. It must be very hard for you to let go of it.

**AXL:** It's like signing a contract with a big record company and being promoted as the bad boys. Then after your success reaches a certain point you're expected to be able to just talk with the lawyers and be very social and business-wise, communicate properly. And you're like, "Wait a minute, the reason we're here is because of what we were and now we're supposed to be something completely different?" That's taken a long time for me to get on top of, and to turn things around in myself so I wasn't just the bad boy. All of a sudden in order to keep things rolling smoothly business-wise and career-wise I had to be two different people, and that was really hard. I'd rather be one person. Being the fucked-up bad boy with mental problems, flipping out and trashing stuff, was getting in the way.

**MUSICIAN:** To some degree the entertainment business expects you to be a hypocrite. "Well, surely that's just an act. Now let's get in the limo and talk about the franchise rights for Japan."

**AXL:** Yeah, and you're expendable. If it's not an act, well then you just couldn't cut it and you're





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afraid of, but it seems scary.

**MUSICIAN:** *Are you in touch with your family now?*

**AXL:** No, I haven't talked with my parents in over a year-and-a-half. I sent them some letters just recently to let them know this was happening, but when I started to uncover things they let me know, very adamantly, to drop the issue.

**MUSICIAN:** *When you uncover things that are buried that deep and that happened in early childhood, how do you know that what you're remembering is even real? How do you know you're not uncovering a dream or a fantasy or*

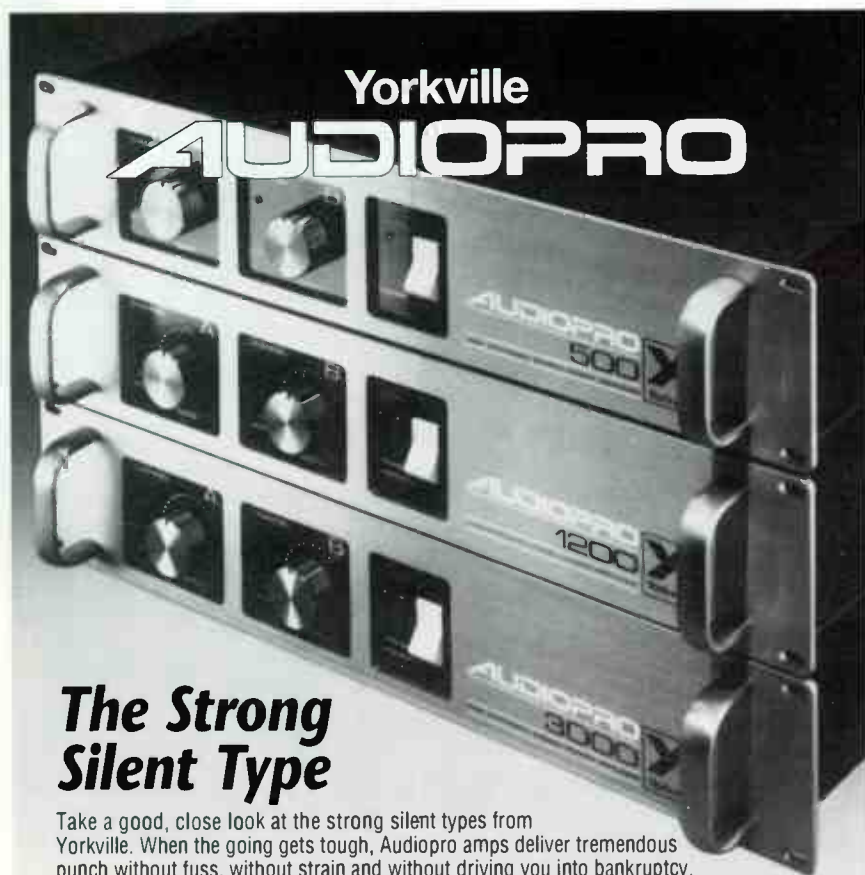
*some projection or demonization?*

**AXL:** I have a lot of corroboration from people who knew something horrible happened. Even now I could talk about it with my grandmother and she'd nod her head yes, but would not talk about it. Also, the emotions that end up surfacing and the amount of weight that is lifted each time we get into certain issues kind of makes me go, "Wait a minute, I can trust myself here." I can trust myself because I feel a hell of a lot better. I mean, you could go to a medium and talk to someone in your family who had died and when you come out you'll feel much different. Some-

one will say, "Was it real?" and you'll say, "I don't know, but I know I feel a lot easier with the situation and acting on it isn't going to hurt me."

**MUSICIAN:** *Sure, but if it makes you feel better to believe in a phony medium, that affects no one but you. When you say publicly that your father molested you and your stepfather abused your sister, you're affecting your whole family. The rules of evidence would have to be stricter.*

**AXL:** Oh yeah. My sister is involved with my life and works with me, so I know what happened there. I know what reaction my mom has to dealing with any of it. Her eyes turn black. It's



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## LOCOMOTIVES

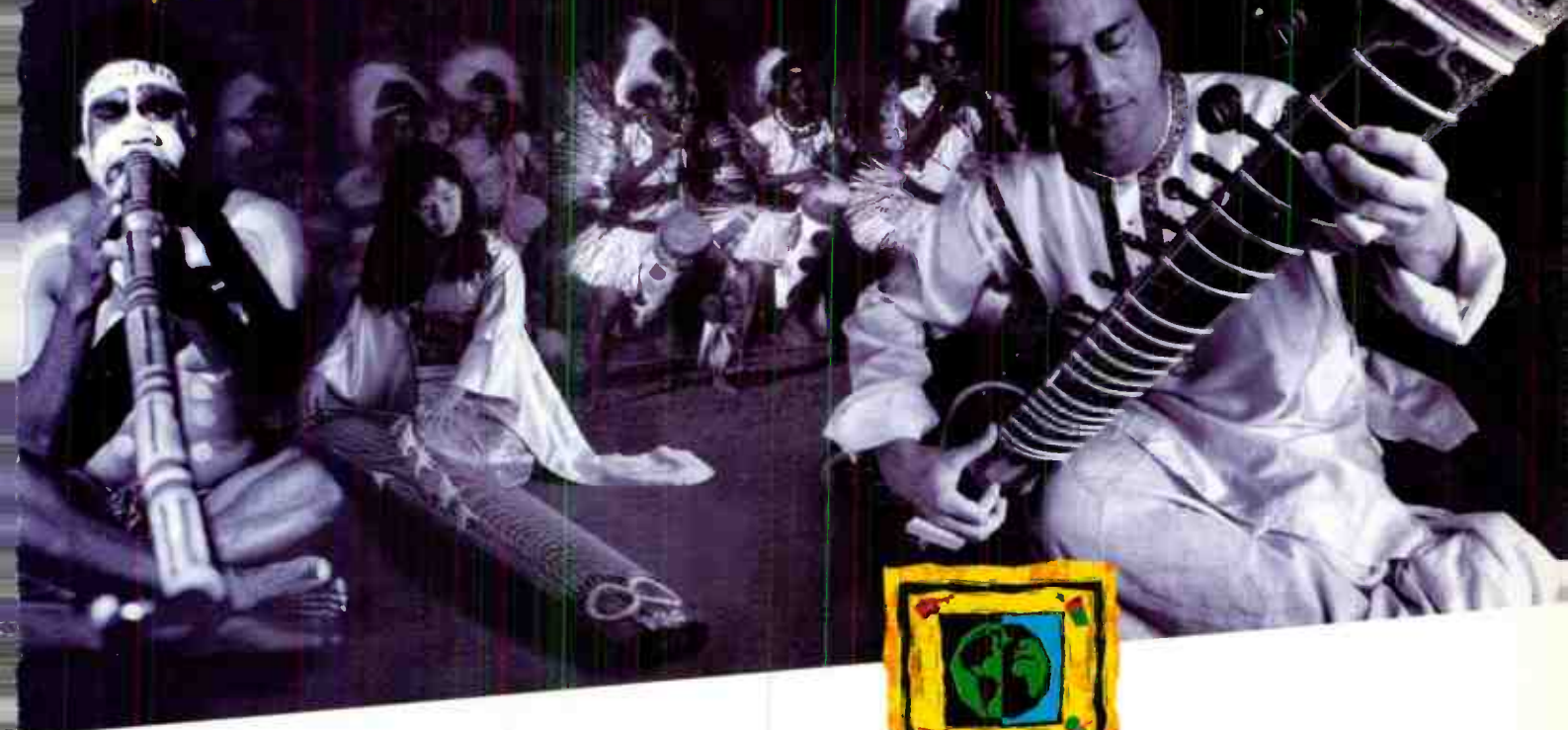
**S**LASH likes Les Pauls, B.C. Rich Mockingbirds and his Travis Bean, which he uses for slide work. Marshall full-stacks serve him clean and dirty, and he EQ's with a Boss seven-band graphic; his E.M.B. remote wahs are scattered around the stage, though he uses CryBabys in the studio. A Custom Audio Electronics system switches between the clean and dirty stack, and the voice box. His wireless is a Nady 1200. AXL's got a Shure L4 wireless receiver with a Beta 58-loaded L2CT handheld, on custom Easton stands; his Yamaha C3 baby grand, with a Helfenstel pickup, runs through a Yamaha mixer, and is MIDI'd to a Roland MKS 20 digital piano module. Roland also provides DIZZY's RD300 keyboard and a mixer for Diz's other axes: a Hammond XB2, a Proteus 2 sound module and an Akai S1000 HD sampler. TED also likes the XB2 and Yamaha mixers, but prefers a Roland D50 and two E-Max II samplers.

**MATT SORUM** uses Yamaha RTC drums: a 26" kick, a 13" rack tom, 16" and 18" floor toms, a 12" piccolo snare and a 14"x6" Recording Series snare; heads are Remo. Matt uses various bongos, congas, jam blocks and cowbells by Latin Percussion. DW supplies double-kick pedals and hi-hat stands for two sets of 15" hats. The other Zildjians include a 24" ping ride, 19", 20", 22" and 20" (a K dark) crashes, 17" and 18" China Boy highs, and an 8" splash. Easton Matt Sorum model aluminum-shaft sticks are behind it all. New man GILBY likes Les Paul Juniors and Fender Teles, a Boss stereo chorus, and uses a Marshall 2555 for dirty and a 900 for clean tones. His wireless is a Nady 1200. DUFF uses two custom Fender Jazz basses with Rotosound Spacer black strings, into Gallien-Krueger 800RBs with GK 4x10 and 1x15 cabs. Like the other Guns, he's got a Hergitronics switcher for his wireless; in Duff's case, it's three Samsons.

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complete anger and she will fight to the death to not have to re-experience that. That somewhat justifies it. The physical damage manifesting itself is another thing that puts it together. Certain thought patterns are there that would have no reason to be there unless something happened. I don't believe too many people are born evil or born fucked up. Something had to happen somewhere. You go back and find the time that something happened and work through and finally find the base underneath. And by letting it go, all of a sudden you don't have certain problems in your life. That somehow validates the situation. I've gone back and realized that I had thought my whole life that sex is power and also that sex leaves you powerless.

**MUSICIAN:** *Because sex was used as a weapon against you as a child, it made you grow up assuming that sex equaled power over people?*

**AXL:** Without even realizing it. It's like, wait, I'm trying to have a happy life here—why do I keep getting in my own way with it? What's going on here?

**MUSICIAN:** *I could sit here and play pop psychologist and say, "Oh well, that explains why you use sex as a weapon in your songs" or explains the antagonism toward women in some of your songs. What*

*do you see in your music that you understand better for going through this therapy?*

**AXL:** Well, the things you just said made sense. So there you are, pop psychologist. Now I feel I know why I've gotten myself into negative situations and why I've been negative in situations and how I've kept that ball rolling whether I wanted to or not. I can see a lot of that in my life and in the albums. I was pretty much trying to express the anger and frustration and I was blaming certain things on the women involved. That's not to say that when I was writing a song like "Locomotive" that the person I was inspired by wasn't doing something completely fucked up. You know, I can even have some love for my real father now, which I never had before, but that's not to say that he wasn't an asshole. I can understand Izzy leaving the band and be fine with that, but that's not to say he didn't go about it like an asshole. Someone could understand why I stormed offstage but I have to take responsibility for that. I could have been bein' a fuckin' baby.


I'm trying to learn how to take more responsibility for my actions. I just wish I didn't have so many actions that were fucked up that I had to take responsibility for.

**MUSICIAN:** *It's got to be good for some kid who is*

*into Guns N' Roses because he finds a manifestation of his anger to be presented with the possibility that anger is not an end in itself.*

**AXL:** Yeah, that's what I'd like to promote. It's very hard because for a lot of people that's a new concept. And rock 'n' roll music is so huge, with all the amps and the watts of power, that someone can think, "This means I should go home and scream at my girlfriend for giving me shit." And I'm saying, "No, that's not what it means. It means you can feel like that and that's okay, and then you need to communicate so you can let that go." Expressing your anger can be really good. I know it's really good for me. But using anger as a tool to try to achieve something doesn't necessarily work.

**MUSICIAN:** *When you're talking to your therapist, are you Axl or Bill?*

**AXL:** It's Axl. Bill was something that got left behind long ago. I was named after my real father and that wasn't something I was a big fan of. If I'm getting in touch with the child in me then I'm dealing with Billy. But I'm Axl. That was the name of a band I had with Izzy and at one point he said, "You live, breathe, eat, sleep, walk and talk Axl. Why don't you just be Axl?" So I was like, "Good. Now I'm Axl Rose." And I won. 

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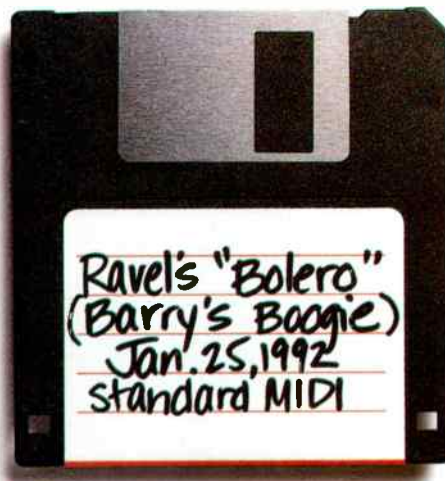
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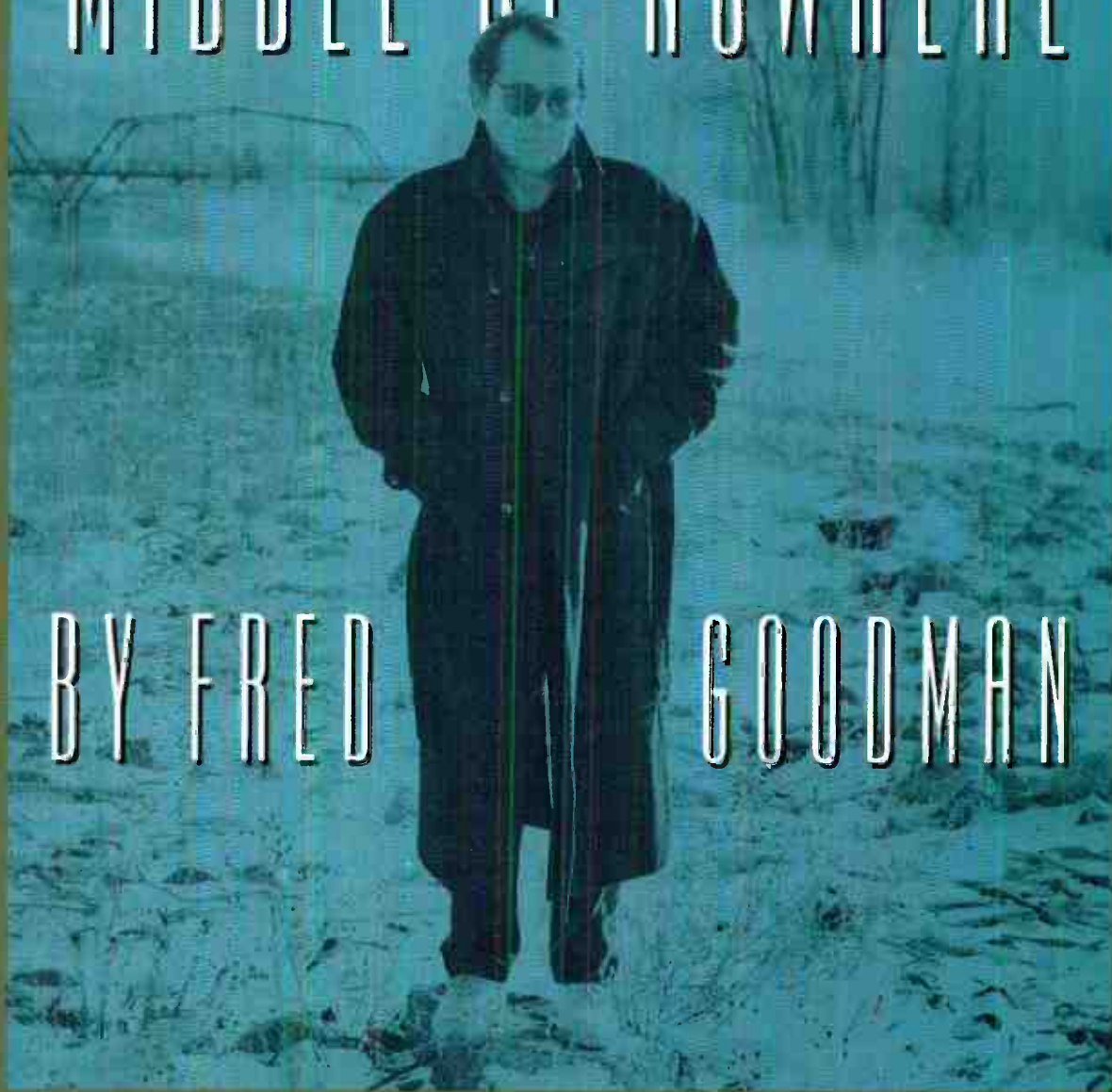
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# MITCH RYDER IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE



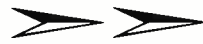
BY FRED GOODMAN

FOR MOST MUSICIANS, TOURING IS A THOUSAND  
MILES AWAY FROM LIMOS AND STADIUMS.



WINTERS IN SEATTLE are usually rainy, gray affairs, but this week the Alaskan freeze has descended over the

Northwest, bringing a biting wind and temperatures that refuse to crawl above zero. The streets are deserted, and everyone is curled up at home, reading how much worse it is in Montana and Idaho, where it hit 40 below last night. That's where Mitch Ryder and his band have been.



Tonight Ryder was in Spokane. The gig was slated for a hotel ballroom, but because of the extreme cold, the promoter was afraid he wouldn't draw enough to break even. So he piggybacked Ryder onto a Savoy Brown show at a bar called Gatsby's and hoped he'd make up the lost business in drinks.

Savoy Brown was already camped out in the bar's only dressing room, so Ryder and his five musicians were led to a basement office. The place was a disaster: A huge hole in the ceiling dripped water through a light fixture and into a bucket on the desk, where cigarette butts floated. There was no place to walk: Bits of discarded electronic components, old clothes, an unstrung bass, bowling trophies and an oil painting of Clint Eastwood, circa *Hang 'em High*, littered the floor. Someone brought down a couple of sixes and some wine for the band; Ryder, one year minus two days off booze and drugs, got bottled water. A platter of coldcuts was plopped down next to the bucket of floating butts.

Wrapped in an ankle-length overcoat, Ryder talked to a girl who wanted him to sign a 1967 tour booklet, while a disc jockey named Billy the Janitor from KKZX, Spokane's "Classic Rock 99," laid on the shmooze. Everyone listened politely until drummer Johnny "Bee" Badanjek (who left the band before this story came out) started to entertain the troops. Johnny Bee was the drummer for Mitch Ryder and the Detroit

Wheels when they came to New York in '65 to cut "Jenny Take a Ride." He was 16 then; now he was 42, a veteran of stints with Nils Lofgren, Edgar Winter, Alice Cooper and Dr. John, and co-founder of two very tough bands of his own, Detroit and the Rockets. He looked like a biker, which he had once been, and played drums like a rock 'n' roll master, which he was.

Right now Bee was imitating Paul Shaffer. "Hey, Mitch and the Wheelies are here," he said in a nasal whine. The group, which wasn't the Detroit Wheels and didn't use the name, had recently seen Shaffer at a party the keyboardist threw in a Las Vegas hotel. "Robert Goulet and Leslie Gore were there," Bee said, shaking his head. He started to whine again. "Hey everybody, it's the Wheelies."

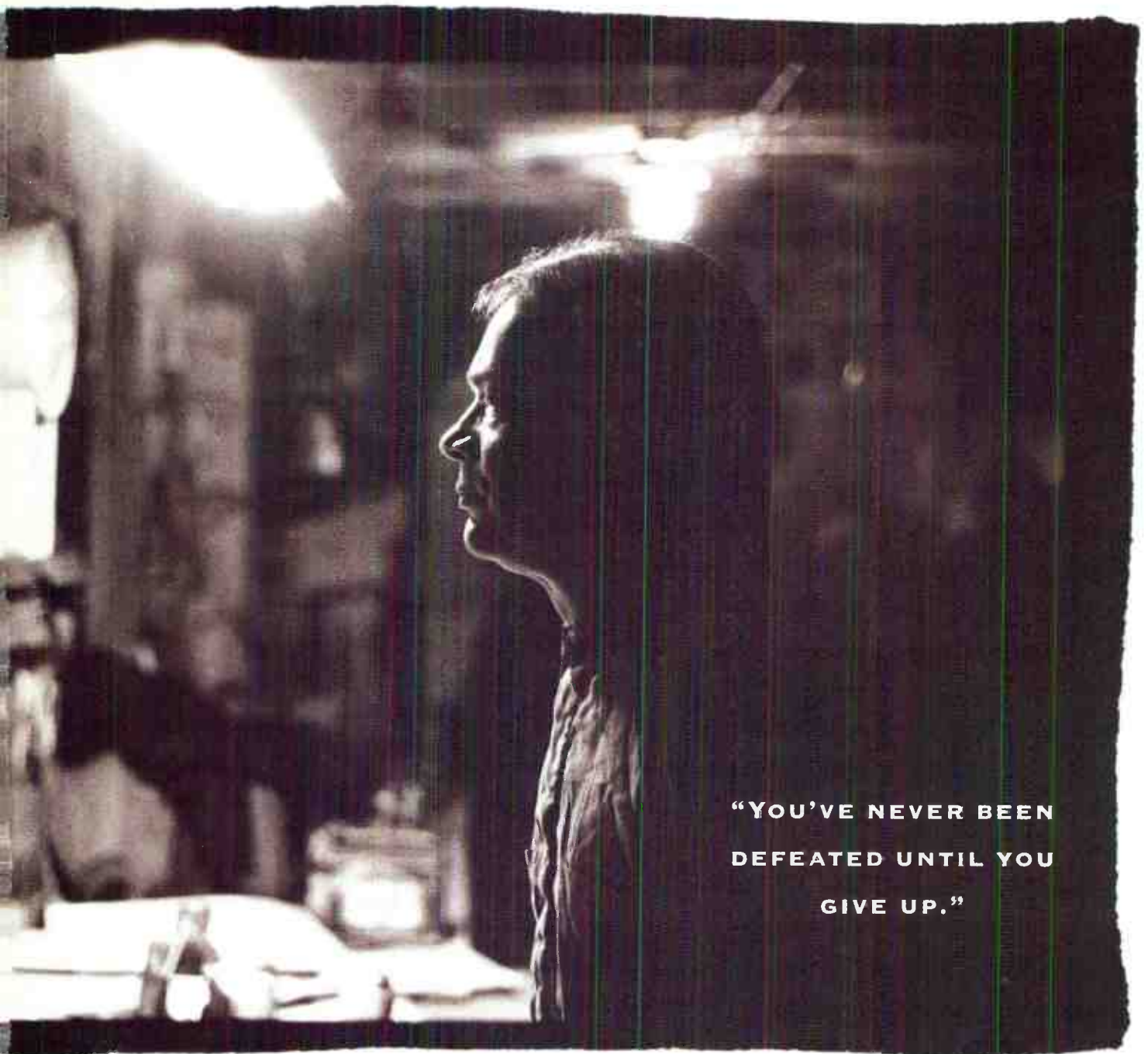
Despite the cold—10 below now—there was a good crowd upstairs. And although they were almost all too young to remember when the record was released, they started right up dancing when the band opened with "Jenny." Ryder ripped into his cover of Prince's "When You Were Mine," a version so good that Prince adopted the arrangement on his *Lovesexy* tour. The band had been on the road for seven straight weeks and Mitch's voice showed the strain, but he refused to hold back. Next came a cover of Lou Reed's "Rock & Roll" and a gruff reading of John Hiatt's "Where's the Next One Comin' From," recorded by the band for a German



album. This was no bar band, but as fine a rock 'n' roll group as you'll hear anywhere. Only tonight, and most nights, they were playing neighborhood bars in smaller cities. Mitch's last American album—*Never Kick a Sleeping Dog*, produced by fan John Cougar Mellencamp—was recorded nine years ago, and this band has never recorded in America.

Time to go to the well: "Little Latin Lupe Lu," "Sock It to Me" and "Shake a Tailfeather" spat out at machine-gun tempo. Then it was "Bow Wow Wow Wow," written and recorded by Mitch with another group of Ryder devotees, Was (Not Was). A cover of "This Heart of Stone" was wrenching: It was years since Ryder





**“YOU’VE NEVER BEEN  
DEFEATED UNTIL YOU  
GIVE UP.”**

did a split, fainting act or any of the other antics which made his managers want to turn him into the white James Brown, but there was plenty of spark left in his voice. He sounded unstoppable.

When the show ended with the requisite “Devil with a Blue Dress/Good Golly Miss Molly,” it was done *faster* than the original, Badanjek driving the band harder than anything that ever rolled off a Detroit assembly line. It’s easy to see why Bruce Springsteen’s former drummer Max Weinberg has cited Bee as a major influence. As Weinberg himself admits, “I was really afraid Bee would audition for the band when Bruce was looking for a drummer. He had better chops than I did.”

All the band had to wear for the sub-zero trip back to the hotel were leather jackets. The next night’s show was over 200 miles away in Whitefish, Montana, a ski resort in the Rockies. Mitch and the road manager agreed that the only way to get there was through Lookout Pass, closed because of the weather. “We’ll just have to duck the cops,” said Mitch, and headed back to the motel.

“Well shuck and darn! What can I get you kids?” said the Denny’s waitress. It was breakfast time, and it would have cost about \$7 a head to eat at the hotel’s dining room. The temperature was a comparatively balmy zero, and

everyone was in good spirits despite the prospect of having to drive an equipment truck and two rented Continentals into the Rockies and northern Montana. Two days before, the band had struggled west across Montana into Coeur D’Alene during a roaring snowstorm, climaxed by a half-hour whiteout during which no one was able to see beyond the windshield. “It was nut-grabbing time,” said the road manager; “you couldn’t see the side of the road to pull over, and you couldn’t stop for fear someone would hit you from behind.”

The Mitch Ryder Band’s gigs, it’s safe to say, are far from plums. “We were on this Thirtieth Anniversary of Rock tour,” Mitch said, digging

into Denny's Breakfast Special. "Forty-five people on three buses, 13 acts playing fairs and stuff like that." Along with Ryder's band, the bill was made up mostly of groups you thought were defunct, like Badfinger, Buffalo Springfield, Three Dog Night, the New Seekers and the Coasters, each patched together with one or two original members. The grand finale was Otis Day and the Nights, the fictional group created for the film *Animal House*.

"In 1965," said Mitch, "when I was successful, our average price was about \$1500 a gig. It's not much more now, maybe a couple of hundred dollars. Last year I had over \$174,000 in cancellations. We'll get on the road and come all the way out west, sometimes on good faith, sometimes with signed contracts, and they change the rules on you. 'I don't have any sales and you'll either take half of what I offered or sue me.' Fucking farmers."

Breakfast paid for, the band split into two groups for the ride to Whitefish. Johnny Bee and Mitch drove. Ryder, cigarette in mouth, both hands on the wheel and Public Image Ltd. blasting on the tape deck, is a good driver; in the swirling snow, his rental Lincoln never lost the road that lay somewhere under a heavy sheet of snow and ice. A road sign announced Lookout Pass, elevation 4680 feet. The Lincoln began to glide down the ice-encased eastern slope towards Montana.

The frozen mountains looked nothing like Centerline, Michigan, the Detroit suburb where Mitch Ryder—Billy LeVise Jr., as his parents named him—grew up down the block from General Dynamics' factory, watching Korean-bound tanks roll off the assembly line. His father sang with a big band.

"It really made it for my dad when I was successful," Ryder said without taking his eyes off the road. "Because that was something that he tried to do, wanted to do and didn't do. My mom gave him a choice. He was fucking her brains out—he had eight kids, right?—so she said, 'Well, you either feed these kids or you be a singer, what's it gonna be?'"

It was while staying with his grandmother in Detroit one summer that Ryder first became aware of Detroit's black music scene. "I got curious about what was going on and that's how I discovered this club called the Village." Groups like

the Pips and members of the Temptations hung out there despite the club owner's reluctance to provide any heat in the winter. "It was a whole different world. Dark, shady characters and drugs. One day I got invited to join a group down there. We'd do doo-wop shit or R&B, and I cut my teeth on that. Then I took it to New York with the Wheels. I wasn't surprised when we blew the Rascals away in Brooklyn. Maybe they sounded blacker than I did, but my fuckin' heart was in the right place."

Pulling off in Missoula for gas, Mitch headed for Ole's Beer Depot and Service Station. After paying for the gas, everyone piled into the back



**MITCH AND THE BAND IN MONTANA. "MY DRIVE IS TO TOUR SO WE CAN KEEP ALIVE."**

of the station where there was a small kitchenette stocked with a microwave, frozen sandwiches and what smelled like five-year-old coffee. Ryder picked up something marked "meat sandwich/\$1.65" and popped it in the microwave. He grabbed a bottle of grape soda on his way back out to the car.

The land was rugged and scarred by mining; red earth and straw-colored grass poked through the snow, giving the hills a yellowed, dirty look. It was just a few more hours to Whitefish, where the band was playing tonight.

"I'd like to start with my very first hit record. It's a very important song for me and I don't mind doing it over and over again"—and Mitch and the group launched into "Jenny Take a Ride."

The Bierstube is a big wooden chalet with a stage and bar; it's part of Whitefish's Big Mountain Alpine Village ski resort, which does a lot of business on skiers coming down from Edmonton by bus. The bar sells a lot of day-glo shirts and panties that say "Lube Your Tube at the Stube."

Although a blackboard near the door an-

nounced the evening's temperature as -10F, the place was packed: After a few nights of weather in the -30 to -40F range, the locals were finally able to get out. A bartender ascribed some of the more unusual behavior, like the guy dancing with a wooden goose decoy on his head, to "cabin fever." Whether it was the band or cabin fever, everybody was up and the house was rocking. Behind ever-present Raybans, black beret and bandana, Johnny Bee pushed the band hard. The king and queen of the 30th Annual Whitefish Winter Carnival came shivering through the door with sashes and crowns in place just as the band surged into the set-closer, "Devil with a Blue Dress On."

There was no dressing room at the Stube, so the band spent its break in the kitchen behind the bar. The place was plastered with beer and ski posters sporting models in various stages of undress. Johnny Bee really liked one. "Hey Billy," he called to Ryder, using the singer's real name. "Check this out." Eyeballing the poster, Ryder was unimpressed. "Shit," he said, "she's got arms like a 16-year-old boy."

Johnny smiled slyly. "I guess you're in then, right?"

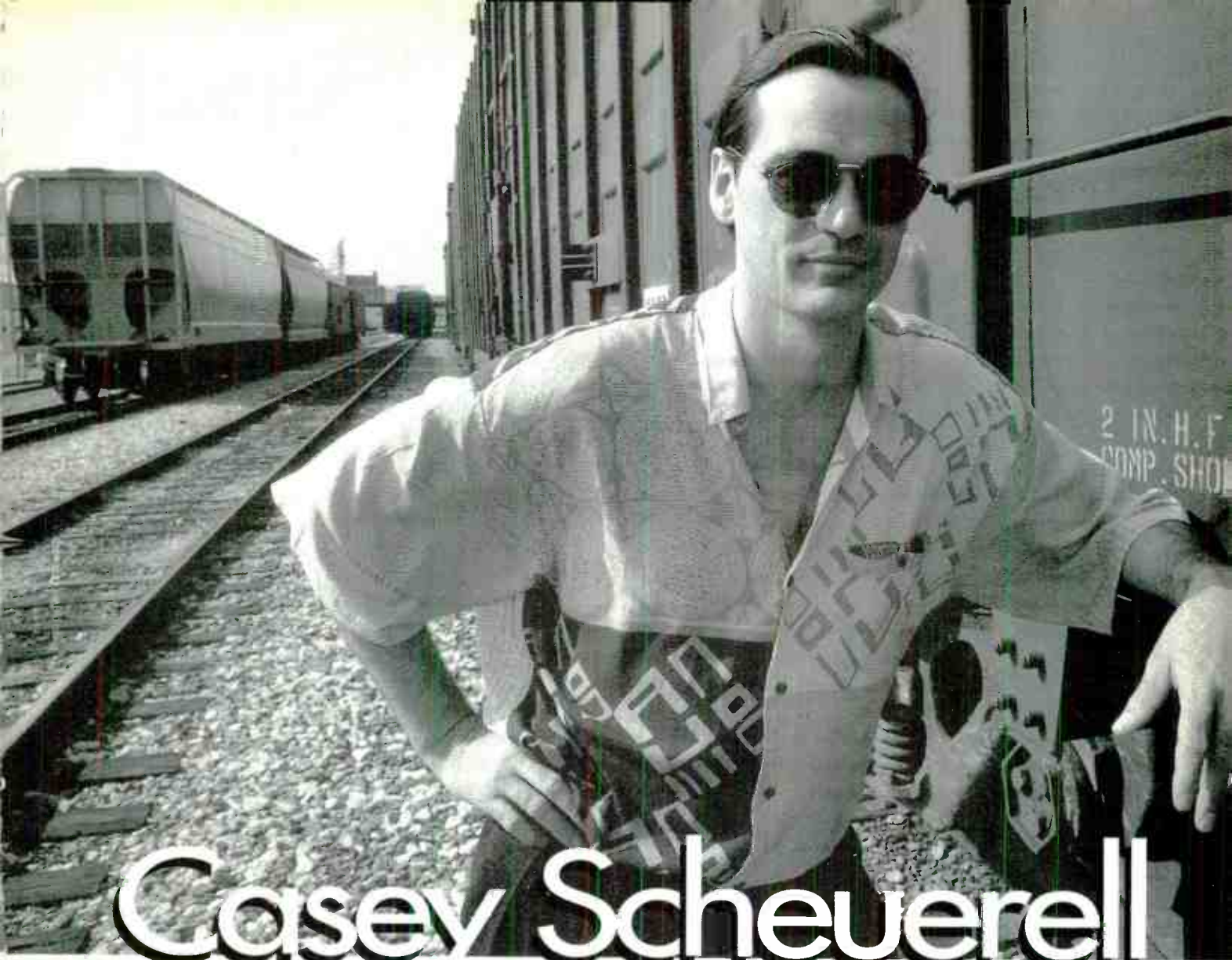
Ryder looked sheepish as

some of the band members laughed. Despite a 20-year marriage, the singer has never made a secret of his bisexuality—one of his best albums, 1978's *How I Spent My Vacation*, is largely about homosexual relationships. Which may have a lot to do with why almost no one heard it.

After "Jenny Take a Ride," which combined Little Richard's "Jenny Jenny" and Chuck Willis' "C.C. Rider," hit #10 in 1966, the Detroit Wheels' follow-up was a medley of Shorty Long's "Devil with a Blue Dress On" and Little Richard's "Good Golly Miss Molly," which went to #4. In the midst of the British Invasion, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels found themselves one of America's hottest rock bands.

"We played on this show with Wilson Pickett," said Johnny Bee, manning the wheel from Whitefish back to Missoula for a gig at a bar called the Top Hat. "We used to do 'I Found a Love,' which Wilson did in the Falcons, his earlier group. We asked Wilson if he was gonna do it that night and he says, 'Nah, nah, you guys go





# Casey Scheuerell



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ahead and do it.' Man, Mitch did such a stirring rendition that Wilson came out onstage. He just went crazy 'cause we did this breakdown with Mitch layin' on the floor. Wilson asked Mitch to tour with him."

The hits continued into 1967 with records like "Little Latin Lupe Lu," "Too Many Fish in the Sea/Three Little Fishes" and "Sock It to Me Baby." But Ryder's handlers thought the singer could go further as a solo act.

"They wanted Mitch to be the white James Brown," said Johnny. "It was 'Mitch, you can be in the movies.'" The Wheels were dumped in

favor of a large horn band, which never duplicated the success of the Wheels. Ryder and Johnny Bee formed the band Detroit, which got off to a strong start and toured heavily—but was also one of the craziest bands in the annals of rock. Johnny Bee had pledged with Motor City bike gang the Renegades, and many of the band's roadies were gang members. The band's passion for drugs didn't help matters; Detroit and its entourage were by turns completely stoned or dangerously violent.

For all the craziness, Johnny always felt Detroit was a band that could have made it. "We

were this close," he said, holding up a thumb and forefinger. "If we could've kept that craziness out and done one more album I think we'd have broken wide open. But Mitch was just burning out—he was doing too much of everything. Oh shit. Here comes the cops."

True to form (he holds the band record for speeding tickets), Johnny was pulled over by a Montana state trooper, who wrote the drummer a \$30 ticket—\$5 for speeding and another \$25 because the rental company had put license plates from a station wagon on the Lincoln. Johnny could pay it on the spot or go into town and protest.

"What a fuckin' racket," he said. "Well, there goes my per diem. I gotta get some cash from Mitch when we get to Missoula."

They must call Montana the "Big Sky State" because there's nothing else to look at. The wind blew unimpeded through Missoula's deserted downtown streets, where no building is taller than six stories. The caps from underground missile silos poked up from the ground a few hundred feet from the town's train station. God's country.

At the Top Hat, the band was told its motel reservations had been switched to the Royal Court Motel, a \$16-a-night establishment that appeared to rely on welfare families for most of its trade. The motel the band was originally booked at would've cost the owner of the Top Hat \$35 per room, but everyone was too tired and cold to fight. Ryder, who gave himself the luxury of a single room, called his wife in Detroit. Things weren't going so well at home.

"My domestic situation is horrible." Mitch flopped into an armchair. "I love my wife very, very much. She really, really needs me, she's in trouble. This is the hardest thing in my life right now. She's the greatest love of my life, and it's not pleasurable, it's not fulfilling. I just told her yesterday, 'If you'll stay there for me and be with me, I'll quit this. But you have to know that it's gonna be gone.' She doesn't want that either, she married 'Mitch Ryder the Singer.' I think that poor girl married the image of success, and then when she found out that it was gonna be a struggle, that might've been a big problem for her. Until she gets it right I haven't got it right, you know? Maybe she'll never get it right. She's sacrificed a lot for me, too. We've made real hard sacrifices to stay together in the face of my pursuit of my goals. I've become hardened to a lot of that stuff, but it might have been too much for her. She's really under a lot of weight. And I'm under the weight of her frustration. She's so messed up." (The couple split up prior to this

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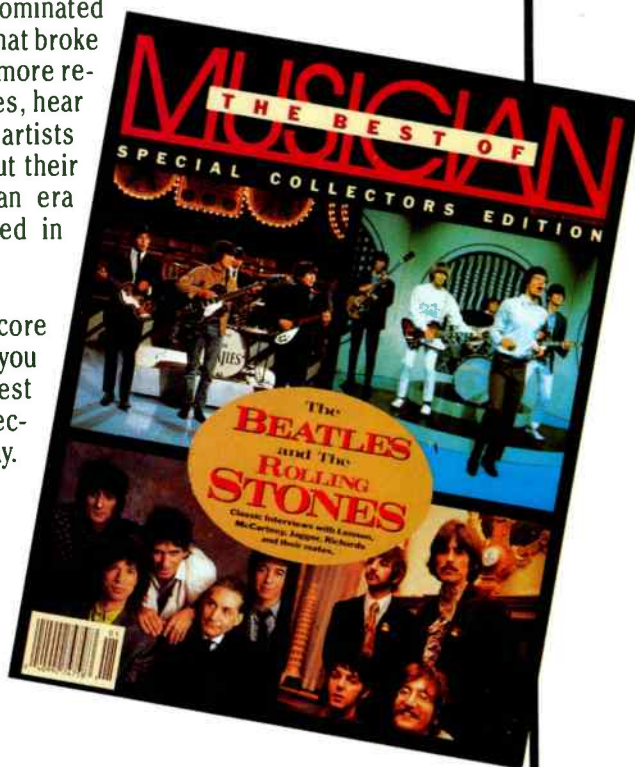
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# WORKING MUSICIAN

MUSICIAN MAGAZINE \* JUNE 1992



◀ *On Tour*

## SOUND ENGINEER

*Rebekah Foster brings jazz quality to hip-hop*  
by TOM MOON

**B**Y 5:45 P.M., WHEN REBEKAH FOSTER pronounced this evening's Queen Latifah/Naughty by Nature show a "no-sound-check" affair, it was already clear that the gods of hurry up-and-wait had visited the Valley Forge Music Fair. The equipment was

unloaded late. The union took lunch and dinner breaks. The crew arrived after a 15-hour van ride and went straight to work. Turntables buzzed with the insistence of insects. The suburban Philadelphia theater-in-the-round provided unguessed-at obstacles—particularly in the drum department, where sound from the tomtoms splattered in all directions at once.

In spite of it all, sounds were being checked. Foster, the sound engineer and production manager for the tour, shuttled between sound-

board and stage to get a uniform level on the cordless mikes. "Purple [the mikes were color-coded] needs to come up, give me more purple." Putting out one fire, she'd only encounter another. Latifah wanted to talk about the show. The house crew had endless questions. And there was her mental checklist: Were the drum mikes on? Was the signal from the turntables, that rap staple, making it to the house? Between crises she conducted a microphone clinic for openers Blacksheep.

"I tell them over and over again: 'Don't cup the mike!'" Foster said during a five-minute beer break right before the show. "They all wanna go like this." She curled her fist around the ball of the mike. "And then they wonder why they're not heard. These are young kids, they don't know about pacing themselves. I have to tell them about breathing from the stomach and stuff that all vocalists know. I say, 'I can only give you what you give me.'"

For Foster, working house sound for hip-hop shows is as much a mission as a source of employment. The aim: to raise the quality of live rap, with its combination of prerecorded sounds and high-decibel incantations, to that of other live music. She's been doing it for years, on tours with KRS-One's Boogie Down Productions, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul and many others. Prior to that, Foster and her P.A. company, Ujima Sound Production Limited, were hired for all manner of music: reggae concerts, live jazz, Gil Scott-Heron shows. She knows how live music should sound and feel.

On shows like these, when time prevents a proper soundcheck, Foster relies on her skills as a mixing engineer to make quick adjustments to the basic house sound, hurling in reverb, gates, compression and more dramatic effects on a catch-as-catch-can basis. The obvious goal, she says, is to make the show sound like the record, but in recorded rap, effects like reverb are often used only intermittently; live, they're expendable in a crisis. After the first few songs, Foster arrives at a serviceable basic mix. "The subs [subwoofers] are crucial, that big and round

sound that just brings you in. Everything else is secondary."

Because the artists only hear the onstage monitor mix, Foster tries to make sure they're happy—Naughty by Nature and KRS-One both like loud monitors, and regularly ask her to come to the monitor board to get the volume they need. "Betcha I'll be at the monitor board tonight," she says. "You always hear somebody shouting, 'Rebekah, turn it up!'" When she can turn her attention away from volume, she works the board, weaving the signals from vocal mikes, turntables, DAT machines and any live musi-


cians onstage into a coherent soundscape.

Foster watches artist after artist incorporate live playing in an attempt to jump onto the bandwagon, as it were; but they give little thought to the way it fits with the raps. She admires Kendu Dickens, Latifah's drummer, for that reason: "He's playing live to the DAT, and if AD speeds up or slows down, Kendu's got to be there reacting. He does it, and still keeps the beats very street. It's got to be much rawer than funk drumming to work." The bulk of Foster's processing gear is dedicated to the drums—"gate and plate on the toms, one delay on the

snare for hip-hop and another for reggae, and at least two preset reverbs." She'll use compressors and limiters on vocals, but says she likes to keep the mix basic, especially since those turntables tend to muddy up things. "Needles are microphones. When you check the turntable sound in an empty theater with nothing else on, you get one sound. But when the room's full, the temperature rises. There's other stage noise. All this can potentially affect the sound."

Foster, who's from rap's cradle, the South Bronx, came by her knowledge a morsel at a time. A decade ago (she's 31 now), she was happy to load her P.A. into a station wagon and go anywhere to do sound. As she came to appreciate artists' needs, unlike some in the sound reinforcement business, she sought to meet and anticipate them. Soon she was getting calls to do mixing sessions in New York recording studios. Getting restless, she returned to live work, touring with Steel Pulse and doing P.A. for New York reggae shows and then rapper KRS-One.

When KRS-One hired her, the notion of a sound engineer traveling with a rap entourage was folly: Even now, rap headliners often rely on promoters to furnish them with sound technicians. But according to Foster, when KRS-One heard the boomy, confident bass her rig was putting out, he wanted her on his show. She spent three years with Boogie Down Productions, and credits KRS-One for her subsequent gigs.

Her biggest daily struggle, says Foster, is against the perception of rap. "People in these theaters, when they see you're coming in and doing rap, they're liable to roll their eyes and expect the worst. They're waiting for the production end to just crumble. And you have to make it so that when we leave their venue, they want us to come back. When people see I'm in control, making decisions and taking what I do seriously, and that these artists work hard, and take what they do seriously, then we're a little closer to changing that perception." 

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## THE GUITAR TECH

Alan Rogan:  
Fixing—and dodging—  
the superstars' axes  
by MATT RESNICOFF

**N**OT ALL OF THESE GUYS ARE IN IT for money or vicarious glory. Guitar technician Alan Rogan just got off the phone with Joe Walsh, who needs a hand while on a 10-day trip entertaining American troops in Kuwait. No martial law, it seems, but not much of a gig either: a small *per diem* to keep the crew going, sand in the sandals, gritty fingerboards. Rogan has had it worse. For two decades he's dodged guitars flung by Pete Townshend and small storms sweated by AC/DC's Angus Young. Finishing one tour, he'd hop a bus right onto another, in the process spending at least twice as much time on the road as any of the rock superstars he's tended to: Townshend, Walsh, Clapton, Harrison, Keith Richards. And in the end, Alan says jovially, he came away with at least one unbendable rule.

"Never tie a knot at the post end of a string. If it's not a Fender-style machine head with the split shaft, then put it once through and do a number of wraps, and then stretch the string a lot. That's because if you tie the end, it's going to take a lot longer to rip it off and let it fall away. That I can guarantee."

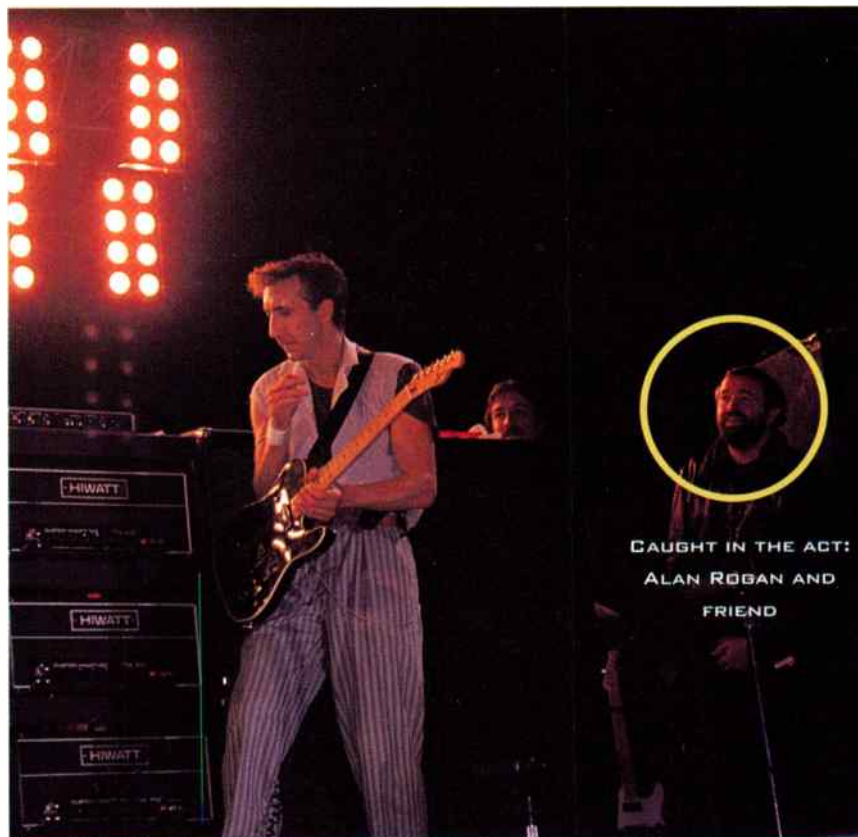
Simplicity keeps everyone happy on the road, especially techs like Phil Taylor, who's responsible for Dave Gilmour's very complex amplifier and effects systems, and Rogan's long-time friend Lee Dickson, who began looking after Eric Clapton's setup when the guitarist fired his American band and crew in '79, borrowed Rogan from Townshend for a tour and hired Lee full-time when Alan rejoined the Who crew later that year. "I'm surprised the string thing is all Alan came up with," Dickson says. "The first thing this job takes is a sense of humor. A lot of guys on the road are great techs, but are simply nonentities. If you know a bit about amps and a bit about guitars, and you can get on with people, which is the hard part, there's the start." Dickson's little secret: keeping a six-inch clipping of bass G string or low guitar

on hand to push the ball end into position in bridge crevices when restringing.

If Rogan's been doing it so long that it's become second nature, it gives him space to take the long way if it could pay off—he was the one responsible for numbering Townshend's 12 Les Pauls on the Who's '79 tour ("one guitar and spares"), and for bringing a Schecter to a Who gig at Madison Square Garden and converting Pete—mid-stint—to the company's Tele copies. Alan says that Pete, like most clients, prefers a guitar variety in the studio or rehearsals rather than on tour, where nice guitars are in constant peril, though Rogan did lend Harrison a sunburst Les Paul for a recent Japanese tour. He might not be so gener-

sounds moronic, but it's true; you just got to keep the man happy. Angus doesn't like changing guitars during a show, but he'd change when a guitar became log-bound with his sweat. You could hear the difference, it was so dull when it was wet. Angus doesn't even play with his amplifier; his brother does it. Malcolm gets Angus' sound.


"I'll tell you something I've learned, the real big one: Don't Panic. Seven seconds is a long time when there's a big audience and a guitarist drawing a finger and shouting at you. But if you're taking care of a string or fixing a guitar and it takes seven seconds longer, that's fine; if it does, it'll *work*." As with music, Rogan's gig is about people as much as equipment. "Pete used to say it was a baptism by fire because he used to



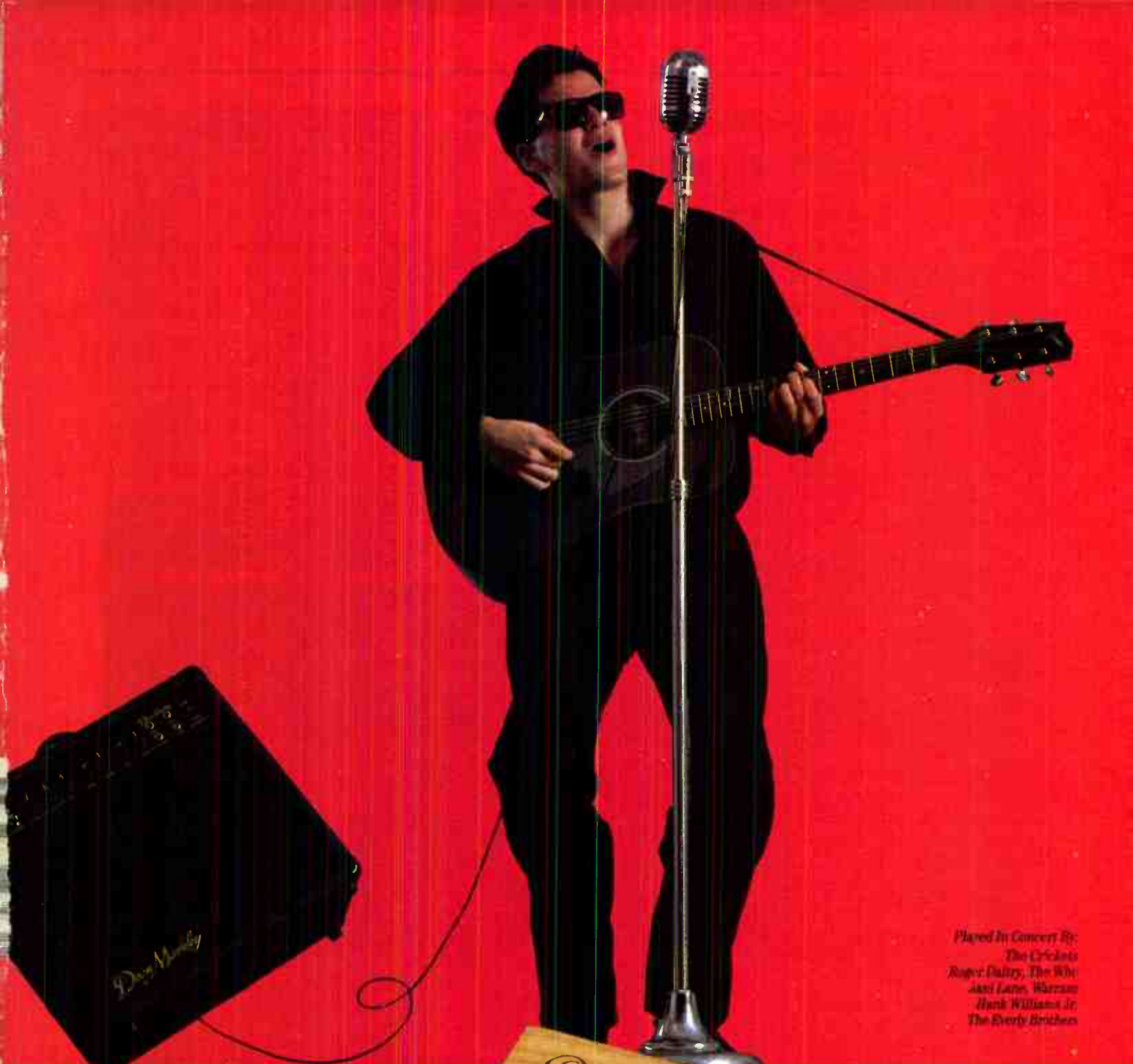
CAUGHT IN THE ACT:  
ALAN ROGAN AND  
FRIEND

ous on an AC/DC tour.

"You couldn't get anything more usual than Angus' setup," he says. "One guitar, one pre-amp, one power amp and four cabinets, which sit on top of Malcolm's on the other side, sort of crossmonitoring." Rogan's main concern when tracking the wandering Angus? "To make sure the signal keeps going through. It

throw guitars at me, all sorts. Pete was on fire in those days. Hey, keep shouting about if that's what floats your boat, but most of the guys I've worked with know what they're aiming at, and you gain a trust. You've got to live with these artists more than work with them. The show's only a couple of hours a day, and there's plenty of the day left." 





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**WORKING  
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changes, the most important of which is computerization. "In old theaters you still see walls full of levers. It took both arms and one leg to go from one lamp to another. These levers evolved to consoles and the consoles evolved to computers, which allow the operator to push a button when the cue arrives, and everything happens for him. The other thing that's revolutionized lighting is the so-called moving light, which does a lot more than just move. The real advantage is that it's multi-focus and multi-application. One light can do the job of two dozen."

Even when operators have to be involved, computers are doing some of the work. "I can lock 300 lamps on a performer who's standing center stage, and if he takes 20 steps to the left or right I can follow him with a track ball. But if he jumps up on a riser, I'm in trouble. So we still have guys sitting in the truss with the traditional follow spot. But whereas we used to be giving them color and fade cues, all they do now is follow the artist; everything else is done from the board. Within the next year or two, performers will wear infrared transmitters, and the lights—when told to do so—will follow them. That's already in the trial stages."

But computer control doesn't guarantee there won't be screw-ups on occasion. "One of the worst was during a Dolly Parton concert," recalls Morse. "We had pyrotechnic explosives onstage that we'd shoot off at the end of 'Great Balls of Fire.' One night Dolly was in the middle of this beautiful but morbidly sad song called 'Me and Little Andy' about a little girl and her dog who die and go to heaven. All of a sudden, all the pyro went off. And not just all at once; it went for 10 minutes."

"Fortunately, with her good humor, she had a great time with it and was joking to the audience, 'Well, they just shot little Andy.' Later, when I went to her to apologize, she said, 'That's okay. I know you better than that. But remember, tits and a smile only get me so far.' She was very wonderful and forgiving. She knows that shit happens sometimes in real life. But everybody's different. Madonna had no patience for stuff like that. None whatsoever."

"All this brings to mind my favorite line: thank God for feedback. Any time there is horrendous feedback, the artist will remember that more than anything the lights could do wrong. So whenever there's feedback, I turn to my crew and say, 'We're off the hook for tonight.'" 



*On Tour*

## THE BACKUP SINGER

*Dolette McDonald  
counts her blessings*

by CHIP STERN

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE ON THE road, far from the spotlight, toil the background singers. To the less ambulatory among us, they're little more than a libidinous diversion, farther up the food chain than drummers, perhaps, but certainly not vital to the overall presentation.

Yet for singer Dolette McDonald, who has enlivened the music of the Talking Heads, the Police, Steve Winwood, Laurie Anderson, Juan Martin and the mighty Sting, this notion rankles like a bad mike cable. "People do have a preconceived idea about backup singers," she concedes. "That we're just there to sing our little

doo-wop *oohs* and *aahs*, do the bump and grind, and that's it. But I'm about as far from that norm as they come."

Born 40 years ago in Newark, New Jersey, McDonald knows how blessed she's been to sing for her supper. Looking back at the emotional crucible of a sheltered childhood, she can appreciate the rich musical fabric of the sanctified church, even though she's still reeling from her mother's Pentecostal evangelism. "Popular music was forbidden in my house. All I could listen to was gospel. When I graduated from high school, I'd never even seen a movie, so I packed my bags and split, knowing there had to be more to life, but I never imagined I'd make a living at music."

But Dolette's life on the road has been both blessed and cursed. "When you fly, everything swells up. You'd be surprised some of the swollen things I've seen on an airplane," she laughs, her dreads swinging in 4/4 time. "When your vocal





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nodes swell up, there isn't always time for them to shrink. But my wonderful teacher Joan Lader has taught me that I can still have a voice and at least sound good if I avoid alcohol, drink a lot of water, rest and practice certain relaxation techniques. Like silence—and that's *real* difficult for me, because I *like* to talk, but there's a certain discipline involved if you want to sing.

"Some people feel like they're going to sound good no matter what, but if they ever have vocal problems, they'll understand. I developed polyps and had to have two operations. I went into speech therapy to relearn how to speak before I could sing. I didn't get my full vocal range back until two years ago, and I promised God, and man—and my voice teacher—that if I ever got my voice back, I would never go onstage with a bottle of beer or do a couple of lines of cocaine, just to be on the same wavelength as everyone else. So long as I adhere to a nice clean lifestyle I can manage to deal with things.

"You know, when you're singing behind other singers, you have to let go of a certain amount of your own vocal *style* to complement the other person, as opposed to standing out. When I came into the Talking Heads, David Byrne was more of a functional singer than a technical singer, so whatever I did was okay with them—I helped to color and flesh out each note. But if the Police heard vibrato, they'd kind of look over and sneer, 'What is that sheep sound I hear?' Coming from the church, that was real difficult. Sting has a very clear idea about what everyone should be doing, and you can't overpower his sound, although he'd let me create my own harmonies when we went into the studio for his solo thing. He gave me freedom within my layering of tracks to do what I wanted, but do you hear me when the album comes out?" she deadpans. "Uh-uh—you hear Sting singing all the background parts—he likes the way he sounds, and that's cool. He'd use me almost like a notepad, and then try and get the effects he liked with his own voice."

Still, for all Dolette's pride in her craft, people seem to assume she's just hanging out until a solo opportunity presents itself. "Right," she smiles. "Well, don't you want to be a star?" I want whatever life is offering me. I'm one of the few chosen people who can say that they make money doing something they really love. I don't have to have my name in lights. Do you know how many people have had their names in lights—and where are they now?"



*On Tour*

## THE HORN SECTION

*Around the world with  
the Uptown Horns*

by CRISPIN CIOE

THE FIRST HORN GUY I REMEMBER that did rock tours was Steve McKay, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Steve played Grand Rapids—greazy tenor sax with Iggy and the Psychedelic Stooges (during that band's much-vaunted *Funhouse* epoch, ca. '71) when I was a fresh-faced novice just starting to wet a reed. I'll never forget when Steve returned from his first Stooges road jaunt and favored me with three slices of advice: 1) If you get to L.A., look up the Plastercasters; 2) you can never hear yourself onstage—the guitars are always too loud; and 3) horns = last hired + first fired.

I spent the remainder of the '70s in the Midwest and on the East Coast, variously playing in Top 40 cover combos and one rather memorable

soul outfit (Radio King and His Court of Rhythm), moving to NYC and street-performing with a pal on Pignose-amped bass and, finally, beginning to travel a mite in those nostalgically pre-video days of tour support with such acts as singer Carolyn Mas and the band Mink DeVille.

And then, one night in '79 at Max's Kansas City on lower Park Avenue, I met saxman Arno Hecht, trumpeter Hollywood Paul Litteral and trombonist Bob Funk: with me, four hornmen of the Apocalypse who instantly agreed that we liked working with our hands but hated getting dirt under our fingernails. Yeah, that's it: We'd form a section, play the occasional club, and quickly mop up doing lucrative studio work 20 hours a day.

NOT. Or, should I say, not exactly. While the Uptown Horns have survived intact these last 12 years as a self-managed anarchist collective, and while, yes, there have been patches where we've been busier than a Scotsman eating a paid dinner in a burning restaurant, we've also done the long hang, waited for the dog and bone to ring, sub-



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sisted on the odd gig and been through more than our fair share of adventures on the road.

Of course, coming up with a good chart can be enough of an adventure. Horn sections thrive or dive on their arrangements and with a touring band it's sometimes a matter of adding horn parts to songs that had minimal (or no) horns on the recorded version. If our arrangements drew too much attention to themselves, a band or artist may feel the song had been violated. This consideration was especially true for us with the Rolling Stones on their '89-'90 *Steel Wheels* tour. Mick Jagger called Arno on a Saturday and asked if we'd care to arrange 15 songs by Monday for the tour opener on Wednesday—i.e., trial by blazing inferno.

Some of the songs more or less arranged themselves: "Honky Tonk Women," for instance. Others, particularly "Tumbling Dice," needed new brush strokes from us. This song's original version has no horns, and to us, Keith's chordwork is the song's defining element. So we made our entrance by merely reinforcing the cadence-like V-I, IV, V progression halfway through the second verse, and then stayed in with long, padding chords under Mick's anthemic chorus phrase, "Roll me the tumbling dice." But the long ride-out at song's end was a crucial moment in the show, where the true majesty of the band's rough-hewn, swaying groove locked in with 70,000 humans every night. Here we came up with a repeating figure that cycles over the IV-I progression. Our goal? Simple: to conjure the image of Otis Redding taking a Sea Cruise on the Proud Mary, where the Stones are the ultimate croupiers.

But back to our own story. Our first road gigs were actually more midtown than out-of-town. In '81 we were playing with the Nitecaps, a fervid punk-soul quartet that opened for the Clash at the latter's infamous concert run at Bond's later that year. On his way to the dressing room opening night, Hollywood Paul had unwittingly dropped his trumpet mouthpiece. Comes time to play, and the Uptown Horns, various Nitecaps, Clash, crew and janitors are crawling around backstage, searching for the little sucker. No dice, so we mount the stage, Hollywood sans lip-cup. Just before the first note—our unison high F on a slam-fest rendition of Booker T. and the MGs' "Time Is Tight"—a roadie runs onstage, brandishing the piece. Paul extends his hand without even turning to look, and in one graceful swoop slaps the mouthpiece into his horn and commences to blow. All part of the act.

The mighty J. Geils Band initiated us into

national touring when we backed them as *Freeze-Frame* went platinum in '82. With lead singer Peter Wolf at the careening helm, here was a band that routinely nabbed six encores a night. What's more, these were some serious practical jokers.

Arno played a tenor sax solo on the band's version of "Land of 1,000 Dances." One night in Pittsburgh, as he wailed away center stage, two roadies emerged and festooned Arno's shoulders with an exquisite purple cape with a big black "A" in the center. Arno, completely oblivious to this upstage action, was in fact the object

**SECTIONAL HEALING**

**C** RISPIN CIOE plays Selmer Mark VI alto and baritone saxes; ARNO HECHT plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor sax; HOLLYWOOD PAUL LITTERAL plays a Schilke S-42 trumpet and BOB FUNK plays a King 3-B trombone, gold-plated with a sterling silver bell. The horns use a Shure wireless mike system.

of rock's first onstage "we're not worthy" scenario as the entire Geils Band, even the drummer, genuflected to the caped honkmeister.

Later that same night, as I was playing what I'd like to think was an impassioned alto sax solo on the ballad "I'm Falling," three music-crazed fans did just that—intentionally, I suppose. Dive-bombing onto the stage from somewhere up above, they immediately tried to tackle me just as I soared into my last appoggiatura. Arno and Paul tried to pull me away from the marauders, and until two more roadies arrived a couple of minutes later to hack me free, the song vamped along to an impressive tug o' sax display.

Then again, let's be fair: When the road gets dangerous, it's not always rock 'n' roll's fault. In '88 we went to Las Vegas with Paul Shaffer, the Late Night Band and David Sanborn, where David Letterman was doing his show for a week. Each night Dave featured various Vegan entertainers: Robert Goulet, Lola Falana, Siegfried & Roy.... The final night opened with a bird act, and the last giant cockatoo onstage was supposed to fly in from the auditorium's rear, circle over the audience three times and land on its trainer's shoulder. We were standing right behind the bird man, who happened to have my hair color, height and build. When the jumbo fowl made its final approach, I realized I was going to be its runway. Literally three feet high, the bizarre creature refused to get off my head. Too terrified to swat it off, I just kept playing.

The next act was the immortal Sammy Davis, Jr. We launched into "For Once in My Life," Sammy dancing alongside the band, and at one point he embraced Bob Funk as our trombonist hit an exhilarating glissando on the song's modulation. Later, Bob spotted Sammy making his way to a waiting limo. When Bob asked his wife Carol to snap a photo of himself and the mighty Sam, a cyclops of a bodyguard detached himself from the retinue and started toward our 'bone man, who was seconds away from being moshed into bone marrow. Mister Davis heard the commotion, turned and raised a hand: "Wait, man, wait. I love this cat! Let's do a picture right here!" The Kodak was snapped and Bob Funk lived to raise mouthpiece to lips another day.

But no exposé of the Uptown Horns' road escapades would be complete without the inside skinny on the *Steel Wheels* tour. And truth be told, there was one serious problem that dogged us across three continents. Yes, our stage monitor sound was consistently superb for 120-odd shows; yes, Charlie Watts' Baby Dodds-meets-Al Jackson backbeat was manna every night; okay, staying up all night jamming on George Jones tunes with Keith and Ronnie once a week was incredible; and we'll even admit that Mick's vocals were spot-on despite his running more feet per show than most jocks do in a week. The big problem was Bill Wyman.

Every night, about halfway through a show, the seminal bassist, who never cracks a smile onstage, would turn towards us, back to the audience, and commence a serious of hideous faces calculated to make us burst out laughing with our horns *al dente*.

The problem worsened as we crossed America. When we reached New York's Shea Stadium, our home field, one of the shows fell on the bassist's birthday. Bill's roadies hatched a plan that, coincidentally, looked like it might satisfy our craving for revenge. They hired a buxom stripper to emerge, on cue, from behind Bill's sound monitor, set underneath a screen on the stage floor. At the appointed time (the opening chords of "Tumbling Dice"), the lady appeared beneath us, shaking everything she had. Of course, all four Uptown Horns and saxman Bobby Keys cracked up, mouthpieces popping out of mouths at the first guffaw. Wyman, his back to us, and holding that swamp groove steady as a rock, slowly looked down upon the zaftig cutie. Then, even more slowly, the Englishman rotated to fix us with his Jack Benny stare and finally, one millimeter at a time, raised his right eyebrow. Now tell me these guys didn't invent the rock 'n' roll tour. M



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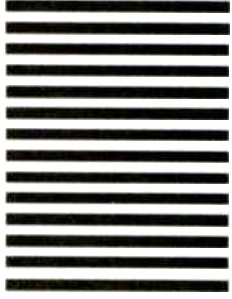
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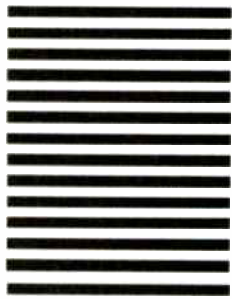
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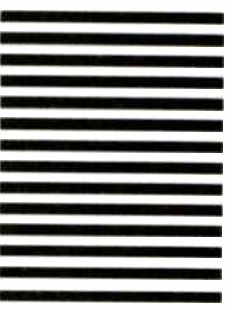
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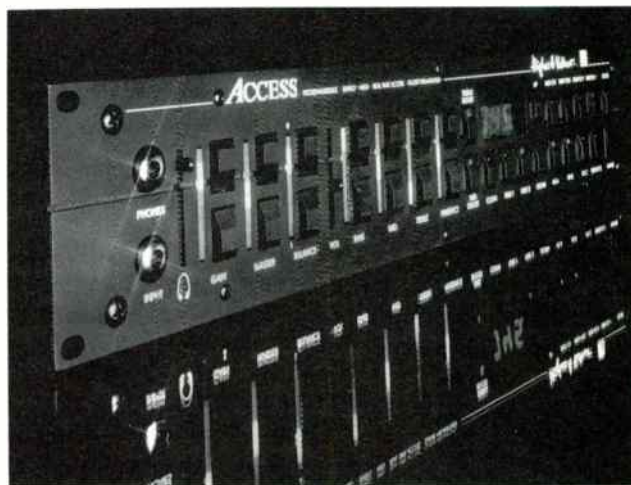
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## EASY ACCESS

**W**ith three independent preamps, an extensive effects patchbay and full MIDI control, Hughes & Kettner has packed a lot into its Access guitar preamp. This unit, combined with a power amp and the right signal processing, will provide any guitarist with a truly powerful rack. But choose your power amp wisely. The Access sounds okay when powered by a solid-state or hybrid amplifier, but it really comes to life in combination with an all-tube setup.

The "clean" channel is a highly refined solid-state circuit with very little of the harshness usually associated with transistors. As you increase gain, the tone changes from bright and clean to warm and fat. A built-in compressor (don't worry, it's very subtle) kicks in about halfway up and keeps the sound full while preventing clipping. The Access' "tube 1" preamp takes the crunch factor one step further, delivering a classic, natural-sounding overdrive which is easily fine-tuned using the guitar's volume pot. The tone is clear and musical and the character of the guitar comes nicely through the distortion. When you're ready to go over the top, hit "tube 2" for a fully-saturated lead sound that has huge presence, even at low volumes. Screaming harmonics come effortlessly, although controlling feedback can be a problem. Your neighbors are likely to store your phone number in their auto-dial.

Even with all the sonic nuance available here, you're going to want to add effects. No problem. The Access has three programmable effects loops: a mono-loop in series, a mono-in/stereo-out loop in parallel, and a stereo-in/stereo-out loop in parallel. The beauty of the parallel loops is that, instead of interrupting the



signal path to insert the effect, the effected sound is added to the original, letting both signals come through much stronger. The Access can store up to 128 different programs with any combination of preamp, EQ settings, volume and external effects—all instantly recallable via a pedalboard or MIDI. And given its flexibility, this thing is surprisingly easy to use. Every parameter is displayed continuously, and signal processing vets will be glad to know that everything on the Access is laid out on the well-lit front panel, so you won't have to scroll through long menus in a tiny LCD window.

When you take into account all this unit does, and the gear it can replace, the \$2000 price doesn't seem entirely out of line.

DAVID LAWRENCE

## ROCK SOLID

Rhythm Tech's **ROCK PAD** is the nicest practice pad I ever met and I've met plenty I didn't like. What it is, is this: a good thick slab of pure gum rubber, laid atop a chunk of marble that sits on four rounded little rubber feet. You get the picture: This thing eats sonic energy, swallows it up. It's the quietest pad I've ever heard.

It's also extremely resilient, and small enough (7"x7") for harried white-collar drummers like me to stash it in their briefcases (you feel its five pounds but that doesn't bother me; just makes your briefcase a better anti-mugger weapon) and use on the train. It's so quiet you won't incur the wrath, only the occasional curious glance, from fellow commuters. And right now it's sitting in the top drawer of my desk, ready for the odd five-minute rudiment break. Or, now that spring's here, for an outdoor lunchtime bout with *Stick Control*.

So check it out—it's a satisfying lil' piece of gear, and about the least anti-social chopbuilder a drummer could ask for. It's not cheap—it lists for \$49.95—but it could end your search for a great practice pad and that's worth something, for God's sake, in this vale of tears, right?

TONY SCHERMAN





# STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN SIGNATURE SERIES STRATOCASTER



**T**his guitar is modeled after Stevie Vaughan's 1960s mainstay, with slightly more attention directed to modifications by Vaughan than to features common to Strats of that era; further design liberties, like flattening the neck radius for a fatter, rounder feel, were taken between three prototypes made for the guitarist roughly eight months before his death in 1990. After that, Stevie's brother Jimmie substituted an engraved SRV pickguard for the original reflector decals. Imagine Vaughan's three-tone sunburst alder-body Strat, with attractive gold hardware, just before he put it through the blast furnace.

If Stevie was synonymous with tone, this guitar is Stevie: loud but nuanced, fat but cutting, pretty despite its excesses. Because a guitar's neck pickup is typically loudest, the three extra-fat-wound single-coils are calibrated weak at the neck and stronger by the bridge, for a more balanced output throughout. The middle pickup is a reverse-wind/reverse-pull so that in the classic vintage Strat positions—two and four—there's a marked decrease in 60-cycle hum. The two and four positions offer a rhythm sound of almost unmatched warmth and detail.

Some of the physical Vaughan elements here take some getting used to, especially if you fall in love with the tone and can't see parting with the guitar. First, you'll want to re-engage the pickguard with your spouse's initials. The lefty vibrato bar, with the arm attached at the low end of the bridge, will throw players who rest their palm there; it works better turned back toward the endpin, Bill Connors-style. Also, the frets are high and shaved steep at the ends, so if you do have a penchant for widebrim hats, wide Stevie Ray vibrato and acknowledge no pressing need to change the pickguard, you need to bend inward or the E strings will go offside fast. Live with an instrument like this for a while. Facing the challenge, as its patron saint would surely testify, is a reward unto itself.

MATT RESNICOFF

## SOUND BITES

**A**ll these stadium tours are cool, but there's plenty of new stuff out there for you regional five-night-a-weekers. **YORKVILLE SOUND** has packed 30 years of experience and a lot of neat features into its Audiopro 12 and 16-channel powered mixers, like 1200 watts of stereo power, two monitor and effects sends, easy internal patching and built-in **ALESIS** reverb. Newcomers **APOGEE SOUND** debuted their line of sound reinforcement gear at this year's NAMM. At the heart of their integrated Artist Systems is a processor that they say optimizes amplifier and speaker performance and avoids some of the pitfalls inherent in disparate component systems. Hmm...makes sense. When it comes to onstage guitar effects, the folks at **BOSS** have the right idea with the ME-6. This nifty multi-effects stomp-box allows the player to make the choice; if those perfect chorus/delay/distortion presets you concocted at home sound like doo-doo on the gig, you can switch to manual, and this unit acts like several independent effects boxes. **ENSONIQ** has beefed up its SQ series Personal Music Studios. These do-it-all keyboards now feature 32-voice polyphony and 80 additional voices in RAM. And they've *still* got the best piano sound around. Yes, upgrades are available from the company. Hey, give the drummer some! For head-beaters who'd rather concentrate more on drum tuning than mike placement, **PEARL** offers the May Acoustic Drum Miking System which promises bigger, more consistent sound by mounting microphones inside the drum with permanent brackets. You can go with drilled (where you actually plug the mike cord into a jack on the shell) or non-drilled (so as not to mess with that pretty finish).

PETER CRONIN



## THE RAP ON MILES

MILES DAVIS  
WITH EASY MO BEE  
DOO-BOP  
(WARNER BROS.)

**M**ore than one fan of the late, great Miles Davis has observed that, for all his radical inclinations, he never really changed his playing style so much as he did the settings behind him. At no time was that more evident than in the final months of Davis' life, during which, among other things, he traveled to Montreux to reprise his triumphs of the '50s and '60s; played behind the timeless blues boogie of John Lee Hooker on a movie soundtrack,

*The Hot Spot*; and toured with his underrated electric orchestra, providing audiences with some of the more provocative jazz/funk arrangements of the present era.

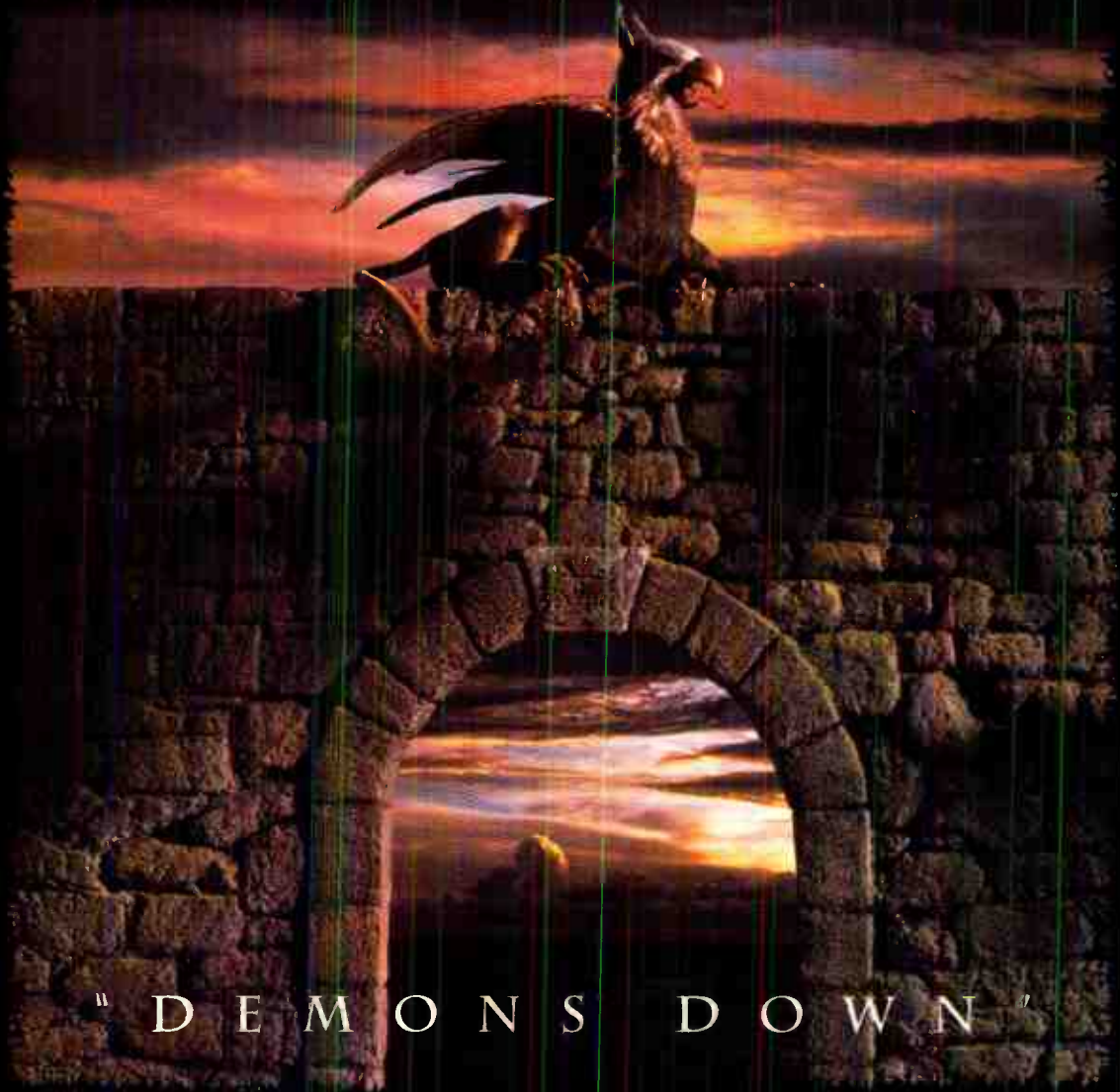
Now comes *Doo-Bop*, Davis' final studio project, one produced by rapper Easy Mo Bee, who also provides verbal accompaniment on three tracks. For fans of his late career this should come as no surprise: From his cover of "Time After Time" to the Marcus Miller-pro-

duced *Tutu*, to this, Miles marched through the '80s determined to bridge the chasm that has come to exist between "jazz" artists and contemporary pop culture. And indeed, Davis was one of few such artists (Louis Armstrong and Thelonious Monk come to mind) whose voice was so clear, so direct, to transcend those formal boundaries. *Doo-Bop* is its natural culmination. If the result is still not as edgy and street-wise as one suspects Davis desired,



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# CURVE

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it's probably due to the natural elegance of his trumpet lines, which gave so much of his music a romantic, ethereal dimension.

This is still a heckuva party album. The record begins with "Mystery," and Miles soloing prettily over a languid two-chord vamp, before moving into "Doo Bop Song" and the entrance of Easy Mo Bee. With a sonorous voice that recalls Barry White, the rapper discourses on Miles as legend with a sweet, deferential air. Next comes the hot stuff—"Chocolate Chip," a made-for-MTV Dance Party groove in which Miles swings effortlessly over a guitar riff reminiscent of his classic *Jack Johnson* LP; "Hi Speed Chase," a slick mix of hip-hop sampling spiced with some barbeque organ work by Davis' last keyboard player, Deron Johnson; and "Sonya," perhaps the record's highlight, in which synthesized string and vibraphone fills give the song's propulsive rhythm a cushioned, velvety veneer. It's not the kind of sound that will win back those fans still rankled when Davis stopped playing "My Funny Valentine"; this is a hip-hop record. But for those open to the spirit as much as the form of jazz, the effect is surprisingly emotional.

Davis died during the making of this album, and there are times when it has the feel of an unfinished project. The length, at about 40 minutes, feels a little short, and is padded by two versions of the title track. Two Davis solos were pulled from earlier sessions and their backing tracks finished after he died. For all that, it's a record that stands on its own, a typically controversial capstone. For younger ears weaned on modern beats, it's also an inviting opening into one of the great cornucopias of American music. Which could be just as the master of timing planned it. Like most everything Miles Davis played, the music of *Doo-Bop* is cool and warm, beautiful and true. —Mark Rowland



**THE CURE**

*Wish*  
(ELEKTRA)

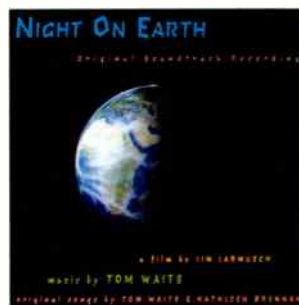
**C**ALL IT MOPE. CALL IT GOTHIC. CALL it Black Sabbath for college students. Call

it the Ramones without Prozac. Call it Michael Bolton for existentialists. The Cure have been playing whatever you call it since they founded it in 1976, and they have seen no reason to play anything else. Simple, minor-key chord progressions, lots of drone and Robert Smith's voice—always on the verge of weeping, even when he allows for the fleeting possibility of joy—were the main elements 16 years ago, and are the main elements in *Wish*. The only real difference is that Smith has progressed in his ability to befool his bleakness with psychedelic mystery, for instance on "End," appropriately placed at the end of this album. The Cure also demonstrate considerable skill at laying down grooves to induce either dance or trance.

It states in the press release before me that in 1986 a fan jumped onstage in Los Angeles and "repeatedly stabbed himself. The 18,000-strong audience thought it was part of the act." Personally, I don't think about stabbing myself a lot. I've spent too much money on vitamins over the years for it to be cost-effective. Thus I listen to the Cure on an irregular basis. But when I was in college, I thought about stabbing myself about every 35 seconds. Something about reading Dostoevsky while contemplating the prospect of law school put you in the mood for applying black eye shadow and opening an artery. What better way to prove to your girlfriend that you're too sensitive for this world?

So I would never deny any demographic slice of American youth the soundtrack to their despair (although rage seems to be connecting with larger numbers in this election year). And if I ever again wish to feel at one with 18,000 people who think stabbing yourself is part of the act, I know just who to dial up on my CD player.

—Charles M. Young



**TOM WAITS**

*Night on Earth*  
(ISLAND)

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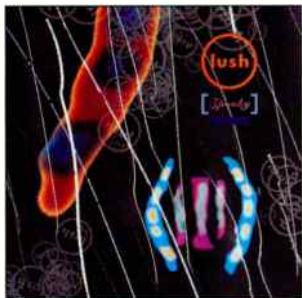
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the obligatory accordion, harmonium and Stinson band organ. Since only three cuts feature Waits' nicotine growl, this could be the karaoke party album of the year, and a perfect gift for that special someone who always wanted a Waits album without all that intrusive singing.

As befits a soundtrack, Waits has tailored his narrative force to sync with Jarmusch's minimalist sensibility, leaving the director enough space to plant the visuals. There's nothing safe or bland about the music (at times it reaches Beefheartian climaxes, especially in the two "Carnival" pieces), but there's a decided déjà vu to the proceedings when you include four versions of "Good Old World" (including gypsy and waltz styles) and four "Mood" pieces (Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Helsinki) that feature similar melodic contours.

Certainly Waits' singular vision—best illustrated in Los Angeles/New York "Theme" pieces where he turns virtuosic, celebratory blow-outs into ramshackle Salvation Army hand-me-downs (never old-fashioned so much as *antique*)—complements Jarmusch's idiosyncratic cinema. However, like most soundtrack albums, the adjoining visuals would help. As singer/songwriter, Waits is simply featured too sparingly, in accordance with the movie's needs, no doubt, but not with ours. —Rob O'Connor



**LUSH**  
*Spooky*  
(4AD/REPRISE)

**RIDE**  
*Going Blank Again*  
(REPRISE)

**V**ISIONARY ART OR NOUVELLE JUNK food? Perfect masters of evocative soundscapes, Britain's Lush and Ride can create a mood quicker than you can dim the lights. Speaking in idiosyncratic tongues conducive to cult worship, both smear their music into a blur, placing a low priority on traditional songwriting. Less charitably, both have a shtick as stylized as the most obvious rap or heavy-metal act.

If that doesn't put you off, Lush's *Spooky* offers

many decadent thrills. Produced by Cocteau Twin (and spiritual mentor) Robin Guthrie, the quartet mimics the kind of light-headed ecstasy associated with forbidden substances. Miki Berenyi's sweet vocals float through the dreamy grooves like a cloud, swept along by swirling guitars. Pop treats "Nothing Natural" and "For Love" fairly sparkle, thanks to real-live melodies under the layers of sound; droopy and tiresome, "Take" and "Monochrome" expose the band's limitations, proving obsessive studio tweaking can be a dead end. Lush should take a cue from their best tracks before self-parody becomes an issue: The unusually blunt "Untogether," where Berenyi sighs, "I wish you'd just leave me alone," and the foot-stomping "Superblast!" concede the existence of a harsher external reality, injecting a gripping undercurrent of tension into the haze.

Equally vague, though less dizzy, Ride's *Going Blank Again* mounts an earnest salute to the guitar. Big chords and crisp licks pour forth in an endless stream, resulting in symphonic epics worthy of arenas, or Cecil B. DeMille. Forget the nondescript, often unintelligible vocals, which seem like an afterthought. Don't look for ego-tripping solos, or hints of the cheesy psychedelia found in the quartet's early work, 'cause now the lads build clear, towering structures. The droning, eight-minute "Leave Them All Behind" achieves a sprawling majesty, while the dramatic crescendos of "Cool Your Boots" inspire meditations on infinity. However, "Chrome Waves" recalls the Moody Blues' cosmic drivel, and the plodding "0x4" underscores their lack of strong material. Having nothing to say, Ride say it with a dazzling flourish. But it's still nothing. —Jon Young



**THE BEASTIE BOYS**  
*Check Your Head*  
(CAPITOL)

**W**HEN ANTHRAX, A BUNCH OF NEW York smart-alecks, decide to release a compilation of their B-sides, it's a thrill. When the Beastie Boys, a bunch of New York smart-alecks, put out a record after a three-year wait that sounds like a bunch of B-sides and isn't half

as impressive as Anthrax's, it's pretty disappointing. *License to Ill*, their 1986 catchy-as-Satan-in-hell hit (though I should mention Satan since Rick Rubin produced it), had real personality, like it or not. Even the pretentious *Paul's Boutique* retained the edge of a show-off concept LP. But here, the Beasties have simply combined some good tunes/raps with some impossibly mellow instrumentals and crowned it their much-awaited LP. What happened?

Who knows? I'm sure we're about to read all kinds of defensive comments from the Beasties, like the kind we suffered through when the Replacements released their only lame LP, the prematurely aged but confused and miserable *Don't Tell a Soul*, and tried to convince everyone they'd really grown up. Whether it's a weariness with drinking red red wine or no longer wanting to fight for one's right to party, it's cool for any band to change their tune. But throughout *Check Your Head*, the Beasties try way too hard to convince us that they're having fun (coulda fooled me), not playing roles anymore (perhaps true) and doing exactly what they want to do.

As though the fans don't really matter. None of these songs is anthemic (the worthy metal-rap of "Whatcha Want" comes close), and none grabs hold emotionally, soulfully or lyrically. There are more jokes than Mojo Nixon and They Might Be Giants, combined. Except that, unlike Mojo Nixon and They Might Be Giants, the humor is so confusing that most of it falls flat.

Whining self-righteously more than Axl even does, interspersing their anger with false-sounding optimistic clichés that maybe are supposed to be sarcastic but never quite get over, these one-time bad boys of rap act less like grown-ups than brats having an identity crisis. Hey guys, check your head. —Jill Bardinelli



**CHET ATKINS/JERRY REED**  
*Sneakin' Around*  
(BONY)

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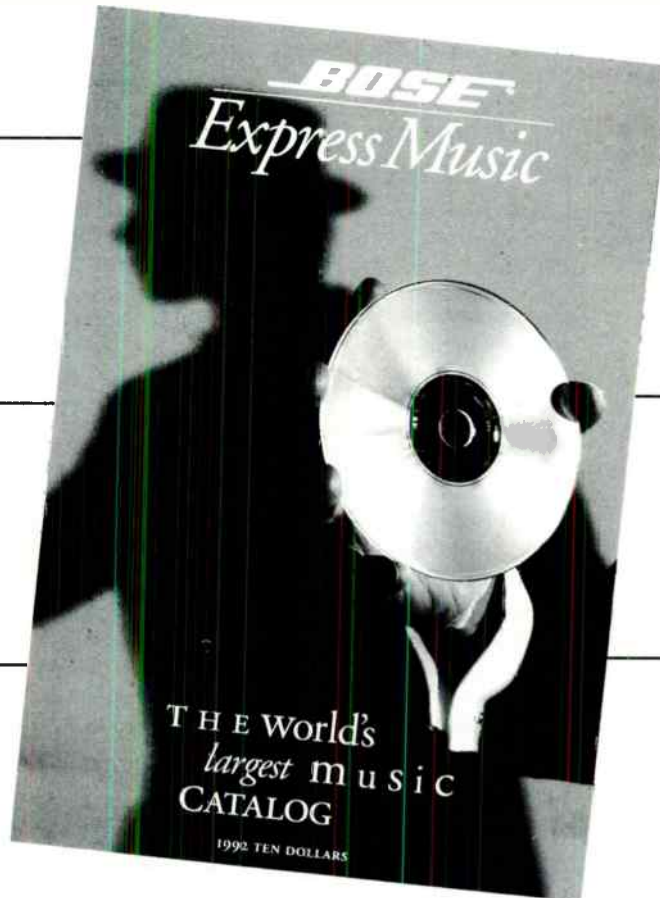
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# PERFORMANCE

## INXS in Australia

BY FRED GOODMAN

**I**NXS' stature as performers seems unassailable—or at least it should. But Australians appear to become unhappy when homegrown talent makes it big in the rest of the world. How else to explain the scathing profile of INXS vocalist Michael Hutchence (headlined "Mr. INXSible") in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on March 28, the day they headlined "The Concert for Life" at Sydney's Centennial Park?



It's hard to imagine any American paper equal in stature to the *Herald* (a world-class newspaper) ripping into an artist the day he's headlining a concert that will raise \$2 million for a hospital's AIDS and heart-research programs. Worst of all, Hutchence's biggest crimes appear to be spending too much time outside Sydney and subsisting on a steady diet of 19-year-old models.

So on a day INXS could have reasonably expected roses, they appeared headed for a raspberry. But whether the broadside had given the band something to prove, or simply the sight of 90,000 listeners standing in a drizzling rain in Centennial Park was enough to ignite them, INXS turned in a performance that was a good deal more than just smart arena-rock.

Keying off familiar tunes like "What's My Color" and "New Sensation," the band quickly established a precision pace on the backs of rhythm guitarist Tim Farriss and his brother, drummer Jon Farriss (a third Farriss brother, Andrew, is the band's nominal leader, writing all the music and playing keyboards; bassist Garry Gary Beers and lead guitarist/saxophonist Kirk Pengilly round out the band). Although INXS has spent the last couple of months off the road and in the studio, there's no rust: The meter changes were fluid, the keyboard fills and guitar solos neatly sculpted—maybe a little too neatly.

The focus was Hutchence. Unlike the half-dozen acts who preceded them on the bill, INXS is used to playing from a massive stage—and Hutchence, dressed in a white suit, stalked its perimeter with all the impertinence and strut of a man who knows he's a rock 'n' roll star.

With each succeeding tune the band played a little harder, the music sounding just that much grittier and Hutchence's incessant pacing taking on a more fevered tempo. The show's climax—"Suicide Blonde" followed by "The Devil Inside"—was delivered with more panache and energy than either of those one-dimensional vehicles would seem to afford. If INXS is less interested in exploring the frontiers of rock 'n' roll than in making people move their bodies in time to the music, it's the legacy of all those nights spent playing pubs on the road from Perth through Darwin to Sydney for thirsty people who just want a cold beer in their hand and a familiar song in their head.

In contrast, the band's encore featured a large string and horn section for a gut-wrenching reworking of "Never Tear Us Apart" and the debut of their new album's focal piece, "Baby Don't Cry." Despite the addition of the tuxedoed sidemen, the band remained loose, and the arrangements proved surprisingly suitable.

Also on the bill was Crowded House, making their last appearance as a quartet with guitarist and singer Tim Finn. Although not exactly spirited, the group's usually warm harmonies and strong melody lines sounded somewhat flat, even on such chestnuts as "Something So Strong" and "Don't Dream It's Over." The band's most animated moments came while performing the Beatlesque "It's Only Natural" and "Chocolate Cake," and the power ballad "Better Be Home Soon."

The surprise of the day was Diesel, a young singer, guitarist and bandleader whose raspy voice, strong guitar work and enormous musical vocabulary—which calls on everything from traditional blues to acid rock to Philly soul—belies his age. An earlier album with another band, released in the U.S. as *Johnny Diesel & the Injectors*, gave little indication of its creator's reach. But he recently scored a number one single in Australia with a ballad, "Right on the Tip of My Tongue," that was all meat and no cheese. Take notice: Diesel is the real deal.



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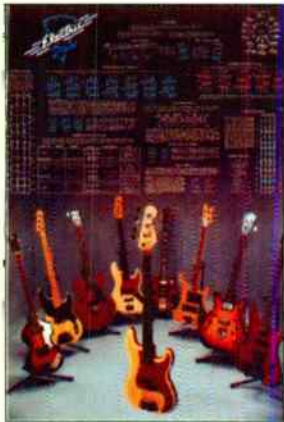
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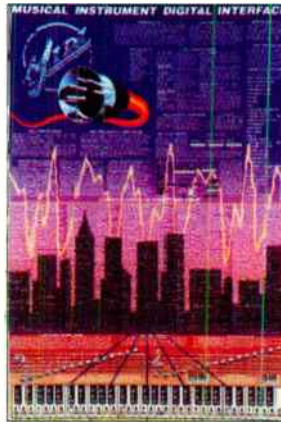


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# THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

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## THE TOP 100 ALBUMS

The first number indicates the position of the album this month, the second its position last month.

1 · 48	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> <i>Wayne's World/Reprise</i>
2 · 1	<b>GARTH BROOKS</b> <i>Ropin' the Wind/Capitol</i>
3 · 3	<b>NIRVANA</b> <i>Nevermind/DGC</i>
4 · 4	<b>GARTH BROOKS</b> <i>No Fences/Capitol</i>
5 · 13	<b>METALLICA</b> <i>Metallica/Elektra</i>
6 · 46	<b>UGLY KID JOE</b> <i>As Ugly As They Want to Be Star Dog</i>
7 · 9	<b>U2</b> <i>Achtung Baby/Island</i>
8 · 11	<b>NATALIE COLE</b> <i>Unforgettable/Elektra</i>
9 · 2	<b>MICHAEL JACKSON</b> <i>Dangerous/Epic</i>
10 · 5	<b>MICHAEL BOLTON</b> <i>Time, Love and Tenderness/Columbia</i>
11 · 8	<b>BONNIE RAITT</b> <i>Luck of the Draw/Capitol</i>
12 · 7	<b>BOYZ II MEN</b> <i>Cooler by Harmony/Motown</i>
13 · —	<b>QUEEN</b> <i>Classic Queen/Hollywood</i>
14 · 12	<b>GENESIS</b> <i>We Can't Dance/Atlantic</i>
15 · 6	<b>COLOR ME BADD</b> <i>C.M.B./Giant</i>
16 · 38	<b>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS</b> <i>Blood Sugar Sex Magik/Warner Bros.</i>
17 · 16	<b>MR. BIG</b> <i>Lean Into It/Jive</i>
18 · 41	<b>VANESSA WILLIAMS</b> <i>The Comfort Zone/Capitol</i>
19 · 21	<b>ENYA</b> <i>Shepherd Moons/Reprise</i>
20 · 10	<b>HAMMER</b> <i>Too Legit to Quit/Capitol</i>
21 · 14	<b>MARIAH CAREY</b> <i>Emotions/Columbia</i>
22 · 20	<b>AMY GRANT</b> <i>Heart in Motion/A&amp;M</i>
23 · 23	<b>PEARL JAM</b> <i>Ten/Epic Associated</i>
24 · 17	<b>BRYAN ADAMS</b> <i>Waking Up the Neighbours A&amp;M</i>

25 · 29	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> <i>Rush/Reprise</i>
26 · 25	<b>OZZY OSBOURNE</b> <i>No More Tears/Epic Associated</i>
27 · 18	<b>GARTH BROOKS</b> <i>Garth Brooks/Capitol</i>
28 · 22	<b>JODECI</b> <i>Forever My Lady/MCA</i>
29 · 27	<b>NAUGHTY BY NATURE</b> <i>Naughty by Nature/Tommy Boy</i>
30 · 33	<b>SIR MIX-A-LOT</b> <i>Mack Daddy/Def American</i>
31 · 32	<b>REBA MCENTIRE</b> <i>For My Broken Heart/MCA</i>
32 · 47	<b>CYPRESS HILL</b> <i>Cypress Hill/Ruffhouse</i>
33 · 44	<b>BLACKSHEEP</b> <i>A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing/Mercury</i>
34 · 15	<b>PRINCE AND THE N.P.G.</b> <i>Diamonds and Pearls Paisley Park</i>
35 · 30	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> <i>Beauty &amp; the Beast/Walt Disney</i>
36 · 34	<b>R.E.M.</b> <i>Out of Time/Warner Bros.</i>
37 · 26	<b>GUNS N' ROSES</b> <i>Use Your Illusion III/Geffen</i>
38 · 19	<b>GUNS N' ROSES</b> <i>Use Your Illusion II/Geffen</i>
39 · 55	<b>QUEENSRYCHE</b> <i>Empire/EMI</i>
40 · 39	<b>TRAVIS TRITT</b> <i>It's All About to Change Warner Bros.</i>
41 · —	<b>MELISSA ETHERIDGE</b> <i>Never Enough/Island</i>
42 · 28	<b>HARRY CONNICK, JR.</b> <i>Blue Light, Red Light/Columbia</i>
43 · 24	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> <i>Jute/Soul</i>
44 · 42	<b>SOUNDGARDEN</b> <i>Badmotorfinger/A&amp;M</i>
45 · —	<b>YANNI</b> <i>Dare to Dream/Private Music</i>
46 · —	<b>RIGHT SAID FRED</b> <i>Up/Charisma</i>
47 · 78	<b>RICHARD MARX</b> <i>Rush Street/Capitol</i>
48 · 35	<b>C&amp;C MUSIC FACTORY</b> <i>Gonna Make You Sweat/Columbia</i>
49 · 40	<b>TEVIN CAMPBELL</b> <i>T.E.V.I.N./Qwest</i>
50 · 51	<b>VINCE GILL</b> <i>Pocket Full of Gold/MCA</i>
51 · 58	<b>VAN HALEN</b> <i>For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge Warner Bros.</i>

52 · 37	<b>PAULA ABDUL</b> <i>Spellbound/Captive</i>
53 · 63	<b>ALAN JACKSON</b> <i>Don't Rock the Jukebox/Arista</i>
54 · 53	<b>LISA STANSFIELD</b> <i>Real Love/Arista</i>
55 · 31	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b> <i>Two Rooms: Songs of E. Jobn &amp; B. Tampan/Polydor</i>
56 · 36	<b>KEITH SWEAT</b> <i>Keep It Comin'/Elektra</i>
57 · —	<b>PANTERA</b> <i>Vulgar Display of Power Atco East West</i>
58 · 68	<b>TANYA TUCKER</b> <i>What Do I Do with Me/Capitol</i>
59 · 49	<b>STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN &amp; DOUBLE TROUBLE</b> <i>The Sky Is Crying/Epic</i>
60 · —	<b>LED ZEPPELIN</b> <i>Remasters/Atlantic</i>
61 · —	<b>EN VOGUE</b> <i>Funky Divas/Atco East West</i>
62 · —	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b> <i>The Mambo Kings/Elektra</i>
63 · —	<b>TLC</b> <i>Ones and twos... On the T.I.C. Tip/LaFace</i>
64 · —	<b>AARON TIPPIN</b> <i>Read Between the Lines/RCA</i>
65 · 45	<b>JOHN MELLENCAMP</b> <i>Whenever We Wanted/Mercury</i>
66 · —	<b>M.C. BRAINS</b> <i>Lovers Lane/Motown</i>
67 · —	<b>MINT CONDITION</b> <i>Meant to Be Mint/Perspective</i>
68 · 75	<b>LUKE</b> <i>I Got Shit on My Mind/Luke</i>
69 · —	<b>HANK WILLIAMS, JR.</b> <i>Maverick/Curb</i>
70 · 70	<b>AMG</b> <i>Butch Beta Have My Money/Select</i>
71 · 50	<b>GERALD LEVERT</b> <i>Private Line/Atco East West</i>
72 · 89	<b>TRACY LAWRENCE</b> <i>Sticks &amp; Stones/Atlantic</i>
73 · 64	<b>TRISHA YEARWOOD</b> <i>Trisha Yearwood/MCA</i>
74 · —	<b>JOHN ANDERSON</b> <i>Sensational Wind/BNA</i>
75 · —	<b>ROOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS</b> <i>Sex and Violence/Jive</i>
76 · 43	<b>MARKY MARK &amp; THE FUNKY BUNCH</b> <i>Music for the People/Interscope</i>
77 · 77	<b>MARC COHN</b> <i>Marc Cohn/Atlantic</i>
78 · 100	<b>LITTLE VILLAGE</b> <i>Little Village/Reprise</i>
79 · —	<b>TESLA</b> <i>Psychotic Supper/Geffen</i>
80 · 59	<b>LUTHER VANDROSS</b> <i>Power of Love/Epic</i>
81 · —	<b>TEARS FOR FEARS</b> <i>Tears Roll Down—Hits 1982-92 Fontana</i>
82 · 61	<b>ORIGINAL LONDON CAST</b> <i>Phantom of the Opera Highlights Polydor</i>
83 · 97	<b>SIMPLY RED</b> <i>Stars/Atco East West</i>
84 · 52	<b>ICE CUBE</b> <i>Death Certificate/Priority</i>
85 · 56	<b>PUBLIC ENEMY</b> <i>Apocalypse 91... The Enemy Strikes Black/Def Jam</i>
86 · —	<b>HAL KETCHUM</b> <i>Past the Point of Rescue/Curb</i>
87 · —	<b>CONCRETE BLONDE</b> <i>Walking in London/I.R.S.</i>

88 · —	<b>K.D. LANG</b> <i>Ingenu/Sire</i>
89 · 91	<b>SEAL</b> <i>Seal/Sire</i>
90 · 69	<b>COLLIN RAYE</b> <i>All I Can Be/Epic</i>
91 · 66	<b>SALT-N-PEPA</b> <i>Black's Magic/Next Plateau</i>
92 · —	<b>2PAC</b> <i>2Pacalypse Now/Interscope</i>
93 · —	<b>THE KLF</b> <i>White Room/Arista</i>
94 · —	<b>SPINAL TAP</b> <i>Break Like the Wind/MCA</i>
95 · 76	<b>CECE PENISTON</b> <i>Finally! A&amp;M</i>
96 · 92	<b>COWBOY JUNKIES</b> <i>Black Eyed Man/RCA</i>
97 · 93	<b>2ND II NONE</b> <i>2nd II None/Profile</i>
98 · 57	<b>MOTLEY CRUE</b> <i>Deicide/Decadence/Elektra</i>
99 · 62	<b>RUSH</b> <i>Roll the Bones/Atlantic</i>
100 · 99	<b>LORRIE MORGAN</b> <i>Something in Red/RCA</i>

The Musician album chart is produced by the Billboard chart department for Musician, and reflects the combined points for all album reports gathered by the Billboard computers in the month of March. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for March 1992. All charts are copyright 1992 by BPI Communications.

## LEPPARD HURTS SPRINGSTEEN, WYNONNA HITS MAINSTREAM (OVERFLOWS BROOKS)

LET THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 5 BE memorialized as Spring Cleaning Week '92, one of those full-scale flushings of the record biz's plumbing that occurs once in a blue moon, or, like, twice a year. When the dirt cleared, what you had on Billboard's April 18th Top 200 Pop Albums chart were brand-new numbers one, two, three and four, all in their first week of release and at least one a major surprise.

Def Leppard's *Adrenalize* zorched through 375,000 units to number one, one of the four or five biggest opening weeks since Soundscan started conducting piece counts last May. With 55 percent of the units cassettes, not CDs, it looks like the bulk of the early scarfers were kids, as expected. Just behind Def Lep's glandular secretion came Bruce's *Human Touch*, moving 250,000 copies; number three was Springsteen's other new one, *Lucky Town* (200,000), indicating an older demographic. Since L.A. Bruce now presumably appeals mostly to older fans (two-thirds of his sales were in CDs), who take more time to wander into record stores, it's possible his albums may see even better days. We'll know by the time you read this.

Wynonna Judd, meanwhile, packaged as a Nashville Bonnie R. but looking more and more like Tammy Faye Bakker at 25, scooted straight to number four, moving 125,000 copies and nudging past Garth Brooks' *Ropin' the Wind* (down from number two to number six). The surprise, says Soundscan's Michael Fine, "is that she's getting across-the-board support, not just in the South. She was four in our Pacific market." It does indeed seem that country (see last month's screed), in its slick Neo-Neo Traditionalist incarnation, is, at least for now, flowing raitt into the mainstream. Over on the country chart, Wynonna toppled Garth from number one: the first week since May 18, 1991 that the bizarre faux cowboy hasn't had the top country album.

And how did Michael J. do? *Dangerous* was number 21 in its 19th week, its sales down 12 percent in a week (*Bad*, in its 19th week, was number 5). All is change. —TS

## TOP CONCERT GROSSES

1	<b>Neil Diamond</b> <i>Great Western Forum, Inglewood, CA/March 11-16, 22-23</i>	<b>\$3,281,923</b>
2	<b>Grateful Dead</b> <i>Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, NY/March 11-13</i>	<b>\$1,245,475</b>
3	<b>Gloria Estefan &amp; Miami Sound Machine</b> <i>Tolredo Arena, Caracas, Venezuela/March 3-4</i>	<b>\$1,193,550</b>
4	<b>Grateful Dead</b> <i>Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA/March 16-18</i>	<b>\$1,181,593</b>
5	<b>Grateful Dead</b> <i>The Omni Arena, Atlanta, GA/March 1-3</i>	<b>\$1,029,105</b>
6	<b>Grateful Dead</b> <i>Palace of Auburn Hills, Auburn Hills, MI/March 23-24</i>	<b>\$888,188</b>
7	<b>Farm Aid V: Willie Nelson, Paul Simon, others</b> <i>Texas Stadium, Irving, TX/March 14</i>	<b>\$856,225</b>
8	<b>The Allman Brothers Band</b> <i>Beacon Theatre, New York, NY/March 10-11, 13-15, 17-18, 20-22</i>	<b>\$812,040</b>
9	<b>Gloria Estefan &amp; Miami Sound Machine</b> <i>El Tascual Guerrero Stadium, Cali, Colombia/March 1</i>	<b>\$800,000</b>
10	<b>Neil Diamond</b> <i>Market Square Arena, Indianapolis, IN/March 4-5</i>	<b>\$785,242</b>



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**RECORDINGS**

[cont'd from page 98] in' finger-style guitar so well that when you listen to him play, it can make your tongue slap your brains out. Just check his artistry on the Carlises reissue on Bear Family Records (when he would take risks as a session guy). Atkins also has produced some of the finest and most perfectly polished country music in memory, and along the way is credited with paving the dirt-road sound of hillbilly music and bringing it uptown. His days at RCA Victor as artist and producer have no equal.

Twenty years ago, Atkins recorded two albums with Jerry Reed (*Me and Jerry* and *Me and Chet*)

when Reed was also at the top of his form. As a guitarist, you could count on two or three cuts an album where Reed's style of chicken-pickin' would make you wonder if it could really be done. Why, then, have they teamed up again to give us an album that borders on Snoresville? Certainly Atkins and Reed have enough money that they could make an effort that doesn't sound like a pile of George Washingtons waiting to enter their bankbooks. *Sneakin' Around* opens with "Summertime," a completely forgettable rendition that reeks of K-Mart jazz at the clearance table. "The Claw" features Reed and almost gets off the ground, but doesn't. "Gibson Girl," a vocal about Chet's guitar (he has an endorsement deal with the company), has me longing for the days when he played Gretsches. By the time they hit the skids with "Nifty Fifties," Duane Eddy would gag himself with a spoon.

Still, when you're as good as these guys, something's gonna shine through. "First Born" is a beautiful ballad, guitars played perfectly to complement each other. The title song is the coolest cut—God, how do they pick so clean? They're playing so sneaky here, you'd swear they each have somebody on the side. Along the way Atkins and Reed are joined by some other heavy pickers, notably Mark Knopfler, Steve Wariner, Mark O'Connor and Jerry Douglas. But the record just never perks up.

I know what these men are capable of, and I just couldn't find any of it here. C'mon guys, stop being a couple o' Perry Comos and make my tongue slap my brains out!

—Al Anderson

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**J**IM SULLIVAN, 32, works for Brockum, the merchandising giant that makes and markets tour paraphernalia for Mötley Crüe, Aerosmith, Metallica, Guns N' Roses, Poison and other rock acts with huge teenage-boy followings—the main demographic for T-shirt sales. Jim boasts that Brockum made “every T-shirt in *Wayne's World*.”

“I’m traveling with the tour from city to city and I’m responsible for having a complete inventory of merchandise at every show. I deal with the buildings displaying and selling all the items. I’m responsible for collecting the money, paying all the taxes, being a liaison for the band, making sure they’re happy. Basically it’s a department store on wheels.”

On a theater tour Jim might travel with the act. On an arena tour there’d be more distance. With some stadium tours, the T-shirt guy hardly sees the superstar at all. So it was when Jim did shirts for Michael Jackson. He explains, “You’re not going to go into his dressing room and say, ‘Hey, Michael, the key chains really sold well in Paris!’ What’s he going to say to you? ‘That’s great, now Bubbles won’t have to worry about where his next banana’s coming from?’ My icebreaker to Michael was something along the lines of, ‘Those guys were jerks for not selling you the elephant man,’ and it was downhill from there.”

Not every act maintains such aloofness. Jim says, “The Replacements were my favorite band. For years they resisted any attempts at doing T-shirts at their shows. Finally we got a contract with them and Brockum sent me out there. I went up and introduced myself to Slim Dunlap, the guitar player, in a bar. He just kind of eyed me, chewed on some ice cubes and said, ‘I’m sure you’re a nice guy and all, but you see that guy over there? That’s Paul Westerberg. He’s the leader of the band and he’s seriously reconsidering this whole merchandising thing.’ Paul comes over and says, ‘Look, we’ve decided we’re going to give Brockum their money back. It’s nothing personal, but who wants T-shirts with our ugly faces on ’em, anyway? We see no need for it.’ So I got bummed out about it and started having a couple of tequilas with these guys and things started thawing out. I tried to explain to them that if they didn’t have a hand in their merchandising, the bootleggers would come in and they’d just be exploited. And sure enough, the first show there was a ton of bootleg shirts. So I said, ‘What do you want? What kind of shirts would you be happy with?’ Chris Mars said, ‘Could you make a T-shirt where you put our faces in the armpits?’ Tommy Stinson said, ‘We want a shirt made

with invisible ink so that after you wash it it’ll say *Ha Ha Suckers!*” After a couple more hours of tequilas we started drawing ideas on napkins until we thought we had the winning entry. The next day I woke up and looked at the napkin and it was nothing but scribbles. We finally ended up with T-shirts that said *I was robbed by the Replacements.*”

How did they sell?

“Terrible! The kids went for the typical black shirt with the band’s face. The coolest-looking stuff never sells. It’s always the crap with dungeons and dragons on the front.”



THE T-SHIRT GUY

Jim found an attitude opposite the Replacements’ when he went off with the Rolling Stones’ *Steel Wheels* tour. The Stones were selling over 50 souvenir items, from leather jackets to ponchos. “Mick Jagger was a master businessman. He knew that his wearing the T-shirts onstage would reflect in the sales, and it did. I wish he would have worn some of the items that didn’t sell as well—like the Rolling Stones skateboarding jams.”

Keith Richards was less concerned with the big picture. “The Stones always got a pretty good spread before the show,” Jim says, “but they hardly ever ate. There was one show where Keith wanted to have some shepherd’s pie and it was all gone. I was talking to the road manager when Keith rounded the corner screaming, ‘All I want is a bloody plate of shep-

herd’s pie and there’s nothing!’ and waving this knife for emphasis. He turns around and there’s one of his security guys eating the biggest plate of shepherd’s pie. It was falling off the sides. He almost spit out a mouthful. Next thing there’s 10 guys in suits and ties with walkie-talkies finding out the nearest restaurant to get shepherd’s pie for Keith. And he got it.

“I was in Tokyo with the Stones and one day found myself talking to a bunch of high school girls who were selling the programs for us. They asked me my name and I said, ‘You can call me Big Jimbo.’ They started screaming and laughing. I didn’t know what I’d said. Finally a translator came over with his head down in shame and said, ‘In Japan *Jimbo* means penis.’ I’d introduced myself as ‘Big Penis’ and by Japanese standards, I may be!”

Jim says such road miscommunication is the lot of all T-shirt guys. “The road manager on Vanilla Ice’s tour went to get his shirts at the airport in Denver and they couldn’t find them anywhere. Finally he found all the boxes in cold storage! ‘Cause they said *Vanilla Ice*.”

Jim laughs the cynical laugh of the road warrior and explains, “When I started doing this I did it because I loved rock ’n’ roll. Now, like every other guy on the road, I hate music.”



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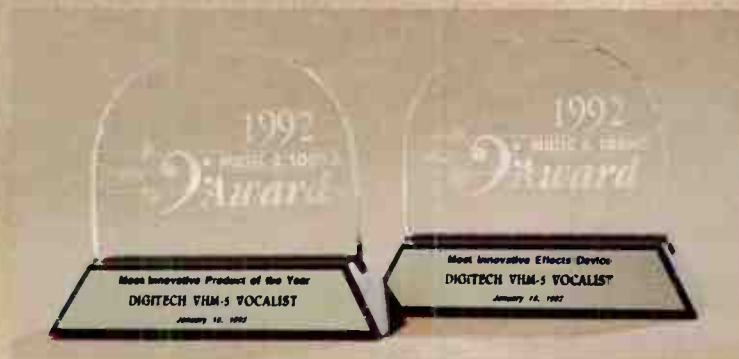


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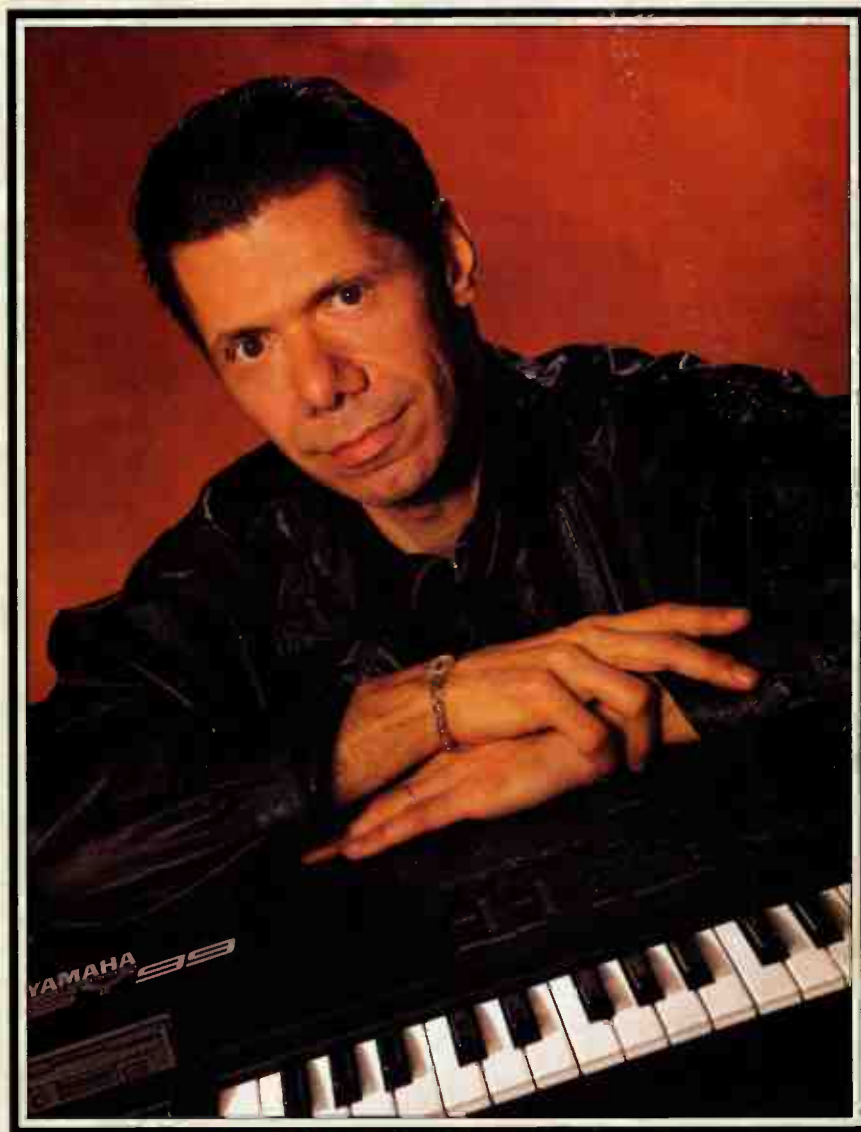
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