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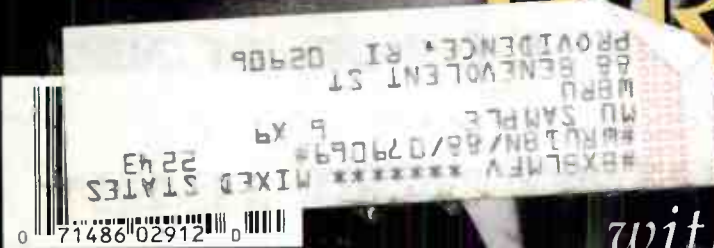
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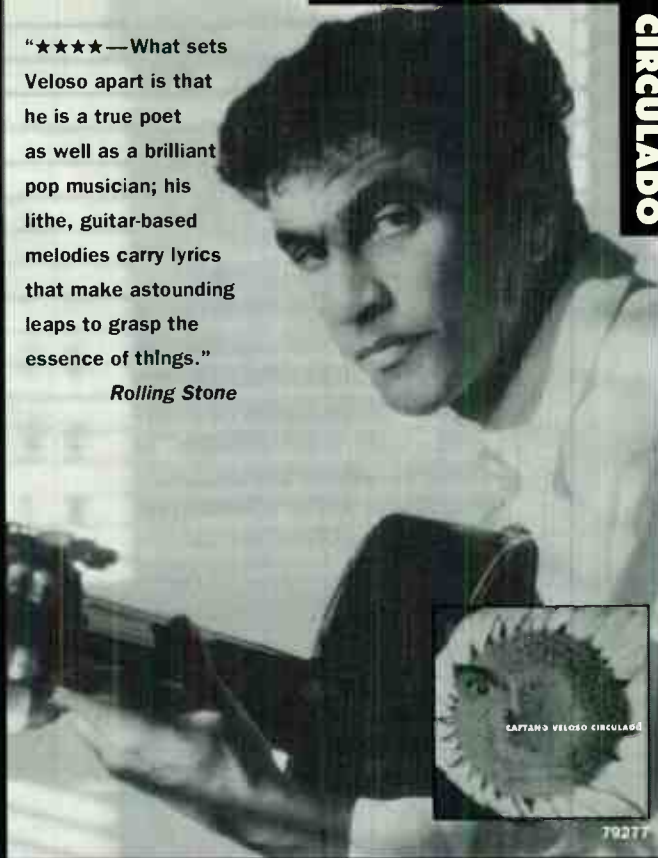
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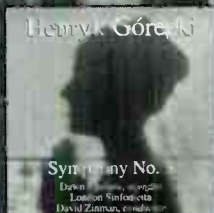
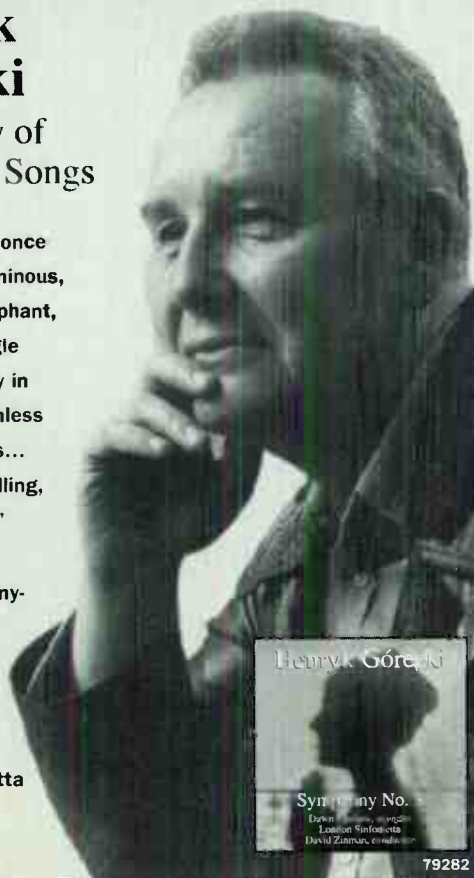
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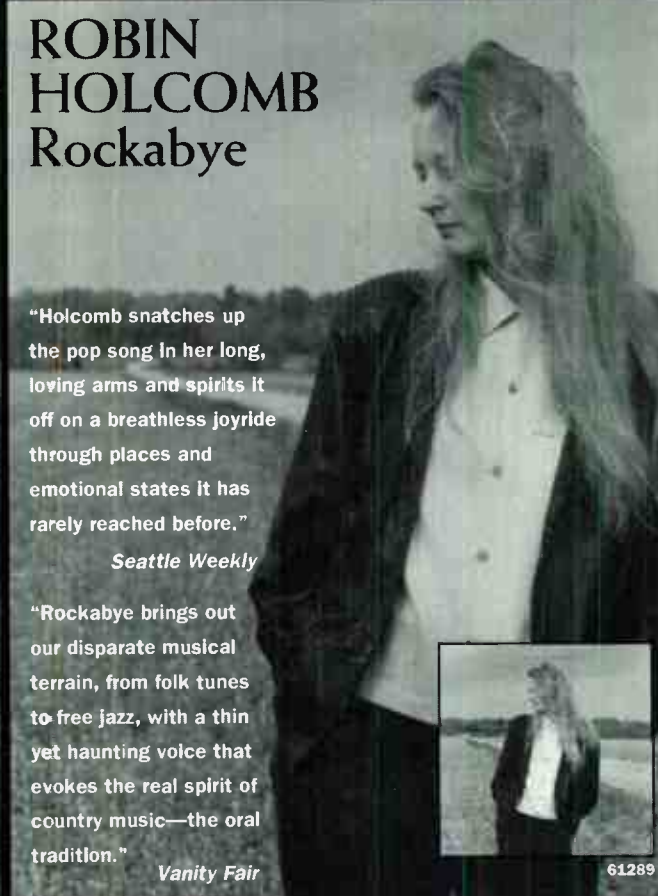
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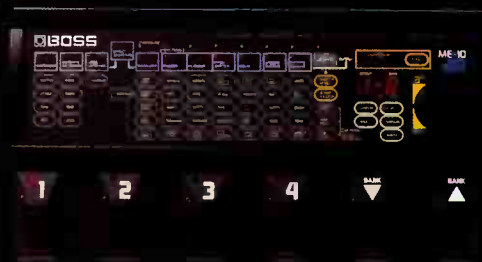
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Elvis Presley photographed at RCA recording studios, New York City, 1956.
© Alfred Wertheimer

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Swinging down from the roofs of Memphis comes a guitar wizard/piano hero with vision so powerful he can see into music's future. BY MATT RESNICOFF

50 ELVIS PRESLEY, MUSICIAN

There was a time when Elvis was not an icon, a cliché, a joke or an American legend. There was a time when Elvis was a human being who sang, played piano and guitar, and worked very hard on records that changed our culture. The musicians, producers and songwriters who collaborated with Elvis get the chance to talk in depth about the musician they knew and the music he made.

BY PETER CRONIN, SCOTT ISLER & MARK ROWLAND

ALL-NEW
CD OFFER
Pg. 107

Tom Waits

there's
nothin'
strange
About an
axe with
bloodstains
in
barn
There's
always
some
killin'
you got to
go around
the farm

Maritime



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BRANFORD MARSALIS

FRONT MAN

You predicted the "Tonight Show" would give you lots of free time, practice time. Has that happened?

It's a full-time job in a lot of ways. The only thing I get to do is work out. It's L.A., the weather's warm, people are nice. Food is good. Parking is extremely hip—after living in New York, that's a major consideration.

My job is to understand Jay's humor. The show's not really effective if I'm out there saying one thing and Jay's operating on a whole different level. It can't be fake—like, "Yeah, here I am, the trusty sidekick, I'm kissing your ass." With the kind of show that Jay wants, he doesn't need an asskisser.

I do make certain concessions to the audience, not a tremendous amount. That band is an immediate challenge to people, even if we're only out there for a minute and 45 seconds. At first [the producers] told us they wanted us to be playing a melody when we came back from a break. Now we've convinced them that it's nice to come back while somebody's playing a solo. They did say they wanted more rock 'n' roll tunes, and we're into that. There are certain songs we just won't play. We won't play "Louie, Louie" or something. Sorry, but we're not a wedding band.

In the D.A. Pennebaker documentary The Music Tells You, you talk about reaching a point in your playing, a line you feel you haven't been able to cross. It's as though you know what it takes to get to the next level, but something is keeping you from it. What is in the way of progress?

I could get to some shit if I put the time in, definitely. Once the smoke clears with this gig, maybe I'll get on the case. I see how much musically I've accomplished in these past few years, and I don't practice. I'm not saying I haven't put in any time. But if I was practicing like I should be practicing, man, watch out. I hear things I should be able to play, and it's painful when it's not there. I could conceivably get up in the morning, play from 9 until 11, stop talking to all you guys, do my work here. The show's finished at 6:30, and I could stay and practice till 9. But I wouldn't be human.

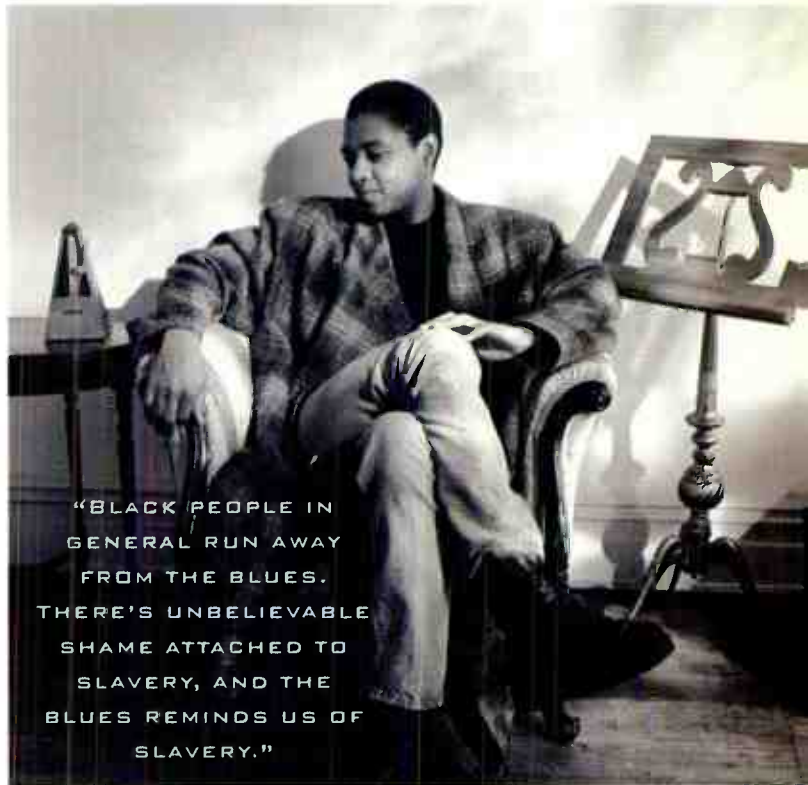
So the "Tonight Show" is blocking that progress?

Yeah. I'm trifling. Lazy. Shiftless. Like that joke in the August Wilson play *Two Trains Running*: "White folks say niggers don't like to work. We worked for 100 years for free."

I Heard You Twice the First Time is essentially a blues album.

When I was with Wynton in 1982, we played the Montreal festival, and at that time I was very green, running around to see everyone with my artist pass on. I'd go see every group. I went to see a dude named Willie Dixon, and it was very important to my development. I started asking about the blues. I went out and copped records like crazy. And then when I went with Sting, you know, almost all hip English rockers know shit about the blues. He was like, "Got any records by Son House?" Sting wanted to know how come all the brothers didn't know about the blues. Then in 1990 I went to see Hooker and something inside me just clicked. I went up and asked him, "Would you play on my record?" I told my manager to pay him whatever he wants—money is not the object. Then we went for B.B. King.

You did some real street blues.



"BLACK PEOPLE IN GENERAL RUN AWAY FROM THE BLUES. THERE'S UNBELIEVABLE SHAME ATTACHED TO SLAVERY, AND THE BLUES REMINDS US OF SLAVERY."

Whenever jazz musicians do the blues, it's a jazz blues. We as jazz musicians get on our high horse, we wear the suits and we elocute, and we claim that our music is superior to the blues. Not true. All the great players came up in blues bands. Trane and Diz and those guys played with the Earl Bostics and the Louis Jordans. Black people in general ran away from the blues. We've accepted the Eurocentric value system. There's an unbelievable level of shame that's attached to slavery, and the blues reminds us of slavery. The real blues comes from African folk songs, it's sung the way John Lee Hooker sings—with the words all wrong, lots of "dis" and "dat" in there. So now you have black people listening to classical music to prove they can be as white as white people are.

You've said in the past you don't make political music, yet you title one song on the new album "Simi Valley Blues."

That's a song inspired by the times. I was inspired by what I saw—that song is a reflection of events that occurred in Los Angeles. It's nothing that hasn't been done before, it does not set the trend. I could play this song tomorrow in Central L.A. and there would be no riot. Great musicians hear music in their minds, not issues. John Coltrane knew about what was going on in Alabama. He got a feeling about it and wrote a song—who knows whether he was seeing those kids in his mind's eye or not, and what difference does it make anyway? Thinking that anything you write or sing is going to influence events is some pop music shit—when you make a million dollars, you start to believe your own hype.

TOM MOON

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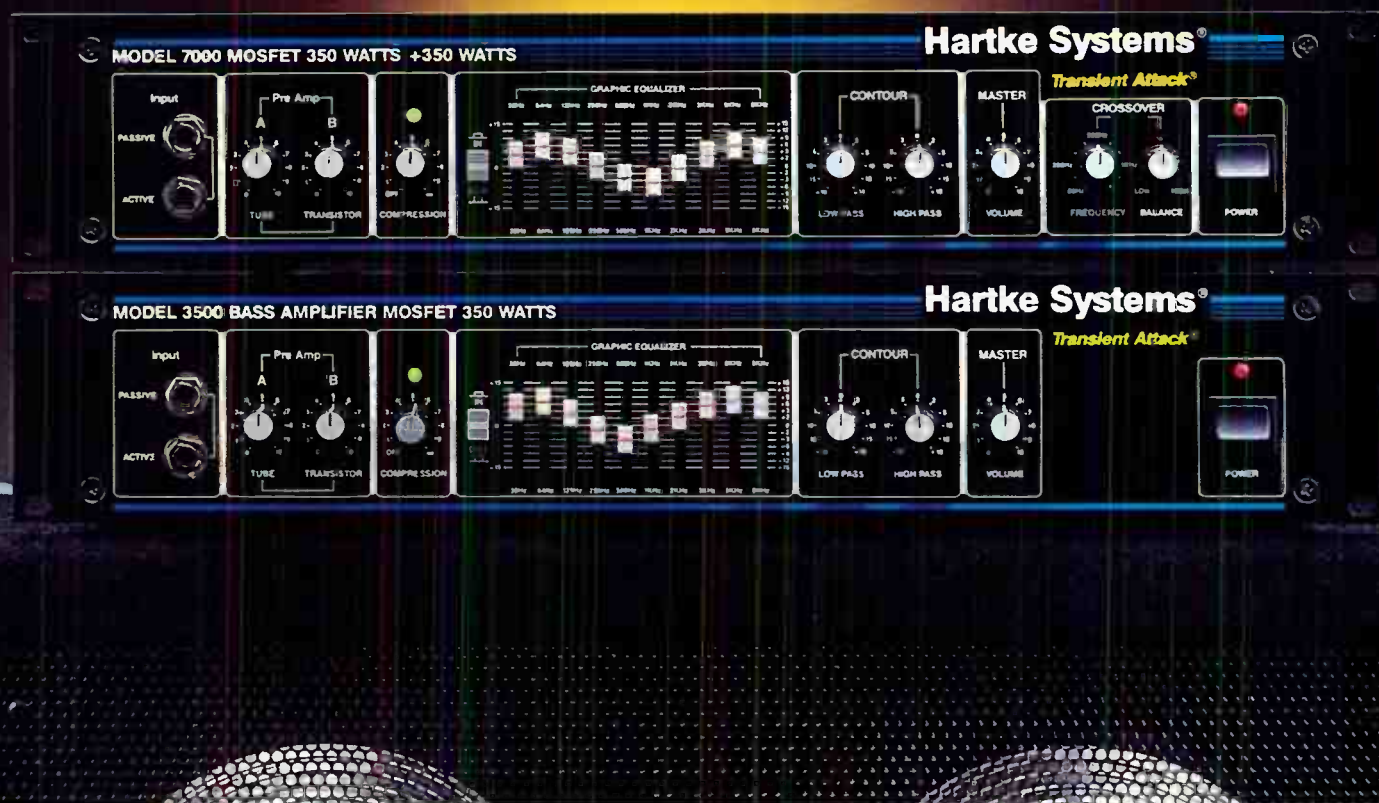
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LETTERS

Al Di Meola (July '92) slags off GRP Records for not being responsive to music fans—please let it be known that GRP has been lovingly re-releasing all of John Coltrane's late works and issuing previously unreleased material, such as the complete *Live in Japan* concert from 1966. If GRP does nothing else but that, they will have rendered a service to this jazz fan beyond anything Al Di Meola could ever hope to do.

How does Di Meola even rate a pulpit to speak from—just look at the sexist cover from his latest release—the heavy-breasted naked babe standing ready in the background and the cheap double-entendre title. Is this cover his idea or did he just cave in to record company marketing pressures? And if so, why is he pointing fingers at others who do the same?

*Dennis Darrah
Montpelier, VT*

By asserting that rap artists are “non-musicians,” Di Meola falls victim to the Western trend of thought that music exists by virtue of its harmonic, melodic and rhythmic complexity and is a mode of expression and creativity as an afterthought. This is an extremely bizarre attitude for a man whose stature in the world of jazz is seldom questioned.

Al Di Meola cries out, “I just want to turn on the radio and be excited.” Perhaps if he were actually *listening*, he would be.

*Tom Coffeen
Tempe, AZ*

As a radio programmer I feel compelled to respond to Al Di Meola's piece about restrictive programming practices. The bottom line is that the majority of citizens in this country *don't want* what we musicians would consider good music. They *want* aural wallpaper. So we

give it to them, because it works, it sells our product, and we make a living. It's a lot like putting beautiful women with large breasts on your album covers. So lighten up, Al, and find a good college station.

*Jeff Calvin
Lebanon, PA*

As an on-the-air alumna at the ill-fated WRVR, I clearly recall how the jazz format was changed to put-your-boots-on-with-Ron-and-Nancy country right under everyone's noses. Was this or was this not New York, the jazz capital of the planet, now stripped of its only commercial jazz station?

Sadly, the younger generation of radio listeners doesn't even know where the real earmeal is out there. Even if they did, the years of critics and academics painting jazz with this b.s. intellectual penumbra did nothing for the art form's accessibility. I'm grateful for the personal memory of having cheated with the 'RVR playlist on regular overnight shifts. I can tell you, slipping in an assortment of Bird and Monk recordings at 3 a.m. alongside fusion didn't go unnoticed and some listeners were grateful too.

Al, stay on the case.

*Angela Gaudioso
Toms River, NJ*

Al Di Meola's editorial in the July issue is something that should grace your pages every month.

*Michael Gordon
Long Beach, CA*

I couldn't agree with your editorial more! In fact, radio is so bad in Connecticut here that I hardly ever listen to it. All the stations have gone to the two-person format where each tries to out-stupid the other, even the country stations! I

hope some of these station management people read your editorial.

*C. William Kaman, II
Kaman Music Corporation
Bloomfield, CT*

Lots of us want to hear music that evidences some depth and (gasp!) talent. I guess I'd better make sure my tape deck is working.

*Jeff Himmel
Nashville, TN*

LED ASTRAY

I am a big fan of *Musician*, and consider your magazine to contain the highest editorial quality of any music magazine. That is why I was so surprised to read Richard Cole's memoir of Led Zeppelin in your July issue. First off, the article was very poorly written. Second, I continually found myself doubting the veracity of Cole's anecdotes. His liberal use of direct quotes is problematic; I find it hard to believe that he accurately remembers these quotes after 10 or 20 years. His account of Jimmy Page's guitar solo on “Stairway to Heaven” also contradicts facts: According to Cole, Page recorded three solos and chose the one he liked best. This could not have been the case. The solo was clearly a composite of different tracks, as punch-ins can be heard on the final version.

I don't mean to be harsh: I enjoy *Musician* and read it cover to cover. It is because I admire your writing so much, and the editorial quality you maintain, that I am writing this letter.

*Dan Levitin
Music Production Editor
Recording Engineering and
Production magazine
Stanford, CA*

Richard Cole contributed greatly to the group's “bad boy” reputation. We would never have heard of him had he not ridden on the group's coattails. I was not at all impressed with Cole in the '70s and I'm damn sure not now.

*Marcia Porter
Elgin, OK*

I don't believe many Led Zeppelin fans want to read any more gossip about their private squabbles, groupies or drug use, especially that of the late John Bonham!

*Gayle Renfroe
Austin, TX*

I'm tired of hearing the same rehashed stories from days more than 20 years gone. Let's let Zep's music tell their story, and the withered musings of one of their ex-roadies bite the dust.

*Kim Andrews
Jersey City, NJ*

Richard Cole's chronicle is as shallow as he himself seems to be. As John Bonham's chief goomba during their years of debauchery, Cole must accept partial responsibility for Bonham's demise. Rather than face up to the reality that Bonham was a seriously sick individual (albeit rock's greatest drummer), Cole is still making pathetic excuses for the man.

The fact that I had a personal run-in with Bonham and Cole in 1977, quite similar to their infamous backstage fight with Bill Graham's stage crew just a few days later, surely colors my view. But to Richard Cole, who still wonders, “Why Bonzo?,” I believe I'm as qualified as any fan to say, “It was you, brother. It was you.”

*Steve Acker
Nashville, TN*

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World Radio History



JOHN MARTYN

"Just say I've fallen in love with America and..." And? "...I'm going to come *live* here. I want to get *out* of what has become something of a rut." This is John Martyn, the taciturn Scot who had to be dragged kicking and cursing into his septennial tour of America? At the end of a 10-day run promoting the U.S. release of *Cooltide* (Permanent Records/Offbeat)—the most recent refinement of the molten groove Martyn has been stirring with his guitar—the folkie-gone-fusion is full of surprises. His current "rework"-in-progress, "a compilation of my most miserable ballads," threatens to be an all-star consort. The basics done, "all I have to do now is to get Phil Collins and Bonnie Raitt in to do their things." And then? He chuckles softly. "And then I will up and rule the world." Somehow that seems more plausible than the notion of John Martyn swapping the woolly environs of rural Scotland for the crunge of the windy city.

"As far as I'm concerned, I've got the 300 quid for airfare home if things go dreadfully askew. Until then, I intend to *adventure* for a while." JOHN S.P. WALKER



BLAKE BABY GROWS UP

"For one thing, I hated that name." So singer/guitarist/bassist Juliana Hatfield broke up the Blake Babies, the Boston-based trio she first led onto the indie-rock battlefield five years ago. "I just want to escape my past and start over." She made a solo album, *Hey Babe*, that's more accomplished and engaging than her former band. Dominated by the 25-year-old's wispy voice and disarming lyrics, *Hey Babe* offers tart, tuneful pop with flavor that lasts. Gary Smith (Throwing Muses, Chills) produced; session help included such guests as Mike

Watt, John Wesley Harding and guitarist Evan Dando of the Lemonheads. (Hatfield and Dando are compadres: He was a Blake Baby, she's the bassist on *his* band's current album.)

For her first solo tour Hatfield drafted drummer Paul Trudeau and ex-Volcano Suns bassist Bob Weston. With Hatfield attacking an old Gibson Firebird, the live group kicks harder than the record. "I wanted guys who had played a lot of rock music, heavy stuff, because I need that to push me along. I feel this burning desire to play heavier music," says Hatfield, whose little-girl

voice and big-girl lyrics bring intriguing tension to her work.

"My songs are about not being able to deal with life." But the author of "Everybody Loves Me but You" admits she may deliver her feelings too transparently. "I can't help myself. I'm trying to fight it and write more cryptically so every meaning isn't so obvious."

Free of past strictures, Hatfield is contemplating greater autonomy. "I was stressed out in the studio when I made *Hey Babe*. I thought I needed all these people. Now I realize I could make a really good record with just a drummer." IRA ROBBINS

TOAD THE WET SPROCKET

hands—the sparkly “All I Want.” Ironically, Top 40 chartage wasn’t what the band wanted—their hit single isn’t at all typical of their bittersweet sound.

As singer Glen Phillips comments, “It’s strange to have ‘All I Want’ be *the* song because it’s kind of a fluke. Normally, if anything sounded half that poppy, we wouldn’t even finish it.” Bassist Dean Dinning notes “that song almost got left off the record about 12 times.”

Guitarist Todd Nichols maintains that “the reason for our success was that we were finally released to Top 40 radio and AOR radio.” Adds Phillips, “And the song sounds like a Toyota commercial.” Dinning: “We finally fit into something. If it’s pop, so be it.

We don’t care anymore.”

The Toad gathered on the porch of the house where drummer Randy Guss grew up, in the suburban idyll of Santa Barbara, California. All were feeling a little dizzy from commercial success. For an “alternative” band, the Toad has been horning in on mainstream media—on Letterman, the “Tonight Show” and with a lovely contribution to the soundtrack of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Although the band name was lifted from a Monty Python skit and the band has a certain flair for the absurd, Toad music is generally lyrical and darkly litting. Variations on 3/4 time, suspended or extended folk chords, swirling vocal harmonies and reflective melodies are their stocks-in-trade. And, up until

the more elaborately layered *Fear*, produced by Gavin Mackillop, the band abided by a live-in-the-studio ethic. “People keep telling you that you can’t record in certain ways,” Phillips says. “You listen to *Desire* and the greatest albums ever made, and mostly it’s with everybody in the same room facing each other.

“If something doesn’t work, we work on it until we fix it melodically or arrangementally. Even if it is a completed song, it’s open to change. It’s an inexact science.” Dinning pitches in, “Hey, sometimes you get it right. And when you don’t, two years down the road, maybe you will. When you’re a live band you have thousands of second chances. That’s a great luxury.”

JOSEF WOODARD



DANA TYNAN

For the last few years, this band with the unwieldy name has been slugging it out, nurturing a cult following, releasing three albums of evocative, folk-tinged rock.

Suddenly, this summer, came the unexpected: Eight months after their latest album, *Fear*, they found themselves with a hit on their



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RORY BLOCK

Steel Strings, Bare Soul

Although she's lived in upstate New York for 22 years, veteran blues singer Rory Block's home is the road. Last year she got a new place. After years in a minivan, cooking instant soup in a heater plugged into the cigarette lighter and throwing a baseball at rest stops for exercise, she bought a motor home. "I read, I rest, I have a bed in the back, I shower. It's a godsend," she says.

But is she too comfortable to play the blues? "If you want the truth," Block says, "I lived through hell. One of my children died [son Thiele, at 20, in 1986], I had a bad childhood [she ran away from home at 15]. But this is the nature of things—hardship happens to

everybody." Hers are documented on her new *Ain't I a Woman*; it's a life that has "without a doubt enriched my music. But it's silly to think your soulfulness fades if you are not at every moment suffering."

Her soul remains on display in *Woman*, where she plays acoustic guitar alongside Mark Knopfler, John Hall and Brendan Croker, and continues her swim through the catalogs of country blues masters. "My last record was Robert and Tommy Johnson, Bessie Smith. Knopfler said, 'Why don't you put the production songs first?' I thought, 'Great idea. I'll start with "Faithless World," and then go *down* in production, *down* to the blues.'" **MATTY KARAS**



IMKE LASS

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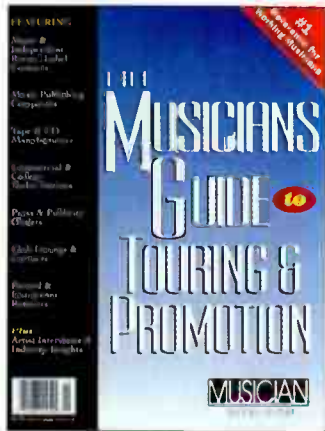
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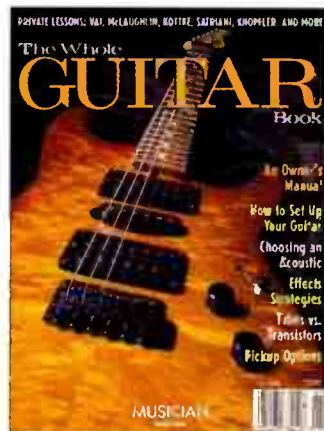
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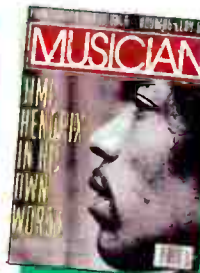
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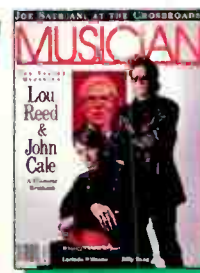
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TOO SHORT

Tall Tale for Sale

"I was driving through Texas recently and got stopped by a police officer in the middle of nowhere," recalls Too Short. "He saw my California plates and probably thought he had a drug dealer, so he asked me to step out of the car. When I told him

I was a rapper, he said, 'You're not that "Cop Killer" guy, are you?' I kept him laughing, though."

Plenty of other folks know exactly who Too Short is. His new album *Shorty the Pimp* entered the charts at number six, though the raunchy subject matter ensures lit-

tle airplay. In fact, Short's X-rated street stories are so vivid that it's surprising to learn they're not drawn from life—his life, anyway. "A lot of my ideas originated in English class. I wanted to be a fiction writer, not necessarily a songwriter," says Short, a.k.a. Todd Shaw, whose parents are both accountants. Fired by an obsession with 1973 blaxploitation film *The Mack*, which he's seen more than a hundred times, the Oakland native created the flamboyant Too Short, superstud and hustler supreme.

Accustomed to fending off charges of sexism and negative stereotyping of blacks, Short explains the idea behind *Shorty the Pimp*.

"Pimping is an attitude, a self-hype thing. You don't see pimps with big hats walking the streets of Oakland anymore, but the attitude is still around. Some women out here act like pimps, too. I wish I had a different word, because it's just an attitude, that's all."

If Short sticks to his game plan, he may not be droppin' sleazy rhymes much longer. "I don't see myself as an old rapper. I'm 26 now, and when I hit 30 I plan to concentrate on running my production company, Dangerous Music."


And leave the spotlight? "Fame don't mean shit to me," he scoffs. "Just give me the money!"

JON YOUNG

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ON STAGE



SOPHIE B. HAWKINS

SOMEWHERE DURING THE COURSE of Sophie B. Hawkins' opening act at Manhattan's Symphony Space (two of them unnatural), I felt like I'd been airlifted in from the ancient emirate of Frostbite Falls. Nude female standup comedians, Ethel, what'll they think of next? They're performance artists, Fred.

"Sophie Hawkins, she's more than a woman," they enthused. "She's a movement." And for the hometown crowd that came to root her on, this was clearly the case. All of which gave me pause. How could rock have come this far, and lost even the power to offend?

And therein lies Sophie's choice, one she seems unable to confront. Does she want to be an outrageous rock bad girl or a comfortable pop easy chair? Off the strength of her goggle-eyed hit single "Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover," she's getting to explore those contradictions in public, like some goofy

copulation of Madonna and Dylan.

Sophie's hippiedippy accouterments (frilly white blouse and faded jeans, the knees cut away) were in stark contrast to her band's leathered attire; sensual street mannerisms and body rhythms were undercut by a teddy bear in front of the bass drum, and other props from Rock Staging 101 (what, no lava lamps?)—the hip bedroom of a teenage girl, a cross-gender Springsteen of the Yupper West Side.

Live, Sophie's presentation has more visceral impact and humor than her debut *Tongues and Tails*, which shoehorns her eccentric vision of folk, rock and ethnic rhythms into a surefire pop package with a cold synthesizer sheen that undercuts the percussive cross-currents animating her beat-poetess, girl-group delivery.

Crawling onstage as a prelude to her hit single, do-si-doing with her background singers, choreographing "an act" with her guitarist on "Listen," she never quite delivers on the sexual liberation of her libretto, and pointedly neglected to perform "Carry Me," wherein she makes love to her mother [cont'd on next page]

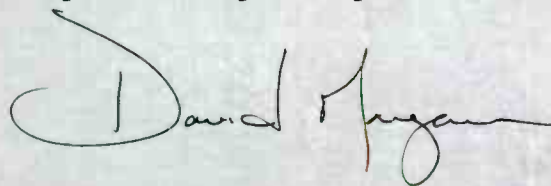


PJ HARVEY

HYPE: CAN'T LIVE WITH IT, can't kill it. It was PJ Harvey's blessing and curse to have been anointed Buzz Maximus (via a thoughtful *Billboard* primitur) the same week they played their first U.S. gig at New York's CBGB. The groundswell began earlier, of course: Starting with the band's first single late last year, PJ Harvey has been the darling of the British indie scene. And why not—they're a noisy, keyboard-less trio led by a woman. Eponym Harvey justifies the attention with intriguing vocals that make you long for a lyric sheet, and glad there isn't one on the album, *Dry*.

That album's tight compositions would lead one to think there's not much room for variation in concert. Sure enough, at CBGB on August 12 PJ Harvey barreled through 11 numbers in just about 35 minutes, plus an encore. What the live [cont'd on next page]

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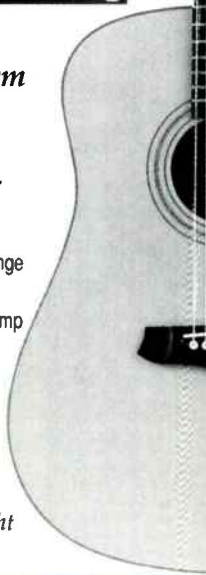
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PJ HARVEY

experience does reinforce is how egalitarian this trio is. Stephen Vaughan, flailing away pickless on his bass, is virtually the lead voice. Harvey's rhythm guitar reinforces the band's low-frequency attack, leaving drummer Robert Ellis to fill in the gaps. Working with motivic scraps and asymmetric/syncopated phrases, the trio stokes a churning blast furnace to smelt the angst-ridden songs. Their two dynamic levels—Harvey unaccompanied vs. overpoweringly loud ensembles—quickly became predictable, but it's still one more than most "rock" bands.

Befitting their material, the band's demeanor was strictly business: no fancy moves, certainly no costumes and only the most perfunctory of greetings from Harvey herself. She cracked a rare smile scrubbing guitar on a thunderous "Joe." Otherwise she stared intently ahead; her left leg pumping time was her only visible abandonment.

Just over half the songs performed were on *Dry*. The omission of tracks like "Oh My Lover" and "Happy and Bleeding" could inspire rumors of their being too personal to air in public. But the non-*Dry* songs didn't lack for emotional charge. "I beg you/My darling/Don't leave me/I'm hurting," Harvey pleaded too straightforwardly in the opening number. "You leave me dry" was the repeated refrain of another, deepening the album title's resonance. For light relief—such as it was—they performed Bob Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" in 3/4 time.

But the large, largely female audience was there for more than a fun evening. Between the music's *Sturm* and the lyrics' *Drang*, Harvey delivers catharsis any old way you choose it. At CBGB the vocals got buried under the instrumental onslaught. No matter; that's what records are for, and the intensity came through nevertheless. With Harvey hitting the mark this often at this stage in her career, she really will be someone to watch—and hear. Don't disbelieve the hype?

—SCOTT ISLER

HAWKINS

in a dream. She also tends to revel self-consciously in her own clichés rather than exploding them, making some of her songs unbearably pretentious.

For an encore she drew upon those paragons of sexual ambiguity, the Rolling Stones and David Bowie ("Gimme Shelter" and "All the Young Dudes"), her voice in full throttle, giving a hint as to where she'd like to journey when the art of her songs begins to approach their craft. But for the moment, Sophie seems content to play the immaterial girl.

—CHIP STERN

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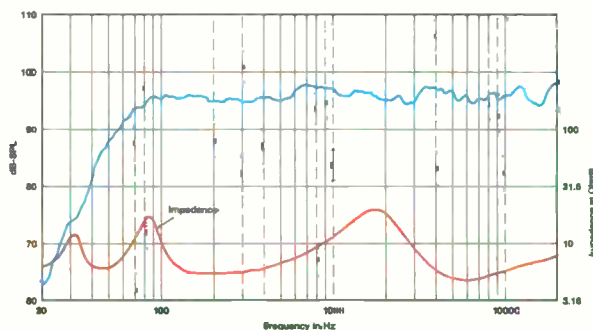
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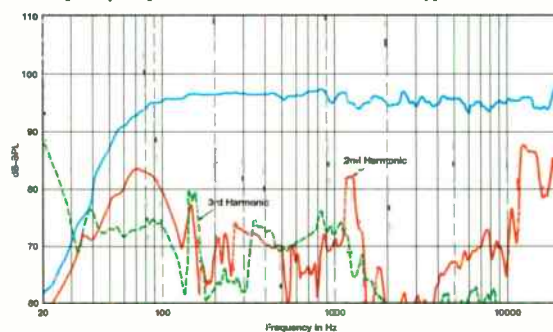
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MICHAEL PENN PANS FOR GOLD



MICHAEL PENN IS PLAYING AN OLD ORANGE GRETSCH GUITAR, overdubbing a lead onto the intro of "Drained" for his second album, *Free-for-All*. The setting is Zeitgeist, a little studio in the back of producer Tony Berg's Los Angeles home. Penn, who has been struggling to get the right part, requests some coffee with "that flammable stuff in it." He looks like his brother, the actor Sean Penn, dresses like Tom Waits in old shirts and Salvation Army shoes and writes demanding and intriguing songs like Elvis Costello.

Surrounded by racks of guitars on the walls and stacks of keyboards on the floor, he arrives on a minor-key riff that begins to work. During playback, however, it starts to seem a bit too familiar and

"No one can be as articulate describing a song as the song is itself."

Berg suddenly realizes where it is from: "You've been playing the 'Theme from Exodus.'" Penn, unrattled, remarks, "It must be the obvious Jewish influence creeping in."

Next comes Patrick Warren to overdub a Chamberlain keyboard, which Penn describes as an "antiquated sampler." Warren has devised a technique of manipulating the machine's fly-wheel so he can bend notes. Though the instrument was never intended for this, Warren altered it by drilling holes in the top that allow him to reach inside. He tries this on the outro of "Drained"; Berg is enthused by the eerie discord. "It's like every bad place you've ever been," Tony says happily. But Penn isn't crazy about the effect: "It sounds too circus-y," he says disdainfully. To compensate, Warren adds a dominant seventh to the major chord he's playing. "Now it sounds like a circus with midgets," Penn says.

Later Penn is back in the booth recording a tambourine for "Long Way Down," a scrutiny of a broken love affair set to a single guitar, vocal, Chamberlain and cello. Penn does a few takes, but none precise enough for Berg, who cajoles him with the promise of abundant Indian food. When Berg suggests the record company, RCA, should have an account at the restaurant, Penn does an imitation of the owner totaling the bill and saying: "Oh yes, that must be the label with the dog."

Though he keeps a light-hearted tone in the studio, Penn's extremely serious when the subject turns to songwriting. He edits himself furiously, with special attention given to complex but inviting melodies. He doesn't get near the studio until a song is fully arranged. Though he describes himself as a control freak, he appreciates experimentation in production and writing. "I don't analyze the process. The times I've tried to figure out a system, it winds up honing it as a craft to such a degree that it negates the chance elements that can be very beneficial to the song."

He sees two alternatives when talking about songs, and he'd prefer to avoid both. "You either sound pretentious or you sound like a jerk. No one can be as articulate while describing a song as the song is itself." His songs, however, invite investigation. "Coal" revolves around a man's search for gold in a barren town. "It was probably some muddled idea about imperfections and

BY PAUL ZOLLO



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THE FINEST PIECES OF SILVER



DURING THE LATE '50S AND EARLY '60S, HORACE SILVER WAS the most imitated jazz pianist in the world, the dominant stylist between Bud Powell and Bill Evans. It was a time when the titles of jazz tunes and albums referred to grits and grease and gravy. That was on the East Coast, among players like Bobby Timmons and Junior Mance. On the West Coast, among semi-shamans like Les McCann, everyone discovered

BY JOE GOLDBERG

*"Any musician
worth a grain of salt
has got to grow."*

church. Both styles derived from Silver, who defined the period. When commentators would speak of the classical composers they heard in the work of the newly emerging Cecil Taylor, even Taylor would ask why they didn't mention Horace Silver.

First with the Jazz Messengers (a cooperative until Silver left, when Art Blakey took over) and then with his own group, he explored the basic bop quintet, working with Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, Kenny Dorham, Donald Byrd, Art Farmer, Blue Mitchell. Look at the titles of the pieces he wrote: "Doodlin'," "The Preacher," "Señor Blues," "Sister Sadie," "The Cape Verdean Blues," "Song for My Father." Whatever hard bop was—and it was, among other things, the basic text on which today's young neoconservative players are attempting to build—Horace Silver was it.

Except that lately, he hasn't been that visible. So when, at the end of June, he brought a 10-piece band called the Silver Brass Ensemble into Hollywood's most venturesome jazz club, Catalina's, it seemed like a good time to check up on him. Inside the club, it was old home week. Lorez Alexandria was there. So was the singer and actor Bill Henderson. And there was Silver, smiling and greeting friends, looking, at 63, no more than 45.

Only one of Silver's past hits, "Song for My Father," was scored for the Brass Ensemble. As always, he sounded like he would break into "Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho" at any moment. He also indulged his penchant for quotation, and in his solo, I was able to recognize "Love for Sale," "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams," Grieg's "Anitra's Dance," "The Breeze and I," "Shadrack" and John Lewis' "The Golden Striker." A closer, "Basically Blue," left the audience clapping and stomping and cheering.

The next day, I went to Silver's home. The quintessential East Coast pianist lives on a hill in Malibu, with a wonderful view of Catalina Island and the coastline down to Rancho Palo Verdes. The living room contains a large painting of Silver's father and son riding carousel horses and the original of the painting that served as the cover to the *Blowin' the Blues Away* album.

That, like the other records on which his reputation is based, is on Blue Note—if any one musician embodied Blue Note's aesthetic, it is



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SHAWN LANE, MEMPHIS'
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THE FAST LANE



HE RECORD STORE CLERK APPROACHED Shawn Lane in the video department, squatting in front of a rack full of foreign movies. She must have recognized him from the cover of a local free magazine found at every bus stop and convenience store check-out counter in Memphis; he was wearing the same grey trousers as in the photo, and his smooth hair dangled in a ponytail down the back of that same blue striped shirt. The store had sold its four copies of his CD Powers of Ten, released that day, and he leaned back and smiled like a Buddha, thanking her for the information. "They obviously put it in the rock section," he joked, and not three seconds later was busy hiding a boxed set of Maurizio Pollini piano concertos so he could come back and buy it when he had cash. • Lane foraged through the bins in search of something he liked, or didn't already have, and he didn't appear satisfied. He was polite about it, but lingering over stacks and stacks of discs on display, he couldn't hide his bewilderment with the MTV culture, with the press' critical laxity ("Just pass 'em the lyric sheet and have them review that"). His biggest gripe was fear of the unfamiliar. "Someone issues a failed experiment, and that spoils it in the critics' minds for all the people that are doing it well. Joni Mitchell was critically hailed, and then she put out Shadows and Light and Hejira and Don Juan's Reckless Daughter; the critics are like, 'Yes, those albums were horrible, and now

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK TUCKER



"YOU PUT MUSIC IN A BOX
AND IT SMOTHERS; IT'S GOT TO BE LET OUT
TO MOVE FORWARD OR IT DIES."

she's back to what she was doing before, before she tried to get complex.' Those are the best things she did, I think. Or Genesis—*Foxtrot* and *Nursery Cryme*, there's some brilliant music on there. Now, for every example of a fusion that yields bad results, like... I don't know, I hate to name names, but that new Stanley Clarke that was all old live things from the '70s? That was ridiculous, it just goes on and on, a bunch of mindless jamming. Quite a few fusion albums at that time didn't have subtlety of timbre or composition, but just because that happened doesn't mean all this other very sensitive and creative music *didn't*.

"But it's funny—when people do something new, like Allan Holdsworth or Scott Henderson, that's somehow...inferior in a lot of critics' minds to, say, what Wynton Marsalis is doing. But why? If anything, *Wynton* is so derivative of a certain era and style. And these other people are trying to create some sound picture that has never been heard. Why is it turned around to where any time you do something traditional—safe rock or pop or jazz—it's fine and wonderful, but when you smear boundaries it's considered wrong? I don't understand that."

In contemporary western culture, those boundaries are rigid; in American record stores, they may as well be laced with barbed wire. Shawn knew this; he had it all figured. "The whole problem is categorization. As soon as you put it in a box, it smothers; it's either gonna have to be let out to go forward or die. And the critics, the people that think of themselves as being progressive and on top of things, are the ones killing it the most, because anytime somebody tries to open the box, well then, they're the worst enemy, you know. Some bad rock-funk-jazz fusions...that's the tip of the iceberg. You could have an interesting fusion of Bulgarian music and pop music, or Indian music and jazz, like McLaughlin, or classical and pop and jazz, like maybe in my case. We need some other term that doesn't have this sour connotation."

The young man with all the big ideas is without doubt the most interesting spectacle in suburban Memphis, and even more certainly the only Liszt scholar to ever play on a record by Robert Duvall, or Johnny Cash, or rapper D.C. Talk. The music on *Powers of Ten*, like the music he listens to—everything from the *Gone with the Wind* soundtrack to Phineas Newborn—is the product of a virtuoso who hasn't quite figured out what he wants to play, or even what instrument he wants to play it on. And that's the whole idea. He passed up the lead guitar spot with Alice Cooper and UFO; he hopes to perform his piano concertina with full orchestra; he eats sushi with a fork.

Lane talks like a Southerner, and one feature of the dialect is that most of his sentences end in an upward inflection that suggests inquiry; most things he says are rhetorical questions aimed at deflating the status quo. "And that brings up *another* thing people overlook, especially in Memphis—that behind every good pop or mainstream person, there's usually some people that are left of center bringing a spark to it. Like Sting with his jazz musicians in the background. Narada Michael Walden produces the mainstream people, and he played some insane drums with Jeff Beck on 'Led Boots.' Where you don't have somebody

slightly progressive or bent, it's usually gonna be real bland crap."

Shawn got back in his car, got on the freeway, and got so excited about Tchaikovsky and Chomsky that he lost his way on a route he traces twice a week. With a copy of *W* magazine tucked under his arm, he glided through the aisles of the biggest bookstore in town, a converted movie house set up with velour ropes and marquee. A three-volume biography of Franz Liszt called out to him and as he spoke about the composer, he picked up a dictionary containing thousands of classical themes written on staves, alphabetically listed in an appendix to lead the user to the corresponding melody. He put it down and said he had them all in his brain already.

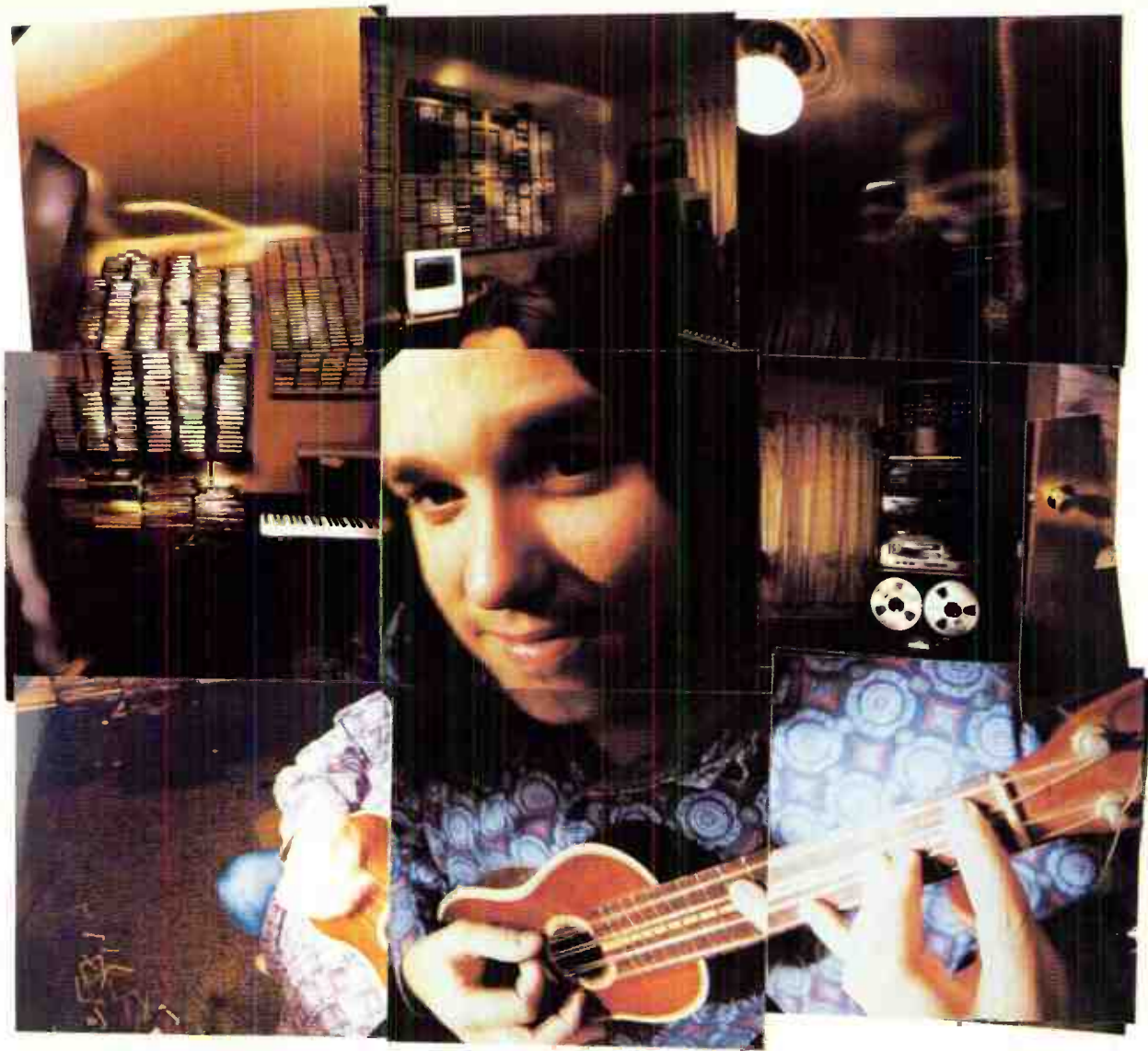
"If it's marble, or if it's notes and sounds or pictures and words—it's all manipulation. A sculptor wants to make a statue but somebody says, 'Yeah, but it has to be like this and this and this...' He says, 'Well, why do you need me?' And it's gotten that way in music, because if you know the drums are gonna go boom-*bap* boom-*bap*, the chords are I-IV-V and maybe a vi-ii thrown in, and the melody has to be harmonically consonant within that, what's left for the artist? You have to start with a clean piece of marble, without assumptions."

He shrugged, and got quiet as he drove past the cemetery. When he arrived home, his grandmother gave him his phone messages, one from the musicians' union about a check. He clenched his fists triumphantly. Were he to get paid by the session for his work on *Powers of Ten*—where some songs contain nearly 100 of his own multi-instrumental parts—Shawn Lane could retire at 29.

IT SMELLS GOOD in Memphis after the rain, even the concrete-tainted mist enveloping the roof of the Peabody Hotel. The view takes in the entire area, north and western suburbs, out to the Mississippi River, which hems in the city tightly to its east; nearer still runs Beale Street, a cove of tiny blues clubs, the Orpheum Theater, where a much younger Shawn saw a concert by the progressive rock group U.K. and had his preconceptions about music ravaged beyond recognition.

Beale Street has changed quite a bit in the intervening years, and so has Lane: He lost and regained a wife, gained a bit of weight, read about 80,000 books and, in locations similar to and including the white raised gazebo behind him on the Peabody roof, probably played more Stones and Hendrix numbers than the Stones or Hendrix ever did. Shawn didn't find this completely satisfying, especially after discovering what a guitar could do that night at the Orpheum, and there it began. Once his old band, the Willys, broadcast a concert featuring his recasting of "All Along the Watchtower," that version of the song became a weekly request in Memphis for five years running. Every famous rock guitarist staying at the Peabody during that time couldn't quite believe what they heard pouring over the sides of the building.

Now, friends commute to spend time with him; one buddy, his car loaded with tapes of a 14-year-old Shawn playing with Black Oak Arkansas, travels from Little Rock and back in the dead of night just to



pore over Lane's record library and listen through the studio door while the maestro practices.

They gathered in his living room as Shawn previewed some rare Art Tatum and Ted Greene albums, and finally goaded him into showing the video bootlegs of his local gigs. He disappeared into his room and the stories began flying, one about how Billy Gibbons watched Shawn play in a bar and just fell out of his chair—Shawn pretended not to hear about it again as he returned with the tapes. Footage from 1987 contained intricate fusion covers: He had recorded bass and keyboards on a backup tape and played guitar over them while a drummer worked to a click track in headphones. Shouts came from his couch requesting the classics, and out they came, each familiar tune wrenched apart by inhuman guitar solos that seemed to alternately repel and impress Shawn. "That's over 'Lucille,'" he grinned, turning from the screen. The tapes are constant close-ups, nostril-hair angles, and at the end of a version of "Purple Haze," a bobbing Lane released such a cadenza that everyone in the room just sat looking at him in disbelief. The friend lobbying to see this tape had appeared in a new-talent column in *Guitar Player* magazine, where he made the mistake of mentioning his guitar teacher. Reams of correspondence came in from guitarists around the country—wanting to know what Shawn was like.

In his room he pulled down Don Pullen's *Evidence of Things Unseen* to underscore a point about technique, spun and walked over to a case of Keith Jarrett albums behind the door. "Jarrett's God; he's in the top five musicians in this century, an absolute, absolute genius," he said, running his fingers down the cabinet, his hand stopping on a box of tapes containing the outtakes from his album. He played back a techno piece peppered with avant-garde harmonies, then sat down and began improvising a blinding classical piano étude which somehow segued into 10cc's "I'm Not in Love" and skittered into atonality. Talking about guitar heroism doesn't chafe him or occupy him; he's just as taken with Bergman's directing or Art Tatum's hands.

"They reminded me of Vladimir Horowitz," he said, "whose fingers also had a flat profile. Their styles weren't similar at all, but they were considered the top in their fields; Tatum was the greatest jazz pianist of all time. With Horowitz you couldn't quite say that. He was an extremist—he could get louder and softer than anybody, you know? But when it came to interpretive music like Beethoven, he didn't do so well. The other thing is, Rachmaninoff and Horowitz would go see Tatum and were amazed, and that's the foremost classical wizards of the day. Gershwin would have done anything for Tatum, and was in the position to help, so he wouldn't have to play in smoky clubs where people

talked over his music. But Gershwin died before he could do anything.”

Tatum got the same criticism which today afflicts Oscar Peterson, and perhaps McLaughlin and Lane: prodigious with chops, parsimonious with poignant ideas. “...More straitjackets,” Shawn continued. “Even though Peterson was playin’ similar in the ’60s, he was communicating at a high level then and a high level now. What made me feel better about that whole scene is the *Lexicon of Musical Invective*, a book of nothing but the criticisms heaped at every great composer. There’s

pages on Mozart. And Tchaikovsky was critically *despised*, which may have led to his killing himself by drinking unboiled water during a cholera epidemic. It gets confused: A work by Scriabin that sells eight records might be one of the most sensuous pieces of art in the world. To judge something by how many people it appeals to, that’s a sticky issue.

“People have criticized my music, saying, ‘This isn’t rock, or jazz, or classical, or this and that,’ and it’s strange, because they’re criticizing me for what I’m *trying* to do. If it was pure jazz, then for me it might be a failure.”

THE FIRST SNAPSHOT of Shawn with his sister’s abandoned guitar was taken when he was four. He leafed through an old photo album to find the funniest pictures. “That’s when I was gigging around town when I was 11 years old, playin’ with other guys that were like 17.”

The bell bottoms made him raise his eyebrows. “Probably about ’75. That was Black Oak Arkansas, I was 14, so that was about ’78. That guitar’s an old Les Paul Special, a ’58; the management stole it from me when I quit the band. I was really mad. This one here was at the Warehouse, where ZZ Top recorded *Fandango*, in New Orleans. The biggest gig we played was Mexico City in 1979, in front of 80,000 people, I think it was. That was when [frontman] Jim Dandy was into Christian rock—we had a keyboard player into John McLaughlin, the bass player and drummer were into progressive stuff, and we did songs where Dandy would sing Christian lyrics in this gutbucket country voice, and the music on top was like Return To Forever! It didn’t really work, but we learned a lot.”

In the next photo he comes eye-to-shoulder against another guitarist grimacing behind matted long hair. “That’s Ted Nugent. And Ted, he’s this guitarslinger, a jammer, and likes to blow people away. This was his hometown, Detroit, and he got up—he was just gonna blow me away, you know, he started whatever

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LANE OF THE LAND

SHAWN has used the same Holmes amp for 20 years, and records it through two 6x10 Acoustic and two 4x10 Holmes cabs. He also loves Gika-Walker Class A rackmount amps; a small pedalboard contains Westbury tube-powered overdrive pedals and Boss DD-3 delays. A Macintosh is the brain of the system, and sits atop a Korg SG10 sampling grand. His synths and sample players are an Oberheim Matrix 1000, two Proteus 1 XR modules, a Roland R8M for drums, a Kurzweil 1000PX+ expander and a Korg EXM1 upgraded for T series sounds. Also on hand are an Aphex exciter, a Boss CE-3000 chorus, a DOD R908 delay, Yamaha REV5, REV7 and SPX90IIs, a Roland SRV2000 reverb and a Rane PE 1S parametric EQ and SM26 mixer. He mikes amps with Shure SM57s and 58s. *Powers of Ten* was tracked on a Foxtex E-16 though an upgraded Soundcraft Delta console, with JBL and big Acoustat monitors. Guitars? An old Roland, Charvels and a Fender Strat, strung with DR and D’Addario .009s.

licks he always played”—Shawn started smiling—“and I was this little kid, and I just...just greased him, man.” Laughter. “In his hometown. And then afterwards I was kinda like, ‘Hey, Ted,’ and he was, ‘*Rrr, get away!*’” What did young Shawn play? “Just wild stuff, just”—he stretched apart and wiggled the fingers of his left hand.

The Shawn in the photos is svelte, flaxen, posing. Clearly, he went through the guitar-hero phase when he was a child; he’s since become an artist. After Black Oak—and the Holdsworth epiphany at the Orpheum—Shawn started recording at home, at first in a four-track setup, later producing multitrack demos which got him his record deal. He made off with a great home studio, though space requires him to keep amps in the closet even when he records. His tone is smooth and thick, and when he held the guitar high his hand expanded to cover huge intervals.

“I don’t want to sound pompous, but pretty much anything anybody plays, I could figure out real quickly. Now, Holdsworth’s voicings are hard to get by ear sometimes, but one guy whose phrasings I never can quite lay a finger on is McLaughlin, because there’s so many combinations of rhythms and notes. And Kazuhito Yamashita’s solo guitar transcriptions of works like Dvorak’s ninth, Stravinsky’s ‘Firebird Suite’—*whhhew!* But just about anybody else I can tell you what they’re doing right away. That doesn’t mean I’m not amazed by their ideas. I hear Henderson or Metheny and go, ‘God, how did they think of that?’ It’s brilliant how they thought of it.

“But Hendrix’s *note-shaping*, where he’s bending one a quarter-tone and another a whole step, then playing a note and not having vibrato, another with fast vibrato and the next slow...ultimately, that is harder to play than something ‘technical.’ Blind Willie Johnson’s ‘Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground,’ all of the little rhythmic and timbral inflections? I’ve never heard anybody come close on a technical level. A composition by XTC can be *unbelievably* technical, because of the genius of this chord put to the next, going to this other modulation. I love everything from the simple to the obscenely complex, like Conlon Nancarrow—he has an army of player pianos hydraulically hotrodded to play music that goes by at 300 notes per second. But it’s all music and it all expresses something.”

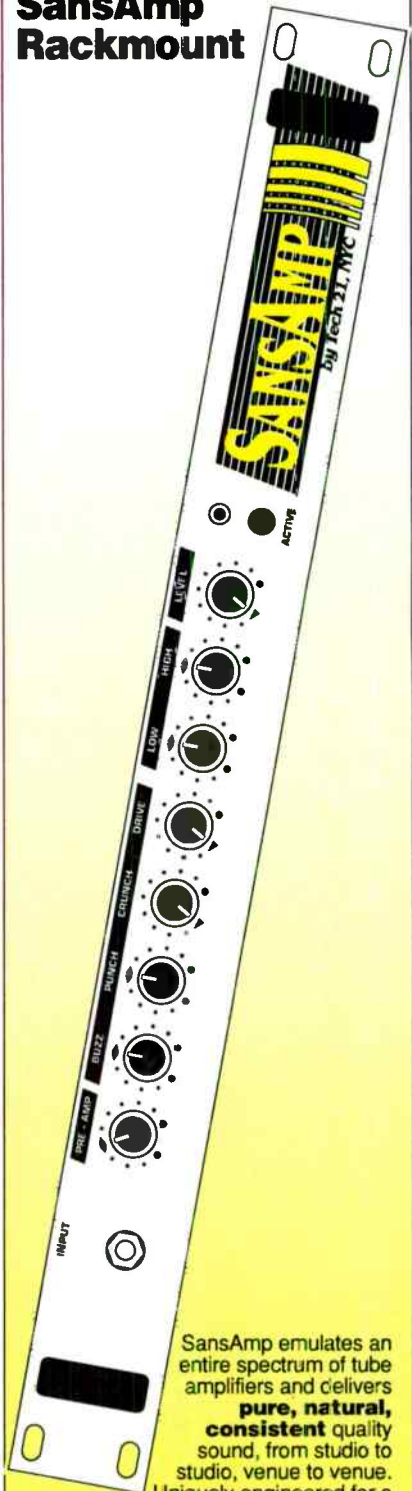
The surprise is that as a composer, Shawn leans toward simple ideas executed craftily, at times explosively, and he made a point of explaining that his phrasing concepts are actu-

ally high-speed extrapolations of the rhythmic groupings inherent in Charlie Parker solos. “People are familiar with the Savoy or Dial recordings,” he said. “But the bootleg of September 27, 1949, the first bebop concert at Carnegie Hall, is a totally different impression of Bird. In my case, I would search out those albums because I love ‘em regardless of if I played, just like I search out records by the people that took lessons from Liszt. Liszt died one year before the advent of recordings in 1886. All the great pianists of the golden age of piano, from 187something to 1940, were Liszt pupils or people that took from Liszt pupils. That style doesn’t exist anymore, with few exceptions, like Cyprien Katsaris and György Cziffra. So if you really are interested in music you have to go to great pains to find the recordings. And when you hear these people it’s a revelation, ‘cause it’s gone, it’s a lost art.”

The title track of *Powers of Ten*, a complex, mutating suite, draws from a wide palette; even the more concise tunes push barriers. “‘Rules of the Game’ doesn’t have a traditional form where there’s a theme and something else and the theme comes back. It’s a journey; it starts with a rock feeling and goes into this classical feel orchestrated with a lot of instruments playing lines in counterpoint over the guitar. And it ends with a totally other theme. But from the first note to the last chord, it goes through such a variety of musics. My music might relate to Jarrett in his piano improvisations: He’ll go through gospel to barrelhouse to something 12-tone, but they aren’t jarring transitions. By the time you’re at the end of the journey, you’re not conscious of how the changes occur.”

None of the motor habits picked up through working on any one instrument have crossed over between Shawn’s playing. On guitar his strong hand is the left, on piano it’s the right. “I don’t relate the instruments at all, from a technical standpoint,” he said. “But that’s because I don’t relate any instruments I play. I’m not like, ‘Okay, now I’ve got to do drums on my guitar album’—no. I’m the drummer; I don’t even think about guitar anymore. And I become the keyboard player when I’m playing keyboards; I totally split off. I think melody, timbre and rhythms, and how they’re achieved on whatever instrument is separate. You have to start somewhere, and may not have anything to play against except something that exists in your head. ‘Paris’ started with bass; I put it down thinking of other instruments. It’s no different—you run through a song once as the drummer, then as

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the keyboard player. Sometimes I'd run through on drums and play off of something in my head that I knew I'd play later on keyboards, then I'd play keyboards, and then redo a few bars of drums. It's not like I have to do one take on each instrument and let it lie. I'll go back and cause interreaction after the fact."


Shawn punched at his computer and a read-out to his right displayed "SHAWN KIT"; his keyboard became a drum trigger and he demonstrated how he recorded all the drums for his record, tapping full parts with two and three fingers. "It's possible to do things like

that to where there's no way to tell it's not live. And see, I know how to play keyboards, drums, bass and guitar, so I become those players when I do those parts. On 'Powers of Ten,' where I'm playing oboe, trumpet and strings, I become those players too. I'm using a sampled sound, but the trick is to know how you're using it. If you're not playing an oboe sample like an oboist, it's not going to sound like an oboe. That comes from *listening*."

THE GUITAR IS no longer a mystery to Lane, and he rarely practices. He spends most of his

time at the piano, composing, singing. The mystery is how he does it all, and why he's been doing it for audiences of 15 people at a time—after *Powers of Ten*, he's a mystery no more. He could turn his guitar into a moneymaker effortlessly, but has mixed feelings about session work. "It's mostly to play some kind of hot lead. The funny thing is, I get in and play something I think is hot, but it's too hot, so I have to keep doing it to scale it down. Certain people locally hesitate to use me for a pop session because, 'Well, he's gonna play too fast.' Or, 'Because he plays fast he can't play tastefully.' And by the same token, when I send a pop song to somebody like [speed-lick Svengali producer] Mike Varney it's like, 'You're not playing fast enough!' So I've always been caught in the middle. And a lot of sessions can be a drag; they expect you to come in with the icing and save the cake, and you can't because the foundation isn't good. I don't like being in that situation that much. It's a challenge if it's subtle music or calls for something unusual. If it's gonna be real stock, well then, why have me? You can get any number of people to do that."

Shawn's read about himself in magazines before, in interviews with gushing rock stars who'd visited the Peabody; sitting in his small studio, he'd put down the articles and return to work. "You try not to dwell on that," he laughed. "It can be depressing, but you make sacrifices to do what you want to do. I don't consider playing commercial music selling out, because I enjoy it, and I'd like to do a pure pop album. I probably would have played with some successful pop or rock band, but just being here in Memphis I never got a call. So I've just tried to get better and better and concentrate on things I like in music, and try to keep positive. I don't know. It's hard. If I did want to do complex things, it's hard to find people that can play it, and even then something's lost by the time you explain something to somebody. I'm not saying what I'm doing is the ultimate concept, but it's an alternative I enjoy.

"It's all a trade-off in that... it's time. It really comes down to time. You don't know how much time anybody's got left. You might be hit by a car or just drop dead any minute, so what's more important to you? To spend all this time doing something you don't like at all, but have a couple nice cars and a nice house, or would you rather live in maybe a less nice house and drive a less nice car, but spend your time doing what you enjoy?" He laughed, turned away and started playing "Bennie and the Jets." 

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sunn 
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[cont'd from page 29] ald Fagen's luxury accommodations, yelling, "Where's the party?"

Producer Gary Katz read from a letter sent by Becker and Fagen: "In 1974 we decided to sell out and do commercials for Schlitz beer—here we were in Hollywood, it seemed like the thing to do. Our guitarist, Denny Dias, knew of a drummer in the Sonny and Cher band and set up a meeting. On the appointed day, a cocky little Italian kid walked in and said in a voice that seemed an octave much too low for a person of such diminutive stature, 'Yo guys, let's groove!' The session was pretty silly for reasons too complex to mention. Ultimately, the Schlitz people said 'pasadena' on the jingle, but Jeff was a keeper, not just as a musician, but as a friend. Fans would always think of Jeff as a great musician; the musicians he worked with will always think of him as a great guy."


Katz spoke of an enormously soulful spirit he said Porcaro shared with everyone. "Every moment I spent with him, I had a smile on my face. I met him in '74 at Cherokee Ranch when I was working on Steely Dan's *Pretzel Logic*; Donald and Walter had a song called 'Night by Night' that wanted more precision and exactness than they were able to give, which for them is saying something. Late one night Denny recommended Jeff; Donald said we'd give it another day and told Denny to make the call and see if we could get the guy out here. Denny hung up the phone and said, 'They're on their way.' Cherokee Ranch was a studio built in a barn, and had above its doorway an ornamental rope with a noose attached. Forty-five minutes later Jeff arrived and saw the noose; Denny introduced us and Jeff's first words were, 'I know you guys have a rough reputation on musicians, but this is way out of line!'

"When Jeff was working," Katz continued, "especially with Donald and Walter, his sense of devotion was unmatched. If he'd feel he wasn't doing exactly what Donald wanted, Jeff—being the huge fan and the man that he was—would throw his sticks at the wall in frustration and say, 'Get someone who knows how to play a shuffle! Call Purdie!' A few minutes would pass, he'd collect himself and do another take, and on those occasions he always brought to my face another smile." Jeff's formidable efforts on behalf of "Gaucho," Katz noted, rescued the track from being scrapped.

In the past year, Jeff had turned down offers to tour with Bruce Springsteen and Dire Straits so he could devote attention to Toto and to his family. In a letter to Susan Porcaro, Springsteen called the drummer "a kindred spirit whose

beauty went beyond craft and precision, into the realm of spirit. With that he graciously blessed my music. He was a soul man." A tape followed of Springsteen describing Jeff to the crowd at a concert the night after his death, and singing "Human Touch" in tribute. Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler had planned to return to the studio with Porcaro in November. "One main reason for my enjoying making our last record more than any other was Jeff," Knopfler said. "He was great as a person and as a musician. If I can find any consolation it is at least that I had the delight and honor of working

with and knowing Jeff. And that he was, he told me, proud of the work he did for us."

At the conclusion of the indoor service Porcaro's casket was opened and his drumsticks were placed inside. His fellow drummers—Keltner, Mike Baird, John Robinson, Rick Marotta, Harvey Mason, Willie Ornelles, Lenny Castro—strapped on the tom-toms and played as they walked to the gravesite, followed by Porcaro's family and friends. Hundreds gathered near sunset on Lincoln Terrace, at the foot of the Hollywood Hills, where Boz Scaggs sang "The Lord's Prayer." 

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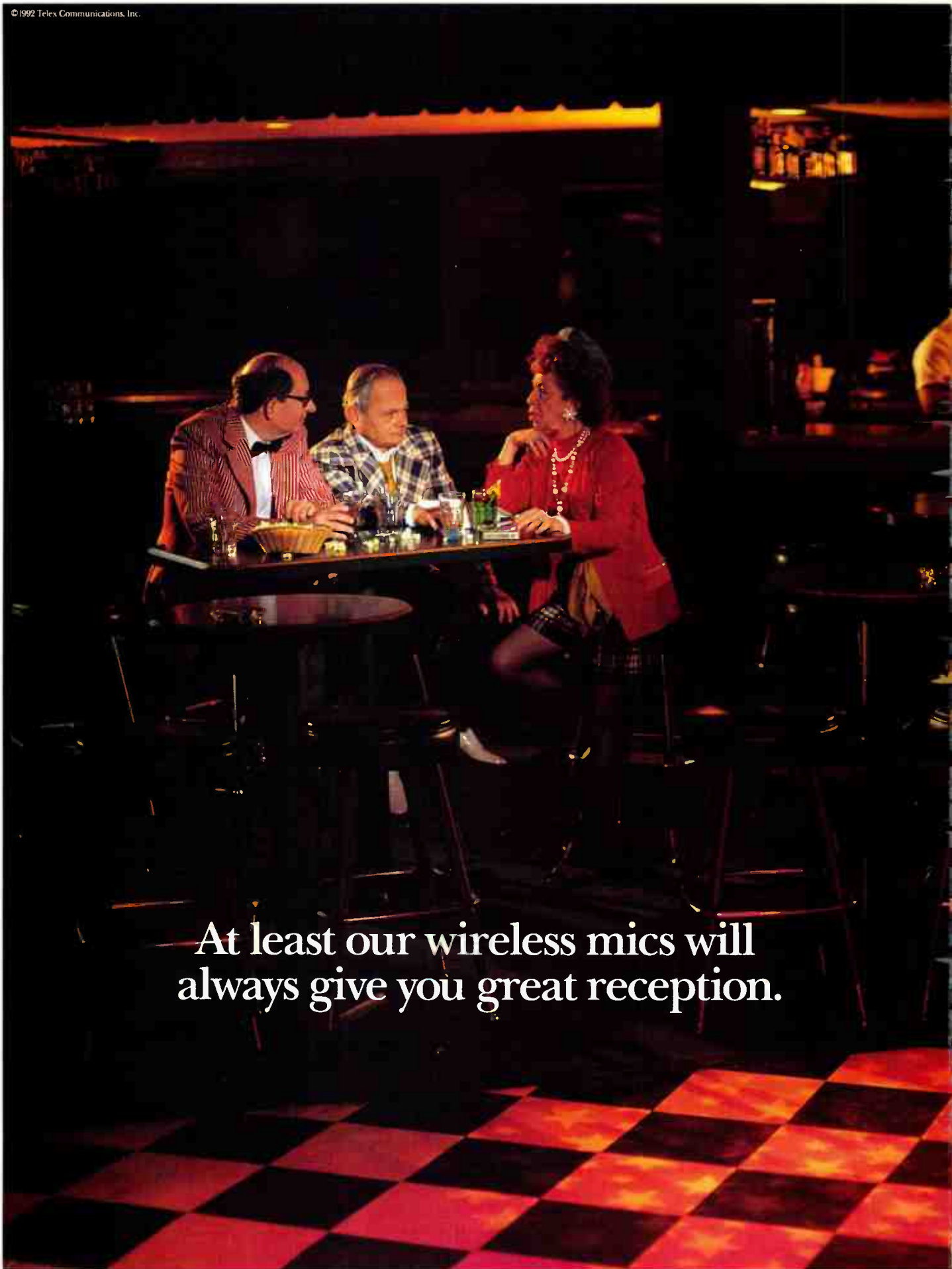
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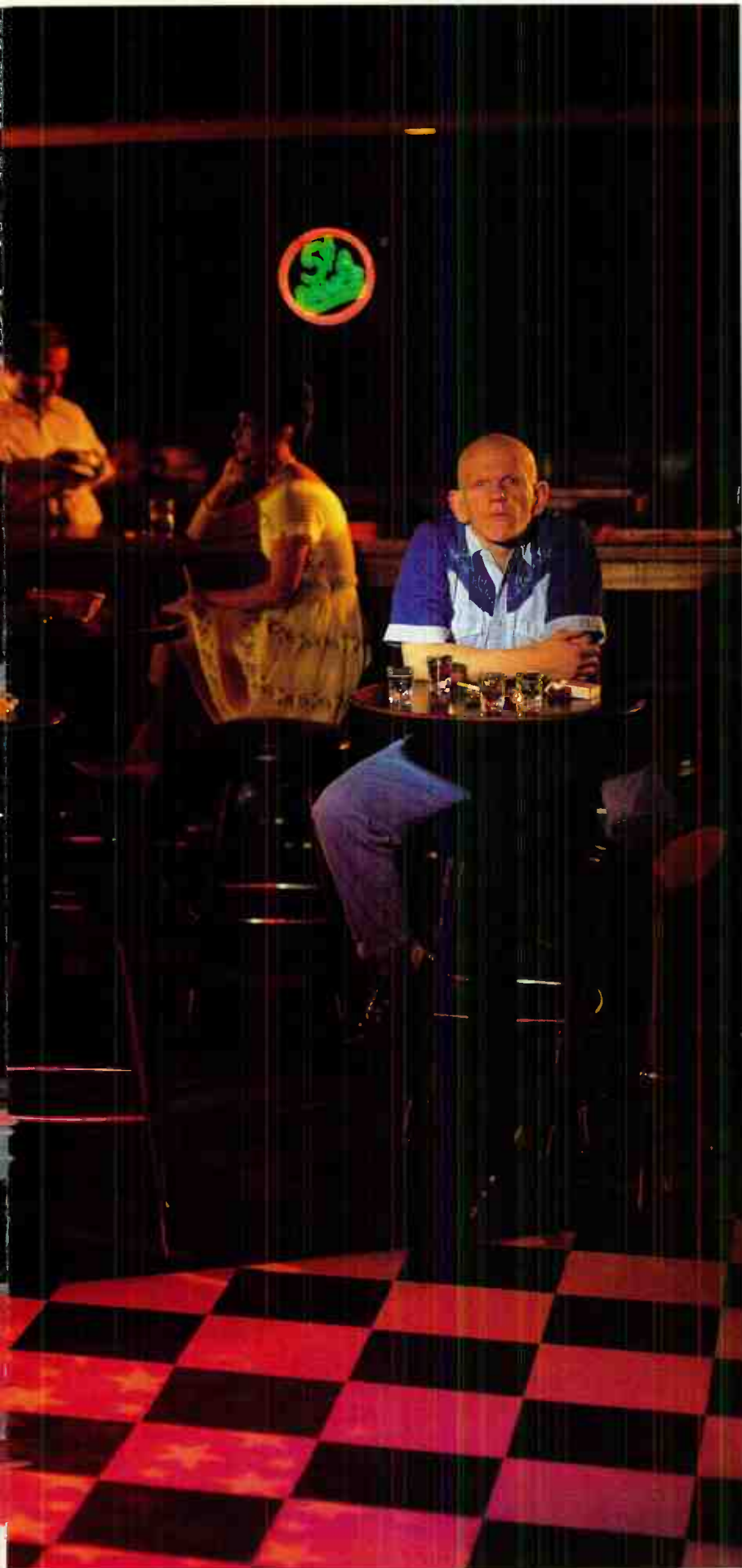


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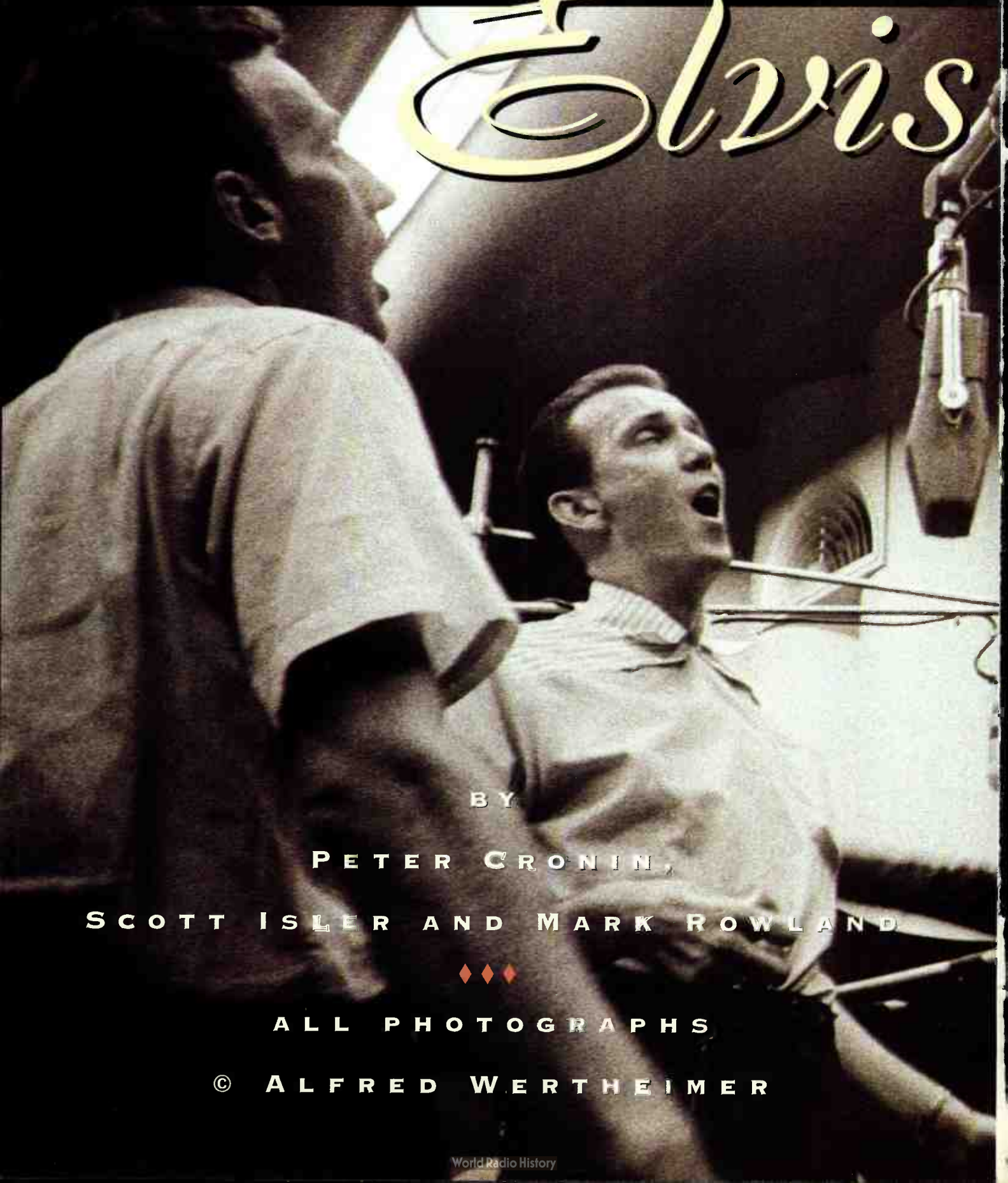
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Elvis



BY

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O R A L B I O G R A P H Y

Presley



*Elvis and
the Jordanaires recording
"Anyway You Want Me,"
1956*



Elvis Presley was the king of rock 'n' roll. Elvis Presley was a fraud. Elvis Presley was The Pelvis. Elvis Presley was a momma's boy. Elvis Presley was a revolutionary. Elvis Presley was a prisoner. Elvis Presley was a fine upstanding gentleman. Elvis Presley was a drug-addled mess.

Elvis Presley turned white society on to black culture. Elvis Presley ripped off black culture for white society. Elvis Presley was heroic. Elvis Presley was pathetic. Elvis Presley lived an American Dream. Elvis Presley endured an American Tragedy. Elvis Presley died in 1977. Elvis Presley is alive.

All these things, of course, are true (and also false). As the great rock 'n' roll lyricist Walt Whitman once put it, writing of America, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself." And Elvis Presley is a quintessentially American figure. Many books have been written on Elvis, with many to come, their authors inevitably praised for exposing terrible truths and also skewered for shallow sensationalizing. Psychological theories abound, notably regarding Presley's strangely symbiotic relationship with his manager, "Colonel" Tom Parker. But the heart of the matter—Elvis' unlikely immortality—remains elusive.

A few months ago, RCA released a lovingly assembled four-CD boxed set devoted to Presley's '50s recordings, the first package in a planned trilogy that will encompass his three decades of music. Like everything in his life, Elvis' records range from the sublime to the ridiculous, but the vitality and emotional power of *The Complete '50s Masters*—which is, after all, 90 percent of his best stuff—brought home what has become the most overlooked facet of the Presley myth: Elvis Presley was a musician. He lived a musician's life. Except for his film career, which even by Hollywood standards remains a monument to kitsch, music and musicians defined his creative sphere. And many of the players with whom Presley worked were sharp talents themselves, the cream of Nashville and L.A. session musicians, engineers and songwriters. They are the men and women who bore witness to Presley's most interesting and perhaps most intimate dimension—making music. Oddly, several of them told *Musician* that no one had ever asked them about *that* before.

What follows is a mosaic of memories and observations regarding Elvis Presley by the musicians who shared that life and its familiar touchstones: "The Louisiana Hayride," "Jailhouse Rock," the endless studio sessions and the dog days of Hollywood, the triumphant '68 TV special, the grandiose '70s tours and slow, painful fadeout. It's a trip that began and ended in Memphis, and went everywhere in between. And still, for one reason and then another, keeps going.



Elvis runs through a spiritual in a "Steve Allen Show" rehearsal room, 1956.

SCOTTY MOORE

Most country singers would stand flat-footed and pat their foot. When Elvis would play guitar he'd balance back on the balls of his feet, with the big britches that everybody was wearin' back then, and he'd be shakin' his legs and the britches'd start shakin'. When we played with Slim Whitman at the Overton Park Shell in Memphis the girls went crazy about it. Elvis didn't realize what was happenin'. That was just his thing, and he was like, "What'd I do?" Of course once he found out, he started embellishin' on it and it got serious real quick. It was the only band I knew of where we were literally directed by an ass.

You couldn't take your eyes off him and look off somewhere. He'd be crawling all over, up and down the drapes and 'cross the floor. Whoever had the biggest record that week was the star, and they'd close the show. But if we was openin' the show, the show was over.

D.J. FONTANA

Or they would put us on at intermission, and after that there was nobody in the building. Elvis really didn't like that. He'd say, "Man, I've been listenin' to this guy since I was a kid, and look what I'm doin'!" The only problem we had with Elvis back then was gettin' him to sleep, because of his nervous energy. He wanted to stay up all night long and just yak yak yak, and listen to the radio. Elvis loved that radio. He'd listen all the time if we gave him the chance. But Bill Black didn't want to hear it. We couldn't keep a radio in the car because Bill would just reach up there and go "pow," kick the radio out.

Every time Elvis'd travel with us, we'd be late. He'd stop every five minutes. He'd stop for nothin'. I think he done it just to make the Colonel mad sometimes, I really do. Elvis'd say, "Don't you worry about the Colonel, I'll take care of the old man," and that was the end of it. The Colonel had a grip on everybody but me, Scotty and Bill. He couldn't tell us what to do 'cause we could go to Elvis, see?

Elvis really had the keenest ears I've ever seen in my life, and he knew what he wanted to hear. You know how on his records they'd say, "produced by so-and-so"? Nobody but Elvis produced those records. Absolutely.

SCOTTY MOORE

The normal studio setup would be Elvis against the wall facing us, with the Jordanaires at his side, and we'd be facing back toward him. That was about the best they could do back then, separation-wise. Everything I ever did with him, feel was most important. If *he* missed something he might stop, but if somebody else hit a little clinker and the thing felt good to him, he'd leave it. He'd let everybody work out how they wanted to play and then he might make a suggestion like, "Can you do this?" If I'd say no he'd say, "Well, just do what you can." But he'd raise holy hell with the mastering. He once sent a bunch of stuff to



Scotty Moore practicing a riff at the "Hound Dog" session.

New York to cut the masters and they EQ'd the shit out of it. That's when they started cutting the masters here in Nashville.

DAVID BRIGGS

Scotty won't admit what he did, what everybody *knows* he did. He was literally the musical producer, the manager, he worked with him, he rehearsed with him, he was the band leader. I mean, they *should* have been like the Beatles. There should have been the four of 'em. And I'm sure he's very bitter about it.

MIKE STOLLER

We didn't meet him till "Jailhouse Rock," then I really got to hear that he knew a whole lot about rhythm & blues, which surprised us. Because after all, he was a white kid, and Jerry and I thought we were the only white kids who were that hip. [*laughs*] And he knew a lot more about gospel music, black and white, than we did. In addition, he sang ballads that, in his own way, were quite beautiful. More in the tradition of Bing Crosby.

We wrote for him, in a way, based on how he sounded on certain words, the way he stretched down to certain notes. He wasn't a writer and he wasn't a performing musician; he generally rapped on the guitar with his knuckles. He could play piano a little bit, like he sometimes did in the middle of a record date; he might sit down during a break and play a hymn, or a Ray Charles number. His strength was in the combination of the music he'd heard and digested through his life. Sometimes his intonation wasn't 100 percent, but it didn't matter much because he was a true performer. He was an artist.

One strange thing was, when we sent him a demo, he would learn the song from the demo even if it wasn't in the right key for him. So he was influenced by the demo, and of course in many cases the demos were trying to emulate his performances, so you know, it was kind of circular in that respect.

We were not his producers, but we had influence, though it

BONES HOWE

There was a closed environment in the sense that the guys from [Presley's publishing company] Hill and Range supplied all the songs. We had a turntable in the booth and we would play these songs for him until he found one he liked. But no one was telling him what to record. They'd give him a hundred and he'd choose five or 10 of them. Then he would work up the arrangements with the band and the Jordanaires. He would stand right in front of the playback speaker, turned up, and if it felt good that was it. He was the most polite, respectful guy. But no one told him what to do.

I remember putting two takes together for him, I forget which song, but he was saying we have to do it again because of the ending and I said no, we can put this other ending on. He said, "You can?" He'd never seen anyone splice a piece of tape before. He stood there watching, with these huge eyes. But he was extremely bright, and everything that he



On the train home from New York, Elvis plugged a record player into a restroom outlet and studied the acetate of "Hound Dog." Asked why he used such a cheap system Elvis said, "That's how the kids will hear it."

was restricted to rehearsal situations. We had this interplay, suggesting things, and sometimes when we thought we'd gotten there he'd say, "I could do it better, I know what you're talking about," and he'd go on for another 20 takes. He was tireless. Of course, with Elvis, nobody was watching the clock. They would get to work on a song and then they'd order in peanut butter sandwiches and orange pop and one of the guys would pick up a microphone and start doing jokes, and I mean, we'd never experienced anything like that. It was that home environment. It was brought wherever he went.

saw, he retained.

I think when Elvis came back from the Army he had changed, though. He came to the studio the first day in his dress uniform. And he was out of the Army. It was like, "Who am I?" He'd had that great edge to him, and you could see the toughness was gone.

JERRY LEIBER

Elvis wasn't dumb. But he was very literal about his performances. He meant every word. If you'd say anything that was oblique, he'd be standing there, like he was frozen in his shoes. What's ironic is that in his



In a couple of months Elvis would be too famous to travel unnoticed on a public train.

(R) Elvis on the white side of a segregated lunch counter in Chattanooga.

(Overleaf) D.J. Fontana, Bill Black, Elvis Presley, the Jordanaires and Scotty Moore recording "Don't Be Cruel," New York, 1956.

later career his performances *were* self-parody to an extent. So ultimately he came around. But not in a very pleasant way.

BOOTS RANDOLPH

Musically it was two-fingers, three-chord stuff. And Scotty was not the greatest guitar player in the world. D.J. was a fair drummer, and Bill Black couldn't play bass. He just stood there and popped the strings a lot. I think all Elvis believed in was a good, swinging, happening thing. Even the ballads like "Are You Lonesome Tonight?"—it was an old, sick song. God, you could think up a thousand songs like that. But he felt it. He reminded me of a country preacher, what they called circuit preachers; they'd preach the hell out of a brush arbor, holier than thou, and while this is going on they'd be screwing one of the farmer's daughters. Elvis was the kind of guy that I always thought was putting you on. I had a feeling he didn't really believe he had a great deal of talent. He could never believe he had something that was mesmerizing to everybody. He was flabbergasted at how he affected women and with the respect he got from a lot of his peers. I don't think he could put all that together.

BONES HOWE

Elvis and I were sitting in the studio one time between sessions, and some girls were walking home from school down the alley, and they saw us, 'cause the back doors of the studio were open. So the girls walked right in.

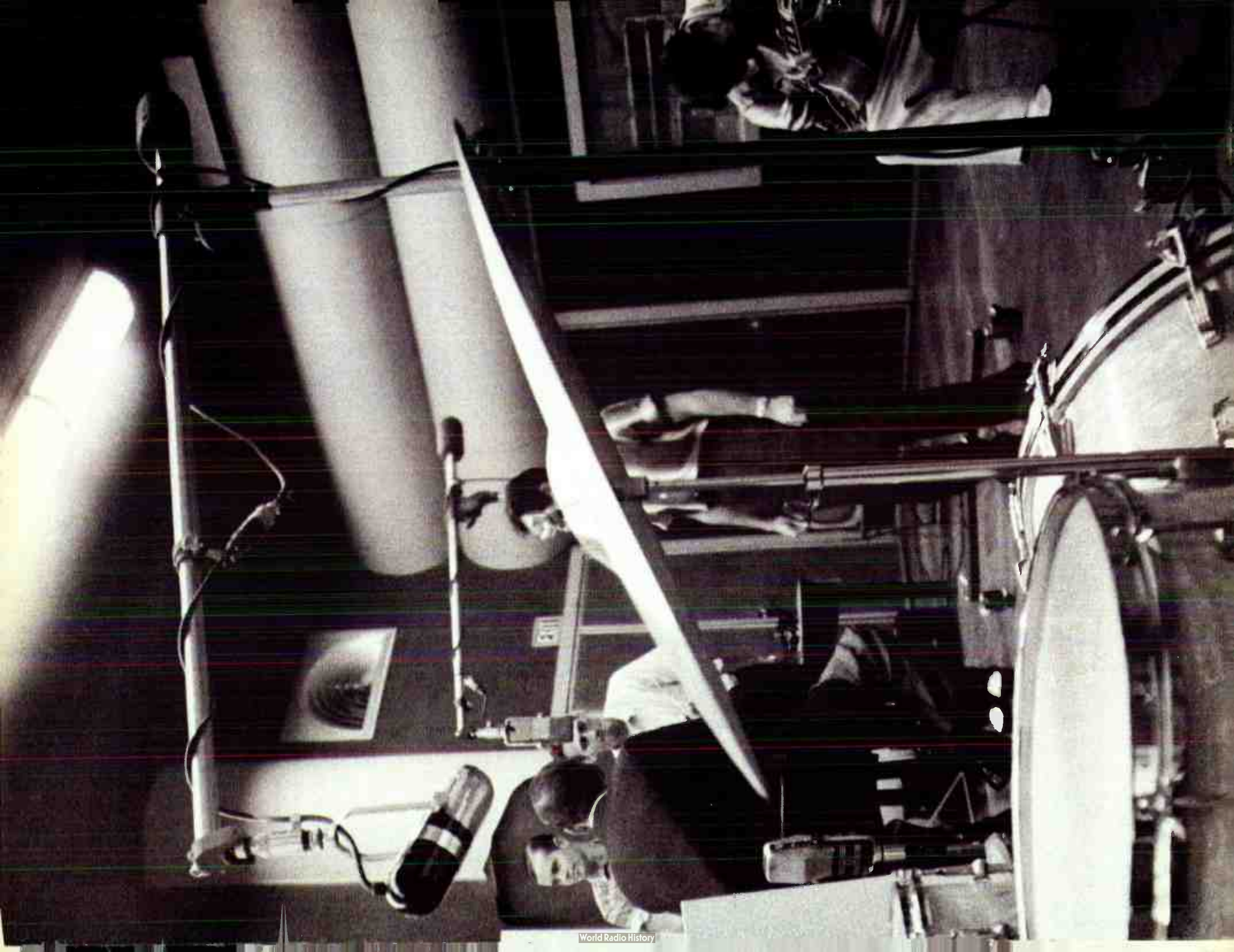
They were very nice, and he was extremely polite to them. One girl asked, "What does your daddy do?" He said, "My daddy doesn't do anything." And for me, having grown up in Florida, that was so vivid, because there are a lot of men in the South that grow up and don't do anything. Somehow they're supported, they go fishing, they survive; there's a brother that gives them money, or a wife—who knows how they do it? We see Vernon Presley as this distinguished-looking guy with gray hair. But Vern Presley was a man who didn't do anything.

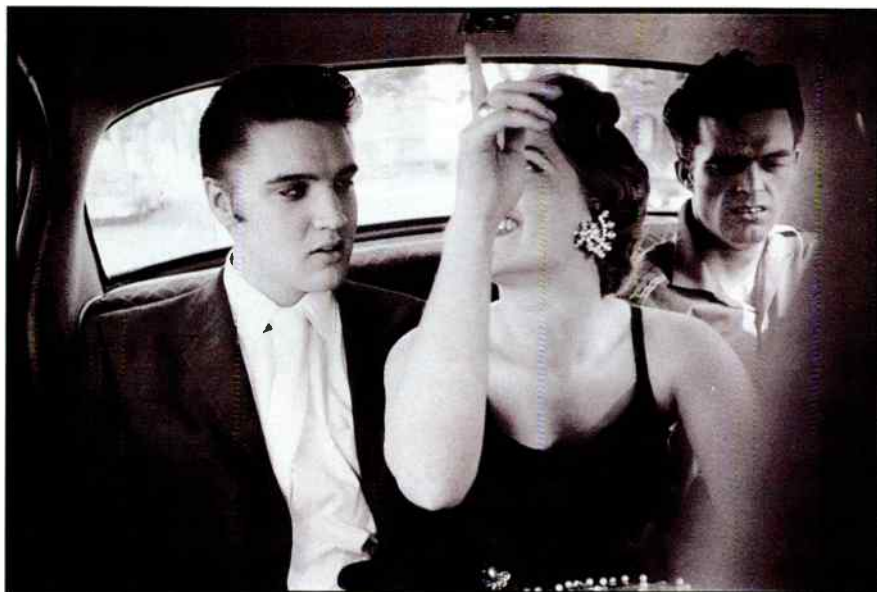
Now the Colonel was a very, very clever man. When we worked on the TV special, the Colonel had a dressing room with two William Morris agents standing guard in front of the room, and he had them dressed like they were guards at Buckingham Palace—red jackets and the furry hats. In front of Elvis' door there was some guy in a chair with his belly hanging over his jeans. As far as Elvis was concerned, he was extremely manipulative, I'm sure. I think Elvis probably felt the guy made a pact with the devil, that without the Colonel he would never have gotten there. The Colonel liked the lowest common denominator, and was proud of it. He'd say, "I designed all these album covers, people say they're in poor taste, but we're selling millions of records. These guys at RCA want to do fancy artistic stuff, but they don't know who the audience is."

JERRY LEIBER

I think Elvis Presley was trapped by his dependency on the Colonel. I think on the one hand he worshipped him as a maker and savior. On the







Elvis and his cousin with an unidentified woman who accepted a friend's dare to try to meet Presley.

other hand, I think he may have despised him because he was never able to take control of his own life. So he was constantly being fantasized outside the realm of just being a person in his own right. Which, as the '60s progressed, turned out to be the model for what was to come, the superstars. It's a male version of *A Doll's House*.

MIKE STOLLER

I always felt that he innately had this talent and it developed to a certain point and then it stopped. It's almost like the movies, where the scripts were never great scripts but they seemed to be getting a little better with *King Creole* and then they just went south. It got so uninspiring. It was hard enough to write songs for *Jailhouse Rock* and *Loving You*. It just wasn't stimulating.

SCOTTY MOORE

Some of the first movies were pretty good music-wise, but after we started getting to *Harum Scarum* and *Kissin' Cousins* everything started sounding the same. It was just different costumes, different girls. We'd go to the studio at around four or five in the afternoon and Elvis'd show up at eight or nine. He wouldn't hit a lick or a note till three, four in the morning. He'd already heard the material, and he was just dreading it. He knew they were bad songs. He hated all of it, just about. There might be one song in each picture that he really liked; mostly he'd say, "Come on, guys, let's do this piece of shit and get it over with." But he'd still give it his best.

MIKE STOLLER

I got to see a little more of him during the pictures because I was on the set. He invited me once to come out with the guys and have a root beer or something. Then he invited me to shoot pool with the guys—this was at the Beverly Wilshire, where they were staying. We went up to the President's Suite and there were guards in the hall and we were sitting around talking about music and songs and life, you know, and shooting pool. I was taking a shot and I looked up and there was nobody in the room. Then Elvis walked back in and said, "Mike, I feel real bad. The Colonel's here and he's unhappy and uh, man, I gotta ask

you man, ah, to go?" I said that's okay. That's how tight the security was.

DAVID BRIGGS

The Colonel hated all musicians. Elvis was big in spite of the Colonel, not because of him. He was just a drunk old carnny.

BOB MOORE

I think the Colonel is a great, great man. I hear a lot of people say a lot of bad things about him, but he did things to make Elvis that may not have happened without the Colonel. He never ever missed one chance to say the word Elvis in front of anybody. He wouldn't miss a chance to buy an ad in any magazine. He's a brilliant man.

D. J. FONTANA

You gotta understand, the movies, the contracts were so involved. A lot of the material was just garbage. The Colonel would say,

"Elvis, just do the song, man, 'cause we throw a song out and we're gonna have to do them a favor." The Colonel was not for doing anybody a favor. He'd say, "We don't do them a favor, they don't do us a favor, we don't owe 'em nothin'."

BOOTS RANDOLPH

Parker's vision of Elvis was as a product. They practically packed their money around in a flour sack. They never invested in anything, I don't think. At the end of the night, or the week, or the picture, they'd sit down and just pass out the bucks. The story was they split it down the middle. Elvis took one and Parker took one. I remember griping to Parker about taxes saying, "What the hell, you guys make millions, what do you do?" And he said, "Oh, we pay taxes on it. I love to pay taxes. I know when I'm paying taxes that I'm making money." I thought, boy, that's a new one.

GORDON STOKER

Elvis just wanted to play his guitar and sing his music and make you happy. I've seen people chew him out and jump all over him: movie producers, directors, Colonel Parker, what have you. And Elvis never, ever fired back. He might have been better off if he had. Jim Denny turned him down for the Grand Ol' Opry because he didn't think he was any good and he told him so. He finally did go on the Opry after that, as Hank Snow's guest. Later, Colonel Parker invited Denny to the set when we were filming *Jailhouse Rock*. We were standing close to Elvis. When they were introduced Denny said, "I just wanted you to know that I've always had faith in you and always believed in you." Elvis did not say one thing except "Thank you sir, thank you, Mr. Denny." Then he turned around to us and said, "Does that son of a bitch think that I've forgotten that he broke my heart?"

GLEN D. HARDIN

When he first came out the press was cruel to him. For years and years they said, "This guy won't be around in a month, no one's gonna remember his name." Finally he said, "To hell with it. I'm not ever going to do an interview again. I don't have to, so why should I?" He

just couldn't handle it. Of course, he triumphed over that, but he still wondered, "What am I gonna do if I go out there and they *don't* scream their heads off?" That was lurking in the back of his mind. But he never did doubt his own capability as a singer.

NORBERT PUTNAM

Elvis was a lot like the guys I grew up with in Muscle Shoals. They were very much concerned with '57 Chevys, cheeseburgers, fries, girls and music, and there wasn't much of anything else. The rest of us went out into the world and on to other things, but Elvis never did. He sort of remained a 16-year-old kid his whole life. Every night at lunch—they called it lunch because Elvis got up at five—we were able to order anything we wished, seafood, barbecue, catered in. Elvis only ever had a cheeseburger, fries and a Coke. He was so sheltered that he never learned anything about cuisine.

GORDON STOKER

I did two or three duets with Elvis, like "All Shook Up" and "Good Luck Charm." I'd stand across from him and sing into the same mike. Back then you couldn't overdub and double-track and all that. But it was funny to look him straight in the face because he'd wink at you, punch you in the jaw, stick his finger in your mouth, anything to break you up. And of course many times he did break me up, and we'd have to start over. Elvis was never concerned with the clock.

BOB MOORE

I played on all of Roy Orbison's stuff and I'll tell you something: Every time when we were recording with Elvis, within 30 minutes he'd have me over to the side and say, "What's happening with Orbison?" He absolutely loved Roy Orbison, and you can hear it occasionally—the big endings and the high notes. He also loved Jimmy Reed. When you hear Charlie Rich, you'll hear some Elvis.

CHARLIE HODGE

One of his favorite singers was Mario Lanza, and also Jan Peerce. He had a wide range of music that he appreciated. You can hear the different characters in his voice. He would be Billy Eckstine, he would be Bill Kenny of the Ink Spots, he would be Hank Snow—all these people became Elvis Presley by the time he started touring. He had all these people inside of him.

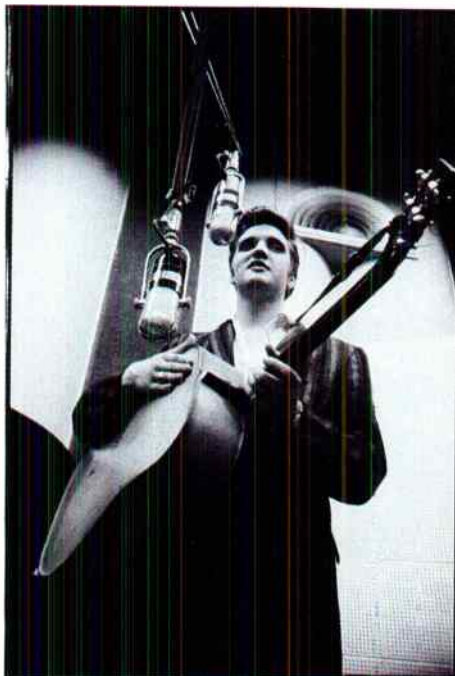
NORBERT PUTNAM

We could get so relaxed that we'd sit around and talk like a bunch of high school guys. I remember telling Elvis that if it hadn't been for the simplicity of his early records I never would've been a musician. I'd learned to play songs like "Milkcow Blues" and "Baby, Let's Play House" by finding the tones on the bass. That if I'd grown up when Crosby and Sinatra were doing it I would never

have gotten a bass. At the end of the conversation he looked at me and took a deep breath and said, "Well, I guess it's time to go be Elvis." And he went out and picked up a microphone and I grabbed my bass. He hit three or four notes and I got chill bumps because he went from being this regular guy to having this voice come out. Even if he was singing, "It's a beautiful day and the sun is shining" he could give you the chill bumps. He could go from this real deep baritone to a scream that Paul McCartney would love to be able to do, every night, and I don't think he ever thought twice about it. It was all natural to Elvis. It was all subconscious.

DAVID BRIGGS

Elvis didn't want to overdub. That was his most unfavorable thing. So you usually only cut a song once, maybe twice. He might listen to it back 50 times after he cut it the first time, so that was the one chance you had to get it together. Some of the worst playing I've ever done is on those records because he always wanted to hit that bottom end. It could be a delicate part I was playing, but I used to hit the bass keys really loud because that's what he wanted. You didn't play what you wanted, you played what you thought *he* wanted.



*Recording "Hound Dog," Elvis beat the back of his guitar for rhythm.
(R) In a dressing room at the Mosque Theatre, Richmond, Virginia.*

NORBERT PUTNAM

After a pretty good take the control room would explode; all the guys that worked for him, the yes-men, guys leaping in the air, "Gas Elvis, smash Elvis, yea King King King!" And the rhythm section has only played this thing twice, maybe not *even* twice. So Elvis puts the mike down and goes to the control room where all these guys jump all over him and tell him how great it was. I'm talking to Briggs, saying, "Dave, did you get that thing in the bridge? We need to work something out on that ending, and James, can you put a lick in there?" I mean, honestly, we were trying to make a *record*. We go into the control room to see what the vibe is, and if Elvis thought it was pretty good it'd be, "All

right guys, let's move on." And we're thinking historically! So it's, "Hmmm, Elvis, I gotta tell you something. I really screwed up a couple of notes going into that bridge. I'm sorry. Would you consider doing one more just for me?" "Hey guys, Putt wants to do another take. You got it in ya? Okay, let's go." That's what it took to get a second take. On the next song David would make the request. You couldn't just go in and say, "This isn't really very good. You certainly could do it better." The King never needed to do one more. It was sort of sad. David and I used to talk about how embarrassing it was to have played on the absolute worst records Elvis ever made. You can't make classic records in one take. You gotta get the groove. But Elvis was no longer interested by 1965.

HAL BLAINE

Elvis had only to say, "Gee, I'm a little bit thirsty," and five guys would run at him with bottles of Coke, almost killing themselves—jumping over chairs and getting around microphones and cables—to be *the* one that hands him a Coke.

Sometimes you'd see a couple of new songwriters in the studio booth. We'd be recording a song, and you could just see these people beaming at Elvis. They just knew they were gonna get a new house or a new Cadillac; maybe it was their first major shot. And then, four or five takes into it, Elvis would say, "I don't think I like this song!" and walk away from it and not another word was said. And you'd see these kids just melt into the woodwork, absolutely sick. That was one of the things about Elvis: I don't think I ever heard someone say, "Aw, c'mon, Elvis, you can do it; it's a little

tough but let's try it again." When he said, "That's it," that was it. He was surrounded by yes-men.

EMORY GORDY JR.

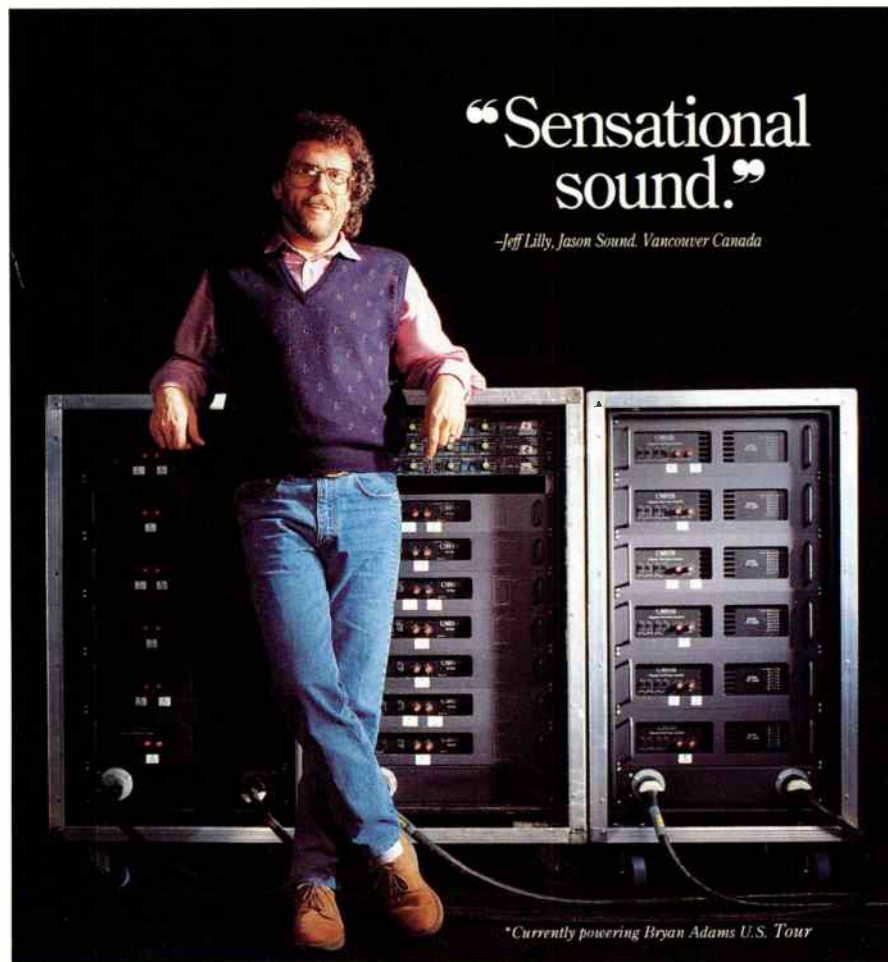
At the time we recorded "Burning Love" I was used to recording sessions where you took your time. So I played every lick I knew, figuring I'd pare it down toward take nine, 10, 11. I think they took the second take. It was embarrassing when the record came out: kind of a bass solo featuring Elvis Presley.

CHARLIE MCCOY

A lot of the tempos he chose for the songs I thought were not right. But he always proved me wrong 'cause those songs were always big hits. He was uncanny about knowing himself and what fit him best. When you look at his career he really covered a wide range, but the great thing about him was he never followed trends. In the '60s Elvis didn't have flowers in his hair. He wouldn't have done disco, he wouldn't have done urban cowboy and he certainly wouldn't have done rap. He didn't have to follow musical trends.

BONES HOWE

The '68 special was originally supposed to be a Christmas show. The year before, Elvis had done a radio Christmas show and it was a big success. Steve Binder was hired as the show's producer and really deserves the credit for making it happen. We'd talk for hours about it, and Steve said, "Nobody has ever seen him in a [TV] setting where he wasn't cut



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off at the waist or something, where he was able to talk about his life, as a dancer, performer, the concert ability—we should be doing that!” At first NBC and the Colonel held the line: “He’s gonna do 24 Christmas songs and say ‘Merry Christmas everybody.’” Finally at one of the meetings we started talking to Elvis. And it was a lot of trouble, but the wheels began to grind. The Colonel was no dummy. I think he began to see that with our enthusiasm there was an audience for this, and beyond that it might mean a resurgence of Elvis’ record career.

We wanted to get Elvis really into this, so we involved him from the start in the writing of the show. Because I knew, from my experience with him in the studio, that if you threw ideas at him he’d catch them and he’d turn them into something. He got so involved in designing and building this machine that by the time we started rehearsing we already knew what the whole show was. He wanted to do a karate thing, so we designed a dance around it. He was a hard-working guy. He came to all the rehearsals. It was a very tight-knit group of people working, and Elvis was at the core. He was there every day, smoking those Dutch cigars with the wooden tips and drinking his Pepsi-Cola. When the special was finished he came to the wrap party, and he was one of the last people to leave.

At one point we asked him, “When you heard you were going to do a television special, what was your first thought?” And he said, “Stark terror.” [laughs] There had been Mick Jagger, there had been the Beatles. He didn’t know if they were going to look at him as if he was just this throwback. I don’t know if you ever noticed this, but when he first comes out onstage and he reaches for the microphone, there’s a closeup

of his hand reaching, and his hand is *shaking*. Eight bars later he knew he had them in the palm of his hand, and you can tell that too. I was in the room where he came off the stage and they had to cut his leather suit off with a razor. They’d designed this great leather thing, and nobody had thought that he’d be so soaking wet you couldn’t get it off! And he said, “I didn’t know if they were gonna laugh at me.”

Obviously he was elated by the reaction. He said, “I want to go out and perform again!” But instead of letting him go out and tour, the Colonel put him in Vegas and took him to Hawaii...he kept him cooped up. The Colonel had his own agenda. The last time I saw Elvis in Vegas he was gaining weight and I came out of the dressing room thinking, he’s into this “good life.” The time is gone.

JAMES BURTON

He was so tired of doing movies, he wanted to start touring again. He said he would like to have me be in charge of putting a band together. We had our first rehearsals at a little studio where they used to do the Merv Griffin show, and it was like we’d known each other for years. Elvis would say, “James, what do you think, how do you feel about that first drummer? How do you feel about that first bass player? You like his feel?” He was really interested in what I thought; our music was from the same school.

He needed to have that strong background, that drive, and he liked to have a lot of voices back there singing and really pushing. He was into gospel and he wanted that big sound in back. He had a natural feel for the way the tempos should be and how the background should sur-

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didn't think Chips did a good job. It was simply loss of face. After that they were all saying, "Elvis, why'd you let him push you around like that? Who's this guy?"

One July they brought a huge tree into Studio B, a gigantic artificial aluminum tree with a hundred gifts under it, all empty. Felton Jarvis came in and said, "We're doing a Christmas album, we're gonna do a gospel album, we're gonna do a country album, an album of standards and a Presley record, a pop thing." And man, you talk about knocking it out; we were booked for five nights. And we did four albums.

TONY BROWN

We had to finish up four songs for the *Moody Blue* album, and they decided to record at Graceland 'cause they couldn't get Elvis to go to the studio. So they brought this big old dinosaur recording truck over from RCA. It was crazy. We'd come to the house and wait all day long, sitting in the living room. When we did "Way Down" he took one of those big Telefunken mikes, with the big thing around it, right off the boom and started walking around the room. He's got his eyes closed, and as I'm playing he's got his hands over mine on the piano. So I'm having to play underneath his hands. Felton Jarvis played me some of those takes, and it was like, "Listen, the piano's loud, he's over by you now," and "Now he's walking by Tutt." You'd hear the drums get real loud. And Elvis wouldn't redo his vocals. What you got was what you got.

JOE GALANTE

Felton Jarvis went through all sorts of crazy things. I can imagine recording in a living room with a waterfall [at Graceland] must have been absolute hell. It was getting tougher and tougher to try to get him to do some of the things you needed to get him to do—as far as recording and also doing songs. There were times that the [mobile recording] truck went down, Felton went down, the truck came back, Felton came back, and we had nothing on tape. Felton still had the fire to go through that.

GLEN D. HARDIN

I didn't enjoy those sessions because he was doing drugs, and he wasn't very interested in what we were doing. One Sunday night he insisted we be there by six o'clock and he didn't show up until about Wednesday. And they wouldn't let us go home. We'd sit around

and shoot pool and eat chicken. Of course, they would pay us.

TONY BROWN

One night he was singing a track, and he excused himself. We were all there, J.D. and the Stamps, the Sweet Inspirations, everybody. Maybe two hours later he comes downstairs with a hat and trenchcoat on and a shotgun, pretending to blow everything up with it. For the next four hours he explained that gun to us and told us how many guns he owned. And then the session was over. Another time he was singing and a truck pulled up with some motorcycles, and someone said, "Elvis, your motorcycles are here." And that was it, rehearsal's over.

DAVID BRIGGS

Some of the best stuff I heard Elvis do off record was at his home. When I first got to know him I enjoyed sitting around with him and playing some of his old stuff that I didn't play on. He wouldn't remember a lot. He'd say, "What's that?" I'd say it was so-and-so, and he'd say, "You know the lyrics to that one?" It was like it surprised him that you knew this song. He didn't realize that practically everybody knew those songs. He really loved being at home. He didn't have to worry about security or crowds.

BOB MOORE

Elvis suffered a lot, and I've had tears in my eyes for him. He once said to me, "Boy, I'd have given anything in the world to go over and get a hamburger with you guys. I never had any idea it was going to get like this." I think he realized toward the end of his life that there weren't a lot of people that cared about him in the right ways. He had his guys with him as friends, but he really didn't have any outside friends. It was business.

TONY BROWN

From '74 out it got pretty stale. Still, some nights Elvis was on, and it could be a powerful thing. Like when we did "American Trilogy," God, the chill bumps. But I'll bet in the last year-and-a-half Elvis was really on maybe four or five times. Being around the house I got to hear a lot of conversations, the inside group, and it got to be pretty incestuous there at the end, as far as even the kind of material he was being shown. I think they thought they were doing the best for him, but now that I'm an A&R guy I see that people got greedy. Believe it or not, that same

scenario is happening today with artists in country music. Just because he was Elvis doesn't mean it was so different.

DAVID BRIGGS

I think he still had it, as far as the feel. But he was in so wrecked a physical state that he couldn't deliver. He was short of breath. He wasn't hitting the notes because it would kill him.

TONY BROWN

We were at the airport, and I happened to overhear an air national guard guy talking over one of those mobile phones, saying, "When did he die? Where did they take Mr. Presley?" I was thinking Vernon had died. In a few minutes Felton Jarvis came out and said, "Guys, the tour is off. Go home and we'll call you." We asked what was wrong and it was "Don't worry, everything's cool." On the way home I heard on the radio that Elvis was dead. We all went out to Julian's and got drunk.

BONES HOWE

One day somebody will do a book on the Colonel and it will be much more interesting than the book on Elvis Presley. Because Elvis led a very public life. What you saw was what he was. Music was his most interesting side; the rest was just a bunch of guys hanging out in a room telling jokes. I mean, how smart were those guys? What could have gone on in that room except boredom? I think Elvis Presley died of boredom.

JERRY LEIBER

Elvis Presley is really mythology. That thing comes from beyond an analysis of his musicality. He had a strange kind of appeal to both sexes. He didn't intimidate or look too much like a grown man—he was innocent but still provocative. There was a feminine undertone to his features; he wasn't handsome, he was beautiful. And his music is really white music with black undertones. It's that Memphis place, where a lot of different things came together at the right time, at the point it was ready to happen.

See, you could look at this from so many points of view. You could say this guy is a monumental cosmic success. We're just in another kind of reference. Maybe what he wanted to do was more important. Maybe Coca-Cola is more important than Eugene O'Neill—maybe in the final countdown of America that's what's more important. Maybe we were wrong.

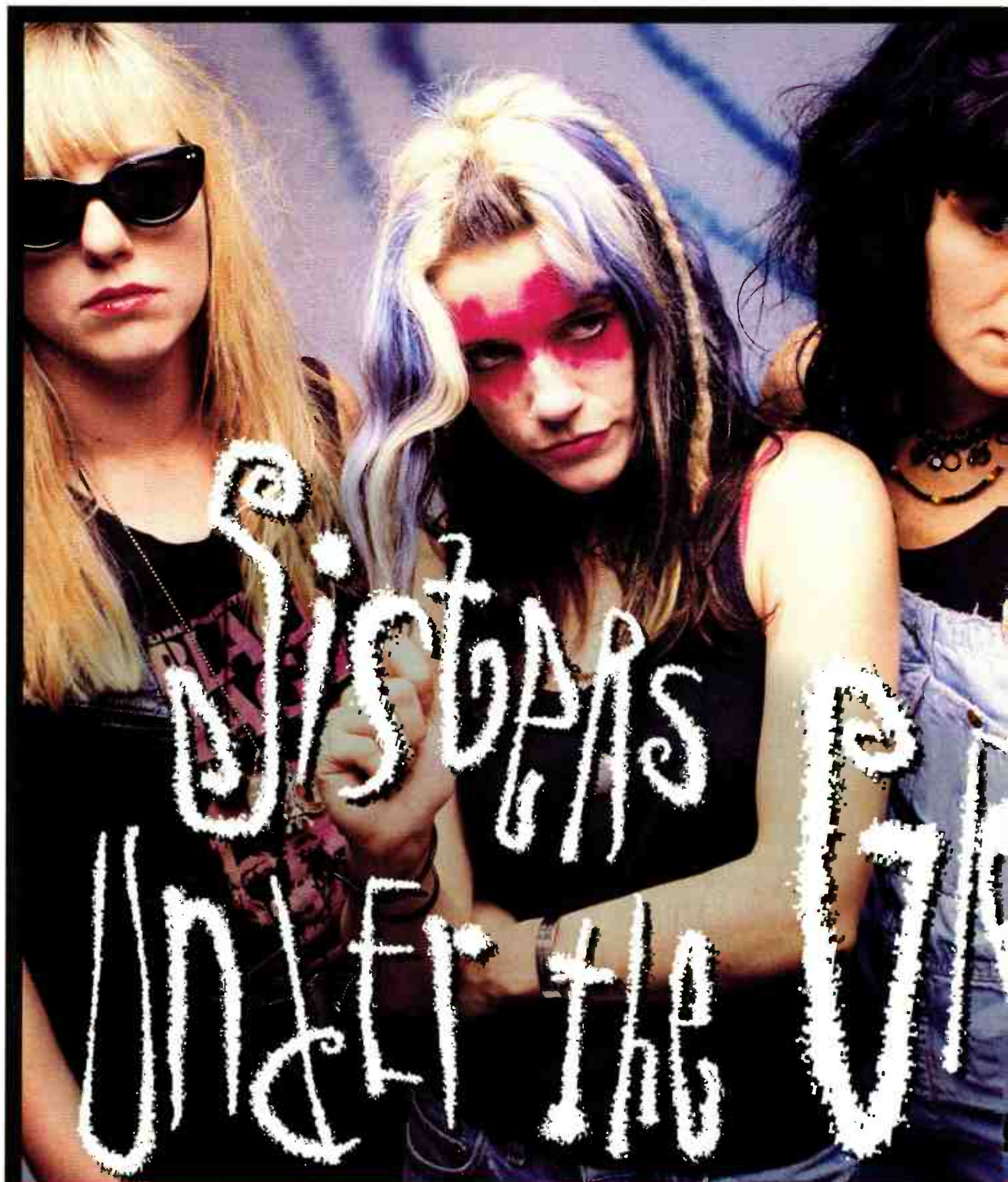
Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller are the legendary songwriting team whose many hits for Elvis Presley include "Jailhouse Rock" and "Hound Dog." Bones Howe is an L.A.-based producer and musician whose hundreds of credits include working with Presley in the '50s and '60s. Guitarist James Burton, bassist Jerry Scheff and drummer Ron Tutt anchored Presley's tour band in the '70s. Gordon Stoker is the leader of the vocal group the Jordanaires. Scotty Moore, D.J. Fontana and Bill Black comprised Presley's first band, which performed and recorded in the '50s and '60s. Bassist Bob Moore, saxophonist Boots Randolph, multi-instrumentalist Charlie McCoy, keyboardist David Briggs and bassist/producers Norbert Putnam and Emory Gordy Jr. are top Nashville session men of long standing. Keyboardist/arranger Glen D. Hardin joined Presley's band in 1970. Tony Brown, now a well-known producer, replaced Hardin on keyboards in 1976. Singer Kathy Westmoreland joined Presley's band in 1972. Veteran drummer Hal Blaine played on many Presley sessions in the '60s. Charlie Hodge, a close associate of Presley's, performed as a backup singer. Joe Galante is president of RCA Records. Special thanks to Steve Douglas, Larry Knechtel, Don Randi, Buddy Harmon.

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L7 is: Suzi Gardner, Donita Sparks, Dec Plakas, and Jennifer Finch



L7 AND HOLE AND THE FUTURE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

DONITA SPARKS IS TICKED OFF. L7's guitarist and singer has discovered, some 45 minutes into dinner, that our interview isn't just geared to a story about L7, but about Hole as well. From her perspective, it's another dreaded "L.A. women in rock" thing. She's lost her appetite and she's leaving.

"This is sexist and I'm not going to be a part of it," she says, sliding out of the booth. "We don't want to sit around for a half-hour and whine about sexism. All of a sudden we are a *women* band. That's bullshit. We're a band on our own terms...sorry. This is morally against what I'm about."

No, Sparks wasn't lured here on false pretenses. L7's management had been informed that the story would include both bands. But apparently that information was never conveyed to the members of L7.

Though bassist Jennifer Finch and guitarist Suzi Gardner stick around for a few more minutes to further explain their objections to this type of article—or at least to finish their iced tea and cappuccino—they, too, have grown noticeably hostile. Finch says that if I run with the story she'll find out where I live and blow up my toilet.

We never get to talk about guitars. >>>>>

Upper Right: Courtney Love of Hole

BY CRAIG ROSEN

L7

AND HOLE ARE BANDS with different personalities, sounds, agendas. Both are based in L.A., take strong feminist stances and have links to Nirvana. While L7 takes traditional pop and roll song structures and cranks them into a potent brew of grunge metal, Hole favors a backdrop of white noise for vocalist Courtney Love's dread-

filled wails. L7 often infuses songs with a dark sense of humor ("My diet pill is wearing off...Calgon can't take me away"), Hole is more deadly serious ("When I was a teenage whore/My mother asked me, 'Baby what for?...' I said, 'I feel so alone/I wish I could die'").

So why fit Hole and L7 together? As Hole's guitarist Eric Erlandson puts it, "We're both from L.A. We sort of came from the same scene. We're both coming up and we know each other and go to each other's shows. That should be more important than the girl thing." Beyond that, both bands appear on the cusp of breaking big or falling apart. While L7 is collecting accolades from the East and West Coast Bobs (critics Christgau and Hilburn) for *Bricks Are Heavy*, its major-label debut on Slash Records, Courtney Love is attempting to deal with life as a pregnant punk-rocker married to punk-rock chart-topper Nirvana's Kurt Cobain. She is also trying to put Hole back together. On the eve of its major-label signing with DGC, the band had been temporarily derailed by line-up changes—and her decision to have a child. Seven months pregnant, Love recently moved into a new house in the hills overlooking the Hollywood Bowl. "I just feel fat and hot," she explains, "like I'm a bowling ball."

Only six months earlier, Love's band was the object of a fevered bidding war, courted by several major labels including Madonna's then-unannounced imprint, Maverick. The buzz began with *Pretty on the Inside*, Hole's 1991 debut album on Caroline Records. Produced by Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and Gumball's Don Fleming, the record became flavor of the month in England that summer, though the music was anything but pretty. On songs like "Teenage Whore" and "Good Sister Bad Sister," Love suggested Henry Rollins' twisted sister fronting Sonic Youth.

It wasn't the album that attracted the A&R men so much as an appearance on the BBC's influential "John Peel Show," when Hole performed more accessible acoustic-based material. "I don't think labels really understood *Pretty on the Inside*, because it was so abrasive," Love recalls. "But when we did the John Peel thing, people went apeshit, because it was so different."

Rock 'n' roll obsessed Love from an early age. "I remember seeing the Runaways record in about fifth grade, and saying, 'Man, that's what I want to be. I want to be a girl rock star. That's a great career choice.' But I was in fifth grade. I wasn't very punk rock at that point."

At age 15 Love traveled to Europe with her father, who'd accepted a job at a university in Ireland. But she shortly went her own way, hooking up briefly with Brit-pop madcap Julian Cope in Liverpool. There have since been reports in the English music weeklies that Cope wrote songs about Love, including the Teardrop Explodes' "When I Dream."

"Come on," Love laughs. "I was like this fat little 15-year-old fol-

lowing him around like a dog. He wasn't really my boyfriend. He just sort of adopted me. I was like his pet."

Her next musical adventure took place in the Bay Area, fronting an early incarnation of Faith No More a decade before the band became platinum-selling arena rockers. "I was just the singer," Love says. "I'd pick up a guitar and they would laugh at me. I'm still really good friends with someone in that band, but it was frustrating to be around so many boys that were so into being boys. I like playing with girls better for the same reason guys like playing with guys. It's more comfortable. It's a lot more fun."

Her first move in that direction was a band called Sugar Babydoll, which included Kat Bjelland, now of Babes in Toyland, and L7's Jennifer Finch. Love claims she bought Finch her first bass and that Bjelland was her best friend. But the band, "real mellow and acoustic," didn't last. After about a year, she was thrown out.

"I came back to L.A. sort of broken and miserable. I thought, well, I'm going to have the hardest band of all, and when it came time to do *Pretty on the Inside* I stuck with that line. I didn't put anything that anyone could call jangly on the album."

The all-women concept remained in Love's mind, but the first person she hooked up with when forming Hole was Eric Erlandson, the only other original member who is part of the band today. "I didn't care because he was so cool and he played really cool. He played like a girl. He just had that certain rhythm that girls have. Culturally, they are not so indoctrinated to play perfect leads."

(Told of Love's comments, Erlandson tends to agree. "I'm not afraid of my feminine side, but I also know my macho side and how to deal with it," he says. "I use a more feminine style of playing without a lot of swanky-guy leads. Girls can play that way too, but it's more of a guy thing, that cock-rock stuff.")

With bassist Jill Emery and drummer Caroline Rue (both have since left the band), Hole recorded two singles, "Retard Girl" on Sympathy for the Record Industry, and "Dicknail" for Sub Pop. "It's like, 'Hey daddy, fuck you,'" Love explains the latter. But she insists her songs are not necessarily autobiographical. "The British press has set me up as someone who has lived it, but I think that's really dumb. You don't have to live it. I'm searching for good songwriting."

Besides, she goes on, asking if a song like "Teenage Whore" is autobiographical is implicitly "kind of sexist. Boys can write things and it's automatically perceived as being allegorical. Do you think my husband raped Polly?"—a reference to Nirvana's "Polly." "And would it cross your mind to even ask him if he raped Polly? Some of it's real and some of it's not."

When the bidding war started, Love took meetings with just about every interested party. "My lawyer, who is a woman, was really into it, because there hasn't been a big bidding war for a female-oriented band as far back as she could remember." One such meeting took place with Madonna's manager Freddy DeMann. "Madonna called in the middle and they made this really big deal about how I should get on the phone with her," Love recalls. "I felt really uncomfortable. It was like I was supposed to get on the phone with her and be so fucking impressed. Part of me was just scared to talk to her and the other part thought that it was really nervy of her. How dumb did she think I was? I told him she could call me at home later and they just flipped out. It was like she was the queen."

In fact, Love did end up having a few conversations with Madonna. "She's pretty cool, but I didn't really want her to be my boss."

Love met Kurt Cobain when they were both teenagers "at the start

of punk rock in Portland." The couple went out for about three weeks until they broke up at a D.O.A. show. "He went off with my best friend," she says. But their paths kept crossing, often with Hole supporting Nirvana. They became friends again, with Love attempting to fix him up with her pals. Then their romance reignited.

"We're just a lot alike," she says. "We're like best friends and we can hang out." The two were married last year on the beach in Honolulu during a stop on a Nirvana tour, witnessed by Nirvana drummer David Grohl and a couple of roadies. "It wasn't that big of a deal, I just did it to do it and have it over with. I didn't want to be jealous of other girls," she laughs.

Nonetheless, the marriage has done wonders for Love's and Cobain's notoriety, among other things sparking reports that they've been addicted to drugs throughout Love's pregnancy. "It's really sexist and horrifying to find that you've worked hard for something and then people are trying to invalidate you because you're affiliated with someone more famous than yourself." Love insists that she and Cobain are not junkies, claiming that early this year, "I took a bunch of Valium, I got really drunk and I was a blithering fool while I was out in New York. The next day it was like, 'You guys are fucked up.'"

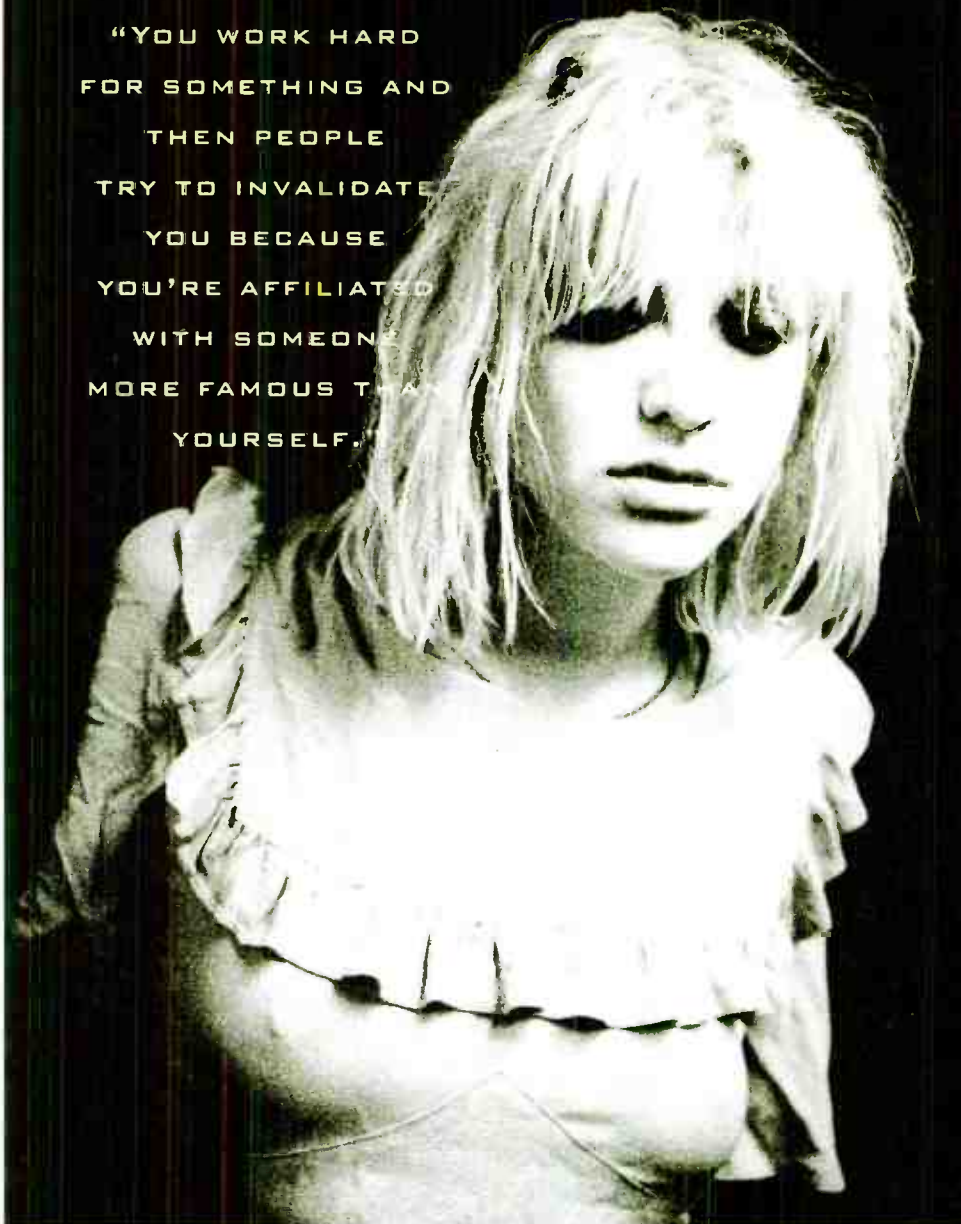
Occasionally Love and Cobain write songs together, but neither has plans to use them on their records. "I wish he was a girl," she cracks. "I'd let him be in my band." She predicts that Hole will record as soon as she has her baby, her "hormones stop being insane" and she finds a new bass player.

And what will her new songs deal with? "Me and how fucking depressed and paranoid I am," she says, adding that since the wedding she and Cobain have lost most of their friends.

"It's not like I'm dwelling on the negative," she says. "If my life was all sunshine, that's what I would write about. I'm attracted more to the bad things because there are more of them, frankly. I had a brief period of bliss for about two-and-a-half months. We got married, we wanted to have a baby, we fell in love and had a new best friend. It was so nice and blissful. Like being on drugs all the time—really expensive drugs that they don't make. It was great. But then it went away." On August 18th, Courtney gives birth to a baby girl she and Kurt name Frances.

L7 HAS BEEN AT IT FOR SEVEN YEARS, and it may be their lucky number. *Bricks Are Heavy*, produced by Butch Vig (whose credits include Nirvana's *Nevermind*), has earned the band a spot on *Billboard's* new artist and pop album chart. Working with L7 was a new experience for Vig. "The dynamic of working with four women is definitely different than working with male-dominated bands," he says. "Women are more open in terms of dialogue and conversation and more emotional in terms of communication, which sounds like a cliché, but it's true. At times they were real over-the-top in communicating. They would be real intense and a couple of hours later they

"YOU WORK HARD
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YOU'RE AFFILIATED
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YOURSELF."



would be really squirrely and goofy. They were very honest also; if they didn't like something they would tell me."

Vig met the members of L7 a few years ago, in the early stages of producing *Nevermind*. At the time, Finch was going out with Nirvana's David Grohl. "She dragged me off to see one of L7's shows," Vig recalls. "I liked them a lot. They were a lot of fun." Producing *Bricks Are Heavy*, he didn't try to change their sound. "They had a certain style down, and I just tried to tighten them up and get the rhythms more focused and make sure everyone was locked in on bridges or choruses. To keep the record as intense as possible, and keep the band in your face with the sound they had developed live."

L7 claims to be a democracy, with no member more prominent than another. But Donita Sparks, who wrote or cowrote most of *Bricks Are Heavy*, is clearly the leader. When she made her abrupt exit from our interview, she gave the other members permission to stay. Bassist Finch is a strong-willed second in command. Drummer Dee Plakas provides occasional comic relief but tends to remain in the background, as does guitarist Suzi Gardner. The band members favor grunge anti-fashions—old jeans, T-shirts—but on this day Gardner, who came straight from a brief vacation in the desert, is wearing a checked sundress with

her blonde hair up. She almost seems too straight to be in the group.

After touring almost nonstop since February, L7 is taking a few weeks off before hitting the road again as a support act for the Beastie Boys. After that, the band is slated to play England's Reading Festival, with Nirvana topping the bill.

If this is success, so far it feels like a slippery ride. "We used to make money on tours," Sparks notes. "Now we lose money on tours."

"But we do get to travel in the same bus that John Denver used," Plakas injects. "So

that balances out being broke."

L7 took root in 1985, when Sparks and Gardner recruited Finch into the band. Unlike Hole, they didn't set out to be an all-women ensemble. There was even a male drummer at one point, but the "Pete Best of L7," as the members now refer to him, didn't last long. Their self-titled debut record was released on Epitaph in 1987 to fanzine raves, but soon became a rarity when the distributor went out of business. With Plakas behind the drums, the group recorded their *Smell the Magic* EP for Sub Pop in 1990.

"Sub Pop is a really good label," Finch says. "But they just didn't have the distribution." Too many visits to small towns and even big cities where they couldn't find their records in stores became an exercise in frustration. "It didn't seem like a situation that was going to clear up any time real soon and quite frankly we're getting old," adds Finch, 25. "We didn't want to wait around."

But L7 was so closely aligned with the underground scene that its decision to sign with Slash brought a flurry of fan criticism and a few cries of sellout. "If we were on MTV wearing 'Dynasty' fashions, or dressed like En Vogue, people could say 'sellout,'" Sparks says. In fact, the band has remained staunchly political, including efforts to put together "Rock for Choice," an organization that stages pro-choice benefit concerts.

L7 likes to rock, but they do it with a refreshing lack of self-importance. Onstage they often mock cock-rock poseurs. "Not because it's gay rock," Finch says. "A lot of that stuff is lame rock, whether it's made by Bon Jovi or Vixen."

Talk turns to a recently published trade journal photo featuring two former members of the latter band, provocatively dressed and holding a sign that reads: "WILL FUCK FOR A RECORD DEAL."

L7 is not amused. "They need a talking to," says Finch. "Where's their phone numbers?"

Maybe she'll blow up their toilets. ☺

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L7 PEGS IN ROUND HOLES

L7's SUZI GARDNER plays Gibson Melody Makers, in brown and blue, through a Marshall JCM 800 and Marshall 4x12 cabinet. For effects, she's got a Cry-Baby, a Boss Heavy Metal, and a ProCo Rat. DONITA SPARKS' Gibson Flying V gets cranked by a Maestro Fuzz pedal and a Marshall with a Hiwatt cab, while JENNIFER FINCH favors a Fender Jazz bass, an SVT 11 amp, and an SVT 810E cab. DEE PLAKAS thrashes a Tama Imperial Star kit with Tama and Sonor snares and Zildjian cymbals. As for Hole, COURTNEY LOVE plugs her Rickenbacker six-string, Fender Jazzmaster and Mosrite into a pre-CBS Fender Twin. ERIC ERLANDSON's '69 Fender Telecaster, Rickenbacker and Les Paul copy go in stereo through an old Super Reverb and a modified Marshall Riviera 2x12. Both Courtney and Eric use D'Addario strings. PATTY SCHUMEL bashes a Maple Series Pearl kit with Quantum 1000 sticks.

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World Radio History

Paul Fox: College Rock Wizard

by TED DROZDOWSKI



Producer Paul Fox came up as a keyboard player in the skinny-tie era. "When I first moved to L.A., there was a big banner on Sunset Boulevard that read, 'Welcome—the Knack.' Everyone was trying to jump on the new-wave bandwagon. A group of us became the rhythm sections to a lot of bands you never heard of."

Fox built his resume and his contacts, graduating to studio work as a player, programmer and arranger for Patti LaBelle, Mötley Crüe, Bernie Taupin and a host of other artists, under a battery of producers including Richard Perry, Bob Ezrin and Jellybean Benitez. Fox's first shot at producing came via Virgin Records, and he landed a solid one-two punch. His work with Boy George helped take the single "Live My Life" into the Top 40 in February 1988; a month later, he scored again with Scarlett & Black's "You Don't Know," which hit number 20. As a budding heavyweight, Fox was asked to run down Virgin's roster of artists who were looking for producers. His finger stopped at "X," for XTC. Since that day in '88, Fox has produced XTC's radio-friendly *Oranges & Lemons*, Robyn Hitchcock and the Egyptians' smartly crafted *Perspex Island*, the Sugarcubes' typically bouncy *Stick Around for*

Joy and the Wallflowers' debut.

Lately Fox has been holed up in Bearsville, the Woodstock, New York studio-in-a-barn that Albert Grossman built, adding 10,000 Maniacs' new *Our Time in Eden* to his already considerable college-rock credits. Bearsville, with its beautiful Neve 8088 board, spacious live room and proximity to New York City, is the L.A.-based 38-year-old's favorite East Coast port o' call.

Including intensive preproduction rehearsals with the band, Fox has been on the job seven weeks, with a few more days of tracking left before he takes the master tapes back to L.A. to mix. "I'm not sure that people who spend a year making a record make better records than people who just bash it out," Fox allows, settling back into a soft couch in Bearsville's control room. "My philosophy is that if you can't make a good album in two or three months, something's wrong. You're trying to create something that doesn't exist."

Nailing what does exist to tape is Fox's goal. And while he likes to take each recording situation as it comes, he does have some rules. For starters, he travels with his own vocal mike. "If I have any secret for recording vocals, it's the combination of using the mike that I own, a beautiful-sounding AKG C-12, and the right amount of compression. I haven't found anyone that doesn't sound wonderful on it—although I've also been privileged enough to work with great singers. The mike's very expensive. It costs \$100 to \$150 a day just to rent one, and most budgets I get can't spend \$400 to \$500 a week on a mike, so I bought my own."

On the compression end, Fox credits the touch of engineer Ed Thacker, his studio sidekick since *Oranges & Lemons*. "Ed has a way of using compression and gain to help singers get more excited, because the soft tones become more present. Those soft tones can be very endearing—you hear a little vibrato, a little more of the mouth tones."

So to capture the huge breadth that singing Icelandic spitfire Bjork Gudmundsdottir of the Sugarcubes contains in her petite frame, Thacker "put a lot of preamp on her vocals, so they could be cranked up loud and the soft stuff—the nuances—came through. The compression doesn't react until the singer's volume rises, so when Bjork got louder—which

on the other hand, was a challenge in the technical sense. "Bowie was unhappy with the way his last two or three solo albums had sounded. I agreed. They were far too corporate, polished and in-time for my liking. I wanted to capture the band as they were at that particular moment—raw, powerful, live and basically very unrehearsed! In the back of my mind I hoped the sound would follow on from the *Scary Monsters, Lodger* period.


"Bowie's voice sounded great through a Shure SM57—very low-tech but what the hell. Reeves' sound was as diverse as his choice of

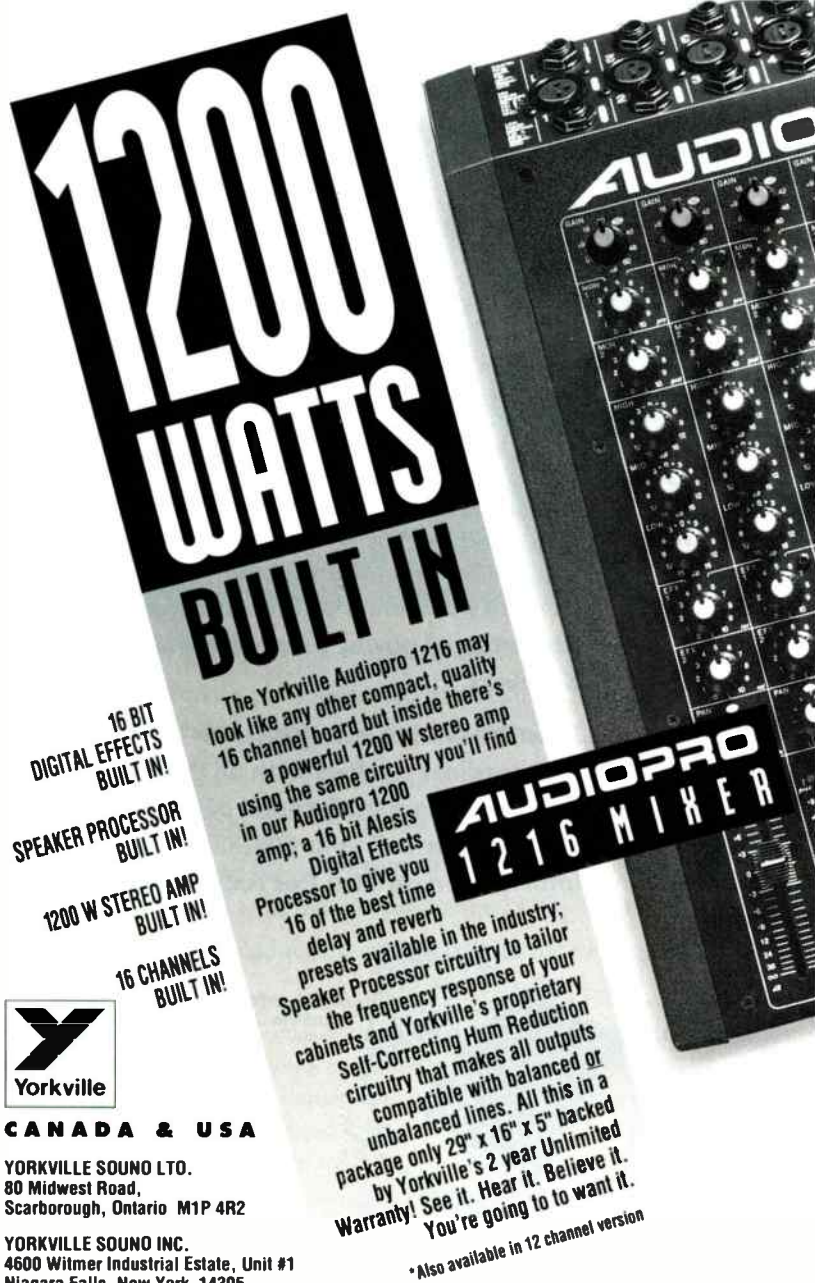
notes, with plenty of speaker distress thrown in. He was aptly named 'His Oddness.' Hunt and Tony are as outrageous in character as they are in sound. It was a fun project but by no means as easy as it sounds. Getting a performance from the band onto tape was more about catching them all in one place at the same time!

"When we were recording in the Bahamas, we arrived to discover we were at least six mike stands short. We were told they would take a minimum of seven days to arrive so we decided to make do. Most of the mikes on songs like 'Crack City' were hung by string from the ceiling."

Palmer prefers to work quickly and believes time restrictions and technical limitations can be transformed into strengths. Thus the *Burning Tree* album was recorded and mixed in Los Angeles in 30 days—"Marc Ford, who is now the guitarist in the Black Crowes, seemed to play his best stuff in the first couple of takes anyway"—and Palmer resorted to shaking a pepper mill and clanging a fire extinguisher on the Pearl Jam album rather than wait for an alternative sound source to be hired in.

"I feel it is important never to stamp your sound on a group but to let them stamp theirs on you," he says. "I could waffle on for hours about dynamics and sounds, but in the end it really is the choice of songs that will make or break an album. You can't make mystery from Meccano and you can't polish a turd. You cannot replace the craft of songwriting by personality and sonics, or vice versa. They must go together.

"Too many times albums are nothing but a hotch-potch of tracks, producers, remixes and studios. Call me old-fashioned, but I think 'the album' was lost for quite some time and hopefully things are now slowly heading back in the right direction." 



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Studer A800: "The best analog tape recorder ever made, I reckon."

EMT valve plate and Lexicon 224X: "The warmth of the old valve plates has not been matched by digital equipment, in my opinion. Something like the 224 does, however, offer so much versatility."

Shure SM57 and valve Neumann U47 and U67: "I use the SM57 for bloody well everything, great on guitars, great on drums, the best mike on snares, and really good on some voices. U47s and U67s are also good all-round mikes but you wouldn't want to use them on a snare."

Urei LA2A compressor: "They're fairly transparent—you can compress a vocal considerably and it will still sound even."

Eventide H3000 harmonizer: "User-friendly and you can do what you want with it."

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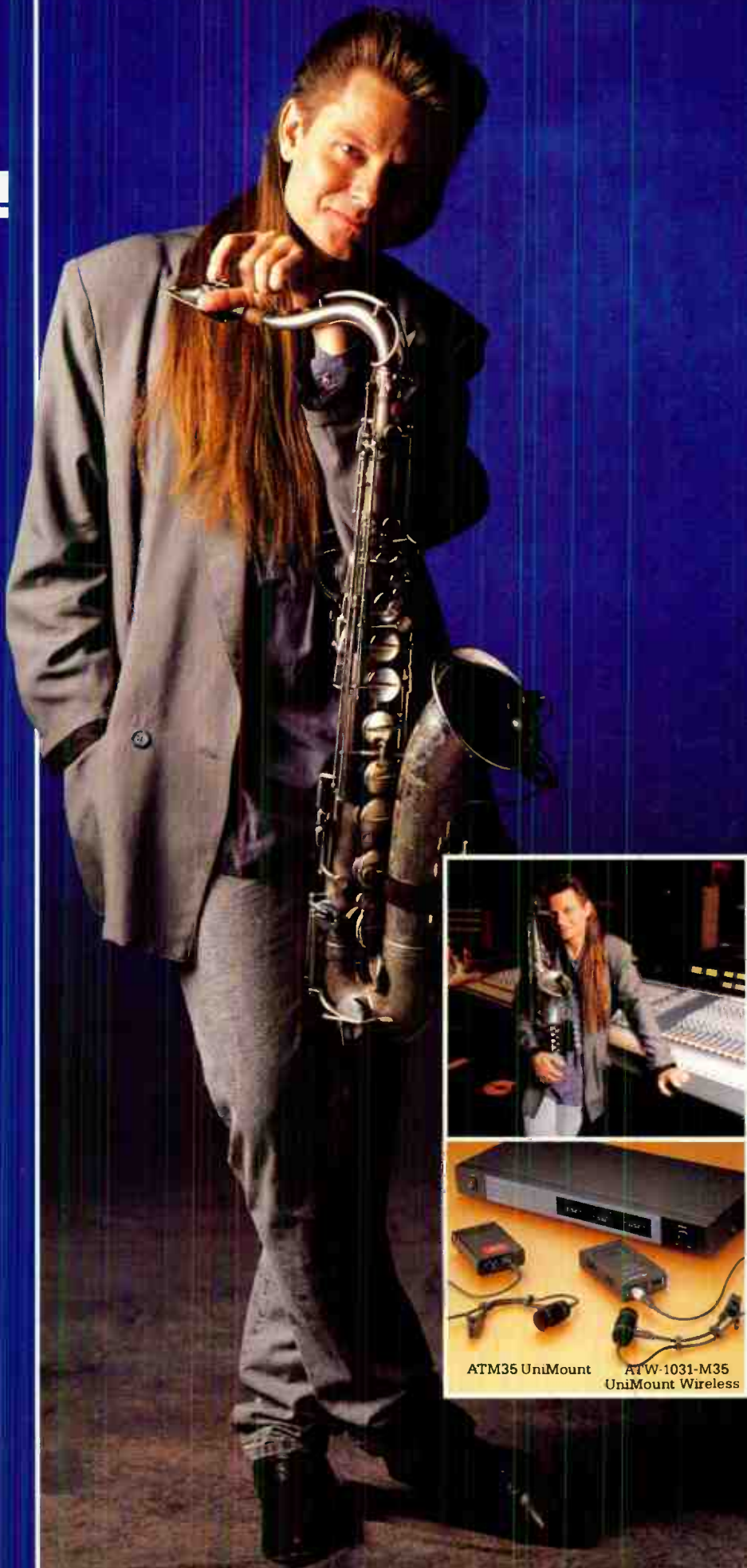
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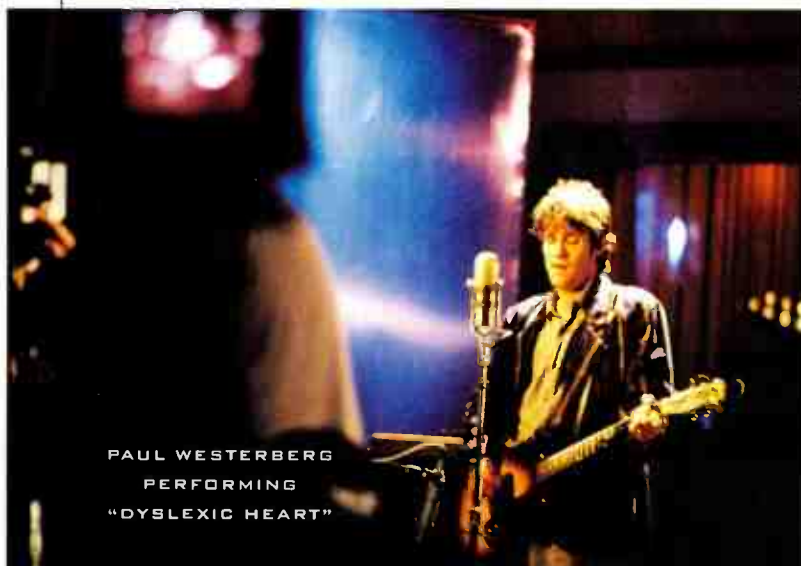


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Director's Cut: Scoring "Singles"

by CAMERON CROWE



PAUL WESTERBERG
PERFORMING
"DYSLEXIC HEART"

Almost every month for the last 10 years, I've made a C-90 road tape of my favorite music. It's just about the most fun I have. Late at night, trying not to wake up the neighbors, I'll cram all kinds of stuff onto the tape, label it and then play it to death. Years later, I'll dig the tape

out again, and it always feels like a diary.

One day in 1988 I got the insane idea that I could make a movie with the same sensibility. It would be a movie about young singles, filled with authentic characters, set in Seattle. The music would be largely local, personal favorites like Mother Love Bone and Soundgarden, and the whole story would play like an album. Even the ending was clear to me. The movie, *Singles*, would end with voices from all over the city, people obsessing about love, about making that connection, and then suddenly the screen would cut to black. The Beach Boys' "God Only Knows" would play over the final credits. It gave me chills just writing it.

It was late in 1991 when I finally had a rough cut. In many secret ways, the entire movie was an excuse to get to this moment. Quietly and solemnly, music producer Danny Bramson and I sat with our sphinx-like music editor Carl Kaller. We watched the end of the movie, overlaid with "God Only Knows." We sat in silence. Some ideas are better on paper. It sounded too holy, too sanctimonious, from another decade.

Carl turned and offered us a look typically devoid of emotion. "Let's get some lunch," he said.

The quest for a final song would go on for more than a year. We tried everything from Joe South's "Games People Play" to Killing Joke's "Requiem" to "The Blue Danube." It became a monolithic problem. What piece of music could put a period on the whole movie? Who would pull the sword from the stone? Why did I even make this movie, instead of a C-90? Such is the dilemma of putting music in movies.

The truth is that music is usually the bastard son of celluloid, begrudgingly invited to the table at the last minute, mostly out of duty. Then, often, it must *save* the movie. It must smooth over the rough spots, even out the plot inconsistencies...and wait, let's get Kenny Loggins to write a love theme! And make a video! And the video must feature clips from the movie! And bingo. Late at night on MTV, up comes a clip where uncomfortable movie stars must mingle with an artist who hasn't seen the movie yet, but just had this B-side lying around...

Early on, *Singles* took a small amount of money from Epic Records, who gave us creative control over our soundtrack album. The money was then applied to the budget of the movie, and the arrangement allowed me to film two extra days. The commercial yoke of a *Footloose*-type soundtrack off us, we were free to work with artists who read and connected with the script. Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard, then with Mother Love Bone, had been providing interviews and inspiration from the beginning. They'd even helped talk Matt Dillon into playing the part of fictional Seattle rocker Cliff Poncier. (Virtually unknown locally, Dillon's character is "huge in Belgium and Italy." Written as parody in 1989, his dialogue now plays almost like a documentary.)

Mother Love Bone later became Pearl Jam, and their involvement in the movie increased. Gossard, Ament and singer Eddie Vedder took acting jobs as Dillon's band, Citizen Dick. The group also did double duty, recording *Ten* while we were filming. One afternoon a weary Ament came to the set with a cassette of new songs for the movie. "State of Love and Trust" was first up, and an instant inclusion into *Singles*. Vedder's words caught the desperation of single life perfectly. The next day we filmed Bridget Fonda dancing alone, listening to



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the song on a boom-box. Later, the band recorded another new song, "Breath," while on tour. (Guitarist Mike McCready also contributed a bluesy instrumental, "The Mad Season.")

Soundgarden was set to contribute a new song to *Say Anything*, a movie I directed in 1989, but their record company had nixed it in favor of another movie with an in-house soundtrack. Singer Chris Cornell had promised that we'd connect on the next one, and I wrote Soundgarden's live performance into the script. Cornell first offered "Jesus Christ Pose," written for a particularly emotional scene in the

movie. The scene had a hard time competing with the power of Cornell's words. Two weeks later, Cornell sent over another new song, "Birth Ritual." Even on a bad cassette player in Campbell Scott's trailer, we knew it was a perfect fit.

Standing around during the long hours of filming, Danny Bramson and I would often kill time talking about our dream musical participants. One day, waiting for a wailing child actor to calm down, I turned to Bramson.

"Paul Westerberg," I said.

"Might be tough," said Danny.

Four months later, Paul Westerberg warily

entered our dorm-like office in Hollywood. He'd accepted our plane ticket from Minneapolis, but the flinty look on his face said he was expecting maybe to step over Barton Fink's carcass on the way in. A Replacements fan of the highest order, I tried not to ask the usual questions. ("The band is on hiatus," he said flatly. "So what's this movie about?") Danny and I showed him a rough cut on videotape, talking him through the unfinished sections like two magpies. When it ended Westerberg thoughtfully lit up his hundredth cigarette.

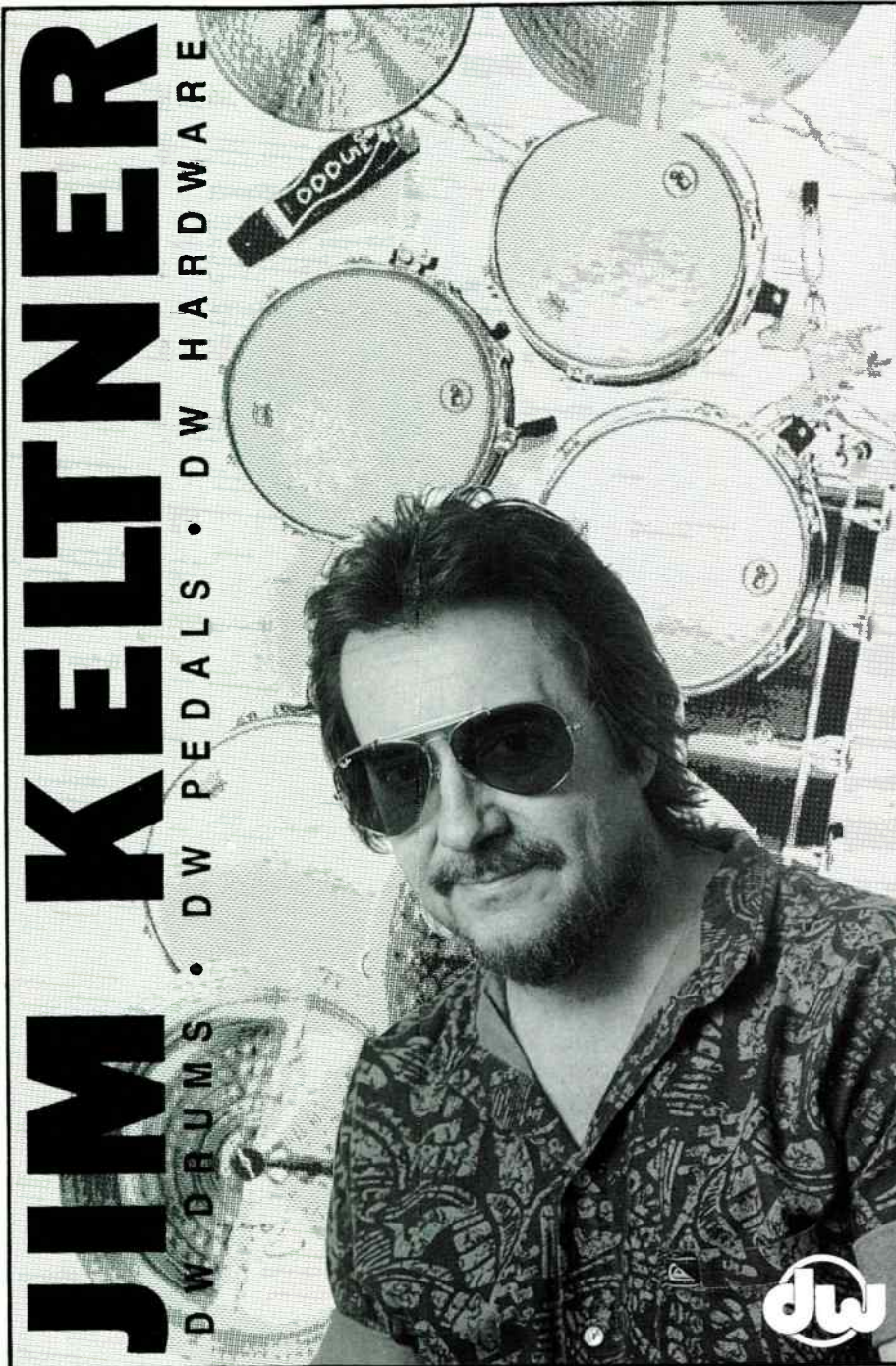
"I think we can work something out," he said. "I'll need a guitar and tape recorder and I'll call you in the morning."

Westerberg called the next day with two new songs. I picked him up at the hotel, and we listened to the cassette in my car. The first song was a beautiful new ballad called "Make the Best of Me." The other was a classic Westerberg rocker performed with hotel-room abandon, "Dyslexic Heart." Playful and ironic, the song was immediately right for *Singles*.

As the months rolled on, we kept returning to the music of Chris Cornell and Paul Westerberg to thread the movie's many stories together. Westerberg's work captured the romantic spirit of *Singles*, while Cornell's voice and guitar enhanced the darker nature of the movie's second half. On a two-day break from Soundgarden's road schedule, Cornell flew to Los Angeles last January and recorded a slew of instrumentals. His guitar work snakes through the movie, lending weight in important ways. Later, Westerberg would also return from Minneapolis and compose the rest of the movie's score.

Scoring a movie is delicate hit-or-miss stuff. The best movie music is subliminal, it bypasses your head and goes straight to your heart. The laborious process involves playing to a video monitor, trying things many different ways, sometimes hitting it but mostly missing. Chain-smoking for days on end, Westerberg put his heart into every scoring attempt. Often the music was stunning, but not quite right. It had to be discarded. I kept waiting for him to blow his stack, but it never happened. This is why most film composers end up hacks, it's just too painful, and at a certain point they remove their passion from the equation. They learn to deliver music by the yard.

Not Westerberg. Often in the eleventh hour, he'd come up with a hand-clap or a vocal passage, some classic pop device that would bring a scene to life. If there was a mistake in the musical performance, all the better. One night I suggested correcting a bum note in an otherwise great guitar take. Westerberg just looked at me, mortally wounded. The cue appears in the



movie in all its flawed perfection.

Music in *Singles* followed a basic rule. *You know when it's right.* When something didn't work, it was usually impossible to know why. When it did, it was impossible to miss. I wasn't in the room, but I'll bet that the first time Spike Lee played Stevie Wonder's "Living for the City" against the crack-house scene in *Jungle Fever*, it probably took him about three seconds to turn to someone and say, "I have to have this song."

Often, you can't get the song that gave you chills.

In the original script of *Say Anything*, John Cusack hoisted up his boom-box and blasted Billy Idol's "To Be a Lover" into Ione Skye's bedroom. By the time we filmed the scene, the song had lost its brief appeal. Cusack, a blazing Fishbone fan, jumped in and suggested "Party at Ground Zero." We filmed the scene with Fishbone on the boom box. It seemed eccentric, defiant, cool at the time. Cusack was fixed, intense as the camera moved in on him. It looked like the ultimate expression of obsessional love. When we first screened the movie, though, something was very wrong. The lighthearted song, matched with Cusack's humorless face, made the scene unintentionally hilarious. It looked, in fact, like Ione Skye was being serenaded by a crazed Fishbone fan.

The search continued. Film editor Richard Marx and I rifled through both our collections. Nothing worked. In my car, by chance, was a tape of music I'd made for my wedding in 1986 (titled, in a moment of C-90 bliss, "The Legendary I-Do Tape"). On the tape was Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes," and a more perfect match couldn't exist. After much soul-searching on Gabriel's part, he finally allowed us to use his most personal song for the scene.

IN RECENT YEARS, soundtrack albums have come to mean much more than just a souvenir from the film. These days it's a marketing device that can make or break a movie. Hollywood is now filled with music supervisors, constantly trolling the waters for hit songs. A journalist friend of mine once went to interview Billy Idol (him again) and saw the rough cuts of Hollywood's biggest upcoming movies strewn around his hotel room. All of them were begging for a new song. Everybody wants that mythical "tie-in," that one song that sells the movie and the album and the artist and the soda pop too.

With *Singles*, we consciously wanted to go in the other direction. There would be no real "single" on the *Singles* soundtrack. Most of the music, like the movie, was a labor of love. One of the songs, Chris Cornell's "Seasons," began as a joke. Pearl Jam's Jeff Ament worked for a

time in the *Singles* art department. Ament is an accomplished artist who designs his own album covers and graphics. Among his many creations for the movie were the logo, the album cover, everything from the career of the fictional band Citizen Dick. Ament even designed the solo acoustic cassette sold on the street corner, after Cliff Poncier has lost his band. (Some of the hilariously "sensitive" song titles: "Seasons," "Nowhere but You" and "Flutter Girl.")

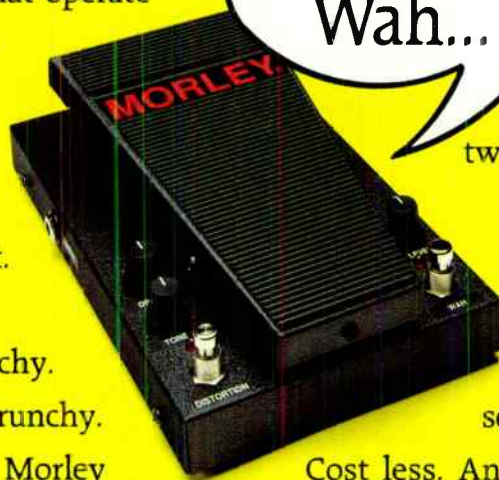
Chris Cornell took it upon himself to actually write and record the songs listed on the cassette box. They are home-studio gems, very different

from Soundgarden, and all delivered with deadpan earnestness. It skates the edge. Is it a joke, or is it just great music? Or both? The Poncier tape became a cutting-room standard. Cornell's elaborate gag first seeped into our brains, and then the movie. We had to have "Seasons," and after some deft maneuvering from manager Susan Silver, the song appears on our album too.

For me, picking the music is the most gloriously difficult part of the entire process. Forget about the minefield known as the Directing Part. For those tough moments, I've learned behavior modification. More [cont'd on page 88]

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Hal Willner: Alone in the Dark

by GENE SANTORO



Sixty years ago the Marx Brothers shot *Animal Crackers* in Astoria, at Paramount's East Coast studios. Last spring, Master Sound Studio, part of that now-refurbished complex, hosted producer Hal Willner's recording sessions for *Weird Nightmare*, a tribute to Charles Mingus. Strange sculptures—legless wooden coneheads, pottery hanging from gnarled frames—hulk around the studio

floor amid the usual tangle of cables, keyboards, amps, baffles. Camera crews (directed by head Kink Ray Davies) clamber around them to film Elvis Costello, Henry Threadgill, Robert Quine, Geri Allen, Bill Frisell and the other musicians streaming in and out. Through the control-room window, Willner watches crowd scenes that look like *Animal Crackers* outtakes.

The sculptures turn out to be instruments. Willner has focused on Mingus through an odd lens: composer Harry Partch, who devised his own 43-note scale from ancient tuning systems and built instruments like the harmonic canon, cloud chamber bowls, chromelodeon and marimba eroica to play his music. Willner's worktapes—the project's conceptual blueprints, which he distributed to his musician-collaborators—juxtaposed Mingus tunes with sounds like Tibetan dirges. Partch, like Mingus an Ameri-

can original interested in Oriental and African cultures, slotted in as a kind of missing link.

The connection makes musical sense. Take Vernon Reid's session for Mingus' raw-boned "Work Song," which includes Frisell, Allen, Don Byron and Partch performer Francis Thumm. Reid starts his crew ad-libbing a dawn-of-time crescendo on the Partch instruments. Then, cued by his shouts of "Let's work!" they walk back to their regular axes, their footsteps carefully caught on the rolling tape. Reid and Frisell strafe each other on guitar, Allen whiplashes the chromelodeon and Byron tortures his clarinet. The finale leads them back to Partchland, where they wail and pound. When Thumm slams the harmonic canon at jagged intervals, the entire studio shudders. "It's like a dinosaur stalking through the Garden of Eden," he exults during the playback. The Marx Brothers, upsetters of convention, would have approved.

Willner has made a career of upsetting expectations. His tribute albums scramble combinations of musicians and tunes that look wacky, but work by finding an unnoticed nexus where player and music redefine each other. They may not pull in big bucks, but they sure have spawned a generally admiring sea of ink and a host of imitators. In fact, one of the few times Willner's voice rises out of its customary monotone is when you mention his wannabes. Usually he's offhanded, which cloaks his intense attitudes. "I always felt I ended up producing records because it was convenient," is a characteristic statement. "It could have been anything else."

And when you watch him work in the studio, if you're not paying attention you might even believe what he says. He spends his energy on the conception and editing stages of a project. When the players and tape machines are in the same place, he becomes a kind of facilitator, coaxing recalcitrant musicians into one more take only if one of their peers doesn't, for instance. It's a hands-off tack that pays off big when it works, since the players get to shape their own input more than usual.

"I consider the producer's role like the frame of a picture," Willner says. "It can change the vibe, but the picture stays the same. I'm totally open. The Mingus project is the closest I've had to a definite it-should-sound-like-this. But even so, the minute I hear something go into what I think sounds great,



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I'll have the musicians try to put it into that direction. I don't usually come in and say it's gotta sound like this or that. Things build as we're doing it. It's very important how something begins and ends and how it gets there; that it's balanced between people who are well-known and people who aren't.

"If you have a Robert Quine or a Bill Frisell coming in, you want them for *them*; you've gotta get the best out of them for what they do, and you're not gonna do that by putting them in a cage. To an extent, you're already doing that by making them play on a kind of session they wouldn't normally play on. You create the atmosphere. But for me, it's what happens before and after. Once you're in there, you've just gotta make sure it comes out the best you can make it."

One reason for Willner's success at this is his lack of player's ego. He readily admits he's no musician. In fact, he chalks up much of his inspiration to '60s TV—"The Smothers Brothers," "Soupy Sales," "Mister Terrific," Norman Lear. "I had this overimagination," he says. "I still listen to music in the same way: I put myself into a *world*, usually very unsocial and alone.

"During the '69-'70 Woodstock period WDAS, in Philadelphia, was the last of personality radio. In the afternoon you'd get your Crosby, Stills and Nash; at night it would get harder, you might get the new Doors; at 10 you started to hear Zappa and Beefheart; at midnight they'd play radio from the '30s, like 'The Shadow'; and from 2 a.m. to 6 you'd get Ornette. That formed my taste. I feel bad for kids today, because they don't have that. How is someone gonna learn about music? Even college stations don't really do that anymore.

"And the *music* from the '60s," Willner enthuses. "*A Love Supreme*, *Sketches of Spain*, the Beatles' white album, the first Blood, Sweat & Tears record, some of the early Zappa—things like that changed my life, because they were a lot more than music; they were records that had beginnings, middles and ends. Overtures, undertures, out-tures. Out-and-out humor. Records had caught up with film and literature as a real art form. I don't know why it regressed. Music was at such a point then, and it just went back to being a bunch of songs. I guess it's obvious from the records I keep trying to make that I'm stuck in that era."

Willner's previous tribute albums—odd juxtapositions of musicians playing the music of Nino Rota, Brecht and Weill, and Walt Disney movies—have inspired less-than-inspired imitators. "There are all these 'tribute' records being made now. I thought it'd be great if people started doing these kind of things, but nobody's

doing it with the same approach. I wish they would use some central theme, some conceptual frame. They're all using people from their separate little worlds, too. You *can* put Betty Carter and the Replacements next to each other. In fact, I need that. I couldn't sit through an evening of the Replacements, though I love them. Now, for instance, they've done this Cole Porter thing for AIDS. I met with the record executive in charge. Even though they were using our direction, I heard him saying, 'You can't do what he does.' So even though they wanted me to work on it, they didn't want Tom Waits and Aaron Neville and Bill Frisell all in one place—"You can't do that." So it's strange: They're taking your ideas but they're not using your method of making them work. They got Steve Lillywhite to do it instead.

"I just want to make everything meet in music somehow. That's the only way it's gonna go anywhere. Jazz is stifling now. Whatever you see at Sweet Basil is something you've heard for 10 years. The thrash clubs—same thing. Everybody's gotta start bringing their things together to get anywhere. There's a corniness missing from the people who are trying to do that: There's nothing wrong with having a night of Bing Crosby, which the Knitting Factory never does. You don't need the arty vibe. Why don't they book Don McLean? Why doesn't Don McLean hire Bob Quine?"

"I'm not really in any one world. Music, if it comes from a social place, isn't where I come from—kids getting together. I'm someone who sees music as a book, something you do when no one else is around. I'm coming from music as extension of film. My confusion about the early punk scene comes from this. You're getting up there without knowing how to play because it's fun? I thought you were doing it to change my life." ❧

CROWE

[cont'd from page 85] than a few times while someone was hysterically telling me why a shot couldn't be done, or why an actor could never stay in *that* hotel room, I would nod. I looked like I was listening. But in fact, I was already sitting in a dark editing room, surrounded by mounds of film, happily auditioning different pieces of music to see what worked.

While we didn't want the *Singles* soundtrack to be another Seattle sampler, we certainly wanted to find a place for the bands in our midst. There is a pleasant unspoken community feel among the musicians in town. (Perhaps not even during the Summer of Love would a cityful of bands come together to perform a rousing benefit for a local rock journalist, Jeff Gilbert. His home was looted, his novel-in-progress stolen.)

The Lovemongers, Ann and Nancy Wilson's local acoustic band, had been playing sold-out shows around town for months. Our original idea was to have the Lovemongers cover Todd Rundgren's "Love of the Common Man." The Lovemongers recorded the song, but it didn't quite work in the movie. Looking for inspiration around the office one day, we put on a live tape of a Lovemongers show. The first song was their standard show-opener, "Battle of Evermore." We decided to use that very performance, with no overdubs.

Somewhere along the line during the making of the movie, alternative music slipped into the mainstream. Nirvana's "Been a Son" was long a mainstay in *Singles*. The band even submitted early rough mixes of "Smells like Teen Spirit," "Lounge Act" and "Something in the Way." As Nirvana exploded, negotiations grew far too complicated. (Finally, when a rough cut of the movie was requested to be sent to Australia, I begged off. The movie wasn't finished. Last thing I needed was a shitty copy of *Singles* on the Nirvana tour bus. We wished each other the best, and cheered them on from the sidelines.)

Jimi Hendrix's "May This Be Love" was always written into the script, and it miracu-

lously survived, even though a more lengthy showcase for the song had to be cut. I've always loved writing about the songs that become part of a budding young relationship. Even turning the radio on can sometimes be a gamble. The wrong song can ruin everything. The right song might stick forever.

Watching the movie around May of 1992, swimming in music, we knew that we still didn't have the perfect closing song for *Singles*. "Dyslexic Heart" had turned into a radio-esque anthem in the hands of Westerberg and co-producer Scott Litt, but somehow it was too tidy a final statement for the movie. We needed a new idea. Again we called on Westerberg, who flew out one more time. "I know you like me," he said, "but this is ridiculous." We worked on several new musical concepts for the end of the movie. Westerberg even adapted his opening theme into a new song, "Waiting for Somebody." We kept him longer still, asking him to perform a surf guitar backing for a dating video that appears in the movie. Westerberg played the surf theme several different ways, and then, as we swayed on tired legs, I asked him to try it just one more time, "more like a Sergio Leone Western."

His eyes narrowed. Finally, I had found the limits of Paul Westerberg's patience. He strapped on his guitar, looked at his watch. "I'm going to play it one more time, and then I'm going to leave." He did, and he did. Westerberg left behind a trove of original music for *Singles*. But with his plane halfway home, we realized that we still needed a different piece of music to sum up this movie, to capture the heartfelt emotions of our characters.

We discovered one of Westerberg's first ideas, a simple and soulful guitar piece. Back in our editing room, we carefully placed it against the movie. Fingers were crossed. Shades were drawn. Our production had run out of money. This was it. The editing machine rumbled to life. Danny, Carl and I sat and watched the ragged black-and-white dupe of the last scene in the movie. Westerberg's guitar brought out the tenderness in Matt Dillon and Bridget Fonda's last scene, it carried *Singles* to a grander place. The music drifted away as the voices of the city took over. After a while the shot ran out, and we cranked up "Dyslexic Heart."

"Well," said Carl Kaller, his poker-face beaming. "That gave me chills." 



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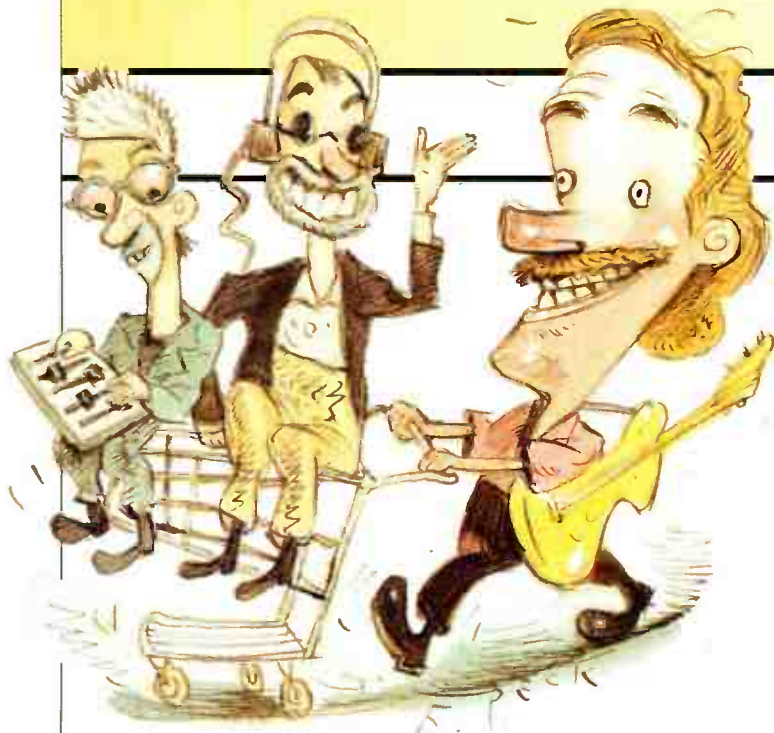
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How to Hire a Producer

by BILL STEPHEN



your friends; recommendations are the best resource. But don't act only on hearsay—still spend the time listening to their reels, going over their credits and getting to know them. Remember, although these professionals will be paid employees, there must be a degree of trust and mutual respect if you are to succeed in the studio.

The Producer

"A producer," said Chiele Minucci, independent producer and leader/composer for the group Special EFX, "makes it possible for you to have a creative musical experience in the studio by letting your artistry come through. They will handle everything from budgeting the recording session to booking studios to bringing in musicians to doing a final mix...in effect, almost everything that doesn't have to do with the music." On top of all that, the producer is your unemotional ear, the person who can help you make hard but appropriate decisions.

"If a band has an idea of what they want to sound like," continued Minucci, "then they need to go out and find a person who believes in their sound as it is and has the ability to get that on tape. But if they want to get a producer who can interpret and change their sound, then they need to listen to a lot of reels to find the right person. One of the most basic things is to be sure the producer agrees with the direction of the band, or that at least a middle ground can be reached."

What will you pay for all of this? Well, it varies. If it's a record deal, the producer can average about three percent of royalties and would get cash on top of that; if the recording budget is \$150,000, then the producer will receive between \$20,000 and \$25,000. For those looking to cut a demo, rates are negotiable. If the producer believes in your songs, he may do the sessions on spec, opting for a percentage of any record deal, although you will be expected to cover all of the expenses. A general range for a demo otherwise is \$500-\$1000 a tune.

The Engineer

Many producers have engineers they work closely with, which will result in more efficient use of studio time. Therefore, pick-

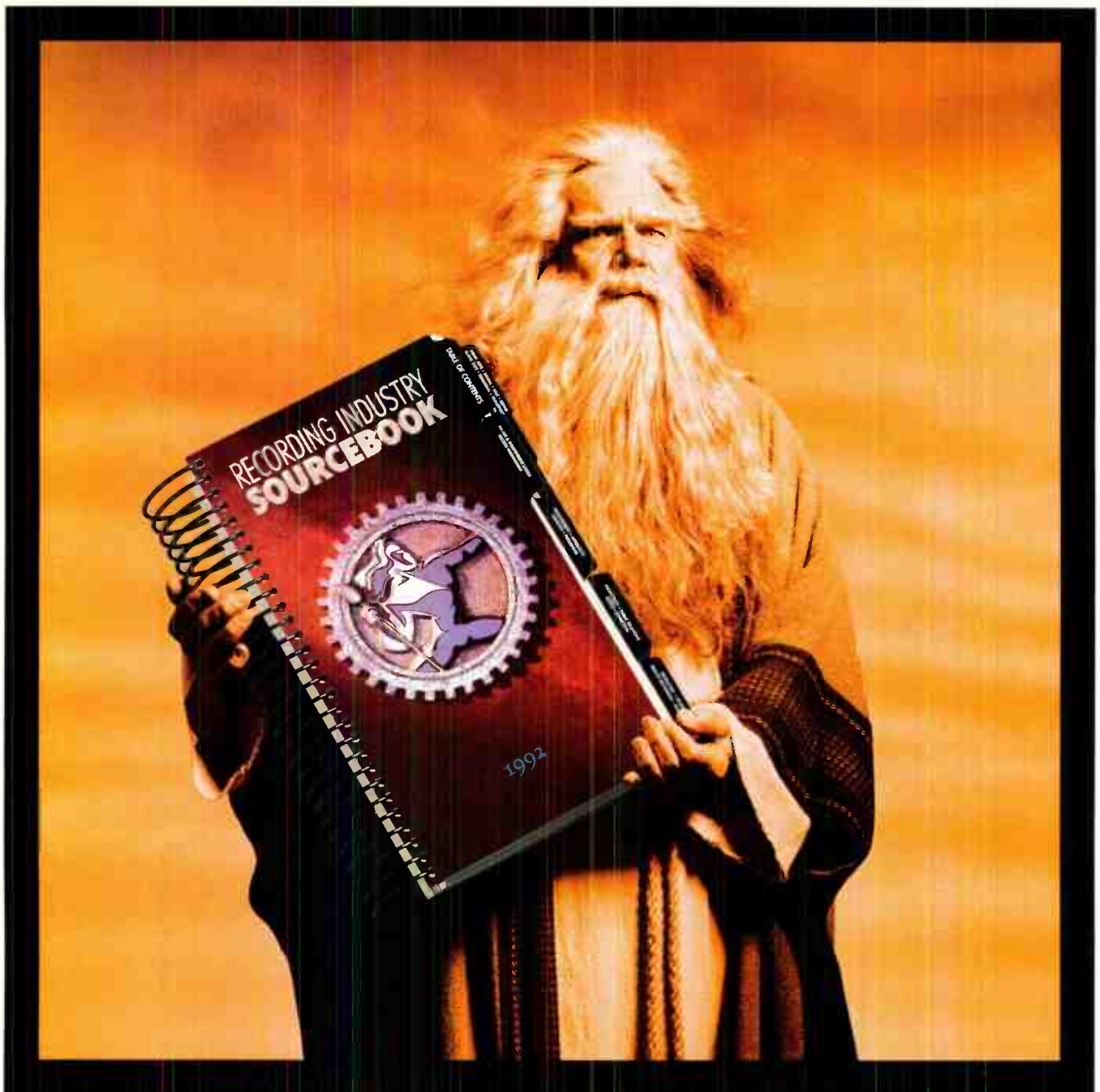
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oving out of the garage and into a professional recording studio can be the best or worst experience of your music career. A large part of this experience centers on the people you choose to bring your music

to tape, and the process of selection will test your talent and your patience as your music is interpreted by people you don't know. The guideline for choosing an engineer and/or producer is simple: Hedge your bet and buy talent. Stepping into a studio should be a *musical* experience and the only way to accomplish this is to be selective and look for people who can contribute to your music.

Before you talk with any potential producers/engineers, be sure to ask the following questions. In a producer, are you looking for someone to develop a sound or someone to bring your sound to its best level? In an engineer, is your need simply for a desk jockey to only record your music, or for a partner who can bring new sound possibilities and ideas to your music?

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ing the producer first can deliver a qualified engineer, but you should still request an audition to get to know him.

"I would look for a musical background in an engineer, someone who can also play an instrument," commented Paul Wickliffe, chief engineer and owner of Skyline Productions studio in New York City. "If you're a MIDI-oriented artist, you want someone who is savvy in that type of gear; if you're on the acoustic side, you want someone who has experience in miking technique. In effect, select an engineer based in the type of music you're doing. It's the job of

the engineer to keep the musician from having to deal with technology. This can guarantee a seamless performance and recording."

Once you've locked onto the engineer you want, what can you expect for your money? In the simplest sense, a recordist who will competently put your performance down on tape. On the other hand, you may expect a professional who will chart a profile of the sessions and map out an advance tracking (how many vocals, instruments, overdubs, etc.). He'll want to know what kind of sound you're going after, examples of sounds you want, etc., and he will either emu-

late your technical requirements or suggest mikes, techniques, effects, etc. for the best results. All in all, you want an engineer to put you at ease with his technological chops, while providing a creative, friendly atmosphere nearly devoid of technical considerations. It will be his role to handle all technical setup problems and, in most cases, do a premix for you and the producer to work with in attaining a final mix.

The price tag on these services depends on your needs. "The big, platinum engineers, mixing the big albums," says Wickliffe, "are getting about \$2000 per song plus their regular fee of \$50-\$100 an hour. For engineers with great technical chops but not big profiles, your costs will range between \$35 and \$50 an hour."

The Producer/Engineer

It's not uncommon to find multitasking recording teams wrapped in one person. Many engineers who possess great ears and a musical background have become producers in their own right. The most obvious benefit of this combination is a net savings (you're only paying for one person, rather than two), but you can also be looking at increased efficiency.

"I can be more efficient," said Wickliffe, "because I know how to get the sound I want, I don't need to translate this to anyone else."

Dan Weiss, owner of New York City's Mad Park Productions, agrees: "As a producer/engineer, I have an opportunity to more directly realize the production I have in my head. It's easier for me to bring it to fruition without having to explain it to an engineer. But I do believe if the budget allows, a separate producer is an important asset."

Weiss suggests when employing a production team to allow them the proper amount of time to achieve results; watching the clock or anticipating a speedy session has negative results. For a bare-bones interpretation of the song, including a mix, look to pay \$400-\$500 a song; a deluxe production would run between \$1000 and \$1500 per song.

As Weiss notes, "I think when you have a tight budget, it's best to try and negotiate a bulk price for the songs when you're using one person as both engineer and producer and to be extremely wary of the \$100 per song demo offers; good production takes time and experience and can't be had for that price."

Remember, everything is negotiable and talent yields results. "A lot of people shop for professionals like groceries," commented Wickliffe. "You should shop for competence over and above price. You can go in a budget studio and things can take twice as long as in a high-end studio."



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oments before the first reasonably priced hard disk recorders hit the market, random access digital recording technology promised to revolutionize the recording world. But excitement turned to confusion when dozens of companies deluged

the market with their spin on the ideal hard disk recorder. While the choices may be overwhelming, there's a bright side: Never before has a single recording technology provided so many options.

If you own or are thinking about purchasing a computer, you might consider a computer-based hard disk recorder. Popular systems for the Apple Macintosh II include **SONIC SOLUTIONS'** Sonic System and **DIGIDESIGN'S** Sound Tools and Pro Tools systems. The Sonic System records up to 24 tracks simultaneously, in resolutions ranging from 16 to 24 bits; with options such as the Sonic Solutions CDF printer and **NoNOISE** sonic restoration, it's preferred by many mastering facilities. The affordable Sound Tools and Pro Tools are found everywhere from home studios to film post-production facilities. Sound Tools is a 2-track setup; Pro Tools provides four to 16 tracks. Both record with 16-bit resolution.

If you prefer IBM, choices include the **SPECTRAL SYNTHESIS** AudioEngine, **TURTLE BEACH SYSTEMS'** 56K, and **MICRO TECHNOLOGY UNLIMITED'S** MicroSound. IBM-based systems cost significantly less than the lowest-priced Macs. AudioEngine utilizes the Windows operating system and provides from 4 to 16 tracks. With options such as the AudioVision, SynthEngine and AudioScope software packages, the AudioEngine can be configured for almost any audio application. MicroSound features two- and four-track versions and operates in Windows. One helpful MicroSound feature is an on-line manual that locates text pertaining to any icon or command with a click of the mouse. The 56K is a two-track recording/editing system with a digital interface box designed to be connected to the digital inputs of a DAT machine for mastering.

While computer-based systems offer exceptional recording and editing, they require a powerful (expensive) computer. And don't count on balancing your budget or playing Tetris, since these systems must be dedicated to digital recording in order to work efficiently. **YAMAHA'S** CBX-D5 sidesteps this. A hybrid computer/hardware-based system, it features built-in DSP and digital EQ, freeing the processor to handle other tasks. The CBX-D5 operates in conjunction with MIDI sequencing/digital audio software, including **STEINBERG'S** Cubase Audio for

Ataris and **MARK OF THE UNICORN'S** Digital Performer for the Macintosh. This means you can use a low-cost computer as the front end for your hard disk recording system.

These MIDI sequencing/digital audio software packages also let you control sequencer and hard disk recording from one program. **OPCODE'S** Studio Vision, Steinberg's Cubase Audio and Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer are all Mac-based packages that work with Digidesign's Pro Tools, Audiomedia and Sound Accelerator hardware. Cubase is also available for Atari platforms. These systems are exceptionally convenient; you don't need to quit your sequencing program to work on digital audio. Cubase also controls all transport functions on **FOSTEX** open-reel multitrack recorders, allowing you to configure a centralized analog, digital and MIDI recording system. With the advent of MIDI Machine Control (MMC), this feature will soon be standard on all MIDI sequencing/digital audio software packages.

Then again, you may not want to bother with a computer at all. In this case a stand-alone, hardware-based system is the solution. **ANATEK**, the company made famous by its pocket-sized MIDI peripherals, is making a bold move at the opposite end of the spectrum with its RADAR (Random Access Digital Audio Recorder). The unit is priced under \$8000, records eight tracks and is expandable to 24 with the addition of plug-in cards. You can also stack multiple units for even more tracks. **KORG'S** SoundLink looks like a miniature recording console, and contains a digital mixer, digital effects and a MIDI sequencer. **ROLAND'S** DM-80 comes in either four- or eight-track configurations which can also be stacked. If you can't keep away from a computer, the DM-80 can be controlled using optional Track Manager software.

While all these companies are busy peddling hard disk recorders, **FOSTEX** and **TASCAM** have remained suspiciously quiet—until recently. Tascam just announced the RAR 4000, a four-track random-access digital recorder/editor that will sell for around \$7000. Fostex purchased **NEW ENGLAND DIGITAL'S** R&D department shortly after NED's collapse last summer, a strong indication that they've got something brewing. And while these two recording giants may be getting a late start, their track record is sure to work to their advantage. With such stiff competition, there are bound to be losers. But with all this choice, it's a good bet the consumer will come out on top.

CHRIS GILL



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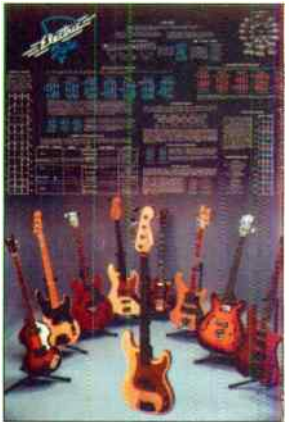
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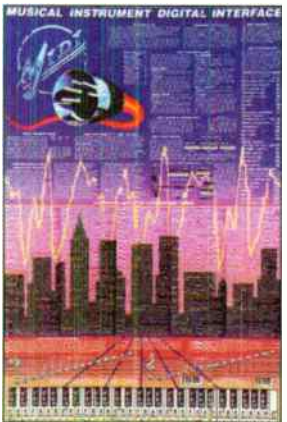
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MESA/BOOGIE TRIAXIS PREAMP

For as long as MESA/Boogie has been around, its amps have exuded a certain glow—the warm, orange radiance of hot tubes that attracts guitarists in almost mystical ways. For its new Triaxis preamp, Boogie condensed the best sounds of its classic amps (and other classic amp sounds) into a programmable, MIDI-addressable preamp that delivers exactly what guitarists crave: great tone and self-explanatory controls.

Instead of knobs, the front is laid out with up and down keys and highly visible LED numerical displays for all functions, including gain, treble, middle, bass, lead 1 drive, lead 2 drive, master, presence and dynamic voice. A pair of concentric knobs make it easy to change the loudness of both stereo outputs to accommodate various venue situations without rewriting programs on the gig. My test Triaxis came with a “quick-start” guide, which gets you up and running in a hurry. I tested the unit through a MESA/Boogie Strategy 500 power amp driving two Mesa 1 x 12 extension cabinets. For extra fun, I patched an ART DR-X 2100 multi-processor into the effects loop. The first 10 factory presets—out of a total of 90—are full of killer sounds. The pristine beauty of a vintage clean sound at factory preset 01 invites you to goose the gain to reach a vintage purr. Presets move smoothly through medium-gain solo tones to scorching, sustaining textures, as if your guitar were squeezing out notes. And with each push of the preset key, I wanted to play louder and louder!

The heart and soul of the Triaxis is an all-tube multi-stage preamp employing five 12AX7s. These tubes are programmably reconfigured in various formats to create eight modes. These include what MESA describes as (1) vintage fat rhythm, (2) modern bright rhythm, (3) vin-

tage Mark I lead, (4) high-gain British-style lead, (5) high-gain bright British-style lead, (6) medium-gain Boogie lead, (7) classic Boogie lead (reminiscent of the Mark II-C/Mark IV) and (8) bright Boogie lead. Even without touching the other controls, these eight voicings provide an impressively broad range of tones. Note: All five 12AX7s are easily accessible from the rear without removing the Triaxis from a rack.



A well-designed effects loop is rare, but the Triaxis' is almost perfect. Its levels matched my outboard gear very well, without mucking up the tone or the output volume. Four jacks on the rear panel let you switch on and off other gear that uses “tip-to-ground” wiring. This works nicely with the SwitchTrack multiple-voicing feature in the Strategy 500 power amp, plus I was able to switch my old DDLs on and off. Two recording outputs with different voicing circuits let you patch the Triaxis directly into a board. One is dedicated to rhythm tones, and the other is optimized for accurate lead sounds. Finally, you can lay direct “keeper” tracks you can take to mastering.

Is the Triaxis worth the \$1200 list price? You bet. After all, you not only get one MESA/Boogie sound, but a veritable tone encyclopedia. You also get mondo channel switchability (remember, 90 presets), a compact size and full-tube killer sound. A great preamp, done right.

TOM MULHERN

Studio pros nationwide are putting things on standby and preparing to fly off to San Francisco for the 93rd (93rd?!) Audio Engineering Society convention, to be held October 1-4 at Moscone Center. There's sure to be a crowd at the TASCAM booth as that company unveils the MDR 88, an

SOUND BITES

eight-track digital multitrack recorder that utilizes the compact 8mm cassette transport and Hi 8 cassette tape. Half of that crowd is probably still waiting for the ADAT machine they ordered a year ago. The MDR 88 retails for \$4500, and Tascam promises a 60-90 day delivery. QSC will

introduce the new USA series of power amps. Based on their Series One amplifiers, these three-rack-space amps come in three configurations: 185, 425 and 650 watts per side. One cool thing about this new no-frills line is the “very competitive” price. LEXICON will be showing the new 20/20 AD, an analog-to-digital converter that can be configured as two 20-bit channels or four 18-bit channels. Two on-board digital signal processors supply compression to insure against nasty digital clipping without sacrificing sound quality.

In other news, JBL recently implemented a “flash fax system” which allows curious consumers to get product info through their fax machine. Brochures, spec sheets, price lists and such on all JBL products can now be faxed your way instantaneously: All you gotta do is call (818) 895-8190. With the integration of more cost-effective G1.5 SoundEngine technology, E-MU has announced price reductions of up to \$200 on its Proteus, Procussion and Proformance series modules. Now that's my kind of technological breakthrough.

PETER CRONIN

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"They laughed when I said they could have Perfect Pitch

...until I showed them the secret!"



The TRUE STORY by David L. Burge

IT ALL STARTED in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry.

I would practice the piano for five hours daily. Linda didn't practice anywhere near that amount. But somehow she always seemed to have an edge which made her the star performer of our school. It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I would wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, sensed my growing competition. One day she bragged on and on about Linda, adding more fuel to my fire. "You could never be as good as Linda," she taunted. "Linda's got Perfect Pitch."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked. Sheryl gloated over a few of Linda's uncanny musical abilities: how she could name any tone or chord—just by ear; how she could sing any pitch she wanted—from mere memory; and how she could even play songs after only listening to them on the radio!

My heart sank. Her fantastic EAR is the key to her success I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But later I doubted Sheryl's story. How could anyone possibly know F# or Bb just by listening? An ear like that would give someone a mastery of the entire musical language!

It bothered me. Did Linda really have Perfect Pitch? I finally got up the nerve and point-blank asked Linda if the rumors were true.

"Yes," she nodded to me aloofly. But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "Can I test you sometime?"

"OK," she replied cheerfully.

Now I couldn't wait to make her eat her words...

My plan was ingeniously simple: I picked a moment when Linda least suspected it. Then I boldly challenged her to name tones for me—by ear.

I made sure she had not been playing any music. I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made certain other classmates could not help her. I got everything just right so I could expose Linda's Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

Nervously, I plotted my testing strategy. Linda appeared serene.

With silent apprehension I selected a tone to play. (She'll never guess F#!)

I had barely touched the key. "F#," she said. I was astonished. I quickly played another tone. She didn't even stop to think. Instantly she announced the correct pitch.

Frantically, I played more and more tones, here and there on the keyboard, but each time she knew the pitch—without effort. She was SO amazing—she could identify tones as easily as colors!

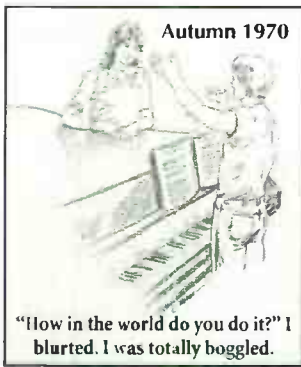
"Sing an Eb," I demanded, determined to mess her up.

Without hesitation she sang the proper pitch. I had her sing more tones (trying hard to make them increasingly difficult), but still she sang each one perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "How in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And to my great dismay, that was as much as I could get out of her!

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me hard. My head was dizzy with disbelief, yet from that moment on I knew that Perfect Pitch is real.



"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled.

I couldn't figure it out...

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why doesn't everyone know musical tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me that most musicians can't tell C from C#, or A major from F major—like artists who brush painting after painting without ever knowing green from turquoise. It all seemed so odd and contradictory. I found myself even more mystified than before.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it myself. I would sweet-talk my brothers and sisters into playing tones for me so I could guess each pitch by ear. My many attempts were dismal failures.

So I tried playing the tones over and over in order to memorize them. I tried to feel the "highness" or "lowness" of each pitch. I tried day after day to learn and absorb those elusive tones. But nothing worked. I simply could not recognize the pitches by ear.

After weeks in vain, I finally gave in. Linda's gift was indeed extraordinary. But for me, it was out of reach.

Then came the realization:

It was like a miracle. A turn of fate. Like finding the lost Holy Grail.

Once I had stopped straining my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the incredible secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not visual colors, but colors of pitch, colors of sound.

They had always been there. But this was the first time I had "let go"—and listened—to discover these subtle differences within the musical tones.

Soon I too could recognize the tones by ear! It was simple. I could hear how F# sounds one way, while Bb has a different pitch color sound—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization hit me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven and Mozart could mentally envision their masterpieces—and identify tones, chords and keys just by ear—by tuning in to these subtle pitch colors within the tones.

It was almost childish—I felt that anyone could unlock their own Perfect Pitch by learning this simple secret of "color hearing."

So I told my best friend Ann (a flutist) that she could have Perfect Pitch too. She laughed at me.

"You have to be born with Perfect Pitch," she asserted.

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I explained. "It's easy!"

I showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. Soon Ann had also acquired Perfect Pitch! We became instant school celebrities. Students tested us in great amazement. Everyone was awed by our virtuoso ears.

Back then I would not have dreamed I would later explain my discovery to college music professors. When I did, many of them laughed at me at first. You may have guessed it—they told me you had to be born with Perfect Pitch.

But once I revealed the secret to Perfect Pitch—and they heard for themselves—you'd be surprised how fast they'd change their tune!

As I continued with my own music studies, my Perfect Pitch allowed me to progress far faster than I ever thought possible. I even skipped over two required college courses. Perfect Pitch made everything much easier—performing, composing, arranging, sight-reading, transposing, improvising—and it skyrocketed my enjoyment as well. I learned that music is definitely a HEARING art.

And as for Linda?

...Oh yes—well, time found us at the end of our senior year of high school. I was nearly 18, and it was now my final chance to outdo her.

Our local university sponsored a high school music festival each spring. That last year, I scored an A+ in the most advanced performance category. Linda only got an A.

Sweet victory was mine at last!

TODAY, thousands of musicians and two university studies have confirmed the effectiveness of my Perfect Pitch method. Now I'd like to show YOU how to discover your own Perfect Pitch—whatever your age!

I hope you won't laugh as you picture yourself with various Perfect Pitch skills—like naming tones and chords by ear with laser-like precision! Of course, you might be surprised at how simple—and how very valuable—Perfect Pitch really is!

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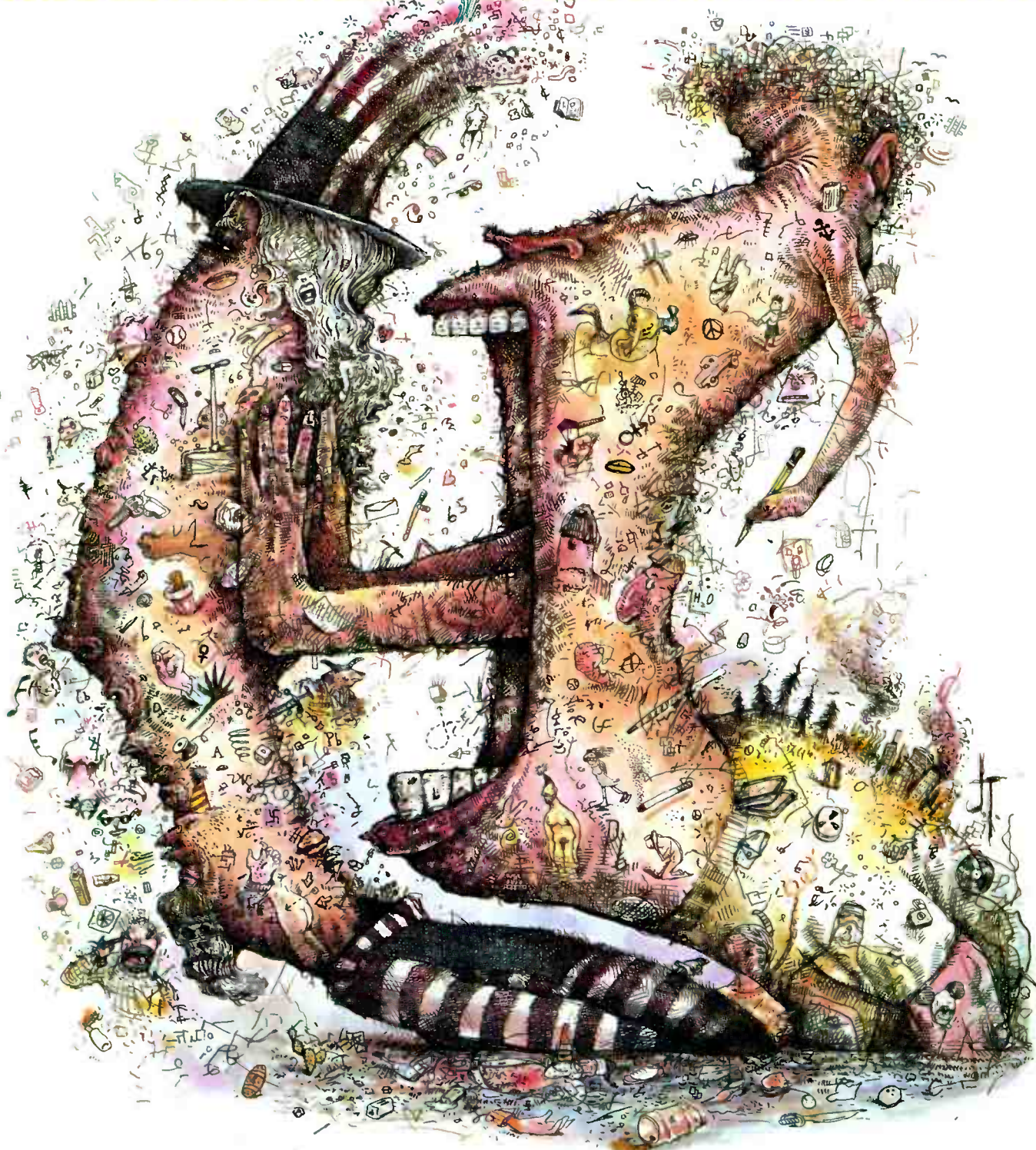
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TOM WAITS
BONE MACHINE
(ISLAND)

VULTURES AT THE DINER

Tom Waits' *Bone Machine* gets points right off for being one of the most singular-sounding albums to come along in some time. With a production as lean as work tapes—usually it's Waits on guitar or percussion, with an added guitar or horn—there's plenty of spots for the singer to put his already-grotesque voice through a variety of emotive paces:

squeezed Beefheartian sneer, shredded falsetto, bullfrog in heat. Waits' percussive textures are equally eccentric: His traps sound at times like empty oil drums being pummeled by wiffle bats, or some sinister approximation of the album's grisly title contraption.

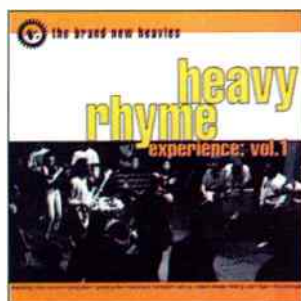
With a sound this challenging—that is to say, ugly in an aesthetically pleasing way—most of the

songs had better be worthy. They are. Waits grew out of his neo-beat persona some time ago and now offers a more wide-ranging commentary on the passing carnage, both physical and emotional. There's traces of the world-weary wise guy, as on "Dirt in the Ground," a slow drag goof reflecting the hipster's heightened awareness that we're all cut from the

same cloth and heading for the same warehouse. But more often, the point of view is less philosophical than freaked. "Earth Died Screaming" is the tone-setting lead-off song, while the midpoint apocalyptic peak is reached with "In the Colosseum." Buried in this latter's melange of imagery is the unoriginal observation that politicians are dangerously bad people, though all this rapacious evil taking place in a colosseum suggests the more cogent insight that you can't tell the lions from the Christians anymore.

Waits' less-populated visions tend toward the suicidal ("The Ocean Doesn't Want Me") and the murderous ("Black Wings," "Murder in the Red Barn"). His taint of yore—sentimentality—shows up most nakedly on "Whistle Down the Wind," though his bruised bellow effectively banishes bathos. On a lighter (?) note, "I Don't Wanna Grow Up" is a wickedly funny anthem for aging boomers, while "Jesus Gonna Be Here" makes for a comic sinner's lament, a praise-be to an imminent Jesus who will be sophisticated enough to forgive one's little indulgences.

Waits co-wrote half of the 16 songs here with his wife Kathleen Brennan, and the consistency of the material suggests that it's an in-sync partnership. In any event, *Bone Machine* should be counted among his best efforts—deeply weird, aggressively sardonic and, at its greasy core, painfully humane. —Richard C. Walls



THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES

Heavy Rhyme Experience Vol. 1
(DELICIOUS VINYL/ATLANTIC)

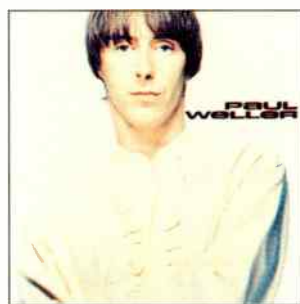
ENGLAND'S BRAND NEW HEAVIES MAY be an ordinary soul-funk combo, but that hasn't stopped enterprising A&R types from gettin' busy. For their debut album, somebody got the bright idea of enhancing the lineup with an outside singer; unfortunately, chanteuse N'Dea Davenport had little more presence than the group. This time, they've devised a better scam. *Heavy Rhyme Experience Vol. 1* finds the

Heavies backing 10 guest rappers, with mixed yet generally engaging results.

The band's smooth grooves don't pack much zing on their own, so the pressure's entirely on the frontmen to generate sparks. Gang Starr rises to the occasion with the sublime "It's Getting Hectic," with supercool Guru Keith E. displaying his usual blasé confidence. Boogie Down Productions alumnus Jamalski goes reggae-style for "Jump n' Move," cheerfully offering what may be an ode to sex and drugs, only he's toasting so fast it's hard to tell for sure. The lovable Black Sheep does best at playing off the nondescript support, evoking a slacker mentality on "State of Yo," complete with eloquent pauses and blithe non sequiturs.

"State of Yo" also contains some tasty scratches, raising the question of whether you can achieve hip-hop satisfaction without that dirty street sound. Maybe not: The Heavies themselves sometimes try to imitate a DJ, mimicking a loop for Kool G. Rap's belligerent "Death Threat," and suggesting a James Brown sample behind Ed O.G. on the stuttering "Do Whatta I Gotta Do."

Real players may indeed be the next big thing in rap—perhaps it's just a question of getting the right ones. In any case, *Heavy Rhyme Experience* delivers a few superior jams, like a hip K-Tel compilation, and inspires fantasies of other MC-band collaborations. What about Flavor Flav with NRBQ? Queen Latifah and Santana? Make a wish. —Jon Young



PAUL WELLER
Paul Weller
(GO! DISC)

SUZANNE VEGA
99.9 F
(A & M)

CALL IT THE CATCH-22 OF POP CREDIBILITY: Critics advise successful musicians to experiment and evolve, then dismiss their ventures into new terrain as presumptuous or contrived. Even superstars like Sting and U2 have learned that joining pop's elite won't spare

them from such scrutiny. Suzanne Vega and Paul Weller, of course, are hardly stars at all: Vega was marginal for a while, what with "Luka" and that hip-hop-ified version of "Tom's Diner"; Weller rose to fame in England as part of the Jam and remains an icon there, but has never transcended cult status in the States. But both have enjoyed enough recognition to establish their artistic personae: Vega as a pensive but hip folkie, Weller as the restless maverick who guided the Jam into punk-pop heaven before trying his hand at subtler, more intricate fare with the Style Council.

Fans who had a hard time with Weller's transition to the latter band are not likely to warm immediately to this solo outing. Where Style Council flaunted an infatuation with R&B only hinted at in the Jam's later recordings, *Paul Weller* is a full-out homage to late-'60s/early-'70s soul. Co-producing with Brendan Lynch, he crafts a dreamy, sometimes psychedelic feel, using wispy flutes, funky horns and guitar riffs and lyrics that refer to karmic dilemmas rather than the social ones he's written about in the past. What's really striking about this record, though, is how improved Weller's vocals sound. Granted, his delivery on soul-rockers like "Bull Rush" and "I Didn't Mean to Hurt You" is more evocative of early Chicago than of Marvin Gaye, but it's engaging. His singing is even better, sweet and fluid, on an ethereal ballad called "The Strange Museum." Not bad for a guy whose seminal recordings, for all their other virtues, showcased a voice only a punker could love.

Suzanne Vega has something more ambitious in mind for her new record. Two years ago, the duo D.N.A. remixed "Tom's Diner," from her 1987 album *Solitude Standing*, and a dance-floor sensation was born. So it shouldn't shock that *99.9 F* is littered with all the hip-hop beats and dance music references one *wouldn't* associate with Vega in the '80s. The title song is centered on what sounds like an INXS sample, while "Blood Makes Noise" and "Fat Man and Dancing Girl" share driving beats and a decidedly electronic feel.

But *99.9 F* isn't a cynical attempt to capitalize on an accidental club hit any more than it's an effort to convince older fans that Vega's remained true to her folk roots. It's simply a smart, tasty pop album, as impressive for its lean but muscular production—for which Vega shares honors with Mitchell Froom—as for its stylistic boldness. The techno-heavy tracks are crisp and catchy and don't sound self-conscious; other upbeat numbers like "As Girls Go" and "When Heroes Go Down" also have a buoyancy that will surprise those who have

found Vega too muted in the past. And there are, less surprisingly, lovely ballads: “Bad Wisdom” is a first-person account of a young girl in trouble, rendered with unpretentious eloquence, while “In Liverpool” recaptures the poignancy and melodic grace that made “Luka” a classic, with a dash of wistful romance to boot.

That Vega’s album seems to represent a step forward rather than a look back doesn’t make it any more a forecast of things to come than Weller’s appears to be. Conceivably, she could next produce a straight-ahead rock album. Or a collection of Gershwin covers. Or even something like these records, emphasizing talent while encouraging fans to expect the unexpected.

—Elysa Gardner



SUGAR

Copper Blue
(RYKODISC)

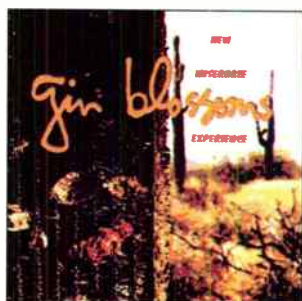
THE FIRST ALBUM BY THE NEW BAND fronted by Hüsker Dü mastermind Bob Mould bears a suspiciously colorful titular resemblance to the Hüskers’ 1986 major-label bow, *Candy Apple Grey*. That record, you’ll recall, followed three poised, brutal albums that Hüsker Dü recorded for indie SST Records—*Zen Arcade*, *New Day Rising* and *Flip Your Wig*. Some folks liked *Grey*, but yours truly found the Hüskers sound somewhat dampened and compromised. Sorry to say, but listening to *Copper Blue*, I feel about the same way.

Cooper Blue follows Mould’s *Black Sheets of Rain*, a loud, overwhelmingly bleak record that was mostly reviled by the singer/guitarist’s critical constituents. (I loved it.) Maybe Mould was stricken by the negative reaction to that utterly uninhibited *Rain* of guitars, but he mainly takes the convenient low road on the new album, just as the Hüskers did in ’86. While it’s hard to fault songs as pretty and as capably constructed as “Helpless” and “If I Can’t Change Your Mind,” other numbers like “The Act We Act” and “Fortune Teller” have the feel of twice-told tunes. The brazenly second-hand opening licks of “The Slim” are generic Hüskeriana; the only

thing missing is the blue-and-white packaging.

It might have been wiser for Mould to strike out into new turf, instead of falling back on the trio format (he is joined here by drummer Malcolm Travis of Boston’s Zulus, a group Mould produced three years ago, and bassist David Barbe of Mercyland) that served him so well artistically in the past. Of course Mould has been known to shift gears in a twinkling (*Black Sheets of Rain*, after all, followed the subdued *Workbook*), and he may do so again. In the meantime, this batch of Sugar isn’t going to overstuff anybody’s cavities, cranial or otherwise.

—Chris Morris



GIN BLOSSOMS

New Miserable Experience
(A&M)

SO NEW MISERABLE EXPERIENCE WAS recorded at Memphis’ Ardent Studios, where Big Star made their three minuscule-selling albums 20 years ago—and, as the Gin Blossoms’ Jesse Valenzuela relates in awe in his group’s new and charming bio, where “we got to use the same amps Big Star got to record with.” Now that an entire generation of impressionables thinks the biggest bands of the past 25 years must’ve been the Velvet Underground and Big Star—heck, that’s all anybody cool ever *talks* about, right?—maybe someone should clue them in: Both groups sold diddly.

So what should these guys expect? Arizona’s Gin Blossoms don’t sound like Big Star the way, say, Teenage Fanclub Xeroxed them; the similarities are more subtle. When vocalist Robin Wilson sings a line in “Hey Jealousy” that could’ve fallen out of BS’s “Thirteen” (“Tomorrow we could drive around this town/And let the cops chase us around”), he sounds less like Alex Chilton than he does the Grass Roots’ Rob Grill. That’s fine by me. Big Star loved ’60s pop, and so did Dwight Twilley, the Shoes, Tommy Hoehn and umpteen other ’70s practitioners of so-called “power pop,” all of whom had the best of intentions, the dandiest of taste

and the worst possible luck in an overwhelmingly screwy marketplace.

What makes Tom Petty a star in 1992 and Dwight Twilley a has-been? *Songs*. There are better songs on the Gin Blossoms album than there are, say, on most of Marshall Crenshaw’s. *Promotional skill*. Pop bands like Material Issue, Jellyfish and the Posies have paved the way for these guys at radio. *Luck*. Of the 12 songs on *New Miserable Experience*, six of the best were written or co-written by now-departed guitarist Douglas Hopkins. Two out of three ain’t bad, and neither is this album. Any major dude will tell you: As Gin Blossoms equals Big Star, techno equals *Tarkus*. The choice is yours.

—Dave DiMartino



VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Scepter Records Story
(CAPRICORN)

BACK IN THE DAYS OF MARV THRONEberry, when Bazooka cost a penny and lead singers pronounced “every” “ev-oh-ree,” a North Jersey housewife named Florence Greenberg founded Scepter Records and turned it into a bustling success. Scepter was a bastion of Brill Building pop, the Manhattan assembly line that matched or bettered Motown and early-’60s L.A. in the art of cutting a pop classic in three hours and getting it on radio in a week (actually, Scepter was across the street from the Brill, in 1650 Broadway). The label launched and/or nurtured the careers of the Shirelles, Dionne Warwick, thick-voiced Chuck Jackson, Maxine Brown, the Kingsmen, Ronnie Milsap (who once sounded just like Jerry Butler) and B.J. Thomas; Scepter also hosted wayfarers like the Isley Brothers and Roy Head for a minute or two. Flo had no particular bent; she signed ’em as she heard ’em, and whether her success was due to ears or luck, these three CDs contain some of the great sounds of pre-hippie rock.

About half of disc one belongs to the Shirelles, their harmonies—a transistorized blur the first time around—beautifully laid bare, gospel roots clear; you can also really appreci-

ate, for the first time, 19-year-old Carole King's sweeping "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" string arrangement. The real revelation is producer/songwriter Luther Dixon, who's managed to avoid fame despite having forged the Shirelles' and Chuck Jackson's sounds and written or co-written hits for Nat Cole, Perry Como, Jimmy Reed ("Big Boss Man"), Gene McDaniels ("One Hundred Pounds of Clay") and the Crests ("Sixteen Candles"), not to mention the Shirelles' "Mama Said," Chuck Jackson's "I Don't Want to Cry" and Tommy Hunt's heartbreaking "Oh Lord What Are You Doing to Me." When Dixon left Scepter in late '62, it was basically the end of the Shirelles and Jackson as hitmakers. But Dionne Warwick was just coming on, and along with Maxine Brown ("Oh No Not My Baby" remains one of my all-time favorite songs), she's the story on disc two. Once again, digitized sound brings a fascinating, if stark, clarity. I don't know if the new sonics make Burt Bacharach wince, but his arrangements aren't diaphanous anymore; you can hear all the moving parts. Disc three starts with Roy ("Treat Her Right") Head's non-hit "Just a Little Bit," recently covered by King & Evans, keeps going with more Dionne ("I Say a Little Prayer" and other glories) and peters out, as did Scepter, with B.J. Thomas, never more than a cut above Gary Puckett. (Humorous rock history footnote #473: "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" was originally submitted to Bob Dylan; what was Bacharach thinking?)

Along with the rest of Brill Building pop, Scepter really represents the end of Tin Pan Alley—the creation of songs by a stable of full-time, non-performing writers. With the Beatles and Dylan, those roles collapsed and the artist became his own writer/player/producer. The Brill Building's method may have been mechanical, its treatment of artists shabby; its sound was a last gasp of innocence. —Tony Scherman

SINÉAD O'CONNOR

Am I Not Your Girl
(ENSIGN/CHRYSALIS)

HISTORY TEACHES THAT EVEN THE most confessional of confessional singer/songwriters will eventually feel compelled to appease the stingy muse by offering up a sacrifice: the all-cover-tunes album. Into this tradition steps Sinéad O'Connor, detouring to pay homage to the classics more prematurely in her career than most. It's a jawdropper: Not since Bob Dylan's universally maligned *Self-Portrait* has a major rock artist miscalculated so thoroughly in reaching for out- [cont'd on page 110]

Long, Quiet Nights

R.E.M. and Peter Gabriel

R.E.M. AND PETER GABRIEL—TWO OF ROCK'S MOST RESPECTED GROUNDBREAKERS—are coming off the most successful albums of their careers. In defiance of the market pressures that often cripple creativity, both have produced reflective albums which may not set MTV alight, but which will have great resonance in the lives of those who remember how to really listen.

It's usually a mistake to project onto music the fractions we know of the musicians' lives. Presumably artists—even those whose work represents a degree of autobiography—still have parts of their experience they keep safe from celebrity. But we can observe something about the context in which these new albums were created. After releasing *Out of Time* in early 1991 R.E.M. broke their cycle of touring to promote each new album and, for the first time ever, spent a year leading private lives. Their new album, *Automatic for the People* (the tentative title at press time), is filled with the sort of quiet contemplation one associates with sitting on the front porch on a September night, smelling the grass and trees and wondering where summer went. R.E.M. extend that mood to wondering where the '80s went, where their generation's youth went, and how America got so far down a bad road. The political and personal are inseparable here. There are meditations on mortality and the inevitable unspoken question, *Have I spent my time unwisely?* These quiet songs, so sure of their honesty that they are unafraid of risking musical corniness, can be heard as an indictment of the Republican era, a lament for the AIDS years, or simply a consideration of roads not taken.

The emotional centerpiece of the album is "Night Swimming," in which singer Michael Stipe recalls the exhilaration he and his friends used to get from moonlight skinnydipping. "I'm not sure all these people understand," he sings. "It's not like years ago." And the saddest line: "These things, they go away."

When R.E.M. announced their intention to forsake concerts in order to quickly produce a follow-up to *Out of Time*, they said they were working on a hard rock album they could take on the road. That they somewhere abandoned that professionally astute plan in favor of work this subtle and brave says more about R.E.M.'s devotion to their art than any promotional rhetoric could.

Peter Gabriel is a decade older than R.E.M. If R.E.M. are sniffing the first traces of autumn in the air, Gabriel is reporting from the long nights of winter. In the six years he has been working toward this album Gabriel's marriage and the love affair that followed it have both dissolved, and his attention to charity work and esoteric music have threatened his financial security. *Us* is an album filled with the longing of the middle-aged man who finds himself alone. When Gabriel sings, "I cannot get insurance anymore/They won't take credit, only gold," it communicates the first flutter of an unfamiliar despair. There are a couple of ventures into "Sledgehammer"-style rock here (after six years away there better be, or Gabriel's next album will be full of songs about, "They're turning off my telephone and repossessing my couch"), but the depth and weight of the album come from "Secret World," "Only Us," "Blood of Eden," "Washing of the Water," songs with a cold wind blowing through them.

At a time when rock's fringe has become overpopulated, when grunge bands go platinum and rap is bursting its limits, Gabriel and R.E.M.—who for years defined the fringes—have made their way back to the middle of the road, found it abandoned and stood there to write songs about watching the last lights go out. Artists who once drew their energy from great crowds, they have never sounded so alone. They have never sounded better. —Bill Flanagan

PETER GABRIEL
Us
(Geffen)

R.E.M.
Automatic for the People
(Warner Bros.)

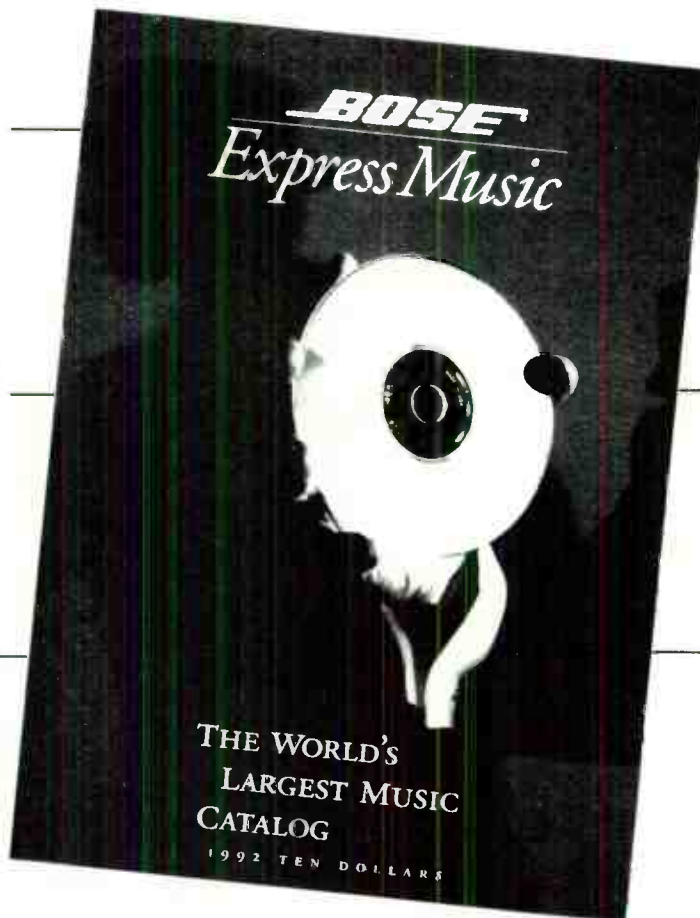
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MUS10



David Snow, Gaithersburg, MD
Grand Prize Winner

4TH BEST UNSI

And The Winners

All of us at **MUSICIAN** would like to congratulate the winners in our **4th Best Unsigned Band Contest**. This year's judging was a formidable task, but at long last the decisions have been made — thanks to the diligence and taste of the writers, editors, and publishers who tackled

the preliminary round of selections as well as our panel of excellent celebrity judges who made the final calls: **Chrissie Hynde**, **Don Was**, **Bootsy Collins**, and **John Hiatt**. Though **Sun Ra** had originally been slated to judge, even his management was unable to



The Angstones, Ottawa, Ontario



David Micheal Jahn, New York, NY



Happy As Hell, St. Catharine's, Ontario



B.U.S.T., Boston, MA



Birds at the End of the Road, Chicago, IL



Mac McClanahan, Bakersfield, CA



Men From Earth, St. Petersburg, FL

Jim Quealy, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA



Acousticity, Brookline, MA

GNED BAND CONTEST

Are...

establish interplanetary contact with him in time for final judging.

So without further ado, here are the **B.U.B.s**...

➤ Information and entry forms for **B.U.B. 5** coming up next month...



The Messengers, Inglewood, CA



Zombie Bird House, Gainesville, FL



Jimmy Richardson & the Rule, Long Beach, CA



Steve Ritter, Anna, TX



Tall Walls, Hollywood, CA

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NEW RELEASES

ROCK

BY J. D. CONSIDINE

DAN BAIRD

Love Songs for the Hearing Impaired

(DEF AMERICAN)

AS CHUCK BERRY proved, it takes a special genius to write great dumb songs, and that's precisely the kind of smarts Dan Baird has. The former Georgia Satellite can rejuvenate the hoariest of roots-rock riffs, but what makes these songs shine is his ability to find something novel in common situations. That makes everything here a hoot, from the hard-luck rhymes in "Knocked Up" to the girl-crazed grammar lesson of "I Love You Period."

PJ HARVEY

Dry

(INDIGO)

POLLY HARVEY POURS more emotional power into her performances than any young songwriter since Throwing Muses' Kristin Hersh, which helps explain the British buzz on her band. But what makes this album more than another alternative fave-rave is its musicality; not only does Harvey translate mood into melody, she does so with such quirky choruses and unorthodox rhythm licks that you almost don't notice how catchy her songs are. At least until you realize that the best ones, like the swirlingly infectious "Sheela-Na-Gig" or the itchy, aggressive "Dress," stick in your memory like glue.

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

Honeymoon in Vegas

(EPIC SOUNDTRAX)

AS MIGHT BE expected of an all-Elvis tribute album, this ranges from the sublime (Bryan Ferry's ultra-mannered "Are You Lonesome Tonight?," Bono's ethereal "Can't Help Falling in Love") to the ridiculous (Amy Grant's soppy "Love Me Tender," Jeff Beck's overblown "Hound Dog"). But it's the stuff in the middle—like Travis Tritt's fiery "Burning Love" or Billy Joel's note-perfect "All Shook Up"—that makes this *Honeymoon* worth remembering.

SHINEHEAD

Sidewalk University

(ELEKTRA)

TOO REGGAIFIED TO BE a regulation rap star and too hip-hop-oriented to really belong in dancehall,

JOE SATRIANI, *THE EXTREMIST* (RELATIVITY)

WHAT HOLDS SATRIANI'S *albums together isn't the guitar solos but the writing and arranging, which provide a sturdily melodic framework for the show-off bits. The Extremist goes one better. Instead of the one-man-band approach Satriani has favored in the past, he surrounds himself with sidemen who play their parts as well as he plays his, guaranteeing plenty of flash and burn.*

Shinehead has done the only thing an artist in this situation can do—followed his instincts. Who else could have found the funk in "I Just Called to Say I Love You," rewritten "An Englishman in New York" as "A Jamaican in New York" or reworked the "Heartbeat" bassline as completely as he does in "Try My Love"?

EDAN

Dead Flowers

(HOLLYWOOD)

IN WHICH EDAN Everly answers the question, "What do you get when you mix guns and roses?"

TIN MACHINE

Oy Vey, Baby

(VICTORY)

A BAND ALBUM in the best sense of the term, this live set is proof that Bowie wasn't kidding when he called Tin Machine a collaborative project. Indeed, the collective clangor these four generate cuts to the heart of songs like "Goodbye Mr. Ed" and the sprawling, exploratory "Heaven's in Here." If any

member seems to dominate, it's Reeves Gabrels, whose shrieking guitar sounds like it could peel the paint off a battleship—and nearly does during a cover of Roxy Music's "If There Is Something."

JAZZ

BY CHIP STERN

JIMMY SCOTT

All the Way

(SIRE/WARNER BROS.)

LEGENDARY SONG STYLIST Jimmy Scott has labored in the shadows throughout his career, but here he benefits from Tommy Lipuma's spare-no-expense studio sheen, the cathedral elegance of the Power Station's sound, a soft shimmering cushion of strings and the poetic sensitivity of Kenny Barron, Ron Carter and Grady Tate. *All the Way* depicts a canvas of heartbreak, loneliness and unrequited, hopeless love that cuts way too deep to function as aural wallpaper: for some jive seduction;

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classics like "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," "My Foolish Heart," "All the Way" and "Someone to Watch Over Me" linger at a slow, unearthly pace. With his tender, keening timbre, a brassy feline vibrato and an anguished ear for the nuance of a lyric, Jimmy Scott's vocal stylings thrust you into a vortex of emotions so chilling it's almost unbearable. *All the Way* is one of the most haunting vocal recitals you'll ever hear.

MARIO BAUZA & HIS AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Tanga

(MESSIDOR/ROUNDER)

MARIO BAUZA IS ONE of the original mambo kings, an Ellington of Afro-Cuban music, and no less an acolyte than Dizzy Gillespie credits him with many of the breakthroughs we now take for granted in popular and concert music (dig Max Salazar's liner notes for the real deal). *Tanga* is a superbly crafted, vivid big band recording (the Messidor label specializes in fine Latin jazz), and if you're one of those gringo innocents like myself whose main exposure to the Latin tinge seems to come in the form of "I Love Lucy" reruns and late-night aural assaults from pumped-up meringue-mobiles, *Tanga* is a superb introduction to all that is earthy, elegant and sophisticated in this rich musical tradition. Buy.

JONAS HELLBORG

The Silent Life

(DAY EIGHT MUSIC)

GINGER BAKER

Unseen Rain

(DAY EIGHT MUSIC)

SELF-STYLED ELEGANT PUNK Jonas Hellborg is charting new sonic territory on his Wechter acoustic bass guitar, a magnificent-sounding instrument with a rich sonority that reminds me of the piano's bottommost strings. On *The Silent Life* his solo tone poems range in mood from fervent flamencan fanfares to delicate mood pieces, paralleling new wave and new age sensibilities. On Ginger Baker's *Unseen Rain*, Hellborg captures Baker's true sound for the first time, and his translucent rhythmic support allows the great drummer to explore the incantatory nature of the drone in an engaging acoustic synthesis of jazz and ritual musics of North Africa and the Near East. Jens Johansson approaches the piano as a bushman might who came upon it for the first time in the chief's hut. The simple, uncluttered minor strains he and Hellborg use to orchestrate Baker's outrageously powerful talking rhythms allow the drummer to converse and react in a manner that he never could atop Bill Laswell's overdubbed, bottom-up arrangements.

SONNY ROLLINS

The Complete Prestige Recordings

(PRESTIGE)

NOT MUCH TO say here, save for gee whiz and drop that C-note, Jim. Over eight hours of music, arranged in chronological order for the first time, that traces all of Newk's early work as a sideman and leader with the likes of J.J., Miles, Monk, Art Farmer and the MJQ (when his precocious rhythmic ability and rough-and-ready tonal power marked him as a coming tenor star), to his creative breakthroughs as a mature innovator with Clifford Brown and Max Roach (where his uncanny thematic logic and harmonic bravado made him the king of tenors, all in his 20s). More to the point, in this critical period of creative gestation, you can begin to apprehend both Rollins' incomparable talent and the daunting standards he has always posed for himself, and why to this day the greatest living improviser remains insatiable and unsatisfied—still a work in progress, and in a class by himself.

HONKERS & BAR WALKERS

Volume I

(DELMARK)

DINAH WASHINGTON

Mellow Mama

(DELMARK)

THIS VENERABLE CHICAGO label has made a splash of late with several splendid blues releases. First off is this collection of macho squawkers and jive talkers (including Jimmy Forrest's timeless classic "Night Train"), from the golden age of jukebox blues when the spiritual gap between R&B and jazz was more imagined than real. Likewise, *Mellow Mama* is a delight, although salty mama is more like it ("My Voot Is Really Vout," anybody?). These obscure 1945 Apollo sessions were recorded following Miss Dinah's stint with Lionel Hampton's big band, and should prove a bracing nightcap for those cloistered souls who somehow imagine that Madonna initiated an era of unprecedented sexual liberation for our female brethren. Lucky Thompson, Milt Jackson and Charles Mingus add to the fun.

MIKE CLARK & PAUL JACKSON

The Funk Stops Here

(ENJA/TIPTOE)

JAZZ IS JAZZ and funk is funk and never the twain do meet. Wrong. Borrowing equal parts Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, Art Blakey and Elvin Jones, with a keen ear for the breakthroughs of Clyde Stubblefield and Bernard Purdie, Mike Clark runs it all through his own Southern blues sensibility and comes out swinging at the end. Having established his mainstream modernist credentials as a

leader with *Give the Drummer Some* (Stash), Clark has reunited with Headhunters rhythm mate Paul Jackson to retake the bottom from producers and give it back to musicians. Bassist Jackson has a vintage Fender Precision sound, woody as all get out, and his vamps are always crisscrossing the beat, rhythmically and harmonically, so free and natural at human tempos that Clark can step in and out of the pocket to interact with Kenny Garrett's soulful alto/soprano filigrees and Jeff Pitson's tasty, multi-keyboard dances. Musically, this is a good old-fashioned blowing session—let's come up with some heads and let 'er rip. But *The Funk Stops Here* is also gen-u-ine funk with a jazz sensibility. For yuppies who have considered suicide when CD 101.9 just wasn't enough.

BOOKS

MUSICAL ELABORATIONS

Edward W. Said

(COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS)

SAID'S SELF-DESCRIBED SLIM volume of "risky, often impressionistic theorizing and description" ruminates on, among other things, the modern relocation of musical performance; Zionism and Fascism; Wagner and Nazism; leitmotifs and totalitarianism; Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*; the path from Beethoven's humanist "Ode to Joy" to Berg's alienated *Lulu*; Proust, memory and the author's associative recollections of being taught to play Brahms on the piano by a Polish emigré in Egypt in the '50s. His dense text largely free of musicological and critical theory jargon, Said is quietly controversial and persuasive in his call to "situate music...in [its] social and cultural setting." An engrossing book, especially for those who suspect that the calcification of the Western Classical Repertory is not necessarily an act of God.

—Richard C. Walls

SOUNDBITES

Albert Goldman

(TURTLE BAY BOOKS)

A COLLECTION OF vintage journalism in which Uncle Albert fights off dangerous middlebrows like John Lennon and Jim Morrison to make pop culture safe for overeducated jive talkers everywhere.—J.D. Considine

DOWN THUNDER ROAD:
THE MAKING OF BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN

Marc Eliot with Mike Appel

(SIMON & SCHUSTER)

YOU EXPECT A few bad vibes from Springsteen's former partner, but the bitterness of his tome is startling. Still nursing open wounds 15 years after

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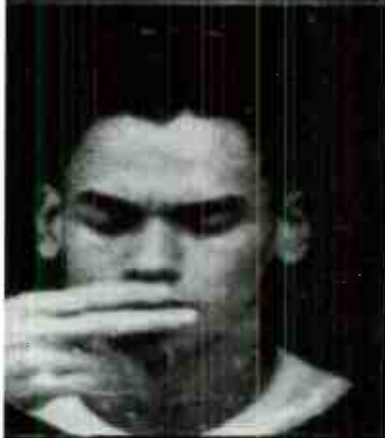


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his acrimonious divorce from the Boss, Appel and mouthpiece Eliot present a mountain of legal and financial information intended to show the estranged manager was not a crook, although the cumulative effect is more numbing than enlightening. While the authors have harsh words for current manager Jon Landau and biographer Dave Marsh, Appel seems oddly ambivalent about Bruce himself, as if harboring fantasies of reconciliation. Between the obsession with settling scores and reams of court depositions, *Thunder Road* takes only a passing interest in what made the music special; Springsteen could be a famous ditch-digger for all the attention his art receives. Anyone who derives pleasure from this sour tract should consider a career in entertainment law.

—Jon Young

RECORDINGS

[cont'd from page 102] side material. Remarkably, O'Connor has managed to collect and record a batch of songs only slightly better suited to her talents than "The Star-Spangled Banner."

With *Am I Not Your Girl*, we learn that O'Connor does *too* want what she hasn't got—namely, the chops to carry off classic pop

and jazz standards in an unadulteratedly traditional style. Under the hand of superproducer Phil Ramone, most of these sturdy standbys have been lushly arranged with big band-style horns and orchestra, as if begging to be fronted by a brassy Broadway veteran (or, dare it be said, La Ronstadt) instead of the timid-voiced and iron-willed Irishwoman who's commandeered them. Things get right off to an unpromising start with "Why Don't You Do Right" (last associated with fellow chanteuse Jessica Rabbit), in which O'Connor's vocal vamping recalls nothing so much as the surly side of Helen Reddy. That's one of the few times the singer exudes any attitude toward her chosen material at all; mostly, she just sleepwalks her way through whispery renditions of "Black Coffee," "Bewitched," "Gloomy Sunday" and the like, bringing nothing to these classics but a lack of confidence we're probably supposed to read as intimacy. (Only "How Insensitive," which demands a kind of coolness, fares well with her under-singing.) The most contemporary choice in the bunch, "Don't Cry for Me Argentina," cries out to be considered as kitsch, before you realize that

here the lyric's tiara-waving self-righteousness is really standing in as the earnest femme-fatale equivalent of, oh, "My Way."

Just once amid this strangely straightforward nostalgia-fest does O'Connor veer into actual reinterpretation, with a somberly orchestrated version of Tammy Wynette's hit "Success" (previously recorded by Elvis Costello on *his* all-covers album) that trades the original tune's surface pleasantness for a melodramatic arrangement more befitting the tragic lyric. But considering that half of what makes country music fascinating in the first place is its juxtaposition of jolly melodicism with sad themes, that hardly counts as a provocative idea. Then it's back to *Lush Life* land again. As this head-scratcher of a Sinéad-at-the-Sahara set ends with a Doc Severinson-style jazzy instrumental reprise of "Argentina," the concerned fan has to ask: Are we on "Candid Camera"? Come on out, O'Connor, you crazy kidder! No doubt about it: That Tori Amos record is still the best Sinéad O'Connor album this year.

—Chris Willman


SILVER

[cont'd from page 36] Raney was on guitar. We stayed with him about a year. I'll always be grateful to him.

"And I learned a lot with Miles. We used to live in the same hotel in New York. I had a little piano and he'd show me voicings. We made records, but he didn't have a working band in those days. He didn't have that many gigs. What a phenomenal guy.

"Let's not leave Art Blakey out," he adds. "He was like a one-man dynamo. He had such energy, such fire and drive. When he got up there you couldn't help but play better."

Silver retains nostalgia for the old days: "It was something to walk down to Birdland and go into the bar and here stands Coleman Hawkins, maybe—Bird or Miles or Diz, Sonny Rollins, Ben Webster, all these people standin' around and checkin' out whoever's onstage. The other day I was riding down the street on the way to the gig and we saw a sign advertising some radio station that read, 'Less music by dead guys.' I said, 'They should have *more* music by dead guys, 'cause it's better than some of the music by the live guys.'"

For all that, Silver's eye is on the future: "I've got material that isn't copyrighted yet. I don't think if I live to be a hundred I could use all the material in this storehouse here. And I'm perfectly willing to let somebody else record it if they care to check it out. I'm still writing, all the time." 

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THE MUSICIAN CHARTS

THE TOP 100 ALBUMS

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

1 · 1	BILLY RAY CYRUS <i>Some Gave All/Mercury</i>
2 · 2	KRIS KROSS <i>Totally Krossed Out/Ruffhouse</i>
3 · 4	MARIAH CAREY <i>MTV Unplugged EP/Columbia</i>
4 · —	SOUNDTRACK <i>Boomerang/LaFace</i>
5 · 6	PEARL JAM <i>Ten/Epic Associated</i>
6 · 8	GARTH BROOKS <i>Ropin' the Wind/Capitol</i>
7 · 3	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS <i>Blood Sugar Sex Magik/Warner Bros.</i>
8 · —	MEGADETH <i>Countdown to Extinction/Capitol</i>
9 · 11	GARTH BROOKS <i>No Fences/Capitol</i>
10 · —	SOUNDTRACK <i>Mo' Money/Perspective</i>
11 · 13	EN VOGUE <i>Funky Divas/Atco EastWest</i>
12 · 15	METALLICA <i>Metallica/Elektra</i>
13 · 9	DEF LEPPARD <i>Adrenalize/Mercury</i>
14 · 10	SIR MIX-A-LOT <i>Mack Daddy/Def American</i>
15 · 39	TLC <i>Oooooohhh... On the TLC Tip/LaFace</i>
16 · —	TEMPLE OF THE DOG <i>Temple of the Dog/A&M</i>
17 · 5	WILSON PHILLIPS <i>Shadows and Light/SBK</i>
18 · —	ELTON JOHN <i>The One/MCA</i>
19 · 7	THE BLACK CROWES <i>The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion/Def American</i>
20 · —	TOO SHORT <i>Shorty the Pimp/Jive</i>
21 · 50	GUNS N' ROSES <i>Use Your Illusion II/Geffen</i>
22 · 12	GENESIS <i>We Can't Dance/Atlantic</i>
23 · —	CLINT BLACK <i>The Hard Way/RCA</i>
24 · —	MC REN <i>Kizz My Black Azz/Ruthless</i>
25 · 37	BROOKS & DUNN <i>Brand New Man/Arista</i>
26 · 45	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>MTV: Party to Go, Vol. 2/Tommy Boy</i>
27 · 31	FAITH NO MORE <i>Angel Dust/Slash</i>
28 · 27	ANNIE LENNOX <i>Diva/Arista</i>
29 · 18	WYONNNA <i>Wynonna/Curb</i>
30 · 19	THE CURE <i>Wish/Fiction</i>
31 · 26	NIRVANA <i>Nevermind/DGC</i>
32 · —	THE B-52'S <i>Good Stuff/Reprise</i>
33 · 23	MICHAEL BOLTON <i>Time, Love and Tenderness/Columbia</i>
34 · 51	ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT <i>3 Years 5 Months & 2 Days in the Life of.../Chrysalis</i>
35 · 20	U2 <i>Achtung Baby/Island</i>
36 · 16	DAS EFX <i>Dead Serious/Atco EastWest</i>
37 · 17	QUEEN <i>Classic Queen/Hollywood</i>
38 · 28	JODECI <i>Forever My Lady/MCA</i>
39 · 22	BONNIE RAITT <i>Luck of the Draw/Capitol</i>
40 · 21	BEASTIE BOYS <i>Check Your Head/Capitol</i>
41 · —	MARY-CHAPIN CARPENTER <i>Come On Come On/Columbia</i>
42 · 14	ZZ TOP <i>Greatest Hits/Warner Bros.</i>
43 · 25	ENYA <i>Shepherd Moons/Reprise</i>
44 · 38	CELINE DION <i>Celine Dion/Epic</i>
45 · 61	FIREHOUSE <i>I Hold Your Fire/Epic</i>
46 · 83	SOUNDTRACK <i>Sister Act/Hollywood</i>
47 · 33	GARTH BROOKS <i>Garth Brooks/Capitol</i>
48 · —	SOUNDTRACK <i>Singles/Epic Soundtrax</i>
49 · 60	GUNS N' ROSES <i>Use Your Illusion III/Geffen</i>
50 · 24	LIONEL RICHIE <i>Back to Front/Motown</i>
51 · 34	INDIGO GIRLS <i>Rites of Passage/Epic</i>
52 · —	DJ QUIK <i>Way 2 Fonky/Profile</i>
53 · 36	MICHAEL JACKSON <i>Dangerous/Epic</i>
54 · 30	COLOR ME BADD <i>C.M.B./Giant</i>
55 · 79	JON SECADA <i>Jon Secada/SBK</i>
56 · 42	OZZY OSBOURNE <i>No More Tears/Epic Associated</i>
57 · 29	BOYZ II MEN <i>Coolerhighharmony/Motown</i>
58 · —	ERIC B. & RAKIM <i>Don't Sweat the Technique/MCA</i>
59 · 56	LORRIE MORGAN <i>Something in Red/RCA</i>
60 · 40	AMY GRANT <i>Heart in Motion/A&M</i>
61 · 44	R. KELLY & PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT <i>Born into the '90's/Jive</i>
62 · 57	BODY COUNT <i>Body Count/Sire</i>
63 · 81	TOM COCHRANE <i>Mad Mad World/Capitol</i>
64 · 32	VANESSA WILLIAMS <i>The Comfort Zone/Capitol</i>
65 · 35	"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC <i>Off the Deep End/Scotti Bros.</i>
66 · 47	BRYAN ADAMS <i>Waking Up the Neighbours/A&M</i>
67 · —	MINISTRY <i>Psalms 69/Sire</i>
68 · 48	ALAN JACKSON <i>Don't Rock the Jukebox/Arista</i>
69 · 52	REBA MCENTIRE <i>For My Broken Heart/MCA</i>
70 · 76	RICHARD MARX <i>Rush Street/Capitol</i>
71 · 49	NATALIE COLE <i>Unforgettable/Elektra</i>
72 · —	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Red Hot + Dance/Columbia</i>
73 · 55	HAMMER <i>Too Legit to Quit/Capitol</i>
74 · 58	SOUNDTRACK <i>The Commitments/Beacon</i>
75 · 41	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>Human Touch/Columbia</i>
76 · —	BLACK SABBATH <i>Dehumanizer/Reprise</i>
77 · 43	SLAUGHTER <i>Wild Life/Chrysalis</i>
78 · —	DANZIG <i>Danzig III How the Gods Kill/Def American</i>
79 · —	SUICIDAL TENDENCIES <i>Art of Rebellion/Epic</i>
80 · 53	SOPHIE B. HAWKINS <i>Tongues and Tails/Columbia</i>
81 · 63	TRAVIS TRITT <i>It's All About to Change/Warner Bros.</i>
82 · 93	SOUNDGARDEN <i>Badmotorfinger/A&M</i>
83 · 66	SOUNDTRACK <i>Beauty & the Beast/Walt Disney</i>
84 · —	JOE SATRIANI <i>Extremist/Relativity</i>
85 · 74	PETE ROCK & C.L. SMOOTH <i>Mecca and the Soul Brother/Elektra</i>
86 · —	VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Barcelona Gold/Warner Bros.</i>
87 · 46	KISS <i>Revenge/Mercury</i>
88 · —	SPICE 1 <i>Spice 1/Jive</i>
89 · 69	CYPRESS HILL <i>Cypress Hill/Ruffhouse</i>
90 · 73	HAL KETCHUM <i>Past the Point of Rescue/Curb</i>
91 · 72	K.D. LANG <i>Ingenu/Sire</i>
92 · 92	CECE PENISTON <i>Finally/A&M</i>
93 · —	ERASURE <i>Abba-esque/Mute</i>
94 · 97	MADONNA <i>The Immaculate Collection/Sire</i>
95 · 54	SOUNDTRACK <i>Wayne's World/Reprise</i>
96 · 91	TESLA <i>Psychotic Supper/Geffen</i>
97 · —	MARK CHESNUTT <i>Longnecks & Short Stories/MCA</i>
98 · 84	ORIGINAL LONDON CAST <i>Phantom of the Opera Highlights/Polydor</i>
99 · 90	TORI AMOS <i>Little Earthquakes/Atlantic</i>
100 · —	DEEE-LITE <i>Infinity Within/Elektra</i>

The Musician album chart is constructed by Billboard magazine from information collected, compiled and provided by Soundscan, Inc. © 1992 by Billboard/BPI and Soundscan, Inc. The concert chart is based on Amusement Business Box Score reports for July 1992, © 1992 by BPI Communications.

COP KILLER'S BULLET

NO ONE LIKES BEING THREATENED BY large groups of armed men beyond the reach of the law, but if you have to make enemies of policemen, you might as well come out of it with a bullet on the record charts. That's the comfort Ice-T can take. His band Body Count's song "Cop Killer" set off a controversy that made headlines. The President and V.P., searching for another Willie Horton or flag-burning issue to prop up their reelection campaign, went after "Cop Killer" as if Murphy Brown had refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Time/Warner, the conglomerate that owns Body Count's record company, found themselves attacked from within and without. The company defended Ice-T's right to self-expression while police unions threatened to yank Time/Warner stock from their pension funds and shareholders like Charlton Heston invoked godly wrath against the company's defense of a song told from the point of view of a police victim plotting violent revenge. Finally Ice-T stepped up and announced he was going to recall Body Count's album and delete "Cop Killer" because, he said, policemen were making personal threats against Time/Warner execs.

Shades of the Beatles' "butcher cover"! Quicker than you can say "collector's item" people were rushing to record stores to snatch up copies of "Cop Killer." On the August 15th *Billboard* chart the Body Count album, which had been languishing down in the 70s, jumped 47 spots to number 26 with a bullet (and a "Power Pick" designation). That was the best showing ever by the album, which had been out for almost five months. The following week it dropped back to number 77.

The song "Cop Killer," meanwhile, turned into an anthem of defiance. Soundgarden performed it at the New York stop of the Lollapalooza tour, sending the crowd into a happy frenzy. Later that night Ice Cube got the audience to join in a "Cop Killer" chant. That same week Ice-T himself showed up on the cover of *Rolling Stone* in a police uniform. He is that rarest of black men: one who has benefited from Bush/Quayle policies.

TOP CONCERT GROSSES

1	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Giants Stadium, East Rutherford, NJ/July 18</i>	\$1,479,830
2	Neil Diamond <i>Sheffield Arena, Sheffield, England/July 3-5</i>	\$1,431,933
3	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Pontiac Silverdome, Pontiac, MI/July 21</i>	\$1,378,660
4	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh, PA/July 26</i>	\$1,356,988
5	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Rich Stadium, Orchard Park, NY/July 25</i>	\$1,322,574
6	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, Washington, DC/July 17</i>	\$1,306,195
7	Guns N' Roses/Metallica, Faith No More <i>Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis, IN/July 22</i>	\$1,039,720
8	Lollapalooza II: Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ministry, others <i>Shoreline Amphitheatre, Mountain View, CA/July 18-19</i>	\$976,073
9	Jimmy Buffett & the Coral Reefer Band, Evangeline <i>The New Pine Knob Music Theatre, Clarkston, MI/July 3-5</i>	\$971,531
10	The Cure, Cranes <i>World Music Theatre, Tinley Park, IL/July 15</i>	\$583,666

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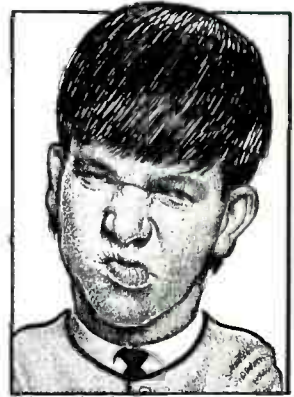
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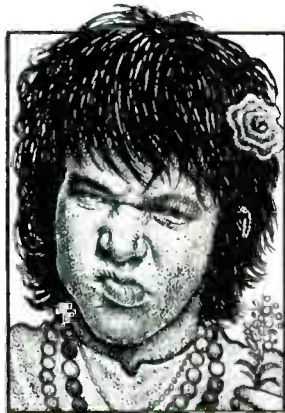
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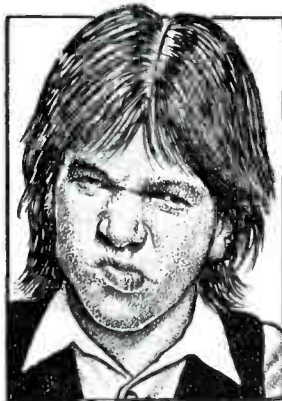
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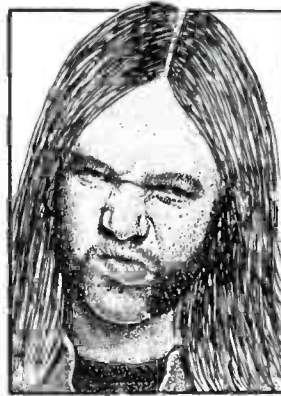
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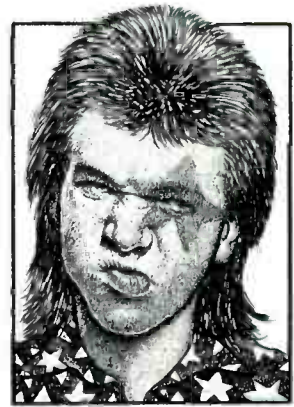
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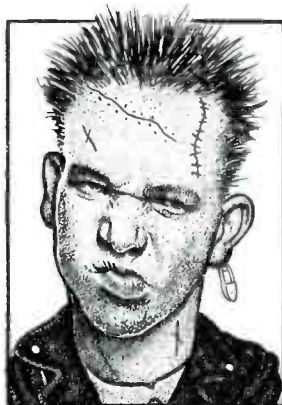
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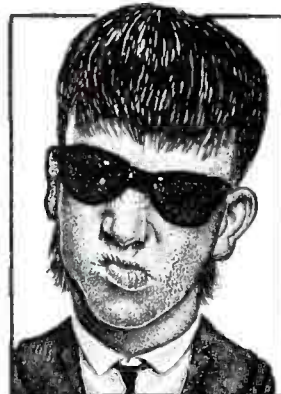
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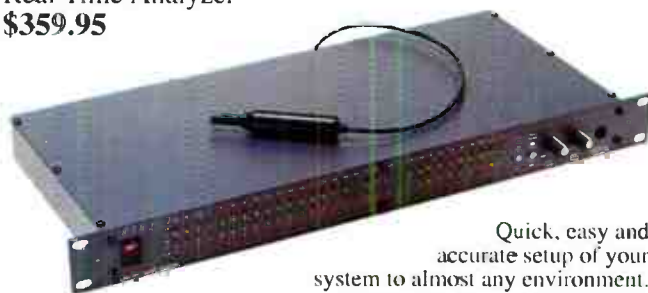
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